

CONSERVATION INVESTMENTS ON WORKING LANDSCAPES

Some of Canada's most unique and ecologically valuable wildlife habitat exists on working landscapes, which are comprised of wetlands and associated uplands, grasslands, southern forest ecosystems and other threatened habitats, particularly on privately owned lands.

Working landscapes in Canada make up over 80% of Canada's land base. They include some of the most unique and ecologically valuable wildlife habitat on the North American continent. These habitats provide critical ecological goods and services to Canadians, including carbon sequestration and floodwater attenuation. They are also home to a disproportionate number of threatened or endangered species, which reside in southern grasslands, wetlands and unique forestland ecosystems. Most of these lands are not under direct federal jurisdiction; and many particularly important and threatened habitats are found on privately-owned land.

Habitat and biodiversity conservation on working landscapes is essential for the federal government to meet Canada's commitments under the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (i.e. Aichi targets). Adopting an ecosystem approach to working landscapes will contribute to all four goals adopted by Canada and other Parties to the Convention on Biodiversity in 2010 and at least 10 of the 19 Targets (i.e. Targets 1,2,3,5,7,11,13,14, and 17). In particular, the Target 11 commitment to protect 17 percent of lands and freshwater by 2020 can be met in part by investing in privately owned land. Furthermore, these conservation investments will assist Canada in achieving its national objectives for climate change adaptation and mitigation, public safety and sustainable development.

The various ecological goods and services that result from habitat and biodiversity conservation (i.e. carbon sequestration, flood attenuation) make conservation projects good candidates for funding under existing programs such as the emerging Low-Carbon Economy Fund or the \$5 billion Green Infrastructure Fund. Federal infrastructure and climate funds should also support tools and approaches designed to help municipal and regional governments make better use of natural ecosystems as an infrastructure asset, and allow ecosystems to provide critical services like flood control and carbon sequestration in an environmentally-friendly and cost-effective manner.

The Green Budget Coalition is recommending that the federal government continue to invest in conservation on working landscapes, including allocating funds for new programs in land management & stewardship and biodiversity conservation, while enhancing existing highly successful programs, particularly the Natural Areas Conservation Program (NACP), the National Wetland Conservation Fund (NWCF), the Habitat Stewardship Program (HSP), the Aboriginal Fund for Species at Risk (AFSP), and the North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP).

- Land management and stewardship** - this program includes incentives to donate, maintain or restore lost or degraded habitats to provide long term ecological goods and services. This includes matching financial supports for particularly threatened ecosystems such as wetlands, grasslands, and threatened southern forest ecosystems.

Investment Required:

For 2017/18	\$75 million
Ongoing	\$75 million for 4 years (\$375 million total)

- Biodiversity conservation**, including areas of federal responsibility such as migratory bird conservation, freshwater fisheries, invasive species management, and pollinator conservation

Investment Required:

For 2017/18	\$21 million (\$5 million bird conservation, \$4 million invasive plant management, \$12 million pollinator conservation
Ongoing	\$17 million/year over 4 years (\$5 million/year migratory bird conservation, \$12 million pollinator conservation

3. Enhancing and Improving Existing Federal Conservation Programs – The GBC recommends that the Government of Canada enhance existing conservation programs by providing additional funding for the Natural Areas Conservation Program, the Habitat Stewardship Program, the Aboriginal Fund for Species at Risk, the National Wetland Conservation Fund, and the North American Waterfowl Management Plan.

Natural Areas Conservation Program

Additional Investment Required:

For 2017/18	\$22.5 million committed plus \$10 million new
For 2018/19	\$22.5 million committed plus \$10 million new
Ongoing	\$185 million over 5 years (\$205 million total over 7 years)

Habitat Stewardship Program and Aboriginal Fund for Species at Risk

Additional Investment Required:

For 2017/18	\$7 million/year (\$5 million HSP, \$2 million AFSR)
Ongoing	\$7 million/year for 4 years (\$35 million total)

National Wetland Conservation Fund

Additional Investment Required:

For 2017/18	\$8 million
Ongoing:	\$8 million/year for 4 years (\$40 million total)

North American Waterfowl Management Plan

Additional Investment Required:

For 2017/18	\$2 million
Ongoing	\$2 million/year for 4 years (\$10 million total)

1. Land Management and Stewardship

Recommendation

The GBC recommends the establishment of a new National Land Management and Stewardship program, to provide incentives to donate, maintain or restore lost or degraded habitats to capture long term ecological goods and services on private land.

