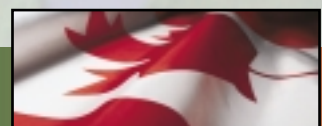
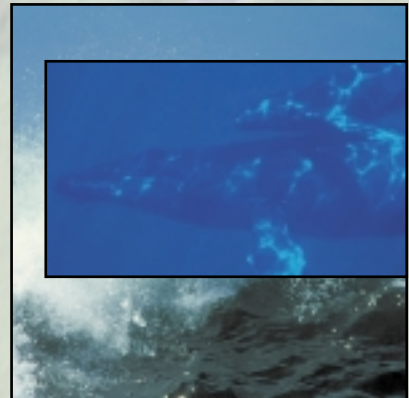
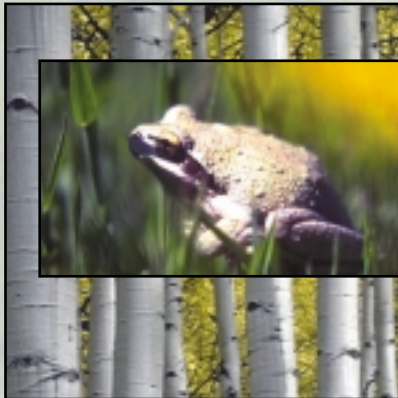


Canada's Stewardship Agenda

Report on Consultations

A Federal-Provincial-Territorial Initiative



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Report on Consultations

Prepared by the
Federal-Provincial-Territorial
Stewardship Working Group

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Foreword

Foreword

The purpose of this Report on Consultations Towards Canada's Stewardship Agenda is to summarize information helping to shape a national framework and a plan for collaboration on stewardship, now referred to as Canada's Stewardship Agenda. This Report summarizes the key points learned in our consultations towards the Agenda and will support its implementation.

Canada's Stewardship Agenda is an initiative derived from the Accord for the Protection of Species at Risk. The Wildlife Ministers Council of Canada in 1998 amended this Accord to acknowledge the role of stewardship in the conservation and recovery of species at risk. They also requested development of an action plan to enhance stewardship nationally. Since then, this initiative has expanded to include a broader base of participation beyond wildlife interests. Responsibility for preparing the Agenda has rested with the Federal-Provincial-Territorial Stewardship Working Group, chaired by Environment Canada. This Group includes representatives from all provincial and territorial governments and federal departments including Environment, Fisheries and Oceans, Natural Resources, Industry, Health, Indian and Northern Affairs, and Agriculture and Agri-Food as well as the Canadian Museum of Nature and the Parks Canada Agency.



The Agenda is being developed under the leadership of agencies involved in resource management and conservation. The Agenda will provide a framework for enhancing stewardship nationally by recommending goals, objectives and supporting activities. It is anticipated that it will be the foundation for a national network to facilitate the ongoing involvement in stewardship of resource sector interests, conservation organizations, volunteer community organizations and others at many levels.

One of the steps towards developing the Agenda, was consultations as part of the Voluntary Sector Initiative (VSI) for Stewardship, held from September 2001 to February 2002. Twelve consultation workshops, facilitated by Wildlife Habitat Canada, were held and involved over 220 participants representing organizations with a collective membership of over 700 000 Canadians. The Millennium Stewardship Conference held in June 2000 at the University of Guelph and earlier consultations on stewardship linked to species at risk recovery also provided sources of advice.

For details on existing investments in this document, a Compendium of Stewardship Programs and Activities in Canada has been developed by the Working Group. The Compendium will be made available, and will be periodically updated, on the Stewardship Canada Portal (see: www.stewardshipcanada.ca). It is also available from Environment Canada in hard copy.

Introduction

Introduction

Stewardship is part of the Canadian character. Canadians are fortunate to be stewards of diverse and impressive landscapes, oceans, lakes and streams. Surveys show that Canadians feel a responsibility for their natural environment, and most importantly, they act on it. As Canadians, we demand high standards of environmentally responsible behaviour from ourselves, industry, our neighbours and political leaders. This environmental ethic is consistently reflected in political issue polls, in demands for effective legislation and enforcement, and in the high emotion generated by issues about development that could negatively affect the environment. Most important, Canadians from all walks of life make conscious decisions every day to act responsibly towards the environment.

Canadians have consistently shown their belief that stewardship of natural resources is essential to the quality of life, and that nature, in all its variety, is essential to human survival. They have indicated their willingness to get more and more actively involved in conservation and sustainable development initiatives. Many Canadians know that our growing population and economy require us all to do more.

As citizens of Canada, we are stewards of major portions of the World's tundra, temperate and boreal forests, grasslands and mountain ecosystems. Almost half of Canada is forested, representing about 10% of the World's temperate and boreal forests. Canada's Arctic region constitutes about 20% of the World's circumpolar areas. This nation's aquatic ecosystems are equally impressive, with rivers and lakes providing approximately 8% of the global supply of freshwater. One-quarter of the earth's remaining wetlands are located in Canada. The country is bordered by three oceans with 224 000 km of coastline, and has the second largest continental shelf in the World – an area of 3.7 million km².

Canada's economy depends heavily on sustaining these diverse and rich ecosystems. Resource-based industries, including agriculture, mining and energy, fisheries, forestry, wildlife viewing and harvesting, and tourism and recreation are essential components of the economy. Many communities depend on natural resources for their subsistence. The diversity of open spaces and wildlife provides a source of emotional, artistic and spiritual inspiration and cultural identity – which is central to individual and community well-being.

Canadians are concerned about the fate of the species that are put at risk as a result of detrimental effects on the environment. However, this is the decade when Canadians, especially in urban communities, have come to realize that their health and well-being depends directly on the capability of people in rural and northern communities to care for our natural life-support systems. We are all dependent on the quality of our water, air, soil and climate. Whether we are motivated out of concern for our health and that of our children, for personal enjoyment or for sound business reasons – we all need to work together to ensure that the natural life-support systems of our communities remain healthy.

Stewardship

What is Stewardship?

Stewardship is an ethic by which Canadians care for our land, water and air as parts of a natural life-support system and act to sustain and enhance it for generations to come.

Stewardship refers to the wide range of actions and activities of individuals, communities, organizations and businesses acting alone or in partnership. They do this to promote, monitor and conserve biodiversity, to develop and use all natural resources in a sustainable manner, and to maintain the ecosystems on which life depends. By working together, Canadians have demonstrated the many benefits of collective and coordinated stewardship actions in the management of our diverse natural resources.



