

A CENTURY OF PARKS CANADA

1911-2011

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Governing a Kingdom: Parks Canada, 1911–2011



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In May of 1911, the House of Commons was preparing to vote on Bill 85, a bill “respecting forest reserves and parks.” It had been a busy enough session for the House that spring, and this particular bill was hardly the most important on the docket. In fact, the *Toronto Globe* counted it as one of a series – along with raising postal workers’ salaries and standardizing bushel weights – designed “with a view of giving the Senate something to do,” while Members of Parliament prepared to lock horns over the subject of free trade with the United States.¹ When forest reserves and parks *were* discussed, MPs focused on the wealth of timber contained on the eastern slopes of the Rocky Mountains, under the rule of the Department of the Interior. There was little discussion about national parks, which were still very much a novelty, and there was no mention of who would run them. The bill simply allowed Cabinet to appoint someone to oversee the forest reserves and to make any decisions necessary for the “protection, care and management” of public parks. But shortly before the vote, Alexander Haggart of Winnipeg rose in protest. Was Parliament, he asked, really about to “divest ourselves of the power of governing a kingdom,” by handing it to an unknown “hired official”?² His

question fell flat, the bill passed, and a month later Cabinet quietly approved the creation of a new unit within the Department of the Interior, to be called the Dominion Parks Branch.³ It was the first time in history that a country had created an agency devoted to managing its national parks.

Haggart was right, but in ways he could not have foreseen. What began as a minor bureaucratic shuffle, simply to provide better management for the forest reserves and a handful of western parks, created an agency that over the next century would convince Canadians that in their national parks resided the true wealth of a kingdom. We prize our national parks because they are places of physical beauty, snapshots of the incredible diversity of the Canadian landscape. We may also think of them as ecological sanctuaries that protect nature for us and, increasingly, protect nature *from* us. But national parks are not “islands of wilderness” saved from history: they are the work of human hands and records of our history. They document our relationship to nature, not just as we wish it could be, but as it has been. Public demands, political strategy, environmental concern, cultural symbolism, and scientific debate have all been inscribed in our parks. And the agency created in 1911 has alternately guided and mirrored this dialogue between Canadians and their land. (Originally called the Dominion Parks Branch, the agency was renamed the National Parks Branch in 1930, the Parks Canada Program in 1973, the Canadian Parks Service in 1984, and the Parks Canada Agency in 1998. As we follow the agency through its history in this collection, we have tried to preserve the name in use at the time.) What began with a “hired official” and a handful of staff would come to govern some of the most iconic places in Canada, profoundly affecting how Canadians and the world see our country. No other government agency in Canada has had such imaginative power.

A Century of Parks Canada, 1911–2011 is about that agency, but it isn’t a conventional institutional history. The essays in this collection set the changing philosophies and practices of Parks Canada in historical context, measuring its response to social and political circumstances, and seeing it as a barometer of Canada in the twentieth century. The agency’s decisions about national parks – where to create them and how to manage them – reflected contemporary ideas and ideals even as they affected particular places and communities. The authors here explore the motivation, effect, and meaning of park policies that played out at different moments in Canadian history.

Parks Canada is a lens through which to understand the making of Canada: our sense of territory, as ideas, resources, and space; our changing relationship with First Nations peoples, with urban communities, with the North; the evolving framework of the Canadian state; and the evolution of environmental thought and practice as we struggle to find a sustainable place for ourselves in the natural world. National parks, then, invite us to look forward *and* back. In 1936, M.B. Williams reflected on the experience of the National Parks Branch in its first quarter-century: “But ideals seldom remain the same for that long together. They grow and develop and change, like everything else, with the passing years. An anniversary merely affords a convenient moment to stand back and look at the design and see how it is working out.”⁴ The centennial of that Branch, now Parks Canada, is such a fitting moment.

In 1985, Parks Canada celebrated a different centennial: that of its landmark creation, Banff National Park. The story of this first park is fairly well known because firsts tend to be, but also because it marked the beginnings of the national parks system, and because it became enmeshed in national iconography. In 1883 workers for the Canadian Pacific Railway accidentally discovered a hot springs – made popular by health-seeking tourists in the nineteenth century – and two years later an Order-in-Council reserved an area of ten square miles around the springs. Federal surveyors reported that the site had “features of the greatest beauty, and was admirably adapted for a national park” (although few would have been able to say what a “national park” actually looked like), and, in June 1887, Parliament passed the *Rocky Mountains Park Act*, creating “a public park and pleasure ground for the benefit, advantage and enjoyment of the people of Canada.”⁵ It says much about our early parks that this phrase, which defined park creation in this country for half a century, is less often cited than the blustery “if we can’t export the scenery, we’ll import the tourists,” attributed to CPR director William Van Horne.⁶ The CPR’s approach was very much in keeping with federal plans for developing the newly acquired western interior. It was the allure of national parks en route, with luxurious hotels and dramatic mountain scenery, that transformed the mammoth but prosaic construction of the transcontinental railway into a true “national dream.” In fact, Ottawa and the CPR owed the United States for the inspiration; Yellowstone National Park, created fifteen years before at another hot springs, was already a booming tourist destination.

