

Edmonton - April 29, 2004

Temporary liquor bans for May long weekend in some provincial parks

As part of a provincial parks pilot project, temporary liquor bans will be in effect in all campgrounds in Aspen Beach, Miquelon Lake and Cypress Hills Provincial Parks from noon on Thursday, May 20, 2004, until 6:00 p.m. on Monday, May 24, 2004.

The provincial parks temporary liquor ban pilot project is intended to reduce disruptive behaviour, such as rowdy parties, vandalism, impaired driving, assaults and other crimes, due to excessive liquor consumption.

"We are confident that this proactive approach will aid in making some of Alberta's most popular provincial parks safer and more enjoyable places for families to camp on long weekends," said Gene Zwozdesky, Minister of Community Development with responsibility for provincial parks and protected areas. "Our provincial parks and recreation areas belong to everyone, and we all have a role in ensuring they remain protected, safe and accessible for all Albertans to enjoy."

Over the past several years, there has been a noticeable increase in disruptive behaviour due to excessive liquor consumption in certain provincial parks, primarily on long weekends. During the 2003 May long weekend, there were a total of 239 recorded liquor-related enforcement action occurrences in Alberta's 68 provincial parks, including written warnings, charges, arrests and evictions. About half of these offences occurred in Aspen Beach, Miquelon Lake and Cypress Hills provincial parks.

The Provincial Campground Operators Association supports the temporary liquor bans in a few provincial campgrounds on long weekends to help curb rowdy behaviour, vandalism, and crime that is liquor-related.

For more information on the pilot project, phone (780) 427-7009 (toll-free by first dialing 310-0000). For more information about Alberta's parks and other options for camping, call 780-427-3582 (toll-free 1-866-427-3582) 8:15 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday to Friday, or visit our website at www.cd.gov.ab.ca/parks.

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Media Inquiries may be directed to:

Gene Zwozdesky, Minister
Community Development
Phone: (780) 427-4928
Cell: (780) 446-1144

Cheryl Robb
Communications
Community Development
Phone: (780) 427-6530

Backgrounder

Aspen Beach, Miquelon Lake and Cypress Hills Provincial Parks

Fast Facts:

- Established on November 21, 1932, Aspen Beach was one of Alberta's first provincial parks.
- Established on May 20, 1958, Miquelon Lake Provincial Park comprises approximately 835 hectares.
- Cypress Hills Interprovincial Park receives close to 250,000 visitors every year.

Located on Gull Lake, **Aspen Beach Provincial Park** was one of four parks established in 1932. As one of Alberta's first provincial parks, Aspen Beach encompasses about 214 hectares (2.14 km²) of land. Its wide sand beaches and warm shallow water are ideal for paddling, sunbathing and swimming. Featuring 586 campsites and 175 group camps, the park receives over 280,000 visitors every year, including both campers and day visitors.

