

REEL ADVENTURES: Saddles and Side Trips

Lethbridge to Fort Macleod, Cowley, and Milk River



Southern Alberta's own style of frontier history, set amid unspoiled natural beauty, has made it a favourite backdrop for movies, from exacting period pieces to sweeping "big country" dramas.

-  Film Location
-  Drive-by Film Location
-  Photo Opportunity
-  Walk or Hike Experience
-  Museum

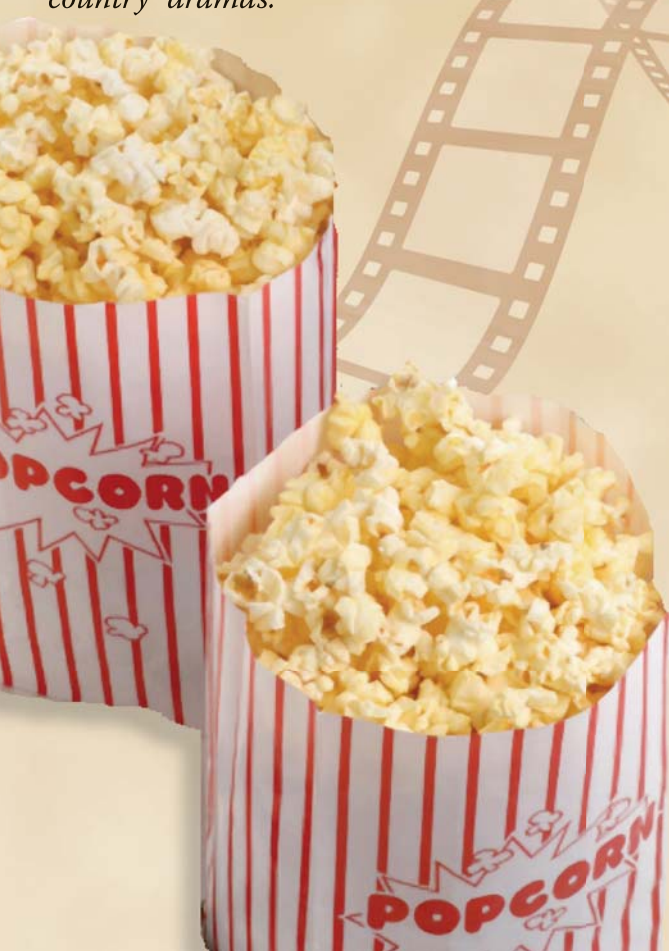
Lethbridge

Let us take you from the area's centre – Lethbridge (once turned into a Kansas town in the movie *Amber Waves*) – on three cinematic tours and three side trips through the camera's lens to where scenery met celluloid in *Brokeback Mountain*, *RV* and *Passchendaele*.

Brokeback Mountain (2005) stars Jake Gyllenhaal, the late Heath Ledger and Anne Hathaway. Beginning in 1963 in Wyoming, it follows the poignant love story of two cowboys over 17 years, and the effect their hidden affair had on them and their families.

RV (2006) stars Robin Williams and Jeff Daniels. A dysfunctional family makes its way across the western U.S. as first-time RVers. Williams, his wife and children slough off the bonds of the city to find themselves in the great outdoors, while encountering merry mayhem – and Jeff Daniels – along the way.

Passchendaele (2008) stars Paul Gross, who also directed. Beginning in 1917 in Calgary, it tells the story of Canadians who fought in Belgium at the First World War's bloodiest confrontation.



"RV"
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"Brokeback Mountain"
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Just before you leave **Lethbridge**, a couple of movie trivia notes:

1 The **Ramada Inn** at Mayor Magrath Drive and Highway 4 has provided accommodation for a few stars, among them Robin Williams, in the area to film *RV*, and rapper L.L. Cool J, who starred in the remake of *Rollerball*.

2 In **Henderson Park**, walk the lake's paved footpath, a favourite cycling spot for Williams during his stay in the city.

3 Grab a meal at the nearby **El Comal Mexican Restaurant** where Robin Williams regularly chowed down; look for the autographed photo.

