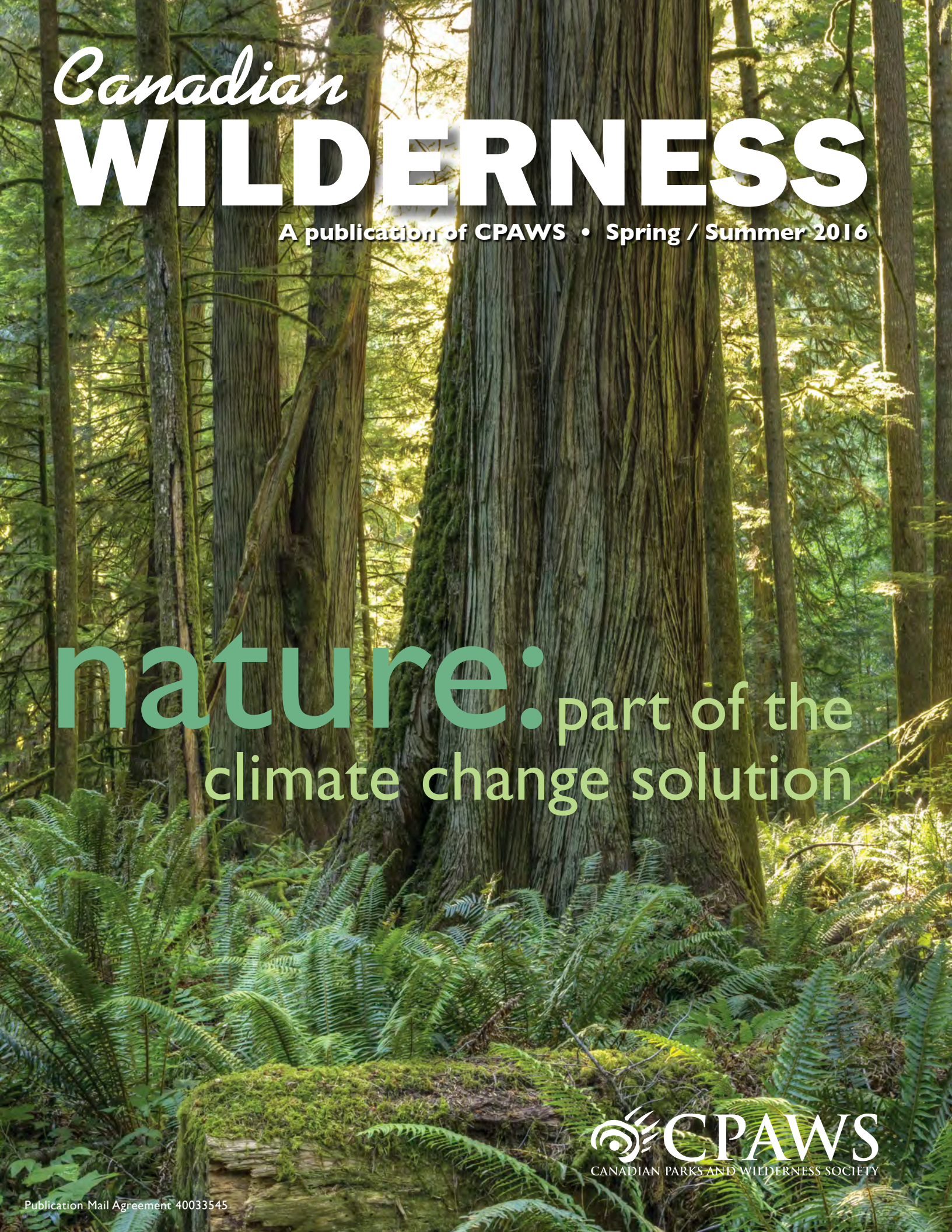

Canadian WILDERNESS

A publication of CPAWS • Spring / Summer 2016

nature: part of the climate change solution

CPAWS
CANADIAN PARKS AND WILDERNESS SOCIETY

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PRESIDENT'S DESK

The year of two summers

MIKE ROBINSON

Last summer was noticeably different on the north end of the Sunshine Coast in British Columbia. I and about twenty of my neighbours keep our boats at the Skelhp government wharf. We regularly swap stories and *kibbitz* about each other, what fish are being caught where, when, and increasingly the local changes in weather patterns.