Over the next two decades, Ottawa created four more parks in the mountains, all with much the same sensibility. National parks were not imagined as a way of preserving nature from people, but as reserving nature for the people's use. Selected sites favoured both the visually sublime and, with the rail line, the geographically convenient. "A forest reserve is withdrawn from occupation," Minister of the Interior Frank Oliver explained, "whereas a forest park is intended to primarily to be occupied for the purposes of pleasure."⁷ The clarification was necessary partly because parks and reserves tended to be located near or adjacent to one another in the Rockies but also because they had been lumped together in the federal bureaucracy. From 1906 to 1911, the handful of national parks in existence were managed by the Dominion Forestry Branch, which had relatively little time for these small tracts of land. Parks and forests alike fell under the jurisdiction of the Department of the Interior, the powerhouse of the federal Cabinet in the decades following Confederation. The Department concentrated on nation-building projects and the development of resources contained in the western territories, and its attitude toward parks was as utilitarian as toward the rest of its lands.⁸ Parks were reserved for "the people" from sale or settlement – but not from primary industries like timber or mining, or from those wanting to operate facilities for tourists. This meshed nicely with a growing public interest in the outdoors, and the new popularity of "getting back to nature" for spiritual and physical renewal. (Meanwhile, a small private bequest enabled the first eastern park in Ontario's tony holiday area of the Thousand Islands, closer to more of "the people of Canada" if somewhat out of keeping with the physical grandeur that Canadians had already come to expect of their parks.) Whether as an industrial or recreational resource, the concept of national parks suited the new ethos of conservation, which insisted that rational, modern management could ensure use in perpetuity. Management, of course, required bureaucracy.

The creation of a Dominion Parks Branch in 1911 thus represented a crucial step in establishing a public identity for national parks. While the *Dominion Forest Reserves and Parks Act* shrunk park borders,⁹ the subsequent decision to create a separate agency proved nothing short of a saving grace for Canada's future national parks system. For one thing, a handful of small parks now actually constituted a system, with a public face in James B. Harkin, the first commissioner of the new branch. Harkin seems the quintessentially

Canadian hero: an “Ottawa mandarin” initially armed with little more than a piece of federal legislation, who in 1919 justified parks to his pragmatically minded department on the grounds that scenery was worth \$13.88 an acre.¹⁰ But as Alan MacEachern suggests here, the Branch flourished over the next twenty years, thanks in part to its development of an able corps of staff like M.B. Williams, but, more importantly, to its ability to present an image of parks that resonated with national and international audiences. It rapidly expanded the parks system, eastward into Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Ontario – this last, in particular, to provide park space closer to where most Canadians lived – and created wildlife preserves for antelope, elk, and buffalo in Alberta and Saskatchewan.¹¹ By twinning use and protection, the Branch was laying the foundations of an approach to national park management that would remain in place throughout the twentieth century. “But though so many provisions are made for enjoyment and use,” M.B. Williams would write in 1936, “it is never forgotten that the most precious possessions of the parks are their peace and solitude.”¹²

Providing both enjoyment and solitude was a tall order but one that Canadians were coming to expect of the Parks Branch by the 1930s. If the idea of the national park dates to 1887, and its agency to 1911, then the national park landscape we have inherited really belongs to the interwar period, when the new automobile culture consistently shaped park design. John Sandlos shows that the Branch’s enthusiasm for catering to highway tourism affected parks in nearly every part of the country. The original parks landscape of the mountain sublime was joined by the lake shoreline at Prince Albert and Point Pelee. This expansion raised the public profile of national parks, and they attained a heightened, even iconic, status as early as the 1920s. But the diversification of their social and ecological character also began to test the cohesion of a national system. Bill Waiser’s essay is just one in this volume that demonstrates the tension emerging between a local community and the national authority, as the cottage community at Prince Albert National Park exhibited a proprietorial attachment to their particular holidaying spot. In 1930, the Prairie provinces finally received jurisdiction over their natural resources, making it far more difficult for Ottawa to create parks at will in the west. Ben Bradley raises the fascinating question of “failed” parks through Hamber, a national park that never existed because it in effect fell through the cracks of this new intergovernmental landscape.

The government of British Columbia created a massive provincial park in the western Rockies, hoping to lure the Parks Branch into adopting it – and the enormous expense of its highway construction. The gamble failed and most of Hamber was eventually reopened to development. Rich in forest resources, Hamber also reminds us how porous and fragile park boundaries can be when land is considered valuable.