Lethbridge Detail

- 1** Ramada Inn
- 2** Henderson Park
- 3** El Comal Restaurant



Lethbridge to Fort Macleod

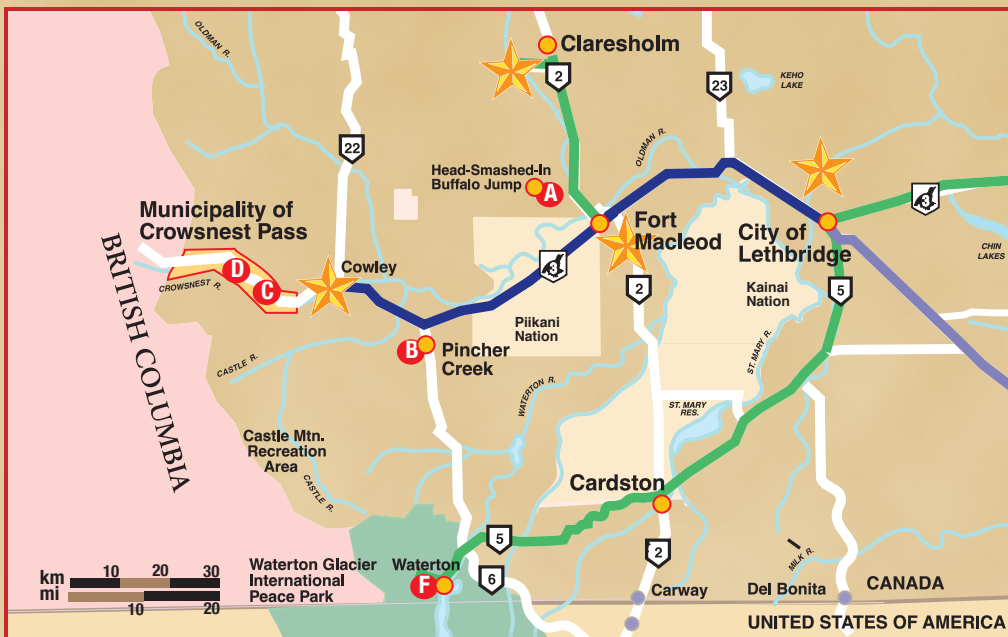
As you scoot west down Highway 3 from

Lethbridge, you'll come to a fork that takes you either west to **Fort Macleod** or north past **Monarch**.

The *RV* crew had this section of highway closed while it filmed the scene in which the Gornicke family's bus, driven by Jeff Daniels, chases after the Munros' RV driven by Robin Williams.

Just 30 minutes west of **Lethbridge** on Highway 3, you'll find a rich vein of storefront movie legend. The historic Western Canadian town of **Fort Macleod** is a virtual movie set, whether providing Ang Lee with a rough, 1960s "Wyoming" town for his *Brokeback Mountain* epic, or turning into 1917 Calgary for Paul Gross' *Passchendaele* (to be released in late 2008).

The town of 3,000 has painstakingly maintained its historic Main Street, most of which dates back to the early 20th century to complement the replica of its namesake, the 1880s-era North West Mounted Police fort that shut down illegal whisky-trading in southern Alberta.



Fort Macleod Downtown

- 1** Photo Plus/The Source Apartment Building – *Brokeback Mountain*
- 2** Fort Macleod & District Community Hall – *Passchendaele*
- 3** Holy Cross Parish Hall – *Brokeback Mountain*
- 4** The Fort – Museum of the North West Mounted Police
- 5** Main Street
- 6** Queen's Hotel – *Brokeback Mountain*
- 7** Hodnett's Drug Store – *Passchendaele*
- 8** Andrews Hardware – *Passchendaele*
- 9** Empress Theatre
- 10** Town Office – *Brokeback Mountain*
- 11** Java Shop – *Brokeback Mountain*
- 12** Greyhound Bus Depot – *Brokeback Mountain*
- 13** Union Bank Building – *Passchendaele*
- 14** Grier Block – *Passchendaele*
- 15** Don's Barber Shop – *Passchendaele*



Interchange near Monarch - RV
Courtesy Darryl Solly



Courtesy Travel Alberta



Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce Building, Main Street Fort Macleod - *Passchendaele*
Courtesy Gordon MacIvor

In fact, movies have been made here since 1920's *Cameron of the Royal Mounted*.

As you drive into town, follow the signs that lead you to **Main Street**. You will be turning left from the highway. Main Street is the location of many motels such as Fort Motel, Century II Motel, DJ Motel and the Red Coat Inn.

