

CGG30 Unit 4: Tourism and the Environment

Activity 1: What Natural Canadian Habitats Attract Tourists?

Overview

In this activity you will learn about the types of attractive natural habitats that exist within Canada. You will examine specific habitats such as the mountains in Western Canada, the beaches in Central and Eastern Canada, the glaciers in Alberta and Niagara Falls.

Lesson



National and Provincial parks protect natural environments that are representative of Canada's heritage. Natural and Aquatic environments are an important part of our natural and cultural heritage. They certainly play an important role in shaping the identity of our land; this fact is reflected in the splendor of the rivers, lakes, wetlands and coasts and mountains associated with our Provincial and National Parks.

Canadians, in particular like to flock to their own Natural habitats. Some of the kinds of habitats that seem to be especially popular among Canadians and international tourists are our forests, glaciers, mountains and natural beaches.

Banff National Park is a spectacular example of an extremely popular natural environment that attracts over 5 million tourists each year that recreate and sight see.

Banff National Park is Canada's oldest National Park and was established in 1885. It began as a ten square mile reserve around Sulphur Mountain hot springs, but today it covers an area of 6,641 sq. km. Banff National Park is the second largest mountain park after Jasper National Park. It also contains some of the most ecologically significant areas in the Canadian Rocky Mountains.

Interestingly, according to Parks Canada, fifty-eight percent of Banff's visitors are local Albertans. However, an increasingly growing proportion of our visitors are foreign: 17% American, 7% European and Japanese.

In 1984, Banff was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site, together with the other national and provincial parks that form the Canadian Rocky Mountain Parks. It was declared significant due to the mountain landscapes containing mountain peaks, glaciers, lakes, waterfalls, canyons and limestone caves as well as fossils found here. With this designation came added obligations for conservation (UNESCO, 2006).

During the summer months there is so much to attract both local and international tourists to Banff. You can back pack, bike, bird watch, boat, camp, canoe, mountain climb, drive, hike, horseback ride, visit the

hot springs, take photographs, scuba dive, swim, and view wildlife. Moreover, there are lots of interpretive programs for children and adults and the park has numerous events that occur daily within the park. If that is not enough, the park also has a plethora of activities in the winter that also attract tourists. You can bird watch, camp, cross-country ski, drive, downhill ski, snowboard, visit the hot springs, ice dive, ice skate, take photos, ski tour, snow shoeing, ice climb, view wildlife and participate in interpretive programming (Parks Canada).

Canada also has hundreds of provincial parks that span all provinces and territories. These parks provide incredible natural opportunities for travellers both in Canada and from abroad. One park in particular that attracts many Canadians is Sandbanks Provincial Park, located on the shores of Lake Ontario on Quinte Isle.

Sandbanks Provincial Park is one of Southern Ontario's amazing recreational spots, and a large summer magnet for campers and day visitors.

Sandbanks had over 450 000 tourists during the summer of 2004. Sandbanks has three popular sandy beaches, Outlet Beach, Sandbanks Beach and Dunes Beach, which is among the largest and most beautiful beaches in Ontario. The sand is golden and the water sparkles. Giant sand dunes and golden beaches form two of the largest freshwater baymouth sandbars in the world here (Ontario Parks).

Sandbanks has plenty to offer tourists including a variety of types of tourism. You can go for a social tourist trip, which many families do, or go to do more active or recreational tourism. The park offers camping, hiking, boating, fishing, swimming, canoeing, wildlife viewing, biking, bird watching, a playground, and natural heritage education. Windsurfing, sailing, canoeing and boating are also favourite park activities. Moreover, you can cross-country ski and snow shoe there in the winter on groomed trails.

Assignment

Research one of Canada's national parks. The Parks Canada websites at www.ontarioparks.com or www.pc.gc.ca may be helpful. Complete the graphic organizer below to highlight some key information about your Park and the significance of its natural habitat.

Park Name	
Location	
Natural Features	
Size of Park	
Attractions (both natural and other)	
Areas of Concern?	