With the passage of the *National Parks Act* in 1930, Parliament entrenched the philosophy developed within the Parks Branch – now the National Parks Branch – over its first two decades. This was another legislative watershed, because now the mandate of parks to provide for the “benefit, education and enjoyment” of the people was paired with a mandate for the people to maintain the parks “so as to leave them unimpaired for future generations.” Industrial activities were excluded, park boundaries were made permanent, and a category of Historical Parks was formally recognized.¹³ “Unimpaired for future generations” is so powerful a phrase that it remains the motto for Parks Canada’s approach to ecological integrity, the core, if elusive, objective of parks management in the twenty-first century.¹⁴ But it is important not to exaggerate the preservationist thinking of Canadians of 1930; like the creation of the Dominion Parks Branch, the implications of the *National Parks Act* would become clearer over time. In fact, with the onset of the Great Depression the parks system entered a period of remarkable stasis, and only four new parks were added over the next forty years. We are sorely in need of more research on this period, precisely because of this relative silence. Until recently historians have concentrated on the earliest years of the national parks system: the rail travel, elite hotels, and alpine culture of the mountain parks in the prewar years. And scientists and park planners have had more use for history since 1970, when national parks were governed by a new biophysical system plan and ecological language. But the middle part of the century may tell us much about what inhibits national park creation, the feasibility of legislating protection as well as use, and the character of the Parks Branch in different parts of the country. All four new parks were created in Atlantic Canada, giving the Branch a significant presence in the four eastern provinces for the first time. But these four clearly followed the old formula: whether along the Cabot Trail on Cape Breton or the north shore of Prince Edward Island, they were designed to provide scenic highway views.¹⁵

By the middle of the twentieth century, the National Parks Branch held a stated commitment to environmental protection but typically was preoccupied with managing parks for tourism and recreation. This contradiction would come to a head by the early 1960s amid a booming postwar economy, as families spurred by a heartily suburban and child-oriented culture made ever-more intense demands on park space. Meanwhile, national parks and their caretaker were having trouble finding a foothold in the byzantine world of federal bureaucracy. After the Department of the Interior was disbanded in 1936, the Parks Branch floated through a series of departments, from Mines and Resources to Indian and Northern Affairs, where, as David Neufeld indicates in his essay on Kluane, it was often overshadowed by more development-oriented players. But in responding to these new pressures, Parks began to evolve a distinctive organizational infrastructure, which in turn helped refine its thinking about parks themselves. A planning branch was established in 1957, followed by regional offices, to ease the tension between policies originating from a remote federal agency and local administration. (The attitude in Banff, according to C.J. Taylor, recalls a Chinese saying that “The mountains are high and the emperor is far away.”) Several essays in this collection describe the Branch’s efforts to locate a “middle ground” in this period within its old dual mandate. South of the border, the U.S. National Park Service likewise found itself facing conflicting demands from its public; an ambitious ten-year program to upgrade visitor facilities, known as “Mission 66” (to be completed by 1966, the fiftieth year of *their* national parks agency), suddenly ran counter to new concern about park overdevelopment and the preservationist directive introduced in 1964 with the *Wilderness Act*.¹⁶

Although the Parks Branch had no formal equivalent to Mission 66, Taylor shows how the wear and tear of park overcrowding, now reaching critical levels at Banff, and an increasingly vocal scientific community prompted significant changes in parks policy, including zoning to localize use and a new degree of public consultation. In 1964, the minister of Northern Affairs and Natural Resources tabled the first national parks policy, which stated that national parks were to preserve “for all time areas which contain significant geographical, geological, biological or historic features as a natural heritage for the benefit, education and enjoyment of the people of Canada.” The contradiction was still present – how were Canadians to enjoy these places without visiting them? – but preservation was nudged ahead

of recreation. In his 2007 book, *Taking the Air: Ideas and Change in Canada's National Parks*, Paul Kopas calls this "the era of state initiative," to distinguish it from the subsequent era of "public participation."¹⁷ But the two cannot be so neatly divided. For one thing, the state was attempting to respond *to* the public, because Canadians were using and discussing national parks more than ever before. George Colpitts discusses how the National Film Board, like the Parks Branch, sought to both shape and respond to a significant shift in attitudes about just who or what parks should be for. While the NFB initially featured wildlife as a tourist attraction in order to promote park visits, by the late 1960s its films cast bears as park inhabitants endangered by those very tourists. After 1963 the National and Provincial Parks Association, later the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, emerged as an influential environmental lobby in Canada, sponsoring a conference on "Parks for Tomorrow" in 1968, where scholars leveled pointed criticism at user-oriented development.

This growing support for environmental protection, the energy of the new Trudeau government, and a new interest in Canada's northern territory gave national parks a new prominence on the federal agenda. All of these were summed up by Minister of Northern and Indian Affairs Jean Chrétien, flying over the dramatic fjords on Baffin Island, who turned from the window to his wife and promised grandly, "Aline, I will make these a national park for you." Sure enough, Aline's park is now Auyuittuq.¹⁸ The federal government created new parks with remarkable speed, from sea (Gros Morne, Kejimikujik, and Kouchibouguac) to sea (Pacific Rim) to sea (Kluane, Nahanni, and Auyuittuq). But romantic impulse and ministerial hubris reached their limit here, for future parks would not be as arbitrary. In 1970, the Branch adopted the National Parks System Plan, which divided the country into thirty-nine "natural regions" and promised to someday have at least one park representative of each. This meant not only more parks but parks with a concrete basis in ecological diversity rather than (or at least in addition to) scenery and political advantage. By recognizing regional landscapes and local specificity, the System Plan also brought Parks Canada, as it was called after 1973, closer to the ground. But Olivier Craig-Dupont argues that the agency was able to use the ecological language of the System Plan to support a more symbolic and conventional federal goal: generating national pride in Canada's natural beauty. Completing the System Plan remains a stated