Challenges

Challenges

Our individual efforts help maintain the quality of Canada's vast and picturesque natural systems. Random acts of stewardship are producing effective results in many areas, but Canadians sense this is not enough. To be more effective, our conservation efforts need a greater degree of synergy. Over the past several years, representatives of many organizations with a strong stewardship ethic have come together to describe challenges that limit the effectiveness of stewardship initiatives. These challenges include:

- lack of coordination and integration among government agencies,
- competition (especially for limited funding) among organizations,
- lack of support for landowners and land users who manage natural resources for the benefit of society as a whole,
- lack of core funding for the volunteers, non-government organizations (NGOs) and, in some cases, government agencies, who care for the public's interest in environmental health, and
- lack of a clear way to share stewardship knowledge and information.

A report entitled Volunteer Sector Stewardship in Canada provides greater detail on these national discussions. It is available on the Stewardship Canada web portal (see: www.stewardshipcanada.ca) or from Wildlife Habitat Canada.

Our collective efforts are not offsetting the pressures of development. Ecological sustainability is not being attained in some areas, as indicated by the long list of species at risk, water quality problems and decline of fish stocks. There are many areas of Canada where our natural systems are at risk, and in turn, human health and well-being are at risk – where natural systems support our economy and our well-being.

Rehabilitation and recovery of damaged natural life-support systems is extremely costly. Many studies have made it clear that it is far cheaper to maintain complex systems than it is to repair them. The same can be said about ecological systems. It is more efficient and affordable in the long run for Canadians to invest in stewardship, and to protect and sustain the natural resources that our health and economy depend upon than to repair or restore degraded environments.

The 21st century must be when we apply the lessons learned on how to maintain our natural systems. We must act together and support the stewardship efforts of all individuals and groups.

Agenda

Canada's Stewardship Agenda – Naturally Connecting Canadians

Discussions with stewardship leaders in recent years have identified key issues about the delivery of stewardship programs. We collectively spend millions of dollars and invest huge amounts of time on stewardship – but we are not leveraging our efforts – so that we have the desired effect to offset the pressures of development and expansion of the human imprint on the land.



Recognizing the importance that Canadians place on species, ecosystems and other resources, Ministers responsible for the management of Canada's natural resources recently renewed their government's commitment to advancing stewardship. In 1998, the Wildlife Ministers Council of Canada amended the Accord for the Protection of Species at Risk to include stewardship, and further agreed to develop an action plan that would support and encourage stewardship nationally.

Ministers directed the Canadian Wildlife Directors Committee to prepare a stewardship action plan that would outline how this could be done. The Federal-Provincial-Territorial Stewardship Working Group, chaired by Environment Canada, was established to oversee development of the Canada-wide Stewardship Action Plan for wildlife and wildlife habitat. Because it was recognized that the need for stewardship was broader than just wildlife interests, the Action Plan evolved to include other resource sectors. It is now called Canada's Stewardship Agenda – Naturally Connecting Canadians.

In the fall of 2002, the Ministers will be presented with a formal report on this Agenda. It will propose steps for its implementation and may include a process for reporting on progress in future years. This Report on Consultations summarizes the key points learned in our consultations towards the Agenda and will support its implementation.

Promote

Why Promote Stewardship?

Three elements of stewardship that support delivery of national biodiversity objectives and economic benefits are examined below. These include the view that stewardship generates results, is cost effective and, is indeed, collaborative in nature.

I. Stewardship Generates Results

Well-delivered stewardship programs can generate tremendous results, as evidenced in Canada and around the World. There are many possible examples. Three are included here to elaborate on the types of results that are possible, including: (a) The Habitat Stewardship Program for Species at Risk; (b) Ontario Stewardship; and (c) Forest Stewardship.

The Habitat Stewardship Program for Species at Risk of the Government of Canada has raised millions of dollars in matching funds and in-kind donations. This national program is administered jointly by three federal departments. Significant, tangible progress is being made in protecting and enhancing species at risk habitats across Canada through this program.

Ontario Stewardship is a provincial initiative that brings people together at the community level to produce positive changes that enhance ecological sustainability on the landscape. The strength of the program is with the 39 Community Stewardship Councils, involving about 450 volunteers and 45 government-funded stewardship coordinators and assistants. The Councils are involved in about 600 projects per year worth about \$25 million.

Forest Stewardship – In addition to the Forest Stewardship Council's efforts that support environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial and economically viable management of the world's forests, there are two other systems of certification in Canada: the Canadian Standards Association (CSA) and the US-based Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI). In addition, the majority of Canada's forest is certified under the ISO 14001, a generic environmental management system usually considered as a step towards forest specific certification systems.

II. Stewardship Is Cost Effective

In the past decade, thousands of stewards have taken actions that help species and systems to recover or protect them from degradation. These are results that individual investments could not achieve acting alone. Pooling our skills, knowledge and financial resources is cost effective. From a taxpayer's perspective, government spending is best directed to collaborative stewardship programs. Leverage ratios for funding are often reported to be from 4:1 to as much as 10:1 for stewardship programs. Examples of leverage in programs include the Ontario Stewardship (noted above), the Eastern Habitat Joint Venture of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan and the North American Bird Conservation Initiative.

Businesses and industries, through the acknowledgement that stewardship is good for their competitive position and operations, are building their commitment to stewardship principles and best management practices. Broader industry awareness of the financial value of stewardship is expected to grow in the coming decade. Those individuals who work on our lands and waters, such as farmers, loggers and fishers, have known for generations that the natural resources are their most valuable capital. They must always only use the interest on annual production, without damaging the capital, if they want to stay in business.

Consumers are beginning to recognize that paying a bit more for a "certified green" product is not just an altruistic act, good for society, but may also ensure their personal health. A growing number of people are also realizing that there are stewardship services to be provided; thus, a stewardship service sector is growing.

In each community, there are individuals who stand out as having a strong, credible grasp of the stewardship ethic – they understand its principles, they speak about what is right for the environment, and they practise it in their daily lives. These Canadians are leaders for stewardship from small northern communities to national special interest groups. Their strong personal commitment, large numbers and diverse locations across Canada, make them an effective driving force in society for stewardship. They are willing and capable of leading at the community level and helping to achieve a greater level of public input into environmental policy and decision-making at the regional and national levels.

In addition to these high profile leaders, there are many ordinary Canadians who are quietly doing what is right and responsible for the environment on a daily basis. These are the people that hike through the snow to take their recycle bin to the curb, their compost to the backyard, the seed to the bird feeder, and stoop to pick up litter while they are on their way to work. These are also the people who join others to put up bird nesting boxes, enhance a trout stream, protect a hawk's nest, or choose in one of many ways to act responsibly while enjoying the outdoors. These are the people who are only occasionally caught in the act by a reporter, but are seen, just in passing by others in the community and seen to be reminders of what is needed. They are leaders in their own right.

