



Quinte Field Naturalists

The Quinte Field Naturalists Association is affiliated with Ontario Nature, a non-profit organization sponsoring nature education, conservation and research.

I urge the governments of Ontario and Canada to protect at least 17 percent of lands and inland waters by 2020, for the reasons outlined in the Protected Places Declaration and in accordance with our commitments under the UN Convention on Biological Diversity.

THE PROTECTED PLACES DECLARATION

A NATURAL LEGACY

Planet Earth is a shared home for humankind and millions of other species, and our fates and well-being are interdependent. Recognizing our responsibility to the whole, we, the Signatories, urge governments, civil society and business leaders across Canada to:

- Develop, initiate and invest in action plans to protect at least 17 per cent of our lands and inland waters and 10 per cent of our coastal and marine areas by 2020;
- Ensure that these action plans are designed and implemented to achieve ecologically representative, well-connected protected areas networks in every province and territory, based on both Indigenous knowledge systems and science; and
- Ensure protected areas identification and management decisions respect the right of Indigenous Peoples to free, prior and informed consent.

We have signed this declaration:

Because a mass extinction unlike any since the disappearance of the dinosaurs 65 million years ago has already resulted in global wildlife populations decreasing by over half since the 1970s; Because protected areas directly address the primary driver of extinction, habitat loss and degradation; Because a sustainable and equitable future requires that we address this threat and protect natural areas of sufficient size, diversity and number so that all life on Earth may continue and thrive;

Because international agreements, including the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the Convention on Biological Diversity, and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change recognize the rights of Indigenous Peoples, including the right to free, prior and informed consent;

Because protected areas established and managed by or in cooperation with Indigenous Peoples can serve to sustain and strengthen Indigenous knowledge and value systems and cultural practices;

Because Canada signed the 1992 UN Convention on Biological Diversity, an international treaty that aims to conserve the diversity of life on Earth and ensure that its resources are sustainably and equitably shared by all;

Because Canada and the other signatory countries to the Convention adopted the 2010 Aichi Biodiversity Targets, which include Targets 11 and 18:

Target 11: By 2020, at least 17 percent of terrestrial and inland water areas, and 10 percent of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services, are conserved through effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well connected systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, and integrated into the wider landscapes and seascapes;

Target 18: By 2020, the traditional knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities relevant for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, and their customary use of biological resources, are respected, subject to national legislation and relevant international obligations, and fully integrated and reflected in the implementation of the Convention with the full and effective participation of indigenous and local communities, at all relevant levels.

Because all of Canada's federal, provincial and territorial Ministers of Environment, Parks and Wildlife signed A Statement of Commitment to Complete Canada's Networks of Protected Areas in 1992, and this work remains unfinished;

Because Canada has ample opportunity to protect natural areas and meet the Aichi targets given the country's vast size and relatively small human population;

Because it is in our collective interest to maintain the many ecological, social, cultural, health and economic benefits that are derived from natural areas, including clean air, clean water, wild foods, genetic resources, nature-based development opportunities, and much more.

Our common future and the health of the planet depend on protected places.

Yours truly,

George Thomson
President, Quinte Field Naturalists

Note: The preceding letter was composed by Ontario Nature and endorsed by Quinte Field Naturalists along with many other organizations who are advocating for the protection of natural landscapes.