

Andy Russell- I'tai sah kòp Parks

Proposed Wildland Park & Provincial
Park For Southwest Alberta

For

 Water

 Wildlife

 Heritage

 The Future

Wildland & Provincial
Parks proposed in
tribute to Andy &
Kay Russell and in
recognition of the
Piikani First Nation.

A place to let legends
& stories live on.



"The wild free
country laced
together by
crystal
streams."

That's how
the late Andy Russell
penned it into people's
hearts around the world – the
Castle as it is locally known or *I'tai
sah kòp* as it is known in the Blackfoot
language to the Piikani (Peigan) First Nation.
Through his books, films and action, Andy
inspired a generation
of conservationists
and adventurers, and
received the Order of
Canada.



Left: Kay Riggall-Russell
Below: *I'tai sah kòp* [where we get
the sacred paint]. Offerings, part of
the ancient ceremony along the way
to getting the paint (1890)



As Andy said, "There's a great deal to be done.
Let's get at it!"

Alberta no longer has a nomination process for parks and protected areas. Once the local MLA, the Minister currently responsible for the area (in this case, Sustainable Resource Development) and the Tourism, Parks & Recreation Minister agree on proceeding, Alberta Parks can begin consultations with the public and existing disposition holders. After the parks are announced, the public is involved in developing the management plan.

How do I make my views known?

Write the Hon. Cindy Ady, Tourism, Parks & Recreation Minister

Fax: (780) 427-0188

Mail: Legislature Bldg., 10800 – 97 Ave.,
Edmonton, AB T5K 2B6

And Mr. Evan Berger, MLA Livingstone-Macleod &
Parliamentary Assistant for Sustainable Resource Development

Fax: (403) 553-2133

Mail: P O Box 69, Ft. Macleod, AB T0L 0Z0

E-mail: livingstone.macleod@assembly.ab.ca

For More Information:

- Visit a library in the region for the "Let the Legends Live On" booklet.
- Contact the committee's coordinator, phone 403 234-7368 or dpachal@telus.net
- Andy Russell – *I'tai sah kòp* Parks initiative www.sierraclub.ca/wilderness
- Cultural and natural heritage summary www.centennialwilds.ab.ca
- On conservation group sites: www.cwc.ab.ca and www.cpawscalgary.org

Pictures: Murray Anderson, Glenbow Museum NA-1905-28, David MacIntyre, Parks Canada, Gordon Petersen, Russell family, Charles Truscott.

Maps: Miistakis Institute for the Rockies & Federation of Alberta Naturalists.



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The Water Tower for Southern Alberta

The Oldman River Basin encompasses much of southern Alberta; from the Town of High River to the St. Mary River headwaters in the US and from the BC border to downstream of Taber and including Lethbridge. There dams regulate the timing of water flows, but aren't the source; the headwaters are. Although only covering less than 4% of the land area of the Basin, the proposed parks provide almost a third (30%) of the annual water flow for this entire arid region. The parks would ensure long-term protection for this source of life-giving water and restoration of its health.