The greatest strength of communities working together on stewardship is the diversity they bring to developing solutions. Collaboration fosters a creativity that enables each participant to offer the best of his or her skills and abilities. As a group, we can find the most efficient ways to get things done, and solve problems that seem insurmountable.

III. Stewardship Is Collaborative

It has been said that stewardship is "positive, fun and proactive." Stewardship projects leave the landscape visibly better than it was before the steward arrived. These stewardship activities are affirming – people feel good when they see the difference they have made. For others, it is enough just to know that the quality of our environment is being maintained. Taxpayers seeing government departments working together with others to share the work and the cost is an excellent illustration of the good use of tax dollars.

Across Canada, in thousands of stewardship initiatives in communities, a predominant feature is the diversity of people and interests that come together for a common cause. It seems that there is one characteristic that runs through us all – we value our natural systems and we want to be good stewards. With a common stewardship vision, we can activate another Canadian characteristic – our ability to cooperate. Canada's Stewardship Agenda invites the broad diversity of Canadians to work together, contributing to our national and global life-support systems. Together, our collaborative efforts will have a much greater effect than our individual efforts.



Collaboration is currently limited by the lack of a network for effective communication. We need to share knowledge and experience. Our current communication mechanisms and practices do not engage the wide variety of stewards or enable easy access to the massive amount of information that is available. To foster collaboration, we need a framework to improve and foster information exchange among people, and we need to make better use of Internet technology to share information quickly and efficiently.

Principles

Guiding Principles for Improved Collaboration

The following principles, developed by the participants in a series of Voluntary Sector Initiative (VSI) Workshops undertaken by Wildlife Habitat Canada from October 2001 through February 2002 and by the Federal-Provincial-Territorial Stewardship Working Group, underpin Canada's Stewardship Agenda. Results of the VSI consultations are summarized in a detailed report developed by Wildlife Habitat Canada and posted on the stewardship portal (see: www.stewardshipcanada.ca).

Eight principles are proposed:

1. Stewardship builds on the strong connection between Canadians and their natural heritage.

Stewardship is based on our belief that we must all act responsibly in our use of, and care for, our natural life-support systems so that we can make a difference.

2. Stewardship initiatives respect the interests and rights of all participants.

People across Canada will have regard for others and for each of these principles – in special projects and in their daily lives. To attain the scale of effect that is desired, each of our individual actions will contribute to the larger goals – within our community and our country. Everyone involved can have their own agenda, and work with others in their community to integrate their efforts – aiming for results that are greater than the sum of the individual investments.

3. Stewardship is knowledge-based.

To be most effective, stewards need access to the best available data and information. This includes traditional and local knowledge, research and management practices. Data management systems can store and retrieve baseline data, inventory information, ecological mapping and program information from landowners, land users, non-government organizations (NGOs), and communities.

4. Stewardship is based on ecological principles and ecosystem approaches.

Effective stewardship is based on understanding how ecological systems function. There is a need to understand what activities will have beneficial results. Stewardship programs can help integrate economic, social, cultural and environmental objectives and values to ensure long-term ecological sustainability. Planning and action at the bioregional scale should be encouraged and supported.

5. Stewardship depends on collaborative action, local capacity and ownership.

With long-term funding and support, stewardship programs will contribute at a variety of scales, building local capacity while enhancing provincial, territorial, national or international goals and objectives for stewardship. Local organizations and local autonomy are important. Funding systems and program review mechanisms should be streamlined so that volunteers and NGOs spend most of their time and effort on productive work rather than on writing proposals or administering programs.

6. Stewardship programs are developed with an understanding of socio-economic conditions.

Participation of landowners, business interests and others in stewardship programs depends on understanding and respecting their interests and needs, and on developing stewardship programs that fully consider local social and economic conditions and recognize regional differences. Government, NGOs and industry organizations will respect that local community groups know what is needed and how to get it done, provided they can obtain the resources and flexibility to do the work.

7. Stewardship programs are transparent and inclusive.

Stewardship programs, from work at the community level to policy and program development, need the involvement of interested stakeholders. Specific efforts will support an urban-rural linkage to enhance awareness of the fact that urban residents consume resources that are produced on rural landscapes. There will be checks and balances, to justify investment and support a community sense of ownership and responsibility.

8. Stewardship programs are ideally based on long-term commitments.

Problems will not be solved overnight – stewardship takes time. The need for long-term commitments and tangible contributions, especially for funding and support, by all collaborators must be clear from the beginning.

Vision

A Vision for Stewardship

The vision for stewardship in Canada is “A nation where Canadians are actively working together to sustain our natural life-support systems.”

Canadian stewardship stakeholders have requested the establishment of a broad, national vision for stewardship, one that ensures the long-term health of our natural life-support systems, and in turn, the resources that they provide for the health and well-being of ourselves and future generations.



The national vision for stewardship respects Canada’s regional and cultural diversity. It should be inviting and inclusive, promoting collaborative action among all those with diverse interests in stewardship, but especially those engaged in the conservation of biodiversity, the sustainable use of Canada’s biological resources and the wise management of other natural resources. Stewardship activities, important for example in contributing to the recovery of

species at risk, go well beyond such efforts and contribute to the sustainability of both terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems and build a sense of community and shared responsibility.

This vision supports stewards and their cooperative actions. It encourages and advances the conservation and sustainable use of the ecosystems on which we depend. In simple terms, Canada’s stewardship vision identifies how we will work together to sustain our natural life-support systems.

Themes and Issues

Enabling Stewardship: Themes and Issues

In the next section, four overarching themes for enabling stewardship in Canada have been identified. These themes, based upon 14 issues, could facilitate and stimulate stewardship actions in the proposed Agenda and are consistent with a framework for stewardship that the Wildlife Ministers Council approved in 2000. Issues have been derived from the consultation workshops and sectoral discussions held across Canada during the 2001-2002 period. For each issue, suggestions for implementation and examples of these types of stewardship programs and activities are given.

Themes from Our Consultations

- There needs to be significant investment in stewardship program support and capacity building.
- There needs to be stronger application of knowledge, enhancement of stewardship education and awareness, and recognition of contributions by stewards.
- Essential economic, policy and legal instruments required to support stewardship activities need to be developed.
- Stewardship across jurisdictions and sectors needs to be connected.



Issue 1: Enhancing and Integrating Incentives

Funding to initiate and sustain stewardship programs was identified as one of the most important requirements for ensuring successful stewardship programs. Core funding should be consistent and ongoing, allowing organizations the flexibility to manage their operations, ensuring a desirable (not minimal) level of capacity and capability. This can be balanced with strategic short-term funding to encourage shifts in focus.

