

Parks Canada sites at the core of two new UNESCO Biosphere Reserves

OTTAWA, March 24, 2016 /CNW/ - The Honourable Catherine McKenna, Minister of the Environment and Climate Change and Minister responsible for Parks Canada, congratulates those who worked towards the creation of the newly designated Beaver Hills and Tsá Tué Biosphere Reserves. These designations were announced by the International Co-ordinating Council of the Man and the Biosphere Programme of UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization) in Lima, Peru on March 19.

As a recognized world leader in conservation, Parks Canada is pleased to participate in UNESCO's Biosphere Reserve program. Nine of Canada's existing Biosphere Reserves include a national park or national historic site at their core. The role of a core protected area is to serve as a benchmark and source of inspiration for conservation and sustainable development within the greater Biosphere Reserve.

The Tsá Tué and Beaver Hills Biosphere Reserves are the result of the considerable dedication and collaboration of many partners, including Indigenous groups and provincial/territorial governments, and join 16 established Biosphere Reserves in Canada. As protected areas at the core of the larger biospheres, Saoyú-?ehdacho National Historic Site and Elk Island National Park are special places in Parks Canada's extensive system of protected natural and cultural heritage areas. Parks Canada looks forward to continued work with our partners and neighbours to protect and present these areas.

Quick Facts

- **A Biosphere Reserve is an area selected by a national committee, proposed by its country and designated by UNESCO, to demonstrate innovative approaches to living and working in harmony with nature. Biosphere reserves are distinct terrestrial, marine, or coastal ecosystems where participants and residents cooperate to promote sustainable resource use and conservation.**
- **Established in 1906, Alberta's Elk Island National Park has made lasting contributions to wildlife conservation through its expertise and management for over a century. Today, the park welcomes an increasing number of visitors every year.**
- **Designated a national historic site in 1997 and set aside as a protected area in 2008, Saoyú-?ehdacho National Historic Site in the Northwest Territories is a teaching, healing and spiritual place, essential to the cultural well-being of the Sahtúgot'įneᑦ – "the people of Sahtú."**

Quote

"As the minister responsible for Parks Canada, I recognize the important role that protected areas play in helping to mitigate the impacts of climate change by protecting and restoring healthy, resilient ecosystems and contributing to the recovery of species at risk. Parks Canada is proud to be part of the newly designated Beaver Hills and Tsá Tué UNESCO Biosphere Reserves, the newest of 18 Biosphere Reserves in Canada. I am pleased to recognize and congratulate the many partners who collaborated to achieve these new designations."

***The Honourable Catherine McKenna
Minister of the Environment and Climate Change and Minister responsible for Parks
Canada***