For us, summer typically occurs in July and August. Last year, summer ran from the first week of May to the beginning of September. It was more like two summers. And more to the point, none of the old timers had ever before experienced that kind of lengthy drought on this part of the coast.

Naomi Klein, who summers on the Sunshine Coast to the south of Skelhp, talks about the importance of paying attention to local climate changes in her book *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. The Climate* (Simon & Schuster: 2014). She argues that fewer and fewer of us live close to nature and function as stewards on the land and seascapes. Those that do, for instance First Nations, Inuit and Métis in their traditional territories or other citizens who have chosen to live and work away from Canada's big metropolitan areas, need to be alert to local changes and communicate them to the urban folk. Arguably the 'bush telegraph' has never been more important.

CPAWS' 13 chapters across Canada add great value to climate change reporting by keeping a 'weather eye' open every day. With your support, our volunteers and staff conceptualize, plan and deliver campaigns that advance the idea that Nature Needs Half, and that our national commitments made at COP21 in Paris last year are attainable in the real world. Together, we can continue to make a difference. Thank you for joining in these efforts.

Mike Robinson is CPAWS' National Board of Trustees President.

Skelhp, Jervis Inlet, BC
Photo: Lynn Webster

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CPAWS
CANADIAN PARKS AND WILDERNESS SOCIETY

CPAWS is Canada's voice for wilderness. Since 1963, we've played a lead role in creating over two-thirds of Canada's protected areas.

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nature: part of the climate change solution

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FEATURES

DEPARTMENTS

COVER: Red cedar and fern forest Photo by Colin D. Young/Adobe Stock
ABOVE: Impacts on salmon affect the rest of the food chain Photo by Peter Mather

Will 10,000 Canadians stand up for Gros Morne?

As you may recall, in 2013 a proposal to drill and "frack" for oil metres from the boundary of Gros Morne National Park raised serious concern that Gros Morne National Park, its World Heritage status, and the local tourism and fishing economy would be at risk from potential adjacent industrial development.

The drilling program would have used hydraulic fracturing (commonly known as fracking)—the high-pressure injection of water containing toxic chemicals to shatter underground shale beds—to extract oil. Industrializing the Gros Morne coastline would not only have threatened the remarkable ecosystems of this World Heritage Site, it would have threatened the vital regional and provincial tourism economy which relies on the pristine natural beauty of Gros Morne's coast and mountains to attract visitors from across Canada and around the world.

In June 2014, in response to concerns raised by CPAWS, local citizens and businesses, the UNESCO World Heritage Committee recommended that Canada create a permanent protective buffer zone around the Gros Morne National Park to prevent harm from future industrial activities around the park.

With brand new provincial and federal governments in place, now is a critical time for Canadians to urge our newly elected officials to act quickly to create the buffer zone. CPAWS' goal is to get 10,000 signatures on our petition before presenting it to the new federal and provincial Environment Ministers. We're getting close! With your help, we know we can achieve this goal. If you haven't already done so, please visit http://cpaws.org/campaigns/gros-morne and sign the petition.

The creation of a buffer zone would help protect Gros Morne forever.
Photo: Michael Burzyński

Peel moves forward to the Supreme Court of Canada

Last August, the Peel case was heard at the Yukon Court of Appeal in Whitehorse. Once again, an extra courtroom was provided to accommodate the extraordinary interest in this case. In the main courtroom, the Yukon Government argued that the Yukon Supreme Court ruling by Justice Ronald Veale be dismissed. The respondents (the First Nation of Nacho Nyak Dun, Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation, CPAWS Yukon and Yukon Conservation Society), supported through an intervention by the Gwich'in Tribal Council, defended against the appeal and argued that Justice Veale's ruling be upheld.