Completing Canada's National Park System

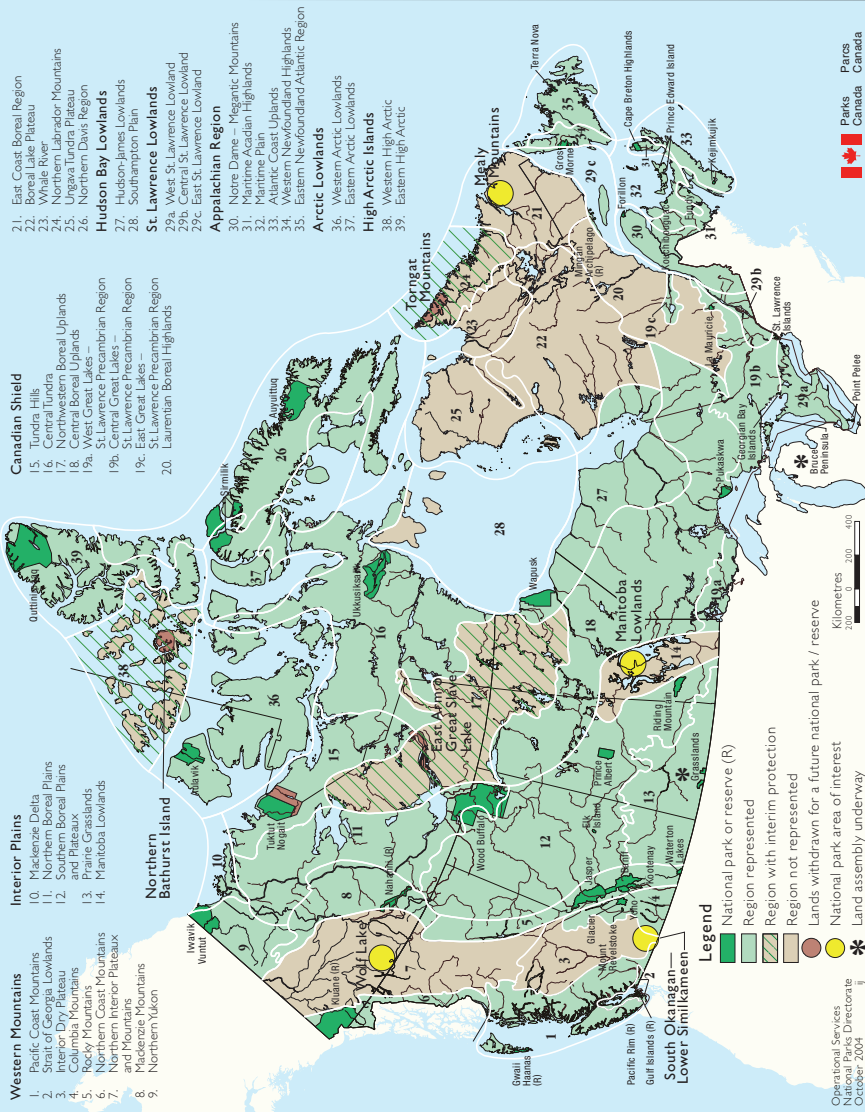


FIG. 1.
COMPLETING
CANADA'S NATIONAL
PARK SYSTEM (2008).
[PARKS CANADA
AGENCY.]

objective for Parks Canada, but history suggests that ecological science can be as political as many other elements of parks policy.¹⁹

At the same time, parks had to be located where land was available – and where the federal government was particularly concerned with showing the flag. This meant that after 1970 new parks were overwhelmingly concentrated in the north, in federal territory, and where they could be drawn on a vast scale. But the “available” space was deceptive because Parks Canada found itself confronting resident communities responding to park creation in an unprecedented way. The stories in this volume of La Mauricie, Kouchibouguac, Kluane, and Ivvavik all document the agency’s efforts to deal with community resistance, the politics of land appropriation, and competing kinds of use. Aboriginal communities in the north most effectively challenged conventional thinking about national parks. In 1974 the *National Parks Act* was amended to include provisions for traditional hunting and fishing practices, and the new concept of a national park reserve: land set aside for a *future* national park pending settlement of any land claims. Ironically, the turn to the great spaces of the north was redefining our sense of parks as “wilderness,” and Parks Canada began to adopt the concept of cultural landscape.²⁰ For the first time in its history, the agency acknowledged the role of people in shaping the physical face of park environments and the different cultural meanings that people might find there. According to Gwyn Langemann, by the early 1970s, archaeologists with the agency had firmly established a record of longstanding human presence in the mountain parks. And as I.S. MacLaren argues forcefully, other countries provide useful models of how to recognize human habitation within national parks, thereby offering an alternative to the idea of parks as wilderness sanctuaries. Meanwhile, high-profile land claims in the face of northern development and increasing disputes over Arctic sovereignty drew international attention to Canada’s parks. More positively, so too did our ratification of the World Heritage Convention in 1976. As the federal representative, Parks Canada acquired the authority for nominating World Heritage Sites, and a showcase for its possessions; national parks presently make up half of Canada’s World Heritage Sites. Regardless of the contested nature of park politics at home, parks now enjoyed an international cachet, and Parks Canada gained a priceless form of advertising.