Red Coat Inn, where the cast for *Passchendaele* and *Brokeback Mountain* stayed while in town, is located between 3rd and 4th Avenue across from IGA. You

can park your vehicle anywhere along here as this is where we start the walking tour.

So lace up the comfy shoes, load your camera and walk this way:

We might as well start at one of the high points: that controversial

Brokeback backstairs smooch between Jack Twist and Ennis Del Mar. Walking down **Main Street** from the **Red Coat Inn**, turn right on Third Avenue (AKA Archie McLean Avenue), where you'll find the **Photo Plus/The Source Apartment Building**. From the street, you'll see the staircase leading to Ennis and Alma's apartment. The kiss lasted seconds, the filming took three days. The owner has thoughtfully installed a poster commemorating the scene.

Continuing north along Third, you'll cross the intersection and find the **Fort Macleod and District Community Hall** where the casting call for *Passchendaele* was held. Up the block and across the street is the **Holy Cross Parish Hall** where *Brokeback Mountain* held its casting call. Several hundred of Macleod's citizens were used as extras in the films.

Walk a few steps farther north and you'll come to the bank of the Oldman River. At the end of the block, turn left down a gravel path and enjoy the views of the Oldman River. Walking farther along the gravel path, you'll find the back

of **The Fort — Museum of the North West Mounted Police**, well worth an investigation. The entrance to **The Fort — Museum of the North West Mounted Police** is on Jerry Potts Boulevard which you will find by turning right at the end of the gravel road. You will walk right past an antique shop.

Walking back along Jerry Potts Blvd and going up Second Avenue (Haultain Avenue) will bring you back to **Main Street** (Col. Macleod Boulevard) and the town's beautifully restored downtown.

Walk along **Main Street** and step into the movies. On the north corner is the **Queen's Hotel**, built of sandstone in 1903. Inside is the dance-floor locale, Cassie's Bar, from *Brokeback*.

The streetscape was used in *Passchendaele* to represent downtown Calgary during the First World War, along which bustling street scenes

OTHER MOVIES FILMED AROUND LETHBRIDGE AND ALONG HIGHWAY 3:

- Badland (2007) – Fort Macleod
- The Secret of the Nutcracker (2007) – Hillcrest & Crowsnest Pass
- Rollerball (2001) - Lethbridge
- Almost America (2001) Coleman
- Heart Full of Rain (1996) – Fort Macleod
- Landslide (1990) – Blairmore, Oldman River Dam
- Getting Married in Buffalo Jump (1988) – Pincher Creek
- Cowboys Don't Cry (1987) – Pincher Creek
- Betrayed (1987) – Lethbridge/ Carmangay
- Journey of Natty Gann (1984) – Crowsnest Pass
- The Wild Pony (1982) – Pincher Creek
- Superman (1977) - Barons



PhotoPlus/The Source Apartment Building - Brokeback Mountain
Courtesy Darryl Solly



Photos by Chris Large
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Queen's Hotel - Brokeback Mountain
Courtesy Darryl Solly



Inside Queen's Hotel - Brokeback Mountain

Courtesy Darryl Solly

NON-MOVIE SITES TO SEE:



A

M

Courtesy Travel Alberta

Head-Smashed-in Buffalo Jump: 18 kilometres (15 minutes) north and west of Fort Macleod; a UNESCO World Heritage Site and Interpretive Centre.



B

M

Courtesy Travel Alberta

Pincher Creek Museum and the Kootenai Brown Historical Park: Pincher Creek



C

M

Courtesy Travel Alberta

Bellevue Mine Tour: At Bellevue in the Crowsnest Pass



D

M

Courtesy Travel Alberta

Frank Slide Interpretive Centre: 1.5 kilometres north of Highway 3 in the Crowsnest Pass

were filmed. Down south side of the street, the **Hodnett's Drug Store** in the Anderson Block was turned into a clothing store. Across the street, **Andrews Hardware**, empty at this writing, is the building turned into a Canadian Army recruiting office.

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8

Down from Andrews Hardware, you will find the **Empress Theatre**, Alberta's oldest theatre at the age of 96. Enjoy the entire block and imagine the scene as it would have appeared almost 100 years ago, as you continue up the street.

