

Completing Canada's Networks of Protected Marine Areas

The Minister of Canadian Heritage has released a national marine conservation areas system plan. It describes Canada's twenty-nine natural marine regions and will guide efforts to establish a network of protected areas that represent these regions.

Valuing Biodiversity

One of the biggest impediments to the conservation of biodiversity and the sustainable use of biological resources has been an inability to attach economic value to nature. The federal government has developed a system for measuring the use and economic benefits of wildlife and natural areas. It has also initiated work on an Environmental Valuation Reference Inventory. This will bring together twenty years of economic valuation work on natural capital from around the world and make it available to meet the needs of other countries.

International Cooperation for Biodiversity

In addition to ongoing support for the Biodiversity Convention process, Canada has supported other activities. For example, Canada cosponsored a regional workshop on the economic value of biodiversity with Chile and the United Nations Environment Programme. This was designed to assist Latin American and Caribbean countries to assess the biodiversity impacts of their policies.

Integrated Approach to the Planning and Management of Land Resources

Since last year's CSD report, Canada has begun a process to define key land use issues. The Federal/Provincial Committee on Land Use sponsored the first Perspective on Land Use Issues in Canada Forum in August 1995. This is expected to lead to a focused public debate over options and actions. Questions addressed at the forum included the following:

- What are the major land use issues facing the country over the next decade?
- What are the broad options for resolving the issues?
- What roles does and should land use planning play in the implementation of sustainable development?

The forum attracted private consultants, members of the academic community, and government personnel. They discussed four key land use categories: agriculture, forestry, shore zone/coastal zone, and urban. The following major issues were identified:

Agriculture

- degradation of agri-ecological resources through agricultural practices, on- and off-farm effects,
- lack of an agricultural land policy,
- loss of agricultural land base, and
- competing uses on rural lands.

The forest industry has launched a Forest Biodiversity Program in cooperation with Wildlife Habitat Canada, a national conservation group. The Canadian Pulp and Paper Association and agricultural producers have also initiated coordinated responses to the challenges of the Biodiversity Strategy.