This heightened attention at home and abroad reinforced concerns about the ecological health of the national parks. So by the early 1980s Parks Canada found itself defining not one but two core paradigms for park management: cultural landscapes and ecological integrity. It was a new and ironic twist on an historical duality. The agency, which had finally accepted the role of people in making national parks, was now also insisting that the health of natural ecosystems would be “paramount” in all governance decisions.²¹ The contradiction became apparent within parks themselves: by the late 1980s, precisely when Parks Canada’s mandate for environmental protection was stronger than at any point in its history, the actual environmental quality *in* the parks reached its nadir. Despite – or because of – a new climate of green politics and a new fashion for green living, national parks were more popular than ever and were eroding under the strain of our enthusiasm for them; environmentalists began to talk about “loving the parks to death.” Ottawa commissioned a series of semi-independent investigations into the state of the parks, culminating in the Panel on the Ecological Integrity of Canada’s National Parks in 2000. These reports consistently described national parks as “under serious threat,” especially the smallest parks like Point Pelee and Prince Edward Island.²² In response, the *Canada National Parks Act* of 2000 provided the strongest language to date, stating that “maintenance or restoration of ecological integrity, through the protection of natural resources and natural processes, shall be the first priority ... when considering all aspects of the management of parks.” Yet it retained the old dualist language of 1930, dedicating the parks to “the people of Canada for their benefit, education and enjoyment,” and promising that “the parks shall be maintained and made use of so as to leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.”

Perhaps this is why Parks Canada has always struggled to find a foothold in the federal bureaucracy, for it is a political creature with responsibilities to Canadians as well as to the environment we inhabit. In 1979, the agency was transferred from Indian and Northern Affairs to the Department of the Environment: a reasonable choice, given the emerging emphasis on ecological integrity. But in 1993 its responsibility for historic places as well as national parks as “natural heritage” prompted another relocation, this time into the new Department of Heritage. This contradicted the trajectory of several decades, and within five years Parks Canada was reconstituted as a special operating agency, answerable to the Minister of the Environment but



FIG. 2. FORILLON NATIONAL PARK, 1987. [PHOTO: NEIL CAMPBELL.]

as a quasi-corporate body with a degree of independence.²³ This realigned the agency with its mandate for ecological protection, but it also heightened its need for public support. Introducing Canadians to “the beauty and significance of our natural world” gives Parks Canada both a civic function and a political *raison d’être*; in other words, bringing Canadians into national parks allows Parks to teach us about the natural environment but also about the agency that has brought us there.²⁴ Although it is easy to see successive pieces of legislation – 1930, 1964, 2000 – as progress toward more stringent environmental protection, we need to remember that Parks Canada remains responsible for, and invested in, ensuring our “benefit and enjoyment” of national parks.

Our history in these parks is clearly important, yet we do not possess a great deal of history about our national parks. One scholar has called national parks a “black hole for historical research” because we prefer to think of them as natural sanctuaries instead of human creations.²⁵ Indeed, Parks Canada’s emphasis on ecology as non-human nature may prevent us from

seeing the ways in which we humans encounter nature within its parks. As several of these essays demonstrate, these encounters occur in very human landscapes: in the campgrounds and scenic roadways dating from precisely the same era as the phrase “unimpaired for future generations,” which Parks Canada takes as its directive. Meanwhile Parks Canada itself, the first agency in the world devoted to managing national parks, has remained astonishingly anonymous, and its complex relationship with these “sanctuaries” is rarely discussed. Histories relating to the Canadian national parks system have been sparse; those that exist tend to be celebratory and rooted in institutional chronology. While three “Parks for Tomorrow” conferences (in 1968, 1978, and 2008) generated critical discussions about human impact on parks, they were framed by scientific findings and policy language.²⁶ But the dramatic growth of environmental history as a field in recent years has set the stage for new research. Despite a rhetoric of wilderness, parks epitomize “hybrid landscapes,” defined by one historian as “a compromise between human design and natural processes.”²⁷ In this, they are perfectly suited to historical study.

A Century of Parks Canada captures this curiosity about our place in the natural world and the new sense of community among environmental historians in Canada. In 2005, a national Network in Canadian History and Environment (NiCHE) was established to support collaborative projects like this collection, whose contributors come from universities across Canada and within Parks Canada itself. We met twice to discuss themes and connections – an unusual step in putting together edited collections, but valuable when talking about a subject that refracts across the spectrum of Canadian history. The essays here locate Parks Canada in a cottage community and a mining frontier; in the Rocky Mountains and the sub-boreal forest of the Canadian Shield; in political disputes, travel writing, and town newspapers. In other words, we can learn as much about *Canada* as about *parks* from this history. Despite our different starting points in time and place, we were struck by the common themes or clusters that emerged. In the early part of the twentieth century automobile-based tourism had an enormous impact on the face of national parks. By the 1960s the presence and application of ecological science became central to the debate amid concerns about the health of the parks. And by the 1970s, expansion into the far north, and growing

involvement by aboriginal communities, forced Parks Canada to rethink parks as cultural landscapes.

