

## Eastend Auto Tour #3

# The Continental Divide



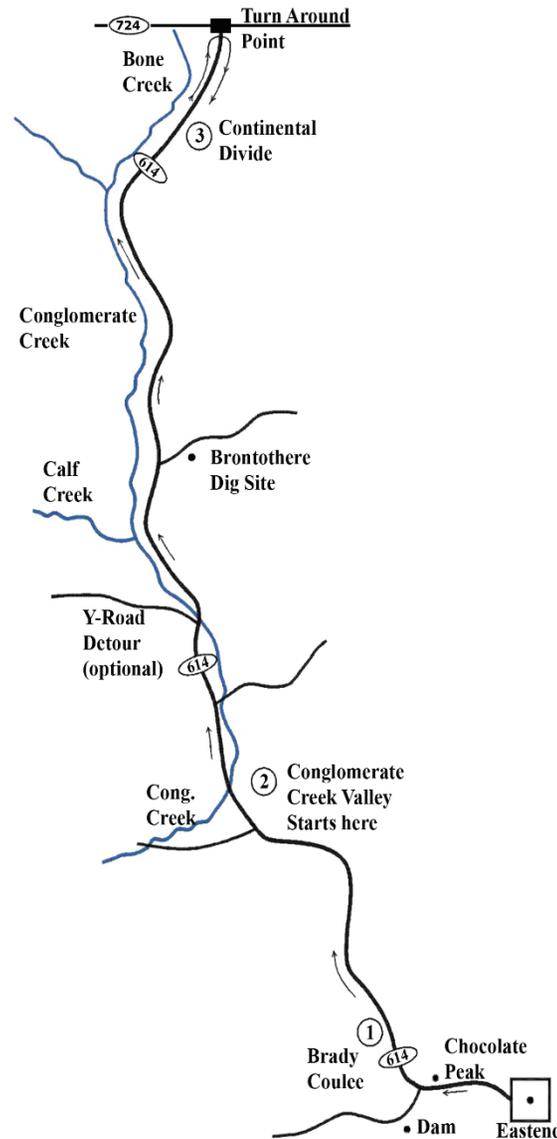
Leading you to.....



**The Continental Divide**

### **CAUTION:**

**The Town of Eastend** is in no way responsible for the condition of the tours. Use at your own risk and discretion.



Continental Divide

Auto Tour Map

## Some Pre-Trip Information

### **PLEASE NOTE:**

- The Continental Divide Auto Tour takes place on gravel roads. Road conditions vary with the weather, and the tour is not recommended in wet conditions. Be especially careful in winter, sudden snowstorms can arise.

- Only leave the main road when the brochure mentions it is safe to do so. The prairie environment is very fragile and must be protected at all times.

- The valleys and surrounding coulees are filled with wildlife such as whitetail and mule deer, antelope, coyotes, rabbits, and perhaps even moose. While best viewed at dusk and dawn, be sure to lower your speed to avoid a potential collision.

## A Little Geology Info



The Continental Divide tour will take you through the Frenchman River, Conglomerate Creek, and Bone Creek valleys.

The Frenchman River Valley, the valley that Eastend rests in, is a melt water channel. As the last glaciers melted, a large volume of flowing melt water would have cut a large channel, now the Frenchman River Valley. The Conglomerate and Bone Creek valleys were also formed by water erosion, though whether they were a result of melt water channels is up to question.

## Lets Get Started

**GPS map datum: WGS84**

**Eastend, Red Coat Dr./Maple Ave.**

**coord's: 49°30.853/108°49.213**

To begin the Continental Divide Auto Tour (about a 58 kilometer journey), take Grid 614, which is commonly referred to as the Brady Coulee Road out from the western edge of town. After only a km or so, you'll see a green sign to the right of the road announcing

**Chocolate Peak (Private property)**

**49°31.003 /108°50.638**

Chocolate Peak got its interesting color when a whitemud (clay) miner attempted to burn the coal layer that lies atop the whitemud. While the coal did burn, it burnt for years, turning the hill into its present shade. If you look to the right of Chocolate Peak you can spot an old whitemud mine originally owned by the Estevan Brick Company. In the early 1900's, clay mining was a fairly large business around here. If you look to the southern side of the valley you can clearly make out the distinct whitemud layers that were targeted by miners. However, more information is available at the interpretive sign. After Chocolate Peak, continue following the Brady Coulee Road. Be sure to take a glance at the Eastend Dam.

