

Action Plan for Implementing the Convention on Biological Diversity's Programme of Work on Protected Areas



Torngat Mountains National Park of Canada
Photo Parks Canada

Canada

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Protected area information:

PoWPA Focal Point:

Marc Johnson (819-953-4220)

marc.johnson@pc.gc.ca

Lead implementing agency:

Parks Canada Agency

Multi-stakeholder committee:

N/A

Description of protected area system

National Targets and Vision for Protected Areas

Since 1996, federal, provincial and territorial governments in Canada have been implementing the Canadian Biodiversity Strategy, which provides a comprehensive blueprint for the conservation and sustainable use of Canada's living resources. The associated *Biodiversity Outcomes Framework* describes the long term outcomes that would result from effective implementation of biodiversity plans and strategies. The framework has been used to connect and report on the results of sub-national plans and strategies.

Canada is currently developing its 2020 Biodiversity Framework, which will set out the targets and mechanisms that will enable a 21st century approach to the conservation, sustainable use and management of Canada's living resources over the next decade. It has also recently initiated the development of a National Conservation Plan, which has as its goal the establishment of a shared and coherent vision to advance conservation efforts across the country.

Protected areas in Canada play a key role in conserving natural spaces; connecting Canadians with nature and connecting habitats and ecosystems to each other; and in restoring degraded ecosystems and recovering native species. The establishment and effective management of protected areas will thus be an important element of Canada's 2020 Biodiversity Framework and the National Conservation Plan.

Coverage

As of 2011, 97,501,554 hectares, or 9.64%, of Canada's land base and 6,073,263.75 hectares, or nearly 1.07% of Canada's ocean surfaces and the Great Lakes were protected.

A map of Canada's protected areas network is attached in Appendix I.

Description and background

Canada is one of the few countries in the world to hold vast expanses of intact natural areas. Its natural heritage includes about 30% of the world's boreal forests, 20% of the world's freshwater resources and 243,000 km of coastline. The country has a proud history in the establishment and management of protected areas, including the creation of the world's first national park service, in 1911. Parks Canada, which celebrated its 100th anniversary last year, is the national focal point for the CBD Programme of Work on Protected Areas.

Under Canada's constitution, responsibilities for natural resource management are shared among federal, provincial and territorial governments. Each of three federal departments (Parks Canada, Environment Canada, and Fisheries and Oceans Canada) and thirteen provincial and territorial governments manage their own protected area networks and also collaborate on common protected area network goals. Canadian governments collaborate through a variety of mechanisms on issues related to protected areas. Federal, provincial and territorial governments have all signed a Statement of Commitment to the Canadian Biodiversity Strategy, which recognizes the key role that protected areas play in conserving biodiversity and achieving the other goals of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Federal, provincial and territorial officials also work together through the Canadian Parks Council, the Canadian Council of Fisheries and Aquaculture Ministers, the Canadian Council on Ecological Areas, the Canadian Endangered Species Conservation Council and other inter-agency coordinating committees on wildlife and habitat management issues. These councils provide invaluable mechanisms to exchange information and encourage cooperation across the country. They also support Canada's involvement in various international conventions, programs and organizations, such as the World Heritage Convention, UNESCO's Biosphere Reserves Program, and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and its World Commission on Protected Areas.

Additionally, the 2011 *National Framework for Canada's Network of Marine Protected Areas* sets strategic direction for collaboration of federal, provincial, and territorial protected area agencies in establishment of bioregional networks of marine protected areas and the sharing of best practices.

Federal, provincial and territorial governments also work with environmental non-governmental organizations and private sector partners to implement programs that support the goals of the PoWPA. For example, Parks Canada and Mountain Equipment Co-op – one of Canada's leading national outdoor equipment retailers - have partnered to develop a national "Learn to Camp" initiative. This initiative aims to instill the confidence in participants to camp on their own and to find enjoyment in camping while connecting to experiences at Parks Canada's places. Further, the Government of Canada, through the Natural Areas Conservation Program, set aside \$225M to acquire ecologically sensitive lands through donation, purchase or stewardship agreements with private landowners. Under the program \$185M was directly invested in the Nature Conservancy of Canada's (NCC), a Canadian private not-for-profit charitable environmental organization. This investment provided an impressive kick-start to the NCC's Force for Nature campaign, and NCC has pledged to more than match it with private funds and land donations. To date, more than 405,260 acres (164,000 hectares) have been conserved under the program from coast to coast on 442 properties.

Canadian governments have made significant strides in recent years in establishing and managing networks of protected areas, in partnership with Aboriginal communities, environmental non-governmental organizations and local communities. While shifts such as climate change and changing demographics present new challenges and opportunities for protected area managers, a strong foundation has been established upon which to build in the years to come.

