



**Alberta
Emerald
Foundation**

Emerald Youth Grants
Study Guides

Defend Alberta Parks



30th Annual Emerald Award Recipient
Public Engagement and Outreach



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About the Alberta Emerald Foundation



We're Alberta's environmental good-news storytellers!

The Alberta Emerald Foundation (AEF) is nonprofit organization that showcases and inspires our province's environmental achievements through the annual Emerald Awards. Through our Sharing Stories Communications Strategy, the incredible work of Emerald recipients is highlighted and celebrated year-round. What began as the Emerald Awards in 1992 has evolved into an ongoing conversation.

The AEF empowers the next generation by providing grants to youth-led and youth-targeted environmental initiatives in our province. The Emerald Educational Engagement Grants Program funds up to 30 groups a year for their dream environmental project inspired by the Emerald Documentary Series, What On EARTH Can We Do? Podcast, and Emerald Speakers Series. After finding inspiration from this content featuring Emerald recipients, submit your pitch to us online. If it's accepted, you will receive \$750, thanks to our sponsor Syncrude Canada Ltd., to make your project a reality.

We encourage you to use this study guide as a resource to help you along in your project's journey. For more information, please visit

www.emerald.foundation.ca

Overview

What they're all about

Mission: Safeguard, connect, and expand parks and wilderness through education, engagement, and collaboration with Albertans.

The Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS) is a Canadian charity dedicated solely to the protection of public land, ocean, freshwater and ensuring Canada's parks are managed to **protect** the nature within them. In the past 50+ years, they've played a lead role in protecting more than half a million square kilometres – an area bigger than New Brunswick, and Newfoundland and Labrador put together. CPAWS' vision is to protect at least half of the public land and water so that future generations can experience Canada's irreplaceable **wilderness**. Partnering with the Alberta Environmental Network, which works to connect Albertans and environmental groups that are dedicated to **preserving** and protecting Alberta's environment, they launched the Defend Alberta Parks campaign.



With the help of thousands of volunteers and supporters from across Alberta, Defend Alberta Parks aimed to protect 175 parks that were under threat of delisting and closing under the Government of Alberta's



“Optimizing Alberta Parks” plan. Throughout 2020 the team worked to raise **public awareness** of the issue, address misinformation, encourage Albertans to write or call their **MLA**, and support other **grassroots** efforts. In December 2020, the Government of Alberta walked back the “Optimizing Alberta Parks” plan and confirmed all park sites would remain protected.

CPAWS believes:

- Nature, **wilderness** and wild places have **intrinsic value**;
- Nature thrives when **ecosystems** are healthy, functioning, **resilient** and diverse;
- Large landscape protection and connection is a natural solution to mitigate and adapt to **climate change**;
- Healthy **ecosystems** have a positive impact on human **wellness**;
- People are an integral part of the **ecosystem**;
- An informed and engaged citizenry is important to public debate and addressing **conservation** and **wilderness** issues; and
- **Conservation** solutions should be developed **proactively**.

Key Terms

Know your lingo



Climate Change: also sometimes called “global warming”, a change in the average conditions – such as temperature and rainfall – in a region over a long period of time. Find out more on [NASA’s website](#).

Conservation: also described as “to conserve”, means to protect a natural area or things that live in nature. It requires the sensible use of all Earth’s natural resources: water, soil, minerals, wildlife, and forests. People who care about conservation try to preserve natural resources so they will still be around in the future. They also try to keep the environment clean and healthy.

Ecosystem: all of the living and non-living things in an area. This includes all of the plants, animals, and other living things that make up *communities* of life in an area.

Grassroots: these types of movements happen when ordinary people work together to make a change. They are usually members of the community that are volunteers.

Intrinsic Value: the idea that nature has value in its own right, whether or not it has uses for humans.



MLA: a Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) is elected by the public in their constituency to serve a representative in the provincial government.

Proactive: doing things or making things happen before something happens, so that you are prepared. This is the opposite to being “reactive”, where you act once something has already happened.

Public Awareness: the level of understanding that the public has about certain issues. It is important because it can spark enthusiasm and support from people, helping attention to be given to problems, and can help create solutions.

Resilient: being able to withstand or recover from difficult circumstances. For example, how fast a plant is able to recover from being blown around in a storm. People and ecosystems can also be resilient, bouncing back after hard times.

Wellness: the act of practicing healthy habits on a daily basis to attain better physical and mental health outcomes, so that instead of just surviving, you’re thriving.

Wilderness: a natural area that is not disturbed by humans and human activity, where nature can exist as it is.



Conversation Questions

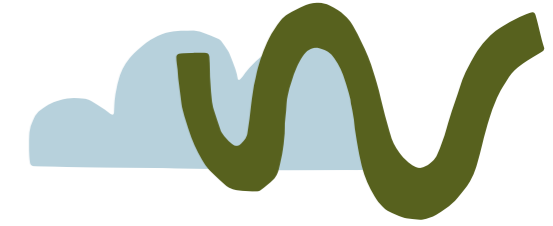
Let's talk about it

- What problem did CPAWS address? How did they address this problem?
- Why is protecting wild areas important?
- Have you ever been to a wilderness park? (For example, Banff, Jasper, or Elk Island)
- Why do you think so many people came together for the Defend Alberta Parks project? Why do you think they cared so much?
- What is something that you can do to protect wilderness in Alberta?
- How are humans part of the ecosystem?
- How do you feel when you spend time in nature?
- Where do you and your family like to volunteer?