In November, the magistrates of the Yukon Court of Appeal issued a judgement confirming the Yukon Government failed to honour its treaty obligations with respect to the Peel Watershed Land Use Plan. The ruling vindicates arguments that land-planning provisions of the Umbrella Final Agreement are binding on the Government. The Court further upheld the trial judge's finding that the Government's Plan for the Peel Watershed is a legal nullity. The Court directed that the process should go back to the stage when the Government's breach of the Final Agreements began, which was deemed to have occurred in 2011.

After careful consideration of the judgement, the respondents decided to file for leave to appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada specifically addressing the remedy imposed by the court. If the land use planning process returns to the court-ordered point, the Yukon Government is effectively granted a do-over and can bring their original plan for the Peel in as a modification to the plan. The wording of the court's remedy has far-reaching implications for the interpretation of all future Yukon land-use plans. A decision from the Supreme Court on whether to allow the application for leave to appeal may take several months.

Water ceremony during the Court of Appeal. Members of the public brought water together from all over the Yukon, from places that were special to them, in support of Peel protection. Our First Nation partners led a water ceremony which concluded with the water being returned to the Yukon River.
Photos: Tyler Kuhn

CLIMATE CHANGE 101

Greenhouse gases sustain life on Earth by trapping the sun's heat, much like the glass in a greenhouse. These gases allow the sun's rays to pass through and warm the earth, and prevent this warmth from escaping our atmosphere into space. When the amount of gases in the atmosphere increases quickly, more heat becomes trapped resulting in a global warming of the planet. Human activities are responsible for increasing three main gases that contribute to global warming: carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide.

Climate change mitigation refers to efforts to reduce or prevent emission of greenhouse gases from human activities. These efforts can include everything from creating new technologies and using renewable energy, to changing management practices or consumer behavior.