Governance types

Canada is a leader in protecting and conserving natural spaces. Across Canada, there are thousands of protected areas managed by Government agencies at various levels, co-managed protected areas, private protected areas, and indigenous and local community conserved areas. Although the majority of protected areas in Canada are government administered, organizations have increasingly found common ground with Aboriginal and local communities on the creation and cooperative management of protected areas. Comprehensive land claims offer a way for government and Aboriginal organizations to work together to protect natural areas that are vital to sustaining traditional ways of life in addition to contributing to the achievement of common conservation goals. Because of their significance to both Aboriginal communities and other jurisdictions, parks and other protected areas afford meaningful opportunities for cooperative planning and management and shared decision-making.

An example of leadership highlighting cooperative management of protected areas is in Torngat Mountains National Park of Canada, located in the Northern Labrador mountains. One of the most important details outlined in the Park Impacts and Benefits Agreements that Parks Canada negotiated with the Inuit, is the commitment that the national park will be established, operated and managed through a cooperative management regime that recognizes Inuit as partners and recognizes and honours Inuit knowledge and the special historical and cultural relationship between Inuit and the land.

The map in Appendix I illustrates Canada's protected areas according to the four broad governance types recognized by IUCN.

Key threats

Canada's protected areas face a number of pressures associated with environmental forces, development needs, and societal changes, as outlined below.

Environmental forces

- Biodiversity loss
 - Alien invasive species
 - Habitat fragmentation
 - Resource harvesting
- Climate change

Development pressures

- Increased urbanization
- Adjacent land/marine use (agriculture, forestry, mining, oil and gas exploration, fishing)

Societal changes eroding public support for protected areas

- Increased urbanization
- Limited access to natural areas

- Lack of personal connection to nature

Barriers for effective implementation

To counter threats and barriers for effective implementation, protected area agencies are seeking to:

- Raise awareness and understanding of the relevance of protected areas in addressing key issues:
 - Biodiversity loss
 - Climate change adaptation and mitigation
 - Human health, physical, mental and social well-being
 - Social and economic resilience
- Engage non-traditional stakeholders and partners in the establishment, management and promotion of protected areas
- Integrate protected areas considerations into land-use/water-use and conservation plans

Status, priority and timeline for key actions of the Programme of Work on Protected Areas

Status of key actions of the Programme of Work on Protected Areas

Canada has a relatively mature system of protected area networks and addresses many key actions of the Programme of Work on Protected Areas as a part of day-to-day business. A systematic evaluation of the status of priority actions has not been undertaken in the preparation of this report and the indication of status given below is qualitative only. Additional commentary is provided in the section “key assessment results”.

Status of key actions of the Programme of Work on Protected Areas	Status
• Progress on assessing gaps in the protected area network (1.1)	2
• Progress in assessing protected area integration (1.2)	2
• Progress in establishing transboundary protected areas and regional networks (1.3)	2
• Progress in developing site-level management plans (1.4)	3
• Progress in assessing threats and opportunities for restoration (1.5)	2
• Progress in assessing equitable sharing of benefits (2.1)	2
• Progress in assessing protected area governance (2.1)	3
• Progress in assessing the participation of indigenous and local communities in key protected area decisions (2.2)	3
• Progress in assessing the policy environment for establishing and managing protected areas (3.1)	3
• Progress in assessing the values of protected areas (3.1)	2
• Progress in assessing protected area capacity needs (3.2)	3
• Progress in assessing the appropriate technology needs (3.3)	3
• Progress in assessing protected area sustainable finance needs (3.4)	3
• Progress in conducting public awareness campaigns (3.5)	3
• Progress in developing best practices and minimum standards (4.1)	3
• Progress in assessing management effectiveness (4.2)	2
• Progress in establishing an effective PA monitoring system (4.3)	3
• Progress in developing a research program for protected areas (4.4)	3
• Progress in assessing opportunities for marine protection	2
• Progress in incorporating climate change aspects into protected areas	2

Status: 0 = no work, 1 = just started, 2 = partially complete, 3 = nearly complete, 4 = complete

Priority actions for fully implementing the Programme of Work on Protected Areas:

Protected area agencies across Canada are working to increase the number and size of terrestrial and marine/freshwater protected areas within their jurisdictions, as contributions to protected area networks. Increasingly, they are reaching out to partners and stakeholders through land and water use-planning, integrated oceans management and other processes to find ways to increase landscape and waterscape connectivity, reduce pressures on protected areas, and restore degraded ecosystems.

