

The Canadian Boreal: A World Heritage Site?



Lesson Five

Age range: 16 to 18 (Senior)

Time: 120 minutes

Subjects: World Issues, Civics, Geography

Resources: Internet access; two class sets of *Atikaki/Woodland Caribou/Accord First Nations Area* (page 29) worksheet, one class set photocopied with the sidebar “Parks Canada Responds” BLANKED OUT (see Step 3) and one class set INCLUDING (see Step 6) the sidebar, which contains the answers from Parks Canada.

Learning Outcomes

Students will examine the criteria used to select a World Heritage Site. They will then conduct Internet research to determine how these criteria apply to a proposed section of Canada’s boreal forest.

Backgrounder

One of Canada’s proposed World Heritage Sites (WHS) is located in the boreal, east of Lake Winnipeg. The Atikaki-Woodland Caribou site includes the Woodland Caribou Wilderness Provincial Park in Ontario, the adjoining Atikaki Provincial Park in Manitoba, and five First Nations. The Bloodvein River, a Canadian Heritage River, runs between them. Canada has 13 WHS, four within the boreal:

- Gros Morne (NL)
- Kluane/Tatshenshini-Atsek (YT & BC)
- Nahanni (NT)
- Wood Buffalo (AB and NT)



Hook: World Heritage Sites

Using an overhead or computerized projector, show students a map of World Heritage Sites (see <http://whc.unesco.org/en/map/>). Discuss the origins of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization’s (UNESCO) World Heritage Site initiative (see <http://whc.unesco.org/en/about/>). Note that seven new sites were chosen on July 15, 2005.

Procedure

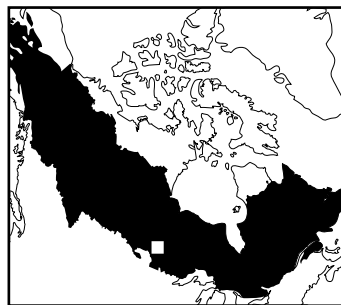
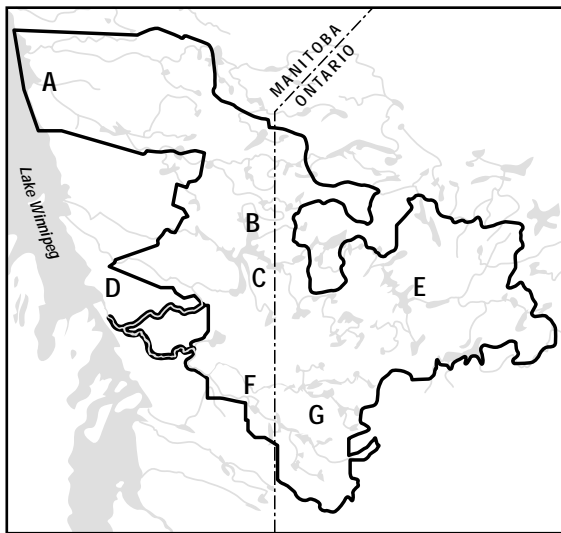
- 1 In pairs or small groups, have students brainstorm** five criteria that UNESCO might use to select World Heritage Sites.
- 2 Have the groups share their ideas** with the rest of the class. On a chalkboard or flip chart, record the criteria they have in common.
- 3 As a class, review the *World Heritage Site Criteria*** (page 29). Be sure the students are viewing the page with the sidebar “Parks Canada Responds” BLANKED OUT. Explain that each confirmed WHS has to meet one or more of the ten criteria.
- 4 Show the class the map** of the Atikaki/Woodland Caribou/Accord First Nations Area on page 29. Explain that this part of the Canadian boreal, bordering Manitoba and Ontario is a proposed WHS.
- 5 Using the following Web sites**, individually or in groups, ask students to use the Internet to research this proposed WHS:
www.poplarriverfirstnation.ca/
www.wildlandsleague.org/bigwild/heritagesite.html
www.borealnet.org/documents/BFN2004b.pdf
www.borealcanada.ca/news_e.cfm?p_id=235 (Within this document, you can also select the PDF link: *Complete Recommendation text*.) Students should gather information to support their claim that this area meets **four** WHS criteria.
- 6 Have students summarize their findings in a report to the WHS Committee.** Once the students have submitted their reports to you, review and discuss *Parks Canada Responds* (page 29). Did they choose these same criteria?
- 7 Discuss the value of a WHS designation.** For example, selection may provide protection against destruction, but not necessarily. Many WHS have been degraded by war and vandalism. Who should care for WHS – government and/or private organizations? What are the possible economic impacts of such designations? What are the possible pros, cons and tradeoffs of receiving a WHS designation?



Extensions

Ask students to research and justify WHS designation for each of the ten other proposed areas. See Canada’s Tentative List for World Heritage Sites, at http://www.pc.gc.ca/progs/spm-whs/itm3-/index_e.asp

Atikaki/Woodland Caribou/Accord First Nations Area



- A Poplar River First Nation
- B Pauingassi First Nation
- C Little Grand Rapids First Nation
- D Bloodvein First Nation
- E Pikangikum First Nation
- F Atikaki Provincial Park
- G Woodland Caribou Provincial Park

World Heritage Site Criteria

Any property that is nominated as a World Heritage Site will be considered to be of outstanding universal value when the WHS Committee finds that it meets one or more of the following criteria. It must:

1. Represent a masterpiece of human creative genius;
2. Exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town planning or landscape design;
3. Bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or civilization that is living or has disappeared;
4. Represent an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble, or landscape illustrating a significant (or stages) in human history;
5. Represent an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement, land-use, or sea-use representative of a culture (or cultures) or human interaction with the environment, especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change;
6. Be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, ideas, beliefs, or artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance. The Committee prefers that this criterion be used in conjunction with other criteria;
7. Contain superlative natural phenomena or areas of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance;
8. Contain outstanding examples representing major stages of Earth's history, including the record of life, significant ongoing geological processes in the development of landforms, or significant geomorphic or physiographic features;
9. Represent outstanding examples of significant ongoing ecological and biological processes in the evolution and development of terrestrial, freshwater, coastal and marine ecosystems, and communities of plants and animals; and
10. Contain the most important and significant natural habitats for in situ conservation of biological diversity, including those containing threatened species of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science or conservation.

PARKS CANADA RESPONDS

The Atikaki/Woodland Caribou/Accord First Nations land meets the following four of ten World Heritage Site criteria:

► CRITERIA 5:

The site, which represents an outstanding example of traditional lifeways by Aboriginal people in the boreal ecozone, exemplifies a land-use representative of a culture and human interaction with the environment.

► CRITERIA 7:

It has exceptional natural scenic values, with wild rivers and extensive undisturbed boreal forests, lakes and wetlands.

► CRITERIA 9:

It is an intact boreal landscape demonstrating a range of ecological processes relating to glacial history and fire ecology.

► CRITERIA 10:

It contains a good variety of species typical of the region as well as one threatened species (woodland caribou) and one species of special concern (chestnut lamprey).

