



**This Park Encourages Leave No Trace Principles**

- \*Plan ahead & prepare.
- \*Travel & camp on durable surfaces.
- \*Dispose of waste properly.
- \*Be considerate of other visitors.
- \*Minimize campfire impacts.
- \*Leave what you find.
- \*Respect wildlife.

## REGULATIONS

Here are a few guidelines for park protection and visitor enjoyment. A complete listing of regulations is posted at the park entrance.

- All vehicles are to observe posted speed limits and remain on authorized roads and parking areas.
- Campfires are restricted to established fire rings. Please observe any fire restrictions.
- Pets must be kept on a leash.
- The Makoshika State Park Visitor Center is open all year; however, inclement weather may cause portions of the park roads to be closed.
- Please preserve natural features by leaving them intact and in place.
- Respect private property. Private lands surround the park.
- Collecting, digging, or removal of fossils or artifacts is prohibited.

Your participation in preserving this place is appreciated. Please leave fossil remains in place and report significant discoveries to park staff, so a professional team can be sent to study and preserve it. Please help us ensure that future visitors can enjoy their experience at Makoshika State Park.

### Activities in Makoshika State Park

- Camping
- Hiking
- Biking
- Picnicking
- Photography
- Disc Golf
- Wildlife Viewing

### Annual Events at Makoshika State Park

- (Ask about dates!)
- Buzzard Day - second weekend in June
  - Summer Youth Program, Thursday mornings
  - Summer Campfire Program, select evenings
  - Shakespeare In The Park
  - Movies In the Park

### For more information

Makoshika State Park  
 1301 Snyder Avenue  
 PO Box 1242  
 Glendive, MT 59330  
 (406) 377-6256  
 website: [stateparks.mt.gov](http://stateparks.mt.gov)  
 email: [makoshika@mt.gov](mailto:makoshika@mt.gov)  
[www.friendsofmakoshika.org](http://www.friendsofmakoshika.org)



THE OUTSIDE IS IN US ALL.

# MAKOSHIKA STATE PARK

THE BADLANDS OF EASTERN MONTANA



Photo by Kristi Powell



MONTANA FWP

## Makoshika State Park

At over 11,500 acres, Makoshika State Park is Montana's largest state park, preserving 20% of the state's contiguous badland topography. The name Makoshika (Ma-KO'-Shi-ka) is an alternate spelling of a Lakota phrase maco sica meaning land of bad spirits or "badlands." Located adjacent to Glendive in eastern Montana, Makoshika's landscape is an array of grassy plateaus, rugged canyons, fluted hillsides, pinnacles, and caprocks.

The mineral-laden soft sedimentary rocks with contrasting decor of pines and junipers create a backdrop of unique shapes and colors that are filled with history. This formidable landscape was set aside as a state park in 1953, and is world-renowned as a place to study paleontology, geology and archaeology.

### A Look at the Past...

Makoshika's badlands expose 65-million-year-old brownish-gray clays and shales of the Hell



*Fossilized Triceratops bones are commonly found in Makoshika*

Creek Formation from a time period when the area had sub-tropical climate and vegetation. Rivers draining from the western mountains deposited layers upon layers of sediments which, over millions of years, compacted to form the sandstones, mudstones, clays and shales that form today's badlands.

Uplifting of sediment layers through anticlinal folding and their erosion by the Yellowstone River, created rugged plateaus and badland canyons revealing the fossils of late-Cretaceous dinosaurs and evidence of their extinction in North America. Over 10 species of dinosaurs have been found in Makoshika within the Hell Creek Formation. The most well known are the *Triceratops*, *Edmontosaurus*, and *Tyrannosaurus rex*.

### The Present...

Present on the surface of the park and the surrounding plains, is a rich history of early human occupation. Archaeological evidence discovered in Makoshika dates to the late-Clovis Paleoindian period, and continues through modern Native American tribes and European settlers as they settled in the interior of North America.

The clays and shales of the lower sedimentary layers erode much easier than the sandstone layers above. When the softer material erodes away, "caprocks" of sandstone are left delicately balanced over spires of eroded material. Erosion of the park's sediments also exposes dinosaur fossils to await discovery.

The landscape of Makoshika differs greatly from its past. From the receding inland sea of the age



*Caprocks are formed when sandstone lenses in the sediments resist erosion as the clays and shales beneath them wash away over time*

of dinosaurs, through ice ages and dry periods of the early age of mammals, the climate and environment of today is that of the surrounding Great Plains ecosystem of North America.

Now, instead of ancient dinosaurs roaming the land you might see mule deer, cottontails, and turkey vultures. There is vast diversity in the landscape here. The sun-scorched south facing slopes have little vegetation, but finds life with some birds that thrive in this sparse setting, such as prairie falcons, golden eagles, and turkey vultures, all of whom reside on sandstone ledges or in cavities.

North-facing slopes, which retain more moisture, maintain dense groves of Rocky Mountain Juniper and Ponderosa Pine. Early morning and evening hours typically provide the best light to photograph images of badland scenes and its in-

habitants.

### Visitor Center

Take a self-guided tour in the visitor center chronicling 74 million years of Eastern Montana history through the educational, interpretive, and interactive displays. The visitor center highlights include displays of fossils, invertebrates of early sea life, *Triceratops* and *Tyrannosaurus rex* skulls, and other artifacts including stone tools used by man.

### Hours of Operation

Makoshika is open for day use, recreation and year-round camping year-round.

**Summer Hours:** (Mid-May to Mid-Sept.)  
10am to 5pm, Daily

**Winter Hours:** (Mid-Sept. to Mid-May)  
10am to 5pm; Wednesday through Sunday



*The visitor center and gift shop at the park entrance houses Triceratops and Tyrannosaurus rex skulls and other interpretive displays.*