

in the parks systems of British Columbia, Alberta, and Yukon. In November 1992, Canadian parks, environment, wildlife, and forestry ministers endorsed a historic commitment to complete a network of protected areas representative of Canada's land-based natural regions by the year 2000. Federally, that commitment entails representing each of 39 natural regions in the national parks system. At this point, 23 regions are represented.

Ten of these regions are predominantly mountainous. Of these, eight are represented by fourteen national parks (two regions are represented by two national parks and another by five). Of the two mountainous natural regions unrepresented in the national parks system, one is represented in the provincial parks system and a study is assessing the feasibility of a candidate national park in the other.

Seven of Canada's mountain national parks have been judged significant enough globally to be designated UNESCO World Heritage Sites. The strong presence of mountain parks in the system is a reflection of the physiography of Canada—bordered on the west by the Cordillera, the east by the Appalachians, and to the north by the Grantland and Axel Heiberg Mountains—and of the historical basis of the parks system.

In response to the increased awareness that the ecological integrity of national parks is closely tied to the regional ecological setting, parks encourage co-operative regional land use planning and management and environmental monitoring. The broader ecosystem approach to the management of protected areas is evident in the management of several of Canada's mountain national parks. Waterton Lakes National Park, for example, is the core of one of Canada's six biosphere reserves. Designated under the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere Programme, each biosphere reserve—which includes a core protected area, a buffer zone, and a co-operative zone where people live and work—is intended to serve as a demonstration area integrating the conservation of biodiversity with sustainable development.

Canadian Heritage, Parks Service, is a partner with the Canadian Forest Service, of Natural Resources Canada, in four of ten model forests, such as the Foothills Model Forest outside Jasper National Park. Through this co-operative program, the Parks Service is working to support the maintenance of sustainable regional landscapes that require preservation efforts, as well as activities beyond the park boundaries.

With the growing emphasis on ecosystem management, the Parks Service and other partners are developing and applying methods for assessing ecological integrity: monitoring, trend analysis, and cumulative impact assessment tools. Test studies are currently being conducted in seven national parks, including two mountain parks.

Legislation requires the federal government to report on the state of its national parks. To give a full picture of the state of ecosystems, a survey was conducted in 1992 to identify those internal and external stresses having an ecological impact on the national parks. In the mountain parks, forestry, visitor/tourism facilities, utility corridors, and to a lesser