

ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF NATIONAL PARKS

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Across this land in 1885 steel fingers of the infant transcontinental railway pointed towards the future of Canada. The government in Ottawa, intent upon building a country by settlement of the great frontier to the west, saw the railway as the answer. The abundant natural resources were a powerful lure and according to the philosophy of the day nothing was more important than conquering nature for the benefit of the nation.

As the railway pushed west, the Rocky Mountains presented a formidable challenge to engineers, the promise of wealth to miners and lumbermen and a gift of breathtaking natural wonder to all. A trio of railway workers in 1883 discovered, among the towering peaks, the Cave and Basin Hotsprings. Unique, attractive and potentially valuable for the tourist industry the hotsprings became the subject of a 'heated' debate between the discoverers, claim jumpers, members of parliament and government land inspectors.

By 28 November 1885, the events concerning Cave and Basin had generated a new and unique concept. Twenty-six square kilometres around the hotsprings were reserved by the government, 'from sale, settlement or squatting ... for proper control ... and great sanitary advantages to the public.' It was the first National Park in Canada. Rocky Mountain Park, as it was called, was later expanded and renamed. We know it today as Banff National Park, one of the world's most famous.

The Government's intention to monopolize the natural features of the area

for development and the anticipated growth of the tourist trade left little margin for the protection of the hotsprings and the surrounding forests and mountains as significant natural environments.

Though far from being founded upon the principles which guide national parks today this was the initial step towards Canada's national park system. This system now protects our natural and cultural heritage in 31 national parks, more the 70 national historic parks and canals and over 1,000 historic sites, through numerous Agreements for Recreation and Conservation (ARCs) and Heritage River designations. Parks Canada is the administrative body responsible for these resources.

Over the decades we have seen the growth of wilderness preservation. Today this is the first role of national parks. Natural patterns and processes are to be allowed to flow unhindered as they have for countless centuries. The ecosystem approach to conservation of natural diversity is a foremost aim.

"100 Years of Heritage Conservation" is the slogan that Parks Canada has adopted for 1985, a year of celebration and renewal of the commitment to preserving for all time this land's natural legacy. The objectives of Parks Canada are ambitious both in philosophy and practice. A wide range of programs and activities are planned to help Canadians come to know the natural diversity of the national parks. It is hoped Canadians will come to understand why national parks exist and discover their distinct role in our society.



Boundary Bog Nature Trail, Prince Albert National Park

Parks Canada

Through the combined efforts of the provinces, and hundreds of groups and individuals 1985 will be a year of increased awareness of the need for protection of our natural and cultural heritage. We must also look to the future to the second century of parks and beyond. What will be the pressures of society and technology upon our national parks? How will we meet the challenges of completing the national parks system?

National parks give us a chance to glimpse the fascination of the real world, to observe life free of the dominating hand of man. They are places where we still have a hope of enjoying the sights and sounds and spirit of the untamed, unspoiled wilderness.

The Centennial of the national parks system is an occasion to reflect upon and celebrate past achievements and to step ahead towards further protection of the first Canada, wild Canada.

CENTENNIAL ACTIVITIES IN SASKATCHEWAN

Across the country this year, Canadians have been invited to join in the celebration of "100 Years of Heritage Conservation."

Interpretive activities in parks and historic sites will have a special emphasis during the Centennial. Come out and experience new excitement in your favorite programs. Spirits from the past and Boomer the Beaver, the National Parks' mascot, may be among the surprises that will liven up the show. Take part in Centennial events outside of parks—exhibits in malls, special film presentations, and displays at fairs are some of the things that have been planned.

For specific details regarding projects and activities within Saskatchewan write to **Brad Muir, Centennial Coordinator, Parks Canada, Prince Albert National Park, Box 100, Waskesiu Lake, Saskatchewan S0J 2Y0** or telephone **306-663-5322**.