

The National Parks of Canada have been established by the Federal Government to preserve, for the benefit of Canadians, areas representative of the country's landscape, flora and fauna.

The national parks system began in 1885, when the Federal Government acquired 26 square kilometres of land surrounding the mineral hot springs at Banff, Alberta, and dedicated it to the people of Canada. Two years later, the Rocky Mountains Park Act was passed, reserving an area of 260 square miles "as a public park and pleasure ground".

By 1911, four more national parks had been established, all in Western Canada. In May of that year, the Dominion Forest Reserves and Parks Act was passed, creating a Commissioner of Dominion Parks and a distinct National Parks Branch to protect, administer and develop the parks. During the next 20 years, nine more national parks were added to the system.

The next major development was the passage of the National Parks Act in 1930, legislation that has remained the basis for national parks administration. The National Parks Act states that the parks are dedicated to the people of Canada for their benefit, education and enjoyment, to be maintained and made use of so as to leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.

Under the Transfer of Resources Agreement of 1930, all uncommitted public land and associated natural resources within the Western provinces (Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and portions of British Columbia) came under the administration of the provincial governments. All national parks added to the system since that date have been set up with the co-operation of the provincial governments, which have made lands available for that purpose. The land, after having been assembled by the province, is ultimately transferred with all natural resources to the Federal Government. The National Parks Act is then amended to incorporate the lands involved into the Schedule of National Parks.

From 1930 to 1967, four national parks were established, and since 1968 ten new parks have been added to the system, including