



TO PATH

WHAT'S NEXT

PARKS AND PROTECTED
AREAS TO 2020 AND BEYOND

 **CPAWS**
CANADIAN PARKS AND WILDERNESS SOCIETY

2020

20

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
INTRODUCTION	7
PART ONE MOMENTUM IS BUILDING	10
WHY ARE PROTECTED AREAS IMPORTANT?	12
CANADA'S COMMITMENT TO PROTECTED AREAS	16
MOMENTUM TOWARDS 2020 AND BEYOND	20
PART TWO THE TRAILMAP TO 2020 AND BEYOND	28
PART THREE STAYING ON THE TRAIL	65
CONCLUSION	73
CHART: CANADA'S PATH TO 2020	74
GLOSSARY	75
END NOTES	77

20

Front cover: Moraine Lake
Road, Lake Louise, AB.

Photo: Kalen Emsley

This page: Northern lights,
SK.

Photo: Bill Allen

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CANADA'S PATH TO 2020



East Arm of Great Slave Lake, NWT.

Photo: Bob Wilson



We are in the midst of a biodiversity crisis. Around the globe, people are waking up to the realization that we are losing wildlife at an alarming rate — including right here in Canada.

Canada has a unique opportunity to address this challenge. As part of the UN's *Convention on Biological Diversity*, Canada pledged to take action to safeguard biodiversity. One of Canada's promises is to achieve at least 17% protection of the country's lands and inland waters by 2020, and to improve the quality of our protected area systems.

Burrowing owl, BC.

Photo: Flickr, Passerine

Can our country achieve 17% protection of our lands and freshwaters in 2 years, and then plan for the longer-term work needed to reverse the catastrophic and ongoing decline in nature?

The answer is YES.



Diverse voices across the country are now calling for action on protected areas, and momentum is growing. With 2020 right around the corner, people are asking, “can Canada do this?” Can our country achieve 17% protection of our lands and freshwaters in 2 years, and then plan for the longer-term work needed to reverse the catastrophic and ongoing decline in nature?

The answer is YES. Thanks in part to the support of the federal government’s Budget 2018 commitment of \$1.3 billion for nature conservation, there is an unprecedented opportunity for Canada to safeguard nature in the spirit of reconciliation between Indigenous governments and public governments, and between all Canadians and nature.

Peel Watershed, YT.

Photo: © Peter Mather



CPAWS Recommendations: The Path to 2020

With 90% of Canada's land and all our waters managed by federal, provincial, territorial and Indigenous governments, CPAWS is challenging governments to work together and take advantage of the growing momentum and support for conservation.



Our recommendations are that federal, provincial, and territorial governments:

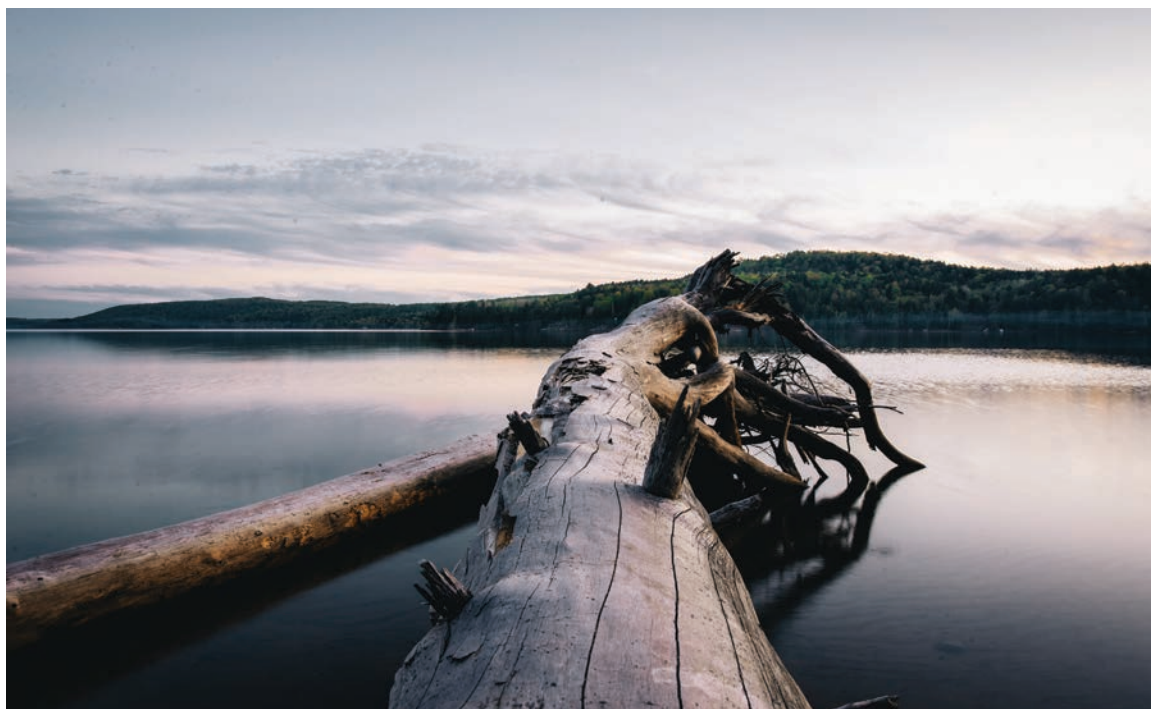
- 1 Demonstrate their commitment by publicly announcing the areas they intend to protect by 2020 to contribute to meeting the target. These areas should, to the greatest degree possible, be representative, connected, and effectively managed for the conservation of biodiversity;
- 2 Develop a science and Indigenous knowledge-based plan by 2020 for completing an effective network of interconnected protected areas that will act as a foundation for conserving nature in the face of climate change;
- 3 Make a clear commitment to adhere to recognized standards for the protection of nature, including those developed by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and the Canadian Council on Ecological Areas;
- 4 Ensure conservation funding from federal Budget 2018 is allocated primarily to support the creation of new protected areas by federal, provincial, territorial, and Indigenous governments and other partners; and
- 5 Collaborate with Indigenous governments to create Indigenous protected areas and remove barriers holding up progress.

NATURE IS THE PRIORITY FOR PROTECTED AREAS

By definition,¹ a protected area is to be managed to achieve the long-term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values. In Canada's national parks, ecological integrity, or the natural characteristics of that park, including the composition and abundance of native species and biological communities,² is intended to be given the highest priority in park management decisions. The commitment to ecological integrity in national parks was reaffirmed by the federal Minister of Environment and Climate Change in early 2018.³ CPAWS works hard to ensure that protected areas across the country are managed to protect and conserve nature and ecological integrity.



Photo: Jerry Charlton

Photo: Matt Garies

Let's Get Moving

CPAWS is a unique conservation organization — we have chapters in almost every province and territory across the country that work with Indigenous and public governments, other conservation organizations, and industry representatives to achieve conservation on the ground. We know that Canada can achieve its goal to be a leader in protecting nature.

CPAWS is ready to work with all governments to help them achieve our nationwide conservation goals. We've been doing this for over 50 years and we'll be doing it until Canada's wilderness and wildlife are truly protected — for now and forever, for the benefit of current and future peoples and all life.

This report shows the way. It provides a trailmap to 2020 and beyond. Together, we can do this.

Let's get started.

*Photo: Bruce Petersen*

MOMENTUM IS BUILDING

In early 2018, the government of Alberta announced the protection of 1.36 million hectares in northeastern Alberta — an unprecedented announcement that, together with Wood Buffalo National Park and Caribou Mountains Wildland Provincial Park, created the world's largest contiguous protected area of boreal forest. This announcement shows that conservation is possible on busy landscapes in Canada — and throws down the challenge to other provinces and territories: what areas will they put forward, and by when?

INTRODUCTION



Beavers on ice.

Photo: Nadine Wagner



We are in the midst of a biodiversity crisis. Around the globe, people are waking up to the realization that we are losing wildlife at an alarming rate. Scientific estimates show that the average rate of species loss over the last century is at least 100 times higher than expected,⁴ and in March of 2018 the Intergovernmental Science–Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) reported that biodiversity continues to decline around the world, endangering economies, livelihoods, food security, and quality of life. The IPBES reports that:

... biodiversity and nature's capacity to contribute to people are being degraded, reduced and lost due to a number of common pressures — habitat stress; overexploitation and unsustainable

use of natural resources; air, land and water pollution; increasing numbers and impact of invasive alien species and climate change, among others.⁵

Canada is not immune to this alarming trend. With 89% of Canada's nature unprotected, World Wildlife Fund Canada reported in the fall of 2017 that half of Canada's mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, and fish populations declined an average of 83% between 1970 and 2014. As stated in that report, "wildlife loss is not someone else's problem. It's a Canadian problem."⁶

Grizzly bear walking on sandy shore, NWT.

Photo: Creatas



WHAT IS BIODIVERSITY?

Biodiversity, or biological diversity, means the variability among living organisms from all sources including terrestrial, marine, and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are part. This includes diversity within species, between species, and of ecosystems.⁷

Why is Biodiversity Important to Me?

Biodiversity is important for the services that the variety of organisms on Earth provide to all of us, from the pollinating of our crops by insects to the provision of our air by plants. Currently, 75% of the world's food comes from about a dozen crops and five animal species, meaning that our food supply is vulnerable.⁸ For example, chocolate could potentially go extinct: 70% of the world's chocolate comes from a single variety grown in Ghana and the Ivory Coast and, with expected rising temperatures due to climate change, the species may not survive.⁹

Biodiversity is also important because other species have the inherent right to co-exist on the Earth alongside us. The more species we can keep alive on Earth, the richer we all are.

Canada is not immune to declining wildlife. 89% of Canada's nature is unprotected.

In July 2017, CPAWS' report, *From Laggard to Leader? Canada's Renewed Focus on Protecting Nature Could Deliver Results*,¹⁰ informed Canadians that Canada is a global laggard in protecting our lands and waters. Ranked last among the G7, the report highlighted how Canada also lags behind Brazil (29.5%), China (17.1%), and Australia (17%), with only 10.6% of its land and freshwater protected. With all of Canada's ecosystems in declining health and the list of endangered species growing each year in large part due to habitat loss, CPAWS declared a need for urgent action.

With 90% of Canada's land and all our waters public, managed by federal, provincial, territorial, and Indigenous governments, CPAWS challenged all jurisdictions to work together and summon the political will to improve the country's conservation record.



WHAT IS PUBLIC LAND?

Public lands and waters are held and managed by federal, provincial, territorial, and Indigenous governments subject to the responsibility that Canada has to reconcile the ownership of those public lands with the fact that these same lands were, pre-European contact, controlled by Indigenous governments. These lands and waters are held in the public trust. Approximately 90% of Canada's lands and 100% of waters are public.

CPAWS believes it is our collective duty to ensure that governments manage Canada's natural resources and wild spaces responsibly, in a spirit of reconciliation with Indigenous peoples in Canada, so that future generations can benefit from their existence. Canadians are charged with safeguarding Canada's wilderness and wildlife in a way that leaves our natural and cultural heritage intact for our children and grandchildren — and which also respects the inherent right of nature and wild animals to exist.

Canoeing.

Photo: Lori Labatt

It has been a year since CPAWS released that report and issued the challenge. Since then much has happened, and there remains much to be done. The purpose of this report is to:

- Demonstrate the conservation commitment and growing momentum towards conservation action made by governments in the past year (see [Part 1](#) of this report);
- Provide trailmaps for each region in Canada to illustrate how the federal, provincial, and territorial governments can achieve conservation in their regions in a framework of reconciliation (see [Part 2](#) of this report); and
- Provide guidance for how federal, provincial, and territorial governments should approach conservation to achieve their goals and then look beyond 2020 (see [Part 3](#) of this report).

CPAWS' general recommendations to federal, provincial, and territorial governments are spread throughout this report.

Cormorant.

Photo: Nadine Wagner



PART

**MOMENTUM
IS BUILDING**



Previous page: Mount
Harrison Smith taken on
Glacier Lake, NWT.

Photo: Mike Beedell

Bison in Wood Buffalo
National Park, NWT.

Photo: Paul Zizka

Since CPAWS' 2017 report, *Laggard to Leader*, momentum is building for conservation. Public governments are stepping up in the conservation of our lands and waters, and diverse voices across the country are calling for action.

Part 1 of this report details why conservation, specifically protected areas, are important for Canada, sets out commitments made by Canada's public governments, and recommends actions necessary if Canada is to achieve its goals to protect biodiversity. Part 1 concludes by illustrating how momentum for protected areas has built across the country over the last year.



WHY ARE PROTECTED AREAS IMPORTANT?



Rouge National Urban Park, ON.

Photo: Jennifer Berney



Protected areas are one of the best proven solutions to slowing the global decline in biodiversity.

