

Wascana Freewheelers Big Muddy Tour Labour Day Weekend 2018

Most of us have heard about the Big Muddy Valley, but have never been there. This is your chance to go!

About the Big Muddy Valley

In their book *Saskatchewan Scenic Drives*, Robin and Arlene Karpan had this to say about the Big Muddy:

“The Valley was formed by glacial melt water during the last Ice Age about 11,000 years ago. Torrents of moving water eroded the landscape, cutting deeply into the fragile valley walls and leaving formations such as Castle Butte.

The human history of the Big Muddy is just as colourful as the scenery. Castle Butte has long been an important landmark, first for Plains Indians, then for settlers, Mounted Police and outlaws. Castle Butte stands about 200 feet high and is nearly 14 mile around. When you walk around it you'll see ridges that look like melted icing running off a cake, caves and niches and different colored layers of sediment that reveal millions of years of its geological past.

The wild terrain and hidden coulees also attracted horse thieves and other outlaws. The Big Muddy was Station No.1 on the famous Outlaw Trail running all the way to Mexico, masterminded by Butch Cassidy and the Wild Bunch.”

Big Beaver

Our headquarters for the weekend will be the hamlet of Big Beaver, just 10 km from the U.S. border. Big Beaver is about 200 km from Regina. To get there, drive south from Regina on highway 6 about 100 km to the junction with highway 13. Turn west on highway 13 and drive past Ogema about 40 km to the junction with highway 34. Turn south on highway 34 and drive past Bengough south about 50 km to Highway 18. Big Beaver is just west of the junction of highway 34 and highway 18.

Not many people live in Big Beaver, but it's got a campground with trees and showers. It's a quiet peaceful place with horses grazing nearby. Big Beaver's main attraction is Aust's General Store open 'til 6:00 p.m. but closed from noon to 1:00 p.m. They take only cash or debit cards. Their slogan is "If we don't have it, you don't need it".

Friday, September 1 – arrive in Big Beaver

On Friday evening, we'll gather at the campground at Big Beaver and pitch our tents. Camping fees are \$15 for a site without power and \$20 for a site with power. Pay fees at Aust's Store.

There are no dining establishments, so bring food to cook for supper unless you eat along the way. Also bring plenty of drinking water. There is lots of iron in the local water.

Saturday, September 2 – ride to Castle Butt and back

At 9:30 a.m. on Saturday morning, we'll ride north from Big Beaver over gravel and dirt roads to Castle Butte, about 20 km. There will be great views of the Valley and countryside

along the way. The gravel is heavy in places, so bring your mountain bike with wide tires. There will be a support vehicle traveling with us.

After exploring Castle Butte and eating our lunch, we'll ride east 6 km on a gravel road to highway 34 and then ride south about 18 km back to Big Beaver.

Supper on Saturday night will be in camp, unless you decide to drive west about 30 km to Coronach where there are several restaurants.

Sunday, September 3

Option 1 - Tour of the Badlands

A guide will lead us from Coronach to parts of the Big Muddy that we can't access on our own. We'll see the Sam Kelly Outlaw Caves, Ceremonial Circles, the Turtle Effigy and the Buffalo Effigy.

The tour lasts approximately 3 1/2 hours, and we'll use our own vehicles. A radio system will be used for the tour. A step on guide will be provided, and we need to make room for the guide in one of the vehicles. Cost of the tour is per vehicle. The first two people in a vehicle will pay \$45.00/person, the remaining people in the vehicle will pay 20.00/person. Coronach Tourism accepts cash or cheque. They do not take credit cards or debit cards

The tour will leave from the Coronach Tourist Booth at 10:00 a.m. and end at the Tourist Booth. It is located on Highway 18 on the east side of town. It is a blue building with a horse statue in the yard as well as a mural of the horse.

Bring your own lunch, snacks and water.

Option 2 - Ride to Coronach and back

If you decide not to go on the tour, you can ride on Highway 18 west to Coronach and back, maybe stopping for lunch in Coronach. It is about 60 km round trip. There are some great views of the Badlands.

Tour Leader

Barbara Shourounis is the tour leader. Let her know if you are planning to come. Contact her at 306 535-6407 or bshourounis@sasktel.net.