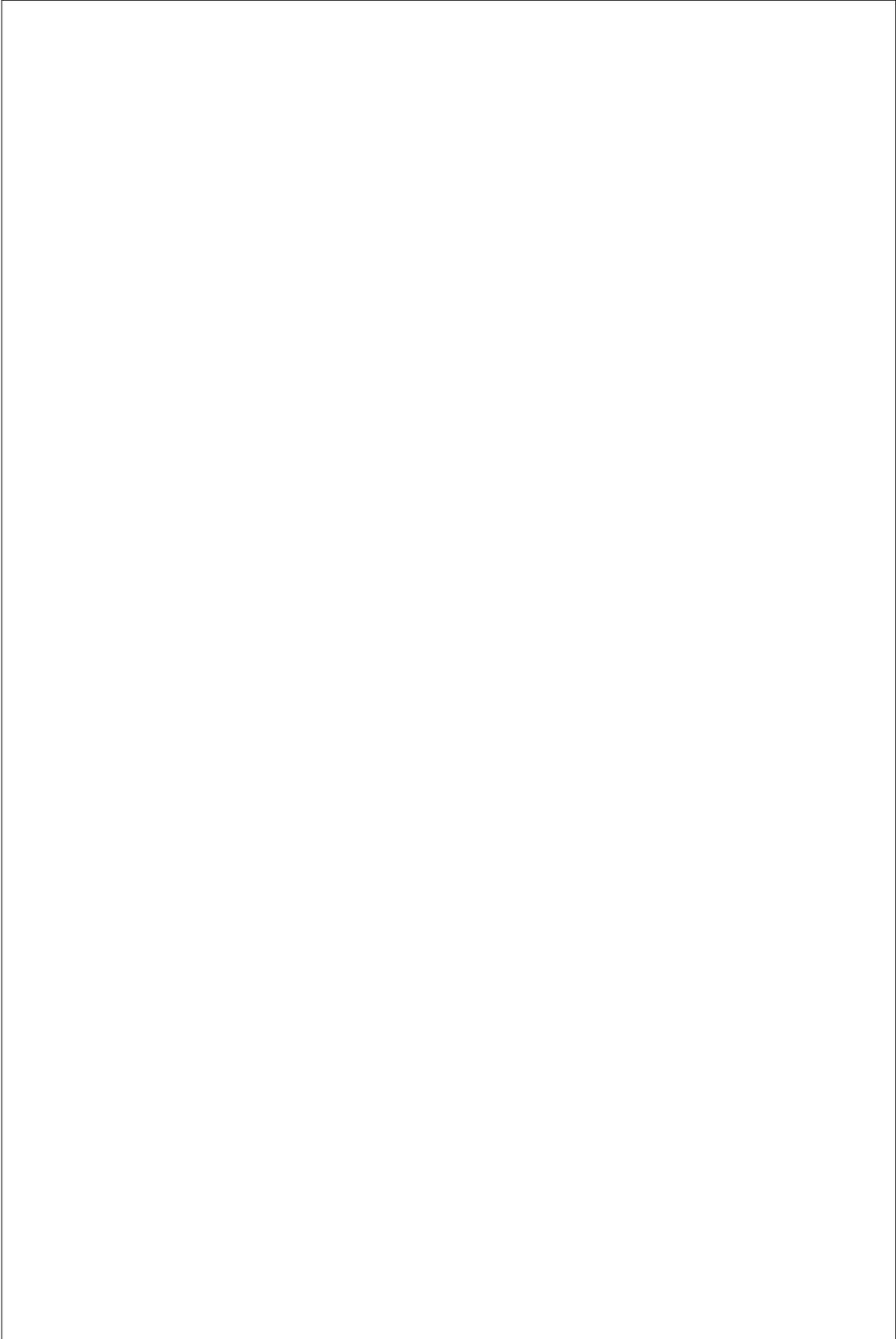

Taking the Air



Paul Kopas

Taking the Air: Ideas and Change
in Canada's National Parks



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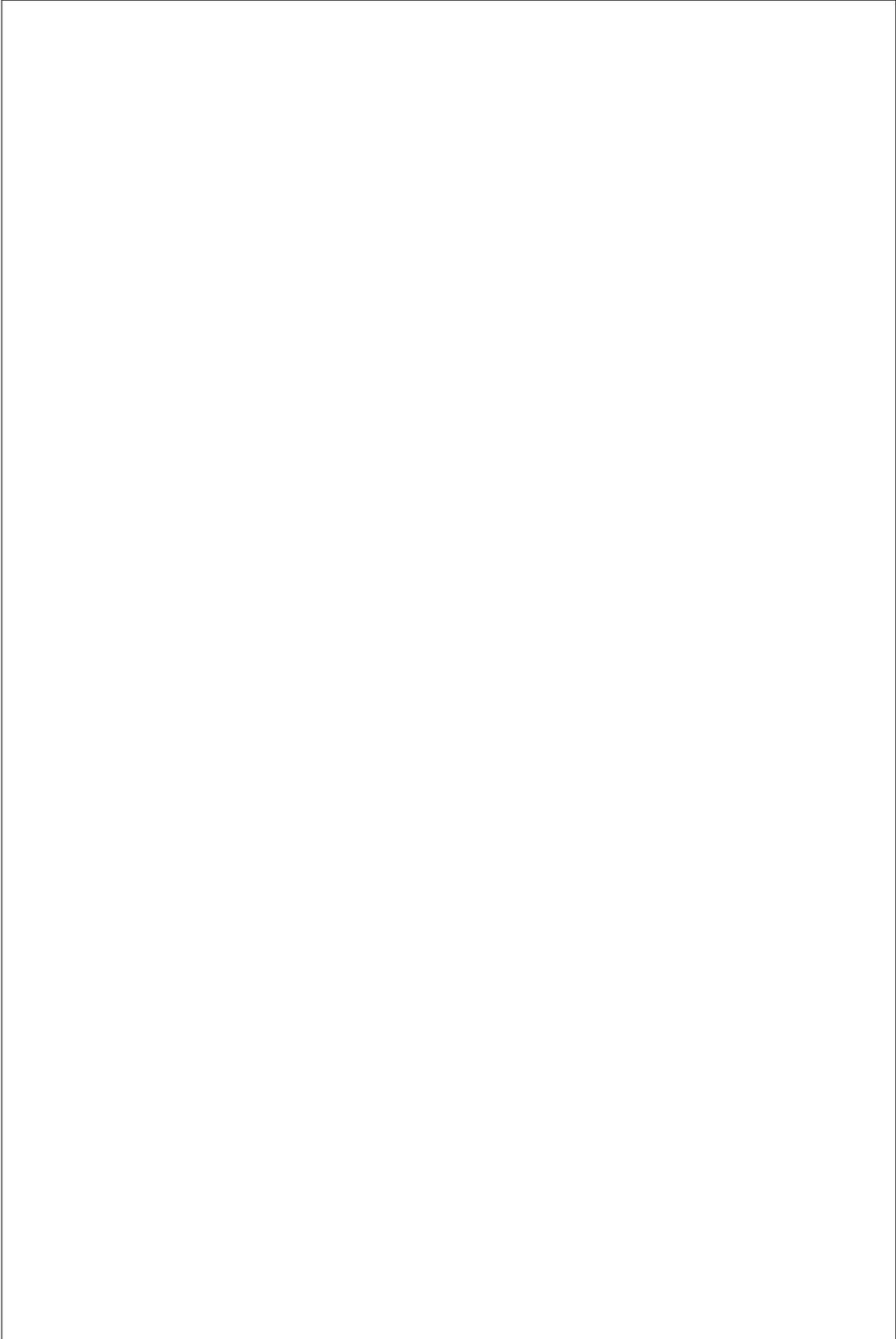
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Preface

National parks are icons of Canada. Canadians and foreign visitors alike regard national parks as national symbols on par with the maple leaf and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. As expressions of Canada, national parks are immensely complex, perhaps also reflecting this country's breadth and diversity. Parks are about history, healthy and wholesome living, opportunities for learning, national memory, recreation, relations between different groups of Canadians (especially between Aboriginal people and the Canadian state), and they are about environmental protection. This complexity presents a challenge for anyone wanting to reach a singular understanding about them.

When I began this analysis, I approached parks as instruments of environmental protection, but I knew that there was also a strong emphasis on their use for tourism and recreation. As a policy analyst, I wanted to understand the relationship between these two elements – protection and use – and sought to explain the growing importance of environmental protection in parks policy from the late 1950s to the present. While the growth of environmental protection continues to be the central theme of this book, the pursuit of ideas about parks has led me through many other subjects, no one of which could capture the diverse character of these special places.

