

Major conversion of natural ecosystems occurs due to human land use and activities. Agriculture (mono-culture and utilization of marginal lands), ranching (importation of exotic species), urbanization (wetland loss), transportation, mining (strip mining, tailing leachate), industry (air, land and water pollution), energy production, fishing (overfishing, bottom trawler damage) and forestry (clear-cutting) are all examples of this. While contributing to the prosperity of Canadians and the strength of our economy it also results in varying degrees of loss to biodiversity and reduces the security of sustainable development.

The Convention calls for the preservation of 12% of each country's land as protected spaces, and the *Green Plan* outlines this long-term goal for Canada as well. Today Canada has allocated 3-4% of its territory for *in situ* conservation of biodiversity, but as the Committee heard from our witnesses, the preservation of isolated pockets of land is not a solution to the loss of biodiversity. Although national parks and protected spaces are necessary and desirable, Canada must manage all its land sustainably. As Diane Griffin advised the Committee:

... and while the 12% solution that's proposed in the name of protected areas and ecological reserves and parks is laudable, the other 88% of the landscape is something we're very concerned about.<sup>42</sup>

Les Cooke, Deputy Minister of Saskatchewan Environment and Public Safety, reiterated this sentiment by advising the Committee:

... the loss of species and ecosystems ... putting that in a positive light, to look forward to the day when we have sound land and resource management for all the lands and resources that all of us in the world need to provide stewardship for.<sup>43</sup>

On 25 November 1992 a tri-council meeting was held in Aylmer, Quebec, the participants were: Canada's Parks, Wildlife and Environment Ministers. The outcome of the meeting was a formal commitment to complete Canada's network of protected national areas by the year 2000. A public statement of commitment was endorsed at this, the first joint meeting of the three councils. The five areas of action in the statement are:

- complete networks of protected areas representative of Canada's land-based natural regions by the year 2000 and accelerate the protection of areas representative of Canada's marine natural regions;
- accelerate the identification and protection of critical wildlife habitat;
- adopt frameworks, strategies and time frames for the completion of protected areas networks;
- continue to cooperate in the protection of ecosystems, landscapes, and wildlife habitat;
- ensure that protected areas are integral components of all sustainable development strategies.<sup>44</sup>

These actions reinforced the necessity of a joint effort between all levels of government and jurisdictions and launched Canada's follow-up action plan for meeting the commitments of the *Convention on Biological Diversity*. The Committee applauds the cooperation and efforts of the

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid., p. 27.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., p. 25.

<sup>44</sup> Environment Canada, Press Release, *Tri-Council Meeting*, Aylmer, Quebec, 25 November 1992.