9

At the corner of Main Street and Third Avenue you can turn right at the Salvation



BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN

"Brokeback Mountain"
Courtesy of Focus Features,
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Photo by Kimberly French

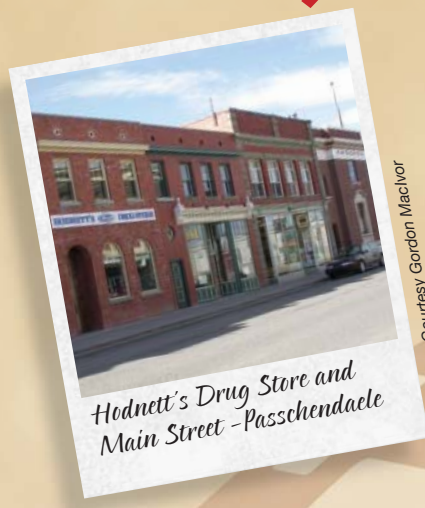
Army and Thrift Store and walk to the end of the block. At Macleod's Restaurant and Lounge, turn right and stroll halfway up the block. To the left is the **Town Office**, which was the courthouse (on the second floor) in which the Del Mars' divorce was granted in *Brokeback Mountain*.

10

Continue down the street and turn right at the **Greyhound Depot**. During filming, the **Java Shop**, next to it, was where Ennis had apple pie and coffee at Table 25 and was told by an old flame: "Girls don't fall in love with fun."

12

11



Hodnett's Drug Store and Main Street - Passchendaele

Courtesy Gordon MacIvor



Town Office - Brokeback Mountain

Courtesy Gordon MacIvor



Java Shop, Table 25 - Brokeback Mountain

Courtesy Rob Freeman, FindingBrokeback.com



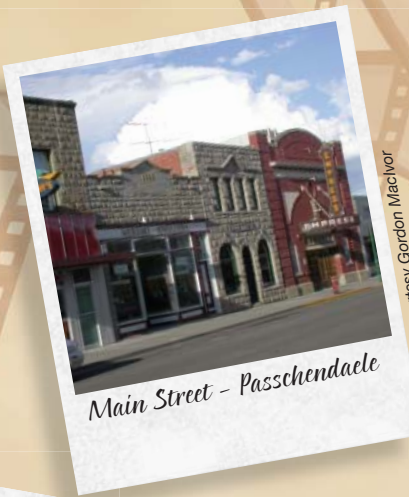
The **Union Bank Building** across the street doubled as a rooming house for Paul Gross' character's girlfriend in *Passchendaele*. The adjacent Grier Block also appears in the film. Moving down the street from the Java Shop is **Don's Barbershop**, used in *Passchendaele*.

From **Don's Barbershop**, if you turn right at the end of the corner, you are back on **Main Street**. From here, you are a block and a half to where you parked your car at the start of the walking tour.

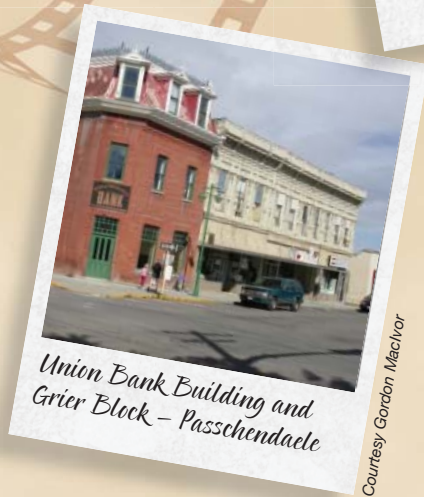
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14

15



Courtesy Gordon MacIvor



Courtesy Gordon MacIvor

NON-MOVIE SITES TO SEE:



M

Courtesy Juicy Wright

E

Devil's Coulee Dinosaur Heritage Museum:

In Warner, between Lethbridge and Milk River



Courtesy Travel Alberta

F

Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park:

On the Alberta-Montana border southwest of Cardston

Fort Macleod to Cowley

Another 60 minutes west and you can find a rich vein of history in the **Crowsnest Pass**, all wrapped in world-class views. Photograph the **Cowley Ridge** and its wind turbines. Visit an underground mine in **Bellevue**. Wind through the aftermath of the **Frank Slide** and check out the slide's visitors centre across from the mountain that buried a village more than a century ago.