Despite devoting some attention to diverse concepts about parks, this book is primarily a policy analysis. It seeks to understand and explain the development of the environmental components of national parks policy in the latter half of the twentieth century. In order to analyze policy, one must first define it. As outlined in the first chapter, definition is particularly difficult for national parks. As a government program over a century old, it has grown, changed, and adapted without necessarily shedding its nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century characteristics. Therefore, policy must address everything from managing municipalities to protecting caribou migration. Interestingly, tracing that history helps to define the policy change that needs to be explained. It soon became apparent that in the contest between

protection and use, environmental protection gained priority, so in 1988 ecological integrity became the legislated first priority for managing parks. Explaining and understanding this development is the purpose of this book.

As I approached the analytical question, I reasoned that it can be answered best by concentrating on one category of protected area. Therefore, this book addresses terrestrial national parks. While it would be desirable to examine protected areas in their entirety, each category of them inhabits a distinct policy universe occupied by its own participants, institutions, and political forces. Efforts to combine categories for analysis may seem orderly and comprehensive at one level, but these efforts introduce additional variables that impair the ability to reach definitive conclusions. An added complication for parks is that there is little existing policy analysis with which to engage. The necessity to begin at (or near) the beginning has been one of the challenges of this research. Ambitions to analyze policy issues about protected areas more broadly speaking must be part of a staged process of which this volume is but one step.

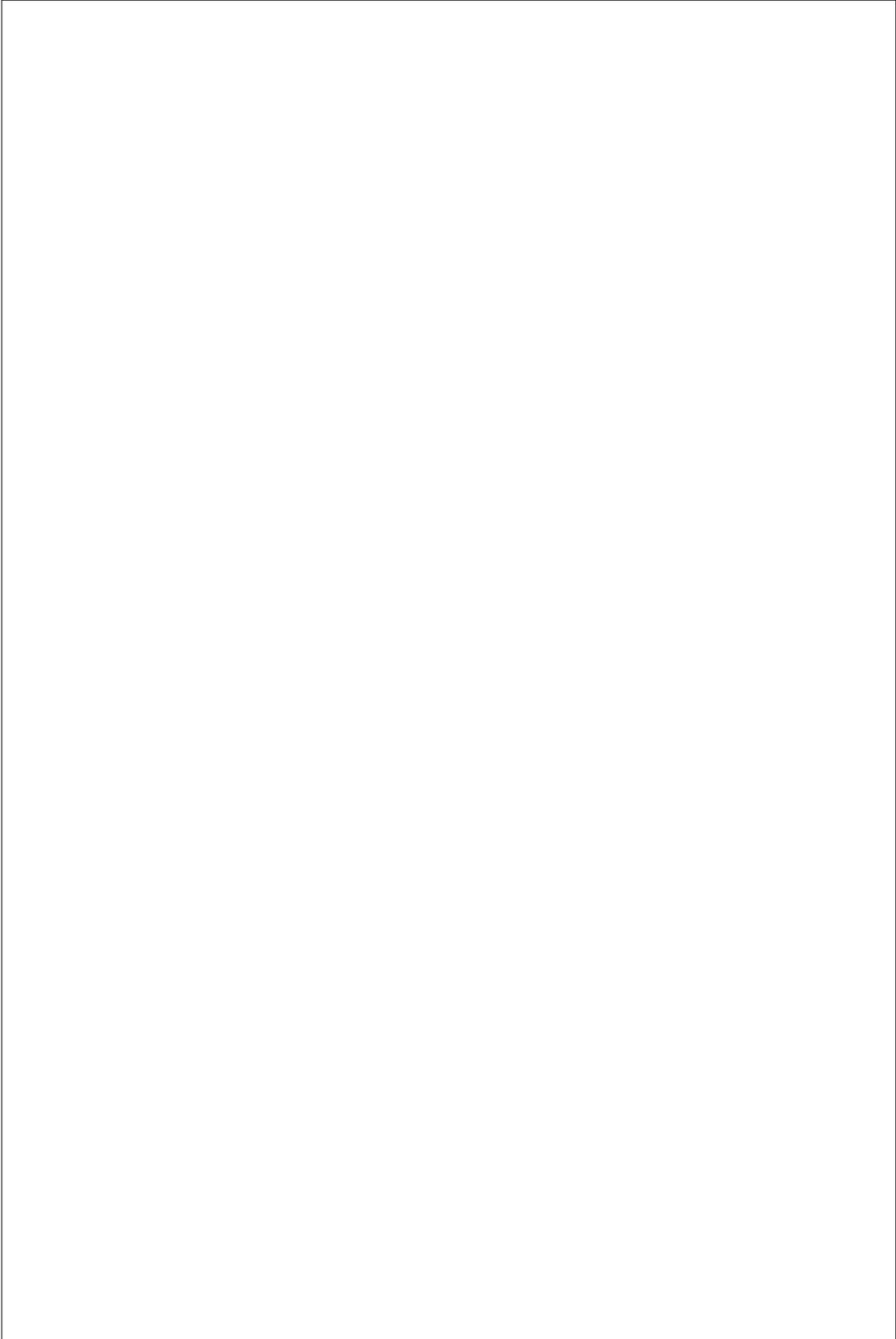
Terrestrial national parks are already highly complicated in themselves. As shown in Chapter 1, national parks are about many things. Policy about them runs the gamut from municipal management to wildlife management. Parks also include millions of international tourists annually, multi-million dollar businesses and commercial investments, indigenous people retaining ancient relationships with the land, other local communities, provincial governments, interest groups, scientific communities, and more. It was preferable, therefore, to make sense of these elements with respect to terrestrial national parks and then to use that understanding for a later examination of other parts of the universe of programs that affect protected areas.

Thus, although this book examines aspects of Parks Canada as an organization, especially in the penultimate chapter, it is not intended to be an organizational analysis of that agency. In particular, the analysis does not examine other Parks Canada programs such as the national historic sites or national marine conservation areas. Historic sites have shared administrative space with terrestrial parks for nearly a century and although there are parallel concerns about conservation integrity in both programs, the cultural emphasis for historic sites makes them a substantively different policy area. More closely related to the traditional national park, the marine areas program has not altered the debate about the degree of environmental protection that needs to be afforded to protected areas of any type. More importantly, and complicating an understanding of marine areas, Parks Canada's ambitions for them overlap with policies for similar reserves by the Canadian Wildlife Service and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. All three agencies' programs are in the process of being harmonized within the federal government. Therefore, it is too early to draw conclusions about

how these tri-department arrangements will affect environmental protection or to offer an explanation for policy outcomes that have not yet manifested themselves. Since historic sites are cultural rather than ecological, and since the results of the national marine conservation areas program are not yet revealed, terrestrial national parks remain the most effective unit of analysis for studying the shift toward increased environmental protection within the broad framework of Parks Canada programs.

At the same time, it is worth observing that these parks exist within a complex network of protected areas in Canada; the lessons learned from studying them may be useful for examining other parts of that network or, alternatively, examples drawn from elsewhere may provide insight into terrestrial national parks policy. For example, in addition to the already mentioned programs within Parks Canada, the Canadian Wildlife Service has an extensive protected areas network, both terrestrial and marine, for the benefit of migratory and resident animal populations. Provincial governments also have diverse, complex systems of parks and protected areas. Some places are devoted almost exclusively to human recreation, and thus parallel that part of Parks Canada's mandate, while others are aimed at wilderness protection and wildlife preservation. Some areas, such as ecological reserves, are off-limits to all humans except scientists who need express permission to enter them. The programs in the provinces vary considerably. Some, such as those in British Columbia and Ontario, parallel the national parks system, while others are more limited. An analysis of the politics of these provincial variations would greatly enhance the overall understanding of policy formation for protected areas in Canada.

There are other kinds of protected areas that also deserve attention. Many municipalities provide land (or water) and budgets to protect parts of their territories for ecological purposes beyond human recreation. Privately funded land conservation trusts also protect tracts of land and water across Canada. By complementing public policies these trusts serve public purposes, but little analysis has been done to understand how their activities are facilitated by formal public policy or how they relate to government actions at all levels. Attention to these and other types of protected areas policy would round out an understanding of parks policy in Canada. This book is but one element in a wider universe.



Acknowledgments

I am deeply indebted to many people who gave generously of their time and shared their expertise as I sought answers to questions. Since one of the challenges that confronted me was the paucity of published material on the policy process for parks, the willingness of many people to share their knowledge was an essential foundation for this book.

Numerous Parks Canada officials were enormously helpful, providing the detail, expert knowledge, and insight that allowed me to develop the arguments I offer. In the early stages of my work, two individuals were particularly useful. Harold Eidsvik had been one of two planners in the original planning section for parks in the late 1950s, and he guided me through the documents, ideas, and experiences that led to the 1964 Policy Statement. Bruce Amos, former director of parks establishment, patiently explained that I “could not get there from here” – parks were not quite the instruments I initially took them to be. These two men provided the primer that enabled me to see parks more clearly and build the arguments on which the analysis grew.

