

2008

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McCleave, Julia

McCleave, J. "'The Regional Integration Of Protected Areas: Results From a Study of Five National Parks In Canada'". Contributed paper for the Canadian Parks for Tomorrow: 40th Anniversary Conference, May 8 to 11, 2008, University of Calgary, Calgary, AB.

<http://hdl.handle.net/1880/46939>

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"The Regional Integration Of Protected Areas: Results From a Study of Five National Parks In Canada"

Julia McCleave, PhD Candidate, University of Waterloo

The term 'regional integration', in relation to protected areas, has been used in the academic and park management literature but has not been clearly defined or explored fully. The premise of regional integration is that protected area management agencies and actors within protected area regions engage in informal and formal interactions with each other in order to fulfill short and long term goals related to the protected area. Each protected area has a distinct context influenced by history, culture, ecology, complexity, politics, and governance and this context influences regional integration. This paper presents some results from a recent study which examined the regional integration of five national parks in Canada: Kejimikujik National Park, NS; Gros Morne National Park, NL; Waterton Lakes National Park, AB; and Mount Revelstoke & Glacier National Parks, BC. The results of this study indicate that the process of regional integration is unique for each of the case studies. There are examples of innovative ways to move regional integration from an issue-based, reactionary approach to a more regular, structured approach. More emphasis on increasing and improving informal interactions between parks and regional actors is suggested.