

## 5. THE PRISTINE AREAS PROCESS

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Given the intense competition for land and resources and the fact that only 12% of the national landbase is intended to be preserved, the process utilized to complete the pristine areas system must be carefully designed. (Additionally, redesign of the current resource allocation process is required.) Of fundamental importance is the careful selection of sites and system design to ensure that the range of pristine areas values associated with Canada's still-remaining intact natural areas are indeed protected for the future. This section addresses the elements to be considered when undertaking pristine areas systems completion.

### PRESERVATION VALUES

Contrary to the viewpoint which says that pristine areas imply exclusive or single use, there are in fact a range of protected areas values which such sites provide for society. These include:

- 1) **Landscape Representation:** As has been discussed, a primary pristine areas objective is to ensure protection of an ecologically viable sample of all landscape regions representative of Canada. In the immediate term this means priority should be placed on protecting those regions/sub-regions that are currently unrepresented or partially unrepresented in our nation's pristine areas systems.
- 2) **Biodiversity:** Biodiversity preservation values relate to the overall native species diversity associated with an individual proposal area. By this scientifically based concept, a site's protected area significance is linked to the number and range of ecosystems, lifeforms and hence genetic variety it encompasses and could maintain if protected. Often an area with a greater variety of species and ecological communities is associated with enhanced protected areas values. Typically, pristine areas that encompass a transition of ecosystems, e.g. from wet to dry sites, warm to cool, and low to high elevations; are likely to feature greater biodiversity.

Biodiversity preservation values also relate to the protection of rare/endangered species (and their habitat) or ecological communities. Maintaining biodiversity will mean protecting both high profile species (e.g. grizzlies) and the less appreciated ones (e.g. insects) which together are crucial to long term ecological health, future knowledge, economic opportunities and even human survival. Therefore, in developing a pristine areas system, ideally