

2016 - 2021

The Pathway Journey

A LOOK BACK AT A RENEWED APPROACH TO LAND
AND FRESHWATER CONSERVATION IN CANADA





TRILLIUMS FLOWERING IN DECIDUOUS FOREST NEXT TO A WORN TRAIL // CATHY QUINLAN, UTRCA



Foreword

For many, COVID-19 has created the conditions for us to reflect on what is important to us as individuals, as Canadians, and as members of a species present across the globe.

Canadians have relied on nature more than ever over the past year, flocking to outdoor recreation areas, green spaces, parks and protected areas in record numbers. Whether you took up a new outdoor sport, found a new favourite picnic spot or took solace in a countryside drive, it is very likely that you too took refuge in the comforts of nature. These challenging times remind us that balance is key – striving for a state of sustainability that will ensure that seven generations from now our children will have the opportunity to breathe fresh air, see a wild animal and take solace in the outdoors.

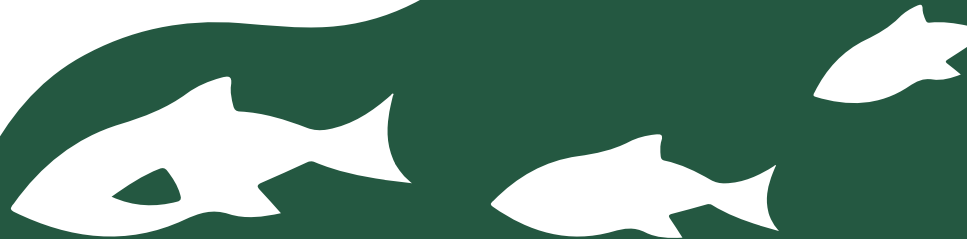




PHOTO BY BC PARKS

Introduction

The global community is facing an unprecedented biodiversity crisis. In 2019, the Inter-governmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services reported that, globally, 1 million species were threatened with extinction, with many expected to go extinct within the coming decades.¹ In 2018, the World Wildlife Fund for Nature reported that habitat degradation and loss accounted for nearly half of all threats to the world's birds, reptiles, amphibians and mammals.²

These impacts on wild species also have stark ramifications for people. Nature is the root of almost all economic activity, with over half of the world's total GDP moderately or highly dependent on nature and its services.³ However, climate change and biodiversity risk are at the top of the

World Economic Forum's analysis of current risks to the global economy. Addressing the biodiversity crisis and preventing these losses will be far cheaper than 'repairing' nature once it's lost.



In Canada—home to 25% of the earth’s wetlands and boreal forests, 20% of its freshwater, and the longest coastline in the world—we have lost two-thirds of all of Canada’s grassland birds over the last 50 years. We have also lost vast amounts of prairie wetlands, which are essential for water management and flood mitigation, and we are seeing precipitous declines in caribou numbers, as well as the collapse of salmon stocks on the west and east coasts.

In 2010, a Strategic Plan for Biodiversity was adopted internationally to address this crisis. This plan included 20 global biodiversity targets, known as the Aichi Targets. Each party to the Convention on Biological Diversity agreed to contribute to achieving the targets by the year 2020. Canada, the European Community and the other 195 parties in this global plan were encouraged to develop their own national targets using the Aichi Targets as a guide.

In response, Canada adopted a suite of national targets known as the “2020 Biodiversity Goals and Targets for Canada.” The four goals and 19 targets cover issues ranging from species at risk, to sustainable forestry, to connecting Canadians to nature. Canada Target 1, Canada’s version of Aichi Target 11, committed Canada to conserve 17% of our terrestrial areas and inland water, and 10% of coastal and marine areas, by the end of 2020.

The Pathway to Canada Target 1 initiative (‘Pathway’) was launched in 2016 to help accelerate progress toward the 17% terrestrial and inland water portion of Canada Target 1, to provide guidance on what indicators should be used to measure progress towards the target, and to ensure that the areas being conserved will contribute to the conservation of biodiversity. This included the creation of the multi-stakeholder National Advisory Panel and the Indigenous Circle of Experts—expert advisory bodies asked to provide recommendations on how Canadians could collectively achieve Canada Target 1 using the best available science and traditional knowledge and in the spirit and practice of Indigenous reconciliation. The reports from these bodies formed the basis of the work taking place today.

This report is a summary from the perspective of the Pathway National Steering Committee. It highlights the work that has taken place over the past few years, the lessons learned by members of this committee, and the proposed actions and considerations for those that will be continuing this work beyond the end of the Pathway to Canada Target 1 mandate, which officially ended with the year 2020.

PATHWAY TO CANADA TARGET 1

“Communities of partners focused on achieving shared objectives is not common outside of Pathway. We often put up walls and barriers to ensure we can achieve our mandates - making ourselves vulnerable is seen as compromising to this. The biggest successes came from that sense of community and from thinking about what we are trying to achieve”

- Pathway Partner



¹ Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services | IPBES

² Living Planet Report 2018 | Pages | WWF (<https://www.worldwildlife.org/pages/living-planet-report-2018>)

³ Nature Risk Rising | World Economic Forum



SHEPODY BAY // PHOTO BY: GARY DONALDSON

What is 'Pathway'?

Pathway is a partnership of federal, provincial and territorial departments responsible for conservation, biodiversity, parks and protected areas, as well as Indigenous representative organizations and municipal governments. Members work together, in accordance with each organization's jurisdiction and priorities, on the solutions needed to protect or conserve terrestrial and inland water areas and advance progress towards the 17% target⁴.

As many participants and partners have noted along the way, the Pathway initiative has been a significant departure from past processes aimed at creating protected and conserved areas across Canada. Designed as a multilateral partnership to rapidly create the pan-Canadian momentum and guidance needed to reach the 17% target, Pathway has strived

to be a collaboratively led partnership rather than a federally led forum—one that agreed to operate under the principles of reconciliation, respect, inclusiveness and collaboration, transparency, innovation and creativity, and evidence-based decision making grounded in science and traditional knowledge. Its directing body, the Pathway National Steering Committee, is co-led by Environment and Climate Change Canada and the Province of British Columbia (formerly co-led by Parks Canada Agency and the Government of Alberta), and is a forum for co-developing pan-Canadian understanding, guidance and tools for protected and conserved areas. This is no small undertaking in a country where approximately 90% of lands are provincial or territorial Crown lands or Indigenous lands and treaty areas, necessitating broad collaboration and



agreement on initiatives to improve the conservation of an area. While partners are all working towards a similar goal, each jurisdiction or partner has their own mandates and political priorities.

