

particular, played a major role in upsetting the traditional power structure of industry, federal agencies, and congressional oversight committees and expanding the concern from a regional one to a national issue.

However, the election of the Republican Congress in 1995 shifted the locus of policy change to Congress, where virtually every environmental and natural resource law has come under challenge. Proposals to increase salvage timber sales, privatize public lands, revise the Endangered Species Act, develop the oil resources of the North Slope and the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, reduce the size of national parks and reserves, and require compensation to landowners when regulations affect their property values are all part of the Republican agenda in the new Congress. The political clout of environmental interests has been greatly weakened, and Congress is clearly oriented toward resource development and reducing public regulation of timber and other natural resources.

Forest policy in the Northwest has a long history of controversy. An earlier spotted owl management plan was rejected by a federal court because its Environmental Impact Statement was incomplete and included outdated scientific evidence and false assumptions. The Supreme Court prohibited the Forest Service from permitting timber cutting in areas that served as habitat for the spotted owl.⁵ Logging of old-growth forests in the Northwest was described by Judge William Dwyer, a Reagan appointee, as "a remarkable series of violations of the environmental laws" and "a deliberate and systematic refusal to comply with the laws protecting wildlife."⁶

How does the experience of British Columbia compare with the problem-plagued policies of the Pacific Northwest? At one level, this comparative policy study focuses on the similarities between public lands issues in the two nations as they seek to weigh economic and environmental goals. Part of the value of the comparative study, however, lies in the differences in political structure between the two countries and in exploring the debate over how to balance national and regional policy making authority. The great interest in the United States in devolution of federal authority to the states in public lands policy (as well as in other policy areas) can help shed light on Canadian efforts to balance federal and provincial authority. The Canadian perspective on federalism is also useful in exploring those issues in the U.S. Most of the comparative studies of environmental and natural resource policy in Canada and the United States emphasize the similarities in laws, the differences in regulatory style--Canadian regulation is more decentralized and discretionary, and the difficulty in assessing the consequences of these similarities and differences on environmental quality itself.

While Canada has played a major role in international efforts to protect the environment, it faces considerable challenges at home as it struggles to ensure ecologically sustainable economic growth. Provinces have enacted most of the environmental laws in place in Canada, and the country's environmental future lies to a great extent in what happens in the provinces and the ability of provincial leaders to balance economic demands with environmental protection. Some scholars argue that the Canadian system tolerates too much departure from national policy goals by independent minded provincial leaders, and