Many others at Parks Canada, including several who are retired, explained their roles and experiences in the evolution of policy development. My research was also facilitated by employees in a number of federal departments: the Canadian Wildlife Service, the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, the Treasury Board Secretariat, and the Privy Council Office. The Academic Access Program of the Privy Council Office was essential for helping me answer questions for which no published sources existed.

Interest group leaders were equally helpful. In particular, the late Gavin Henderson, founder of the National and Provincial Parks Association of Canada, explained the early details and challenges of the parks protection movement. His award as a Member of the Order of Canada recognizes his work for wilderness conservation in this country. In addition, people in the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, the World Wildlife Fund, the Sierra

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Legal Defence Fund, the Canadian Arctic Resources Committee, and Nature Canada described events, explained strategies, and provided documents.

Thanks are also due to many librarians and archivists whose efforts unearthed obscure and valuable documents. Of critical importance to the early part of this work was the support and guidance of staff at Library and Archives Canada. The interlibrary loans and government publications librarians at the University of Toronto libraries were extraordinarily helpful. The staff of the Documentation Centre, a small library within Parks Canada, were equally generous with their knowledge. Librarians at Environment Canada, the Toronto Public Library, the Vancouver Public Library, and the University of Saskatchewan assisted my work.

I would like to extend special appreciation to two of my former professors, Ronald Manzer and Grace Skogstad, both at the University of Toronto, for their support on this and other projects. I also owe thanks to Randy Schmidt of UBC Press for his encouragement and support during the preparation of this manuscript.

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The interpretations and the conclusions I have drawn from this information are completely my own. Any errors or omissions are mine.

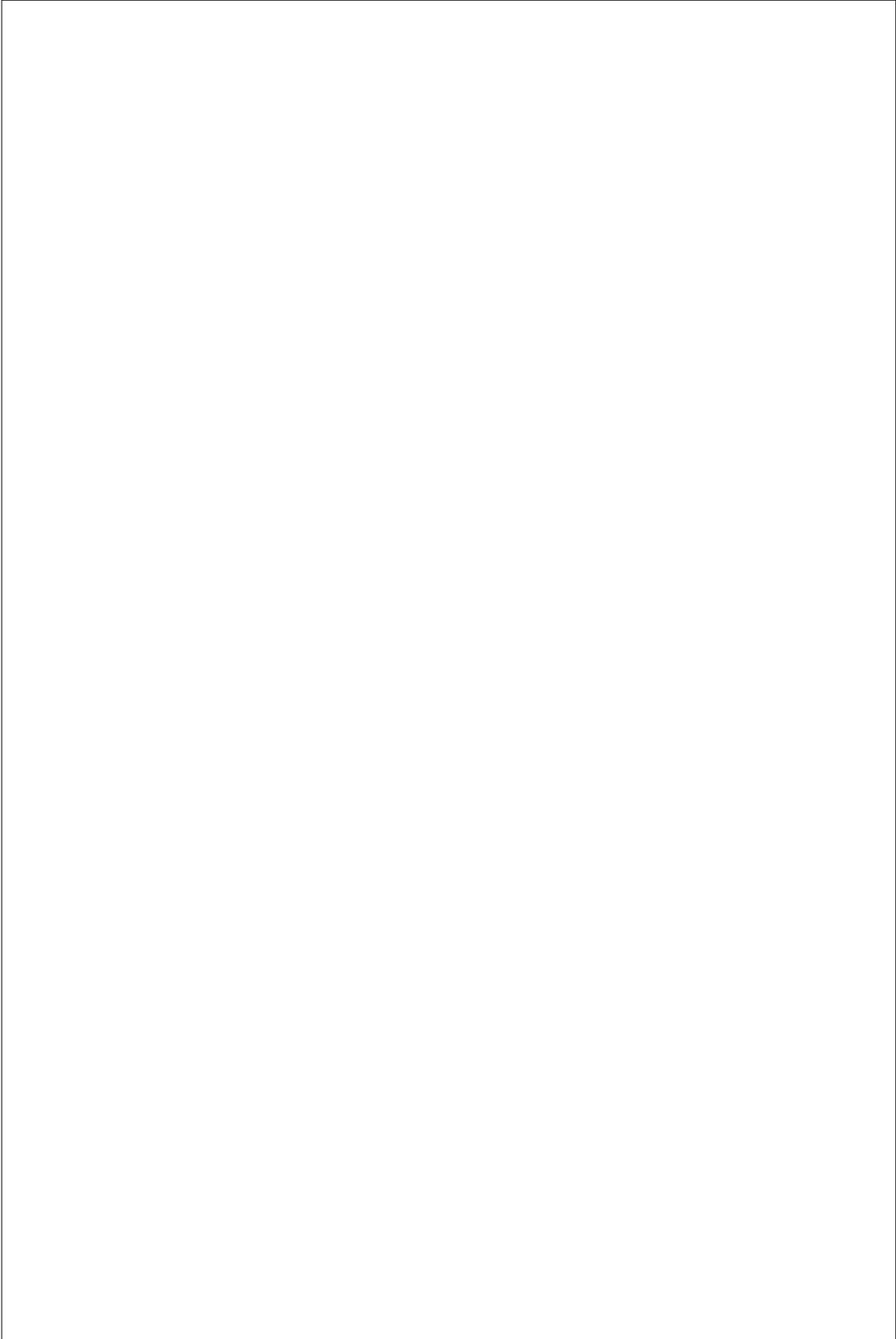
Abbreviations

ADM	assistant deputy minister
AMB	Archipelago Management Board
AMPPE	Association for Mountain Parks Protection and Enjoyment
APA	Administrative Procedures Act (US)
ARDA	Agriculture and Rural Development Agency
BBVS	Banff-Bow Valley Study
CAP	Canada Assistance Plan
CCMD	Canadian Centre for Management Development
CCME	Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment
CCREM	Canadian Council of Resource and Environment Ministers
CCRM	Canadian Council of Resource Ministers
CEAA	Canadian Environmental Assessment Act
CNF	Canadian Nature Federation
CPAWS	Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society
CPR	Canadian Pacific Railway
CRASE	Conseil régional d'aménagement du Sud-est
CWS	Canadian Wildlife Service
DFO	Department of Fisheries and Oceans
ELUCS	Environment and Land Use Committee Secretariat
ETO	employee takeover
FEARO	Federal Environmental Assessment Review Office
IPC	Islands Protection Committee
IPS	Islands Protection Society
ITC	Inuit Tapirisat of Canada
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources
NCC	Nature Conservancy of Canada
NDP	New Democratic Party
NPPAC	National and Provincial Parks Association of Canada
NPS	National Parks Service (US)

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ONC	Office of Native Claims
ORRRC	Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission
PCO	Privy Council Office
PPBS	Planning, Programming, and Budgeting System
PSAC	Public Service Alliance of Canada
SCCR	Ski Club of the Canadian Rockies
SLDF	Sierra Legal Defence Fund
SOAs	special operating agencies
TBS	Treasury Board Secretariat
VSCs	visitor service centres
WAC	Wilderness Advisory Committee
WWF	World Wildlife Fund

Taking the Air



1

Introduction: The Meaning of National Parks and the Contexts of Change

Ideas about National Parks

National parks are about meaning. They reflect, for a population, something about itself that it would like to believe. However, these meanings change over time as national, or even international, populations adopt new beliefs about themselves.

Although viewed by many Canadians today in terms of environmental protection, Canada's system of national parks actually reflects more than a century of changing ideas about the natural environment. As meanings change, so does the nature of national parks, and that nature is likewise affected by shifts in who, among the set of policy-making participants, defines new meanings for them. These shifts are not smooth and effortless, and their paths are both obscure and labyrinthine. Because of changing ideas and values, it is difficult to offer a single definition of a national park or even to define, unequivocally, what is national park policy. Canada's own legislation – which was not passed until 1930, forty-five years after the first national park was created – captured the ambiguous position of parks when it declared that they be simultaneously used by the present generation and preserved unimpaired for future ones. This dichotomy between use and preservation is not unique to Canadian parks but is also reflected in definitions such as those used by the World Conservation Union (formerly the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources [IUCN]), a global authority on environmental practice.

By containing this particular ambiguity, national parks policies reflect both past and present meanings as well as foreshadow possible future ones. Identifying actual policy and charting its change therefore comprise a difficult task, which needs to be approached tentatively. Nevertheless, it is clear that policy debates have largely focused on divergent views about the relationship between humans and the natural environment. While this is true in general, over the past fifty years concepts favouring greater protection within national parks have slowly gained ascendancy over those supporting

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economic use and development. Of course, conceptions of parks are more complex than this dichotomy, and ancillary ideas have been included in one or the other of these divergent views. In order to understand this transition and to identify the associated changes in meaning, it is necessary to explore the various values that are embodied in national parks.

