



Crater Lakes with Clear Water Canada

About 290 million years ago, two large asteroids smashed into Earth. The massive craters they left behind—now the Clearwater Lakes, or Lac à l'Eau Claire—are still visible from space.

When they struck, the binary asteroids crashed into a part of Earth's crust that was fairly close to the Equator. Since then, millions of years of plate tectonics have pushed the craters northward into what is now northwestern Quebec. A mere 20,000 years ago, massive ice sheets advanced and retreated, scouring the land of soil and rock during cool periods and then carving deep channels and rinsing the landscape with meltwater during warmer periods. The erosion was so complete that many land surfaces were scraped down to underlying bedrock, exposing some of the oldest rocks in the world. Meanwhile, the meltwater from retreating glaciers left a dense network of linear lakes and streams that now dominate the surface.