Federal, provincial and territorial Pathway partners released pan-Canadian guidance for conserved areas through the One with Nature report, a jurisdictional response to recommendations provided by the Indigenous Circle of Experts and the National Advisory Panel. This multilateral, aspirational report highlights priorities and actions that could be undertaken and advanced either through pan-Canadian efforts or by individual Pathway members to create progress towards achieving Canada Target 1. In reviewing actions and advancements made since this report was released, it is clear that much has been accomplished and much remains to be done.

Through the efforts of Pathway and the funding provided through Nature Legacy, the on-the-ground conservation projects currently moving toward establishment or recognition should allow Canada to reach the 17% target in just a few short years. More importantly, the lessons brought forward through the Pathway process will allow us to further strengthen the relationships and processes required for continued collaboration beyond that.

PROPOSED ACTION:

Re-affirm support for One with Nature and the aspirational priorities and actions for a post-2020 context.

PROPOSED ACTION:

Re-affirm intention to operate under the guiding Pathway principles of reconciliation, respect, inclusiveness and collaboration, transparency, innovation and creativity, and evidence-based decision making grounded in science and traditional knowledge.

What follows is an overview of the main accomplishments, lessons learned and proposed actions drawn together under the four main priorities identified in the One with Nature report.

PATHWAY PUBLICATIONS

The One with Nature report is a compilation of aspirational, pan-Canadian priorities and actions and was the culmination of several years of discussion and learning. It builds upon the recommendations of the Indigenous Circle of Experts and the National Advisory Panel.

We Rise Together, a report from the Indigenous Circle of Experts, lays out recommendations, teachings and guidance for the creation of Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas in Canada, in the spirit and practice of reconciliation.

Canada’s Conservation Vision contains recommendations put forward by the multi-interest National Advisory Panel on ways Canada could potentially meet the vision to conserve 17% of our land and freshwater by the end of 2020.



⁴ Québec does not participate in the Pathway to Canada Target 1 initiative, but it contributes to the pan-Canadian effort by achieving an identical target for the creation of protected areas on its territory and its inland water by 2020.



PHOTO BY BC PARKS

Accomplishments, Lessons Learned & Proposed Actions

Priority 1 - Expand the Systems of Federal, Provincial and Territorial Protected and Conserved Areas

While protected areas have been tracked and reported in Canada since the 1990s, Canada did not have a standardized, pan-Canadian way of identifying them until recently. Through the Pathway to Canada Target 1 initiative, Canada now has pan-Canadian definitions and criteria for determining what qualifies as a protected area or as an Other Effective area-based Conservation Measure (OECM).

Based on internationally agreed-to definitions, these pan-Canadian definitions, along with guidance on Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas (IPCAs), were published in the 2019 pan-Canadian One with Nature report.

With thanks to the Pathway Indigenous Circle of Experts (ICE), National Advisory Panel (NAP)

and the many voices that contributed to their recommendations, we also now have pan-Canadian guidance on the essential elements of an IPCA. There is no strict 'definition' of what constitutes an IPCA, as this will depend on the partners involved in creating, governing and managing an area. While the term 'Indigenous Protected and Conserved Area, or IPCA', is new, the concept is not. Many exemplary conservation partnerships that highlight the essential elements of an IPCA already exist in Canada (see Thaidene Nënë text box on page 7). These, and all IPCAs, may be counted towards the area-based conservation targets if they have the attributes of a protected area or an OECM, and if the Indigenous lead or Indigenous partner(s) want(s) the area to be counted.

When Pathway was officially launched by federal, provincial and territorial Ministers responsible for Parks, Protected Areas, Conservation, Wildlife and Biodiversity in 2017, 10.5% of Canada's land and freshwater area was conserved, the same national total as in 2016 and 2015. Over the next three years, thanks to growing partnerships, collaboration and an influx of investments from governments and foundations, additional area over 200,000 km² was added to the national network of protected and conserved areas. This brought the national area conserved to 12.5% at the end of 2020, representing a total area approximately equivalent to four times the size of the province of Nova Scotia or twice the size of Iceland.

A national database, based on the foundational work completed by the Canadian Council on Ecological Areas (CCEA), is the public portal for information on areas that qualify towards Canada's network of protected areas and OECMs. This public database, the Canadian Protected and Conserved Areas Database (CPCAD)⁵, is currently updated twice a year. In addition, summaries of the data housed in CPCAD are available on the Canadian Environmental Sustainability Indicators⁶ webpage (ECCC), which is updated annually.

PROPOSED ACTION:

Continue efforts to develop an audit function/process for CPCAD data, taking into consideration the recommendations provided by the Pathway Accounting Working Group.

In June 2020, Łutsël K'é Dene First Nation, NWT, was named as one of 10 winners worldwide of the prestigious the UN Equator Prize.

"Thaidene Nënë is a great example of what can be done here in Canada right across the country. Thousands of jobs can be created. Land use can be reviewed ... when it is done in a positive relationship."

- Steven Nitah,
Lead negotiator for Thaidene Nënë
National Park Reserve

⁵ <https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/national-wildlife-areas/protected-conserved-areas-database.html>

⁶ <https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/environmental-indicators/conserved-areas.html>



BANKS ISLAND // PHOTO BY DANICA HOGAN

Canada is vast and varied. This is true, not only for its ecological landscape, but also for its political landscape. This means that the legislation, policies and priorities addressing area-based conservation vary across the country. However, area-based conservation can be achieved in a variety of ways, for a variety of purposes and can provide multiple co-benefits. Focusing too narrowly on a numerical target, without taking into account the broader co-benefits protected and conserved areas provide, may underserve their value and may create unintentional and unnecessary barriers. At the same time, it is recognized that having a measurable goal can help to create collective accountability and action.

While aspirational, policy discussions about land and freshwater area conservation should continue to take place in a multilateral, pan-Canadian forum as needed, while discussions on specific efforts and specific areas should be undertaken bilaterally (federal – provincial/territorial) with the intentional inclusion of Indigenous peoples, governments and communities connected to the area as well as local governments, industry and other interested parties as applicable. For Indigenous partners, this is likely to require consideration of capacity support to enable meaningful partnership. Other partners, including local and provincial or territorial partners, may also require funding to support action.

PROPOSED ACTION:

Seek and create greater engagement and commitment from all levels of government from the onset for post-2020 efforts.

PROPOSED ACTION:


In order to create and advance win-win opportunities for conservation, foster bilateral discussions, agreements and, if possible, funding to create action that will result in area-based conservation (directly or indirectly) that aligns with government and Indigenous priorities. This must be done while working with relevant partners and stakeholders and should focus on areas that have or could support quality biodiversity outcomes.