Among the many ideas that today confound national parks policy makers, both inside and outside the state, five frame the meanings that parks reflect to their creators and advocates. First, parks are, both currently and historically, symbolic institutions variously reflecting an ideology of the state or its constituent society (although state and society may not agree on what is being symbolized). Second, parks are instruments of economic development and social (i.e., recreational) policy providing for national, regional, and personal well-being. Third, parks are instruments of environmental policy in that they protect terrain and resident wildlife, selectively represent diverse natural landscapes, and encourage popular nature education. Fourth, parks are human landscapes where people live in an environment and where they also observe and reflect upon their own interaction with that environment. Fifth, parks are heritage artifacts; as social constructions, they are fragments of the mostly vanished Canadian wilderness and, as such, objects of curiosity and wonder.

Parks as Symbols

National parks began in the United States, where, in that country's early decades, there was a sense of cultural inferiority to Europe and a consequent strong desire to show that national greatness, present or potential, existed in the New World too. Roderick Nash, chronicling how early nation builders sought inspiration at home to offset this perceived superiority of Europe, observed that in the early nineteenth century much concern remained about the shortcomings of American culture but that a distinct national personality gradually emerged. Central to that personality was the nature and vastness of the American wilderness. "Romantics," says Nash, "invested it with value while nationalists proclaimed its uniqueness."¹ Later, in the nineteenth century, national parks became both the embodiment and a representation of this new American national character. Alfred Runte, writing specifically about parks, suggests that "cultural insecurity, as the catalyst for concern, speeded the nation's response to the threatened confiscation of its natural heritage" and that the monumental landscapes of the American west were the "cornerstones of [the] nationalistic park idea."²

While Canadians are frequently insecure about their place in the world and are proud of the country's natural beauty, nationalism is more often played out in terms of national unity or integration rather than in the expression of national greatness. National integration has been and continues to be the historic project for the federal government and often clashes with

provincial ambitions. To pursue this project, a wide variety of policy instruments from transportation through health care has been used in support of the federal government's integrative efforts. The same is true with respect to national parks, which have, in their own way, also been used as an instrument of integration and nationalist symbolism. At the same time, provinces have generally resisted establishment of the federal jurisdiction and the national symbolism inherent in national parks.

For its part, the (national) Parks Branch³ evinced the federal government's nationalizing philosophy when, in the 1950s, it made tentative steps toward defining a national parks system as one in which there would be at least one national park in each province (even though the national parks plan eventually came to be geophysically, not politically, based). Indeed, exponents of the national parks system, both public and private, now draw attention to the fact that there are national parks in each of the provinces and territories. It is as if a Canadian national parks system would not be complete without representation, regardless of physical merit, in each subnational jurisdiction.

While national parks may symbolize ideas of nationalism and national greatness, they can also express democratic ideas. This democratic ideal reflects a difference in political values between the Old World and the New, at least in the initial decades of parks establishment. European parks were initially the property of royalty. As early as the thirteenth century, the word *park* was used to denote "an enclosed tract of land held by royal grant for the keeping of beasts of the chase,"⁴ although royal hunting preserves are thought to have existed even earlier. The term "public park" appeared in the seventeenth century to suggest a place of public recreation as opposed to one reserved for royalty, but it was only in nineteenth-century America that the idea of a park as a place for the common citizen gained prominence. Frederick Law Olmsted, the great landscape architect and advocate of urban public parks, wrote that it is the duty of democratic government to protect natural areas for public enjoyment from obstacles created by the private ownership of land.⁵ Indeed, as the explorers of Yellowstone prepared their recommendations to Congress, they explicitly discussed the idea of a national or government-controlled park to allow all people to have access to and enjoy the marvel of Yellowstone's natural wonders. For Americans, in other words, the concepts of citizenship and democracy extended to having the state make available opportunities for outdoor recreation and appreciation of the nation's natural monuments.

These American views deliberately rejected the class philosophy of the Old World, a philosophy expressed by William Wordsworth, who wrote in 1810 that the English Lakes District should be preserved as a national property for "every[one] ... who has an eye to perceive and a heart to enjoy," but that the land would be ruined if "artisans, labourers, and the humbler class

of shopkeeper” were allowed to frequent the region.⁶ Yet Wordsworth’s ideas, whether directly or not, would have found ready listeners in the Parliament of Canada seventy-five years later. In 1885, in a motion to protect the natural hot springs at Banff and thereby establish what would become the focal point of Canada’s first national park, Sir John A. Macdonald and other parliamentarians saw Banff as a preserve of the rich and felt that the government should provide opportunities for relaxation to people of wealth. Explicit plans were drawn up to keep “the doubtful class of people” away.⁷

In fact, the democratic ideal of wide public access to parks did not appear in Canadian discussions until well into the twentieth century when car travel became widespread. Surprisingly, this ideal continues to be debated today, although in a new guise. As parks policy has shifted toward increased protection of the natural environment and access has accordingly been restricted, road and other motorized access is increasingly limited in some of the older parks and is not being developed at all in new ones. Some of the new parks are in locations remote from the main bulk of the Canadian population centres and are very expensive to visit. These factors have the effect of making large expanses of the parks system mainly available to the young, healthy, and moderately wealthy. Critics point out that this correspondingly limits enjoyment for the aged, infirm, and less privileged.

While democratic ideals continue to be debated, parks also represent an environmental symbolism irrespective of any tangible protection of the environment, and this symbolic role is a significant aspect of their continuing presence. In a book by the Canadian Nature Federation (now Nature Canada), an interest group deeply concerned about national park policy, this role is explicitly acknowledged: “Countries ... need the symbolism of wild places to remind them of their sources and ... their continued co-existence [with nature] in the world.”⁸

Parks as Instruments of Economic and Social Policy

In Canada, national parks were specifically designed to be instruments of economic development when they were first established in the late nineteenth century. As Canada expanded westward, natural resources, in terms of agriculture, mining, and logging, were seen as opportunities for economic and national growth. Parks, in terms of scenic and recreational opportunities, presented a different use of natural resources. By preventing unmanaged agricultural and industrial development of resources in certain areas, parks preserved natural beauty while giving government-appointed managers monopoly control over their natural amenities, which could then be sold (or ancillary services could be sold) to park visitors. At Banff, Canada’s first national park, the government expropriated control over the famous hot springs from the original entrepreneurs and then extended virtually monopolistic commercial opportunities to the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR)

in which the government had so much interest. Following the establishment of Banff, the government created a string of national parks through the mountains along the railway line to provide tourist attractions and economic opportunity for the CPR.

Economic opportunity continued to play a major role in the establishment of other national parks, particularly when they came to be established in the disadvantaged Atlantic provinces. Indeed, Newfoundland's Terra Nova National Park, complete with golf courses and other tourist facilities, was part of the package of enticements that the Government of Canada offered to the then British colony to encourage it to join Canada in the late 1940s. The economic promise of national parks continues to be one of their main features, as they are justified in terms of tourism and other commercial opportunities in order to offset provincial and local concerns about the possible loss of economic activity that might accompany a park's protection of forests and other lands. The federal government has had not only to compensate provincial treasuries for resources situated in provincially located parks but also to assure local people that new economic opportunities will equal or even exceed the commercial value of forgone activities. In short, to gain critical public acceptance, national parks must still be promoted as including economic opportunity.

A relatively recent further manifestation of the economic uses of parks is the inclusion of Aboriginal interests in them. Not only do many new parks (in Canada and elsewhere) allow for continuing traditional indigenous uses of park lands (e.g., hunting, fishing, and gathering), but also paid employment is increasingly a way in which the interests of parks and Aboriginal people are integrated. In many new parks, wardens and interpretive personnel are drawn from local Aboriginal and other indigenous populations. Often there are formal or administrative guidelines requiring such employment.

While direct commercial activity and Aboriginal employment are both past and present factors in national park creation, parks also contain a social policy element insofar as they provide opportunities for outdoor recreation and popular nature education. (In this sense, nature education is an element of both "social policy" and "environmental policy.") In particular, with the increased availability of cars, national parks were promoted by governments as places for healthy, family-oriented outdoor vacations. Through the 1950s and 1960s, national parks focused on campgrounds, hiking trails, and wildlife-viewing locations. The creation of these amenities drew on arguments from mid-nineteenth-century thinkers who held that modern urban industrial workers needed outdoor recreation either in city parks or in the wilderness to maintain their mental and social health. Indeed, in the 1950s, federal park planners considered creating national parks at locations within a short day's drive from Canada's major cities specifically to make outdoor recreation available to the urban masses. This plan

founded on the provinces' own desires to use the provincial land base to make such parks available to what they saw as a provincial constituency.

Parks as Instruments of Environmental Policy

Today, national parks are widely regarded as a means of environmental protection and preservation. In addition, national parks provide two other environmental functions. One of these is to selectively represent samples of the natural environment in a given country or region in order to provide a benchmark for comparison with human-altered environments as well as opportunities for scientific research. The other is that national parks provide a forum for popular nature education.