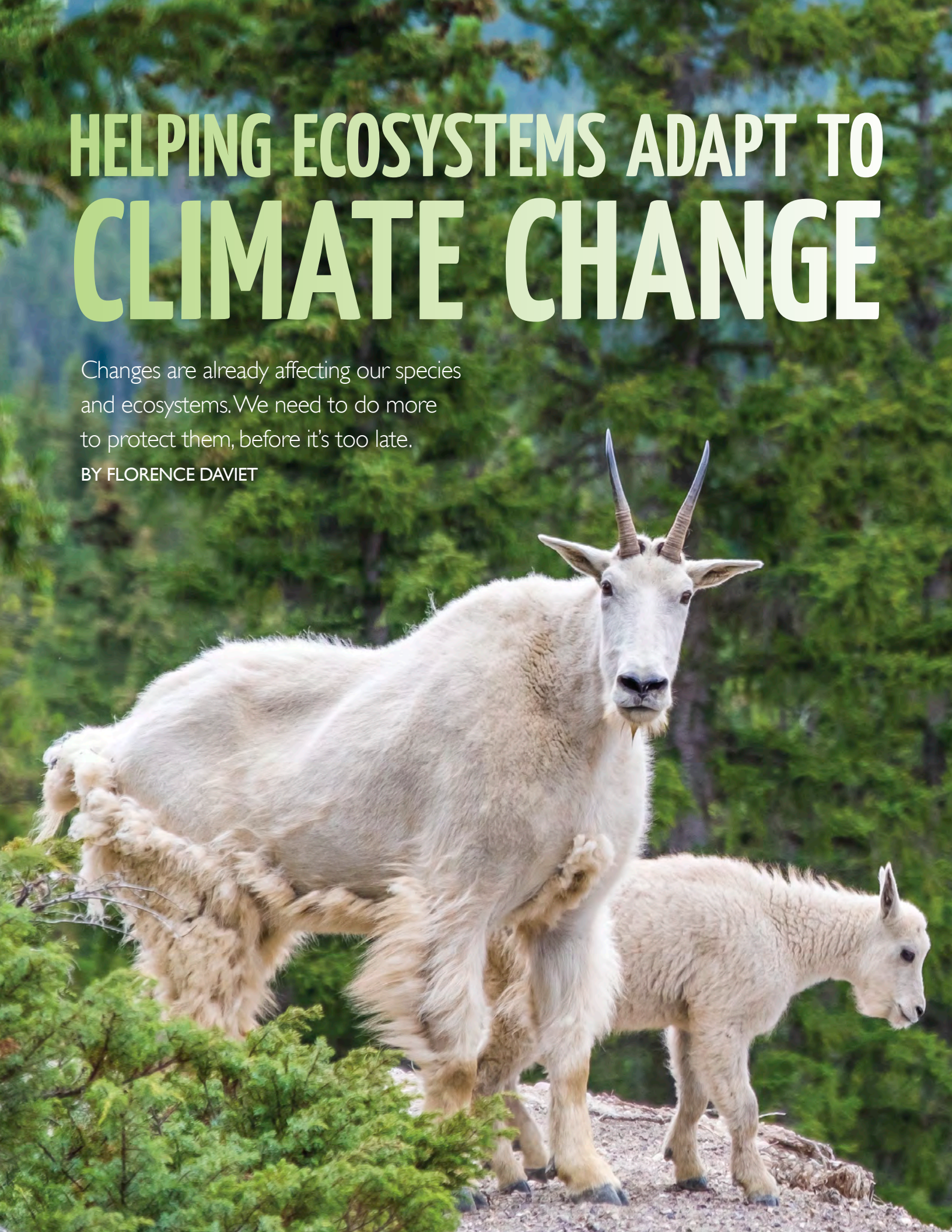
Climate change adaptation refers to strategic actions designed to help human communities, plant and animal ecosystems and other agencies deal with the expected effects of climate change. These include changing temperatures and increased flooding and fires.

Resilience to climate change and climate change impacts is the extent to which communities, business, ecosystems and others can maintain or return to a previous level of functionality when faced by climate change and its impacts. Some may be much more vulnerable to climate change as a result of existing stresses such as poverty.

HELPING ECOSYSTEMS ADAPT TO CLIMATE CHANGE

Changes are already affecting our species and ecosystems. We need to do more to protect them, before it's too late.

BY FLORENCE DAVIET



Since 1948, Canada's climate has warmed by 1.6 degrees Celsius. These unprecedented rates of warming pose dire consequences for Canada's ecosystems.

The tightly evolved relationships among species are being disrupted. Grizzly bears and polar bears are mating as their modified ranges intersect. Returning migratory birds are faced with a lack of food to feed their young as insect hatching patterns change. Traditional habitats are disrupted by melting permafrost, flooding and/or drought. Pine beetles are no longer restrained by cold temperatures. Our oceans are warming and acidifying, placing shellfish at risk. Much is already altered and more can be expected if temperatures increase unabated.

In face of climate change, we must actively encourage our governments to meet international standards to reduce emissions. In parallel, we also need to explore ways to build up resilience of our ecosystems and to allow species to shift their ranges in response to changing conditions. A simple and proven solution is to focus on creating a robust well-managed and well-connected system of protected areas. This will not only buffer change, but will continue to yield clean air and water. Furthermore, it offers a much cheaper alternative than expensive infrastructure.

PROTECTED AREAS AS PART OF THE SOLUTION

How do protected areas help? Large, well-managed protected areas, give ecosystems – and all that live within them – an opportunity to function free from the stress of industrial and other harmful development. For species affected by the stress of industrial and commercial activities or urbanization, large protected areas could mean the difference between being resilient and able to adapt to climate change, and becoming extinct.