Investment Required:

For 2017/18	\$75 million
Ongoing:	\$75 million/year for 4 years (\$375M total)

This program would be administered by Environment and Climate Change Canada in conjunction with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, and be implemented in collaboration with other levels of government and non-government partners, who would be required to match federal government contributions on a cost-shared basis, i.e. at a 1:1 match ratio.

Background and Rationale

Incentivizing private landowners to restore and maintain lost or degraded habitats and their associated ecological goods and services remains a recurring challenge for governments and conservation organizations alike.

This program will help to address this challenge by offering new incentives and tools that would further encourage conservation-minded actions on private land. Recent economic analysis indicates that every \$1 invested in the conservation and management of critical habitat generates \$22 of benefits in terms of economic,

ecological and societal well-being. Based on this analysis, a \$375 million investment, when matched at a 1:1 rate by non-federal government funds, will generate \$1.6 Billion worth of benefits to Canadians, including carbon capture and sequestration, flood and drought attenuation, better resilience to a changing climate, and biodiversity.⁵⁹

This program would be focused on wetland and riparian habitats, because of the high economic return on investment associated with the conservation of these habitats^{60 61}, but funds should be made available to support other threatened terrestrial ecosystems and habitat values.

Working with landowners to maintain these vital ecosystems, the federal government would reduce the need for investment in built infrastructure and costly natural disaster recovery, while at the same time supporting biodiversity and species at risk. Habitat restoration would also increase economic activity in rural communities, creating new jobs and supporting sustainable agriculture practices.

⁵⁹ Anielski, M., J. Thompson, and S. Wilson. 2014. A genuine return on investment: The economic and societal well-being value of land conservation in Canada. Anielski Research for Ducks Unlimited Canada, Stonewall, Manitoba, Canada.

⁶⁰ Wilson, Dr. Thomas A 2013. Net Fiscal Costs of Federal Funding of Ducks Unlimited Canada. Wilson Economic Research Inc. for Ducks Unlimited Canada.

⁶¹ Anielski, M., J. Thompson, and S. Wilson. 2014. A genuine return on investment: The economic and societal well-being value of land conservation in Canada. Anielski Research for Ducks Unlimited Canada, Stonewall, Manitoba, Canada.

Funds would be used for:

- Restoring lost or degraded habitats on working landscapes, namely wetlands and associated uplands, prairie grasslands, southern forest ecosystems and other threatened habitats located on private lands throughout Canada
- Compensating landowners who secure and restore additive habitats (which benefit the broader public interest) on their property through financial supports and long-term conservation easements through a funding formula based on its assessed market value.

Landowners would retain full legal rights to their property, including land identified under the conservation easement, and would be able to continue making productive use of their land in accordance with the terms of the conservation agreement – a perpetual legal encumbrance that would be held by a third party such as an NGO, a conservation authority, or other level of government, and that is registered on title. Similar approaches have been employed with great success in other jurisdictions, such as the Agriculture Conservation Easement Program in the USA.⁶²

2. Biodiversity Conservation

Recommendation

The Green Budget Coalition recommends that the Government of Canada provide funding for migratory bird conservation, invasive species management, and pollinator biodiversity conservation.

Investment Required

For 2017/18: \$21 million
(\$5 million Bird Conservation, \$4 million Invasive Plant Management, \$1 million Pollinator Conservation)

Ongoing: \$17 million/year over 4 years
(\$5 million/year Bird Conservation, \$12 million Pollinator Conservation)

Background and Rationale

Migratory bird conservation funding to support scientific research and conservation efforts, identified as an urgent need in the 2016 State of North America's Birds Report, which was co-led by Environment Canada and Climate Change.

