



NATURE | **CONSERVATION**
CONSERVANCY | **DE LA NATURE**
CANADA

SUBMISSION TO:

**THE HOUSE OF COMMONS STANDING COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
2018 PRE-BUDGET CONSULTATION**

August 3, 2017



The Natural Areas Conservation Program *Conservation through Collaboration*

Executive Summary

Natural capital is one of Canada's competitive advantages. Healthy natural systems support sustainable, livable communities, job creation, and economic development. Nature underpins Canada's reputation as a top destination in which to live, work and invest. Environmental stewardship, economic growth, and productivity go hand in hand.

However, habitat loss, climate change, invasive species and other pressures increasingly threaten our environmental and financial well-being. We must accelerate conservation action urgently to ensure that Canada's terrestrial, freshwater and marine ecosystems can sustain and benefit both present and future generations.

Canada's Target 1, our pathway to achieving national and international biodiversity conservation goals by 2020, recognizes this imperative.

Collaboration and partnership are essential in order to meet Canada's conservation needs. Public-private partnerships, such as the partnership between the Government of Canada and the Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) through the Natural Areas Conservation Program (NACP), are highly effective and efficient in achieving common goals.

The Nature Conservancy of Canada proposes to build upon the success of the Natural Areas Conservation Program to help conserve more of the natural habitat that supports the well-being of Canadians. By modernizing the NACP, we can accelerate priority conservation, contribute directly to Canada Target 1, and support climate change adaptation and species at risk goals, all while safeguarding the natural infrastructure that sustains prosperous communities and commerce.

With the support of the Government of Canada and in collaboration with Canadians, governments, land trusts, Indigenous communities, and industry, NCC commits to achieving more than **half a billion dollars of new conservation** outcomes in the next five years.

The Nature Conservancy of Canada is seeking a **\$170M** commitment from the Government of Canada in Budget 2018, which we will leverage to raise at least **\$340M** in donations and contributions to priority conservation. Such a commitment will ensure a robust five-year continuation of the Natural Areas Conservation Program and its conservation successes for Canadians through 2020 and beyond.

Nature: A Foundation for Economic Growth

As the Pathway to Target 1 states, "Canada is one of very few countries on the planet with sufficient natural spaces left to allow us to become a **world leader in conservation.**" We could not agree more.



Nature provides Canadians with essential goods and services that support the health and prosperity of our communities and enables Canadians to participate in the economy.

- Nature reduces grey infrastructure needs and helps clean our air and water.
- Nature helps communities and species manage the adverse impacts of climate change, providing flood protection and drought mitigation.
- Nature supports our high standard of living, enhancing Canada's appeal to investors and visitors alike.
- Nature supports the growing travel and tourism sectors (bigger as a percentage of GDP than mining, agriculture, and forestry).
- Nature provides natural pollination services which are essential to a thriving agricultural sector.

Canada needs nature, and nature needs us all to redouble our conservation efforts, now.

The Natural Areas Conservation Program Delivers Success for Canadians

The NACP partnership between the Government of Canada and the Nature Conservancy of Canada is a resounding success. Independent evaluators have applauded the NACP for its ability to deliver results in line with government priorities, efficiently and effectively.

A recent independent evaluation finds the Program continues to be highly supportive of and complementary to existing programs in Canada and North America. The Program represents a significant cornerstone for the Government of Canada's conservation effort and the only funding mechanism that maintains a strong focus on permanent securement of private lands across a wide range of ecosystems. The requirement that it meet a 2:1 match is unique; its ability to achieve that target is a testament to the Program's value for money.

Over ten years the NACP has:

- Conserved more than **430,000 hectares** and raised over **\$580M** match from non-federal sources, leveraging a Government of Canada investment of **\$300M**, to date.
- Protected habitat for 198 species; more than 27% of COSEWIC (Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada) listed species at risk.
- Conserved areas within reach of more than 29 million Canadians.
- Created natural connections; more than half the projects are within 25 km of federally protected areas.

The NACP partnership with the Government of Canada has enabled NCC to achieve results that were not even contemplated when the Program was implemented. We have developed a science-led planning process that has resulted in land-use mapping across Canada that truly changes the way conservation is done. We now have tools in place to take a more critical look at landscapes through both a securement and a stewardship lens and then let science identify and drive conservation priorities.



It is time to use all the resources in our unique toolkit to modernize and expand the successful Natural Areas Conservation Program.

NACP 2.0: An Expanded and Enhanced Partnership

A renewed partnership between the Nature Conservancy of Canada and the Government of Canada will:

1. Accelerate priority conservation in Canada's private landscapes by connecting critical areas and protecting species at greatest risk.
2. Support the establishment and expansion of Parks, Wildlife Areas, and Indigenous Protected Areas.
3. Connect more Canadians to nature through accessible projects and multiple, highly visible announcements of achievement where Canadians live, work and play.