There's a little more **Brokeback** down the highway at **Cowley** (about 30 minutes), where some of the scenes featuring Jack's 1950 GMC were filmed outside the town's fire hall. In the movie's opening sequence, Ennis gets out of the truck (**Carseland**) and walks down the street (**Cowley**). Jack then drives up and parks (**Cowley**). They notice each other (**Cowley**). Joe drives up (**Cowley**). After Ennis and Jack leave the trailer (**Cowley**) they introduce themselves (**Cowley**) before walking into a bar (**Carseland**). Considering **Cowley** is roughly 200 kilometres from **Carseland**, you get a sense of the lengths directors will go to create the "perfect" sequence of shots, even for a minute or two of the film.

After you've checked out the movie locales, grab a bite at the **Savory Suite Café** on Railway Avenue in the post office building. Look for the "Brokeback Mountain was filmed here" plaque in the dining room.

SIDE TRIP IN THE AREA:

Fort Macleod to Claresholm

About 20 minutes north of Fort Macleod on Highway 2 is the town of **Claresholm**.

- From Claresholm, follow 43rd Avenue (Hwy 520) west about 14 km.
- Turn left on Range Road 283 and go south 1.3 km.
- Turn left again and follow the driveway 0.6 km.

This is a large tract of land which has been in the same Alberta family for generations (John and Kerry Hart's farm) and is the place of both the **Lonesome Ranch**, where Alma and Ennis first moved into after getting married, and the **Divorce Cabin** in **Brokeback Mountain**. The Cabin, where Ennis moved after his divorce, is located on the same property and was originally built in 1927 for a "bachelor" uncle. The place features a rustic Windcharger tower, outhouse and root cellar. Looking out, you might just be able to picture Alma saying "I'm tired of these lonesome old ranches".

This is private property, so permission must be obtained before entering the driveway.



Lonesome Ranch House



Divorce Cabin



Railway Avenue – Cowley
Brokeback Mountain



Ennis' Alley in Cowley – Brokeback Mountain



Courtesy Travel Alberta

Writing-On-Stone Provincial Park

Lethbridge to Milk River

Within a 90-minute drive south out of **Lethbridge** on Highway 4, you can scope out some of the most beautiful grassland prairie in Canada, walk where dinosaurs once held sway near **Warner**, spend hours photographing the unique hoodoos of **Writing-On-Stone Provincial Park** east of Milk River, and wonder at the grandeur of the Rockies to the west (that big one with the flat top is Chief Mountain and it's actually in Montana).

Should you travel this route in a recreational vehicle, we hope you escape the catastrophes that befell Robin Williams in the film **RV**. Wide swaths of the route you'll be taking were used for the movie's settings, including **Writing-On-Stone** and its cliff-side acres of sandstone rock

formations that doubled for the fictional Munro family on its journey through Utah. It's near here the family camped while on its way to Colorado (actually southern Alberta). Part of the area containing pre-historic petroglyphs and pictographs in the archaeological preserve is protected, but a guide will gladly take you through the area.

Back in **Milk River**, a drive down Main Street will take you past the locale where **RV** director Barry Sonnenfeld and crew parked production trailers. Williams' dressing room was in one of them. The affable comedian spent considerable time meeting Milk River's townsfolk, and was named an honorary mayor by Mayor Terry Michaelis. The crew sometimes ordered pizza from the **Milk River Inn** and ate at the **Milk River Golf Course**.

What do you do when your RV is full of raccoons? Hit the **Milk River Inn** for some family reconnect time. That's what the Munros did in **RV**. It's a great place to eat, shoot some pool or just kick back and let the road dust settle.



Milk River - RV

Courtesy Brian Dunne



Milk River Inn - RV

Courtesy Brian Dunne



RV

"RV"
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- MOVIES FILMED IN THE WATERTON/CARDSTON AREA:**
- Excess Baggage (1996) – Waterton Lakes National Park
 - Samurai Cowboy (1992) – Waterton Lakes National Park
 - Showdown at Williams Creek (1991) – Waterton Lakes National Park
 - Wild Horse Hank (1978) – Waterton Lakes National Park
 - Days of Heaven (1976) – Waterton Lakes National Park
 - Locusts (1974) – Spring Coulee
 - Slipstream (1973) – Spring Coulee
 - Pioneer Woman (1973) – Waterton Lakes National Park



