

Federal parks

Parks Canada includes national parks, national historic parks and sites, and agreements for recreation and conservation. Parks Canada has its headquarters in Ottawa but operational responsibility in five regions: the Atlantic regional office in Halifax, the Quebec regional office in Quebec City, the Ontario regional office in Cornwall, the Prairie regional office in Winnipeg and the Western regional office in Calgary.

National parks. Canada's national parks system, encompassing more than 129 499 km², is the largest in the world. It has grown from the federal government's efforts, with co-operation of provincial and territorial governments, to preserve natural areas of scenic and biological interest for the public.

In 1885 the Canadian government reserved from private ownership the mineral hot springs of Sulphur Mountain in what is now Banff National Park. Two years later this 26 km² reserve was extended to 673 km² and named Rocky Mountains Park, the first federal park in Canada.

Two land reserves in southern British Columbia — Yoho and Glacier — were made by the federal government in 1886, a reserve of 140 km² in the Waterton Lakes area of southern Alberta in 1895, and an area of 12 950 km² around Jasper, Alta., in 1907. These four western mountain reserves, together with Rocky Mountains Park, formed the nucleus of the national park system after the Dominion Forest Reserves and Parks Act was passed in May 1911. A national parks branch was created to protect, administer and develop the parks.

By 1930 there were nine more national parks. Three in Ontario consisted of federal Crown land or land held in trust for Indians: St. Lawrence Islands National Park, Point Pelee National Park and Georgian Bay Islands National Park. Prince Albert National Park in Saskatchewan and Riding Mountain National Park in Manitoba were former

Canada has the largest system of national parks in the world and provincial parks set aside for enjoyment now and in the future. Together they show nature at its best, preserved for all to cherish.

federal forest reserves. Elk Island National Park near Edmonton was established as a preserve for buffalo and Wood Buffalo National Park, a 44 807 km² area straddling the Alberta–Northwest Territories border, as a refuge for the largest surviving herd of buffalo in North America. In British Columbia two scenic areas were preserved — Mount Revelstoke National Park and Kootenay National Park.

Between 1930 and 1969, national parks were established in the four Atlantic provinces: Cape Breton Highlands and Kejimikujik in Nova Scotia; Prince Edward Island National Park in Prince Edward Island; Fundy and Kouchibouguac in New Brunswick; and Terra Nova in Newfoundland. By 1972 eight more were added: three in Quebec; one each in Newfoundland, Ontario, British Columbia and Yukon; and two in Northwest Territories.

Details of national parks with their description, size and location are given in Table 1.9. Further information and a location map are available in *Canada's national parks* published by Parks Canada.

For parks within provinces, land is acquired by the province acting within a federal-provincial agreement to establish a national park. These lands are transferred to Canada and the establishment of the park is made formal by Parliament. In Yukon and Northwest Territories, lands have been reserved from all alternative disposition by orders-in-council and proclamation.

In 1971, *A national parks system planning manual* was published, in recognition that new and comprehensive measures were needed to preserve Canada's natural heritage. With a view to protecting not only unique and outstanding areas of the Canadian land and seascapes but also those representative of its physical, biological, and oceanographic characteristics, 48 distinctive natural regions were identified for which natural history themes were defined.