In most respects, environmental protection has come to be the focus of national parks. Environmental values emerged in western Europe and the United States in the nineteenth century almost concurrently with the development of America's first national parks. These values quickly divided into opposing themes, often distinguished (though not very clearly) in the American debate as conservation and preservation, respectively, which continue to underlie current discussions of environmental policy in general and national parks in particular. More recently, these two concepts have been joined by the perspectives of scientific ecology. Together, these three sets of ideas form the basis on which national parks are considered instruments of environmental policy.

Conservationists are proponents of scientific management and hold that natural resources should be used but used wisely; that is, resources should be managed carefully to avoid waste and to achieve the most efficient production from them. For conservationists, a nation's natural resources should be kept available for present or future production. While conservationists acknowledge that recreation and quiet enjoyment may constitute a kind of use, they argue that these uses do not require exclusive control and need not preclude extractive uses. With careful management, say the conservationists, all these activities can coexist.

Robert Craig Brown's suggestion that Canada's early parks conformed to a "doctrine of usefulness"⁹ parallels the conservationist or "wise use" ideas prevalent in the United States in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The fact that current critics of national parks often argue that parks constitute a single use of resources and a "removal" from production of important forestry or other resources attests to the continuance of the conservationist doctrine.

In contrast, preservationists argue that some parts of the natural environment should be protected completely and kept inviolate from alteration by humans. Human activities, according to this concept, should be limited to observation and contemplation. While preservationist ideas competed with

conservationist ones, both remained essentially human centred; that is, preservationists held a transcendental but human view of the natural environment, while conservationists saw the environment purely in terms of human utility.

Since the 1930s, the concept of ecology, wherein the multiple and intricate links among all parts of the natural environment are seen as important, has become an increasingly important part of the environmental and national parks debate. Understanding something about these links introduces a new set of ideas into the discussion of national parks. Thus, while parks policies are still concerned with use versus preservation, the latter concept is given a focused objective in matters of parks selection, definition, and management by the scientific principles of ecology.

Ecological ideas infused concepts of national parks in the post-World War II era as scientists and then park planners began to design parks systems around the perceived need to protect representative samples of all the Earth's major ecosystems for study and reference. While not initially conceived for this purpose, national parks provide a suitable vehicle for these representational objectives. Today there are many small and medium-sized parks that are of doubtful value in actually protecting a functioning piece of an ecosystem but that do provide some (however limited) representation of the pristine environment.

A third element of environmental policy with respect to parks is that, coupled with outdoor recreation, they provide a forum for popular nature education. Parks, both national and provincial, play this educative role by offering various kinds of interpretive and instructional guidance. Trails are designed to take pedestrians to points of interest where plaques, displays, and dioramas enlighten the visitor on matters of geology, botany, wildlife, Aboriginal uses of natural resources, early European explorers, and so on. Summer employment is offered to specially trained interpretive staff to make this perambulatory education even more effective.

Parks as Human Landscapes

Initially, national parks were about the spectacle of wilderness. Despite an 1832 proposal by George Catlin, an early-nineteenth-century American painter, for a park "containing man and beast," the early parks were not about people. In the late nineteenth century, the idea of pristine nature meant that wilderness was almost unencumbered by human occupation and use.¹⁰ In 1872, the legislation creating Yellowstone National Park prohibited settlement upon or occupation by people within park boundaries. This restriction included Native Americans. This was a period in which military conflict continued sporadically between several indigenous tribes and the US government. In 1877, there was a skirmish between the Nez Percé

and the government on the territory within the park in which several Natives were killed. In establishing the park, individual indigenous groups were removed to nearby reservations provided for by treaties. In this context of war, treaty making, and relocation, the restrictions on settlement in the new park clearly meant that indigenous people were excluded.

At the same time as Native Americans were prevented from occupying park land, the unregulated nature of the area meant that souvenir hunters gathering animal trophies, geological specimens, and pieces of sculpted hot springs mineralizations were rapidly stripping the park of its attractions. This removal alarmed the park superintendent, who had been given broad powers under the original legislation, and his early reports illustrate his concern for the management of people within the park. Out of these circumstances and from the nineteenth century's romantic ideas of wilderness grew the concept of parks as wild areas free of human occupation. This "Yellowstone model" of parks devoid of people was rapidly adopted around the world and subsequently provided the basis for the internationally recognized definition of a national park. Accordingly, national parks are aimed at protecting ecosystems, which, until about the 1970s, were understood in non-human terms. This definition means that the system of "national parks" in England and Wales is not internationally recognized as such. Those parks, and similar ones in France and elsewhere in Europe, are designated "protected landscapes" (or level five in the six-level scheme adopted by international agreement), whereas "national parks" are level two.¹¹ For England and Wales, the landscape is really a joint creation of natural features and the long and thorough human occupation that has meant that these areas do not qualify as national parks,¹² although a very similar acknowledgment of indigenous and/or peasant relationships to the land in later decades resulted in changes to concepts of "natural" ecosystems.

In Canada, even though the early parks were essentially about economic development, with townsites established in Banff, Jasper, and elsewhere, Aboriginal people, as they had been in the United States, were initially excluded. When Banff park (then called Rocky Mountain National Park) was created in 1885, the Stoney Indians, who had previously hunted on and travelled over the land, were kept out of the new park. In a report in 1895, the first commissioner recommended that they be kept out permanently.¹³ Later, in 1930, when Riding Mountain National Park was being established, government officials forceably removed the Ojibway people, now the Keeseekoowenin First Nation, from their traditional hunting grounds and residential areas in order to include these lands within the park.¹⁴

However, the conception of parks as unpopulated wilderness increasingly came to be challenged in the post-World War II era, especially in the period of decolonization and expanding human rights ushered in by the 1960s. Based on claims of indigenous rights and on humanitarian grounds,

Aboriginal people in Canada and other formerly colonized countries and hunter-gatherer people around the world demanded recognition. In turn, their co-operation was seen as essential to the ecological protection of parks. Moreover, in some countries, Canada in particular, Aboriginal people established a legal and constitutional claim to the land.

These claims were coupled with scientific recognition that the world's land, save Antarctica, had been peopled for millennia and that, with basic technology, humans were integral to the ecosystems of the planet. The Yellowstone model of parks, based on nineteenth-century concepts, was actually an artificial approach to landscapes. Therefore, increasingly, indigenous people who lived close to the land, including some agriculturalists, were incorporated into concepts of natural ecosystems. Correspondingly, the definition of national parks came to include indigenous people, and these parks were recognized internationally as "national parks."

Parks as Heritage

The idea of parks as heritage is not necessarily a new one. Catlin's 1832 proposal was, in fact, a suggestion to preserve a way of life against the imperative pressures of change. Today, his ideas would be regarded as being about heritage.

"Heritage," says Raphael Samuel, is "a nomadic term, which travels easily, and puts down roots ... in seemingly unpromising terrain." In the United Kingdom, Samuel describes heritage as encompassing widely dispersed matters from the political characteristics of the past, "God, King and the Law, the altar and throne," to language, "the principal element in conveying tradition from generation to generation, to "do-it-yourself genealogists."¹⁵ David Lowenthal makes a similar observation: "Spanning the centuries from prehistory to last night, heritage melds Mesozoic monsters with Marilyn Monroe, Egyptian pyramids with Elvis Presley. Memorials and monuments multiply, cities and scenes are restored, historic exploits are reenacted, flea-market kitsch is elevated into antiques."¹⁶

For nature conservancy, Samuel says that heritage also refers to "unspoiled countryside and wildlife reserves," although, he acknowledges, this is not limited to "areas of outstanding natural beauty" (as defined in the UK national parks legislation) but includes the entire country, including many urban areas.¹⁷ J.E. Tunbridge and G.J. Ashworth offer five "commonly understood meanings" for the term and, among them, suggest that "natural landscapes [that] are survivals from a past or are seen as in some sense original or typical" constitute a natural heritage.¹⁸

But Robert Hewison is concerned about the consequences of a concentration on heritage. In his book *The Heritage Industry*, he expresses his surprise that, in the 1980s, a new museum opened in Britain approximately every week, and he wonders how long it would be before the entire country is one

vast museum. He further laments that this “industry” seems to be expected to “replace the real industry on which the country’s economy depends.”¹⁹ He also acknowledges that the term is difficult to define, but he is unequivocal about what it means. For him, the heritage industry produces “fantasies of a world that never was,” and at the same time it is “stifling of the culture of the present.” As the past “solidifies around us, all creative energies are lost,” he argues.²⁰ Lowenthal agrees, saying that “heritage is held to fossilize.”²¹ It is this sense of replacement or displacement that raises questions about how parks are heritage rather than environment.

In Canada, the term “natural heritage” has been in use since, at least, the early 1970s. Documents of many kinds frequently use it as a way of expressing one of the values associated with national parks. This usage also helps to link national parks to and distinguish them from national historic sites within their shared administrative domicile in the Parks Branch (Parks Canada). Indeed, one of the dilemmas for the branch was trying to find a way to unify both the conceptualization and the public presentation of the wilderness parks and the historic sites. The search to resolve this dilemma is partly what led to the transfer of the branch from the Department of the Environment to the newly created Department of Canadian Heritage in 1993.

