

governments, Aboriginal governments with environmental jurisdiction and law-making powers, and local governments. The federal government and each province have a constitutional authority over land use within their respective jurisdictions. Of Canada's total land area, 40 percent remains federal Crown land (only 5 percent of federally owned land is located in the provinces), whereas 50 percent is provincial Crown land. About 10 percent of Canada's land base is privately owned. In Canada, there has also been a transition over a number of years to cooperative management as communities and nongovernmental organizations become more involved. Joint ventures under the North American Waterfowl Management Plan are evidence of this shift, as are the community-based organizations that oversee Canada's Model Forests.

While progress is being made in implementing an ecosystem approach, we still have a long way to go. Moving further toward an ecosystem approach to resource management will require additional shifts in values and commitment on the part of Canadian society. We need to build strategically upon the wide range of activities and programs to conserve, protect, and restore ecosystems as described in the next section of this monograph. Canada is also developing the knowledge-gathering, integration, and dissemination tools and additional partnerships necessary for the application of an ecosystem approach to resource management. We are learning how to organize ongoing and future initiatives through trial and error and the sharing of best practices.

Panel on Ecological Integrity

In November 1998, the Panel on the Ecological Integrity of Canada's National Parks was appointed to identify issues, examine Parks Canada's approach for maintaining ecological integrity, and provide recommendations for improvement. The panel members travelled to a series of representative parks to speak with park staff and other interested Canadians to see first-hand the problems and stresses that threaten Canada's national parks and to develop a sense of how to address these problems.

The panel released its report on March 23, 2000. Its chief recommendation was that ecological integrity be the first priority in park management. For ecological integrity it proposed this definition: "An ecosystem has integrity when it is deemed characteristic for its natural region, including the composition and abundance of native species and biological communities, rates of change and supporting processes". In other words, ecosystems have integrity when they have their native components (plants, animals, and other organisms) and processes (such as growth and reproduction) intact.