Collaborating for Conservation in Nova Scotia

The Government of Nova Scotia and other partners are building new networks for sharing knowledge and advancing work on protected and conserved areas across the province. With grant support from the Canada Nature Fund Target 1 Challenge, this collaborative initiative involves Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq, land trusts, municipal partners, and others. Key actions include exploring opportunities for Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas, conserving critical habitat such as old forests and wetlands, improving water quality protection, and enhancing ecological connectivity. Over 15,000 hectares of Crown land within 27 new and expanded parks and protected areas have been added to Nova Scotia's protected areas network. As a result of collaboration efforts, the Nova Scotia Nature Trust has launched a major land protection campaign aspiring to double their conservation lands network by 2023. In addition, a new IPCA report has been released by Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources, the Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaw Chiefs made an announcement profiling IPCA work, and critical Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) conservation lands in Nova Scotia have been protected.

Commitments by major partners, including the federal government, on ambitious conservation efforts encourage provincial and territorial partners, such as Nova Scotia, to make bold conservation targets as well. Support, particularly in the form of investments in nature and biodiversity conservation, is an essential element of achieving these ambitious conservation targets.



Due to the Pathway initiative, a broad array of areas has been evaluated using the pan-Canadian definitions, criteria, tools and resources. The creation of these tools not only allows for more standardized reporting of what is being included in Canada's national protected and conserved areas network—and thus of what is being counted towards national area-based targets—but has also created an opportunity for greater capacity support. External experts and internal, dedicated task teams can now evaluate and provide recommendations on whether areas qualify as protected areas or OECMs and if not, how the areas can be improved in order to do so. While evaluating and understanding which areas are currently contributing to a national network is important, the true benefits for biodiversity will ultimately be achieved by identifying potential improvements and carrying them out. The public sharing of examples and case studies of evaluations also creates a valuable resource for others to learn and build from.

It is important to keep in mind that this is a learning process and ongoing conversation for all involved. Pan-Canadian definitions were agreed to, but what these look like when applied 'on the land' is still being worked through. This is particularly true for OECMs. As well, individual federal, provincial and territorial jurisdictions will undertake the actions that best suit their unique contexts and needs. The management of public lands is the responsibility of provincial and territorial jurisdictions, and each jurisdiction may have varying priorities and capabilities for management and conservation of lands within their jurisdiction. Yet, continuing to work in partnership, with open dialogue, will greatly help advance this work. There is still much that we can learn from each other.

In alignment with this learning, provincial and territorial Pathway partners have been advancing their establishment programs, plans and strategies over the past several years.

PROPOSED ACTION:

Build on efforts to date and on capacity support available, to continue to better understand and identify areas that are currently contributing to the conservation of Canada's biodiversity and that may qualify as protected areas or OECMs.

PROPOSED ACTION:

Continue to contribute to collective lessons learned by sharing new or unique case studies publicly where possible.





Thaidene Nënë

Thaidene Nënë, established in August 2019, is located at the eastern end of Great Slave Lake (Tu Nedhé) in the Northwest Territories (NWT). Thaidene Nënë makes up 26,525 km² of lakes, old-growth spruce forests, rivers and spectacular cliffs. In addition to protecting important habitat for many species of mammals, fish and birds, the land is also culturally significant to the Métis and First Nations of the area.

The area is composed of the NWT's first Territorial Protected Area created under the new NWT Protected Areas Act, a Wildlife Conservation Area created under the *NWT Wildlife Act* and a National Park Reserve, protected through the *Canada National Parks Act*. Collectively, these areas constitute the Thaidene Nënë Indigenous Protected Area. Thaidene Nënë achieves key objectives for the conservation of biodiversity and will allow for cultural continuity of the area and tourism investments that will directly benefit neighbouring communities. Thaidene Nënë reflects positive steps towards reconciliation in recognizing these areas as integral to Indigenous communities' way of life and government-to-government relationships in the future management of the area.






PHOTO BY BC PARKS

Beyond having rights over lands and waters, responsibility implies stewardship and caretaking – making thoughtful, well-considered choices that factor in the impact of decisions made today on future generations’ ability to enjoy the bounty of the land.

- Indigenous Circle of Experts,
We Rise Together, 2018

Priority 2 - Promote Greater Recognition and Support for Existing Indigenous Rights, Responsibilities, and Priorities in Conservation

It has been observed globally that lands managed by Indigenous peoples conserve more biodiversity than areas managed by non-Indigenous peoples.⁷ Indeed, some of Canada’s greatest achievements in conservation-oriented land-use planning have been driven by Indigenous leadership—as have some of the most promising examples of linking conservation with the legitimate aspirations of local communities for economic development—such as Tallurutiup Imanga National Marine Conservation Area and Great Bear Rainforest conservancies. Further, rights and responsibilities of Indigenous peoples apply across Canada, supported by treaties, land claim or self-government agreements, and other arrangements. Indigenous peoples are therefore uniquely positioned to contribute to conserving Canada’s biodiversity.⁸

⁷ Vertebrate biodiversity on indigenous-managed lands in Australia, Brazil, and Canada equals that in protected areas - ScienceDirect

⁸ The Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami was invited to participate in the Pathway to Canada Target 1; however, Inuit governments have opted to use other mechanisms to advance their interests with respect to conserved areas.



PHOTO BY BC PARKS

The Indigenous Circle of Experts set in motion many important conversations that led us to re-examine our relationships with nature and with each other. In order for IPCAs to be a living example of reconciliation, ICE identified the four ‘moose in the room’ (Canadian version of ‘elephant in the room’) that would need to be discussed:

- Jurisdiction – sharing jurisdiction and responsibilities to and for the land
- Financial solutions – to enable IPCAs to be viable and self-sustaining
- Capacity development – to support IPCAs with subject matter expertise
- Cultural keystone species and places – species that are important to the ongoing survival of the people, their ability to be on the land, and their interactions with the land.

Through the Pathway to Canada Target 1 and the many offshoot partnerships and conversations that have advanced since its inception, a beginning has been made to further and support these discussions. Under Pathway, this has included a knowledge gathering process to share insight on the important conversations for initiating conservation partnerships, guidance for building conservation capacity, and a look at the pre-existing areas in Canada that are aligned with IPCA guidance and essential elements.

IPCAS BENEFIT ALL

IPCAs are first and foremost designed to benefit Indigenous communities, but they have considerable potential to benefit all Canadians. When protected and conserved areas across Canada increase, more lands and waters are relieved of the stresses of unsustainable human and industrial development. The result is biodiversity conservation and healthier ecosystems, which in turn benefit all Canadians in the form of clean air and water, improved human health, and the mitigation of risks from climate change and disease. In this way, IPCAs can be expected to provide a variety of ecosystem services for generations to come.