Protected areas play an important role in our wellbeing for many reasons. They provide us with clean air and fresh water, protect communities against the negative impacts of climate change, such as floods and droughts, and store carbon in their intact soils and forests. They provide us with ecological benchmarks or controls against which we can assess the sustainability of our management of the broader landscape. They are also one of the best proven solutions to slowing the global decline in biodiversity.

Protected areas provide us with places in which we can connect with nature, which has been shown to be important for maintaining both physical and mental health, and providing us with resilience against the stresses of the modern world. People, especially children, who spend time outdoors experience less anxiety, depression, and attention disorders.

Elk Island National Park, AB.*Photo: David Krueger*

Spending time in nature has been linked to decreased sick days, lower healthcare costs, and increased productivity.¹¹



WHAT IS A PROTECTED AREA?

The term “protected area” means something very specific. The International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) defines a protected area as “a clearly defined geographical space, recognised, dedicated and managed, through legal or other effective means, to achieve the long-term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values.”¹²



PROTECTED AREAS ARE IMPORTANT TO CANADA!

Canadians value protected areas for many reasons:

- Parks and protected areas are part of our national identity — a 2017 poll of Canadians found that after our healthcare system, national and provincial parks are what Canadians most appreciate about Canada.¹³ The same poll found that, after friends and family, the thing Canadians most enjoy about Canada is proximity to nature, parks, and the outdoors.
- Protected areas are also good for our economy — parks and protected areas support at least 64,000 full time equivalent jobs across the country, and for every dollar spent by federal, provincial, and territorial park agencies, \$6 is returned to Canada’s Gross Domestic Product.¹⁴
- Parks and protected areas safeguard our natural heritage — the 2018 Space for Nature survey found that 93% of Canadians strongly agree or agree that protected areas are necessary, with protecting wildlife and areas of scenic or natural beauty as the primary reasons for protection.¹⁵

Above: Great blue heron.*Photo: Nancy Vlayen***Right: Northern lights.***Photo: Priscilla Du Preez*

Studies show that protected areas contain 10.6% more species and 14.5% higher abundance of individuals than unprotected areas.

Biodiversity

Protected areas have irreplaceable value for biodiversity conservation. Protected areas can be refuges for species by protecting a variety of ecosystems and habitats, as well as lessening the negative impacts of human activities and land uses. Protected areas contribute to biodiversity through species richness and abundance of individuals. Studies show that protected areas contain 10.6% more species and 14.5% higher abundance of individuals than unprotected areas.¹⁶



Point Pelee National Park, ON.

Photo: Alison Ronson

POINT PEELE NATIONAL PARK



Point Pelee National Park in southwestern Ontario was established in 1918 primarily for its ecological significance as a stopover for migratory birds. Point Pelee is a small but important protected area: recognized as a Wetland of International Significance by the RAMSAR Convention of UNESCO, designated as a Carolinian Canada Signature Site and provincially as an Area of Natural and Scientific Interest, and protecting four different ecosystem

types (wetland, Great Lakes shore, non-forest and forest) and over 60 species at risk, including piping plover, monarch butterflies, and spiny softshell turtles.¹⁷

Point Pelee is a great example of both the strengths and limitations of a protected area in safeguarding biodiversity. Its strength is that it is a refuge for wildlife but its weakness is that it is too small and it is situated in a heavily fragmented landscape. By the 1960s Point Pelee was the most heavily used park in Canada, and there were many homesteads, cottages, parking lots, and roads cutting through the park. The natural environment in the park began to suffer.

Beginning in 1972, however, cottages and other private property began to be removed from the park, public transit was brought in, and intensive-use activities were phased out. Since that time the park has regenerated its forests and species richness has increased. For example, species richness in a one metre by one metre section in 1980 was 12 species, but in 1995 had increased to 18 species.¹⁸ The park has also reintroduced the previously extirpated flying squirrel, whose populations are now stabilizing.¹⁹

The park faces other challenges now, including being an island of conservation in the middle of an intensively used and fragmented landscape. The gains made for biodiversity over the last 50 years are now suffering because of the lack of connectivity of the landscape.²⁰ Parks Canada's current Management Plan for the park now includes objectives such as "a more representative habitat mosaic is restored and maintained to reflect the natural biodiversity of the Carolinian ecosystems and contribute to the recovery of Species at Risk."²¹

World Heritage

Many of Canada's parks and protected areas are recognized not only in Canada, but around the world for their global importance. Natural World Heritage Sites are places designated as having elevated importance by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). They are designated as World Heritage Sites because of the outstanding universal values they contain. Canada, as the state party, is responsible for properly managing World Heritage Sites to maintain outstanding universal values. When management of these sites is not done properly, or when outside influences threaten the outstanding universal values of a site, there is the potential for the site to be placed on the List of World Heritage in Danger — a black mark on the state party.

Alpine Bologna Creek,
Nahanni National Park, NWT.
Photo: Mike Beedell



WHAT IS OUTSTANDING UNIVERSAL VALUE?

According to UNESCO, outstanding universal value means "cultural and/or natural significance which is so exceptional as to transcend national boundaries and to be of common importance for present and future generations of all humanity. As such, the permanent protection of this heritage is of the highest importance to the international community."²²



Bison.
Photo: Nadine Wagner

WOOD BUFFALO NATIONAL PARK



Wood Buffalo National Park was established in 1922 and designated a Natural World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1983. Its outstanding universal values are the great concentrations of migratory wildlife, rare and superlative natural phenomena such as the Peace–Athabasca Delta, salt plains, and gypsum karst, the fact that it is the most ecologically complete and largest example of the Great Plains–Boreal

grassland ecosystem in North America and the only place where the predator–prey relationship between wolves and wood bison has continued, unbroken, over time, and it contains the only breeding habitat in the world for endangered whooping cranes.²³

In 2014 the Mikisew Cree First Nation petitioned UNESCO to place Wood Buffalo National Park on the List of World Heritage Sites in Danger, stating that changes in the environment caused by upstream oil and gas activity along the Athabasca River and hydro–electric dams along the Peace River have led to significant and negative impacts on the Peace–Athabasca Delta. The changes are also negatively impacting the way of life and traditional land use practices of the Mikisew Cree First Nation, whose traditional territory overlaps the park. UNESCO sent a monitoring mission to the park and has asked Canada to create an Action Plan designed to improve the situation. Work is now ongoing, and the federal government recently announced \$27.5 million towards the Action Plan. For more information, visit <http://mikisewgir.com/projects/>

CANADA'S COMMITMENT TO PROTECTED AREAS



Spirit Bear, BC.

Photo: Andrew Wright



The UN's Convention on Biological Diversity

Canada is part of the UN's *Convention on Biological Diversity*,²⁴ (CBD) an international agreement signed by over 195 countries worldwide. As a party to the CBD, Canada has pledged to take certain actions in order to safeguard biodiversity.

Countries that have agreed to the CBD also agreed to a set of goals and targets (the "Aichi Targets"). These 20 targets set out various commitments that each country has made to help reverse the global decline of biodiversity.

Aichi Target 11 has been a focus of Canada's in the past year. It states:

By 2020, at least 17 per cent of terrestrial and inland water areas and 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services, are conserved through effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well-connected systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, and integrated into the wider landscape and seascape.²⁵

In response to the CBD, Canada created its own *2020 Biodiversity Goals and Targets for Canada*.²⁶ The *2020 Biodiversity Goals and Targets for Canada* align with CBD commitments; Target 1 corresponds to Aichi Target 11 and states that by 2020 Canada will have protected 17 percent of terrestrial areas and inland waters and 10 percent of coastal and marine areas.

Gros Morne National Park,
NL.

Photo: Jim Cornish



Report of the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development

In March 2017 the House of Commons Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development released a consensus cross-party report, *Taking Action Today: Establishing Protected Areas for Canada's Future*.²⁷ The report contained 36 recommendations to the federal government to help Canada “rapidly increase the extent of its protected spaces in a coordinated and equitable manner.”²⁸ The recommendations included accelerating the establishment of national parks and other federal protected areas by establishing multiple protected areas concurrently and removing legislative barriers to protection, confirming minimum standards for protected areas, adequately funding the establishment and management of protected areas, and partnering with Indigenous peoples to recognize Indigenous protected areas. Importantly, the Committee made the following statement:

*Canada's natural spaces and biodiversity are at the heart of our national identity, but they are increasingly threatened. Canadians expect their governments to effectively protect and manage the land and water to safeguard Canada's natural heritage. **Governments must act now.**²⁹ [emphasis added]*

The Regional Imperative

Canada has committed to the goal of protecting its biodiversity and all governments must step up to the challenge of helping the country achieve this goal. Because the majority of land in Canada is managed by provincial and territorial governments, the Ministers responsible for parks and protected areas from east to west to north must accept the challenge of achieving effective networks of protected areas in their jurisdiction. This will require working with Indigenous governments, civil society organizations, landholders, industry representatives, and recreational groups on an ongoing basis to ensure best land use practices.

It is imperative that all jurisdictions in Canada — federal, provincial, territorial, and Indigenous, work together for Canada to achieve its commitments under the CBD. The first step is for regional governments to publicly reaffirm their commitment to the creation of new protected areas for the conservation of biodiversity and demonstrate publicly how they intend to work towards that.

Mountain goats.

Photo: Adobe Stock





SASKATCHEWAN'S PASTURES — A MISSED OPPORTUNITY



In 2012, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada disbanded the *Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Act* (PFRA) program and announced the divesting of 7,000 km² of critically important grassland habitat in Saskatchewan to the provincial government with no requirement that these lands be managed for conservation. This could result in as much as 1% of the province's protected lands losing their conservation status, putting many endangered species at greater risk of extinction.

On top of the Saskatchewan government's commitment to only protect 12% of their province, far below what is needed for nature and human wellbeing, this loss of the most significant areas of native prairie grassland left in the country is troubling — and a step backwards.

Sage grouse, SK.

Photo: Branimir Gjetvaj

This loss of the most significant areas of native prairie grassland left in the country is troubling — and a step backwards.

Recommendation

Federal, provincial and territorial Ministers responsible for the creation of protected areas must demonstrate their commitment to the Aichi Target 11–Canada's Target 1 by publicly announcing the areas they intend to protect by 2020, in partnership with Indigenous peoples.

CPAWS is committed to working with the federal, provincial, territorial and Indigenous governments and other partners as they strive to protect more of Canada's land and inland waters across the country. Part 2 of this report provides trailmaps for each jurisdiction to help guide them to 2020 and beyond.

MOMENTUM TOWARDS 2020 AND BEYOND



Grasslands, South Okanagan–Similkameen, BC.

Photo: Graham Osborne



Momentum is growing for conservation in Canada. Since CPAWS' *Laggard to Leader* report, the federal government's Pathway to Target One process has made progress towards an agreed-to approach, federal Budget 2018 delivered a historic investment in conservation, and several provinces have already made significant announcements related to protecting more of their lands and waters.

Indigenous Leadership in Conservation

Indigenous peoples, as the traditional stewards of lands and waters in Canada, are demonstrating leadership in advancing conservation across Canada.

CPAWS has a long history of working with and supporting Indigenous governments in the conservation of their traditional lands and territories. We will continue to support Indigenous partners with an interest in safeguarding lands, waters, and wildlife, and in how they define conservation.



Murchison Lagoon,
Gwaii Haanas, BC.

Photo: Sabine Jessen

GWAII HAANAS

Gwaii Haanas National Park Reserve, National Marine Conservation Area Reserve, and Haida Heritage Site is located in the southern islands of the Haida Gwaii archipelago off the northwest coast of British Columbia. Protected since 1993, Gwaii Haanas is unique in Canada as a true example of co-decision-making in a protected area, as it is collaboratively managed by the Council of the Haida Nation and the Government of Canada through the Archipelago Management Board.



The *Gwaii Haanas Agreement* between the Council of the Haida Nation and the Government of Canada states that both parties agree that “long-term protective measures are essential to safeguard the Archipelago as one of the world’s great natural and cultural treasures, and that the highest standards of protection and preservation should be applied.”³⁰



The Rockies, AB.

Photo: Gabriel Santiago



Edézhíe, NT.
Photo: G. Yeoman

EDÉZHÍE



Edézhíe (eh-day-shae) is a 14,200 square kilometer proposed protected area in the Dehcho region of the Northwest Territories. The area is a unique ecosystem including head water lakes and has numerous cultural and harvesting sites. Following public review of a recommendations report for the Edézhíe candidate area, the Dehcho First Nations and Tłı̨cho Government requested the establishment of Edézhíe as a National Wildlife Area under the Canada Wildlife Act. The Dehcho and Government of Canada have worked on an establishment agreement since 2016. Co-operative management is now being implemented and formal designation of the protected area is expected in summer of 2018.

The federal, provincial, and territorial governments in Canada must recognize that, without Indigenous governments, new protected areas proposals will not advance in Canada. Public governments must be prepared to embrace the spirit of reconciliation and partnership to achieve their conservation goals.

