

# Park Puzzle

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This activity will help you and your students understand the similarities and differences between the many designations of Alberta's protected areas. Parks are given different designations based on the levels of development or protection the area should support. Organizations like CPAWS work with the Alberta Government to protect Alberta's wild spaces for wilderness conservation, mitigating development, and for human recreation and education. Test your knowledge and problem solving skills to explore Alberta's parks through this game!

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**Time required:** Up to 30 minutes; ~ 5 minutes per round

**Materials:**

- Park designation cards, definition cards, local park names (lamine for longevity)
- Map of Alberta showing parks (optional – can also allow exploration online)

**Instructions:**

1. Ideally you will have discussed a few types of parks with your class, with some local examples before the activity. Introduce the Alberta Provincial Parks system, with a brief mention of the various levels of protection. Ask the students why we have parks and protected areas – leave up for discussion, and then ask again after the game.
2. Divide the class into teams – one per set of printed cards (3 - 5)
3. To complete this task, each team must correctly match the park designation <hold up wilderness area or provincial park card for example> with the definition card <demonstrate> and then must find the correct name of a park that falls within that category <demonstrate>. Advise the students to look up the parks on the maps if they need help. Give students only three minutes to complete this task. *I will let you know when the three minutes is up and we will see how well you know Alberta's parks and protected areas. Good luck! Get ready...Go!*
4. After three minutes has passed, see how well everyone did: flip up each of the designation cards, and interact with each team to see if they got them right. At the end, make sure all groups have correct arrangements.
5. Ask again – why do we have parks and protected areas? Why do you think we have different types of parks in Alberta?
6. This activity pairs well with any of the Science 7-9 activities, as well as lessons on species at risk in Alberta. CPAWS Southern Alberta has a Discover Parks! education program that further explores our parks and inspires students to become environmental stewards. Please see <http://cpaws-southernalberta.org/campaigns/education> for more information.

# Ecological Reserve

- Preserve and protect natural heritage in an undisturbed state for scientific research and education.
- The primary intent is strict preservation of natural ecosystems, habitats and features, and associated biodiversity.
- Public access is by foot only.
- Open to the public for low-impact activities such as photography and wildlife viewing.

# Heritage Rangelands

- Preserve and protect natural features representative of Alberta's prairies; grazing is used to maintain the grassland ecology.
- Ensure ongoing protection of vast prairies while continuing the traditional grazing approach that has preserved these grasslands for so many years.
- Recreational use must be compatible with preservation of natural values and grazing management.

# Wilderness Areas

- Preserve and protect natural heritage, with opportunities for non-consumptive, nature-based outdoor recreation.
- Only three such areas in Alberta
- Provide limited opportunities for recreation such as backcountry hiking, wildlife viewing and mountain climbing. Hunting, fishing and the use of horses are not permitted.
- Travel is by foot only.

# Wildland Provincial Parks

- Preserve and protect large, undeveloped natural landscapes that retain their primeval character and provide opportunities for backcountry recreation.
- Trails and primitive backcountry campsites are occasionally provided.
- Some provide opportunities for eco-tourism and adventure activities.
- Trails for off-highway vehicle riding and snowmobiling are occasionally provided.

# Provincial Parks

- Preserve natural and cultural heritage; support outdoor recreation, heritage tourism and natural heritage appreciation activities that are compatible with environmental protection.
- Greater range of outdoor recreation facilities, road access, and interpretive and educational programs are available to visitors.
- Automobile access limited to facilities & staging areas

# Natural Areas

- Preserve and protect sites of local significance and provide opportunities for low-impact recreation and nature appreciation activities.
- Typically quite small.
- Most have no facilities and in those that do, facilities are minimal and consist mainly of parking areas and trails.

# Recreation Areas

- Support outdoor recreation and tourism; they often provide access to lakes, rivers, reservoirs and adjacent Crown land.
- Outdoor recreation is the primary objective.
- Support a range of outdoor activities in natural, modified and man-made settings.

**Plateau Mountain**

**Elbow-Sheep &  
Bow Valley (Yamnuska)**

**Peter Lougheed &  
Bow Valley (YMCA)**

**Black Creek**

**White Goat**

**Ole Buck Mountain &  
Mt. Livingston**

**Evan-Thomas &  
Sibbald Lake/Meadows**

