

*Between May 1992 and August 1994, British Columbia established 64 new parks or protected areas. One of these is the Taishenshini-Alsek Wilderness Park. This 10 000 square kilometre park is the essential link in creating the largest internationally protected area in the world—95 000 square kilometres—combining with existing national parks in the United States and Canada's Yukon Territory. Now a World Heritage Site, the park preserves the habitat of the grizzly and the rare glacier bear, and maintains the Taishenshini as one of the last three major salmon-bearing rivers on the northern Pacific coast.*

The federal government will appoint a Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development. It will require sustainable development plans from departments and federal agencies. The anticipated federal sustainable development framework will serve as a guide for these departmental strategies. The Commissioner will monitor and report to Parliament on the Government's performance in integrating the principles of sustainable development into decision making. Moreover, to reduce the impact of its activities on the environment, the federal government is adopting measures to conserve energy and water more effectively, to reduce solid waste, to improve management of government vehicles, and to purchase "green" products.

All of the provinces and territories have created, or are in the process of creating, sustainable development strategies. For the most part, these are the product of provincial round tables on the environment and the economy. A common element in these strategies is the recognition of the need to improve land use planning and to move toward more integrated resource use management. These have also been the means to address related priorities in a comprehensive way, such as increasing the number and extent of protected areas. They allow us to move closer to fulfilling our commitment to protect biological diversity in an integrated fashion.

One of the important elements in the development of these strategies has been the participatory nature of the process. Groups and communities have been encouraged to discuss and reconcile their views in order to achieve a consensus that reflects the needs and priorities of all members of society.

The shift is also apparent in the level and tenor of federal/provincial relations. The Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment (CCME) brings together federal, provincial, and territorial governments in an effort to make progress together on environmental issues. Currently, it has an exercise under way to redefine the working relationship between orders of government to eliminate overlap and duplication, and to identify gaps in the way the environment is managed in Canada.

No less important is the burgeoning number of examples of change at a local level. Communities across the country have put in place "green," "healthy," and "sustainable" community activities. The initiatives reflect not only the efforts of local government but also those of community groups, businesses, and interest groups. More than 200 communities have established local round tables that involve a range of participants who collectively reflect the diversity of interests in the community.

Hamilton-Wentworth, in the province of Ontario, is recognized internationally for its Vision 2020 sustainable development plan. The International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI) has selected Hamilton-Wentworth as one of 21 municipalities from around the world to be role models for local sustainable development initiatives.