



moderate

Sir Wilfrid Laurier Park (33-ha) has nine picnic sites for large groups near the east end and several smaller picnic sites at the west end. It has two ball diamonds, each with a sheltered picnic site; a boat launch; and a small playground. Best of all for walkers, it has a scenic granular trail next to the river.

TRAILHEAD: Granular parking lot south of Buena Vista Road in Sir Wilfrid Laurier Park and northeast of the zoo parking lot

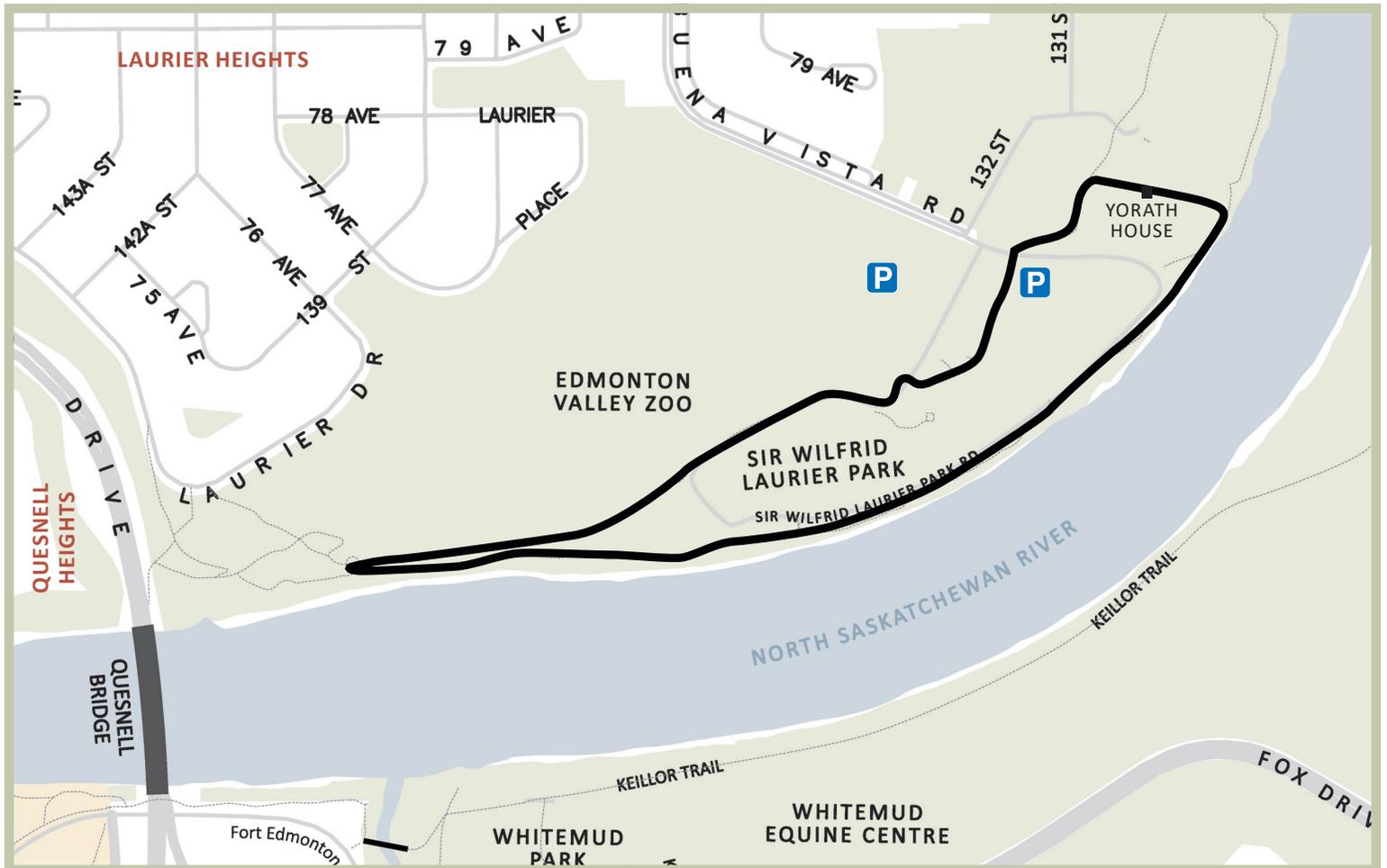
DISTANCE/DIFFICULTY: About 3 km round trip (1 km from the Laurier Park trailhead to the roundabout); easy and wheelchair accessible up to roundabout. Trail by river is granular and uneven (moderate).

- Walk south from the small parking lot (trailhead) on the granular path, which heads towards the entrance to the park and the paved road of the picnic area/park. The zoo parking lot is on your right.
- Walk through the yellow metal gate (the entrance to the picnic area/park) and turn right on the paved road.
- Continue right on the paved road (or walk on the path to the right of the road) to a pair of bollards (that

restrict vehicles). Continue straight ahead on the road to a small roundabout (circle).

- From the circle, walk left (south) towards the river to join the granular trail that is parallel to the river and head left (east).
- Keep the river on your right until you reach a sign that warns of slumping on the trail. The trail is rerouted up to the road (Picnic Shelter #8 is across the road, on your left).
- Walk on the road for a short distance past the boat launch and rejoin the granular path by the river, opposite Picnic Site #9 and the baseball diamond.
- Continue on the path, which curves as the river curves, and watch for the large lawn of the Yorath house on your left.
- Leave the river trail by walking west, through the Yorath property to the granular trail. Turn left (south) on the trail and go back to the trailhead (small parking lot).

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AMENITIES

- wheelchair accessible washrooms and a pay phone at the amenity building near the entrance to Sir Wilfrid Laurier Park
- emergency phone near boat launch
- water fountains near the amenity building
- outdoor toilets in various areas in the park

DESCRIPTION

The Valley Zoo combined with the big parking lot is about 20 ha in size. It is open all year from 9:30 am to 4:00 pm (until 6:00 pm on weekends), houses about 350 native and endangered animals and offers many special programs. This fascinating facility includes a children's zoo, pony rides, a carousel, a miniature train on wheels and paddleboats. Winter rates are in effect from October 11 to May 7.

The new large Arctic Shores exhibit at the zoo, opened in 2012, features a new interpretive trail system that will invite visitors to wander from a mountain habitat to boreal and parkland and prairie areas. Further renovation will also provide a new ticketless entryway and cafeteria.

In 2012 several public meetings were held to consider a 10-year master plan for this park and Buena Vista Park.

HISTORY

Laurier Park, as it was originally called, was named after Wilfrid Laurier (1841-1919), Canada's first francophone prime minister. Laurier served four terms, from 1896 to 1911. He was knighted in 1897 at Queen Victoria's Jubilee celebrations. He came to Edmonton in 1905 to attend the ceremonies when Alberta became a province. The park was officially renamed Sir Wilfrid Laurier in 1987 to recognize his title.

Storyland Valley Zoo opened in 1959. "Storyland" was dropped from the name in 1975.