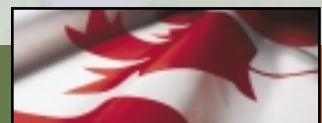
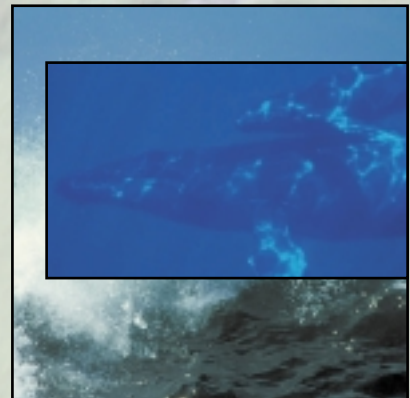
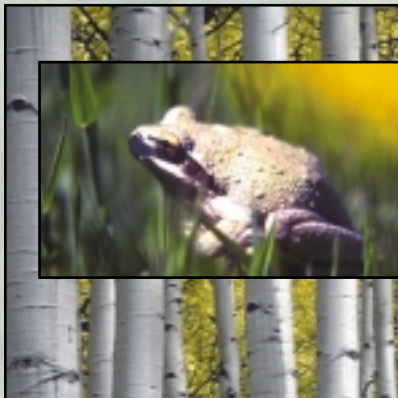


Canada's Stewardship Agenda

Naturally Connecting Canadians

A Federal-Provincial-Territorial Initiative



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Prepared for the Joint Meeting of Resource Ministers Councils by
the Federal-Provincial-Territorial Stewardship Working Group.

Printed copies of this report can be obtained from:

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Canadian Wildlife Service
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Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0H3

This document is also available on the Internet
(see: www.stewardshipcanada.ca)

Introduction

Canada is diverse in many ways – ecologically, socially and culturally. Within this diversity, stewardship in agriculture, forestry, fisheries and wildlife management and other natural resource sectors is a fundamental component of wise use of Canada’s natural legacy. Stewardship is also part of the broader voluntary effort in which Canadians share a commitment to improve the quality of life and to foster vibrant, healthy communities.

Stewardship, simply stated, means Canadians – including landowners and other individual citizens, private companies and volunteers – are caring for our land, air and water, and sustaining the natural processes on which life depends. Aboriginal communities share directly in stewardship and have unique experience in managing the land.

Every day, thousands of Canadians at work, home and in their communities take action to improve their natural environment through a variety of stewardship projects – a contribution that is worth millions of dollars. These activities reflect the recognition and importance of a common ethic and means for achieving environmental objectives. Many stewardship initiatives have already been implemented in the forestry, fisheries, oceans, agriculture and wildlife sectors, and others are underway.



In recent years, the Government of Canada and the provinces and territories have committed to further supporting and encouraging stewardship as a key conservation tool. They have consulted with industries, landowners, communities and others about ways to encourage stewardship across Canada. These efforts will be expanded in the coming years to incorporate all sectors and regions.

Consultations held to date have included a series of workshops sponsored by Canada’s Voluntary Sector Initiative. Valuable discussions were also held with Aboriginal and industry association representatives. The initiatives in this document draw extensively from this work and capture many of the best ideas that have come forward. A Consultation Report reflecting the results of consultations to date is available on the Web (see: www.stewardshipcanada.ca).

Canada’s Stewardship Agenda is a plan for collaboration that proposes a national vision and operating principles for stewardship. The Agenda outlines four key goals, objectives for each goal and identifies a set of priority actions that recognize and empower stewards. This includes establishing a national network of stewards, improving coordination among stewardship programs and efforts, and supporting the capacity of individual stewards to carry out conservation activities. The Agenda draws on collective experience, complements existing investments in stewardship programs, and fosters actions to conserve and promote wise use of our natural resources. It is intended to establish a broad, long-term course of action, foster collaborative actions and identify priorities for future investment in stewardship.