Tangible incentives, including economic incentives and technical or logistical support, have proven to be extremely effective in advancing stewardship in many areas of Canada. Economic incentives, including taxation assistance in particular, are a means to strengthen and facilitate a commitment to stewardship, especially where conservation actions or activities involve cost to landowners and resource developers. Landowners can accept the costs of sustaining their own resources and of being "good neighbours," but deserve assistance with the cost of sustaining resources for the good of society.

Incentives for industry need refinement, to foster stewardship that is beyond the legal requirements of the regulatory processes to which they are subject. For example, the agriculture industry needs attention and assistance in developing appropriate incentives for on-farm stewardship. Funding and incentive application, approval and accountability processes should be streamlined. To avoid duplication, funding organizations should collaborate.

Suggestions for enhancing and integrating incentives:

- Integrate and enhance incentives for landowners, industry and others to promote and support stewardship activities.

- Market the business value of employing best practices to gain customer and community confidence (e.g. quality food, community health) and reduce environmental risks.
- Identify and remove disincentives to stewardship, including adjusting systems of taxation where necessary.
- Establish stewardship funding targets.
- Funding organizations should collaborate to streamline application, approval and accountability processes; reduce duplication; enhance linkages among programs and projects. They should also respect local capability and needs for individuality and ownership as well as consider building a network that encourages collaboration among funding agencies to enhance effectiveness and reduce bureaucracy.

Existing Investments

Examples of existing investments and initiatives include:

- Work by the National Round Table on the Environment and Economy on Ecological and Fiscal Reform – National
- Environmental Tax Credit Program, Pilot Project – Manitoba
- Program for the Development of a Private Network of Protected Areas – Quebec
- Ecological Gifts Program, Environment Canada – National
- Conservation Land Tax Incentive Program – Ontario
- Habitat Stewardship Program for Species at Risk, Environment Canada, Parks Canada Agency, Fisheries and Oceans Canada – National
- Ontario Wetland Habitat Fund – Ontario
- The Habitat Conservation Fund – British Columbia

Issue 2: Enhancing Local Community Support and Capacity

The driving force for stewardship is often at the local level. Investment at this level will support the recruitment of stewards, the administration of programs, and increase local capacity to help implement stewardship programs. Local Aboriginal communities should be engaged in stewardship – by sharing training programs for stewardship advisors to enhance learning of both scientific and traditional knowledge applications. Successful stewardship programs can be reviewed to learn what led to their success. This information can be used to improve programs.

Suggestions for enhancing local community support and capacity:

- Consider creating local or regional stewardship coordinators as a way to strengthen community and regional capacity for stewardship, while building on existing structures and successful models.
- Create a network of stewards who come together within each jurisdiction to collaboratively work toward stewardship goals for their jurisdiction and contribute to national goals.
- Provide training and related work placements to enhance stewardship knowledge and skill development among stewardship advisors.
- Enhance communication between landowners and resource managers so resource managers can better respond to landowners' questions and resource needs related to stewardship programs, and for technical advice.
- Identify and share examples of best management practices among stewards.
- Promote use of available stewardship resources and "tool kits" such as Logging for Wildlife, Beach in a Box, Wetkit and others.
- Facilitate access to stewardship funding via national and regional stewardship networks.
- Make recommendations about the design of funding programs so that they build capacity of local, provincial, territorial and national NGOs, enabling them to be more self-sufficient.
- Foster collaboration among NGOs, volunteer organizations and other stakeholders to lever greater support for stewardship.

- Foster collaboration among funding organizations to streamline processes, to improve integration and increase efficiency and effectiveness.
- Use stewardship networks to integrate, coordinate and promote initiatives.
- Promote community participation in Nature Watch programs like Frog Watch and Worm Watch, etc.
- Promote projects that are of local interest.
- Continue the involvement of local stewards in bioregional initiatives such as Model Forests and Biosphere Reserves.
- Increase the opportunity for involvement of urban residents.

Existing Investments

Examples of existing investments and initiatives include:

- Ontario Stewardship – Ontario
- First Nations Forestry Program – National
- Rainy River First Nation’s Watershed Program – Ontario
- Delta Waterfowl’s Adopt a Pothole Program – Manitoba
- Use Traditional Techniques to Fish Selectively – First Nations
- Wildlife for Tomorrow Program – Saskatchewan
- Species At Risk Stewardship Program – Newfoundland and Labrador
- Cows and Fish Program – Alberta
- Riparian Stewardship Program – Manitoba
- Vincent Lake Working Model (see: www.healthyshorelines.com) – Alberta
- Prairie Conservation Forum – Alberta
- Common Grounds Program, Evergreen Foundation – National
- Loggers for Wildlife, Canadian Forestry Association, Model Forest Program and Provincial forestry organizations – National
- Stewardship funding programs, Fondation de la faune – Quebec
- Mixed-Grass Prairie Grazing Demonstration Project – Manitoba

- American Chestnut is at Risk, Farmers Respond – Ontario
- Coastal Habitat Stewardship Program – Newfoundland and Labrador
- Habitat Conservation and Stewardship Program – British Columbia and Yukon
- Saint-Laurent Vision 2000 ZIP (Zone d’intervention prioritaire) – Quebec

Issue 3: Managing the Use of Data and Information

Stewards need access to the best available data and information. Priority data and information needs should be determined and effective approaches for disseminating information should be developed to ensure that intended audiences are reached. Improved data and information management can also promote collaboration among organizations. Information management policies that foster sharing of data and information, subject to confidentiality agreements or legal constraints, are required so that stewards can contribute data as well as use it. Stewardship organizations that serve landowners and the community need to make best use of Internet technology for distributing and sharing information.

Suggestions for managing the use of data and information:

- Develop a “stewardship directory” that builds on existing regional and national stewardship centres to promote collaboration among those involved in stewardship, locally, regionally and nationally.
- Enhance efforts to better link data and information management systems across Canada, and to ensure that required data and information is accessible, affordable, and usable to stewards.
- Maintain historical data sets.
- Encourage the use of metadata in data collection and management.

- Establish and maintain libraries and stewardship resource centres to complement electronic information sources.
- Use the Stewardship Canada web portal as the one window to guide stewards to the many data and knowledge sources.

