

# WATERTON LAKES NATIONAL PARK ALBERTA

Canadian Section  
**WATERTON-GLACIER  
INTERNATIONAL PEACE PARK**



## LOCATION

Waterton Lakes National Park is an outstanding mountainous area rising abruptly from the prairies in the southwest corner of Alberta. Set apart as a National Park in 1895, it extends over 203 square miles along the eastern slope of the Rocky Mountains immediately north of the International Boundary. Glacier National Park, Montana, joins it to the south, the two Parks together forming Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park. (The formation of this Peace Park in 1932 was the first of its kind in the world.)

The map on the reverse side of this folder will assist visitors to identify the various features of the Park.

## PURPOSE

Waterton Lakes National Park is one of Canada's 19 National Parks which form a chain of nature sanctuaries extending from Mount Revelstoke in British Columbia to Terra Nova in Newfoundland. These Parks have been established for the preservation of selected areas in their natural state for the benefit, education and enjoyment of present and future generations of Canadians.

This vast area of more than 29,000 square miles is administered by the National and Historic Parks Branch, Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development.

## NATURAL FEATURES

### GEOLOGICAL

The mountains within the Park are carved out of a series of layered sediments over a mile thick. They include some of the oldest rocks known in the Rocky Mountains of Canada. Some of these rocks show structures which are believed to be fossilized algae. The old sediments were uplifted and displaced horizontally in relatively late geological time and now lie adjacent to much younger sediments in the north-eastern section of the Park, which have yielded fossil shells. The uplifted mountains have been progressively dissected by eroding streams and further modified by alpine glaciation. The results are the sharp peaks, narrow ridges and interlocked U-shaped valleys. The highest peak is Mount Blakiston with an altitude of 9,600 feet.

The distinctive purple, red, green and grey colouring of the various geological formations throughout the park has been caused by chemical change in the minute mineral particles making up formations. This chemical change was brought about by changes in climate while the particles were moved to other

areas by the waters which eroded their original location.

Waterton Lakes is noteworthy for its glacial sculpturing which is well illustrated in the prominent cirques, rock-basin lakes or tarns, U-shaped valleys, hanging valleys and waterfalls. One of the most conspicuous features of the park area is the main chain of lakes. The largest lake, Upper Waterton, is seven miles long and one-half-mile wide. In places it is over 450 feet deep. This lake, which spans the International Boundary, separates the Lewis and Clark Ranges and occupies part of a valley that has been considerably deepened and widened by valley glaciers. A hanging valley formed by this deepening caused Cameron Falls in the townsite area.

Notches formed in the rock by frost and snow water are much in evidence on the side of Vimy Peak. The light green bare streaks down the mountain above the townsite from Bertha Peak and elsewhere were left by snow-slides which swept the forest from their pathway leaving only low shrubs and grasses.

A great overthrust which affected the mountains on this eastern slope of the Continental Divide is also characteristic of this area. The pressure of folding was so great that some of the oldest rocks in this region now overlie younger rocks and thus form a few 'upside down' mountains such as Vimy Ridge, Crandell Mountain and other mountains that carry on into Glacier National Park along the eastern edge of the Park.

The townsite is built on a delta deposited by Cameron Creek. It is believed that most of the sediments were deposited while the Cameron and Alderson glaciers were still present farther up the valleys. The grinding of the Waterton Glacier against Bertha Mountain produced a sharp bank over which Cameron Falls now drops.



*Cameron Lake and Mount Custer.*

## PLANTLIFE

Waterton Lakes National Park is in the transition zone between the prairie and montane life zones, making it botanically one of the most interesting areas in the country. Plants characteristic of both the prairies and the mountains grow in profusion throughout the Park. The flowers present an ever-changing carpet of colour for most of the summer season. Amongst the better known flowers are the wild rose, large-flowered gaillardia, aster, Indian paint brush, larkspur, wild geranium, pasque flower, double wind flower, false hellebore, yellow columbine, avalanche lily, and Jacob's ladder. Balsamroot, bear grass and mariposa lily are special features among the wildflowers of the Park.

