

About 20 million visits a year are now recorded in the national parks. Details of the parks with their description, size and location are given in Table 1.8.

To protect 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 have been identified with a view to having national parks eventually in each of these natural regions; 20 regions are now represented. As an example, in 1986 an agreement was signed with the Northwest Territories to establish Ellesmere Island National Park Reserve.

**National marine parks.** Canada is bounded by three oceans and has the largest volume of freshwater among all countries of the world. Extension of the national parks system to represent the Pacific, Arctic and Atlantic coasts and inland waters, with identification of the marine natural regions and marine natural history themes is an objective of the National Marine Parks Policy approved in 1986.

**National historic parks and sites.** National historic parks and sites commemorate persons, places and events of major significance in Canada's historical development.

The National Parks Act of 1930 provided that any land may be set apart to commemorate a historic event, or preserve any historic landmark or any object of historic, prehistoric or scientific interest of national importance. The historic sites and monuments board may recommend that sites, buildings and other structures of national importance be developed as national historic parks or historic sites or commemorated by the erection of plaques or distinctive monuments.

The National Historic Parks and Sites Branch has been instrumental in creating 80 national historic parks and major sites, and in commemorating with plaques more than 1,000 persons and events of national (as opposed to local or regional) significance. Negotiations are conducted with provinces for acquiring other sites. The branch has entered into cost-sharing agreements with provincial and municipal governments and with incorporated non-profit societies for acquiring and restoring architecturally or historically significant buildings and structures on the understanding that the other party will pay the balance of acquisition and restoration costs and will maintain the buildings in perpetuity. In recent years, nearly 5 million visits have been recorded annually at Canada's national historic parks and sites.

**Heritage rivers.** Six provinces and the two territories are participating with the federal government in a co-operative program to give national recognition to rivers that are significant examples of the natural environment; have played an important role

in history; or offer outstanding recreational opportunities. The French River in Ontario and the Alsek River in Kluane National Park Reserve in the Yukon were proclaimed as Canadian Heritage Rivers in 1986.

**Heritage canals.** The Rideau-Trent-Severn waterway exemplifies the importance of heritage canals as recreational waterways which emphasize not only navigation but also visitor participation. Heritage canals illustrate both historical development and early engineering technology.

**World heritage sites.** Canada is one of 87 nations that have adhered to the UNESCO World Heritage Convention to identify and protect cultural and natural properties throughout the world considered to be of outstanding universal value. Nine Canadian sites are on the world heritage list: L'Anse aux Meadows National Park, Nfld.; Dinosaur Provincial Park and Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump, Alta.; Anthony Island Provincial Park, BC; Kluane National Park, Yukon; Nahanni National Park, NWT; Wood Buffalo National Park, NWT-Alta.; Canadian Rocky Mountains National Parks, Alta.-BC; and the Historic District of Quebec City.

### 1.7.2 Heritage Canada Foundation

This is a charitable national organization created in 1973 to promote an awareness of the architectural heritage on a nationwide basis. It received an initial federal capital endowment of \$12 million in 1972; interest on this fund is used to further its work. Additional support is solicited from the private and public sectors.

### 1.7.3 Provincial parks

All provincial governments have established parks within their boundaries. Some are wilderness areas set aside so that portions of the country might be retained in their natural state. Most of them, however, are smaller areas of scenic interest, easily accessible and equipped or slated for future development as recreational parks with camping and picnic facilities. (For details see Table 1.9.)

**Newfoundland.** The first park was established in 1954 in western Newfoundland. Then camping and picnicking areas were developed along the Trans-Canada Highway. Later parks were extended to outlying parts along the coast. The system includes camping parks, day-use parks with facilities for picnics and swimming, natural scenic attractions and reserves for future parks.

**Prince Edward Island.** The provincial park system is a diversified network of 31 unique parks. Ranging in size from simple picnic areas to large resort complexes, the parks are mostly situated