Recommendation

Recognizing Indigenous leadership on conservation, federal, provincial and territorial governments should work with Indigenous peoples to identify how to better support their efforts to protect and manage lands and waters, including by removing legislative and political barriers where they exist.

Bighorn Backcountry.*Photo: Adam Linnard*

Pathway to Target One

In 2016 the federal, provincial, and territorial Ministers responsible for parks and protected areas across the country announced the Pathway to Canada Target 1 process.³¹ As part of this collaborative process, two advisory bodies were established to provide guidance to public governments on how Canada can reach its Target 1 goal: the Indigenous Circle of Experts (ICE) and the National Advisory Panel (NAP).

Haida dogfish dancer, BC.*Photo: Sabine Jessen*

The Indigenous Circle of Experts submitted its report to government and released it publicly in March 2018. The National Advisory Panel's report was released publicly in June 2018.



INDIGENOUS CIRCLE OF EXPERTS (ICE), AND THEIR REPORT

The Indigenous Circle of Experts are a group of Indigenous experts from across Canada, working alongside officials from federal, provincial, and territorial jurisdictions. They were tasked with providing recommendations to government on how Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas could be realized in Canada and could contribute to Canada achieving its Target 1 goals in the spirit and practice of reconciliation.³²

The ICE report suggested the need for a paradigm shift towards Indigenous-led conservation. It also made many recommendations, including that federal, provincial, and territorial governments work with Indigenous governments to support Indigenous-led conservation and develop collaborative governance and management arrangements for new and existing parks and protected areas.³³

The Report of the National Advisory Panel*

The National Advisory Panel were experts appointed by the federal Minister of Environment and Climate Change Canada and the Minister for Alberta Environment and Parks to represent perspectives from Indigenous Peoples, land trusts, conservation non-governmental organizations, industry, academia, and youth. The purpose of the National Advisory Panel was to provide practical and innovative recommendations reflecting a broad spectrum of perspectives and based on the best available science and traditional knowledge on how governments, non-governmental organizations, and Canadians could collectively achieve Canada's land and freshwater target through a coordinated and connected network of protected and conservation areas throughout the country that could serve as the cornerstone for biodiversity conservation for generations to come.³⁴

The report of the NAP, *Canada's Conservation Vision: A report of the National Advisory Panel*,³⁵ was publicly released in June 2018. The NAP recognized that Canada, like the rest of the world, is facing a "grave disruption of nature" and provided 38 wide-ranging recommendations designed to encourage governments to deliver on their protected area commitments. The recommendations were the consensus of the diverse voices on the NAP, and included:

- That governments in Canada should adopt a *shared conservation vision* that affirms a core strategy for conserving biodiversity in an interconnected network of protected areas;
- That governments in Canada should adopt *even more ambitious targets for protected areas* than those established for 2020;
- That Canada's commitments under Target 1 should be achieved *primarily through the creation of new protected areas*; and
- That Canada's governments should begin by *completing protected area proposals and commitments already underway*.

The report of the NAP recognized 4 different ways that Indigenous Peoples are currently advancing conservation, and calls for new conservation tools to be developed. A key theme of the report was how the creation and management of protected areas should contribute to reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada.

Iceline Hike in Yoho National Park, BC.

Photo: Cory Lagasse



THE IMPORTANCE OF THE NAP REPORT, CANADA'S CONSERVATION VISION.

The NAP report is an important and timely document — it sets out 38 consensus recommendations from experts from across a spectrum of peoples, from Indigenous peoples to civil society leaders to industry representatives (forestry, oil and gas, mining). The recommendations are not only those of conservationists or environmentalists — they come from a broad group of individuals who, while representing different sectors, agreed that Canada must protect more of its lands and waters.

* Two of CPAWS' staff and one National Trustee sat on the National Advisory Panel.



Kayaking the west coast, BC.

Photo: Laura Lefurgey-Smith

Federal Budget 2018

In March of 2018 the federal government released federal Budget 2018, which included \$1.3 billion dollars over five years to protect Canada's land, ocean, and wildlife. This budget recognizes the scale of the biodiversity crisis faced in Canada and should support the efforts of all levels of government, Indigenous communities, and civil society partners to achieve conservation across the country. The budget announcement included \$500 million over five years for a new \$1 billion "Nature Fund" to support conservation partnerships, and \$800 million over five years to support the creation of new federal protected areas, better national park management, and to protect species at risk.

CPAWS celebrated this historic achievement. It is a significant and necessary investment required if Canada is going to meet its international obligations. We look forward to details on how it will be allocated. CPAWS supports the bulk of the monies being allocated to support Indigenous led land use planning and protected areas and to cost-sharing the creation of new protected areas with provincial and territorial governments. In late June, 2018, the Minister of Environment and Climate Change announced that "a call for proposals will be launched in the coming months to identify initiatives that will create new protected and conserved areas on public and private lands and support collaboration toward establishing Indigenous protected and conserved areas.

Recommendation

Provincial and territorial Ministers and Indigenous governments responsible for the creation of protected areas should apply for federal funding from the Nature Fund to support the creation of their new protected areas.

The federal Minister of Environment and Climate Change should primarily allocate the Nature Fund to supporting the creation of protected areas, in partnership with Indigenous governments, and to cost-sharing the creation of new protected areas with provincial and territorial governments.



South Okanagan Grasslands,
BC.

Photo: Trevor Reeves

GOVERNMENTS AND INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES ANNOUNCE INTENTION TO PROTECT THE SOUTH OKANAGAN–SIMILKAMEEN, BC

In October 2017, the federal government, government of British Columbia, and leaders from the Okanagan Nation in southern BC announced a renewed process to achieve protection of the South Okanagan–Similkameen area of southern BC in a National Park Reserve. This is a historic moment for the protection of endangered ecosystems and wildlife in BC and represents an important shift for provincial and federal governments who are now working in full partnership with local First Nations to protect the area in the next two years. CPAWS British Columbia chapter has been working with partners in the Okanagan–Similkameen region for many years.

QUÉBEC PROTECTS THE LAND — AND CARIBOU — IN THE MONTAGNES BLANCHES

In November of 2017, the government of Québec announced its intention to protect the Manouane–Manicouagan Woodland Caribou protected area, in the Montagnes Blanches region of Québec. The creation of at least 10,000 km² of protected areas is one of the priority measures detailed in the Plan de rétablissement du caribou forestier au Québec 2013–2023, a plan CPAWS Québec (SNAP) helped develop. The government's proposal includes a large area north of the Manicouagan Reservoir where the population density of the caribou is very high and where the habitat is favourable to the species.

Montagnes Blanches, QC.

Photo: F. Brassard



ALBERTA ANNOUNCES LARGEST BOREAL FOREST PROTECTED AREA NETWORK IN THE WORLD

Following the federal government's announcement of the "Nature Fund," Alberta made a major announcement — the designation of multiple Wildland Provincial Parks in northeastern Alberta around Wood Buffalo National Park. Alberta adds 1.36 million hectares of protection to the boreal forest, creating the largest contiguous area of protected boreal forest in the world. Importantly, for the five new Wildland Provincial Parks established, the government of Alberta plans to enter into cooperative management agreements with Indigenous communities, with Indigenous advice and knowledge informing decision-making and management of the lands.³⁶

Conservation groups such as Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) and CPAWS had significant involvement in securing these new protected areas — by working with industry and Indigenous governments to resolve resource tenure claims (NCC), or by participating in government land use planning processes in the region (CPAWS Northern Alberta chapter).

Conclusion

The achievements above represent the beginning of what is necessary for protected areas to advance in Canada — governments and communities working together to protect our biodiversity. Now we need every jurisdiction to do its part to meet and then exceed the international target.

Part 2 of this report sets out trailmaps for each jurisdiction — how respective governments can move forward and help Canada meet our goals to protect more of our land and freshwater ecosystems — until 2020 and, importantly, beyond.

Hare, ON.

Photo: Calvin Aman



A scenic landscape photograph of a sandy beach. In the foreground, several large, dark bear paw prints are visible in the sand. The beach curves along a body of water on the right. The background features a dense forest of green trees and mountains under a blue sky with white clouds.

PART

THE TRAILMAP TO 2020 AND BEYOND

2

Bear Prints in Taku, BC.

Photo: David Nunuk

The answer is YES — this is an unprecedented opportunity for Canada to safeguard nature, and to do it in the spirit of reconciliation between both Indigenous governments and public governments, and between all peoples and nature.

Introduction

With 2020 right around the corner, people are asking: can Canada achieve its protected areas goals? Can our country achieve 17% protection of our lands and freshwaters in two years, and plan for ambitious targets beyond 2020?

The answer is YES — this is an unprecedented opportunity for Canada to safeguard nature, and to do it in the spirit of reconciliation between both Indigenous governments and public governments, and between all peoples and nature.

CPAWS is a unique conservation organization — we have chapters in almost every province and territory across the country that work with governments, Indigenous communities, and industry representatives to achieve conservation on busy landscapes.

CPAWS knows that Canada can achieve its goal to be a leader in protecting nature. That's why we have developed trailmaps for each jurisdiction that set out actions that each government can take to advance protected areas. CPAWS' trailmaps and recommendations are designed to assist governments across the country in seizing the current conservation opportunity.



Kluane National Park, Y.T.

Photo: Kalen Emsley

NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

Summary



Newfoundland and Labrador has a long-standing commitment to publicly-release and implement the “Natural Areas System Plan” (NASP). This commitment goes back several decades, yet these pending protected areas have never been officially established. All of the sites from this plan need to be announced by the provincial government, without delay. This is the best opportunity for the province to make progress in expanding its system of protected areas in the short term. The proposed Eagle River Provincial Waterway Park, announced by the province and Indigenous communities in 2010, is still awaiting establishment. Miawpukek First Nation has been identifying conservation opportunities within their traditional territory, which includes a substantial majority of large intact landscapes on the Island of Newfoundland and some of the best remaining caribou habitat.

Even when the NASP and Eagle River sites are publicly-released and implemented, there will still be sizeable gaps in the provincial system of protected areas. The government should initiate a province-wide conservation analysis to identify conservation priorities for filling these gaps and to achieve the 17% protected areas target.

Recommendations

1. Publicly-release and implement the entire Natural Areas System Plan
2. Deliver on the promise to protect the Eagle River in partnership with Indigenous peoples
3. Collaborate with Miawpukek First Nation on their efforts to conserve their traditional territory
4. Seek funding from the Nature Fund to support creation and management of new protected areas, and conservation planning
5. Work with local communities, First Nations and the public to address the World Heritage Committee’s request to create a buffer zone around Gros Morne National Park
6. Initiate a province-wide conservation analysis to examine gaps in the protected areas system and to identify opportunities to achieve the national 17% protected areas target

Short Term Opportunities

Natural Areas System Plan: Newfoundland and Labrador has a long-standing commitment to publicly-release and implement the NASP. This commitment goes back several decades, yet these pending protected areas have never been officially established. Recently, the House of Assembly passed a unanimous resolution calling on the provincial government to publicly release the NASP. It's crucial that the full plan be publicly-released, without delay, and that this plan includes all of the sites that have been under interim protections internally within government for many years. Implementing the NASP is a long overdue commitment and something that would help Newfoundland and Labrador make important progress on protected areas in the short-term.

Eagle River: Covering 3,000km² in Labrador, the proposed Eagle River Provincial Waterway Park was announced by the provincial government and Indigenous communities when the Akami-Uapishkò-KakKasuak-Mealy Mountains National Park Reserve proposal was announced in 2010.

Miawpukek First Nation Traditional Territory: Miawpukek First Nation have been undertaking important conservation work to better protect their traditional territory, which includes some of the best remaining caribou habitat and the substantial majority of large intact landscapes on the Island of Newfoundland. The provincial government needs to collaborate with the First Nation on this important initiative.

Western Brook Pond, NL.

Photo: Michael Burzynski





Green Gardens, Gros Morne
National Park, NL.

Photo: Alison Woodley

Gros Morne National Park: Gros Morne is one of Canada's most iconic national parks and World Heritage Sites. However, in recent years the park has been threatened by nearby oil and gas exploration and development. In response, the UNESCO World Heritage Committee has repeatedly called on Canada to establish a buffer zone around the park, working with local communities and civil society. Moving forward on this request would safeguard Gros Morne's natural beauty and wildlife, and the tourism economy which depends on its integrity. It would also demonstrate leadership by better integrating protected areas into the broader land and seascape — a requirement of Aichi Target 11.

Nature Fund: Capacity in the Newfoundland and Labrador government protected areas branch has been dramatically cut over the past few years and is inadequate to embrace all the opportunities that currently exist. The provincial government has a very small but strong protected areas team in place, but they need more capacity to deliver on these protected area opportunities. Newfoundland and interested Indigenous communities should apply to the new federal Nature Fund to enhance their capacity to complete protected areas planning and establishment processes.