Some of the more common shrubs found in the Park are shrubby cinquefoil, bear berry, buffalo berry, silver olive, dogwood, juniper, saskatoon and chokecherry.

Most of the trees in the Park are evergreen. At the lower altitudes Douglas fir, lodgepole pine, limber pine, and white spruce are common. At the higher altitudes Engelmann spruce, alpine fir and mountain larch can be found. An interesting hybrid between Engelmann spruce and white spruce occurs throughout the Park. In the lower regions of the Park and adjacent to the prairie areas are the deciduous or broad leaf trees, the most common of which are the trembling aspen, paper birch, cottonwood, willow, Douglas maple, and sitka alder.

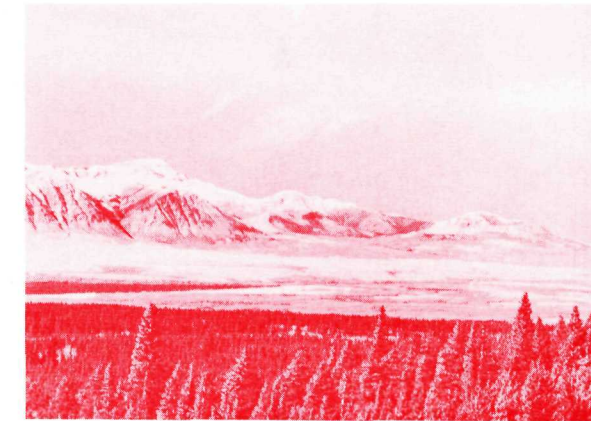
## WILDLIFE

The Park is a wildlife sanctuary in which all wild animals are protected from hunting and trapping. Consequently many have become accustomed to close association with man and can be observed at short range. Because they are still wild animals they should be viewed and photographed with caution.

The larger mammals characteristic of the Park are: black bear, grizzly bear, cougar, elk, mule deer, moose, bighorn sheep and mountain goat. A small herd of plains bison is maintained in a paddock near the north park entrance. This species roamed the foothills and mountain valleys years ago. White-tailed deer are occasionally seen in the park.

Some of the smaller mammals characteristic of Waterton Park are: coyote, marten, shorttailed weasel, lynx, wolverine, skunk, badger, bobcat, pika, snowshoe hare, hoary marmot, columbian ground squirrel, golden mantled ground squirrel, red squirrel, pocket gopher, beaver, and muskrat.

Waterton Park has a rich and varied bird life.



*Where the mountains rise from the prairies.*

In the spring and autumn fair numbers of migrating ducks, geese and swans rest in the lakes. The contrastingly marked harlequin duck is occasionally seen in mountain rivers and streams where it negotiates the rapids with ease.

Golden eagles are frequently seen soaring and gliding above the mountain slopes. Several species of hawks occur at the lower elevations.

Blue grouse occur in the grassy or shrubby vegetation of the mountain slopes. Broods of whitetailed ptarmigan are sometimes encountered on the alpine meadows around the high elevation lakes.

The dipper or water ouzel, a fascinating little brown bird smaller than a robin, is found year-round along swift mountain streams where it swims and walks beneath the water to feed on animal matter.

## FISH

Modern methods of fish management are followed to improve angling in the lakes and streams of the Park and a regular stocking program is carried out. Rainbow, cutthroat, lake and eastern brook trout may be taken.

As fishing regulations change occasionally visitors are advised to consult Park Wardens or the Park Information Centre concerning licences, seasons, and catch limits.

## HOW YOU CAN LEARN MORE ABOUT THE PARK

To help you understand and obtain greater enjoyment from your park visit, the National Parks provide interpretative facilities. These include the serv-



ices of park naturalists who conduct tours and campfire talks to explain the purposes and natural features of this National Park. Some of these talks are illustrated by slides and films in the outdoor amphitheatre. A well-marked nature trail of a self-guiding type is established. Trail-side exhibits are also provided at points of interest. Detailed information is available at the Park Information Centre.