- We Rise Together,
2018 (ICE report)



EDEHZIE // PHOTO BY ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE CANADA

PROPOSED ACTION:

Continue to expand the input included in the report *Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas – Supporting Conditions for Success: Lessons and Experiences for Jurisdictions Across Canada* through a Knowledge Gathering Process in order to reflect broader partner perspectives.

PROPOSED ACTION:

Continue to develop and expand upon Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) on IPCAs.


PROPOSED ACTION:

Develop an overview of the potential federal, provincial and territorial legislative and policy mechanisms that could be used to establish protected areas or OECMs that also have the flexibility needed to support Indigenous leadership, rights and responsibilities (i.e., the key elements of IPCAs).



Edézhíe

In July 2018, the Dehcho First Nations established the Edézhíe Protected Area on the Horn Plateau on the west side of Great Slave Lake, southwest of Yellowknife. The creation of the Edézhíe Protected Area marks the designation of the first Indigenous Protected Area since the inception of the Pathway to Canada Target 1, a significant conservation milestone. As Edézhíe contains unique watershed and boreal forest biomes that require human stewardship, the support of the communities that surround Edézhíe is essential to its success. Dehcho First Nations was proactive in establishing ground protection of Edézhíe through employment of its Dehcho K'éhodi Guardians. The Guardians program is highlighting the importance of Indigenous-led stewardship and serving as a model for Guardians programs across the globe. Edézhíe covers an area of more than 1.4 million hectares (14,218 km²) of boreal forest lands and waters, protecting important wildlife such as Caribou and bringing Canada closer to the goal of 17% by 2020. The area is managed by a consensus management board with the Canadian Wildlife Service, in partnership with Dehcho K'éhodi Indigenous Guardians.



The discussion around IPCAs has also garnered significant attention within Canada and abroad. Many groups and organizations outside of the Pathway have embraced the concept and are working in partnership with Indigenous peoples and communities to further develop the supports and knowledge needed to help these endeavors thrive. Amongst others, these include:

- The Conservation Through Reconciliation Partnership – an initiative out of the University of Guelph examining the state of conservation practice in Canada and supporting efforts to advance Indigenous-led conservation in the spirit of reconciliation;
- The Indigenous Leadership Initiative – which supports Indigenous Nations in honouring their cultural responsibility to care for lands and waters; and,
- The Lisaak Olam Foundation – which supports the establishment and long-term capacity of IPCAs and works to educate Canadians about their value and relevance.

Ceremony was a foundational part of the Pathway to Canada Target 1 initiative

The Indigenous Circle of Experts' (ICE) collective work on Pathway to Canada Target 1 was commemorated in a sacred pipe ceremony conducted on June 7, 2017, in Ottawa by Elders Dr. Reg Crowshoe (a Blackfoot cultural and spiritual adviser and former chief of the Piikani Nation) and Larry McDermott (a member of Shabot Obaadjiwan First Nation and the executive director of Plenty Canada).

Other participants were Indigenous Circle of Experts, National Steering Committee (NSC) and National Advisory Panel (NAP) members. The ceremony demonstrated our intent to do good work together and to co-create the ethical space within which we would accomplish this work.

Conducted in both English and Indigenous languages, the pipe ceremony provided the venue and the action that grounded our work moving forward. Indigenous knowledge systems were lifted and elevated in the Pathway to Canada Target 1 process. In participating and contributing, all NSC, NAP and ICE members in the Pathway process committed to obligations that were grounded in both written and oral systems represented by the weaving of Indigenous and other knowledge systems and sciences. It meant we had collectively undertaken the task: through our Terms of Reference on the written side of things, and through ceremony on the oral side of things, which together validated our agreement to work hard on our stated goals and objectives. Beginning our collective work through ceremony also bound us together in a way that written documents could not have done.

-Indigenous Circle of Experts,
We Rise Together, 2018 [p.14, modified excerpt]

In addition to the lessons learned as noted above, the Métis National Council also provided the following observations and recommendations:

Perspectives, lessons and proposed actions from Métis National Council as a Pathway partner

The inception of the Pathway initiative marked a transformation in the approach to including Indigenous peoples in federal, provincial and territorial (FPT) government processes on conservation. This could be characterized as “reconciliation in action.” The innovative relationship-based approach demonstrated from the outset of Canada Target 1 work was in stark contrast to traditional methods of FPT-Indigenous engagement — from the initial invitation, through to having an equal voice at the National Steering Committee and particularly in shaping the Pathway governance structures and decision-making systems.

Unfortunately, as efforts moved from building relationships and seeking recommendations into what was referred to as the ‘implementation phase’, there was a noticeable loss of transparency in the process. This resulted in what felt like an erosion of relationships, collaboration and capacity support

of Métis Nation partners. It felt as though the role of Métis Nation representatives shifted from being active and equal participants to being one, smaller voice among many.

Relationships impact and underpin all collaborative work. While FPT governments are big, with many individuals and points of contact, the Métis National Council is capacity limited and has a few people who manage many interrelated nature discussions. We recognize that while there is a distinction between the multilateral Pathway initiative and bilateral federal funding initiatives like the Nature Fund Target 1 Challenge, the relationships built or lost in any one piece of collaborative work will carry through to the others. To create successful multilateral collaboration, future federal funding programs for conservation need to take into account the need for an equitable distinctions-based approach with Indigenous peoples in Canada.

Lesson:

- Even with the best of intentions, it is easy to backslide into old ways of FPT governments working with Indigenous peoples—old ways in need of stronger nation-to-nation and distinctions-based relationships.

PROPOSED ACTIONS:

- Build in regular partner check-in opportunities with mechanisms to make adjustments based on partner feedback in order to help ensure that partnerships continue to move forward in an Ethical Space.
- Build upon the early Pathway partnership efforts and learn from the collective challenges faced when relationships were not sufficiently nurtured and maintained. This multilateral work has great value when advanced in the right way and the lessons learned from the Pathway initiative as a whole will be valuable in informing how this work moves forward. These efforts should be undertaken with expedience in order to reinvigorate relationships before they fade too much.
- Given capacity limitations, ensure that there is sufficient support specifically for Indigenous partners built into both the funding and secretariat mechanisms intended to help advance collective efforts.



CAPE SPLIT // COMMUNICATIONS NOVA SCOTIA

Priority 3 - Maximize Conservation Outcomes

Aichi Target 11, the international foundation of Canada Target 1, emphasizes that the creation of new protected areas and OECMs alone is not enough. These efforts must be undertaken with particular attention given to areas of importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services, while creating an ecologically representative, well-connected system of areas that are effectively and equitably managed.

Halting biodiversity loss is increasingly understood to be more urgent now than ever before in human history. Creating a quality network of protected and conserved areas is a paramount consideration in all work under Pathway – especially as it is theoretically possible to achieve a specific percentage of area protected and conserved without necessarily achieving the ultimate goal of safeguarding biodiversity.