Although the branch, in its new guise as the Parks Canada Agency, was moved back under the responsibility of the minister of the environment in 2003, the 1993 administrative transfer and the shift in emphasis for parks subtly change their focus. Heritage, in all its manifestations, is a spectator activity, even when there are interactive presentations (one is not participating in the past, after all), and not fully a participatory one. As heritage, then, parks are to be looked at. The environment is regarded from a conceptual and emotional distance. Hiking, camping, winter sports, and other outdoor activities remain as opportunities, but the symbolic message conveyed by the administrative location is that parks are reliquaries containing fragments of Canada’s wilderness landscape. As such, they are not meant to be realistic presentations of current environmental conditions. Embedded within this message is the signal, for parks personnel and public alike, that parks are no longer policy instruments for environmental protection (except within their own boundaries). Not that national parks, as a federal policy tool, ever did stray far outside their official mandate, but in their new presentation there is a diminished role as an innovative participant in protecting Canada’s natural environment.

Defining National Parks Policy

The ideas outlined above are about parks, not about policy (except in passing), although they are often reflected in policy. Policy is, however, equally difficult to define since it has accumulated over a long time and because it contains a wide diversity of ideas. The ideas above are presented chrono-

logically in roughly the order in which they emerged initially in the United States, then in Canada and elsewhere. With the exception of concepts of national greatness, all of these ideas have been part of the history of national parks in this country and are manifest in varying degrees in Canada's national parks today. In the early twentieth century, environmental values were incorporated into administrative practice, and eventually legislation, under the influence of a single senior parks bureaucrat. During that process, an incipient conflict emerged between nineteenth-century ideas about economic development and newer environmental ideas evident in the practices of the Parks Branch. This conflict was interrupted at the national level by the Great Depression and World War II, when virtually all the policy tools of the state, including national parks, were employed to deal with those two immense crises. At the local level, the debates continued.²²

For a time following World War II, the Parks Branch did not seem to have a focus or direction, and it was not until the mid-1950s that the inherent and arrested conflict between economic development and environmental protection was resumed. From that period to the present, there has been a general policy shift toward increased emphasis on environmental protection in national parks. By the 1970s, this theme became predominant, and national parks were touted as examples of pristine wilderness without human residents. Indeed, it was expected that people would be expelled from new park sites in order to create pure wilderness settings. This view changed in the 1980s when concepts of ecology were elaborated to acknowledge the reality of human presence in natural environments, especially with respect to Aboriginal people. Then, in 1993, with the transfer of the Parks Branch to the Department of Canadian Heritage, the concept of heritage was explicitly and formally attached to parks.

Thus, for over a century, there have been constantly changing ideas about the purposes of national parks, complicated by the fact that some parks already included previous uses coexisting with recent ones. It is, therefore, very difficult to define national parks policy in any general sense. It is only possible to specify it at the margins, so to speak, with respect to certain periods of time. That is, policy emphases, such as outdoor recreation and nature education in the 1950s and 1960s or environmental protection in the 1980s, can be identified as they occur in a specific period or at the margin of the total body of policy. However, the actual accumulated body of policy and practice contains many competing and conflicting ideas, so it cannot be said that parks are singularly about commercial development, outdoor recreation, environmental protection, revenue generation, or national remembrance: they embody all of these aspects and more. Indeed, some parks continue to cater to an urbanized, cultivated use of wilderness even though the general policy is now expressed more in terms of environmental protection.

Current national parks policy, therefore, is an accretion of several policy initiatives, some recent, many long entrenched. The historic purpose of genteel wilderness relaxation with extensive urban amenities continues in the oldest national parks, especially Banff and Jasper (which have become distinct policy problems in their own right). Policy documents must address, therefore, issues such as the nature of human settlements, the types of buildings and built space, and the management of commercial activities. More recently, as parks have become more environmentally focused, policy has had to include criteria for the selection of parks (which mostly emphasize natural characteristics), the degree and method of protection of their natural environments, and the very definition of “natural environment” itself.²³ As the emphasis in parks policy has shifted, there has been an increasing role for public consultation, now institutionalized in Parks Branch procedures, so that policy formally includes a commitment to public participation in policy deliberations. Finally, and most recently, public discussion has included specific concerns about the role of indigenous peoples in national parks, and policy reflects ideas about the extent and nature of their habitation and use of resources there.

Despite this complexity, both historically and currently the contest between environmental protection and preservation movements, on the one hand, and political forces promoting the use of national parks for commercial recreation, on the other, has been at the centre of the policy debate. Since the mid-1950s, the preservation model for parks has gradually prevailed over the development model. In attempting to understand and account for national parks policy, this study explains the reasons and motivations for this trend toward environmental protection.

It is worth a note at this point to distinguish three avenues of exploration in this study. First, since parks are understood to have meaning, one of the tasks is to identify and illustrate that meaning as outlined at the beginning of this introductory chapter. These ideas suffuse the discussion of parks even when they are not the subject of attention. Second, as parks policy is a complex amalgam of a century of decision making, this work offers a way to define and articulate what that policy is, as has been established immediately above. Third, because the principal objective of this book is to explain policy, a theory (or theoretical framework) needs to be identified and shown to assist in understanding policy and its development. The challenge of finding and employing a suitable policy theory is presented in the following section.²⁴

The Analytical Challenges

The transition to an environmental focus is difficult to explain because it has included many different participants, has not been a steady and uniform process, and has taken place in four discernible periods. Therefore, an

explanation is needed not only for the ascendancy of environmental values over ones favouring economic development but also for why different forces have been influential in each of the periods identified.

In fact, the central problem confronting the student of environmental policy in national parks as it has developed in the past fifty years is that no single theoretical explanation is persuasive over the entire period. To overcome this difficulty, the total time span can be reasonably subdivided into four separate policy periods in each of which political forces bear differently on the policy process. In the first, from (roughly) the mid-1950s to about 1970, the Parks Branch bureaucracy was the central participant in policy development, and policy can be explained by the institutional framework in which the bureaucracy functioned. However, the branch could not institute its proposed policy revisions without the assistance of environmental interest groups, and, even though the branch was the initiator and dominant party, the interaction between the two was essential to the progress of policy formalization.

As the second period began in the late 1960s and early 1970s, the balance between the institutionalized bureaucracy and environmental interests shifted toward approximate parity, wherein both sides initiated as well as responded. In this period, the institutional framework was opened to an ill-defined public participation process in which the effects of governing institutions were very fluid. Ideas about environmental protection and ones about public participation, both current at the time, infused both sets of actors and thereby offer an important element of the explanation for national parks' environmental emphasis through to the end of the 1970s.

The third period, after a brief lull at the beginning of the 1980s, began in earnest with the Mulroney Conservative government era. In this period, environmental interest groups were able to take a critical lead in advancing the environmental character of national parks policy largely because they had learned how to use the institutions of the state, including the courts. Ideas were also important, however, because some institutions had changed in response to new ideas about the role of the public in policy development and in the courts. Thus, an understanding of the interaction among institutions, interests, and ideas in this period is necessary to explain the consolidation of policy.

In the fourth period, state officials, particularly appointed ones, once again became the dominant participants, and again policy can be best explained by understanding the management needs of the bureaucracy and the institutional framework in which it operated. Ideas were also important since neo-conservative concepts occupied much of the broader policy debates, which influenced the choices available to policy makers. However, the bureaucracy was selective about which elements of the business-oriented framework to adopt and how to use them to pursue the goals of the parks program.

Thus, the argument presented in this analysis is that national parks policy can be explained best by examining the institutionalization of ideas within a context of constant change and interaction among environmental interest groups and state institutions. It will show how the interaction of groups and state institutions has led to greater emphasis on environmental protection in national parks. In addition, however, it will show that policy contexts are not static and that the interaction will change over time. In turn, the presence and dynamic of contextualizing ideas, strongly influencing the relationship among policy participants, explain that change.

The Workability of Policy Theories

Numerous theories seek to explain some feature of parks policy, and several might be given consideration. However, most have some limitation that prevents them from providing a convincing explanation. For example, a Marxist or class-analysis model might be used to show how the first parks provided important opportunities for capital accumulation and were developed to enhance the profitability of the CPR and other early railways in Canada. Such a model does not, on the surface, seem to be a likely one for explaining national parks policy since it is, essentially, about class conflict between capital and labour. Therefore, this approach does not explain the shift to stronger environmental protection.

Similarly, a public choice theory might explain how individual actors, politicians, and bureaucrats, in particular, employ self-interested, utility-maximizing criteria as they decide about parks questions. These ideas are initially very attractive for an analysis of the development of national parks policy since budgets and bureau size have expanded over recent decades (until the beginning of the 1990s), but it would be nearly impossible to show empirically how self-interest affected behaviour differently than commercial interests. Arguably, self-interest would be rewarded more by following a development-and-use policy for parks.

