

**Protected Areas in New Brunswick Update -  
Protected Areas Committee's Report  
Submitted to Government  
July 31, 2000**

Where are we now? Ten years of work on the Endangered Spaces Campaign, extensive public meetings around the province, and the past six months of concentrated negotiations with government and industry have resulted in a report recommending how New Brunswick should proceed with protecting its natural areas. This is more than a report and an agreement among industry and environmental representatives - it signals a groundbreaking new direction for protected areas in New Brunswick.

This report was generated by a Protected Areas Committee comprised of representatives of major stakeholder groups and the Department of Natural Resources and Energy. The Committee was mandated by government to strive to sort out conflicting issues regarding protected areas, within the framework of Dr. Louis LaPierre's final report.

The Committee's report has been submitted to the Minister of Natural Resources and Energy. Until the Minister has briefed Cabinet and MLAs, we have agreed not to distribute in writing specific details of the report. If you have questions or specific issues to discuss, please contact the Protected Natural Areas Coalition. We understand that government will publicly release the report as soon as it has been translated - likely in August.

The environmental representatives on the Protected Areas Committee have come to agreement with industry on a package of sites that are recommended for protection, with a total land area being very similar to the total that was recommended by Louis LaPierre in his final report. If implemented, we strongly believe that this is a package that will protect the large roadless parts of most of the 8 candidates and minimize impacts on industry. It also would protect additional large sites that are ecologically important. As part of the agreement, parcels of land adjacent to a few of the candidate protected areas will be added to the protected areas system in 12 years. The portions of land that will be added at a later date already have roads in them and would first be harvested using low-impact methods. Input from environmentalists will be incorporated in setting the criteria for the harvesting of these areas.

The NB Protected Natural Areas Coalition believes that this is a good first step toward a protected areas system for our province. The fact that industry representatives on the

committee supported the recommendations, recognizing the effort we made to minimize impacts on both mining and forestry industries, should make it easier for government to move forward with the protected areas system.

Where do we go from here? Now that the large wilderness areas have been recommended for protection, New Brunswick's protected areas system needs to be rounded out with smaller sites, corridors, linkages and good land use planning. A "fine filter" process to identify small and medium-sized natural areas needed to complete our protected areas system has been recommended in the report, but details on how to accomplish this have not been worked out. A key next step will be the identification of priority natural areas to protect in parts of New Brunswick where there are currently no candidate protected areas, especially in northwestern, northeastern and central western parts of the province.

The report will now go to the Cabinet Ministers for review. They will decide which, if any, of the recommendations government will implement. Therefore, the recommendations described in this update should be seen as recommendations only - the final decision rests with government.

We need strong support from the public over the summer to ensure that government will move forward with the protected areas and other recommendations in the report. The MLAs need to hear that you care about this and want the large protected areas to be permanently designated, as recommended to government by a committee representing environmental and wildlife groups and the forestry and mining industries. Please write or call your MLA and Premier Bernard Lord (all MLAs and the Premier can be reached by mail at this address: P.O. Box 6000, Fredericton, NB E3B 5H1). The MLAs will likely not be briefed about the report until late August, so they cannot be expected to answer any detailed questions about the direction that government might take. Please feel free to contact the Coalition if you have questions.

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