It was originally built in 1904 by a large ranching outfit named Enright and Strong to provide irrigation for the surrounding pasturelands.

### **1. Brady Coulee**

**9°36.933/108°51.346**

About 3.5 km's northwest of town, you'll pass through Brady Coulee itself. The coulee is named after John Brady, an American who moved north in 1913 to homestead in the area. The coulee is an excellent area to spot birds. A variety of species make the coulee home, from beautiful bluebirds to larger predatory birds such as eagles, hawks, and owls. Be sure to try and spot some of the larger nests that lay in the trees to the left of the road. Deer are also frequently spotted in the coulee. To your left side you can also observe an interesting geological effect termed slumping. When the hills reach a very high moisture content, the soil will compress or

drop down. This is what gives them the terraced or lined effect.

### **2. Conglomerate Creek Valley**

As you continue north you'll climb onto the Middle Bench. Although the land is mainly covered by crop here, the Bench is an excellent location to see native prairie. Sloughs also dot the area, and are frequented by waterfowl in the spring. After a few km on the Middle Bench, you'll drop down into the

**Conglomerate Creek Valley.**

**49°33.991/108°54.463**

Along the roadside keep an eye out for the silvery gray leaves and purplish stems of the wolf willow bush. Prominent author Wallace Stegner named his Eastend memoir, *Wolf Willow*, after these bushes.

### **Watch for wildlife!**



A few km into the Conglomerate Valley a fork known as the Y Road splits off to the left.

**49°35.204/108°55.053**

Although an optional detour, the view from the top is definitely worth the short two-kilometer jaunt off the main tour. Deeper into the valley (roughly 13 km's from town) you'll encounter a deep wooded coulee that ends in numerous beaver dams known as **Calf Creek Coulee.**

**49°37.954/108°55.789**

Large ranching outfits once used the coulee as a place to keep sheds and corrals to wean calves. Later on the coulee became an important palaeontology dig site. "Dinosaurs" have been discovered further north on the Hanson ranch. In fact, an operator grading a small dirt road on the right side of the main grid found the brontothere that is displayed in the T-Rex Discovery Centre in this area.

### **3. Continental Divide**

**49°40.607/108°55.984**

Twenty-four kilometers north of town (not including the optional Y Road detour) you'll come across the Dividing Springs Ranch and Continental Divide. A green interpretative sign that tells about the area is located on the right side of the road. This interesting geological feature is basically an imaginary line that extends to Chimney Coulee and divides which way the local waters flow. North of the line, the creeks and rivers flow northeast to Hudson Bay, which is around 1800 kilometers away. Creeks and rivers found to the south of the line flow roughly 2768 kilometers south to the Gulf of Mexico. It's quite similar to the Continental Divide found in the mountains, which divides waters that flow east/west, but is on a much smaller scale.

In the area of the Dividing Springs Ranch is an underground spring that is the source of Conglomerate Creek, which flows south to the Gulf of Mexico by way of the Frenchman and Missouri Rivers. Also in close proximity is the spring of Bone Creek, which flows north to Hudson Bay after meeting up with Swift Current Creek, another local creek that flows through Pine Cree Regional Park and has its headwaters a few miles to the southeast. These creeks all contain trout, and some excellent fishing holes are around. However, the **permission of landowners must be secured before you pass onto any private land.**

After viewing the Continental Divide Area, you can continue along the Bone Creek valley, eventually climbing back up onto the Bench. At about the 28 kilometer mark of the tour you'll come to a junction and sign announcing the RM of Piapot. While you're free to continue exploring the area on your own if you wish, the official portion of the Continental Divide Auto Tour ends here. **49°43.633/108°55.121**

Hope you enjoyed the tour!