Existing Investments

Examples of existing investments and initiatives include:

- Landowner Resource Centre – Ontario
- Natural Heritage Data Centre – Quebec
- Community Conservation Centres – British Columbia
- Biodiversity Data for Stewards – National
- Canadian Biodiversity Information Network – National
- North American Biodiversity Information Network – National
- Ecological InfoService, Alberta Land Stewardship Resource Centre – Alberta
- Conservation Data Centres – National
- Stewardship Canada Portal (see: www.stewardshipcanada.ca) – National



Suggestions for collecting and applying scientific, traditional and local knowledge:

- Use stewardship networks to allow stewards to recommend knowledge development priorities and delivery.
- Continue to implement “Citizen Science” or community-based scientific initiatives – to enhance interaction of scientists with local residents and to build understanding and support for research and stewardship programs.
- Strengthen the Canadian Community Monitoring Network and develop improved tools and approaches to community-based environmental monitoring that support preparation of local policies and decision-making.
- Continue to promote and implement community monitoring programs.
- Ensure that data and information is usable by scientists and local communities.
- Enhance the capability of resource management specialists to provide advice to land managers.
- Build support in the scientific community to use data collected by volunteers.
- Respect, maintain and track traditional and local knowledge, and improve respect for, and understanding of, the roles and values of traditional knowledge as part of efforts to better integrate traditional knowledge with scientific data and information.
- Train stewardship advisors or coordinators, and engage Aboriginal people.
- Prepare fact sheets and other materials to make science interesting and relevant to encourage local volunteer participation in monitoring and other scientific studies.

Issue 4: Collecting and Applying Scientific, Traditional and Local Knowledge

Stewardship programs should be knowledge-based and adaptive. This requires research and development of mechanisms to integrate research with traditional and local knowledge, and to involve volunteers, where possible, in research. This traditional and local knowledge component should be used to help put science into plain language and lead in “tech transfer.” Facilitating access to and encouraging the application of this knowledge is equally important. Volunteers should have access to people who can provide training and extension services. In addition to environmental knowledge, NGOs want professional resources, such as accounting and legal advice, to support their operations.

- Work with existing organizations (such as The Sustainability Network) to enhance access to professional advisory services and training that will support NGO operations.
- Access the vast resources offered by universities, colleges, training centres and other academic institutions.

Existing Investments

Examples of existing investments and initiatives include:

- Rideau River Biodiversity Project, Bringing Science to the People and People to the Science – Ontario
- Traditional Ecological Knowledge and Stewardship – Yukon
- Oromocto First Nation Sucker Brook Watershed Project – New Brunswick
- Volunteer Monitoring Programs, An Essential Element of Wildlife and Fisheries Management – National
- Volunteer Ecological Monitoring Program in the Saskatchewan River Basin – Saskatchewan
- Ecological Monitoring and Assessment Network, Environment Canada – National
- Atlantic Sentinel Survey Program – Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Quebec and Prince Edward Island

Issue 5: Promoting Education and Awareness for Stewardship

Education and awareness promote effective citizen participation in “on-the-ground” stewardship as well as in policy and program development. Both formal and informal stewardship educational programs are required to provide a continuum of learning opportunities for young people and adults. Delivery of stewardship education

programs should be through existing mechanisms whenever possible, and targeted to maximize their effect. Social marketing of stewardship should borrow examples and content from the education sector. Better marketing is needed to increase awareness among landowners of the tools that are available to them.

Suggestions for promoting education and awareness for stewardship:

- Work with existing environmental education associations and networks at all levels of the education system, to provide young people and stewardship advocates with opportunities to learn and to apply knowledge and skills.
- Promote and support stewardship within formal education systems. Establish initiatives, such as the EcoSchools program, that will make more accessible to the formal education system the products of environmental education associations, industry and educators’ networks at the elementary, secondary and university/college levels.
- Promote implementation of the proposed Stewardship for Sustainability Schools Recognition Program. Through faculties of education in each province and Internet delivery, it is designed to provide Canadian educators and students with the necessary knowledge to make informed stewardship decisions and take related actions. The program is designed to increase the reach of the current stewardship education investments, to all of Canada’s 16 500 schools, colleges and universities, so that together they will reach 10 million Canadian students, teachers and support staff who are in the formal education system.
- Use the Stewardship Canada Portal to provide stewardship information to schools and others.
- Encourage the development of UNESCO Associated Schools with themes such as equality and the environment as part of their local curricula.
- Promote use of the Eco-route de l’information established by the Union québécoise pour la conservation de la nature.
- Promote use of stewardship programs such as the Game Guardians initiative in Yukon.
- Promote student use of stewardship tools such as Beach in a Box, and student involvement in programs like Frog Watch and Worm Watch.

- Promote networking among educational institutions to share experiences in developing and implementing stewardship educational programming, and to encourage other institutions to be involved. Enhance opportunities for training educators in stewardship programming.

Existing Investments

There are excellent examples of how stewardship can be supported and promoted in formal education systems, including supporting existing excellent programs. Examples of existing investments and initiatives include:

- Brundtland Schools approach – Quebec
- Species at Risk Stewardship Program – Newfoundland and Labrador
- Stewardship’s Environmental Leadership Program – Ontario
- The “Greening of Schools” Initiative – National
- Effective Communication Keys for Stewardship such as Wetkit (see: www.wetkit.net) – National
- Red Indian Lake Stewardship – Newfoundland and Labrador
- Waterscapes, Activity Guide – Newfoundland and Labrador
- Rare Air, Species at risk information in radio spots, several languages – Newfoundland and Labrador
- Teaching Stewardship – Prince Edward Island
- The Stewardship Series – British Columbia
- A Handbook for Coastal Landowners in the Strait of Georgia – British Columbia
- Stewardship Programs Designed to Educate and Conserve Ocean Resources, Fisheries and Oceans Canada – National

- Signs, Blinds, Hearts and Minds, Wildlife Habitat Canada – Quebec
- Salamander Stewardship Project, Canadian Museum of Nature – National
- Curriculum Development for Educators – Fisheries and Oceans Canada and York University
- Environmental Education Program, Alberta Environment – Alberta
- Operation Grassland Community, information for landowners, Fish and Game Association – Alberta
- Salmonids in the Classroom – British Columbia and Yukon

Issue 6: Communicating Stewardship Achievements

There are key messages that should be promoted as part of a national stewardship campaign to engage Canadians. This campaign would focus on messages such as: “Stewardship is part of the Canadian character”; “We work well together, and make the difference that is needed”; and “Stewards have been achieving great success, but there are some specific challenges that must be addressed, locally, regionally and nationally.” People – whether they are local stewards, national bureaucrats or politicians – need to know that they are tackling the right problems and that they are making a difference. This can be accomplished by communicating the achievements of stewards and recognizing the positive results they achieve. Canadians want to know they are doing what is needed, and that they are making a difference. For example, the use of mapping and geographic information system (GIS) technology to illustrate the state of the resource is very helpful. Canada should make the best use of existing computer and Internet portal technology to quickly retrieve information and provide synopses of progress.

Suggestions for communicating stewardship achievements:

- Develop tools to market stewardship to help decision-makers see the importance of stewardship and to facilitate new initiatives.
- Acknowledge staff and organizations for achieving conservation and sustainable development goals and objectives.