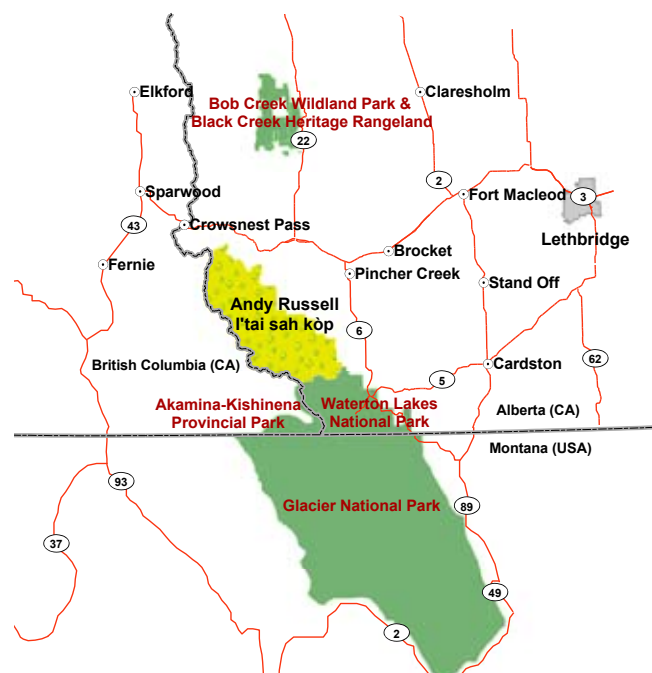
Bear Sound

Kiay'oh komii (Bear Sound) is the name the Piikani people gave Andy Russell – the first to film grizzly bears in the wilds of North America. The parks would be a major step for the recovery of Alberta's endangered grizzly bears, and would protect six rare plant communities along with the habitat of 13 other mammal species, 44 birds, three reptiles, five amphibians, two fish and ten butterfly species listed as rare or at risk. It would also be Alberta's contribution to sustaining the ecological integrity of the Waterton-Glacier UNESCO World Heritage Site and International Peace Park.

A Major Destination along the Cowboy Trail & Trail of the Great Bear

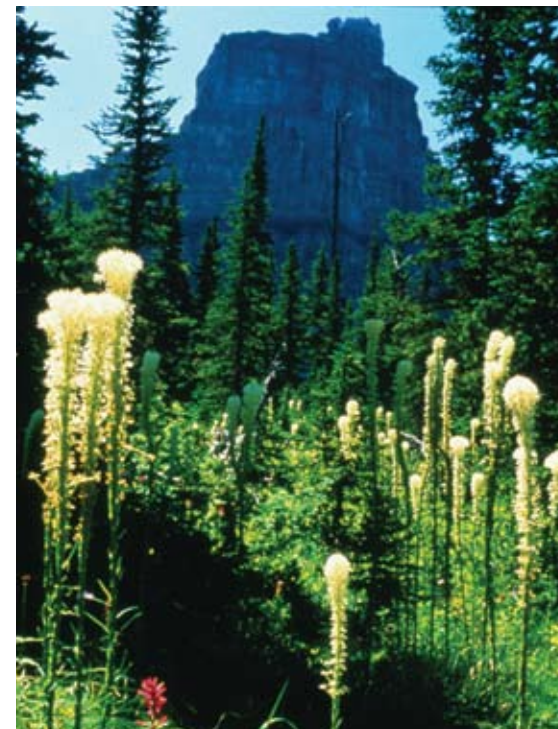
In view of the Russell's ranch and the Piikani's Reserve, the Castle Special Place is proposed for establishment as an integrated wildland park and provincial park in memory of Andy and Kay, and in recognition of the Piikani First Nation, for whom this is a part of their traditional lands. The 1040 km² (400 mi²) wildland is all public land.

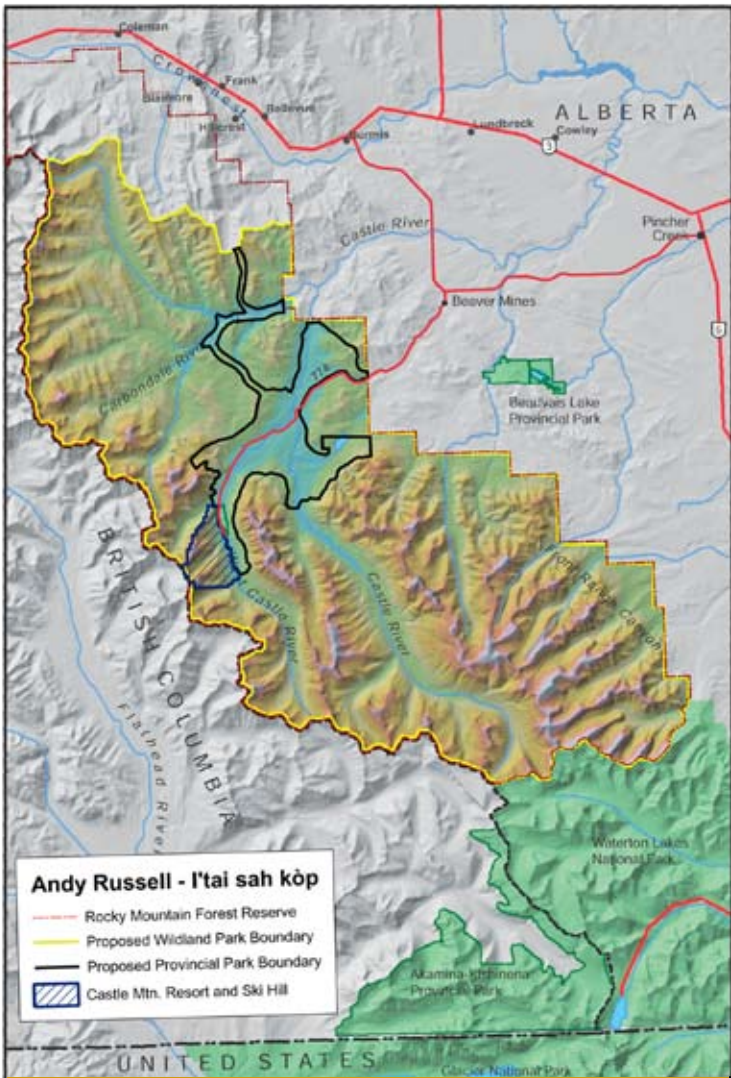
The Castle is the only one of 81 provincial "Special Places" named by the government that has yet to become any type of park. So protected, it would give generations to come the chance to experience the western wilderness Andy and Kay loved; a place to imagine the pioneer outfitting and ranching heritage they typified. It would be a link to the ancient lands and history of the Piikani people – a piece of the original. It is the place to let the legends live on.