All of the Aichi Target 11 quality elements are important in creating a pan-Canadian network that will conserve biodiversity for the long term. Given emphasis and efforts underway to create new protected and conserved areas, Pathway partners decided to start by prioritizing the advancement of certain elements that help to determine where conservation efforts may need to be focused in order to create the greatest impact. Accordingly, work was undertaken to identify and advance areas important for biodiversity (Key Biodiversity Areas), ecological representation and ecological connectivity.

It is important to note that areas that have a higher degree of conservation value do not necessarily need to be turned into a protected or conserved area. Biodiversity can be conserved in many ways, and in some cases, creating a protected or conserved area may be neither feasible nor beneficial for the biodiversity in question. This biodiversity value does, however, need to be understood and considered in order for well-informed decisions to be made. Both conservation and development must take place on the Canadian landscape and do not need to be in conflict if they are considered in tandem and undertaken thoughtfully.

PROPOSED ACTION:

Recommit to collaboratively developing, advancing and sharing information and tools that identify or describe conservation values and practices, which can support evidence-based decision making for land-use (land-relationship) planning.

Habitat fragmentation obstructs gene flow between populations, which can lead to inbreeding, dramatically increasing the risk that a species will disappear. In the face of climate change, ecological connectivity is all the more important to enable plants and animals to shift their ranges in response to changing conditions

- National Advisory Panel,
Canada's Conservation Vision, 2018

ECOLOGICAL REPRESENTATION:

As recommended by the Pathway National Advisory Panel, a national ecoregion framework was updated to ensure alignment with Canadian ecozones for the purpose of assessing and reporting ecological representation as Canada increases the extent of protected and conserved areas. This work was undertaken as a collaboration between the federal government and all provinces and territories in Canada.

National reporting on ecological representation at ecoregion and ecozone levels is now publicly available and is being updated regularly as part of the annual Canadian Environmental Sustainability Indicators reporting.⁹

CANADIAN TERRESTRIAL ECOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK (CTEF) 2019 - ECOZONES AND ECOREGIONS OF CANADA



LEGEND - TERRESTRIAL ECOZONES OF CANADA

● ARCTIC CORDILLERA	● BOREAL SHIELD	● MONTANE CORDILLERA	● TUNDRA CORDILLERA
● NORTHERN ARCTIC	● ATLANTIC MARITIME	● PACIFIC MARITIME	● ATLANTIC HIGHLANDS
● SOUTHERN ARCTIC	● MIXEDWOOD PLAINS	● BOREAL CORDILLERA	● SEMI-ARID PLATEAUS
● TAIGA PLAINS	● BOREAL PLAINS	● TAIGA CORDILLERA	
● TAIGA SHIELD	● PRAIRIES	● HUDSON PLAINS	

⁹ <https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/environmental-indicators/conserved-areas.html>

The background is a dark green color. On the left side, there is a white curved shape containing several light green leaves. At the bottom, there is a dark green silhouette of a fish swimming to the right.

Protecting the Peel

In August 2019, the Government of Yukon and the First Nations of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun, Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, Vuntut Gwitchin, and Gwich'in Tribal Council, came together to jointly approve the Peel Watershed Regional Land Use Plan. Under the plan, 55% of the watershed, or 3.7 million hectares, will be permanently protected as ecological and cultural resources. The Peel River Watershed will become one of the largest protected area complexes in Canada. The cornerstone of the Land Use Plan is sustainable development, which guides the plan in three areas: environmental protection, heritage and culture protection, and economic development. The land base is divided into 16 different landscape management units to accommodate the different land types of the area. Recommendations on land use, conservation and monitoring have been developed for each landscape management unit in order to efficiently preserve the wilderness characteristics in the long term and maximize conservation outcomes.

The Fraser River Estuary in British Columbia has been identified as one of Canada's first KBAs. A large complex of interconnected marine, estuarine (where river and sea meet), freshwater and agricultural habitats, the area is one of the most important ecosystems for migrating and wintering waterbirds in Canada. The area includes marine ecosystems, forests patches with mature Douglas-fir, and a sphagnum moss wetland surrounded by forest. The area supports 37 KBA 'trigger species', including Barn Owls, Georgia Basin Bog Spiders, Streambank Lupine, and the Pacific Water Shrew.

KEY BIODIVERSITY AREAS:

Canada is one of the first countries in the world to actively pursue the identification of Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) based on the international standard published in 2016. In addition, as recommended by the Pathway National Advisory Panel, a national KBA standard has been developed in Canada, creating a standardized path forward for identifying areas of particular importance for biodiversity at a national scale. Canada is the first country in the world to develop a national version of this standard and is being recognized on the international stage for the collaborative process that was undertaken to develop the national standard and to identify both global and national KBAs. This work has been, and continues to be, advanced by a Canadian KBA coalition¹⁰ in partnership with the Pathway. This coalition includes national representatives of the international KBA partnership as well as other organizations and scientific institutions holding relevant data or expertise, relevant government departments and agencies,

private sector organizations and industry associations holding relevant data on KBAs, as well as Indigenous peoples, local communities, and groups able to reflect those perspectives at a national scale.

Advancing this body of work was prioritized by the Pathway National Steering Committee and subsequently partially funded by the federal government on behalf of Pathway. KBA identification efforts are being made possible by collaborative efforts such as NatureServe Canada's ecosystem-based automated range maps (EBAR)¹¹ initiative to develop publicly accessible range maps for priority species, Bird Studies Canada's development and maintenance of a Canadian KBA database,¹² and the coordination and leadership of Wildlife Conservation Society Canada.

The identification of national and global KBAs in Canada will continue in partnership over the coming years, led by the ongoing efforts of the Canadian KBA Coalition.

¹⁰ www.kbacanada.org

¹¹ <https://www.natureserve.org/natureserve-network/canada/biodiversity-data/ebar-range-mapping>

¹² <http://www.kbacanada.org/canada-kbas-in-progress/>

ECOLOGICAL CONNECTIVITY:

In order to measure and ultimately improve the ecological connectivity of Canada's protected and conserved areas network, indicators are being developed for both freshwater and terrestrial functional and structural connectivity in Canada. This work has been undertaken by an expert Pathway Working Group whose representatives include provincial government departments with priorities in areas such as environment, forestry, sustainable development, energy and resources, several national environmental non-government organizations, representatives from several Canadian universities, and federal employees from Environment and Climate Change Canada, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, and Parks Canada Agency.