Vision

The federal, provincial and territorial governments will further develop the Agenda by identifying options to support stewardship that are appropriate for each jurisdiction. Jurisdictions will seek broader partnerships for the Agenda, particularly with the forestry, fisheries, agriculture and other natural resource sectors, and will continue consultation on its longer-term implementation. Each jurisdiction will base its participation on the relevance of these actions to its priorities and its capacity to contribute to this Agenda.



The Stewardship Vision

The vision of Canada's Stewardship Agenda is "A nation where Canadians are actively working together to sustain our natural life-support systems." This reflects the fact that Canadians are already carrying out efforts to ensure the long-term health of these systems and, in turn, the resources these systems provide for the health and well-being of themselves, their children and their neighbours.

The scope of the Agenda reflects this vision, promotes collaborative action, and builds social cohesion and shared responsibility among citizens. In particular, it engages those who are involved in the conservation of biodiversity, the sustainable use of Canada's biological resources and the wise management of all natural resources. Under the Agenda, stewardship activities can be directed at the recovery of species at risk and contribute to the sustainability of terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems.

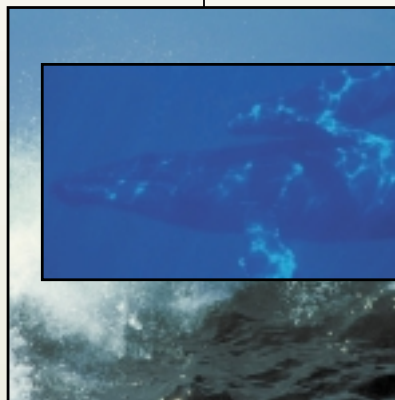
Principles

Goals

Principles of Canadian Stewardship

Stewardship is implemented primarily at the local level, recognizing the diverse social and economic conditions across Canada and the different situations faced by stewards in rural and urban areas and in the North. The following eight principles give expression to this vision and will guide the implementation of the Agenda:

1. Stewardship builds on the strong connection between Canadians and their natural heritage.
2. Stewardship initiatives respect the interests and rights of all participants.
3. Stewardship is knowledge-based.
4. Stewardship is based on ecological principles and ecosystem approaches.
5. Stewardship depends on collaborative action, local capacity and ownership.
6. Stewardship programs are developed with an understanding of socio-economic conditions.
7. Stewardship programs are transparent and inclusive.
8. Stewardship programs are ideally based on long-term commitments.



Goals and Objectives

The following four goals and supporting objectives create a framework for engaging Canadians in stewardship at the local, regional and national levels. It is intended to assist stewards in enhancing their efforts and promoting collaborative stewardship activities across Canada.

Goal 1:

Invest in Stewardship – by enhancing stewardship program support and capacity.

Objective 1: Enhance and Integrate Incentives

Consistent and ongoing funding to initiate and sustain stewardship programs is one of the most important requirements for ensuring their success. Funding should allow organizations the flexibility to manage their operations, provided that they sustain a desirable (not minimal) level of capacity and capability. Strategic short-term funding can be used to encourage shifts in focus. Tangible incentives, including economic incentives, taxation assistance and technical or logistic support, are effective. Economic incentives, in particular, are helpful where conservation actions involve cost to landowners and resource developers. Landowners may accept the costs of sustaining their own resources and being a “good neighbour,” but many believe that they deserve assistance with the cost of sustaining resources for the good of society. The processes related to funding and incentives, such as application, approval and accountability, can be streamlined, especially if funding organizations collaborate.

Objective 2: Enhance Local Community Support and Capacity

The driving force for stewardship is often found at the community and local levels. Hence, governments should invest resources at the local level in order to

encourage the recruitment and retention of stewards, support the administration of programs and increase capacity to help implement stewardship programs.

Goal 2:

Strengthen the Application of Knowledge – by enhancing participation in stewardship through education and awareness, and by better recognizing the contribution of stewards.

Objective 1: Manage Use of Data and Information

Stewards should be given appropriate access to the best available data and information. Improved data and information management policies can foster collaboration among organizations, improve sharing of information, subject to legal constraints and confidentiality agreements, and ensure that stewards can contribute data as well as use it.