Planning For The Future

Conservation planning: Newfoundland and Labrador has consistently ranked toward the bottom-of-the-pack for the percentage of lands allocated for protection, despite ample opportunities for establishing new protected areas. The provincial government should initiate a province-wide conservation analysis that looks for gaps in the protected areas system and identifies opportunities for achieving the national 17% protected areas target.

	Percentage of Newfoundland and Labrador (land and inland waters)	Area (km ²)
Current Terrestrial Area Protected (Dec 2017)	6.88%	27,891
Proposed protected areas - Natural Areas System Plan - Eagle River		TBD Approx 3,000
Total: Existing and proposed protected areas	7.62%	30,891
Gap to 17%	9.38%	38,009

NOVA SCOTIA

Summary



Nova Scotia has made reasonably good progress in recent years creating new protected areas. The Nova Scotia *Our Parks and Protected Areas Plan* was a big step in the right direction and, when fully implemented, will legally protect about 14% of the provincial landmass. The full implementation of the Plan is the most important thing that the Nova Scotia government can do in the short term to improve Nova Scotia's performance on protected areas. Although the final version of the plan was approved almost 5 years ago, only half of the sites have been officially implemented. Those sites need to be designated without delay.

Even when the *Plan* is fully implemented, significant gaps will still remain in the protected areas system in Nova Scotia and the province will still fall short of the national 17% protected areas target. To address this shortcoming, the provincial government should initiate a province-wide conservation assessment to identify opportunities to fill gaps and to establish better connectivity between existing protected sites.

Another challenge for the Nova Scotia government is the overall lack of public land in the province. Funds dedicated to the purchase of private lands for protected areas need to be re-established by the provincial government, which also needs to work collaboratively with the federal government to access the new "Nature Fund" to help with protected area establishment and planning.

Recommendations

1. Complete the full implementation of the Nova Scotia Our Parks and Protected Areas Plan
2. Undertake a province-wide gap analysis to identify priority conservation sites and opportunities for improving connectivity between protected areas
3. Initiate a wilderness area assessment for the Ingram River watershed on the former Bowater lands
4. Seek matching funding from the new federal "Nature Fund" for protected area establishment and conservation planning
5. Re-establish a land acquisition budget for the Nova Scotia Department of Environment so that key private lands can be purchased for conservation

Short Term Opportunities

Full implementation of Nova Scotia's Our Parks and Protected Areas Plan

Through the *Our Parks and Protected Areas Plan*, the Nova Scotia government committed to protecting approximately a quarter million hectares of land through the creation of 200 protected areas. These sites include some of the best remaining natural areas in the province, including large intact forests, wilderness coastline, significant wetlands, old growth forest, species at risk habitat, representative areas, and important waterways.

Although the plan was approved in 2013, there are nearly 100 protected areas still awaiting legal protection by the government. This includes sites such as St. Mary's River, Wentworth Valley, Mabou Highlands, Sackville River, Giants Lake, and rare species hotspots in southwestern Nova Scotia. By designating these areas quickly, the Nova Scotia government could add approximately 88,000 hectares to its protected areas system. This would bring the province from 12.4% to approximately 14% protection, and within reach of the 17% target.

Planning for the future

Even when the *Our Parks and Protected Areas Plan* is fully implemented, there will still be sizeable gaps remaining in Nova Scotia's system of protected areas, particularly highly disturbed areas of the province where there are fewer opportunities to establish conservation sites.

The provincial government should initiate a province-wide assessment of conservation opportunities, to identify priority areas for filling gaps and to improve connectivity between protected areas. This should also include a wilderness area assessment for the Ingram River watershed, on the former Bowater lands near St. Margaret's Bay, where there is strong local support for creating a protected area. Together, these two conservation assessments should seek to identify at least 17% of the provincial landmass for protected areas, consistent with both Canadian and international protected areas targets.

Above and right: St. Mary's
River floodplain, NS.

Photo: Irwin Barrett



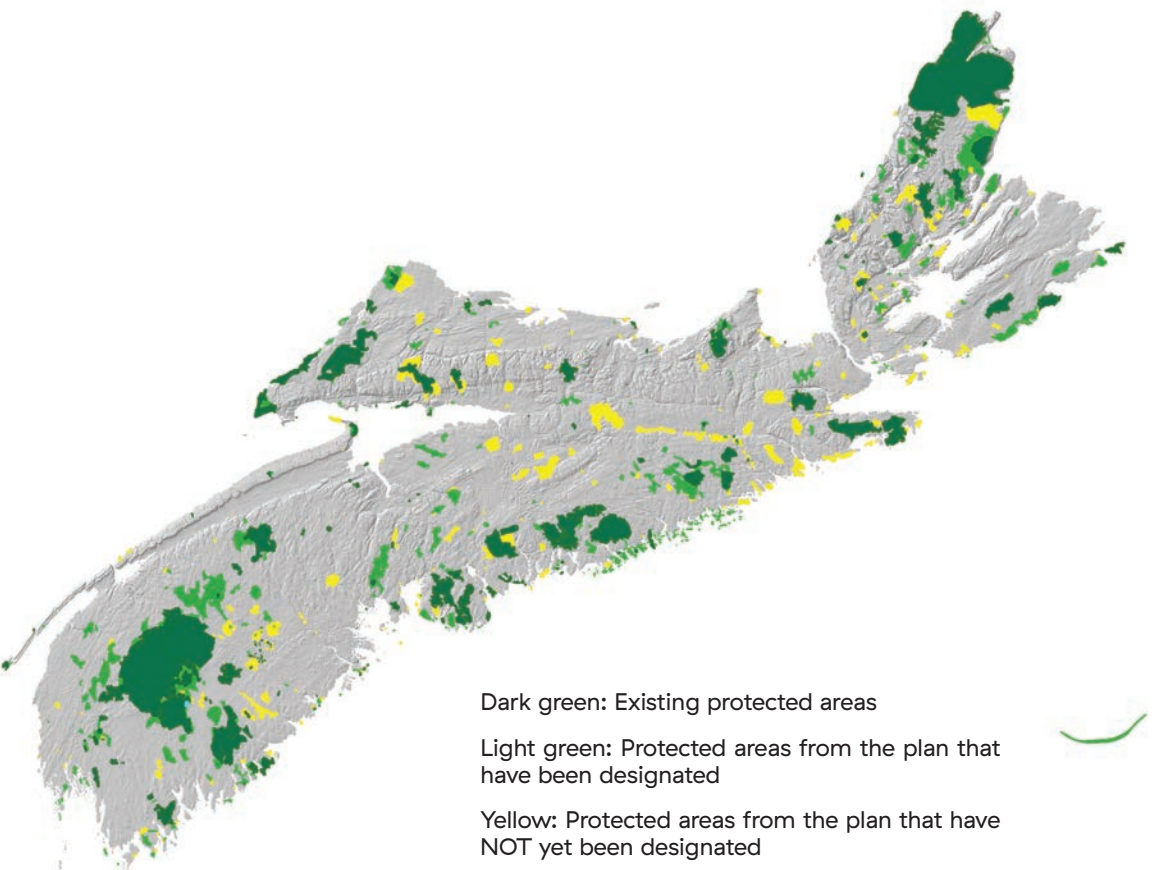


Grand Lake, NS.
Photo: Irwin Barrett

Securing new funds for private land acquisition

Nova Scotia has a relatively small percentage of public lands compared to most provinces in Canada. This creates challenges for establishing a complete network of protected areas, since important ecosystems will inevitably occur on privately owned lands. Previously, the provincial Department of Environment had a land acquisition budget to purchase private lands for protected areas, but those funds were cut several years ago. With the new “nature fund” announced by the federal government, there is an opportunity for the provincial government to re-establish the land acquisition funds for the Department of Environment by working collaboratively with the federal government.

	Percentage of Nova Scotia (land and inland waters)	Area (hectares)
Current Terrestrial Protected Areas (Dec 2017)	12.4%	686,000
Our Parks and Protected Areas Plan – protected areas approved but not yet designated	1.6%	88,000
Gap to reach 17%	3%	166,000



PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

Summary



Prince Edward Island has the smallest percentage of land protected of any province or territory in Canada, with only 3.19% of the island's landscape protected.³⁷ However, it is also unique in Canada in that the majority of the island's land base — about 90% — is privately owned. This is the opposite of the rest of Canada, where 90% of the land base is publicly owned. There is an existing provincial government commitment to protect 7% of the province.

In order for Prince Edward to advance the creation of new protected areas, the provincial government should work with private land conservation organizations such as the Island Nature Trust, which acquires and manages land as protected areas, and works with private landowners to protect their own properties.³⁸

Recommendations

CPAWS does not have an office in Prince Edward Island. Therefore, our recommendations are based on the best understanding we have regarding opportunities to achieve protection in a province which is predominantly made up of private land:

1. The Government of Prince Edward Island should work with private land trusts such as the Island Nature Trust, Nature Conservancy of Canada, Ducks Unlimited, and PEI Wildlife Federation to protect more private lands on the island, and those land trusts should seek funding from the Nature Fund to support this work
2. The Government of Prince Edward Island should create a strategy to protect more of the public lands it does manage in the province, with a focus on achieving connectivity across the island, and should work with Indigenous communities on the island in the creation of this strategy

Fox, PEI.

Photo: Scot Walsh



NEW BRUNSWICK

Summary



Natural beauty and wildlife are at the core of New Brunswick's identity. Yet over 95% of the province's landscape remains unprotected, lagging well behind most other Canadian provinces and leaving the health of New Brunswick's landscapes and wildlife at risk. The Pathway to Target One offers a chance for New Brunswick to resource and protect more of its treasured forests, rivers, wetlands, and coastline, and to sustain healthy natural areas and economy for generations to come. This will also contribute to Canada's nationwide goal of protecting at least 17% of land and freshwater by 2020 in a network of connected, well-managed protected areas.

The Restigouche River watershed offers an immediate opportunity to safeguard one of New Brunswick's most beloved and iconic landscapes. The Restigouche is an internationally renowned fishing and wilderness tourism destination, important to the province's environment and economy.

Half of New Brunswick is public land. By upgrading existing protection measures for lands already identified as drinking water sources, peatlands, wetlands, old growth forests, and sensitive coastal areas, New Brunswick could more than double the percentage of public land in protected areas. By doing this, the province would also secure economic opportunities, quality of life, and a variety of good jobs for New Brunswick communities.



**Proposed Restigouche
Wilderness, NB.**

Photo: Roberta Clowater

Short Term Opportunities

Protect the Restigouche wilderness

The iconic Restigouche watershed, which spans the border of Québec and New Brunswick, is one of Eastern Canada's most famous rivers. Renowned for its Atlantic salmon, the Restigouche watershed is also home to moose, marten, bald eagles, Canada lynx, and spectacular wild river scenery. A million-dollar salmon angling economy relies on the long-term health of this watershed, as does a thriving wilderness tourism sector. Expanding protection in this watershed from its current 29,000 hectares to 60,000 hectares would help safeguard one of New Brunswick's most beloved natural treasures and the economic benefits that it provides, for now, and for future generations.

Upgrade management of high value ecosystems to protected area status

A variety of management measures are already in place for areas of public land that are particularly important for wildlife, and that deliver essential ecosystem services to communities — for example, drinking water. Upgrading these areas to protected area status would almost double the portion of the province protected for nature. These areas include:

1. **Peatlands** — 110 km² currently identified in policy to be conserved (not harvested for peat).
2. **Drinking water watersheds on Crown land** — 800 km² are regulated under the Clean Water Act. Designating these as protected natural areas would be a cost-effective way to secure community drinking water supplies, and wildlife habitat.
3. **Drinking water watersheds owned by municipalities** (area TBD).
4. **Old forest communities and habitats** — although these tend to be small sites individually, protecting those that are largest, or located close to other important areas (e.g. drinking water areas) could add significant functional habitat to the protected areas system — estimated 200 to 400 km².
5. **Coastal areas** — salt marshes, cliffs and dunes — estimated 100 to 200 km².
6. **Provincially Significant Wetlands** — these wetlands contribute significantly to biodiversity conservation and are crucial to flood control and water purification — estimated 100 km².
7. **Providing legal protection** under the Protected Natural Areas Act for dozens of small private properties already secured by land trusts (but are still open to mining).

Beyond these already identified areas, an action plan would need to protect additional coastal, wetland, river, and forest habitats that go beyond the categories described above.

Flowerpot Rocks, NB.

Photo: Stockvault



**Proposed Restigouche
Wilderness, NB.**

Photo: John MacDermid



Planning For The Future

2020 is now just around the corner and work to protect our land and freshwater will need to continue beyond this short-term timeline. Setting an ambitious, science-based and measurable conservation target for New Brunswick would provide a good foundation for this work. We recommend focusing on completing, by 2030, an effective, well-connected network of protected areas, based on science and Indigenous knowledge, with an interim target of at least 10% of the province in protected areas by 2020.