The federal government has legal responsibility for migratory bird management under the Migratory Birds Convention Act (1917). The 2016 State of North America's Birds Report, co-led by Environment Canada and Climate Change, concluded that there is an urgent need for investment in migratory bird conservation and science. The report points to dramatic declines in many migratory bird populations such as shorebirds, grassland birds,

and birds like swallows that feed on flying insects. Some species populations have declined by over 80% in the 40 years of measurement.

The ongoing transfer of 1.8 million acres of ecologically important federal community pastures to Saskatchewan is an important time-limited opportunity to conserve grassland bird populations, some of which are species at risk. The 2012 agreement to transfer management of these lands did not ensure that public values such as biodiversity conservation, ecosystem protection and carbon storage would continue to be managed post-transfer. Ranchers and nature groups are jointly proposing that a fund be established to support conservation work (e.g., bird conservation, species at risk recovery, invasive species management) on these community pastures, making use of the \$5 million in annual resource rents currently being collected primarily from oil and gas operations on the pastures

Invasive Species Management funding to tackle the spread of aquatic invasive plants in key areas of Canada, as part of the government's commitment to watershed health.

Aquatic invasive plants are a growing ecological concern in Canada and threaten ecosystem health, function and biodiversity. In collaboration with other government and non-government partners, the federal government has a key role to play in tackling the spread of several key invasive plant species of national concern, including Spartina grass, non-native Phragmites, Water Chestnut, and Water Soldier.

Pollinator Conservation funding to conserve pollinator biodiversity and increase food security, resilience of agricultural sector, and sustainability of natural ecosystems.

Canada has hundreds of native insects which contribute to the pollination of agricultural crops and native plant communities, including bees, birds, butterflies, and moths. Land use change, climate change, disease and pesticide exposure all threaten the integrity of natural ecosystems, food and field crops, and vital pollinators. While some efforts are underway to address managed pollinators' health, the federal government effectively abandoned its coordinated effort to engage leading pollination science experts in 2014 with the termination of federal support for CANPOLIN.

The following recommendations are designed to provide policy coherence for Canada's approach in the context of global challenges, to acquire current empirical data that exists in other jurisdictions, to provide needed resources to support basic research in areas unique to Canada, and to build necessary capacity to provide policy makers, stakeholders and the wider public with information and tools to better protect and conserve pollinators. Under a joint program, Environment and Climate Change Canada and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada would address the need for monitoring data so that progress to protect

62 <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/programs/easements/acep/>

pollinators and their services could be measured, and programs adapted as new threats and conditions arise.

The Green Budget Coalition recommends that the Government of Canada invest \$12 million per year for the next five years in pollinator conservation and protection:

- \$8 Million per year for 5 years to establish a national research consortium modelled on the CANPOLIN experience to coordinate, support and leverage independent, unbiased scientific research and technological development for managed and wild pollinators. This funding would also include support for innovation in current farming practices, and support for the Canadian apiculture industry to reduce diseases within hives and minimize spillover to wild bees.
- \$4 Million per year for 5 years to support national policy development and monitoring/reporting programs on wild and managed pollinators including:
 - 1) resources for Canada-OECD linkages and formal working relationships among North American agencies, research institutes and stakeholders (e.g., data sharing, joint research); 2) the development of a monitoring/reporting program on pollinator community intactness that includes all pollinators that contribute to agricultural pollination; and 3) establishing a tracking and reporting system and requirement for movement of managed native bees.

3. Enhancing Existing Conservation Programs

The GBC recommends that the Government of Canada enhance existing conservation programs by providing additional funding for the Natural Areas Conservation Program, the Habitat Stewardship Program, the Aboriginal Fund for Species at Risk, the National Wetland Conservation Fund, and the North American Waterfowl Management Plan.

Investment Requirements:

NACP:

For 2017/18	\$22.5 million committed plus a \$10 million new investment
For 2018/19	\$22.5 million committed plus a \$10 million new investment
Ongoing	Additional \$185 million over 5 years to 2024
HSP:	Additional \$5 million annually for 5 years
AFSAR:	Additional \$2 million annually for 5 years
NWCF:	Additional \$8 million annually for 5 years
NAWMP:	Additional \$2 million annually for 5 years

Background and Rationale

As a signatory to the Convention on Biodiversity (Aichi Biodiversity Targets), Canada has committed to protecting 10% of our marine and coastal areas and 17% of our terrestrial and freshwater habitat by the end of this decade. Only by working together — government, private sector and civil society — can we ensure that Canada exceeds its international obligations and becomes recognized as the world leader in conservation.

