



STATE OF ONTARIO'S PROTECTED AREAS

Economic Value of Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves

2021

State of Ontario's Protected Areas Indicator Report

Economic Value of Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves

This indicator looks at how provincial parks and conservation reserves contribute to Ontario's economy.

Status

 **Status:** Good

 **Trend:** Mixed

Why it's important

Ontario's protected natural areas contribute significantly to maintaining the environmental and economic health of the province. Each year, provincial parks and conservation reserves generate millions of dollars in tourism revenues that support and diversify local and regional economies. By defining and monitoring what contribution is made by protected areas to the economy of Ontario, we solidify our understanding of the economic importance of this resource.

How we monitor

Economic value is assessed by looking at numerous facets of provincial parks and conservation reserves, including; capital budget for recreational facilities; expenditures by Ontario Parks that support local and provincial economies; human resources employed in permanent and temporary positions; and staff who contribute to the local economy through daily activities. The economic impact of the existence and operation of provincial parks and conservation reserves on nearby communities is also examined.

Results

Item	Numbers
Replacement Value of Capital Assets	\$1.4 billion
Total Revenue (2018/2019)	\$94.3 million
Visitor Days (2019)	10.77 million
Car Camping Sites (2019)	19,253 sites
Backcountry Camp Sites (2019)	8,451 sites
Number of Ontario Parks Staff (2019 peak)	~2,850 persons

In 2019, Ontario Parks employed 254 year-round staff. During the peak summer season, an additional 1,000 seasonal staff and 1,600 students are employed.

In 2011, provincial park visitor expenditures were about \$262 million. About \$95 million of this amount was spent in local communities within 40km of the park.

Research suggests that the annual ecosystem service benefits, or the benefits humans receive from healthy ecosystems, from the 88 provincial parks and conservation reserves within the ecodistrict from Sudbury to Sault Ste. Marie were estimated to be about \$1.1 billion (2012). Similarly, the annual ecosystem service benefits arising from

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the 86 protected areas within the Mixedwood Plains Ecozone of southern Ontario were estimated to be about \$601 million (2009).

The estimated replacement value of the capital assets (e.g. buildings, machinery, equipment, water systems and road infrastructure) in operating parks is approximately \$1.4 billion.

Indicator last updated

September 2020

Data source(s)

Ontario Parks, MECP

Related links

N/A