	Percentage of province (land and inland waters)	Area (km ²)
Terrestrial Area Protected (Dec 2017)	4.6%	3,384
Restigouche Wilderness Waterway	0.4 %	Approx. 300
Upgrading protection for identified high value ecosystems – proposed for 2020 protection	5 %	3,650
Total with proposed protected areas	10%	7,334

QUÉBEC

Summary



Québec has committed to designating at least 17% of its land and inland waters as protected areas by 2020, and to conserving half of its territory north of the 49th parallel by 2035, with 20% of this northern territory in strict protected areas by 2020. While not formally participating in the federal-provincial-territorial Pathway to Canada Target One process, Québec has committed to delivering on the target through its own parallel process.

The announcement in November 2017 of a 7,000 km² new protected area in boreal caribou habitat in the Montagnes Blanches area of northern Québec was a positive sign of progress. The March 2018 investment of \$40.9M for protected areas in the Québec budget is another positive signal that the government is serious about delivering on their promise.

With a provincial election scheduled for the fall of 2018, there is an urgent need for the Québec government to release a clear and specific plan for how they will achieve 17% protection by 2020.

Short Term Opportunities

While timelines are tight, it is still possible for Québec to achieve its 17% protection commitment by 2020. Only 10.2% of its landscape is currently protected, but at least 130,000 km² of land and inland waters have already been identified as candidate protected areas across Québec by Inuit, First Nations, and regional stakeholders. Formally designating these as protected areas will enable Québec to deliver on its promise.

Parc national d'Oka, QC.

Photo: JP Valery





PIPMUACAN, AN INNU HERITAGE SITE CRUCIAL TO CARIBOU RECOVERY

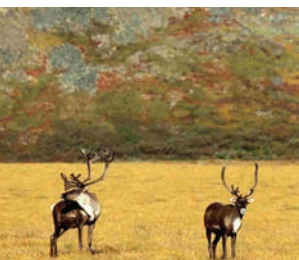
Located in Pessamit First Nation *Nitassinan* (traditional land), the Pipmuacan area shelters unique cultural and ecological value. A gathering place for Pessamiulnut from times immemorial, it is still today a boreal haven crucial for the transmission of Innu knowledge and culture. The area was identified by scientists as a priority area for caribou recovery, and regional stakeholders designated it as a candidate protected area back in 2015. The Québec government must urgently halt forestry cuts and lease granting in this area while Pessamit First Nation develops a conservation scenario that will ensure the perpetuity of *Atik* (caribou) and Innu heritage.

Pipmuacan Area, QC.

Photo: Snap Québec

Accelerated action is now needed across Québec to achieve the promised level of protection in the next two years, including:

- by August 1, Québec should publicly release an action plan for completing protection of the 130,000 km² regional protected area proposals;
- Québec should start by focusing on areas where there has been significant work done by Indigenous governments, civil society, and others to build support for protection, including:
 - The Magpie River watershed (Côte-Nord)
 - The Dumoine River watershed and the watersheds of the Noire and Coulonge Rivers (Outaouais)
 - Pipmuacan (Côte-Nord)
 - Lac Manouane (Saguenay Lac St Jean)
 - Mishigamish (Eeyou Itschee)
 - Innu sacred sites (Côte-Nord, Nunavik)
 - Expansion of the Parc national Iles-de-Boucherville and protection of Sainte-Therese Island
 - Bas Saint Laurent candidate protected areas
 - Cambrian Lake area, including Waskaikinis (Fort McKenzie) Naskapi historical site
- Leverage Québec's 2018 budget investment in protected areas by applying to the new federal Nature Fund for matching funds to help deliver on these protected area commitments, notably by supporting the Municipal Biodiversity Fund initiative, which helps leverage financial support for conservation at the local, regional, and provincial level.



Woodland Caribou.

Photo: Ken Madsen

Planning For The Future

Québec has already demonstrated leadership in setting ambitious conservation targets by committing to protect half of its northern territory by 2035 to conserve biodiversity. To ensure this commitment delivers the desired outcomes for biodiversity and for community well-being, it is crucial that implementation prioritizes the effective protection of ecological and cultural values and is based on science and Indigenous knowledge-based plans.

Recommendations

We recommend that the Québec government:

- 1. Commit to a next interim target of designating 25% of Québec’s landscape in protected areas by 2025
- 2. Use the Municipal Biodiversity Fund to make gains in southern Québec and ensure the representativeness of the protected areas network
- 3. Support Indigenous-led conservation initiatives and promote inspiring co-management models established for the Nunavik parks network
- 4. Increase the proportion of Québec’s budget that is allocated to the environment to 1%
- 5. Initiate a review of Québec’s protected areas governance system to remove obstacles and to meet governmental and international targets

	Percentage of Québec (land and inland waters)	Area (km²)
Current Terrestrial Protected Areas (Dec 2017)	10.2%	154,700
Regional proposals for new protected areas	8.6%	130,000
Current and proposed protected areas	18.8%	284,700

Monts-Groulx, QC.
Photo: Marieve Marchand



ONTARIO

Summary



For more than a decade, there has been little work done to expand Ontario's system of parks and protected areas, which currently covers only 10.7% of the province. The last significant expansion of the protected areas system was Ontario's Living Legacy (1999) process.

In 2008 the Ontario government committed to protecting half of Ontario's far north in collaboration with First Nations. In 2012 the province committed to protecting at least 17% of Ontario's terrestrial and aquatic systems by 2020. Despite these commitments a considerable gap remains to reach the 17% target. However, there are opportunities to make significant progress in the next few years.

Arguably, no public policy decision delivers as broad a suite of benefits for the people of Ontario as protecting more of the province's land and freshwater. From Point Pelee, to Algonquin and the vast northern landscape of Polar Bear Provincial Park, Ontarians love their parks and benefit from their economic and health impacts.

Overall, Ontario's provincial park system contributes over \$290 million dollars to GDP and \$200 million dollars of income and \$35 million dollars of tax revenue. The Ontario government reports that each year, camping and day use visitation to Ontario's operating parks amount to about 10 million visitor days.³⁹ These visitors help support local businesses by spending significantly on their trips to provincial parks.⁴⁰ Another study concluded that the value of the non-use benefits Ontario residents could receive ranged from \$2.1 to \$4.6 billion dollars (depending on the portion of area protected).⁴¹

Protected wetlands are the most productive ecosystem for wildlife and their economic benefits are up to 35 times the cost of protection or restoration. They can reduce the economic costs of floods alone by up to 38 percent.

Whitefish Lake, Algonquin
Park, ON.

Photo: Nelz Tabcharani



Female moose, ON.

Photo: M. Lorenz



Below are some areas that Ontario could add to its protected area system that will benefit people and wildlife and help deliver on the province's commitment to 17% protection by 2020.

Recommendations

1. Work with Moose Cree First Nation to permanently protect the North French River watershed
2. Identify and support other Indigenous community proposals for protection
3. Building on the Greenbelt and Rouge National Urban Park, commit to creating a connected network of protected natural lands throughout southern Ontario
4. Work with forestry companies to provide legal protection for candidate protected areas identified in Forest Stewardship Council ("FSC") certified forests
5. Review past candidates for protected areas including many of the 86 Enhanced Management Areas (EMAs). These areas lack legal protection today but those with high ecological importance could be designated as protected under the Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves Act, 2006
6. Phase out logging from Algonquin Park. This would secure the province's most famous park and add about 3,400 km² to the protected area system
7. Work with Parks Canada to create new National Marine Conservation Areas in the Great Lakes



NORTH FRENCH RIVER WATERSHED

The intact boreal forest, wetlands, and waters of the 6,660 km² North French River Watershed in northeastern Ontario are in the heart of the Moose Cree homeland. Protecting this watershed is central to guaranteeing the survival of the Moose Cree people. The North French is one of the last watersheds that remains untouched by industrial development, and one of the last sources of clean drinking water in this part of the province. It is home to threatened boreal caribou as well as an abundance of fish and migratory birds, and its wetlands store massive amounts of carbon.

In 2002 the Moose Cree declared the North French River watershed permanently protected and reaffirmed this in a 2015 letter to the Premier of Ontario and in a 2017 presentation to the federal House of Commons Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development. By working with Moose Cree to apply provincial legal tools that would respect the community's declaration of permanent protection for the watershed, the province could be a leader in supporting Indigenous protected areas, safeguarding clean land and water, while demonstrating Ontario's commitment to reconciliation with Indigenous peoples.

North French River, ON.
Photo: Ron Spencer

	Percentage of Ontario (land and inland waters)	Area (km ²)
Currently protected (Dec 2017)	10.7%	115,120
North French River proposed First Nation protected area	0.62%	6,660*
Algonquin Park – phasing out logging	0.32%	3,400
Gap to 17%	5.4%	56,514

Algonquin Park, ON.
Photo: Bildagentur Zoonar

*1,583 km² of the watershed is already protected as a conservation reserve.



MANITOBA

Summary



Fisher Bay, MB.

Photo: Ron Thiessen

Manitoba can advance conservation and help Canada meet the 2020 protected area target of 17% by continuing to support the Ochiwasahow — Fisher Bay initiative lead by Fisher River Cree Nation and CPAWS. Also, by moving forward on the Manitoba Protected Areas Initiative by working with local communities to determine which Areas of Special Interest, that have been identified through this process, can be designated a protected areas. There is also an outstanding opportunity to work with local communities to cooperatively advance opportunities for the protection of terrestrial polar bear habitat through Resource Management Area land use planning and the proposed the Polar Bear Provincial Park. Completing land use planning in Resource Management Areas throughout the boreal region offers an opportunity to identify new protected areas that will help conserve a vast array of wildlife, support Indigenous communities' traditional use of the land, and support sustainable economic opportunities for local communities.



Recommendations

The Manitoba government should:

1. Continue supporting the Initiative by Fisher River Cree Nation and CPAWS in efforts to secure greater protection of the Ochiwasahow — Fisher Bay region, which includes a community and stakeholder engagement process beginning summer of 2018
2. Financially support land use planning by Regional Management Boards throughout the province
3. Work with Indigenous governments and other conservation partners to secure funding from the new federal Nature Fund for this work. This could be an opportunity to leverage the funding recently announced for Manitoba's Conservation Trust
4. Consider protected areas as key tools for implementing the natural infrastructure component of the province's Climate and Green plan

Young polar bear.
Photo: Alexandra Rose



Short Term Opportunities

Ochiwasahow–Fisher Bay Region: Located on the south–west basin of Lake Winnipeg, Ochiwasahow (Fisher Bay) park reserve is a remarkably undisturbed area relatively close to urban, industrial, and agricultural development. Through the leadership of Fisher River Cree First Nation (FRCN) and CPAWS Manitoba, Fisher Bay provincial park was established in 2011. This partnership continues, and work is now focused on identifying additional protected areas in the region, with the goal of protecting nature, culture, and supporting sustainable economic opportunities in the area. Once completed, this work can set the stage for additional protection that will contribute to achieving the 17% target. The Manitoba government should continue to actively support this work.

Proposed Polar Bear Protected Area: This 29,000 km² study area along the Hudson Bay coast includes critical polar bear denning sites, habitat for barren ground and coastal caribou herds, and four internationally significant Important Bird Areas. Through Indigenous–led land use planning in the broader region, and consideration of a potential Polar Bear protected area, this area has the potential to contribute to Manitoba’s achievement of helping Canada reach 17% protection by 2020.

Planning For The Future

Resource Management Boards have been established in Manitoba to co–manage natural resources in defined resource management areas. Supporting First Nations to complete land use plans in these areas, including identifying areas for protection, offers a path forward to conservation and sustainable development throughout much of the province.

	Percentage of Manitoba (Land and inland waters)	Area (km ²)
Current terrestrial protected area (Dec 2017)	11%	71,000

SASKATCHEWAN

Summary



Saskatchewan has an immediate opportunity to protect one of Canada's most ecologically rich areas — the Saskatchewan River Delta — as well as to secure ongoing protection for significant areas of the province's prairie grasslands, which provide critical habitat for many endangered species. In the boreal forest the Saskatchewan government can support and work in partnership with Indigenous peoples, conservation organizations, the forest industry, and others to plan for landscape-scale conservation and sustainable land use through land use and caribou range planning processes. The new federal "Nature Fund" provides an opportunity to secure matching funds to support and expand this work.

Recommendations

1. Implement the proposed Saskatchewan River Delta/Suggi Lowlands/Mossy River Watershed protected area proposal
2. Maintain or restore conservation measures for grassland areas that were part of the federal *Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Act* (PFRA) program
3. Support Indigenous-led land use planning in the Athabasca region, and implement when completed
4. Identify new protected areas as part of caribou range planning initiatives and forest management planning processes
5. Apply to the federal Nature Fund to help support this work

Saskatchewan River Delta,
SK.