Given Canada's vast and varied landscapes, indicators that may be appropriate for other countries may not accurately portray the Canadian

context (i.e., some make the assumption that the landscape between two protected areas is always developed). As such, a freshwater indicator, based on the Nature publication Mapping the world's free-flowing rivers¹³, has been tested for the Canadian context and approved for national reporting on the freshwater connectivity of protected and conserved areas in Canada. Reporting using this indicator will be included in the next iteration of the Canadian Protected Areas Status Report (name to be revised) released on a three to five year cycle by Environment and Climate Change Canada (see the last, 2012 – 2015, Protected Areas Status Report¹⁴). A national terrestrial indicator is still in development. In addition, a suite of recommendations for advancing efforts on a national connectivity strategy have been provided for continued considerations.

PROPOSED ACTION:

Continue work on developing a national terrestrial indicator for functional connectivity.

PROPOSED ACTION:

Review and consider **Ecological Connectivity Conservation in Canada - Priority Actions for Advancing Implementation** in planning next steps for national connectivity of protected and conserved areas in Canada.

PROPOSED ACTION:

Continue to develop regional structural connectivity indicators (freshwater and terrestrial) for more fine-scale analysis.

Creating a protected and conserved areas network that effectively conserves Canada's biodiversity will require long-term, sustained collaboration to continue to build a 'conservation toolbox' based on scientific and traditional knowledge systems. An early iteration of this conservation toolbox currently exists at [Conservation2020Canada.ca/conservation-tools](https://www2020canada.ca/conservation-tools). However, it is expected to evolve and grow.

¹³ Grill, G., Lehner, B., Thieme, M., Geenen, B., Tickner, D., Antonelli, F., Babu, S., Borrelli, P., Cheng, L., Crochetiere, H. and Macedo, H.E., 2019. Mapping the world's free-flowing rivers. *Nature*, 569(7755), pp. 215-221.

¹⁴ <https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/wildlife-habitat/publications/protected-areas-report-2012-2015.html>



PHOTO BY GARY DONALDSON

Priority 4 - Build Support and Participation for Conservation with a Broader Community

People can look at a single piece of land and see many different things: nature, culture, development, resource extraction, recreation, etc. Given the many considerations, traditions and interests at play, it is unsurprising that it has usually taken decades to fully establish a protected area in Canada. This same fact makes collaboration and strong partnerships an essential ingredient for significant progress on conserved areas that create positive biodiversity outcomes in Canada.

Developing a path forward together means moving forward with a better understanding of all needs that must be considered and creates greater buy-in for outcomes.

One lesson has been clear and uncontested since Pathway began: strong partnerships are essential. Conserving nature in Canada cannot be done by any one group, government or organization alone. It requires making the time to build the trust necessary for difficult conversations to occur. This can be done in many ways, however periodic, but regular face-to-face interactions are invaluable for

Efforts to achieve pan-Canadian priorities must proceed in ways that demonstrate a shift from past practices to ones that more fully recognize Indigenous Peoples as essential partners who have a shared interest in conserving lands and waters for future generations.

- One with Nature,
2019

creating the relationships and trust necessary to move discussions and action forward. In acknowledgement of this and in recognition that partner capacity and funding vary, the federal government provided funding support to essential Pathway partners, when needed, to attend annual or semi-annual meetings. This support was highlighted by partners as an 'out of the ordinary' and extremely successful measure for advancing partnerships.

Partners' perspectives on what worked well to create these necessary partnerships include:

- Emphasis on team building at the very beginning of the initiative to build effective working relationships that enabled participants to move away from typical 'positional' perspectives to a 'pan-Canadian' perspective.
- The federal government supported and enabled the process, but was just one voice of many at the table and was not the sole lead on the process. This allowed new perspectives to emerge and be heard.
- As a pan-Canadian initiative, importance was given to building into the process the time and need for connecting with people face-to-face and on the land where they lived. This made the initiative real, which could not have been achieved through a series of boardroom meetings or teleconferences.
- The commitment from each government at the Minister and Deputy Minister level made the priority of the work clear. This in turn allowed for those undertaking the work to know that they were supported in their efforts to make progress on Canada Target 1.

'The Pathway work reinforced the need to think of ourselves as part of a community and to consider the needs of the Pathway community alongside our specific mandates. The biggest successes came from that sense of community and from thinking about what we are trying to achieve. It is hard work to maintain this and it cannot be taken for granted. It can be easily lost without committed partners and constant effort.'

- Pathway Partner

PROPOSED ACTION:

Commit to making the time for partnership and to regularly re-evaluate your role in partnerships. Make sure to build in the time to have regular check-ins with partners and make sure that you hear and understand each other's needs, considerations and concerns.

PROPOSED ACTION:

Commit to identifying how you or your organization can support your partners in fully participating in collective efforts. Ask your partners what it is that they need in order to do so.

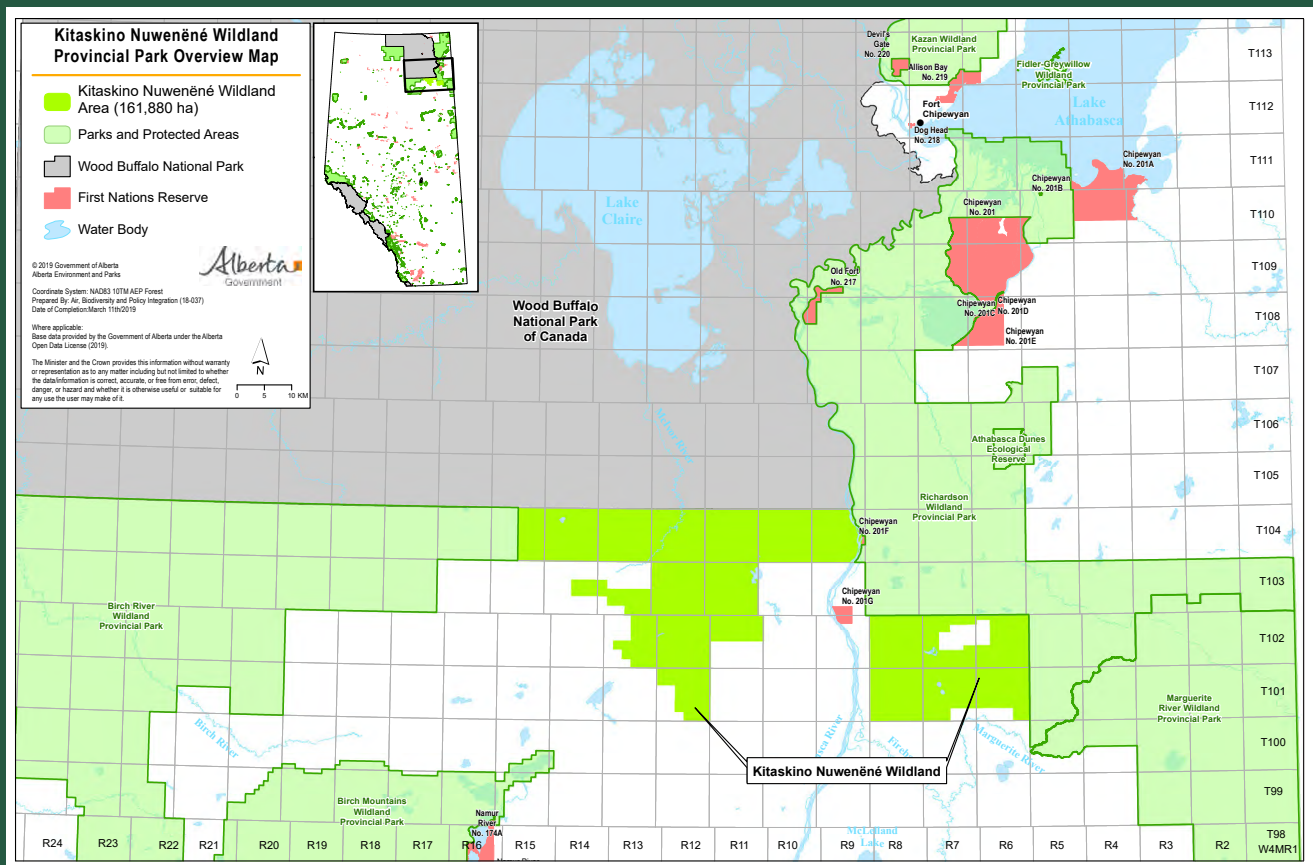
PROPOSED ACTION:

Consider inviting new voices to the table. Have a mixture of government and non-government partners discussing ideas in order to create more engagement and more creative solutions.

Kitaskino Nuwenënë Wildland Park

With the support of the Quick Start component of the Canada Nature Fund, the Mikisew Cree First Nation and Alberta Environment and Parks established a new biodiversity stewardship area, which was formally designated as the Kitaskino Nuwenënë Wildland Provincial Park in March of 2019. The 1,620 km² park protects bison, caribou and the Peace–Athabasca Delta watershed. The new park is a key connection of land between several other provincial and national parks in the area. (Map)

After receiving feedback during the consultation period, the final park boundary was modified in order to accommodate industrial activities that were occurring in the area. Collaboration between the Government of Alberta, Indigenous communities and industry was essential to achieving the broader biodiversity and conservation goals of the Kitaskino Nuwenënë Wildland Provincial Park.



While they may still need to be better communicated to the public, the benefits of protected and conserved areas for nature are relatively well understood. However, the economic and health benefits accrued from the creation of protected and conserved areas are less well understood and have traditionally not been a topic of much discussion. This needs to change. While the intrinsic value of nature must continue to be acknowledged, the benefits in terms of job creation and development of conservation economies, mental and physical health, and climate change adaptation and mitigation all need to become a greater part of a well-balanced discussion.

PROPOSED ACTION:

Better and more broadly communicate the value of protected and conserved areas for nature, but also for economies, health and climate change.

In 2018, the federal government announced the Canada Nature Fund. This historic investment in Canadian nature was a catalyst for action and for the creation of new protected areas across the country, many of which may become IPCAs. Investments such as this are essential for creating immediate capacity and funding action on the landscape. However, longer-term funding must also be a consideration moving forward, as protected and conserved areas need to be maintained and managed in order to effectively conserve their value. Creative and novel sustainable conservation financing discussions need to be undertaken in a broad and inclusive way.

PROPOSED ACTION:

Advance efforts to better understand the economic values of protected and conserved areas in Canada.

PROPOSED ACTION:

Identify and advance options for creating sustainable conservation financing in Canada.

The Canada Nature Fund was developed to support the protection of Canada's biodiversity through the creation of protected and conserved areas and through initiatives that help to recover species at risk. The Fund was made available to not-for-profit and Indigenous organizations, provinces and territories, and others. Based on a 2018 federal investment of \$500 million over five years, including funds-matching by partners, the Canada Nature Fund was estimated to provide roughly \$1 billion for conservation action for protected areas and species at risk, with benefits for climate change and reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples.

The value of nature for Canadian mental and physical health during the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted how important it is for Canadians to have access to nature near where they live. Visitation to urban and near-urban parks and protected areas skyrocketed in the summer of 2020, with 94% of Canadians saying that being in nature helped relieve stress or anxiety during the pandemic.

reference: <https://www.natureconservancy.ca/en/where-we-work/new-brunswick/news/nature-is-a-relief-NB.html>



PHOTO BY BC PARKS

Conclusion

The Pathway to Canada Target 1 initiative’s mandate formally came to a close at the end of 2020. However, given the importance of the work, the relationships built and the work still underway, it was decided to extend the collaboration until a renewed forum for continued multilateral action could be launched.

The exact details of what will follow the current Pathway initiative are still in discussion. However, many Pathway National Steering Committee members have expressed strong interest in continuing a forum that can collaboratively tackle the many challenges facing conservation in Canada; that can continue to be a space for sharing ideas, challenges and successes; that can continue efforts

to consistently work better with Indigenous peoples in a distinctions-based way; that can operationalize the principles of ethical space; that would learn from and build upon the Pathway initiative; and that can possibly draw in more partners and represent broader views in order to continue to create real gains for biodiversity in Canada.

Summary of Proposed Actions

The proposed actions included in this report are not intended to create obligations or commitments on behalf of those who will continue to carry this work forward. Rather, these proposed actions are either:

- discrete pieces of work previously approved for advancement by the Pathway National Steering Committee, but which remain incomplete and could inform early efforts for continued action, or
- suggestions on ways to move forward given the experience gained and the tools developed during the Pathway initiative.

Overarching

- Re-affirm support for One with Nature and the aspirational priorities and actions for a post-2020 context.
- Re-affirm intention to operate under the guiding Pathway principles of reconciliation, respect, inclusiveness and collaboration, transparency, innovation and creativity, and evidence-based decision making grounded in science and traditional knowledge.

Priority 1 - Expand the Systems of Federal, Provincial and Territorial Protected and Conserved Areas

- Continue efforts to develop an audit function/process for CPCAD data, taking into consideration the recommendations provided by the Pathway Accounting Working Group.
- Seek and create greater engagement and commitment from all levels of government from the onset for post-2020 efforts.
- In order to create and advance win-win opportunities for conservation, foster bilateral discussions, agreements and, if possible, funding to create action that will result in area-based conservation (directly or indirectly) that aligns with government and Indigenous priorities. This must be done while working with relevant partners and stakeholders and should focus on areas that have or could support quality biodiversity outcomes.