Natural Areas Conservation Program (NACP)

The GBC proposes an expanded and enhanced NACP conservation partnership with the Government of Canada, supported by an additional federal contribution of \$205 million over seven years to conserve more than 500,000 hectares (1.2 million acres) of habitat and support the establishment of millions of more acres of federal and provincial protected areas. Under this expanded NACP framework, conservation partners would leverage and match the federal government's contribution to achieve the largest public-private investment ever for nature and a cumulative investment of \$750 million in conservation action.

The NACP is a public-private partnership, led by the Nature Conservancy of Canada, which to date has conserved more than 418,000 hectares (1 million acres). Along with other partners – including 38 local land trusts - more than half a billion dollars in matching contributions has been raised to secure conservation outcomes. NACP projects conserve habitat for more than a quarter of COSEWIC-listed species at risk. More than half of the projects are within 25 km of federally protected areas. The NACP directly complements federally protected areas with conservation lands that contain samples of the full range of existing ecosystems and ecological processes.

An expanded and enhanced public-private partnership program will conserve important natural habitats across Canada, connect more Canadians to nature, and inspire communities to care for our natural infrastructure.

Goals of this enhanced public-private partnership program include:

- Continuing to protect our natural infrastructure and a full suite of ecological goods and services, including clean water, carbon storage and sequestration, flood protection, pollination services, and drought mitigation.
- Implementing critical stewardship actions to protect and restore natural habitat, including increased connectivity within the greater protected area ecosystem.
- Conserving habitat for at least a third of Canada's terrestrial and freshwater species at risk.
- Building more partnerships with Indigenous peoples across Canada to realize conservation objectives for the lands and waters of ecological importance in their own territories.

- Supporting work with industry to facilitate the relinquishment of mineral rights, to remove roadblocks and accelerate the establishment of federally and provincially protected areas.

(including climate change, biodiversity loss and poor watershed management) that impact the health of aquatic ecosystems and the benefits they provide.

Habitat Stewardship Program (HSP) and Aboriginal Fund for Species at Risk (AFSAR)

The Habitat Stewardship Program has been instrumental in protecting Canada's wildlife and species at risk. In recent years, the prevention stream focused on preventing species from becoming a conservation concern has been oversubscribed. Protecting these species and their habitats from becoming at risk will be essential if Canada is to fulfil its Aichi commitments. The GBC recommends that the Government of Canada provide additional funding of \$5 million to the HSP prevention stream and \$2 million to the Aboriginal Fund for Species at Risk.

National Wetland Conservation Fund (NWCF)

This is an effective and important program for supporting wetland restoration and conservation activities to maintain or enhance wetland ecosystem goods and services. The conservation activities supported by this program make a vital contribution to the federal Government's climate adaptation efforts. The GBC recommends additional funding of \$8 million annually be allocated to enhanced complementary programming that delivers climate adaptation services to Canadians.

North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP)

NAWMP continues to be a leading North American and multi-stakeholder conservation partnership dedicated to the protection and restoration of critical habitat for waterfowl and other wildlife. While the accomplishments under the NAWMP are significant, waterfowl habitat is increasingly threatened by human development activities. The GBC recommends that the Government of Canada enhance the NAWMP program by providing additional funding of \$2 million per year.

Recreational Fisheries Conservation Partnerships Program (RFCPP).

Recreational fishing is an exceptionally popular outdoor activity in Canada – According to the 2012 Canadian Nature Survey, approximately 21% of Canadians over age 18 participate in angling. According to the 2010 Recreational Fishing Survey coordinated by the Fisheries and Oceans Canada, anglers spend \$8.3 billion annually, creating jobs in tourism, transportation, retail goods, boating, vehicle sales and other sectors.

The RFCPP is a highly successful federal program, and its guidelines should be enhanced to emphasize a broader landscape approach to fisheries management, with the aim of protecting fisheries habitat, combating invasive species and protecting aquatic ecosystems from threats

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