Photo: Chris Miller



Short Term Opportunities

Saskatchewan River Delta/Suggi Lowlands/Mossy River Watershed: The Saskatchewan River Delta is a 10,000km² network of waterways, wetlands and forests that straddles the Saskatchewan–Manitoba border and is one of the most biologically rich landscapes in Canada. The land and waters of the Delta provide habitat for millions of waterfowl and other migratory birds and is internationally recognized as an “Important Bird Area.” The Delta’s ecosystems also store billions of tonnes of carbon in a vast peatland and boreal forest ecosystem, acting as a critical natural storehouse for carbon and a buffer against climate change.

In Saskatchewan, an approximately 4000 km² protected area has been proposed for the Delta by local First Nations, conservation organizations, and forestry companies. Protecting this area would not only help deliver on Saskatchewan’s protected area commitment, it would also protect critical boreal caribou habitat and contribute to the pan–Canadian climate change plan. Support and action from the Saskatchewan government is needed to approve and implement this proposal. There is also a potential opportunity to work with the government of Manitoba to explore protection of the Delta on their side of the border.

Saskatchewan’s Grasslands: The federal government is in the process of divesting responsibility for managing approximately 7,000 km² of critically important grassland habitat in Saskatchewan to the provincial government, which could result in as much as 1% of the province’s protected lands losing their conservation status, putting many endangered species at greater risk of extinction. In 2012 Agriculture and Agri–Food Canada disbanded the *Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Act* (PFRA) program and announced that these lands would be divested to provincial governments with no requirement to continue to manage for conservation.

White Pelicans.

Photo: Chris Sargent



In 2017 the federal government confirmed it will maintain ownership and conservation-focused management for 850 km² Nashlyn and Battle Creek community pastures as well as the Govenlock pasture. While this is an important step, the remaining 6400 km² of critically important grasslands are still at risk.

The federal government should immediately halt any transfers of the remaining grasslands to the provincial government until an agreement is reached that will assure their continued conservation. The province should ensure that the grasslands already transferred maintain their conservation status, working with First Nations, ranchers, and civil society partners. This would safeguard the most significant areas of native prairie grassland left in Canada and help Saskatchewan achieve its protected area targets.



Chickadee.

Photo: Ruben Ortega

Planning For The Future

Athabasca Land Use Plan — this land use planning process in northern Saskatchewan is being led by Ya'thi Nene Dene Nations and offers an opportunity for Indigenous governments to identify proposed Indigenous or co-managed protected areas in the region.

Alberta–Saskatchewan Transboundary Conservation Analysis — in northern Saskatchewan and Alberta, conservation organizations and forestry companies are working together on a scientific analysis of gaps in the current protected areas system in the boreal forest to help inform land management discussions with governments. Once completed, this information will be presented to Indigenous and provincial governments for their consideration.

Caribou Range Plans — Under the federal *Species at Risk Act*, provinces are required to develop range plans that meet the minimum threshold of maintaining at least 65% of caribou habitat intact. In central Saskatchewan, the SK2 Central Range Planning process is underway. Identifying new protected areas as a tool to secure critical caribou habitat would not only deliver on the province's responsibilities to protect species at risk but would also contribute to Saskatchewan's protected areas target.

	Percentage of province (land and inland waters)	Area (km ²)
Current Terrestrial Area Protected (Dec 2017)	8.7%	56,685
SK River Delta proposed protected area	0.6%	4,000
Preventing loss of existing Grassland conservation areas	1%	7,000
Athabasca Land Use Plan	TBD	TBD
Other land and caribou planning initiatives	TBD	TBD
Remaining gap to 17% protection	7.7%	50,130

ALBERTA

Summary



Alberta has demonstrated leadership by stepping forward to co-lead the Pathway to Canada Target One initiative with the Government of Canada. They also recently demonstrated leadership on the ground by designating five new Wildland Provincial Parks that will permanently protect an additional 13,600 km² around Wood Buffalo National Park, creating the largest contiguous boreal forest protected area in the world, and committing to working with Indigenous peoples to develop co-management processes and Guardians programs.

With this announcement Alberta has protected 14.9% of its landscape, bringing the province significantly closer to the 2020 target. Protecting the Bighorn Backcountry and critical habitat in the northwest identified for protection in Alberta's *Caribou Action Plan* would make Alberta the first jurisdiction in Canada to achieve 17% protection — showing real Alberta leadership in conservation.

If the 2020 target is met, there will still be significant gaps to fill to complete an effective interconnected, network of protected areas throughout the province that will safeguard Alberta's wildlife, wildlands and communities in the face of climate change. Completing other ongoing land use and caribou range plans and addressing concerns of Indigenous communities about the future of the Peace Athabasca Delta will help conserve other underrepresented ecosystems and solidify Alberta's leadership position. To guide this long-term work, the province should craft a science and Indigenous knowledge-based systematic conservation plan with Indigenous partners, academic, civil society, and industry partners.

Bighorn Backcountry, AB.

Photo: Marcus Becker



Recommendations

SHORT TERM OPPORTUNITIES

1. Designate the 6700 km² Bighorn Backcountry area as a Wildland Provincial Park
2. Protect critical boreal caribou habitat
 - a. Deliver on the Alberta government's commitment in Alberta's *Caribou Action Plan* to permanently protect 18,000 km² of boreal caribou habitat in northwest Alberta
 - b. Support the on-going Alberta-Saskatchewan transboundary protected areas gap analysis project
3. Designate remaining protected areas announced as part of the South Saskatchewan Regional Plan
4. Seek funds from the new federal Nature Fund to help support new protected areas, restoration activities, and conservation planning

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

5. Complete an industry-free buffer zone around Wood Buffalo National Park, as requested by the UNESCO World Heritage Committee, in partnership with local Indigenous communities
6. Work with civil society, academic partners, and others to complete a science and Indigenous knowledge-based plan for an interconnected and representative network of protected areas that will safeguard Alberta's wildlife, wildlands, and communities in the face of climate change⁴²
7. Work with Indigenous communities and other partners to support development of Indigenous protected and conserved areas

Plan to 2020	Percent of province (land and inland waters)	Area (km ²)
Terrestrial Area Protected (Dec 2017) plus New boreal protected areas	12.5% 2.1%	82,898 13,600
Total existing protected areas	14.6%	96,498
Short term opportunities: • Bighorn Backcountry protected areas • Alberta Caribou Action Plan commitment	1% 2.7%	6,700 18,000
Existing and proposed protected areas	18.3%	121,198

BRITISH COLUMBIA

Summary



With just over 15% of BC's land and inland waters currently protected, the province is within reach of protecting at least 17% by 2020. However renewed commitment and a plan are urgently needed. There are immediate opportunities for BC to work on a nation-to-nation basis with Indigenous governments, and to engage with the federal government and other partners to expand protection of important landscapes in northern BC and the South Okanagan Similkameen region, within a framework of reconciliation.

While BC should aim to reach and exceed the very achievable short-term goal of 17% protection by 2020, it is important that the province also pursue a long term goal of improving ecosystem representation and completing better interconnected networks of protected areas that will be the foundation for conserving healthy ecosystems and communities for the long term. This is a key component to Aichi Target 11. To achieve this, the province should prioritize science and Indigenous knowledge-based land use planning, led by, or in full partnership with, Indigenous peoples, that includes a clear goal of biodiversity conservation. In the past BC has been the leader in Canada on protected areas, and once again there is an opportunity to drive bigger and bolder outcomes.

Recommendations

1. The province and federal government should support efforts by First Nations to establish Indigenous or co-managed protected areas, as well as Indigenous Guardians programs
2. Parks Canada, BC and the Okanagan Nation should work to complete the proposed national park reserve in the South Okanagan Similkameen region by 2020
3. BC should create new protected areas in boreal and mountain caribou habitat, and in threatened ecosystems like remaining old-growth forest
4. BC should support Indigenous-led land use and conservation planning, informed by science and traditional knowledge, to identify priority areas for protection beyond 2020
5. First Nations and BC should apply to the new federal Nature Fund to leverage additional funding to support this work



South Okanagan, BC.

Photo: Trevor Reeves

Short Term Opportunities

South Okanagan—Similkameen: The proposed South Okanagan Similkameen National Park Reserve offers an immediate opportunity to protect more of BC's endangered interior grassland ecosystem. In 2017, leaders from the Okanagan Nation, the federal government, and the BC government announced a renewed commitment to creating the National Park Reserve. Completing this by 2020 would protect some of BC and Canada's most endangered ecosystems and species and advance reconciliation.

Indigenous protected areas: There is growing interest among First Nations in BC in establishing Indigenous protected areas and Indigenous Guardians programs. BC and the federal government should support and engage in these efforts where appropriate, within a framework of reconciliation.

Funding — BC's provincial parks suffer from chronic underfunding, including understaffing. This has degraded the ecological integrity of the system, reduced monitoring and enforcement efforts, and resulted in a lack of expansion to keep up with the demand from outdoor recreation. The BC government and Indigenous governments should apply to the new Nature Fund to support protected areas planning, establishment and management.



California bighorn sheep, BC.
Photo: Graham Osborne

Planning For The Future

While work is underway to achieve at least 17% protection by 2020, BC should also prioritize landscape-level land use planning with a goal of completing a network of interconnected protected areas that will sustain resilient natural systems and healthy communities in the face of climate change. These plans should focus on filling gaps in representation of all ecosystem types and species, ensuring ecological connectivity, and protecting areas of particular importance for biodiversity, Indigenous culture, and ecosystem services. Regional planning should be based on science and Indigenous knowledge, be led or co-led by Indigenous governments, and engage transparently with other partners (eg. universities), interests and experts.

	Percentage of BC (land and inland waters)	Area (km ²)
Current terrestrial protected area (Dec 2017)	15.3%	144,772
South Okanagan Similkameen national park reserve proposal		Over 250
Other Indigenous protected areas	TBD	TBD
Total existing and proposed pro- tected area	15.3%	145,022
Gap to reach 17%	1.7%	16,060

Chopaka Grasslands, South
Okanagan, BC .
Photo: Graham Osborne



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

Summary



Wood Buffalo National Park,
NWT.

Photo: Paul Zizka

The NWT is in a position to lead by not only meeting the quantitative target of protecting at least 17% of the landscape by 2020, but also by addressing the quality measures required under Aichi Target 11, including ecological connectivity, integrating protected areas into the broader landscape, ecological representation, and effective and equitable management.

A new Protected Areas Act that supports Indigenous and co-managed protected areas is now being drafted to support the establishment of existing protected area proposals. Then, by completing regional land use plans, implementing recovery strategies for species at risk, and supporting Indigenous-led conservation planning, the NWT could be a Canadian and global leader in implementing all aspects of Aichi Target 11 and in looking beyond 2020 to what is needed to conserve nature and sustain healthy communities for the future.



Recommendations

1. Complete territorial protected areas legislation that supports the establishment of Indigenous and co-managed protected areas and meets international standards for protection
2. Complete Thaidene Nene National Park Reserve and Territorial Protected Area
3. Complete designation of Edehzhie National Wildlife Area with full surface and subsurface protection, and co-managed with the Dehcho First Nations
4. Complete and implement the Dehcho Land Use which would protect approximately 50% of the Dehcho region, including the following protected area proposals:
 - Ka'a'gee Tu
 - Sambaa K'e
 - Ejie Tue Ndade
 - Lue Tue Sulai
 - Dinaga Wek'ehodi
5. Advance land use planning in the Akaitcho region
6. Advance conservation network planning by identifying and filling remaining gaps in the protected areas system, and to ensure that the landscape is connected for species migration and adaptation
7. Ensure effective management of protected and conservation areas by supporting on-the-land Indigenous Guardians programs
8. Indigenous and territorial governments should access funding from the new federal Nature Fund to support the above work

	Percent protection (land and inland waters)	Area (km ²)
Terrestrial area protected (Dec 2017)	9.27%	124,767
Proposed protected areas		
• Thaidene Nene		27,000
• Edehzhie		14,250
• Ka'a'gee Tu		9,600
• Sambaa K'e		10,600
• Ejie Tue Ndade		2,177
• Lue Tue Sulai		180
• Dinaga Wek'ehodi		750
• Ts'ude niline Tu'eyeta		15,000
Filling gaps in representation through Healthy Land, Healthy People plan	To be determined through the planning process	To be determined through the planning process
Total	15.2%	204,324

YUKON

Summary



Implementing the Peel River Watershed land use plan will result in the permanent protection of over 20% of the Territory. This is an incredible milestone and shows conservation leadership to other jurisdictions across Canada. However, this success masks an ongoing challenge. Once the Peel Watershed protection is implemented, of the Yukon's 23 ecoregions, only 11 will have received the minimum baseline target of 17% percent protection.

