

National Conservation Plan

New Maryland, New Brunswick
15 May 2014

On May 15, 2014, Prime Minister Stephen Harper launched the National Conservation Plan (NCP), which will provide a more coordinated approach to conservation efforts across the country with an emphasis on enabling Canadians to conserve and restore lands and waters in and around their communities, and making it easier for citizens living in cities to connect with nature.

The NCP will include significant additional investments over five years to secure ecologically sensitive lands, support voluntary conservation and restoration actions, and strengthen marine and coastal conservation. In addition, it will contain new initiatives designed to restore wetlands and to encourage Canadians to connect with nature close to home through protected areas and green spaces located in or near urban areas.

The Plan will expand opportunities for partners, including municipalities, environmental interest groups, hunters and anglers, landowners and community groups, to take practical actions to safeguard the land and water around them in the three following priority areas:

- **Conserving** Canada's lands and waters: safeguarding and enhancing biodiversity and ecosystems through conservation and stewardship actions, including on working landscapes and seascapes.
- **Restoring** Canada's ecosystems: supporting the restoration of degraded ecosystems, which, once restored, will provide habitat for wildlife and clean water, and are essential for the protection and recovery of species at risk.
- **Connecting** Canadians to nature: leveraging existing successful initiatives to help foster an appreciation for nature and building a "community of stewards" among Canadians of all ages.

The Plan recognizes the efforts of countless Canadians who are working to conserve and protect our natural world. It will encourage on-the-ground action and partnerships leading to tangible conservation results. Views from stakeholders across all regions and sectors helped to shape the National Conservation Plan, including input from three conservation-related studies by the House of Commons Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development.

Progress under the NCP will be measured against a set of outcomes related to land and ocean conservation, restoration of lands and shorelines, opportunities for Canadians to experience nature, and access to improved information about Canada's natural environment.

Building on the conservation measures announced in Budget 2014, the National Conservation Plan includes funding of \$252 million, primarily over a five-year period (2014 to 2019) for a variety of conservation initiatives:

- \$100 million over five years to the Nature Conservancy of Canada to secure ecologically sensitive lands;
- \$37 million over five years to strengthen marine and coastal conservation;
- \$3.2 million over five years to support the development of a complete national inventory of conserved areas in Canada;
- \$50 million over five years to restore wetlands;
- \$50 million over five years to support voluntary actions to restore and conserve species and their habitats;
- \$9.2 million over five years to connect urban Canadians to nature;
- \$3 million over three years to Earth Rangers to expand family-oriented conservation programming.

Since 2006, the Government of Canada has taken important steps to conserve and restore our country's natural environment and connect Canadians to our rich natural heritage:

- We have made a six-fold expansion of the Nahanni National Park Reserve in the Northwest Territories, considered to be a significant conservation achievement.
- We have secured almost 4,000 km² of ecologically sensitive private lands.
- We have added an area nearly twice the size of Vancouver Island to the network of federal protected areas, including the world's first protected area extending from the mountain tops to the sea floor (Gwaii Haanas National Marine Conservation Area Reserve and Haida Heritage Site) and the world's largest freshwater protected area (Lake Superior National Marine Conservation Area).
- We have created three National Wildlife Areas (Akpait, Ninginganiq and Qaqulluit) in Nunavut, protecting 4,554 km² of marine, coastal and terrestrial habitats including the world's sanctuary for bowhead whales.
- We have designated three new Marine Protected Areas under the Oceans Act: Musquash Estuary in New Brunswick, Bowie Seamount off the coast of British Columbia, and Tarium Niryutait in the Beaufort Sea.
- We have invested nearly \$6 million under the Recreational Fisheries Conservation Partnerships Program to support 94 fisheries habitat restoration projects across Canada. Funding to support up to an additional 128 projects, for a total of up to \$5.5 million, is underway.
- We have advanced work to create the first national urban park.
- We have taken steps to improve water quality in the Great Lakes, Lake Simcoe, and Lake Winnipeg, rehabilitated recreational fisheries habitat, and are working to clean up contaminated sites.
- We have supported partners in the delivery of hundreds of local projects to protect species at risk and their habitats, for example:
 - Under the Habitat Stewardship Program, we have invested over \$86 million to support 1,467 local conservation projects, benefitting the habitat of 431 species at risk.
 - In 2010 alone, EcoAction provided more than \$2 million to support 58 local biodiversity conservation and restoration projects in communities across Canada.
 - We have successfully expanded the population of Blanding's turtles in Kejimikujik National Park and are assisting in the recovery of Garry oak

ecosystems in Gulf Islands National Park Reserve and Fort Rodd Hill National Historic Site.

- Under the Aboriginal Fund for Species at Risk program, we have invested over \$23 million to support more than 680 local aquatic and terrestrial conservation projects, benefitting the recovery needs of 287 species at risk.

The NCP complements the proposed 2020 Biodiversity Goals and Targets for Canada, which were developed together with our conservation partners, as part of our participation in the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity. NCP initiatives will help us make progress on many of the targets. The goals and targets will also help to measure and report on progress for some areas of the NCP.