In the 1980s, numerous scholars identified the triumvirate of ideas, interests, and institutions as an explanation for policy where ideas and interests interact within established (mostly state) institutions. While incorporating the principal arguments of interest group theory, this approach recognizes that policy is made within an institutional framework, and the structures and processes of institutions will affect how groups function and how they interact with the state.

Ideas and Public Policy

Ideas are central to any explanation of policy. According to Ronald Manzer: "Ideas are important as determinants of public policies because participants in politics and policy-making depend on ideas in order to know what are

public problems, understand potential courses of action, decide which policy is best for them in the circumstances, and later evaluate the overall results."²⁵ In a similar vein, Judith Goldstein says that ideas serve as "road maps, providing guidance to leaders."²⁶

Margaret Weir earlier commented that too little attention had been given to "how ideas become influential, why some ideas win out over others, or why ideas catch on at the time that they do."²⁷ Manzer, however, identifies the critical element by discussing "policy makers," "political rivals," "participants in politics," "interest groups," and "political opponents" because, of course, ideas are brought into and are present in the policy process by and within the political actors also present.²⁸

Ideas are not only present in the participants, however, but are also extant in the many institutions of government and the state. They exist within legislation, practices and procedures, formal rules and orders. Within government and the state, therefore, ideas of a former period are themselves institutionalized, and government itself thus reflects historic ideas.

In terms of explaining policy, therefore, ideas have several possible roles. First, they can be constitutive of meaning whereby they form the basis of individual and collective identities in both fundamental and ephemeral ways (in this case about parks). Second, there are substantive ideas that constitute the specific content of policy – whether, for example, it should be stringent or relaxed, universal or individual, accommodative or punitive. In addition, substantive ideas are about the choice of policy instruments to be used, such as taxation, expenditure, or regulation. Third, ideas are about cause-effect relationships, about what works and what does not. Fourth, ideas encoded in institutions, rules, and practices determine, or at least influence, who may be involved and under what circumstances. Fifth, ideas guide or condition the often rapidly changing policy process. In particular, there are short-lived ideas, sometimes experiments, sometimes simply fashions or trends, about how policy development is to be conducted and who may participate in it. These more fleeting and transitory ideas are the focus of this book.

Interest Groups and Policy

Considerable Canadian scholarship concerning groups has analyzed them within the context of the policy community model, where that community consists, on the one hand, of a subgovernment with a leading bureaucratic agency having a statutory mandate over the policy area, together with (mostly) institutionalized interest groups, and, on the other hand, an attentive public of interested but not actively participatory parties. Related to policy communities, work on policy networks has provided detail about how groups interact with each other and with the state. William Coleman

and Grace Skogstad and others have elaborated upon this latter framework by distinguishing three broad categories of policy networks found within a policy community:²⁹ pluralist, closed, and state-directed.

The differentiation of the policy community into networks enables distinctions to be made among the separate processes concerning the creation or management of each of nearly forty existing national parks, several designated regions awaiting parks, and the general policy debate at the national level – all of which may, at different times, constitute different policy loci. Another insight into national parks policy development, and the most important in terms of the thrust of this analysis, is the fact that the policy network model describes the several different relationships that have characterized the interaction between the Parks Branch and organized groups over the past five decades.

Despite the undoubted value of the policy community framework, there are several respects in which the model is not helpful. First, because of the resources that they can bring to bear, institutionalized groups are seen to dominate policy communities, and groups with less capacity are relatively insignificant in comparison.³⁰ However, in the contest between preservation and development in national parks, for much of the period under discussion, the preservationist groups were issue oriented or, at best, fledgling groups (in the terms of this literature), while the development interests were organized into local or national institutionalized groups. The relative success of these weaker (environmental) groups in shifting policy toward environmental protection is therefore unexplained by the policy community model with its attention to the advantages of institutionalized groups.

A second concern is that at its most fundamental level the policy community model is conceived in terms of different interests competing with each other for influence over policy ideas and outcomes. However, groups favouring commercial development in parks are mostly not evident in the policy process at the national level. Development interests are reflected in policy formulation in highly abstract, almost invisible, ways at this level. The details of policy networks are valuable, but groups successful at influencing parks policy conform only weakly to these configurations described by network models. For example, groups challenge the state not by “drawing on an inclusive, hierarchical associational system”³¹ but by being able to use state institutions such as Parliament, the Constitution, and the courts.

For national parks, the most significant shortcoming of the policy community model is that it does not, at its present level of development, explain change over time. Whereas the parks policy network in the 1950s and 1960s might be described, with modifications, as a state-directed network, by the 1970s this had become more like a pressure pluralist one and by the 1990s had acquired some characteristics suggesting a limited form of concertation.

Taken together, these observations about the policy community model show that, while it is essential to understanding changes in national parks policy, it needs to be buttressed by additional analytical concepts.

Institutions in Policy Analysis

James March and Johan Olsen,³² Theda Skocpol,³³ Peter Hall,³⁴ and others have argued that policy is not simply the aggregation of the bargains among competing individuals and organized interests but also the result of the organizational or institutional framework in which competition takes place. For them, an understanding of the combined effect of institutions together with interest groups and ideas is necessary to more fully explain policy outputs. By making some policy options available and precluding others, institutions structure or channel the competing interests and the ideas that these individuals and organizations convey.

One of the many diverse issues in the literature on institutions is the debate between rational choice and historical institutional approaches to institutional analysis. For rational choice theorists, institutions are no more than the constraining and channelling contexts in which participants seek, under conditions of rationality, to maximize their self-interest in pursuit of goals exogenously determined. In contrast, historical institutionalists see the matter more broadly, arguing that institutions shape the goals of participants as well as their strategies and relationships. Equating organizations and institutions as he does, Hall says that "organizational position ... influences an actor's definition of his own interests, by establishing his institutional responsibilities and relationship to other actors."³⁵ This self-definition by policy actors leads historical institutionalists to be more inductive than rational choice theorists since the goals of participants must be determined during the analysis rather than being taken a priori into it.

The distinction between the concepts of rational choice and historical institutionalism is relevant to national parks because the development of policy has been strongly influenced, both constrained and facilitated, by the central institutions of the Canadian state, such as federalism, parliamentary government, ministerial authority, and the courts. At the same time, participants' goals concerning both policy and their relation to it have arisen partly from the institutions within which national parks are situated. In this context, it is important to note that national parks and the National Parks Act (1930) are themselves institutions and that their very existence influences the kinds of goals that various participants develop with respect to them.

Relatively little of this literature has addressed changes in these variables over time. Because the interaction (like the ideas, institutions, and interests themselves) is not static, it is necessary to explain the changing contexts in

order to fully explain the policy itself. Thus, this analysis of how the policy contexts change over time will add to existing understandings about institutions and enrich general theoretical explanations of policy analysis over extended periods of time.

The Role of Contextualizing Ideas in Understanding Change

Canadian national parks policy presents a series of challenges to attempts to explain its development over the period from the mid-1950s to the early twenty-first century. One, as outlined above, is to define the policy, given its multiple components, in such a way that it can be analyzed and explained at all. Another is to choose a theoretical perspective that can provide a persuasive explanation for the policy. Since no one theoretical approach is consistently effective when applied over a fifty-year period, this presents a third and general challenge. This one is that, while standard theoretical perspectives on the one hand, or the composite approach of looking at institutions, interests, and ideas together on the other, may be persuasive for one period, neither any single approach nor any particular configuration of several will be uniformly convincing in all periods. The challenge is therefore twofold. The first part is to offer an explanation for the policy output in any particular period. The second is to understand changes in the factors relevant to the explanation of that policy output.

There is a vast literature on national parks, most of it describing their natural features or narrating their human histories. Few studies address policy except in descriptive or prescriptive (usually in highly normative) terms. Limited attention has been given to explaining parks policy in terms of theories of public policy in general. Without much previous analysis, the study of parks policy must begin without reference points, a situation that is complicated by the many political influences that affect the development of policy.

In the beginning of national park development, railway interests were a significant factor, a fact that might suggest that some form of Marxist or elite-accommodation model would be useful in explaining the pre-World War II period. Ambitious politicians have also, on occasion, played a major role in the expansion of the parks system, which suggests a public choice approach wherein self-interest is determinative. In the current period, interest groups have been central to the policy process, and this involvement suggests either a pluralist or a policy community explanation. Each has some relevance, but each is also insufficient to explain either the century-long development of national parks or the relatively recent shift toward strengthening environmental protection. In place of these explanations, or combining them, an explanation is sought that can unify the multiple political factors and the transformations through time.

