

LAND AVAILABLE FOR PRISTINE AREAS

Given the range and rate of development, the options for protecting a truly representative sample of each of Canada's 340 natural terrestrial and marine regions is quickly being lost.. As far as the combined area of the 10 provinces is concerned, World Wildlife Fund Canada estimates that at a minimum; nearly 60% of the land base has already been claimed by other resource and development use (Table 1). Given that the total provincial land base includes remote expanses of Labrador, northern Quebec and Ontario, the loss of intact natural areas in southern Canada will be significantly higher with likely 80% of the land base in the populated portion of the country already having been developed or committed to resource industrial use. (Note: these estimates do not take into account the indirect impacts of developments such as down-stream contamination or long distance air pollution.)

Rivers and streams serve as the vital arteries that carry water and its nutrients to the lowlands and provide habitat for a wide variety of plants and animals. In southern Canada, the loss of these vital arteries has been a major concern since the arrival of European settlers.

Traditionally, Canada's rivers and streams have been used for navigation, power generation, and recreation. However, the increasing development of the country has led to a significant loss of natural areas. In southern Canada, the loss of these vital arteries has been a major concern since the arrival of European settlers.

As key as rivers and streams are to environmental health, there is no program that enables their systematic protection in Canada similar to that afforded in the United States by its National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. The designation of national significance rivers is a process that is still in its infancy. The Heritage Rivers System (HRS) is a program that has been established to protect some of the most significant rivers in Canada. However, the increasing development of the country has led to a significant loss of natural areas. In southern Canada, the loss of these vital arteries has been a major concern since the arrival of European settlers.

Other land use impacts include the loss of natural areas to agriculture, urban development, and industrial activity. The cumulative effect of these activities has led to a significant loss of natural areas. In southern Canada, the loss of these vital arteries has been a major concern since the arrival of European settlers.