

PRINCE ALBERT NATIONAL PARK*



Prince Albert National Park occupies 1,496 square miles of land and water in central Saskatchewan. The table which follows indicates distances in miles from Waskesiu Townsite in the Park to the Trans-Canada Highway and to major Saskatchewan centres.

Location	Miles
Prince Albert	60
Saskatoon	163
North Battleford	192
Regina	287
Moose Jaw	280
Swift Current	335
Trans-Canada Highway	280

The vegetative cover of the Park is classified as lying within the boreal forest, but of significance is the occurrence of remnants of true prairie and aspen parkland in association with the boreal forest (due primarily to the peripheral location of the Park within the boreal forest zone). Faunal species typically found in each of these plant

communities are found here as well. Elk, moose, deer, black bear, wolf, coyote, lynx, fox, badger, beaver and a number of other mammals find refuge in the Park; migratory birds and an occasional woodland caribou inhabit the Park seasonally.

The northern half of the Park, which lies within the Churchill River Watershed, is characterized by a few large lakes, numerous smaller but relatively deep lakes, and a few bogs and streams.

The southern half of the Park, part of the North Saskatchewan River Watershed, is characterized by numerous small sloughs (some of which are slightly alkaline), a few small lakes, and two geologically-old meandering streams.

Public use of this Park has been concentrated in the Churchill Watershed portion due primarily to the presence of: larger and deeper lakes, quantity and quality of beaches, better fishing and boating opportunities.

Topographically, the lands within the Park have a general undulation with a general elevation of 1,800 feet above sea level. These undulations are very slight in the south-west and north-east corners of the Park, and are

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greatest around Delworth Hill, the highest point in the Park. A height of land which occurs immediately south of Waskesiu Lake and includes Delworth Hill forms a watershed divide between the Churchill River drainage to the north and the North Saskatchewan River drainage to the south.

Glacial sediments (largely till laid down over sedimentary rock of the Upper Cretaceous account for these undulations and vary considerably in depth. Only in a very few instances, however, does this soil mantle become thin enough to permit exposure of the underlying rock.

In general, these glacial sediments have been relatively stable as witnessed by the existing pattern of drainage (wide stream valleys and meandering streams), but where finer surface sediments have been cut by roads or game trails, they have been subject to immediate erosion.

Indicator plant species are extremely useful in determining soil capabilities in Prince Albert National Park, for they reflect not only vegetative capability but development capability as well. For example, pure stands of Jack pine (*Pinus banksiana*) are commonly found on sandy-gravelly soils which, in turn, can be used for construction purposes such as a source of fill material or as a satisfactory base for park developments. The aspen park land areas are characterized by relatively dry soils which, in combination with periodic fires and drought, are best suited to the growth of aspen and grasses rather than hard woods or soft woods of the

next stage of natural succession. Poorly drained soils which would be more difficult to develop as roads or park facilities are indicated by wetland species such as speckled alder (*Alnus rugosa*), sedges (*Carex* spp.) and black spruce (*Picea mariana*).

Prince Albert National Park lies just within the sub-Arctic climatic region which the Atlas of Canada (1957) describes as having a "cool short summer, with only one to three months with a mean temperature above 50 degrees F."

Its peripheral location with respect to the southern limit of this climatic region enhances the Park environment in that it offers a significant yet pleasant change in climate for visitors from other climatic regions.

Mean monthly temperatures range from 60-70°F. in July to -10 to -5°F. in January, but extremes which have been recorded can range from 100° to -60°F.

The Park lies within one of the dryer forested areas of the world, and receives on average annual precipitation of 14-18 inches, most of which falls during the growing season. Periodic droughts occur within the Park which give rise to hazardous forest fire conditions, and natural and man-caused fires often result.

Approximately one-half of the total daylight hours in the Park are bright sunshine, and this, combined with low rainfall, pleasant temperatures, and invigorating outdoor environments, makes ideal conditions for a National Park visit.



White Pelicans in P.A. Nat. Park