- Use stewardship networks and the Stewardship Canada portal to lead a national, collaborative campaign for public involvement in stewardship, to strengthen the stewardship ethic in society and move responsible action into everyday practice in urban as well as rural and remote communities.
- Continue to provide opportunities for stewards to meet and share their experiences as a means to better understand and acknowledge the roles and contributions of stewards.
- Complete and maintain a compendium of stewardship initiatives to recognize and foster participation in stewardship programs and to promote new initiatives. Consider placing this compendium report on the Stewardship Canada portal for ease of maintenance, update and access.
- Market a stewardship vision, providing tangible examples of Canadians doing what is “right” for the environment, every day, to make a difference.
- Improve understanding among executives of the cost of not acting to achieve conservation and sustainable development goals and objectives.
- Promote stewardship, as a vision and with its tangible actions, within and among government/industry jurisdictions and departments.



volunteers. Acknowledgement of the important efforts of stewards by reflecting their contribution in the design and implementation of government policies and programs is another form of recognition. This can significantly contribute to encouraging others to become involved in stewardship programs. It is particularly important to recognize industry leaders who have gone beyond legislated environmental standards of care.

Existing Investments

Examples of existing investments and initiatives include:

- Countryside Canada, Recognizing Stewardship, Wildlife Habitat Canada, Canadian Federation of Agriculture, and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada – National
- Les Phoenix de l’environnement – Quebec

Issue 7: Recruiting and Recognizing Stewards

Education and awareness are key elements in recruiting new stewards. Recognition of stewardship efforts is essential to both acknowledge the efforts of individuals and communities, and to promote and encourage others to participate in stewardship programs. Recognition can take many forms. Public awards can provide a valuable means to acknowledge the efforts of

Suggestions for recruiting and recognizing stewards:

- Support young people and stewardship advocates, especially at the community level, to be local leaders of stewardship.
- Compile a list of stewardship recognition programs and post on the Stewardship Canada portal.
- Investigate the establishment of mechanisms, such as Governor General’s Annual Stewardship Awards and a “Stewardship Week” to recognize and profile the contribution of stewards.
- Identify corporate donors to provide awards of excellence in stewardship.
- Demonstrate success in knowledge and technology transfer related to sound environmental management and sustainable development.
- Encourage stewardship awards within industries (e.g. the Cattleman’s Environmental Stewardship Award, the Canadian Forest Service Forest Stewardship Award) and broaden media coverage.
- Use the Stewardship Canada portal and hubs to promote, report and develop award and recognition initiatives.

Existing Investments

Examples of existing investments and initiatives include:

- Recognition Program, Island Nature Trust – Prince Edward Island
- Habitat 2000, Wildlife Populations and Habitat – National
- Woodland Stewardship Publications Support Landowners: Federation of Ontario Naturalists, Ontario Forestry Association, Centre for Land and Water Stewardship and the University of Guelph – Ontario
- Industry-level Stewardship Awards – National
- Forest Stewardship Recognition Program, Wildlife Habitat Canada, Canadian Forest Service, Canadian Forest Products Association and the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources – National
- Urban Habitat Stewardship Award, Regional Municipality of York, Living with Wildlife and Wildlife Habitat Canada – Ontario
- Order of the Bighorn, Alberta Sustainable Resource Development – Alberta
- Emerald Awards, Alberta Foundation for Environmental Excellence – Alberta

Issue 8: Increasing the Use of Conservation Agreements, Easements and Management Plans

A variety of conservation agreements are used across Canada to achieve biodiversity conservation goals, the sustainable use of biological resources and the wise management of landscapes and seascapes. Voluntary conservation agreements, including landowner contracts, easements, covenants and servitudes, often involve partnerships between conservation organizations and landowners. Management plans also can be prepared by private sector interests in collaboration with responsible government departments to guide use and development of biological and other resources on conservation properties. These conservation agreements and management plans have proven to be successful in securing lands for the conservation of species and their habitat and ensuring the sustainable use of resources. Conservation agreements have been successfully employed in both terrestrial and marine areas.

Suggestions for increasing the use of conservation agreements, easements and management plans:

- Review the range of currently employed conservation agreements to determine best techniques, and the need for modifications or additional tools such as certification systems.
- Streamline conservation agreements and identify priority areas where such agreements are needed.
- Continue to encourage and support preparation of management plans for conservation properties on privately owned lands.
- Continue to prepare and improve management plans for public lands and waters and for publicly managed biological and other resources integrating conservation agreements into these management plans where feasible.
- Explore the development of a certification system for stewardship.
- Develop and distribute information to landowners and others on the use of conservation agreements.

Existing Investments

Examples of existing investments and initiatives include:

- Act respecting nature reserves on private land (Reserves naturelles volontaires) – Quebec
- Conservation covenants legislation – British Columbia
- Habitat Retention Program – Alberta Conservation Association
- Conservation easements legislation – Alberta, Saskatchewan, Nova Scotia, Ontario, Yukon, New Brunswick

- Conservation Agreements Act – Manitoba
- Conservation Easements and the Bruce Trail – Ontario
- Donation of mineral interest assists conservation of the Whaleback Area – Alberta
- Southern Alberta Land Trust Society – Alberta
- Local and Regional Land Trusts and Conservancies – National

Issue 9: Developing and Providing Access to Guidelines and Codes of Practice

Guidelines and codes of practice can be extremely valuable in promoting stewardship among organizations, resource industries and other business interests. These tools provide guidance, and promote and enable commitments to modify practices to reduce the detrimental effects of our actions on the environment, to adopt best management practices, or encourage specific measures in support of conservation and sustainable use objectives across sectors.

Efforts among industry leaders should be fostered to go beyond legislated environmental care and to use their practical expertise to develop best practices to achieve stewardship. Managers and resource operators are accustomed to a “follow-the-instructions” method of environmental management according to their regulatory regime. Some operators generally believe that they have fulfilled their obligations when their licence requirements have been met. Stewards should do more than just manage the risk of legal action.



Suggestions for developing and providing access to guidelines and codes of practice:

- Develop or enhance guidelines and codes of practice for resource-based industries, landowners and others, across sectors.
- Ensure that stewards and others can access guidelines easily (e.g. through the Stewardship Canada portal).
- Examine resource management plans to determine if they can or should be broadened to include stewardship.
- Explore the development of stewardship certification systems across sectors to promote sustainable use of resources.