## HOW TO SEE THE INTERESTING FEATURES

While the roads in the Park lead to some of the interesting park features the best way to gain a full appreciation of the Park is to use the trails. A large number of people derive considerable satisfaction from hiking or riding over more than 100 miles of well kept trails. Many areas of exceptional natural interest are within a day's travel along the trails to the high lakes and alpine meadows. At most of the high lakes a shelter has been provided for the trail user whether staying for the day or overnight.

Most of the trails radiate from the townsite. Most popular of the routes, with the average walking time one way, are, Bertha Lake, 2½ hours, Alderson and Carthew Lakes, 3½ hours, International Boundary, 2½ hours, Goathaunt Camp at the head of the lake (Glacier Park), 3½ hours, Crandell Lake, 2½ hours, Vimy Mountain, 3 hours, Crypt Lake (from Hell Roaring Cabin), 2½ hours.

Another series of trails leads from Red Rock Canyon to Goat Lake, Lost Lake, Twin Lakes, and the South Kootenai Pass.

All the trails lead through alpine valleys and beside picturesque mountain tarns. The brilliant colouring of wildflowers can be enjoyed from close at hand. The trails usually wind up the side of the mountains past waterfalls to lakes. The mountain lakes have waters of vivid emerald shades which combine in pleasing colours with dark green forest and the multicoloured slopes of the surrounding peaks to form a striking picture. A trip to the high country will reward the visitor with an unequalled view of the tops of the mountains. The rugged peaks can be seen stretching for miles in all directions, broken only by the white slopes of the snowfields or by drifting clouds.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### PARK ADMINISTRATION

A resident Superintendent is in charge of the Park. The protection of the park and the visitor is in the hands of the Warden Service assisted by the

Royal Canadian Mounted Police. Visitors may obtain detailed information from the nearest Park Warden.

### SEASON

The Park is open throughout the year, but it is only from May to September that all the facilities are provided in the townsite. During the winter months a motel, a service station and store are usually open.

### CAMPING

Four campgrounds readily accessible to the motor-ing public are available. The campground, at the south end of the townsite, is completely equipped with kitchen, and washroom facilities with showers and includes a trailer area.

Smaller campgrounds are available at Cameron Lake, Crandell Mountain and Belly River where tent sites, kitchens and toilets are provided.

Camping fees are \$1 a day for an unserviced site, \$1.50 a day for a site with electricity, and \$2 for a site equipped with individual water, electrical and sewage disposal services. No refunds are allowed to campers who do not stay the number of days they have paid for in advance.

Visitors who wish to camp away from the road will find adequate shelter at most of the high lakes. They must register their overnight trip with the Warden Service prior to leaving and check in with the Warden when they return.

Picnic shelters and wayside tables are located at various points throughout the park as indicated on the map. The majority of these free picnic sites have a picnic shelter with firewood, water, and sanitary facilities.

### ACCOMMODATION

Commercial accommodation in the park is owned and operated by private businessmen. Reservations may be made by applying to the manager of the particular establishment well in advance.

A listing of all accommodation and the rates is available on request at the park information office. The National Parks Service cannot make reservations or arrange accommodation for visitors. Camping space is allotted on a first-come, first-served basis and cannot be reserved in advance.

### PRESERVATION

National Parks are selected areas set apart as nature sanctuaries and special care is taken to maintain them in *their natural state*. For this reason all birds, animals, wildlife, trees, rocks and fossils



*Young red-tailed hawk.*

*are to remain undisturbed. Even the wild flowers are not to be picked; they are to be left for others to enjoy.* Feeding, touching or molesting wild animals is not permitted. This is in the interests of the animal, as well as the human who could receive serious injury.

Please help protect your own park for future enjoyment. It is part of your national inheritance.