But one theme that stretches across the century and appears in nearly every essay is the tension between national agendas and local interests. Bill Waiser describes a moment when John Diefenbaker – one can almost imagine him shaking his fist in regionalist indignation – insisted that Prince Albert National Park was “a place for the people ... not a playground for bureaucrats in Ottawa.” But which people? Parks Canada is a federal agency, tasked with preserving “nationally significant” places for “the people of Canada.” In reality, though, these places are located in very diverse ecosystems, and among very different communities. Sometimes these communities have been displaced by “bureaucrats in Ottawa” in the name of a national ideal – as with Acadians at Kouchibouguac, or Métis families in Jasper – and sometimes Parks officials have responded to local demands, as in the Georgian Bay, Prince Albert, or Ivvavik. In this, it is in many ways a microcosm of the tensions of federalism, in a country famously said to have too much geography.

An anniversary is, as M.B. Williams suggested, a convenient moment to stand back and ask what we have learned. Created in a legislative aside in 1911, yet charged with “governing a kingdom,” Parks Canada one hundred years later is recognized as a global leader in the environmental challenges of protected places. But as these essays show, this has been hard-won, earned through a century of dealing with diverse communities, diverse geographies, and changing historical circumstances. So its history is a rich repository of experience, of lessons learned, and even of paths not taken.²⁸ Asking what has or hasn’t worked, and where, and why, is critical for making informed decisions about how to sustain the environmental and social health of our national parks. At the same time, environmental policy needs the perspective of the humanities – the study of people who inhabit, use, and value that environment – in order to be effective.²⁹ The authors here are citizens as well as scholars; we write about these places because we care about them, because we feel invested in their future. While we see the heavy footprint of the past century, these essays are still “tinged with idealism,” much as John Sandlos describes Parks Canada itself in its early years. We hope the stories we present here will add to our ability to make wise choices about these places in the

future. And we hope, finally, that the 2011 centennial of Parks Canada kindles interest in our national parks and their place in Canada's history.

NOTES

- 1 "Government bills put through Commons," *Globe* (29 April 1911) and "What Parliament has done so far," *Globe* (22 May 1911). I would like to thank Alan MacEachern for his comments on an earlier draft of this introduction.
- 2 House of Commons, *Debates*, 9 May 1911, column 8666; *An Act respecting Forest Reserves and Parks*, Statutes of Canada 1–2 Geo. V., chap. 10.
- 3 Department of the Interior, *Annual Report for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1912*, J.B. Harkin, "Report of the Commissioner of Dominion Parks," Sessional Paper no. 25 (1913); E.J. Hart, *J.B. Harkin: Father of Canada's National Parks* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2010).
- 4 M.B. Williams, *Guardians of the Wild* (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1936), 138.
- 5 *Annual Report of the Department of the Interior for the year 1886*, Part I: Dominion Lands, Sessional Paper no. 7 (Ottawa, 1887), 9.
- 6 Van Horne saw tourist revenue as a way to pay for the astronomical costs of the transcontinental construction project. See, for example, Walter Vaughan, *The Life and Work of Sir William Van Horne* (New York: Century, 1920) 151, and E.J. Hart, *The Selling of Canada: The CPR and the Beginnings of Canadian Tourism* (Banff: Altitude, 1983) 7, and "See this world before the next: Tourism and the CPR," in *The CPR West: The iron road and the making of a nation*, ed. Hugh A. Dempsey, 151 (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1984). Prime Minister John A. Macdonald shared this point of view, telling the House of Commons that a park at the Banff hot springs would "recuperate the patients, and recoup the Treasury." House of Commons, *Debates*, 3 May 1887.
- 7 House of Commons, *Debates*, 13 January 1911.
- 8 With jurisdiction over the vast federal territories in the northwest, Interior's portfolios included federal lands, Indian Affairs, the Geological Survey and the Dominion Survey, immigration, leases for homestead lands, timber, ranching, and mining, reclamation and water, the Forest Service, and, from 1911, the Parks Branch.
- 9 See Peter Murphy, "'Following the Base of the Foothills': Tracing the Boundaries of Jasper Park and its Adjacent Rocky Mountains Forest Reserve," in *Culturing Wilderness in Jasper National Park: Studies in Two Centuries of Human History in the Upper Athabasca River Watershed*, ed. I.S. MacLaren, 71–122 (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2007).
- 10 Paul Kopas, *Taking the Air: Ideas and Change in Canada's National Parks* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007), 29; J.B. Harkin, "Report of the Commissioner,"