Existing Investments

Examples of existing investments and initiatives include:

- Best Management Practices, Fish and Wildlife Habitat Management – Ontario
- Stewardship and Codes of Conduct for the Fishing Industry, Fisheries and Oceans Canada – National
- Work on Principles and Criteria for Forest Management, including a Forest Certification Program, Forest Stewardship Council – National
- Landowner’s Guide, Conservation of Canadian Prairie Grasslands – Saskatchewan
- Sustainable Forestry Management Guide, Ministry of Natural Resources – Quebec

- Codes of Practice, Water Act – Alberta
- Petroleum Industry Activity in Native Prairie and Parkland Areas, Guidelines for Minimizing Surface Disturbance, Alberta Energy Utilities Board – Alberta

Issue 10: Ensuring that Public Policies Support Stewardship

Public policies can play a critical role in advancing stewardship activities. All orders of government should understand the effects of their policies on the achievement of public environmental goals and objectives for stewardship, and should avoid policies that may discourage stewardship activities. People who are active stewards of the land should have meaningful avenues for influencing public policy development and implementation.

Suggestions for ensuring that public policies support stewardship:

- Improve the linkage of conservation, sustainable use and stewardship policies to other government policy agendas, especially those related to health and the economy.
- Modify policies that impede involvement in stewardship programs.
- Enable landowners, resource developers and resource users to contribute in meaningful ways toward the development of policies that affect them. Develop mechanisms that enable stewards to pool their advice and forward it to policy makers.
- Further develop accords to advance stewardship.

Existing Investments

- Citizen Science Initiative, Wildlife Habitat Canada – National
- Linking Community-Based Ecosystem Monitoring to Local Decision-Making and Policy Development on Sustainability Initiative, Canadian Nature Federation – National

Issue 11: Using Legislation to Support Proactive Stewardship

Legislation is an important tool for supporting and promoting stewardship. In some regions of Canada, in particular northern Canada, legislative agreements provide the basis for sharing stewardship responsibility over biological and other resources. All levels of government should ensure that existing and proposed legislation supports stewardship. In some regions, amendments to legislation will be important as an enabling tool.

Suggestions for using legislation to support proactive stewardship:

- Develop legislation where it will significantly advance stewardship.
- Revise legislation that impairs participation in stewardship.
- Include policy and legislation initiatives as standard items for discussion in national and regional stewardship networks as a mechanism for stewards to influence policy development and implementation.

Existing Investments

Examples of existing investments and initiatives include:

- Conservation Easement Act – Saskatchewan
- Species at Risk Act – National

Issue 12: Improving Institutional Arrangements

Governments and national, provincial and territorial stewardship organizations should collaborate to improve program administration and integration, to develop financial resources to efficiently and effectively support stewardship and to avoid duplication. Together, integrated operations should be considered by involving Aboriginal organizations, industry and communities; by continuing governmental commitment to enhance voluntary stewardship; and by enabling the expression and respect for regional and cultural diversity across Canada. The findings of the Auditor General of Canada, recommendations from various resource and landowner associations and recommendations from national round tables of experts, reinforce the need for these integrated approaches to natural resources management.

Suggestions for improving institutional arrangements:

- Establish a stewardship network to enable stewards to influence the implementation of Canada's Stewardship Agenda and future policy development that affects stewards.
- Use Canada's Stewardship Agenda as the focus for collaboration, to link to other major governmental and non-governmental initiatives, such as Canada's Natural Legacy Agenda, the Agriculture Policy Framework and Oceans Sector Stewardship, efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, smart growth initiatives and Citizen Science (public input to environmental monitoring).
- Further develop the Stewardship Canada portal to focus initially on tools that are highly valued by stewardship organizations (e.g. Directory of Organizations and Funders; case studies; projects on line) and for land managers (e.g. guidelines, mapping tools, demonstration sites). Organizations should work together to provide learning opportunities, stewardship services and tools that will simplify funding and accountability.

Existing Investments

Examples of existing investments and initiatives include:

- Community Fisheries and Wildlife Involvement Program – Ontario
- Resource Stewardship Branch – Nova Scotia
- Stewardship Initiatives, Forest Stewardship Council – National
- Agriculture and Environmental Resource Conservation Program – Prince Edward Island
- Land Stewardship Resource Centre – Alberta

Issue 13: Integrating Stewardship with Planning and Ecological Management

Integrating stewardship activities into ecosystem approaches and bioregional planning will bring together diverse interests and enable cooperation. Stewardship programs are necessary at a variety of geographic scales. Local actions can help address provincial, territorial, national and international issues and fulfill needs at ecosystem or bioregional scales.

Suggestions for integrating stewardship with planning and ecological management:

- Ensure planners and resource managers understand the contribution that stewardship can make to a national vision for sustainable development.
- Enhance governmental support on a regional basis to better integrate land use planning, resource use strategies and bioregional initiatives.
- Improve the networks of individuals and organizations engaged in the conservation of biodiversity and development of resources.
- Continue and enhance support for existing bioregional planning mechanisms and programs such as Model Forests, Biosphere Reserves, the Atlantic Coastal Action Plan, and other watershed management and river basin approaches and recognize the contribution that stewards can make to these initiatives.
- Establish planning and development standards and guidelines that better support biodiversity conservation goals and the sustainable use of biological resources, and that promote and support stewardship.
- Identify geographically-based biodiversity conservation and sustainable use targets, and performance targets for stewardship programming to enable evaluation of programs and to assess levels of support for stewardship.
- Use demonstration sites to promote the results of improved integrated planning and management, and to demonstrate the roles and contributions that stewards make toward attaining biodiversity conservation and sustainable resource use development goals and objectives.
- Convene a national conference on integrated resource management and bioregional planning to share experiences and improve measures across Canada as part of efforts to advance stewardship.

Existing Investments

Examples of existing investments and initiatives include:

- Stewardship Activities and Hamilton Harbour Watershed – Ontario
- Prescribed Burn Workshops, Tallgrass Prairie Association – Ontario
- Municipal Wetland Stewardship Agreements – Newfoundland and Labrador
- Atlantic Coastal Action Program, Environment Canada – Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick and Newfoundland and Labrador
- Local Capacity Building Through Volunteerism, Canadian Biosphere Reserve Network – National
- Habitat Stewardship Program for Species at Risk, Environment Canada, Parks Canada Agency and Fisheries and Oceans Canada – National
- Model Forest Program, Canadian Forest Service – National
- Bedeque Bay Environmental Management Association – Prince Edward Island
- North American Waterfowl Management Plan – National
- Partners in Flight – National
- Partnerships Essential, Conserving the Garry Oak Ecosystem – British Columbia
- Capital Region Habitat Stewardship Project – Manitoba
- Coalition for Land and Water Stewardship in the Red River Basin – Manitoba and International Partners
- Integrated Resource Management – Alberta
- Wetlands and Coastal Habitat Project – Nova Scotia
- Co-Management Agreements, Framework for Stewardship in Northern Canada – Nunavut, Northwest Territories and Yukon

Issue 14: Improving Monitoring and Reporting on Stewardship Progress

Mechanisms are needed to monitor and report on the effects of stewardship policies and programs. The results of monitoring can be used to ensure that stewardship programs are contributing toward conservation and sustainable use

goals and the wise management of landscapes and seascapes. Reporting should illustrate the importance of stewardship in achieving goals and objectives. Monitoring and reporting should be objective and streamlined to ensure that it does not overburden governments, stewardship groups or local organizations.