The Most Biologically Rich Area in Alberta

Andy Russell – *I'tai sah kòp* is an extension of the internationally renowned natural landscapes of Waterton Lakes National Park. Its Front Range Canyons are unique in Canada. This is the most biologically diverse area in Alberta. For example, half of all the vascular plant species recorded in Alberta can be found here; 145 of them are rare. It was to Andy that the National Geographic magazine turned in 1987 for comments on threats to the survival of this part of the international "Crown of the Continent" ecosystem.





At widest, parks would be 19 km (12 mi).

What the Tribute/Parks Mean for the Southwest

As outlined in the province's pamphlet *The Value of Alberta Parks ...* priceless, parks are part of community development and sustainability. They protect people's defining sense of place, attract visitors and new residents to adjacent communities, and provide irreplaceable ecological services, such as water and wildlife habitat. Their contribution to economic activity is on par with that of agriculture and the logging industry, when compared on an equivalent size basis. Since 1992 all provincial protected areas and parks have been amalgamated under the responsibility of Alberta Parks & Protected Areas.

What Parks Would Do for the Castle Special Place

Establishment brings with it interpretation services for the public, international recognition for the neighboring communities, protection of the natural landscapes that outdoor recreation and wildlife depend upon, and on-the-ground enforcement of the rules so all, including the wildlife enjoy the parks. Parks protect watersheds and wildlands of national and provincial significance. Hence, there would be no mining and no more commercial logging in the Castle.

The legislation, (legally binding) states parks "shall be developed and maintained for the conservation and management of flora and fauna, for the preservation of specified areas or objects in them that are of geological, cultural, ecological or other scientific interest, and to facilitate their use and enjoyment for outdoor recreation."

Wildland parks "preserve and protect natural heritage and provide opportunities for backcountry recreation." They don't have developments such as public roads and campgrounds. Provincial parks do, which is why the about 10% of the Castle – the existing roads, staging areas, campgrounds and organization camps – is proposed as a provincial park and the rest as a wildland park.



How the Tribute/Park Initiative Started

Inspired by tributes at Andy Russell's memorial in June 2005, including the words of the Premier, a number present decided to pursue a wildland park for the Castle Special Place as an Alberta Centennial legacy and tribute. That summer the Minister responsible for parks committed to discussing the proposal with the local MLA and Sustainable Resource Development Minister.

Local campaigns to legally protect the Castle area date back to 1914 when Waterton Lakes National Park was expanded to include it, 1921-1954 when it was made a Game Preserve after being removed from the national park, and more recently, 1958-1968 when the Pincher Creek Fish & Game Association worked hard to get it protected like Willmore Wilderness Park. Today's initiative encompasses all of what the province named and mapped as the Castle Special Place in 1998.

Will entrance still be free? Yes

Entrance fees are only charged for national parks and some historic sites.

Will there still be camping? Yes

Use of the public roads, staging areas and campgrounds will continue. All five campgrounds and group camps (235 sites) are already under Alberta Parks & Protected Areas. As in Kananaskis Country, in order to protect the watershed and wildlife habitat, reduce the fire hazard and equitably share the area, random, vehicle-accessed camping would be phased out.