Objective 2: Collect and Apply Scientific, Traditional and Local Knowledge

Stewardship programs should be knowledge-based and adaptive. Research should be better integrated with traditional and local knowledge and, where possible, should involve volunteers in research, monitoring and the collection of data. Facilitating access to traditional and local knowledge and encouraging the application of this knowledge are equally important. Volunteers need access to people who can provide training and extension services.

Objective 3: Empower Stewards with Knowledge and Information

Education and awareness promote effective participation by people committed to "on-the-ground" stewardship as well as those involved in policy and program development, and are key elements in recruiting and retaining new stewards. In order for information to be understood and knowledge to be shared, Canadians want science put into plain language. Both formal and informal stewardship education programs are desirable – providing a continuum of learning opportunities for young people and adults. Delivery of stewardship education programs should occur through existing mechanisms, whenever possible, and be targeted to maximize their impact. Marketing of stewardship should borrow examples from the social sciences and content from the education sector. Better marketing would increase awareness among landowners of the tools that are available to them.



Objective 4: Communicate Stewardship Achievements

Key messages need to be communicated across Canada.

These include: "stewardship is

essential to conserving Canada's natural heritage"; "stewardship is part of the Canadian character"; "Canadians work well together and make a much-needed difference"; and "stewards have been achieving great successes." A wide variety of communication methods should be used in order to reach as many target audiences as possible. Computer and Internet portal technology can be used to retrieve and share information, provide synopses of progress and enhance program transparency.

Objective 5: Recruit and Recognize Stewards

Education and awareness are key elements in recruiting and retaining new stewards. The efforts of individuals and communities should be recognized and promoted, when appropriate, to encourage others to participate in stewardship programs. Recognition may include the provision of public awards and, where possible, should reflect the contribution of stewards in the design and implementation of stewardship policies and programs.

Goal 3:

Strengthen Policy and Legislative Support for Stewards – by providing the essential economic, policy and legal tools and instruments required to support stewardship programs and activities.

Objective 1: Increase the Use of Conservation Agreements, Easements and Management Plans

The use of conservation agreements (including landowner contracts, easements, covenants and servitudes) and management plans should be increased to achieve biodiversity conservation goals, the sustainable use of biological resources and the wise management of lands and waters. Voluntary conservation agreements often involve

partnerships between conservation organizations and landowners. Management plans can be prepared by private sector interests for conservation properties in collaboration with government agencies. Conservation agreements and management plans have both proven to be a successful means of securing lands for the conservation of species and their habitat and ensuring the sustainable use of resources.

Objective 2: Develop and Provide Access to Guidelines and Codes of Conduct

Guidelines and codes of conduct for land management and resource use should continue to be employed to promote stewardship among organizations and business interests. By providing individuals and organizations with guidance and promoting both formal and informal commitments to improve practices, guidelines and codes of conduct help reduce environmental impacts and encourage measures that support conservation and sustainable use objectives.

Objective 3: Ensure that Public Policies Support Stewardship

Public policies can play a critical role in the achievement of environmental goals and objectives by encouraging stewardship activities and discouraging activities that are contrary to these objectives. People who are active stewards of our lands and waters should also get involved by influencing the development and implementation of such policies.

Objective 4: Use Legislation to Support Proactive Stewardship

Legislation is an important tool for supporting and promoting stewardship. In some regions of Canada (the North, in particular), legislative agreements such as land-claim settlements form the basis for shared stewardship responsibility over biological and other resources. All governments should ensure that existing and proposed legislation, including taxation regulations, either supports stewardship or does not otherwise impair it.



Goal 4:

Connect Stewardship Programs – by fostering cooperation among stewardship programs, and integrating them with terrestrial and aquatic approaches to conservation and sustainable use.

Objective 1: Improve Institutional Arrangements

To support stewardship and avoid duplication, governments and national, provincial and territorial stewardship organizations should collaborate to promote program integration and the effective and efficient use of financial resources. This would

promote integrated approaches to stewardship and ecologically-based management.