Suggestions for improving monitoring and reporting on stewardship progress:

- Develop a comprehensive program and project management system to facilitate monitoring and reporting that will profile and describe the results of stewardship.
- Develop performance indicators for evaluating and reporting on stewardship programs.
- Report on the implementation of stewardship programs to ensure accountability and to profile the contribution of stewardship in achieving Canada-wide sustainable resource use goals and objectives.
- Design monitoring and reporting systems that meet the needs of users.

Existing Investments

Examples of existing investments and initiatives include:

- Understanding and Sharing Stewardship Successes, Centre for Land and Water Stewardship, University of Guelph – Ontario
- Habitat Status Reports, Wildlife Habitat Canada – National
- Survey of Farmers, Ranchers and Rural Landowners' Attitudes and Identifying Needs, Wildlife Habitat Canada and partners – National

Role

The Role of Governments

There is a strong expectation for leadership from all levels of government. Many of the proposed options lead to enhanced community capacity and improve the ability of stewards to help themselves in the future. Government investment will generate greater returns over time.

The primary roles of government in relation to stewardship are:

- to enable or enhance stewardship;
- to provide a positive environment for stewards;
- to support stewardship activities by providing a mix of voluntary and regulatory tools;
- to assist local communities build capacity to undertake stewardship initiatives and to maintain and enhance volunteerism;
- to provide funding or other incentives for stewardship; and
- to provide education and information programs that promote stewardship.



Public funding is often extremely valuable in the early phases of stewardship program development and delivery and can result in opportunities for groups to obtain other funding. The need for funding from governments may diminish over time as local capacity is established and projects become self-sustaining. However, there will be a need to provide long-term direction on behalf of the public interest.

New programs can benefit from the knowledge and experience of stewards. This information can help develop public policies and strategies for sustainable use, management and conservation of natural resources. By applying the principles of stewardship and ecological management approaches in their operations, Canadians demonstrate leadership.

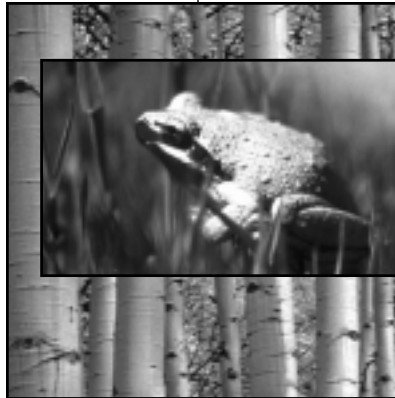
Conclusions

Conclusions

The range of stewardship meetings, discussions and consultations that contributed to this report identified issues and suggested options to enhance stewardship. The participants in the Voluntary Sector Initiative (VSI) and the Federal-Provincial-Territorial Stewardship Working Group meetings believed that fulfilling these needs can enable stewards to be more effective.

This report provides a summary of many views expressed by Canadians on stewardship. It can serve as the basis for the development of a plan for collaboration among Canadians that draws on the collective experience of communities, organizations and individuals, and is directed toward complementing existing investments in stewardship programs.

Canadians expect direct benefits from investing in stewardship, including better support for landowners who are good stewards, better integration among government agencies, more efficient funding processes and easier access to stewardship knowledge. In the preparation of this report, advice was drawn from many forums, surveys and conferences. The federal Voluntary Sector Initiative, in particular, provided valuable support for the conduct of community workshops across Canada, led by the staff of Wildlife Habitat Canada. The VSI Report emphasized the common message that Canada needs a vision for stewardship and it needs a coherent, linked network of stewards so that local activities can benefit from the experience of other Canadians.



Terms

Glossary of Terms

Accords are policy tools created to support work among organizations. Accords can link economic and political considerations. They are developed through consultation and consensus building.

Biodiversity means the variability among living organisms from all sources including, terrestrial, marine and aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are part; this includes diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems.

Bioregional means an ecological unit defined by a management authority, community association or other body, for purposes of natural resource planning, management and protection, e.g. a river watershed that encompasses the range of a particular salmon population.

Collaborative means working together, as a unit, all contributing to the same goal, to produce a result that is greater than the sum of the individual investments.

Collective means working individually, with the result being additive as a group.

Community means people, living in a definable area, who have common interests. The scale of the area is determined by the ability of these people to interact, to deal with their common interest. Therefore, a community could be a relatively large number of people in a relatively small geographic area, such as the members of a town who have a common interest. It could also be the community of people who are working on the recovery of endangered bird species across Canada.

Conservation means the maintenance or sustainable use of the Earth's resources in a manner that maintains ecosystems, species and genetic diversity and the evolutionary processes that shaped them. Conservation

may or may not involve the use of resources; that is, certain areas, species or populations may be excluded from human use as part of an overall landscape/waterscape conservation approach.

Metadata describe other data, being structured data about resources that can be used to support a wide range of applications such as description and discovery, or the management of information resources and their long-term protection.

Natural Life-Support Systems are also known as ecosystems. This term best combines the common interests of human health and biodiversity.

Portal is a website, containing large amounts of information with a focus on a specific topic. It provides links to other websites with complementary information. It may use interactive applications that enable users to add information and allow the portal information to rapidly expand and remain current (see: www.stewardshipcanada.ca).

Stewards are individuals or organizations that are custodians of the environment who are knowledgeable and committed to conserving biodiversity, to wisely using natural resources and to maintaining or improving soil, water and air quality. Simply stated, stewards are custodians of environmental resources, using them without limiting the opportunities for future generations.

Stewardship refers to the wide range of actions and activities of individuals, communities, groups and organizations acting alone or in partnership, to promote, monitor and conserve biodiversity, to develop and use all natural resources in a sustainable manner, and to maintain the ecosystems on which life depends. For the purposes of this report, stewardship is defined as: "An ethic by which Canadians care for our land, water and air as parts of a natural life-support system and act to sustain and enhance it for generations to come."

Sustainable Use means the use of components of biological diversity in a way and at a rate that does not lead to the long-term decline of biodiversity, thereby maintaining its potential to meet the needs and aspirations of present and future generations.