



• **Meeting Creek Watershed Discovery** – As you explore the railway corridor you will see pasture that has never been plowed especially within and immediately off the railway right of way in some locations. Historically, the creek was much larger than it is today, but it remains important as a riparian area and to the local watershed. Trees along the rail corridor help hold moisture for diverse fauna, and supply home for insects, birds, and wildlife, all part of the natural ecosystem we are helping to preserve.

• **Wooden Railway Trestle** – located at mileage 20.8 (which is 20.8 miles from the Battle River crossing south of Camrose), the wooden trestle here was last rebuilt in 1948. It has refuge bays for track workers to safely stand while they waited for a passing train.



CN train No. 547 crosses the trestle over Meeting Creek in May 1981. Charles W. Bohi photograph

• **Railway Water Tank Discovery** – on the “right hand” side of the corridor walking north towards Edberg, there are 12 concrete pads upon which once rested the sub-structure for a 40,000 gallon water tank, used to supply steam locomotive boilers by drawing water from Meeting Creek, and storing it for consumption.

Beyond the trestle, blue birds can be seen seasonally, along with dragonflies, and butterflies. In addition, mid-summer features pink bergamot and prairie sunflower, as well as licorice plants. During the winter months seeds from the licorice plants are observed continuing to hang from their branches.

Of interest, when you are walking north towards Edberg on the railway corridor, you are walking “up the Meeting Creek Hill” as it was known by the railroaders. This hill represented the “ruling grade” between Big Valley and Vegreville or Edmonton on the Canadian Northern Railway, and was designated as a .7% grade. In practical terms, that meant that the line rose on average 7/10” of a foot for each 100 foot run. A 1% grade is considered challenging for a railway, beyond 1.5 %, grades will be described as heavy.

Discovery Packs and Guided Tours

If volunteers are present, discovery packages are available for visitors to take along on walks to explore the railway corridors and linear park. In addition, a medicinal plant kit is available allowing you to harvest a small piece of sage.

If you would like a special guided tour

such arrangements can be made subject to volunteer availability.
Email canadiannorthern@telus.net
780-672-3099

Community Garden

The Canadian Northern Society sponsors land on the Meeting Creek station grounds for community garden use and development. All are welcomed to develop and grow using individual garden plots. Responsible gardeners with an interest may contact Canadian Northern Society
Email canadiannorthern@telus.net
780-672-3099

Respect along the Linear Parks and in the Heritage Railway Station and Grain Elevator Park:

- All property owned by the Canadian Northern (Meeting Creek) Historical Society and the East Central Alberta Heritage Society is used at your own personal risk. You are responsible for any accidents, injuries, loss, or death caused by your use of the properties.
- Have fun, enjoy, and treat this property as if it was yours.
- Obey all signs, and stay off all private property. Respect private property, cattle, and crops. Do not enter any fields or crops.
- Keep pets on a leash and clean up after them.
- No drug use on our properties. NONE. This includes legalized marijuana.
- No all terrain vehicles permitted. Golf carts, are permitted.
- Respect the environment – PLEASE do not litter. Take your garbage with you when you leave.

Report inappropriate activity, damage, danger, or other exceptions to:

East Central Alberta Heritage Society:
info@albertarailheritage.com
or Canadian Northern Society:
canadiannorthern@telus.net
780-672-3099



Walking near the heritage railway track at Meeting Creek presents little risk – as railway operations here have been abandoned. However, never walk or step on rails, or in between rails. In addition, a reminder that railway tracks anywhere should be considered active. Never trespass on railway property or walk on railway tracks. Watch trains safely from a distance.

THE MEETING CREEK NATURAL LINEAR PARK



Incorporating the station grounds and right of way of the old Canadian Northern Railway Vegreville to Calgary branch, and in partnership with the East Central Alberta Heritage Society, the Canadian Northern Society offers year round recreational enjoyment in a natural prairie setting.



Begin your visit at the Canadian Northern Railway Heritage Railway Station and Grain Elevator at Meeting Creek.

Parking, picnic area, and a toilet facility are available.

At certain locations, interpretive signage is available to provide background to enhance your visit.



Walking the old Canadian Northern Battle River Subdivision

At Meeting Creek, the railway line slices diagonally from the southeast towards the northwest. It is part of a line originally constructed in 1911 by the Canadian Northern Railway that was primarily developed to haul coal, a commodity that was in great demand to heat our homes and businesses during the frigid winter months. The coal was brought from Drumheller, Big Valley, and Nordegg and delivered to markets across the prairies.

The directions for the railway at Meeting Creek were designated “North” and “South” – even though at this specific location the line was in fact on a geographic angle. Therefore the first station “south” of Meeting Creek was Donalda (followed by Red Willow, Stettler, and eventually Big Valley and Drumheller), and the first station “north” was Edberg, followed by Viewpoint, Camrose, and then on to Vegreville. The railway crossed the Battle River six miles south of Camrose at the bottom of the Battle River valley.



SOUTHWARD
WALK

To complete, plan a one hour round trip walk:

From the Station platform, cross the tracks at the pedestrian crossing and follow the road behind the Alberta Pacific Grain elevator to the right along the outfield of the baseball field. Beyond the “red” Alberta Wheat Pool elevator you will note interpretive signage, and the road/trail bordered to the east by the aspen grove trees will take you to our Grasslands Trail and Labyrinth. Various grasses, flowers, and sage grow abundantly; native grasses such as prairie wool have been replanted to naturally control invasive plants.

Follow the abandoned railway corridor further towards Donalda to the highway 56 overpass. Prairie songbirds, insects, and even hawks and eagles are observed here at certain times of the year. Hawks and eagles prey on the gophers and related species found here.



- **Bird Discovery** – Bohemian wax wings and eastern kingfisher birds both nest along the railway corridor. Meadowlarks are also known to perch along the fences on the wooden posts.

The Meeting Creek valley can be followed 10 miles to Donalda, on the abandoned railway corridor now preserved by the East Central Alberta Heritage Society.



NORTHWARD
WALK

To complete, plan three hours for a round trip walk:

From the station platform, follow the tracks towards Edberg – entering the East Central Alberta Heritage Society’s Linear Park gate across the main road that enters Meeting Creek.

- **Rock Discovery** – A short distance along the rail corridor, watch for a large stone covered with lichen. Discovery Packs available from the Canadian Northern Society can help tell the story. Note that the rocks along the right of way were part of the ballast section used to hold the track structure and surface when the railway was operational. Most of these rocks came from near the Battle River at Viewpoint, or from a railway pit near Fenn.

- **Pond Discovery** – There are aquatic species that grow beside the small ponds located along the right of way. Some of the ponds will tend to dry completely by late summer. Springtime brings frogs, even if the pond has dried.

- **Hoodoo Discovery** – Beyond the ponds is an area where the railway construction cut the natural contour of the land – and as a result, the exposed bentonite soil has eroded creating an interesting formation. This soil becomes slippery and muddy when wet, and was known for healing qualities. When layers of decaying plant life break down and form nutrient-rich loam on top of bentonite soil, it can foster growth of diverse vegetation.