### PREVENT FIRE

Campfires may be kindled only in fireplaces provided for this purpose and must be completely extinguished before campers leave the site. Visitors observing an unattended fire should attempt to extinguish it if possible and promptly report it to the nearest Park employee. Fire in a National Park can cause damage which cannot be repaired in a hundred years.

### MOUNTAIN CLIMBING

Park Regulations require that all persons before climbing a mountain shall register with the District Park Warden indicating their proposed route and the duration of the climb. Inexperienced climbers should obtain the services of a guide and full information concerning the necessary equipment. They must also report in to the Warden Service on returning.

### PETS

Dogs and cats may accompany a visitor into a park. For the protection of all park animals, however, dogs must be kept on leash.

### ADMISSION FEES

All motor vehicles entering the park must be licensed with a \$2 or \$3 (with trailers) motor vehicle licence available at the park entrance. This licence admits the vehicle to all National Parks for an unlimited number of times over the period from April 1 to March 31.

### MOTOR-BOATS

Boating is a popular pastime in the Park. Motor-boats are permitted only on the main Waterton Lakes and Maskinonge Lake. Boat docking and launching facilities are available at the townsite docks and nearby on the Middle Lake near Lake Linnet.

Trips on the lake, and as far as Goathaunt Landing in Glacier National Park are offered by commercial interests.

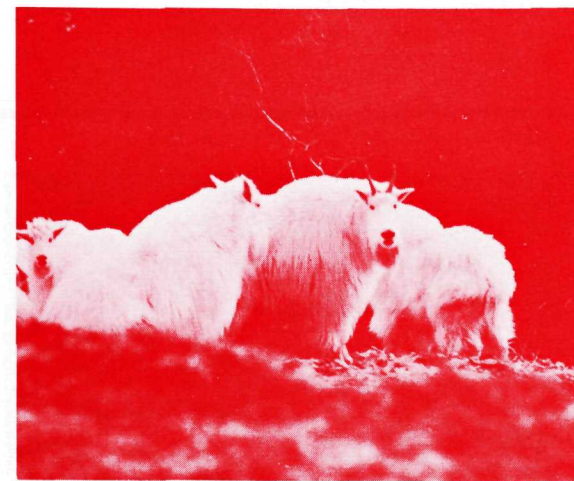
Emerald Bay in the townsite area of the Upper Lake is a restricted boating area. As a safety measure boats are restricted to a maximum speed of 5 miles per hour. All boats operating on the lakes must carry proper safety equipment and conform with federal navigation regulations.

### HOW TO REACH THE PARK

Most visitors travel to Waterton Lakes National Park by car. Alberta Highways 5 and 6 lead into the Park from the north and east and Montana route 17 enters from the south. Buses run twice daily from Calgary and Lethbridge during the summer months only. Visitors travelling by train should make bus connections at Lethbridge or Fort Macleod. Lethbridge airport is served by several airlines. A small landing field is located near Pincher Creek.

### A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE PARK

Waterton Lakes National Park derives its name from the lakes that form the main valley. These lakes were named in honour of Charles Waterton, famed 18th Century English naturalist, by Lieut.



*Rocky mountain goats are seen occasionally.*

Thomas Blakiston who led a section of the Palliser Expedition of 1857-1860. Mount Blakiston perpetuates the name of this officer.

The expedition marked a turning point in the history of the region which hitherto had been practically unknown territory and a stronghold of the hostile Blackfoot Indian Federation. In 1886 traces of oil were discovered in Lineham Creek and Alberta's first oil well was drilled there in 1902. Some of this equipment can still be seen from the Akamina Highway some 5 miles from the townsite.

The gradual settlement of the region ultimately led to the filing of a petition to make this area a National Park. Most active in the promoting of this objective was John George "Kootenai" Brown, who was later to become the first Park Warden and subsequently the Acting Park Superintendent. Kootenai Brown lies buried between his two wives in a specially marked grave near the Lower Lake (Knight's Lake).