Objective 2: Integrate Stewardship with Planning and Ecological Management

Stewardship activities should be integrated into ecosystem approaches and regional planning. Stewardship programs should be targeted and are necessary at various geographic scales. Local actions can assist in

addressing provincial, territorial, national and international issues, and fulfil needs at ecosystem or bioregional scales.

Objective 3: Improve Monitoring and Reporting of Stewardship Progress

Mechanisms are needed to monitor and report on the impact of stewardship policies and programs to ensure that they contribute to conservation and sustainable use goals and the wise management of our lands and waters. These mechanisms will help adapt programs to ensure long-term conservation benefits. Monitoring and reporting, including the application of performance measures, should be designed to ensure that they do not overburden stewardship organizations or government.

Actions

Priority Actions for Stewardship

The goals and objectives outlined in this Agenda provide a framework for strengthening and encouraging stewardship across Canada. However, practical steps are required to advance this framework in close collaboration with Canadians. The four actions described here focus on strengthening the network of stewards in Canada, empowering and expanding this network through the Internet-based Stewardship Canada Portal, and challenging this network to refine and improve Canada's Stewardship Agenda.

Action 1:

Promote improved cooperation among stewardship programs and, where possible, coordination with conservation and sustainable use initiatives.

Stewardship initiatives across Canada are strongly based on partnerships and collaboration. Knowing which of these initiatives are working well would enable the stewardship community to build on successes and address specific needs. These include improved coordination among stewardship programs and integration with ecosystem approaches and land and water management. Specific priorities for action are:

- Establish working agreements and partnerships, as appropriate, that will strengthen integration and collaboration among government and non-government stewardship programs.



- Collaborate on mechanisms and indicators that will improve monitoring and reporting on the impact of stewardship policies and programs, with a focus on making accountability easier, strengthening abilities to attract funding and reducing administrative costs.
- Priority attention will be given to Goal 4, where appropriate, in the development of jurisdictional responses to the Agenda (see "Next Steps" section of this document).

Action 2:

Establish a Stewardship Network to facilitate collaboration among stewards and help guide the implementation of Canada's Stewardship Agenda.

Although stewards are already part of the conservation and sustainable use regime in Canada, their experiences and skills do not tend to be easily shared across the country, or readily accessed to develop new stewardship policies and programs. To address the situation, jurisdictions are committed to planning and developing a network of stewards in each province and territory, as appropriate to each jurisdiction and linked nationally. This network can

connect community groups through regional, provincial, territorial and national forums, and will enable them to share information about the state of the environment and to promote collaborative actions within the framework of Canada's Stewardship Agenda. The networks' participants can examine practical priorities within their own jurisdictions, clarify issues, take actions appropriate to their resources and areas, make recommendations to influence the priorities of other parts of the network, and provide learning opportunities for one another. Specific priorities for action are:

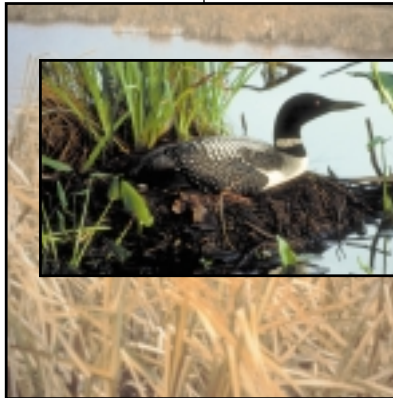
- Promote public involvement in stewardship.
- Integrate and enhance incentives for those who implement stewardship.
- Enable stewards to identify their priorities for knowledge development and delivery, and support young people and stewardship advocates – especially those at the community level and in educational programs – to be local leaders in building collaboration, bringing people together to advance stewardship.
- Enable all stewardship groups and stewardship funding organizations to identify themselves, their stewardship programs and their achievements – through a Stewardship Network and on the Stewardship Canada Portal.