- Annual Report of the Department of the Interior*, 1919, Sessional Paper no. 25 (Ottawa, 1920), 3–4.
- 11 These were Menissawok (1914–30) in Saskatchewan and Wawaskesy (1914–38) and Nemiskam (1915–47) in Alberta, all of which were renamed national parks in 1922. This is the first and last time we see the use of aboriginal names until the creation of Kejimikujik National Park in Nova Scotia in 1968. Also see Jennifer Brower, *Lost Tracks: Buffalo National Park, 1909–1939* (Edmonton: AU Press, 2008), for the story of another wildlife preserve (1908–47) that was eventually eliminated.
 - 12 Williams, *Guardians of the Wild*, 136–37.
 - 13 C.J. Taylor, “Legislating Nature: The National Parks Act of 1930,” in *To See Ourselves / To Save Ourselves: Ecology and Culture in Canada*, ed. Rowland Lorimer et al., 125–37 (Montreal: Association for Canadian Studies, 1991); also Taylor, *Negotiating the Past: The Making of Canada’s National Historic Parks and Sites* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1990).
 - 14 For more on this, see Shaun Fluker, “Ecological integrity and the law: The view from Canada’s National Parks,” Parks for Tomorrow 40th Anniversary Conference, Calgary, Alberta, 8–12 May 2008.
 - 15 See Alan MacEachern, *Natural Selections: National Parks in Atlantic Canada, 1935–1970* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2001). Another study of the interwar period is Bill Waiser’s *Park Prisoners: The Untold Story of Western Canada’s National Parks, 1915–1946* (Calgary: Fifth House, 1995).
 - 16 Ethan Carr, *Mission 66: Modernism and the National Park dilemma* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press in association with Library of American Landscape History, 2007); Richard West Sellars, *Preserving Nature in the National Parks: A History* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997).
 - 17 Kopas, *Taking the Air*, 37–66.
 - 18 Jean Chrétien, *Straight from the Heart* (Toronto: Key Porter, 1985), 68.
 - 19 Catriona Mortimer-Sandilands argues strongly for the nationalist message in park creation and presentation throughout the twentieth century, even after “the ecological turn.” See “The Cultural Politics of Ecological Integrity: Nature and Nation in Canada’s National Parks, 1885–2000,” *International Journal of Canadian Studies* 39/40 (2009): 161–89. On the System Plan, see the *National Parks System Plan*, 3d ed. (Hull, QC: Canadian Heritage and Parks Canada, 1997); <http://www.pc.gc.ca/eng/docs/v-g/nation/nation1.aspx>. The Agency’s stated goal remains to have at least one national park and one national marine conservation area in each of Canada’s terrestrial and marine regions; currently 28 of the 39 terrestrial regions and 3 of the 29 marine regions are represented. See *Parks Canada Agency Corporate Plan, 2009/10–2013/14/ Agence Parcs Canada plan d’entreprise, 2009–2010 à 2013–2014* (Gatineau, QC: Parks Canada, 2009), 6. <http://www.pc.gc.ca/eng/docs/pc/plans/plan2008-2009/sec1/page01.aspx> (However, in 1989, CPAWS and World Wildlife Canada complicated the neat jigsaw visual by launching an Endangered Spaces campaign, which called for protecting sample landscapes

- in 350 regions). In 2010, Parks Canada proposed two future parks, both in Eastern Canada: Mealy Mountains, Labrador, as representative of the “East Coast Boreal Natural Region,” and Sable Island, Nova Scotia. In the west, a memorandum of understanding with the province of British Columbia in 2003 enabled Parks to undertake a feasibility study for a park in the “Interior Dry Plateau Region” in the south Okanagan Valley, to be called the South Okanagan–Lower Similkameen National Park Reserve.
- 20 For a view of how this affected parks practice within the agency, see David Neufeld, “The development of community-based cultural research and management programs: The Canadian Parks Service (CPS) experience in the northwest,” *Canadian Oral History Association Journal* 12 (1992): 30–33.
 - 21 Parks Canada uses this definition of ecological integrity: “An ecosystem has integrity when it is deemed characteristic for its natural region, including the composition and abundance of native species and biological communities, rates of change and supporting processes.’ In plain language, ecosystems have integrity when they have their native components (plants, animals and other organisms) and processes (such as growth and reproduction) intact.” Panel on the Ecological Integrity of Canada’s National Parks, *Unimpaired for Future Generations? Conserving Ecological Integrity with Canada’s National Parks* (Ottawa, 2000). It was established as paramount in the 1988 *National Parks Act* and the 1994 *Parks Canada Guiding Principles and Operational Policies*, which also acknowledged the importance of ecosystem health outside of park boundaries and introduced new categories of designation, including national marine conservation areas.
 - 22 David Bernard et al., *State of the Banff–Bow Valley, prepared for Banff–Bow Valley Study* (Banff, 1996); *State of the Parks Report*, especially for 1997 and 1999 (Parks Canada, 1998 and 2000) – continued as *State of Protected Heritage Areas*, reported in 2005 and 2007; *Unimpaired for Future Generations?* (2000).
 - 23 While some agencies were related to Parks Canada, primarily in its historic sites mandate – notably Library and Archives Canada, and the National Battlefields Commission – the Department of Canadian Heritage is responsible for a primarily cultural portfolio, including, for example, the national museums, film and television, cultural property, and public servants. On the Parks Canada Agency, see *An Act to Establish the Parks Canada Agency* S.C. 31 (1998).
 - 24 I owe this idea to a point made by Catriona Mortimer-Sandilands in “Calypso Trails: Botanizing on the Bruce Peninsula,” *Dalhousie Review* 90, no. 1 (2010): 21. Also Parks Canada Agency charter (2002), http://www.pc.gc.ca/agen/chart/chartr_E.asp. The Agency’s recent insistence on “visitor experience” betrays its quasi-market concerns; Chief Executive Officer Alan Latourelle recently highlighted Parks Canada’s success in winning awards from the tourism industry. See *Parks Canada Agency Corporate Plan, 2008/09–2012/13/Agence Parcs Canada plan d’entreprise, 2008–2009 à 2012–2013* (Gatineau, QC: Parks Canada, 2008), 5.

