

Furthermore, the decision by both governments and the public conservation community to pursue a protected areas system based on landscape/bio-region representation also runs contrary to the "endless agenda" argument. The requirements of the protected areas system are finite and scientifically based.

In fact, the real concern isn't whether preservation efforts will shut down extractive resource industries but rather whether enough of the original Earth can be preserved to ensure long term ecological sustainability, before the options are forever lost to development activities.

Using the Endangered Spaces criteria, the conservation community has objectively defined its agenda. By contrast, the extractive resource industries and land development sectors have yet to indicate just what portions of the land base they would be prepared to leave intact for the benefit of future Canadians. In fact, some sectors such as mining have suggested that no areas should be considered off-limits to possible development.

SHAREHOLDER NEGOTIATING FORUMS

One of the most promising means to move from fear-based confrontation to cooperative, solutions oriented dialogue is by means of stakeholder negotiating forums. This approach has led to success in the settlement of wilderness issues such as British Columbia's 65,000 Ha Height-of-the-Rockies wilderness area on the southern border of Banff National Park. Here, a fact-based all-stakeholder negotiation process pre-empted confrontation with the result that a win-win solution was arrived at between the forest industry and conservation sector in 6 months.

While not all issues are amenable to such negotiated settlement, many are. British Columbia is ambitiously pioneering this approach on a large scale through its Commission on Resources and Environment (CORE). Focusing on in-region stakeholder negotiating forums, with government serving as an impartial facilitator (the CORE process is not managed by vested interest resource extraction, or preservation oriented government agencies), the intent is to have the various sectors of society and the public work together to delineate the commercial extraction and preservation portions of the province's land base. The CORE process has been given substantial resources and prestige to help accomplish negotiated identification of those lands which will be preserved to double the current level of B.C. protected areas.