Continuing Work

Inspiration for your Emerald Youth Grant



- Send a letter to your MLA. It can be about something that you are passionate about, something you'd like to see changed, or just to say hello and introduce yourself. Find your MLA [here](#).
- Take a look at this [map of parks across Alberta](#) and see which are closest to you. Plan a trip with your class or family to visit them.
- Plan a clean-up day at a local park in your community.
- Create and implement a lobbying campaign for sustainable packaging to convince local businesses, schools, restaurants, etc. to make the switch to sustainable packaging.
- Did you know that you hold power through your choice? Vote with your dollars, by choosing to support businesses that are in line or working towards issues that you care about.
- Order your own Defend Alberta Parks lawn sign [here!](#)



Resources

Click to discover

[Learn more about MLA's and government](#)

[Defend AB Parks Website](#)

[Alberta Environmental Network](#)

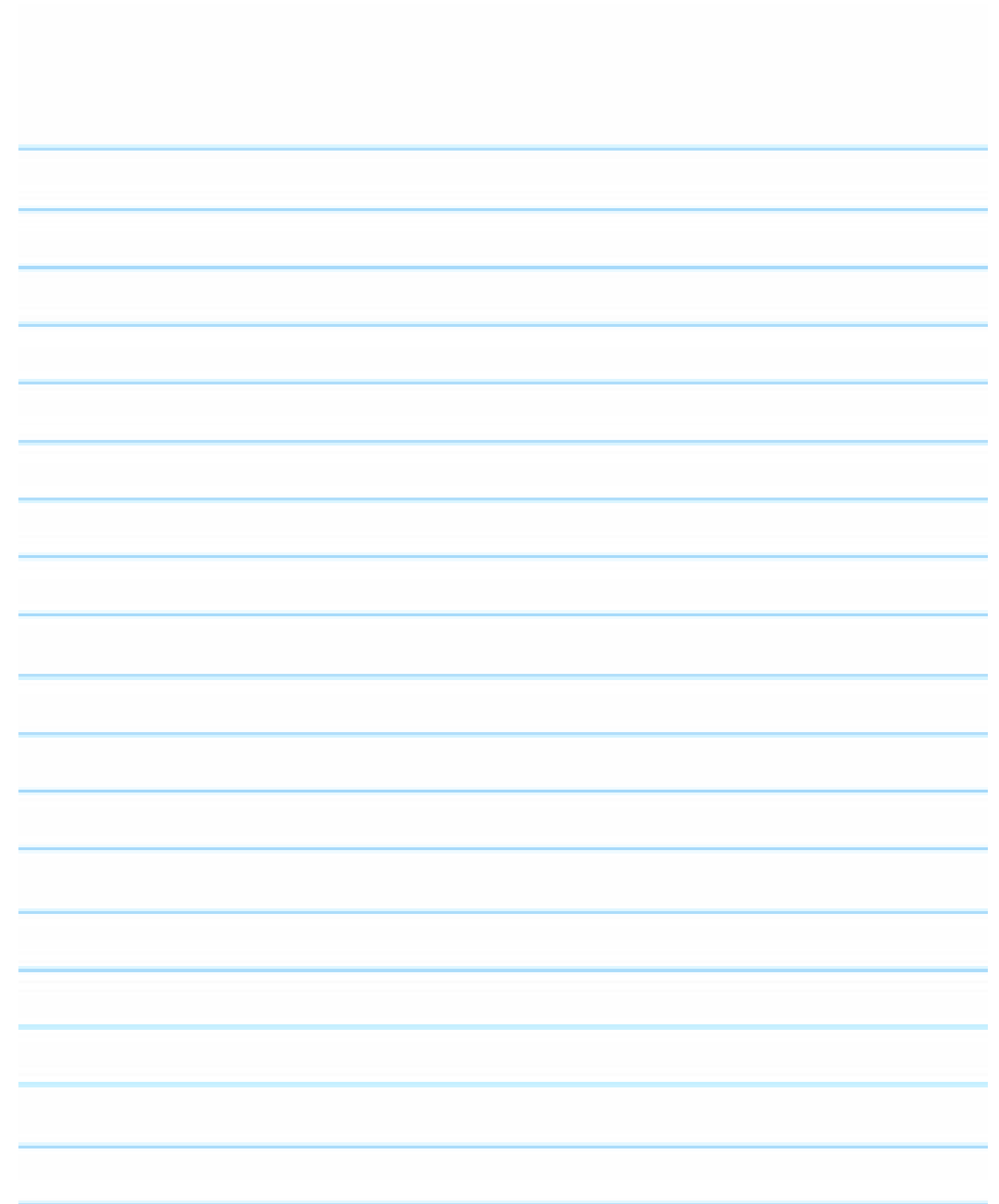
[CPAWS Northern Alberta](#)

[CPAWS Southern Alberta](#)

[Britannica Kids](#) (used for Key Terms)

[36 environmental project ideas that you could get funding for!](#)

Notes





Emerald Youth Grants

The AEF would like to thank Syncrude Canada Ltd. for their sponsorship of the Emerald Youth Grants Program. As well, we'd like to thank Hoopla Media for their work on the Emerald Documentary Series.

This study guide was created and written by AEF Summer Student, Katherine Rogers.

[Click to apply for an Emerald Youth Grant!](#)