Action 3:

Continue to develop and enhance the Stewardship Canada Portal.

The Stewardship Canada Portal provides an entry point into a virtual community of information, knowledge, contacts and resources related specifically to stewardship (see: www.stewardshipcanada.ca). Stewardship leaders from across Canada are collaborating to develop a toolkit filled with valuable information. This includes directories of funding sources and stewardship organizations, demonstration sites, case studies, stewardship services and mapping and learning tools. It is a virtual toolkit designed to serve the Stewardship Network. Specific priorities for action are:

- Foster better collaboration among funding organizations to streamline applications, project management and accountability processes.
- Encourage access to and use of guidelines and codes of conduct that promote “best management practices” for land management and sustainable use of resources.
- Provide national policy forums that will enable individual stewards and organizations to influence the future of stewardship by commenting on planned or existing policies and legislation concerning stewardship and on the need for and progress toward fostering new knowledge.



Action 4:

Explore the development of a Stewardship Charter to engage Canadians.

The development of a Stewardship Charter will be explored among all jurisdictions as an optional tool for engaging and recognizing stewardship across the nation. The Charter would allow participants at all levels to acknowledge the principles of Canada’s

Stewardship Agenda, and to commit to assisting in the implementation of the Agenda. The Charter would be signed by jurisdictions, participants in the Stewardship Network and organizations that support stewardship. The concept of the Charter will be explored in 2002-2003, aiming for consensus on its support by June 2003 and for possible implementation in the fall of 2003.

Next

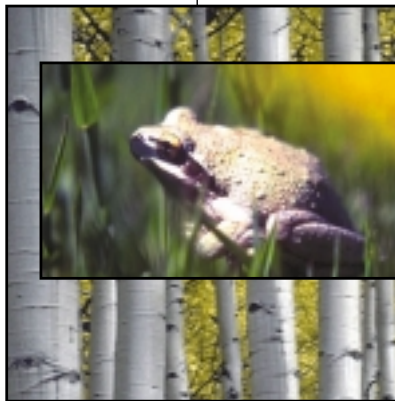
Next Steps

Canada's Stewardship Agenda is a plan for collaboration among Canadians that draws on the collective experience of communities, organizations, Aboriginal peoples, the private sector and individuals, and that complements existing stewardship programs. By establishing a broad, long-term course of action and fostering collaborative actions, the Agenda will help guide future investments in stewardship.

Canadians can expect direct benefits from these investments in stewardship, including better support for landowners and land users who are good stewards, improved integration among government agencies, more efficient funding processes and easier access to stewardship knowledge and information.

The four priority actions described in this document focus on strengthening a network of stewards in Canada, empowering and expanding this network through the Internet-based Stewardship Canada Portal, and challenging this network to refine and improve Canada's Stewardship Agenda, possibly by developing a Stewardship Charter to engage Canadians.

The federal, provincial and territorial governments will develop a response to the Agenda by identifying options to support stewardship that are appropriate for each jurisdiction. This will seek a broader partnership for the Agenda, and collaborate on the longer-term strategy to enhance stewardship nationally. To help guide the future development and implementation of the Agenda, jurisdictional responses and reports of progress made on the goals, objectives and actions in the Agenda will be brought together in a national



summary report, starting in 2003. A Consultation Report reflecting the results of initial consultations will be used to guide regional and national planning on actions (see: www.stewardshipcanada.ca).

Once they are fully implemented, the measures outlined in the Agenda will position Canada to become a world leader in stewardship and the sustainable use of natural resources.

Acknowledgements

Canada's Stewardship Agenda is a continuing collaborative effort that has evolved through the support and encouragement of a variety of organizations, local community leaders and individuals. Advice has been drawn from many forums, surveys and conferences. The national Voluntary Sector Initiative provided valuable support for the conduct of community workshops that were held across the country, led by the staff of Wildlife Habitat Canada. The intergovernmental Canadian Wildlife Directors Committee developed the Agenda with the support of a Working Group of officials from all levels of government.