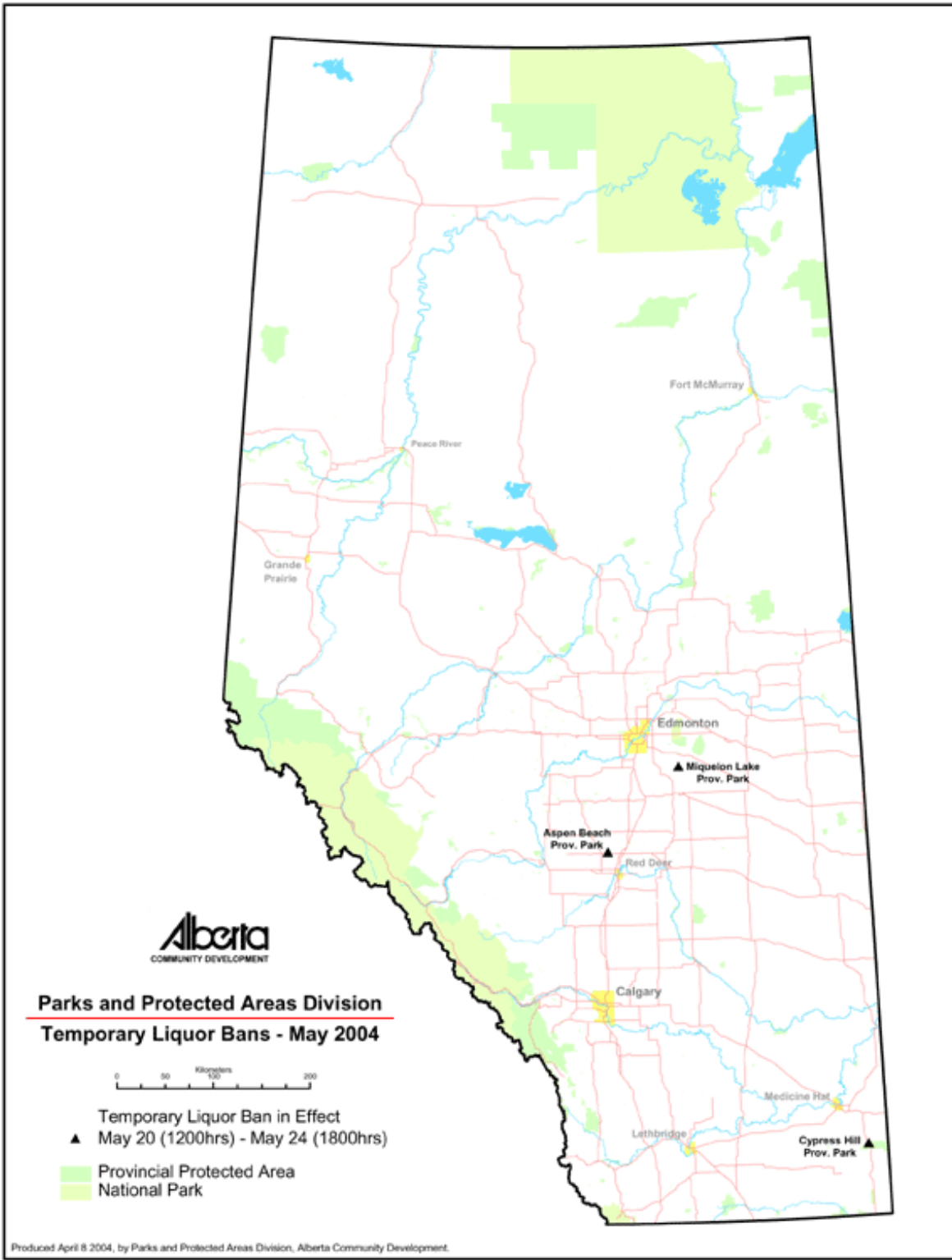
Miquelon Lake Provincial Park

is in a significant waterfowl viewing area, particularly during spring and fall migrations. The large warm lake is bordered by wide, sandy beaches and the abundant wild flowers and colorful waterfowl are attractions for hikers and bird watchers. The park was established on May 20, 1958, and encompasses about 835 hectares (8.36 km²) of land. Each year, over 140,000 visitors including both campers and day visitors, enjoy the 275 campsites and 172 group camps.

Cypress Hills Interprovincial Park

is one of the most popular tourism attractions in southeast Alberta and has a \$20 million economic impact on the local economy every year. It is Alberta's second largest provincial park and Canada's first and only interprovincial park, located in both Alberta and Saskatchewan. Cypress Hills was established as a provincial park in 1951 and as an interprovincial park in 1989. The Cypress Hills are the highest point in Canada between the Rocky Mountains and Labrador, with a maximum elevation of 1466 metres above sea level. The montane environment is an oasis of mixed and lodgepole pine forests in the midst of the Canadian prairies. The park contains 50 km of hiking trails and a wealth of plant and animal life, including 18 species of orchids. On the Alberta side, the park encompasses about 20,450 hectares of land, and close to 250,000 visitors every year enjoy the 417 campsites and 70 group camps.

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