

Research Strategy for South Eastern Zone of Ontario Parks

Corina Brdar, Susan Grigg and Jim Peets
Ontario Parks, South Eastern Zone

Abstract

The South Eastern Zone of Ontario Parks includes 35 provincial parks and proposed parks in the geographic area between the Ottawa and St. Lawrence Rivers, the City of Oshawa, and the southern boundary of Algonquin Provincial Park. In order to make sound resource management decisions, we require applied research that provides key baseline, issue, or strategic information. Pure research is also valuable in maintaining ecological integrity. We have recently developed a strategy to identify research needs and develop research priorities at the zone level. This poster highlights our research needs and priorities in order to promote partnerships with interested researchers.

The Ideal Study Site

Why and How to do Research in Ontario's Provincial Parks

The South Eastern Zone of Ontario Parks requires research by qualified individuals to assist us in our planning and resource stewardship activities. The following information was presented in a poster. An information package summarizing this information and listing our research needs is available from our office.

Why conduct research in Ontario's Provincial Parks?

- The South Eastern Zone of Ontario Parks includes 35 provincial parks, ranging from popular recreational class parks to remote natural environment parks to ecologically unique nature reserves
- Ontario's Provincial Parks represent a variety of ecological, geological, and historical themes
- Researchers have the opportunity to contribute to the protection of Ontario's natural and cultural heritage, while experiencing Ontario's world class system of protected areas.
- In some cases, Ontario Parks may be able to assist with logistics, such as providing campsites.

How does Ontario Parks benefit from research?

- Research provides a better understanding of park environments and contributes to wise resource stewardship decisions
- Ontario Parks has recently become the custodian of several outstanding natural areas through initiatives like *Ontario's Living Legacy* and *Legacy 2000* (see "Stewardship Planning" poster). Partnerships with researchers will help us fill the gaps in our knowledge with respect to these areas.

What types of research does Ontario Parks require?

We encourage research by qualified individuals whose projects: contribute to our knowledge of natural and cultural history, environmental stewardship, and recreation management; and are compatible with protection values and recreational uses in the parks.

Individual park management plans and the South Eastern Zone's Research Strategy identify and prioritize research needs in 4 areas: Life Science, Earth Science, Cultural Sciences, and Social Sciences.

Life Science

A good understanding of park ecosystems and their components is essential for effective protection.

Earth Science

Provincial parks protect areas representing many geological features and processes.

Cultural Sciences

South Eastern Ontario's parks have a rich cultural history, much of it yet to be inventoried and assessed.

Social Sciences

Social science research can contribute to Ontario Parks' mission: Protect and Enjoy.

How to proceed with research in a provincial park

- All prospective researchers must complete the "Application to Conduct Research" available from the Ontario Parks website (www.ontarioparks.com)
- Research applications must be approved by Ontario Parks
- The project must meet all requirements under applicable provincial and federal legislation
- Once a project is approved, researchers are issued a complimentary park permit
- Researchers will provide Ontario Parks with copies of all reports produced as a result of the project