

# LAND

## Ontario's Living Legacy

In Ontario, the provincial government recently completed a comprehensive land use planning process with the release in July 1999 of its land use strategy entitled Ontario's Living Legacy. This strategy was the product of an unprecedented public consultation process, known as Lands for Life, which took place during 1997 and 1998. This planning process, led by three citizen round tables, engaged people from across the province in a thorough review of Ontario's land use policy. Ontario's Living Legacy identifies 2.4 million hectares of new provincial parks and conservation reserves, bringing total protected spaces to fully 12 percent of the planning area, a first in Canada. The land use strategy, together with the Ontario Forest Accord, provides the direction required to balance the needs of environmental protection in the province with the need for stability to support the economic development of resource-based industries and communities. Ontario's Living Legacy represents a model of cooperation between competing interests in land use planning debates and sets important direction. Its implementation will help to ensure the ecological sustainability of Ontario's resources for the future.

*Areas Component of B.C.'s Land Use Strategy*, sets forth the vision, goals, and principles to guide the completion of the province's protected areas system. The strategy is intended to coordinate and integrate all protected areas programs and systems and to double the size of the protected areas system to include 12 percent of the province by the year 2000.

In 1995, Alberta announced its Natural Heritage Policy — Special Places 2000, with the goal of completing a network of parks and protected areas that preserves the environmental diversity of the province's six natural regions. To the extent that they are compatible with the preservation goal, Alberta's parks and protected areas will satisfy goals for heritage appreciation, outdoor recreation, and heritage tourism. New legislation is being prepared that will consolidate the Provincial Parks Act, the Willmore Wilderness Park Act, and the Wilderness Areas, Ecological Reserves and Natural Areas Act into a single act that will provide a broad spectrum of parks and protected areas with varying degrees of protection and use.

Saskatchewan has established a Representative Areas Network of ecologically important land and water areas across the province. This system started with a base of sites totalling nearly 3 million hectares, including national and provincial parks, wildlife refuges, and ecological and other reserves in the province. Working from this solid foundation, Saskatchewan's Representative Areas Network has expanded by more than 50 percent in less than two years. In total, new

additions to the Representative Areas Network since 1997 now amount to more than 1.6 million hectares. Working together with other partners and landowners helps to support the province's commitment to cooperative and community-based protection of the environment.

Other provincial and territorial governments have similar strategies/programs under development. During 1998–99, the Quebec Ministry of the Environment continued to develop its strategy on protected areas that was initiated in 1997. Through this exercise, Quebec wants to adopt a global vision and a strategic plan for the development of its networks of protected areas within a context of biological diversity conservation. In October 1999, the Government of New Brunswick released a report entitled *A Protected Areas Strategy for New Brunswick: Summary of Public Hearings and Recommendations*. The report's 50 recommendations are under review with the intention of providing the government with a protected areas action plan by May 2000, followed by a protected areas strategy. The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador is currently reviewing its draft Natural Areas Plan. The plan is based on three types of reserves: large wilderness reserves that cross ecoregion boundaries; medium-sized reserves that usually protect a single ecoregion; and small reserves (usually less than 10 square kilometres) that protect special features.

Since the completion of Ontario's Living Legacy strategy (see box), several other provinces have expressed interest in the process and its accomplishments. In addition to individual discussions, Ontario hosted a workshop in October 1999 to review the planning process and discuss other provincial initiatives. Opportunities are being explored to continue this kind of dialogue more formally in the future in order to share approaches and gain from different experiences in addressing land use issues.

## Nunavut

On April 1, 1999, Nunavut was formed from the eastern part of the Northwest Territories and officially named Canada's third territory. The goal set by Nunavut's Department of Sustainable Development is healthy, sustainable communities. The department seeks balanced development through the integration of environmental stewardship, community economic development, and people in partnerships. In collaboration with institutions of public government, the department is using monitoring, good science, and Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit (traditional knowledge) in the co-management of Nunavut's wildlife and its habitat. It is also developing and maintaining parks and conservation areas.