

POPSON PARK

HISTORY

The south river valley park was named for the Popson Family who settled on the land in that area. The Popson family have been in the area since 1886. Miheal Papcun [Popson] immigrated to Coalbanks NWT from Czechoslovakia in 1886 with his brother John and sister Elizabeth. He was employed at the Galt No. 3 & Federal Mines. His love for fishing, hunting and farming prompted him to purchase 272 acres of land in West Lethbridge in 1925. His son Steve assisted in the operation of the farm and when the elder Michael passed away, his second son Mike joined Steve with the operation of the farm. The farm was expanded in 1949 when they purchased 298 acres from another farmer. Steve died in 1964, and Mike in 1973 and the farm was sold in 1974.

PHYSICAL LAYOUT



Sign at the entrance of Popson Park 2013
Photo T. Purkis

The park is located in the southern part of West Lethbridge and can be accessed from the extension of University Drive and a roundabout past Sunridge subdivision. At the entrance the grey and yellow sign welcomes visitors and the gravel road winds down to the floodplain. The park occupies 329 acres on the floodplain with cottonwoods visible on the upper portions. The Oldman River serves as the east and south boundary of the park the other sides are flat land.

The first turnoff to the left leads to the boat launch and an off leash area. Continuing south there is a gated road which leads to the



The Astronomy Clubhouse 2013
Photo T. Purkis



The Observatory 2013
Photo T. Purkis

Oldman River Astronomy Society. The society started out as the Stargazers Club in 1984 and became the Lethbridge Astronomy Society in 1988. They hold their meetings

in the renovated home that has existed in the river valley for many years. The Society



host education classes, group viewings for service clubs, scouts and girl guides etc. Near the observatory there is a picnic shelter used for family gatherings, anniversaries and any huge event with the backdrop of the river valley in mind. The area between the boat launch and the picnic shelter is home to the prairie.

The compound at Popson Park 2013
Photo T. Purkis

BUILDINGS/STRUCTURES

There is a camping area for tents with picnic shelter and tables which can be booked for use. Besides the picnic shelters for day use, Popson Park is home to the Lethbridge Astronomy Society and Observatory.

ACTIVITIES

There are opportunities for fishing and boating, use of the covered picnic site for family gathering or the individual picnic tables.

The area is an off leash dog park for the west side residents which extends from the boat launch to the picnic shelter.



Area of the off leash area for dogs at Popson Park 2013
Photo T. Purkis