- 25 Eric Higgs, "Twinning Reality, or how taking history seriously changes how we understand ecological restoration in Jasper National Park," in *Culturing Wilderness*, ed. MacLaren, 292.
- 26 At the 2008 conference, Alan MacEachern suggested that parks history actually was now more marginalized than it had been at the original "Parks for Tomorrow" conference forty years before. MacEachern, "Writing the History of Canadian Parks: Past, Present, and Future," Parks for Tomorrow 40th Anniversary Conference (Calgary, 2008) <http://dspace.ucalgary.ca/bitstream/1880/46876/1/MacEachern.pdf>. The 1968 conference proceedings were published as *The Canadian National Parks: Today and Tomorrow*, ed. J.G. Nelson and R.C. Scace (Calgary: National and Provincial Parks Association of Canada and the University of Calgary, 1969) and *Canadian Parks in Perspective: Based on the Conference The Canadian National Parks: Today and Tomorrow, Calgary, October 1968*, ed. J.G. Nelson with R.C. Scace (Montreal: Harvest House, 1970). R.C. Brown's essay "The Doctrine of Usefulness," from the 1968 conference, is one of the most cited for evidence of the exploitative or development-oriented agendas of early national parks, but a few years earlier A. Roger Byrne pointed to the diverse effects of human activity on a park in his M.Sc. thesis, "Man and landscape change in the Banff National Park area before 1911" (Calgary: University of Calgary, 1964). Brown's criticism was amplified by Leslie Bella in *Parks for Profit* (Montreal: Harvest House, 1987). Rick Searle, in *Phantom Parks: The Struggle to Save Canada's National Parks* (Toronto: Key Porter, 2000), expresses concern over parks' long-term ecological integrity. On the other hand, the more prosaic institutional history is W.F. Lothian's *A Brief History of Canada's National Parks* (Ottawa: Environment Canada, 1987). Sid Marty, *A Grand and Fabulous Notion: The First Century of Canada's Parks* (Toronto: NC Press, in co-operation with Cave and Basin Project, Parks Canada, and Supply and Services Canada, 1984), the centennial publication, is predictably celebratory in tone, as is Robert J. Burns with Mike Schintz, *Guardians of the Wild: A History of the Warden Service of Canada's National Parks* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2000). Janet Foster's *Working for Wildlife: The Beginnings of Preservation in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1978, 1998) also looks favourably on the efforts of civil servants involved in wildlife policy. But the publication with the most public impact is likely the beautifully photographed *National Parks of Canada* by J.A. Kraulis and Kevin McNamee, rev. ed. (Toronto: Key Porter, 2004).
- 27 Mark Fiege, *Irrigated Eden: The Making of an Agricultural Landscape in the American West* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999), 205. See also Richard White, "From Wilderness to Hybrid Landscapes: The Cultural Turn in Environmental History," *The Historian* 66 (2004): 558. The "cultural turn" is apparent in the park history that has proliferated in Canada in recent years. Such work includes MacEachern, *Natural Selections*; the essays in MacLaren, ed., *Culturing Wilderness*; Kopas, *Taking the Air*; Bill Waiser, *Saskatchewan's Playground: A History of Prince Albert National Park* (Saskatoon: Fifth House, 1989); John

- S. Marsh and Bruce W. Hodgins, ed., *Changing Parks: The History, Future and Cultural Context of Parks and Heritage Landscapes* (Toronto: Natural Heritage/Natural History, 1998); Lyle Dick, *Muskox Land: Ellesmere Island in the Age of Contact* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2001); George Colpitts, *Game in the Garden: A Human History of Wildlife in Western Canada to 1940* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2002); John Sandlos, *Hunters at the Margin: Native People and Wildlife Conservation in the Northwest Territories* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007); C.J. Taylor, *Jasper: A History of the Place and Its People* (Calgary: Fifth House, 2009).
- 28 As Alan MacEachern has argued elsewhere, "In attempting to make decisions, we may as well draw on the experiences of those who came before us, who may have had to make similar decisions. The past is by no means a sure guide to the future, but then again it is the only database we have." "Writing the History of Canadian Parks" (2008), 2.
- 29 Environmental history is somewhat unusual because it is often oriented toward public engagement, even political application. Catherine A. Christen and Lisa Mighetto, "Environmental History as Public History," *The Public Historian* 26 (2004): 9–19.