This gap can partly be explained by the fact that most regions of the Territory have not yet completed land use planning processes. As this process is re-established, beginning with resurrection of the Dawson Land Use Plan in 2018, we believe that there is opportunity for more significant conservation gains and more complete eco-region representation. Thus, in the Yukon, the focus should not be on a short-term goal of protecting 17%, but on completing land use plans that will conserve the Territory's natural and cultural values, and support sustainable economies for the future, based on western science, traditional knowledge and within a framework of reconciliation.

The Supreme Court of Canada's decision on the Peel Watershed legal case has helped provide a framework to interpret chapter 11 of the Umbrella Final Agreement, providing an opportunity for all Yukoners to work together to assure a healthy future for all.

Recommendations

1. Complete final consultations, approval and implementation of the Peel Watershed Land Use Plan by 2020
2. Complete regional land use planning in other regions of the Territory, starting by re-establishing work in the Dawson region
3. Establish a bold vision for establishment of new parks and protected areas, by developing a Yukon parks strategy. This should include a path towards ensuring representation within the majority of Yukon's diverse eco-regions
4. To support this work, secure matching funding from the federal government's new "Nature Fund", including to support capacity for First Nations' participation, and to assemble scientific and Indigenous knowledge to support planning
5. Support the creation of Indigenous protected areas proposed by First Nations in areas that do not yet have Final Agreements
6. Support the establishment of Indigenous Guardians within protected areas across the territory



Snake River, YT.

Photo: Peter Bowers

Short Term Opportunities

Implement the Peel River Watershed Land Use Plan

In December 2017 the Supreme Court of Canada issued a decision that upheld the Peel River Watershed Land Use Planning process and directed the Yukon Government to return to consultations, based on the Final Recommended Plan. This Plan, which was developed over seven years by a Land Use Planning Commission appointed according to provisions in First Nations' Final Agreements (modern treaties), had been derailed when the previous Yukon government introduced its own unilateral plan at the last minute, triggering a legal challenge by First Nations, CPAWS and the Yukon Conservation Society which went all the way to the Supreme Court.

The Final Recommended Plan identifies 55% of the watershed to be permanently protected from roads and industry, with another 25% of the watershed identified for interim protection. The current Yukon government has already begun work with First Nations to conduct final consultations, which are expected to begin in fall 2018. Once implemented, the Peel River Watershed Land Use Plan will add approximately 37,000 km² to the Yukon's protected areas system, meaning that over 20% of the Yukon Territory will be protected.

However, lots of work still needs to be done to safeguard the natural and cultural values of other regions of the Territory.

Planning For The Future

COMPLETE LAND USE PLANNING IN ALL REGIONS OF THE YUKON

Regional land use planning in the Yukon Territory is mandated under the final agreements signed between First Nations and the Yukon and federal governments. These processes have been on hold while the legal challenge over the Peel Watershed Plan made its way through the Courts. To date, only one land use plan has been completed and implemented in the Territory (North Yukon). Now that the Supreme Court of Canada has issued its decision upholding the Peel Watershed land use planning process, planning in other regions can proceed.⁴³

The first land use planning process expected to move forward soon is in the Dawson region, where planning had already been started prior to the Peel legal challenge. However, more funding is needed so that regional planning can proceed in multiple regions at the same time.

Landscape-level planning, based on science and Indigenous knowledge, conducted in the spirit of reconciliation, is the best way to ensure healthy lands, waters and wildlife and a sustainable economy.

	Percentage of Yukon (land and inland waters)	Area (km ²)
Current Terrestrial Protected Area (Dec 2017)	12.7%	61,486 km ²
Peel River Watershed Land Use Plan (proposed permanent protection)	7.6%	37,087 km ²

Glaciers, YT.
Photo: Kalen Emsley



NUNAVUT

Summary



The Nunavut Land Claims Agreement,⁴⁴ which led to the creation of Nunavut as Canada's newest territory in 1999, also provides for the establishment of parks and conservation areas in the territory and mandates the creation of a land use planning process which is legally binding. Almost 20% of Nunavut is Inuit-owned land, with title held by territorial and regional Inuit organizations.⁴⁵

Currently, 10.46% of Nunavut's land is protected,⁴⁶ the majority of which is federally-governed national parks, national wildlife areas, and wildlife sanctuaries. Only 1% of Nunavut's protected lands are through territorial legislation.

Mirnguiqsirviit (the Parks & Special Places division of the Government of Nunavut) works for the people of Nunavut to "identify and protect significant areas as territorial parks and special places."⁴⁷ This includes working with the Government of Nunavut to develop feasibility studies, plan the creation of new parks and protected areas, withdraw land from either federal or territorial jurisdiction in order to establish a new protected area, and manage the new protected area.⁴⁸

The greatest opportunity for conservation in Nunavut is through the territory-wide land use planning process. In 2016, a Draft Nunavut Land Use Plan was released.⁴⁹ The draft plan identifies many proposed protected area opportunities, from national parks to territorial parks awaiting establishment to proposed territorial parks.⁵⁰ If these opportunities are developed, over 20% of the territory (terrestrial and marine areas) would become some form of protected area where some or all industrial activities are precluded. The draft land use plan has identified these areas based on their importance for wildlife such as migratory birds, polar bears, and walruses.

Musk oxen, NU.

Photo: iStock



Recommendations

CPAWS does not have an office in Nunavut. Therefore, our recommendations are based on existing land use and protected area work and proposals that are publicly advancing in the territory:

1. Complete the Nunavut Land Use Plan and advance protection of the proposed and expanded national parks, proposed and to-be-established territorial parks, wildlife sanctuaries, and conservation areas described in the draft land use plan
2. Advance Mirnguiqsirviit work with communities in Nunavut to substantially complete protected areas in areas such as:
 - Coral Harbour
 - Kugaaruk
 - Aggutinni (Clyde River)
 - Hall Beach
3. Commit to achieving further protection for Nunavut's terrestrial land base that would safeguard the territory's wilderness and wildlife

Mt Thor, NU.

Photo: Manuel Lacoste



GOVERNMENT OF CANADA

Summary

The federal government is key in helping Canada meet its terrestrial protected areas targets, playing three main roles:

1. Establishing and managing protected areas under federal legislation (e.g. national parks, national wildlife areas), in partnership with Indigenous governments;
2. Leading and providing funding support for the Target 1 initiative with provincial, territorial, and Indigenous governments and working with these governments to set ambitious nationwide goals and plans for protected areas and conservation of biodiversity beyond 2020; and
3. Reporting to the international community on Canada's contributions to conserving biodiversity under the UN CBD.

The most important action the federal government can take at this point is to continue showing leadership on the establishment and management of protected areas. They have done this in two important ways in the past few months — with the historic investment of \$1.3 billion over five years for conservation in federal budget 2018, and in the response to “Let’s Talk Parks, Canada,” the 2017 Minister’s Roundtable on Parks Canada, where the Minister of Environment and Climate Change reaffirmed ecological integrity as the number one priority for park management and committed to increasing protected areas across Canada.



Coastal Fog Forest along
Fundy Shore, NB.
Photo: Nick Hawkins



In the Minister’s response to “Let’s Talk Parks, Canada,” she committed to working with provincial, territorial, and Indigenous governments to further the creation of protected areas in Canada. One key way this will be achieved is through the Nature Fund, a new cost-shared fund focused on protected areas and species at risk. To deliver on Canada Target One commitments, this fund should focus primarily on supporting the establishment of protected areas in provinces and territories, and in partnership with Indigenous peoples.

Finally, scientific consensus is building that nature needs much more than 17% protection to thrive and support human well-being. The federal government must continue to show leadership in the conservation of Canada’s biodiversity by working with governments and other partners to develop ambitious targets for the protection of lands and waters beyond 2020.

Recommendations

Based on Canada’s protected areas targets and the Minister’s commitments, and with Canada being a signatory to the UN CBD, CPAWS makes the following recommendations to the federal government:

- 1. Complete all proposed federal protected areas, including Thaidene Nene National Park Reserve (NWT), South Okanagan–Similkameen National Park Reserve (BC), and Edézhíe National Wildlife Area, by 2020
- 2. Pursue other areas where Indigenous governments are interested in protecting land and freshwater in partnership with the federal government
- 3. Update Parks Canada’s national park system plan to incorporate better representation of Canada’s ecoregions, to improve connectivity between national parks and other protected areas, and to account for projected impacts of climate change
- 4. Continue leading nationwide on achieving Canada’s commitment to 17% protection by 2020
- 5. Make the Nature Fund available to provincial, territorial, and Indigenous governments working to protect Canada’s lands and waters in either a cost-shared model (provincial and territorial governments) or fully funded model (Indigenous governments)
- 6. Provide nationwide leadership to set ambitious targets for what nature needs to thrive beyond 2020

FEDERAL:

Terrestrial area protected (federal protected areas):	4.7% (of Canada)
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PART

STAYING ON THE TRAIL

3

Previous page: Pending
Wentworth Valley protected
wilderness area, NS
Photo: Irwin Barrett

Introduction

CPAWS' trailmaps and recommendations are designed to assist governments across the country in seizing the important Target 1 conservation opportunity. If we are going to be successful, we have to keep our eyes on the trail and make sure that the conservation decisions being made support the end-goal of safeguarding biodiversity. Part 3 of this report details the elements governments need to consider when making their conservation decisions.

Northern Gannet.
Photo: Alan D. Wilson



Beyond 2020: Nature Needs Half

There is a growing scientific consensus that Canada, and the world, need to protect at least half of lands and inland waters in an interconnected way to truly protect ecosystems and wildlife, while managing the remainder of the landscape with conservation principles in mind. The Target 1 goal of 17% protection is a political, rather than scientifically-supported, target which emerged in 2010 out of political discussions at the international level as part of the UN CBD discussions.

For example, in 2007 over 1,500 scientists from more than 50 countries called for half of the boreal forest in Canada to be protected to defend this important ecosystem from the threats of climate change and development pressure.⁵¹ In 2016, acclaimed author and scientist E.O. Wilson again made a rational and impassioned argument for why half of the Earth should be devoted to nature.⁵² There is also a growing movement around the world called “Nature Needs Half,” an international coalition of scientists, conservationists, non-profits, and public officials supporting collaborative actions to achieve 50% protection of the planet by 2050.⁵³

Wildflowers in Taku, BC.*Photo: David Nunuk*

The Space for Nature Survey has recently been conducted across Canada – and Canadians support the protection of half of our land and sea to protect our wilderness and wildlife.



Significantly, the consensus cross-party report of the House Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development, *Taking Action Today: Establishing Protected Areas for Canada's Future*, recommended that “the Government of Canada set even more ambitious targets for protected areas than those established in the Aichi Target 11.

In addition to scientists and conservationists, citizens around the world are voicing their support for protecting half of the Earth for the benefit of nature — in November 2014 the Zoological Society of London released results from the first-ever global survey commissioned to understand the public's perceptions and expectations of what percentage of land and sea is and should be protected. The poll of over 7,000 people from Australia, Brazil, China, India, South Africa, UK and the United States shows people think that 50% of the planet's land and oceans should be protected. In reality, only 3% of the world's oceans and 15% of land is currently under protection.⁵⁴ This survey has recently been conducted across Canada with similar results — Canadians support the protection of half of our land and sea to protect our wilderness and wildlife.⁵⁵

If Canada is to effectively conserve nature, governments across the country must determine what their path is *beyond 2020*.

How will each jurisdiction ensure that enough of the right areas of land and water are protected so nature and people can thrive in the future? What steps will each jurisdiction take to ensure that important lands and waters are secured from industrial or commercial development while negotiations for greater protection are ongoing? How will public and Indigenous governments across the country work together to ensure that these ecosystems are connected and functioning the way they need to protect biodiversity and human well-being?

Significantly, the consensus cross-party report of the House Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development, *Taking Action Today: Establishing Protected Areas for Canada's Future*, recommended that “the Government of Canada set even more ambitious targets for protected areas than those established in the Aichi Target 11.”⁵⁶

Canada, including federal, provincial, territorial, and Indigenous governments, working collaboratively, openly, and optimistically, will need to develop a strategy for *beyond 2020* that illustrates how the country will truly protect its wilderness and wildlife.

Recommendation

All governments must recognize that 17% protection of land and freshwater is a step forward—but it is not nearly enough to safeguard nature and human wellbeing. All governments must work together to craft post-2020 targets that are designed using science and traditional knowledge to truly protect our natural life support system.

Representation, Connectivity, and Effective Management for Biodiversity is the Goal

The conservation challenge facing this country right now is protection of biodiversity. In order to protect biodiversity, governments need to consider the *quality* of protection as well as quantity. Right now, Canada's protected areas are mostly islands in the midst of busy, developed landscapes. By 2020 and beyond, public governments must consider how they are going to expand protected areas from islands, to networks. To do this, public governments must consider representation of species and ecosystems, connectivity of protected areas, protection of important biodiversity areas, and effective management.