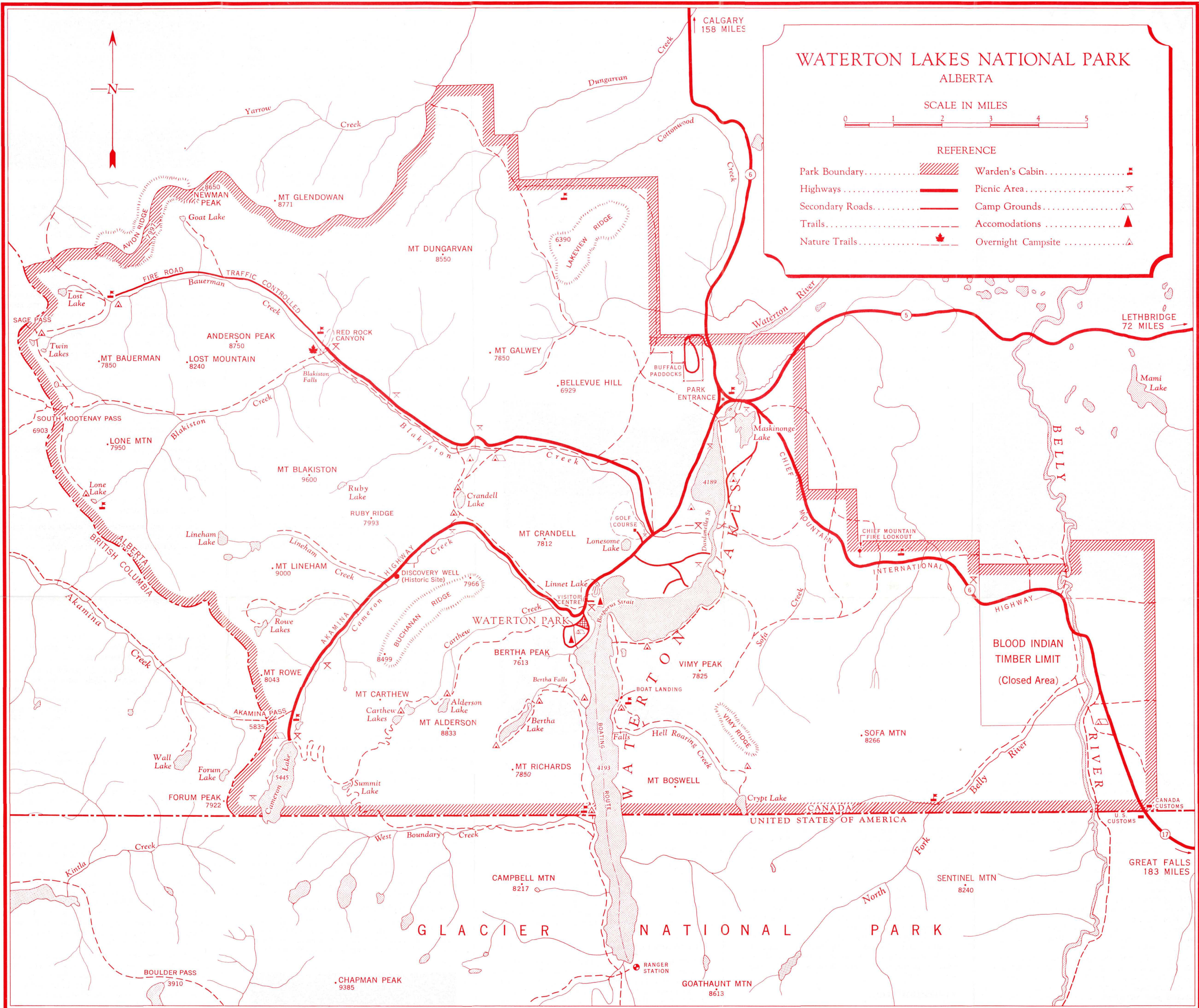
The idea to link Waterton Lakes National Park with Glacier National Park in Montana originated at the first goodwill meeting of the Rotary Clubs of Alberta and Montana in 1931. By their efforts laws were passed the following year by Canada and the United States of America to link the two parks into the first International Peace Park in the world. The Association formed by the original Rotarians meets annually on alternate sides of the border to renew their pledge of friendship and foster goodwill throughout the world.

