

Administration

Canada's national parks are administered by the Parks Canada Program of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. There are five administrative regions: Western, Prairie, Ontario, Quebec and Atlantic.

The management of each park is carried out by a park superintendent, whose staff deals with maintenance, interpretation, visitor services and resource conservation.

Using information provided by the resource-base description and special studies of the total park environment (plant and animal life, land formation, soil, geology and climate), park naturalists develop interpretive programs to help visitors understand and appreciate the individuality of each national park. The programs include tours, guided walks and hikes, self-guided trails, exhibitions, films, slide shows, discussions and publications.

The natural resources of the parks must be protected against misuse, damage and destruction, a task that falls to the park wardens. Trained in resource-management, the wardens are involved in forest-fire control and in the assessment of the condition of plant and animal life. They also deal with visitor safety, search-and-rescue operations and law enforcement.

The National Parks staff consult specialists of the Canadian Wildlife Service on wildlife management and protection. Other federal agencies also provide expertise: the National Museum of Natural Science, the Forest Management Institute, the Geological Survey of Canada and the Fisheries Research Board.

A Junior Warden Program began in 1971 as a pilot project in Georgian Bay Islands National Park, Ontario, and Fundy National Park, New Brunswick. The program was extended to 12 parks in 1972 and became known as the National Parks Conservation Corps. In 1973, a number of positions were set aside for native youth, and in 1974 women participated in the program for the first time. The candidates, who are high-school students, are recruited through high schools and Canada Manpower centres. They spend seven weeks in July and August working with park naturalists and wardens, studying park resources, forest, wildlife and fisheries management, and forest-fire control and safety operations.