REPRESENTATION

To be properly protecting biodiversity in Canada, the lands and waters that we protect need to include adequate examples of all of Canada's diverse landscapes. Canada's ecosystems are classified into distinct areas across the country at different scales and levels of generalization. The government of Canada breaks Canada's diversity down into 18 large terrestrial ecozones, 194 ecoregions (smaller scale than ecozones), and 1,021 ecodistricts (a further subdivision of ecoregions).⁵⁷ As of 2016 most ecozones in Canada fell well below the 17% target for protection.⁵⁸

Sheep laurel.

Photo: Wayne Lynch



The NAP report, *Canada's Conservation Vision*,⁵⁹ recommends that, instead of assessing representation at the ecozone level, assessing representation of ecosystems in protected areas in Canada should be done at the ecoregion level.⁶⁰

Canadian governments must work together to make sure that we are protecting all ecoregions—from those in the Prairies to the Montane, from the Mixedwood Plains to Atlantic Maritime. Only when these areas are all adequately represented by Canada's protected areas network will we have advanced the protection of biodiversity.



South Okanagan–
Similkameen, BC.
Photo: Trevor Reeves

SOUTH OKANAGAN–SIMILKAMEEN NATIONAL PARK RESERVE



Canada's national parks are established to protect representative natural regions of the country. Parks Canada divides Canada into 39 terrestrial natural regions, and regions that are not represented in the network are prioritized for the placement of new national parks.⁶¹

The proposed South Okanagan–Similkameen National Park Reserve in British Columbia is in the Interior Dry Plateau natural region of Canada — an area not yet represented in Canada's national park system. It also happens to be one of the most ecologically diverse areas of Canada. The proposed new National Park Reserve would contain a sagebrush desert ecosystem which provides habitat for over 60 species at risk that are listed on the federal *Species At Risk Act*.⁶² These include American badgers, birds such as flammulated owls and yellow-breasted chat, and reptiles such as desert night snakes and western rattlesnakes.⁶³

It is only by protecting these different, diverse areas that Canada can safeguard the suite of species that call the lands and waters of our country home.

CONNECTIVITY

In addition to representation, protected areas must achieve a certain level of connectivity — meaning that the lands and waters they protect are not simply islands in the midst of human development and activity but are connected into a functional landscape that can support animal migrations and natural processes such as nutrient, water, and air flow between ecosystems. Habitat fragmentation is one of the leading causes of the decline in species in Canada. Thus, ensuring that protected areas are large enough and provide corridors for movement of wildlife is incredibly important.



Bighorn Backcountry,
AB.

Photo: Tara Russell

THE BIGHORN BACKCOUNTRY



The Canadian Rocky Mountain Parks, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, include the contiguous national parks of Banff, Jasper, Kootenay, and Yoho, as well as Mount Robson, Mount Assiniboine and Hamber provincial parks in British Columbia.⁶⁴ These parks all work together to protect the Rocky Mountains natural region. However, there is a significant piece of the puzzle missing in Alberta — the Bighorn Backcountry.

The Bighorn Backcountry is one of Alberta's last intact pieces of wilderness. The expansive region just west of Rocky Mountain House, over 6,700 km² in size, is the missing link that would better connect Banff National Park to Jasper National Park, and is composed of mountains, foothills, plains, rivers, and lakes. While Banff and Jasper are connected through the Sunwapta Valley, protecting the Bighorn would mean that wildlife that rely on north-south valleys for movement through the Rocky Mountains would have more options and habitat available to them. Protection of the Bighorn would also provide more connectivity to the east in Alberta — through the montane, along the North Saskatchewan River, and into Alberta's under-represented foothills and parkland ecosystems.⁶⁵

Governments across the country must recognize that protecting biodiversity is not just area-based, but also depends on which lands and waters are protected, and how. The protection of different and diverse ecosystems in each jurisdiction is the only way Canada's full suite of species and ecological characteristics will be conserved.

Recommendation

The areas protected by federal, provincial, and territorial governments must be designed and planned to contribute to effective protected areas networks across many scales.

Governments should develop a science and Indigenous knowledge-based plan by 2020 for completing an effective network of interconnected protected areas that will act as a foundation for conserving nature in the face of climate change.

Biodiversity First – Not Creative Accounting

Finally, Canada must ensure that areas are effectively managed for biodiversity to achieve its goals. There is a real need to create *new protected areas* to achieve the 17% target rather than relying on conservation tools that do not ensure ongoing, meaningful protection or management for biodiversity.

Aichi Target 11 and Target 1 commits Canada to conserve biodiversity through protected areas and “other effective area-based conservation measures,” or “**OECMs**.”⁶⁶ However, while protected areas have a clear and accepted definition, as well as management purpose, OECMs are not yet clearly defined and their design, purpose, and management are still being debated by the international community. The draft definition of an OECM from the IUCN and the Canadian Council on Ecological Areas (CCEA), a non-profit organization made up of parks and protected areas practitioners from government, non-governmental organizations, and academia across Canada, states that OECMs are:

*A geographically defined space, not recognized as a protected area, which is governed and managed over the long-term in ways that deliver the effective and enduring in-situ conservation of biodiversity, with associated ecosystem services and cultural and spiritual values.*⁶⁷

The main difference, then, between an OECM and a protected area would be that a protected area has a primary purpose of the conservation of nature, and is meant to be managed for such, while an OECM conserves nature regardless of its primary purpose or management regime. According to the proposed definition, an OECM is clearly defined, adequately governed, in place for the long-term, and effective in its conservation of biodiversity.⁶⁸

Taku River, BC.

Photo: David Nunuk



Until we know exactly what OECMs are or aren't, and whether they are effective at conserving biodiversity, we need conservation to focus on the creation of areas that are proven to be effective: protected areas.

This means that an OECM would not be:

- A government imposed, temporary moratorium on resource exploration or extraction in a certain area;
- An industry self-imposed, temporary moratorium on resource exploration or extraction in a certain area. For example, an area of forest that a forestry company agrees not to harvest for 80 years in order to let the forest grow and mature, but which they may want to harvest once the 80-year period has ended;
- The temporary closure of an area to hunting or fishing by the general public; or
- An area protected by regulatory tools from one type of resource harvesting or extraction, if that area is not protected from other incompatible uses, not very clearly defined, or not governed adequately. For example, a forested riparian corridor along a river on un-protected public lands left un-logged by a forestry company because of government regulations stipulating that forest harvest must stop within a certain distance from the river.

The above conservation tools, while having merit in their own way, should not count towards Canada's commitment to 17% protection by 2020. Until we know exactly what OECMs are or aren't, and whether they are effective at conserving biodiversity, we need conservation to focus on the creation of areas that are proven to be effective: protected areas.

As recommended by the NAP, governments across the country should use the creation of new protected areas as their primary tool for achieving Aichi Target 11–Canada Target 1 rather than relying on tools which are as-of-yet undefined and unproven as effective.

Recommendation

Governments across the country should make a clear commitment to adhere to internationally recognized standards for protected areas, including those developed by the IUCN and the CCEA.

Governments across the country should focus on the creation of new protected areas by 2020, not on OECMs.

CONCLUSION



Boreal forest, SK.

Photo: Garth Lenz



Canada has a unique opportunity to address its biodiversity crisis. Momentum is growing across the country for expanding and improving protected area networks. With 2020 around the corner, CPAWS is challenging all governments and their partners to work together to seize the opportunity.

Let's get started.

This report provides the trailmap for Canada — for the federal, provincial, territorial, and Indigenous governments that manage our public lands and waters. It is also an invitation for these governments to harness the significant experience CPAWS and other partners bring to the table when it comes to public land and water conservation in this country. We're here to help, and we've got over 50 years of experience doing this.

Let's get started.

Canada's Path to 2020

	Square km	Percentage (%)
Total area of Canada:	9,984,670	100
Area currently protected (end 2017):	1,053,151	11
Area remaining to protect by 2020:	644,243	6
Area in proposals below:	338,031	3
Remaining Area Needed by 2020:	306,212	3

Province/Territory	Name	Approximate Area (Square km)
Newfoundland and Labrador	Eagle River	3,000
Nova Scotia	Our Parks and Protected Areas Plan – protected areas approved but not yet designated, including St. Mary's River, Wentworth Valley, Mabou Highlands, Sacville River, and Giants Lake	880
New Brunswick	Restigouche River Waterway	300
	Upgrading protection for identified high value ecosystems – proposed for 2020 protection, including peatlands, watersheds, old forest communities, coastal areas, and provincially significant wetlands	3,650
Quebec	Regional proposals for new protected areas, including the Magpie River watershed, Dumoine, Noire and Coulonge River watersheds, Pimpuacan, Lac Manouane, Mishigamish, Innu sacred sites, Expansion of the Parc national Iles-de-Boucherville and protection for Sainte-Therese Island, and Bas Saint Laurent candidate protected areas	130,000
Ontario	North French River proposed protected area	5,070
	Algonquin Park – phasing out logging	3,400
Manitoba	Polar Bear potential protected area	29,000
Saskatchewan	SK River Delta proposed protected area	4,000
Alberta	Bighorn Backcountry	6,700
	Alberta Caribou Action Plan Commitment	18,000
British Columbia	South Okanagan–Similkameen proposed National Park Reserve	250
Northwest Territories	Proposed protected areas, including Thaidene Nene, Edehzie, Ka'a'gee Tu, Sambaa K'e, Ejie Tue Ndade, Lue Tue Sulai, Dinaga Wek'ehodi, and Ts'ude niline Tu'eyeta	79,557
Yukon	Peel River Watershed Land Use Plan (proposed permanent protection)	37,087
Nunavut	Proposed territorial parks, including Coral Harbour, Kugaaruk, Aggutinni (Clyde River), and Hall Beach	17,137
TOTAL		338,031

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Aichi Targets	Under the UN's <i>Convention on Biological Diversity</i>, there are 20 targets, called the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, organized under five strategic goals. "The goals and targets comprise both aspirations for achievement at the global level, and a flexible framework for the establishment of national or regional targets."⁶⁹ <i>From UN Convention on Biological Diversity</i>
Biodiversity	Biodiversity, or biological diversity, means the variability among living organisms from all sources including terrestrial, marine, and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are part. This includes diversity within species, between species, and of ecosystems.⁷⁰ <i>From UN Convention on Biological Diversity</i>
CCEA	Canadian Council on Ecological Areas
CPAWS	Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society
CBD	United Nations <i>Convention on Biological Diversity</i>
ICE	Indigenous Circle of Experts
Indigenous Circle of Experts	The Indigenous Circle of Experts (ICE) led efforts to consider how Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas (IPCAs) could be realized in Canada and contribute toward achieving Canada Target 1 in the spirit and practice of reconciliation during the Pathway to Target 1 process. Members of the ICE included a core group of Indigenous experts from across Canada, and officials from federal, provincial, and territorial jurisdictions. The ICE was mandated to produce a report with recommendations and guidance on IPCAs for consideration by Indigenous, federal, provincial and territorial governments.⁷¹ <i>From Conservation2020canada.ca</i>
Indigenous Guardians	Indigenous-led Guardians programs empower communities to manage ancestral lands according to traditional laws and values.⁷² <i>From Indigenous Leadership Initiative</i>
IPBES	The Intergovernmental Science–Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature
NAP	National Advisory Panel

National Advisory Panel to Pathway to Canada Target 1	National Advisory Panel (NAP) members were appointed by the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change Canada and the Minister for Alberta Environment and Parks. Members were selected based on merit and represented perspectives from Indigenous Peoples, land trusts, conservation non-governmental organizations, industry, academia, and youth. The National Advisory Panel's report highlights recommendations on how governments, non-governmental organizations and Canadians could collectively achieve Canada Target 1 through a coordinated and connected network of protected and conservation areas throughout the country. <i>From Conservation2020canada.ca</i>
NCC	Nature Conservancy of Canada
OECMs	Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures
Protected Area	A protected area is a clearly defined geographical space, recognised, dedicated and managed, through legal or other effective means, to achieve the long-term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values. (IUCN Definition 2008)⁷³ <i>From International Union for the Conservation of Nature</i>
Species Richness	Species richness refers to the number of different species represented in an ecological area, landscape or region. ⁷⁴
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization

Little Limestone Lake, MB.

Photo: Roger Turenne



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Photo: Kalen Emsley

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About CPAWS

The Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS) is Canada's only nationwide charity dedicated solely to the protection of our public land and water, and ensuring our parks are managed to protect the nature within them. Since 1963 we've played a lead role in protecting over half a million square kilometres — an area bigger than the entire Yukon Territory! Our vision is that Canada will protect at least half of our public land and water so that future generations can benefit from Canada's irreplaceable wilderness.



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