Although the Park has been set apart primarily to preserve its natural features for the enjoyment of future generations, the Parks Service has also provided other recreation facilities. In addition to those already mentioned, there are: an 18-hole golf course, tennis courts, modern swimming pool and a children's playground.

Waterton Park Townsite contains all the customary services of a modern community, with hotels, motels and restaurants located throughout the business area. A motion picture theatre and dance pavilion operate during the summer.

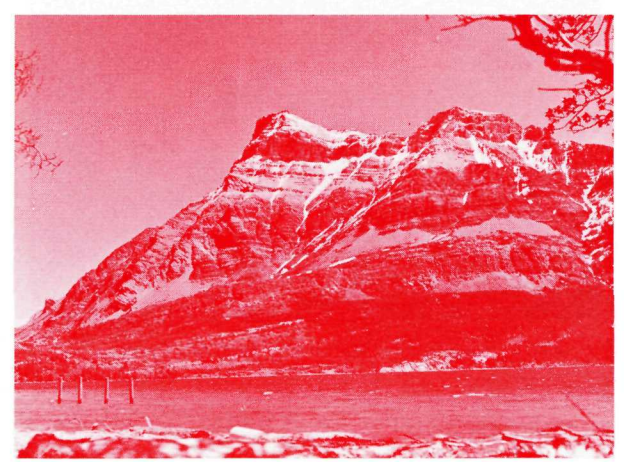
Single copies of this folder are available from the Park Information Office or the Director, National and Historical Parks Branch, Ottawa.





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Vimy Peak and Vimy Ridge



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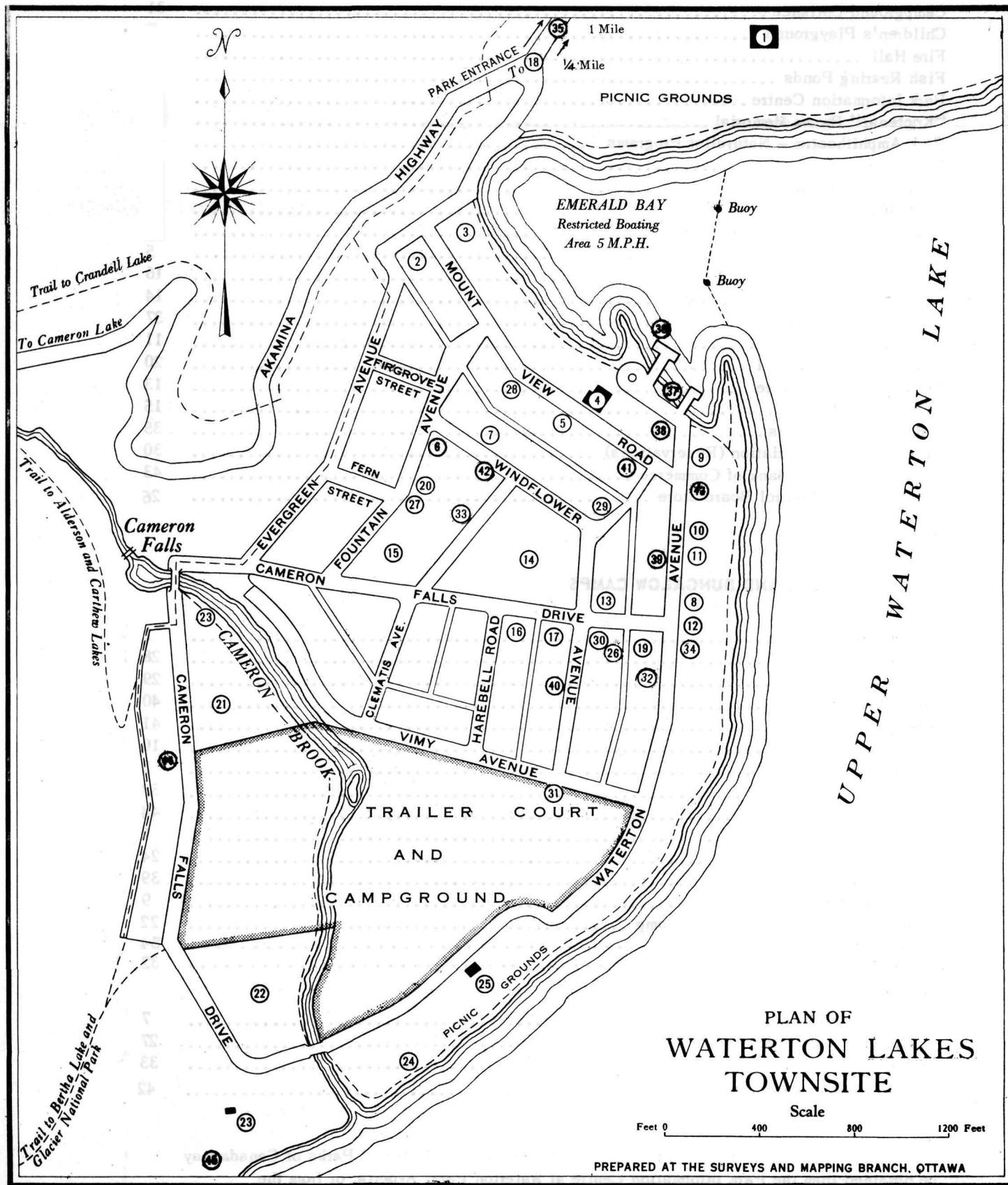
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Summit Lake