Overall, the five PoWPA goals with highest priority for action in Canada are Goals 1.1, 1.2, 2.2, and 3.5. A few examples of priority actions currently being undertaken to achieve these goals are provided below:

Goal 1.1: To establish and strengthen national and regional systems of protected areas integrated into a global network as a contribution to globally agreed goals

Canadian protected area agencies are working towards:

Federal

Designation of 5 new National Wildlife Areas (NWAs) in the Northwest Territories to protect an additional 4.1 million ha of terrestrial habitat.

Formal designation of new National Parks and National Marine Conservation Areas across Canada, as well as a new National Urban Park in Toronto's Rouge Valley, which will add approximately 6.7 million hectares to Parks Canada's protected areas network

Designation of an additional 7 *Oceans Act* Marine Protected Areas, to protect an additional 1.5 million hectares of Canada's ocean estate.

Fisheries and Oceans Canada is leading establishment of a national network of marine protected areas that will consist of 13 bioregional networks of marine protected areas, building on the suite of existing federal-provincial-territorial marine protected areas.

Provincial/Territorial

Quebec: Adding 60 million hectares to the province's protected areas network in the context of *Le Plan Nord*.

Ontario: Adding 22.5 million hectares to the province's protected areas network as a result of the *Far North Act*.

Yukon Territory: Opportunities for the establishment of new protected areas exist through First Nation Final Agreements and Regional Land-Use Planning. Management planning processes are underway for 3 new parks established through First Nation Final Agreements and boundaries are currently being determined for a protected area identified in the North Yukon Regional Land-Use Plan.

Goal 1.2: To integrate protected areas into broader land- and seascapes and sectors so as to maintain ecological structure and function

Protected area organizations across Canada engage with other sectors through regional and local planning and assessment processes.

The Government of Canada is exploring three key thematic areas that would support achievement of this goal as it works in collaboration with other jurisdictions, and a range of stakeholders and partners towards the development of a National Conservation Plan:

1. Conserving Canada's landscapes and marine/aquatic areas, including through innovative working landscape/seascape approaches;
2. Connecting Canadians to nature as well as habitats and ecosystems to each other; and
3. Restoring degraded ecosystems and recovering species at risk.

Protected areas will be a cornerstone of this plan.

Canada is also contributing to the achievement of this goal globally by sharing best practices in maintaining ecological structure and function, including restoration, monitoring, and maintaining or improving ecological integrity and resilience. It is also supporting efforts in other countries to implement climate change adaptation strategies through site-based protected area actions such as wetland and forest restoration in protected areas to conserve ecosystem services for communities.

Goal 2.2: To enhance and secure involvement of indigenous and local communities and relevant stakeholders

Canadian protected area agencies have a long tradition of cooperation with Indigenous and local communities. Current work that will contribute to the achievement of this goal includes:

Federal

Parks Canada is committed to building strong positive working relationships with the Aboriginal peoples of Canada. Consultation with First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples on a wide range of initiatives is a major element in the operational policies of the Agency. New national parks and national marine conservation areas have been and are being created through consultation and negotiation with Aboriginal organizations. The resulting establishment agreements set out cooperative management structures and allow for the continuation of traditional activities. For example, Parks Canada is working with the Qikiqtani Inuit Association in the creation of a large National Marine Conservation Area in Lancaster Sound, the eastern end of Canada's Northwest Passage through the Arctic archipelago. In the

Northwest Territories, Parks Canada and the Lutsel K'e Dene First Nation are negotiating an agreement for the establishment of a new national park reserve to be called Thaidene Nene.

Provincial/Territorial

Manitoba: Working with several First Nations to designate Partridge Crop Hill and Walter Cook Caves park reserve as ecological reserves and Chitek Lake and Amisk park reserves as provincial parks.

British Columbia: There are currently 35 collaborative management agreements in place with First Nations regarding the management of protected areas and 10 more under negotiation.

Nova Scotia: The Mi'kmaq – Nova Scotia Protected Areas Selection and Management Technical Advisory Group act as a technical advisory body to provide advice, information, and recommendations to the Assembly and the Province respecting scoping, selection, acquisition, designation, management, and use of certain provincial Crown lands to be established as parks and protected areas.

Yukon: Three new Yukon Parks – Agay Mene, Kusawa, and Asi Keyi – were established through First Nation Final Agreements. The management planning processes will include representation by both Yukon and First Nation governments, First Nation Governments also have key roles in the management of a number of existing Yukon parks.