Contexts, Ideas, and a Theory of Policy Change

Heraclitus, the sixth-century-BC Greek philosopher, observed that “one cannot step twice into the same river”;³⁶ everything is in flux. Institutions, ideas, and interests exist in constantly changing contexts, and the intersection among these political factors, which may help to explain policy, will not necessarily be stable. Hence, to understand more fully the various influences on policy, it is essential to understand how changes in the policy-making context affect the ways in which institutions, ideas, and interests may come to bear on policy decisions.

Contexts are widely recognized as influential in political life. Kenneth Dyson, for example, in his work on the development of the state in western Europe, posits that “concepts and contexts are inseparable.”³⁷ Robert Putnam, in his twenty-year study of Italian regional government, suggests that “the practical performance of institutions ... is shaped by the social context within which they operate.”³⁸ In a similar vein, Kent Weaver and Bert Rockman comment that institutional “capabilities are inherently situational: they involve a relationship among government objectives, efforts and perceived problems that are never completely comparable across individual countries.”³⁹ James Farr takes this view further and proposes what he calls “situational analysis.”⁴⁰

Most of these comments refer to a short-term, static situation, but the relevance of differing contexts in different periods is also frequently acknowledged as politically influential. Douglas Ashford, for example, draws attention to the importance of timing and the context of the moment when he suggests that policy case studies describe a particular setting and give “an account of prevailing ethical and moral standards at work in political and social life at some moment in history.”⁴¹

Similarly, Carolyn Tuohy acknowledges the importance of context for Canadian health policy when she suggests that health policy will vary depending on the “climate” of federal-provincial relations or what she calls the intersection between institutions and ideas. Expressed somewhat differently, as the intersection changes, so do the ideas that are incorporated into the developing policy. For Tuohy, “shifts in the climate of federal-provincial relations over time” will affect health policy outputs.⁴² Moreover, changes in “the dominant theme of the international climate of policy ideas” have shifted the emphasis from “access” to “cost control” in Canadian health policy and changed policy outputs.⁴³ These shifts in climate are not changes in institutions or even, for that matter, in substantive ideas about policy content; rather, they are shifts in the manner in which institutions function or in the background against which certain (substantive) ideas are adopted.

In another area of Canadian social policy, Rodney Haddow has drawn attention to the importance of changing contexts over time. By comparing

the postwar development of the Canada Assistance Plan (CAP) in the 1960s and the later failure of the Social Security Review in the 1970s, Haddow argues that the difference in context between these two periods was influential in the success of one policy initiative but not the other: "A singular merit of the period spanned by the two reforms ... is that it witnessed a significant transition in [the] internal arrangements of the Canadian state, which altered the organizational context of policy making but not necessarily the fragmented nature of the state. The cases examined here therefore provide an excellent opportunity to document the impact of distinct forms of state organization on policy making."⁴⁴ Haddow reiterates this point later when he says, "Changes in the structure of the Canadian state account for the most striking differences between the CAP and the [Social Security] Review."⁴⁵

In a more detailed approach to differing temporal contexts, George Hoberg offers a framework for what he calls regulatory "regimes." By examining environmental regulation in the United States from 1933 to the early 1990s, he distinguishes between two such regimes, the New Deal (1933-69) and the Pluralist (1970-92). In his analysis, Hoberg identifies a series of characteristics and shows how they changed between the two regimes. For example, procedures in the New Deal regime were "informal, nonlegal and consensual," but in the Pluralist regime they were "formal, legal and adversarial."⁴⁶ Similarly, supporting norms in the earlier regime were characterized by agencies representing the public interest, whereas later the public interest was represented by a balance of interest groups mediated by the courts.⁴⁷ By describing the features of each regime, Hoberg reveals a focus on institutional factors.⁴⁸ However, by paying attention to both "policy objectives" and "supporting norms" his analysis also incorporates some attention to prevailing ideas that help to establish the differing contexts in which policy develops and that are therefore influential in policy development.

In much the same way that Dyson, Putnam, and Farr recognize that contexts are important, Tuohy, Haddow, and Hoberg acknowledge that contexts change and that the altered ways in which institutions function affect policy processes and outputs. Forms of and differences in state organization or intrastate relations do not arise spontaneously, however, and one therefore must look at ideas concerning the practice of intrastate relations (i.e., both intergovernmental, in a federal state, and intragovernmental) to explain them more fully. The changes to institutions or to institutional factors might themselves be interpreted to acknowledge that ideas, to paraphrase Manzer, are important as determinants in institutional change because institutional participants depend on ideas to decide which changes are best for them in the circumstances.⁴⁹

One final author whose work supports the importance of both context and changes in context is Hugh Hecló, whose analysis of social policy development in Britain and Sweden during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is valuable to the current analysis in two respects. First, Hecló argues that most policy studies tend “to consider the role of political factors in isolation rather than in interaction through time.”⁵⁰ Social policy in Britain and Sweden developed over many decades and is, according to Hecló, “too complex to be explained simply”⁵¹ as the result of a single political factor (or perhaps a limited few) such as political parties, interest groups, and the like. Combining several influences, however, raises questions about the nature of their interaction that, Hecló urges, should lead one to inquire into how problems are worked out over time. The influence of time on ideas, for him, lies at least partly in the succession of generations: “In time ... generations of policy makers may rise to positions allowing them to express in policy their own generational views of the issues and presumptions for action (as Edwardian poor law opponents, Keynesian reformers, anti-means-testers from the 1930s and so on). Social policy in any period acquires a molar quality through these bodies of common interpretation.”⁵² Hecló’s suggestion of idea change as a result of cohort succession does not explain the more rapid sequence of contextualizing ideas with respect to national parks (each segment of which is more brief than a generation), but it does draw valuable attention to the knowledge that policy factors interact differently at different times.

Second, Hecló eschews the conception of politics as being exclusively about conflict and power. For him, “governments not only ‘power’ (or whatever the verb form of that approach might be); they also puzzle. Policy making is a form of collective puzzlement on society’s behalf; it entails both deciding and knowing.”⁵³ This viewpoint is instructive for analyzing national parks policy because, while there were, at times, obvious conflicts, and often the application of power, many of the significant decisions were made by bureaucrats seeking clarity in their jobs and by co-operative participatory relations between the Parks Branch and the various members of the policy community. A principal difference between Hecló’s argument and the present one is that Hecló locates a significant portion of the explanation for early-twentieth-century British and Swedish social policy in those countries’ bureaucracies, whereas for Canadian national parks no single factor stands out over the four decades addressed herein.

Contextualizing Ideas

This brief review illustrates that contexts taken alone and changing contexts over time have already been presented by several authors as having an

influence in policy development, although there have been varying degrees of emphasis on the aspect and importance of change. While changing ideas have been recognized, they have been seen either as differences in substantive ideas (through generational succession, for example) or simply as one of several factors (as in regime change) rather than being distinguished as a separate and significant variable. For national parks in Canada, the substantive idea of environmental preservation has been present since the early twentieth century and included in official policy since 1930. However, it did not become an effective part of policy until the 1960s and subsequently. The reason for the change from formal but ineffective to manifested policy through the postwar era can be explained by different factors at different times, and the underlying, and thus critical, factor is that some ideas altered the context of the policy environment and therefore affected which variable would be influential in different periods. Ideas that affect the policy-making context in this way have been called "contextualizing ideas" for the purposes of this study.

Contextualizing ideas shape and condition the policy-making environment in which discussion takes place and in which substantive ideas, interest groups, and institutions interact. Where policy development is, to invoke Hecló, more about puzzling than about powering, contextualizing ideas provide a logical argumentative advantage to some policy participants in contrast to others. The leverage gained through the presence of these ideas influences which groups or agencies may achieve prominence in deliberations, which institutions may be brought to bear on issues, and the manner in which the institutions may be used. This leverage and the organizations thus favoured, in turn, benefit some substantive ideas over others. As they change, contextualizing ideas create new opportunities for policy entrepreneurs and therefore favour change relative to the status quo. Nevertheless, these ideas interact with existing ones, both contextual and substantive, to shift rather than revolutionize policy direction. Hence, the corpus of national parks policy today contains most of the ideas ever incorporated into this arena, making it highly complex.

Contextualizing ideas bear more directly on the form of policy than on its substance, but by affecting form they also, indirectly, affect substance. For example, rationalism in government was not intended to make national parks policy more explicitly environmentalist, but by motivating a particular (rationalist) framework it also favoured a wilderness and preservation conception of parks. In affecting policy in this way, contextualizing ideas leave an imprint but are not the manifest subject of policy. These ideas are also relatively transitory in that they tend to be influential for, perhaps, ten to fifteen years and are subsequently replaced by other prominent ideas. They appear to arise from more deeply rooted conceptions such as those

about democratic participation or Aboriginal rights. But they may also be satellites to other currently hegemonic ideas or paradigms in the way that market orientation in parks is currently a spinoff from a more broadly based, neo-conservative, monetarist paradigm. By conditioning, perhaps even establishing, the context in which policy discussion takes place, contextualizing ideas privilege some participants and their substantive ideas and thus channel the direction of policy change.