As federal, provincial, and territorial departments responsible for parks, protected areas, conservation, wildlife and biodiversity, we strongly believe that the time is right for all Canadians to embrace a collective approach to biodiversity conservation —one that:

- recognizes the integral role of Indigenous Peoples as leaders in conservation and respects the rights, responsibilities, and priorities of First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples;
- looks for cooperation across jurisdictional boundaries for approaches that are holistic and ecosystem-based, and includes local governments, industry, and other partners in conservation; and
- considers climate change, ecosystem processes and services, and their associated scales and rates of change.

Finally, we believe that our approach should complement all of Canada's 2020 Biodiversity Goals and Targets so that biodiversity can be conserved alongside thriving, sustainable economies, and so that all species, including humans, can flourish over the long-term.

- One with Nature,
One with Nature, p. 37, 2019



WILLOW LAKE RIVER // PHOTO BY JAMES LARIVIERE

- Build on efforts to date and capacity support available to continue to better understand and identify areas that are currently contributing to the conservation of Canada's biodiversity and may qualify as protected areas or OECMs.
- Continue to contribute to collective lessons learned by sharing new or unique case studies publicly where possible.

Priority 2 - Promote Greater Recognition and Support for Existing Indigenous Rights, Responsibilities, and Priorities in Conservation.

- Continue to expand the input included in the report Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas – Supporting Conditions for Success: Lessons and Experiences for Jurisdictions Across Canada through a Knowledge Gathering Process in order to reflect broader, partner perspectives.
- Continue to develop and expand upon Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) on IPCAs.
- Develop an overview of the potential federal, provincial and territorial legislative and policy mechanisms that could be used to establish protected areas or OECMs that also have the flexibility needed to support Indigenous leadership, rights and responsibilities (i.e., the key elements of IPCAs).
- Build in regular partner check-in opportunities with mechanisms to make adjustments based on partner feedback in order to help ensure that you continue to move forward in an Ethical Space.

- Build upon the early Pathway partnership efforts and learn from the collective challenges faced when relationships were not sufficiently nurtured and maintained. This multilateral work has great value when advanced in the right way and the lessons learned from the Pathway initiative as a whole will be valuable in informing how this work moves forward. These efforts should be undertaken with expedience in order to reinvigorate relationships before they fade too much.
- Given capacity limitations, ensure that there is sufficient support specifically for Indigenous partners built into both the funding and secretariat mechanisms intended to help advance collective efforts.

Priority 3 - Maximize Conservation Outcomes

- Recommit to collaboratively developing, advancing and sharing information and tools that identify or describe conservation values and practices, which can support evidence-based decision making for land-use (land-relationship) planning.
- Continue work on developing a national terrestrial indicator for functional connectivity.
- Review and consider Ecological Connectivity Conservation In Canada - Priority Actions for Advancing Implementation in planning next steps for national connectivity of protected and conserved areas in Canada.
- Continue to develop regional structural connectivity indicators (freshwater and terrestrial) for more fine-scale analysis.

Priority 4 - Build Support and Participation for Conservation with a Broader Community

- Commit to making the time for partnership and to regularly re-evaluate your role in partnerships. Make sure to build in the time to have regular check-ins with partners and make sure that you hear and understand each other's needs, considerations and concerns.
- Commit to identifying how you or your organization can support your partners in fully participating in collective efforts. Ask your partners what it is that they need in order to do so.
- Consider inviting new voices to the table. Have a mixture of government and non-government partners discussing ideas in order to create more engagement and more creative solutions.



EDEHZIE // PHOTO BY JAMES LARIVIERE

Other Pathway Resources

Other Pathway Resources can be found on the Pathway website: www.conservation2020canada.ca

Early recommendations and direction

- Primary recommendation bodies
 - ICE report
 - NAP report
 - Local Government recommendations
- Federal, Provincial, Territorial
 - 2018 FPT Ministerial declarations
 - One with Nature report

Conservation Toolbox

- Accounting
 - Decision Support Tool and guidance
 - Case studies
- Indigenous protected and conserved areas and ethical space
 - IPCA FAQs
 - Knowledge Gathering Process
 - Ethical space documents
- Local government
 - Conservation close to home report
- Key biodiversity Areas
 - See the Canadian KBA Coalition's website for details including the global and national KBA standards
- Ecoregion framework for national reporting on conserved areas (see annual Canadian Environmental Sustainability Indicators (CESI) reporting annual ecological representation at the ecoregion scale)
- How much is currently conserved?
 - Canadian Protected and Conserved Areas Database (CPCAD)
 - Canadian Environmental Sustainability Indicators (CESI)

Annex 1 [additional content for NSC consideration]

While the Pathway was focused on advancing progress towards Canada Target 1, conservation efforts are always intertwined. Advancing this work in partnership, with an eye to creating 'quality' conservation through advancing efforts such as identifying Key Biodiversity Areas and creating a well-connected network of protected and conserved areas, cannot be undertaken without advancing other national biodiversity targets in tandem.

Primary Target

- Target 1. By 2020, at least 17% of terrestrial areas and inland water and 10% of coastal and marine areas are conserved through networks of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures.

Secondary Targets

- Target 3. By 2020, Canada's wetlands are conserved or enhanced to sustain their ecosystem services through retention, restoration and management activities.
- Target 4. By 2020, biodiversity considerations are integrated into municipal planning and activities of major municipalities across Canada.
- Target 5. By 2020, the ability of Canadian ecological systems to adapt to climate change is better understood, and priority adaptation measures are underway.
- Target 6. By 2020, continued progress is made on the sustainable management of Canada's forests.
- Target 7. By 2020, agricultural working landscapes provide a stable or improved level of biodiversity and habitat capacity.
- Target 12. By 2020, customary use by Aboriginal peoples of biological resources is maintained, compatible with their conservation and sustainable use.
- Target 13. By 2020, innovative mechanisms for fostering the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity are developed and applied.
- Target 14. By 2020, the science base for biodiversity is enhanced and knowledge of biodiversity is better integrated and more accessible.
- Target 15. By 2020, Aboriginal traditional knowledge is respected, promoted and, where made available by Aboriginal peoples, regularly, meaningfully and effectively informing biodiversity conservation and management decision-making.
- Target 16. By 2020, Canada has a comprehensive inventory of protected spaces that includes private conservation areas.
- Target 17. By 2020, measures of natural capital related to biodiversity and ecosystem services are developed on a national scale, and progress is made in integrating them into Canada's national statistical system.

PROPOSED ACTION:

In structuring multilateral forums for advancing the next suite of Canadian biodiversity targets, consider how to more purposefully align efforts to advance complementary targets.



EARLY SPRING SWAMP WITH SERVICEBERRY
SHRUBS IN BLOOM // CATHY QUINLAN, UTRCA