Accelerate Priority Conservation:

An expanded and enhanced partnership will:

- Rally Canadians to conserve in excess of an additional 150,000 hectares including:
 - Habitat for targeted species at risk;
 - Targeted pathways for species movement and genetic diversity; and
 - Lands adjacent to existing public, private and Indigenous protected areas.
- Directly contribute to Canada Target 1.
- Influence and support more conservation projects on working landscapes, such as prairie grasslands.
- Support increased climate change resilience through carbon storage, flood protection, drought mitigation, pollination services and water quality.
- Assist local land trusts to increase capacity and reinforce donor confidence.

Support New Parks, Wildlife Areas, and Indigenous Protected Areas:

An expanded and enhanced conservation partnership will:

- Facilitate the establishment of new terrestrial and marine protected areas by governments and Indigenous communities to advance tangible progress towards Canada Target 1, and beyond.
- Increase collaboration with government and industry to secure critical lands adjacent to current protected areas and remove roadblocks to the creation of new terrestrial and marine protected areas.
- Support new partnerships with Indigenous communities to collaborate on innovative conservation mechanisms.

Showcase Success and Connect Canadians to Nature:

An expanded and enhanced partnership will:

- Provide opportunities to celebrate conservation with Canadians;



- Connect Canadians to nature through accessible project lands and NCC's Nature Destinations program.

A Proposed Federal Investment Profile:

The Natural Areas Conservation Program already provides value for money. Government funding is a great incentive to Canadians to contribute to conservation. Without the incentive, NCC cannot leverage private funds to the same extent. Conversely, without the leverage of private funds, the government investment is less effective. Both are required to achieve the habitat conservation necessary for thriving natural systems. The Natural Areas Conservation Program has a current match ratio of 2:1, and is effectively rallying Canadian support for conservation.

The Nature Conservancy of Canada and its partners are now ready to contribute to an expanded public-private partnership. With federal funding of **\$170 million**¹ over five years, starting in Budget 2018, we will raise at least a further **\$340 million** for over **half a billion dollars** in **new conservation** initiatives.

Canada can be recognized as a global leader in the conservation of natural lands and freshwater.

A modernized partnership with the Nature Conservancy of Canada will directly contribute to the prosperity of Canadians by safeguarding the natural ecosystems that sustain our productivity.

Why Now?

The short answer is **continuity**. Current federal funding for the NACP is in place until March 2019. The project development time frame for conservation securement takes anywhere from 18-24 months, or longer. A renewed government commitment in Budget 2018 will guarantee the pace of conservation continues to be robust beyond 2019, helping to achieve Canada Target 1 and species at risk goals.

Renewing and expanding the Program will ignite the support of even more Canadians for conservation.

About the Nature Conservancy of Canada

No other nature-based organization in the country matches the breadth and depth of the Nature Conservancy of Canada. Founded by naturalists in Ontario nearly 60 years ago, NCC has grown from humble roots into a nationwide *force for nature*. To date, the organization and its partners have conserved more than 1.1 million hectares coast to coast to coast.

With staff working in more than 30 communities, NCC has developed a science-based conservation planning process that guides securement and stewardship of the most threatened lands and species in Canada. Today, the Nature Conservancy of Canada is **the custodian of more habitat for species at risk than any other non-governmental organization in the country.**

¹ \$170M is inclusive of \$22.5M already committed and allocated for 2018 under the Natural Areas Conservation Program.



As a government partner for two decades, NCC is a **key delivery agent** that produces quality conservation outcomes through collective action. This work has evolved into our current partnership with the Government of Canada -- the Natural Areas Conservation Program (NACP).

Every conservation project is unique, but all are built upon strong partnerships. The Nature Conservancy of Canada builds partnerships for conservation with:

- Communities and local land trusts, to help safeguard the natural places Canadians cherish;
- All provincial governments to achieve joint conservation objectives;
- Ranchers, farmers and landowners to help them achieve best practices and conservation on their lands;
- Indigenous peoples on joint conservation initiatives, youth education and outreach, and co-management of lands to reach common goals; and
- Industry, to help companies achieve net benefits for nature.

The Nature Conservancy of Canada is a trusted partner of industry, assisting to lift mineral and exploration rights, and clearing the way for new publicly protected areas. Such collaborations have directly supported the creation of Vuntut National Park in northern Yukon, Gwaii Haanas National Park Reserve in British Columbia, and set the stage for the new National Marine Conservation Area in Lancaster Sound, Nunavut.

The Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) is the nation's leading not-for-profit, private land conservation organization, working to protect our most important natural areas and the species they sustain. To learn more visit: www.natureconservancy.ca