Waterton Lake



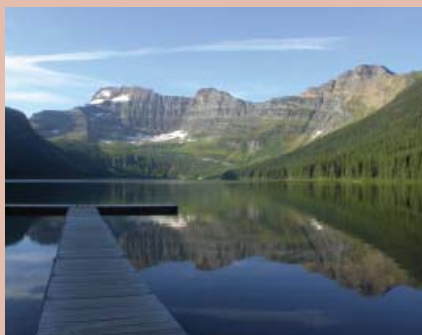
Courtesy Travel Alberta

SIDE TRIP IN THE AREA:

Cardston/Waterton

An hour southwest of Lethbridge is the town of **Cardston**, home of the largest Mormon temple outside of Salt Lake City. The town is the gateway to **Waterton Glacier International Peace Park** which straddles the Canada-U.S. border, and home to spectacular sweeping views of **Waterton Lake** and the surrounding **Rocky Mountains**.

While in **Waterton Lakes National Park**, head up to pristine **Cameron Lake**, or take a boat trip to the end of **Waterton Lake**, a journey that crosses the international boundary.



Cameron Lake

Courtesy Travel Alberta

MOVIES FILMED IN THE BROOKS AREA:

- RV (2006)
- Texas Rangers (2001)
- A Simple Wish/Fairy Godmother (1997)
- Two Brothers, A Girl and A Gun (1992)
- Unforgiven (1991)

SIDE TRIP IN THE AREA:

Rainier and Brooks

The better campers take a page from the Munro-Gornicke RV guidebook and stop for fuel at the **Prairie Oasis** in **Rainier** on the left hand side at the intersection of Highway 36 and Highway 535 between **Taber** (30 minutes east of Lethbridge on Highway 3) and **Brooks** (one hour north of **Taber** on Highway 36).

- 1 In **Brooks**, you can stay at the **Heritage Inn and Convention Centre**, which had a room specifically re-designed for Clint Eastwood during the filming of *Unforgiven* (1994). Morgan Freeman, Eastwood's co-star, also stayed here.
- 2 Next door at the **Heritage Inn and Suites**, Robin Williams took a room while filming *RV*; there is an autographed picture of Williams in the lobby. At 119 – 15th Avenue West, you'll find another favourite eating stop for Robin Williams, **O'Sheas** (once called Egan's Restaurant & Irish Ale House).
- 3 **Brooks Hospital** lays claim to having had Clint Eastwood as a patient. The actor had a minor injury while filming *Unforgiven*; he was treated by Dr. Lyle Oberg, who later went on to serve as Alberta finance minister. Oberg was later invited to the *Unforgiven* set.

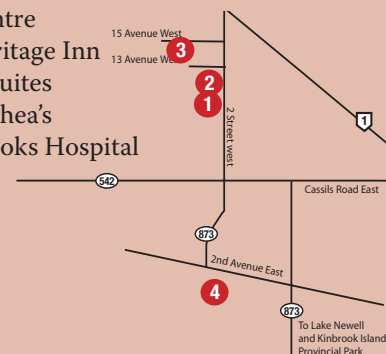
Texas Rangers (2001), with star power that included Dylan McDermott, Randy Travis, Ashton Kutcher, Tom Skeritt, Robert Patrick and Alfred Molina was also filmed in the area. The **Brooks** area filled in for 1875 Texas in this 2001 story of the origins of the famous lawmen.

If you're up for dinosaur hunting, **Brooks** is slightly southwest of **Dinosaur Provincial Park**. North on Highway 873 is the recommended route to this breathtaking land of hoodoos set amid prairie grasses in what truly is the Alberta badlands. Enjoy interpretive bus tours and hikes as you scope out the spectacular badlands scenery, fossils and wildlife. On your way to Dinosaur Provincial Park, you may want to stop in **Patricia** at the **Patrica Hotel** for a beverage.

From **Brooks**, a nudge south of the Trans Canada Highway, you'll find **Lake Newell**, featuring **Kinbrook Island Provincial Park** on Highway 873 south. If you've got time to cast about, the lake is full of trout and is a haven for migrating birds, watchable from three sanctuaries.

Brooks Detail

- 1 Heritage Inn & Convention Centre
- 2 Heritage Inn & Suites
- 3 O'Sheas
- 4 Brooks Hospital



Prairie Oasis – RV

Courtesy Jackie Motokado-Bryant

IT'S A WRAP