Will it have fishing, hunting & horseback riding? Yes

Fish and wildlife management, including licensing, remains with the Alberta Fish & Wildlife. Unlike national parks, wildland parks are open to hunting and you don't need a separate fishing license. Wildland and provincial parks provide for a variety of outdoor recreation, including outfitting and horseback riding.

Will it still be open to OHVs & snowmobiles? Yes

Designated routes are allowed. In 2004, Alberta Sustainable Resource Development committed to reviewing the Castle motorized access management plan. That review would become part of the standard public consultations on the management plan for the parks.

What about grazing, Shell & the ski resort?

Establishment provides for the continuation of the summer grazing permits, and oil and gas activities associated with existing petroleum leases, such as the Shell Waterton Gas Field that overlaps the eastern side. It is up to Castle Mountain Resort if they wish to be inside the park or as is. The proposed parks are consistent with the mitigation measure that the 1993 hearings on the resort development recommended for reducing foreseen future, adverse cumulative impacts.

Info. from AB Parks, Tourism, Parks & Recreation Dept.
<http://tprc.alberta.ca/parks/managing/spectrumsites.asp>

Summary of Some Activities in Alberta's Protected Areas & Parks

According to Alberta & Canadian Legislation, Policy & Management Guidelines

	National Parks	Ecological Reserves	Wilderness Areas	Willmore Wilderness Park	Wildland Parks	Heritage Rangelands	Provincial Parks	Natural Areas
Average Size to Date**	10,813 km ² (4,175 mi ²)	18 km ² (7 mi ²)	337 km ² (130 mi ²)	4,597 km ² (1,775 mi ²)	541 km ² (209 mi ²)	78 km ² (30 mi ²)	30 km ² (11 mi ²)	9 km ² (4 mi ²)
Access Fee	Yes	none	none	none	none	none	none	none
Outdoor Recreation & Education								
Use by Foot, Paddle	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Camping - Backcountry	1	4	1	1	1	1	1	1
Horse use	1	3*	4	1	1	1	2*	1
Fishing	2*	4	4	1	1	1	1	1
Hunting	4	3	4	1	1	1	3	1
Cycling, Mountain Biking	2*	2*	4	4	2*	2*	2*	1
Power Boating	2*	4	4	4	1	1	1	1
Off-Road Vehicles & Snowmobiling	4	4	4	4	2*	2*	2*	2*
Motor Vehicles & Auto Touring	1 in front country	3	4	4	3	3	1	1
Outdoor Recreation Facilities	1 in front country	4	4 except trails	4 except trails	4 except primitive	4 except primitive	1	4 except primitive
Camping - Auto Access Campgrounds	1 in front country	4	4	4	4	4	1	4
Aircraft Landing	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Commercial Activities								
Trapping	4	3	4	1	1	1	3	1
Livestock Grazing	4	2	4	4	2	1	2	2
Oil & Gas Exploration, Development	4	4	4	4	3	3	3	3
Commercial Tourism Facilities	1 in front country	4	4	4	4	4	2	4
Mining – Subsurface Minerals	4	3	4	4	3	3	3	3
Cultivation	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Timber Harvesting	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Mining – Surface Minerals	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Other Developments								
Roads & Utility Corridors	New, 4	4	4	4	3	3	3	2
Telecommunication Towers		New, 4	4	4	New, 4	New, 4	New, 4	
Mainline Pipelines	New, 4	4	4	4	3*	3*	3*	3*

This is a summary and as such, cannot cover all uses and the variations. For details, consult Alberta Parks & Protected Areas, Tourism, Parks & Recreation Dept. (or in the case of national parks, Parks Canada), and the individual management plans.

1 = Permitted.

2 = May be permitted or grazing permitted as part of ongoing management for lands in Montane, Parkland or Grassland Natural Regions.

2* = May be permitted on specific routes or waters designated for this purpose.

3 = Not permitted except for wildlife management or dispositions in existence at the time of designation of the protected area.

3* = Discouraged or permitted with strict conditions when no alternatives exist.

4 = Prohibited.

** Average sizes as of Feb. 11, 2008. The City of Calgary, for comparison is 745 km² in size.