Goal 3.5: To strengthen communication, education and public awareness

Connecting with Canadians is one of the themes of Canada's emerging National Conservation Plan. Recent achievements in this area that may serve as the basis for future action include:

Federal

Parks Canada is working with Mexico's National Commission of Protected Areas (CONANP), the U.S. National Parks Service and other American land management agencies to address shared challenges associated with building awareness and relevance of protected areas in both the terrestrial and marine environments. In addition, Parks Canada, Fisheries and Oceans Canada and Mexican and US marine protected area agencies worked closely with the Commission for Environmental Cooperation in North America and the Coastal Ecosystem Learning Centers consortium of North American aquariums to recently release new videos that will build awareness of the existence and relevance of North American MPAs among the millions of annual visitors to the aquariums.

Parks Canada is also exploring the use of innovative ways to connect Canadians with their protected areas through new media channels, films, music, and television, aimed primarily at a target of young, urban, and new Canadians, as well as through Facebook and Twitter.

Provincial/Territorial

British Columbia: Over 250 events and celebrations occurred across the province to celebrate BC Parks Centennial Year in 2011. In addition to centennial events, other programs included: Get Outside youth

engagement program, Arts in the Parks, BC Parks passport program, 100 Years of Adventure event series, Geocaching event, special contests and conservation and recreation events across the province.

Yukon: The new Tombstone Territorial Park interpretive centre, which offers a wide range of displays and events as part of a comprehensive interpretation program, has become a premier attraction for Yukon residents and visitors alike. A new book on Herschel Island-Qikiqtaruk Territorial Park explores the natural and cultural history of this unique Arctic island.

Key assessment results

Ecological gap assessment

To date, there has been no national gap assessment completed. However, most of Canada's protected area agencies have conducted their own network gap analysis.

Management effectiveness assessment

Some jurisdictions have in place monitoring and reporting programs to inform decision-making at the site level and to report to Canadians on the state of protected areas. At the national level, the Conservation Areas Reporting and Tracking System developed by the Canadian Council on Ecological Areas can be employed for the tracking and reporting on the status of Canada's protected areas in a consistent, standardized and authoritative manner.

Sustainable finance assessment

Canadian protected area agencies are funded through a combination of government appropriations, revenues generated through entrance and other user fees and revenues generated through sponsorships and/or partnerships. Allocation of resources to priority initiatives is determined through regular budgeting processes.

Capacity needs assessment

Based on available funding, as described above, Canadian protected area agencies have a combination of permanent, temporary and seasonal staff, and staff hired on contract. Through work planning, training and succession planning, agencies determine and secure the capacity required to address priority initiatives.

Policy environment assessment

The establishment, governance and management of Canada's protected areas are guided by enabling federal, provincial / territorial and local legislation, regulations and policies. Overall, the policy environment for protected areas in Canada is robust.

Protected area integration and mainstreaming assessment

Jurisdictions across Canada are variously engaged in land use planning, climate change adaptation strategies and other sectoral initiatives to support the integration and mainstreaming of protected area objectives.

Protected area valuation assessment

The Canadian Parks Council (CPC) commissions studies on valuing the economic contribution of agency and visitor expenditures to the Canadian economy.

Its most recent national study in which all provincial and territorial park agencies and Parks Canada participated, determined that in 2009 \$5.2 billion in combined direct spending by park agencies and visitors added \$4.6 billion to Canada's GDP of which \$2.9 billion was labour income (equivalent to 64,000 full time jobs). The study also indicated that \$337.4 million (44% of the \$0.8 billion spent by park agencies) was returned to three levels of government in taxes.

In addition to the economic assessment, there is also work underway in partnership with national and international agencies to better understand and value the contribution of protected nature, such as the following three major projects:

- 1) Parks Canada and the CPC are implementing a four year project to estimate the value of ecosystem services to Canadians at several case study protected areas.
- 2) Environment Canada and Statistics Canada are leading a two year project to create a system of ecosystem accounts that could be integrated into the System of National Accounts.
- 3) Parks Canada is working with Mexico's National Commission of Protected Areas (CONANP), the U.S. National Parks Service and other American land management agencies to collectively assess the extent and value of ecosystem services provided by wilderness and protected areas in North American.

Climate change resilience and adaptation assessment

Some Canadian jurisdictions are beginning to integrate the role of parks and protected areas into their overall climate change adaptation strategies. The Canadian Parks Council has prepared a report on the role of protected areas in ecosystem-based approaches to climate change adaptation and mitigation to guide collaborative actions, communications and engagement. In addition, the Canada-USA-Mexico Commission on Environmental Cooperation has prepared *Scientific Guidelines for Designing Resilient Marine Protected Area Networks in a Changing Climate*.

Appendix I: Canada's Protected Areas Network, as of May 1, 2011