## INDEX TO BUILDINGS AND ATTRACTIONS IN WATERTON PARK TOWNSITE



### PUBLIC BUILDINGS AND ATTRACTIONS

Park Office .....	4
Boat Launching Ramp .....	36
Campground Entrance .....	31
Children's Playground .....	17
Fire Hall .....	8
Fish Rearing Ponds .....	21
Park Information Centre .....	18
"Kootenai" Brown Memorial .....	12
Park Amphitheatre - Naturalist Programs .....	45
Picnic Grounds .....	23
Picnic Grounds Shelter .....	25
Post Office .....	6
Royal Canadian Mounted Police .....	19
Telegraph Office .....	5
Tennis Courts .....	16
Swimming Pool and Parking Area .....	14
Boat Rentals and Trips .....	37
Dance Hall .....	11
Lion's Community Hall .....	20
Motion Picture Theatre .....	13
Public School .....	15
Saddle Horse Rentals .....	35
Alberta Motor Association (Reservations) .....	30
Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce .....	43
Alberta Liquor Control Board Store .....	26

### MOTELS, HOTELS AND BUNGALOW CAMPS

Crandell Lodge .....	2
El Cortez Motel .....	28
Frank-Lin Motel .....	29
Green Timbers .....	40
Alpine Motel .....	41
Kootenai Lodge .....	10
Kilmorey Auto Lodge .....	3
Emerald Bay .....	38
Northland Lodge .....	44
Prince of Wales Hotel .....	1
Allens Lakeshore Motel .....	24
Stanley Hotel .....	39
Bay Shore Motel .....	9
Waterton Lakes Auto Bungalow Camp .....	22
Happy Landing .....	34
Kiruna .....	32

### CHURCHES

Anglican Church (Episcopal) .....	7
Roman Catholic Church .....	27
United Church .....	33
Latter Day Saints Church .....	42

Additional information, maps and publications concerning the National Parks of Canada may be obtained from the Park Information Centre at Waterton Park, Alberta, or from the

National Parks Branch,

Ottawa, Canada.