We also need to address the need for connectivity between core protected areas. As climate change forces ecosystems to move and change, we need to make sure that species have the ability to shift in response to these changing conditions. We have traditionally protected little islands of nature in isolation of each other, but that kind of thinking will not help us meet the needs of nature into the future.

Ecosystems that have the full suite of plants and animals have the best chance of long-term survival. With everything else we throw at them, ecosystems need some factors to work in their favour. Large, connected protected areas are a key way to ensure that our ecosystems can be resilient to the many threats they face, including climate change. Ecological restoration can help rebuild resilience where it has been weakened through poor management decisions.

For our own sake, we need to regularly ask ourselves what we can do to help our ecosystems adapt to a rapidly changing world. It's taken millions of years for nature to reach its current shape. It has evolved and adapted over long periods of time. Now humans have set changes in motion that require ecosystems to adapt faster than they ever have before. Nature has never faced the kind of pressures we are placing on it today. We cannot afford to take any additional risks. By protecting these ecosystems, we are in fact protecting ourselves.

Photo: Mountain goats, Athabasca River by Robert Bohrer/Adobe Stock

CONSERVATION: A SOLUTION TO CLIMATE CHANGE

Minimizing disturbances and restoring damaged ecosystems are key to reducing emissions and mitigating climate change. **BY FLORENCE DAVIET**

In Paris this past December, Canada helped to champion a future with global warming limited to less than 2 degrees. This highly ambitious goal requires using every tool available to reduce greenhouse gas emissions including absorbing and storing carbon. Mitigating climate change is everyone's responsibility.

Our planet's lands and oceans absorb more than half of the human-caused greenhouse gas emissions into the atmosphere. The challenge for Canada is to minimize activities that could cause emissions from these land and seascapes.

An effective network of protected areas prevents emissions that would otherwise occur from development activities or other forms of disturbance. Protected areas by definition are not to be disturbed and are established in perpetuity. The bonus of course is that biodiversity is sheltered and important ecosystem services like clean air and fresh water are ensured.

Minimizing disturbances can be complemented with management actions such as restoring damaged ecosystems like peat bogs and wetlands, which enhances their ability to absorb and store carbon. Setting prescribed fires to prevent more severe fires, and protecting vulnerable ecosystems are also important strategies in mitigating climate change.

We know that there are places where protecting carbon is especially important. The boreal forest, for example, stores more carbon than any other terrestrial ecosystem – almost twice as much per hectare as tropical forests. Parks Canada estimated that Nahanni National Park Reserve, even before its recent expansion, stored about as much carbon as is currently emitted in Canada in one year. Similar calculations for all protected areas in Canada would underline the important role these areas have in the commitment to avoiding emissions.

Protecting our seagrass and salt marshes through marine protected areas is another powerful tool to address climate change. In BC, roughly 400 km^2 of salt marsh and seagrass meadows store the equivalent of the emissions from 200,000 passenger cars, yet most of these areas are not protected and many are in danger of disappearing.

Harvesting less of our forest and shifting to wood products that store carbon for longer time periods can also be a part of the solution. Natural Resources Canada suggests such actions could reduce emissions by an amount equivalent to what Canada currently releases in one whole year.

In the coming years, we will need to explore many solutions for reducing our emissions in Canada. One key part of our strategy needs to focus on reducing our footprint on our lands and oceans, including creating effective networks of protected areas and other ecosystem-based solutions.

Photo: Great blue heron by Brandon Smith/Adobe Stock

MAPPING CONSERVATION

We all know that parks and protected areas provide us with wonderful refuges from our fast-paced modern lives and help our well-being by connecting us with nature. Protected areas, though, are also the most important long-term solution for wildlife conservation. Studies estimate that species are currently going extinct at a rate of 100 to 1000 times greater than they were prior to human life on Earth, and that these extinctions are generally caused by habitat loss and fragmentation, overexploitation, and competition with invasive species. All of which are either directly or indirectly related to human activity.

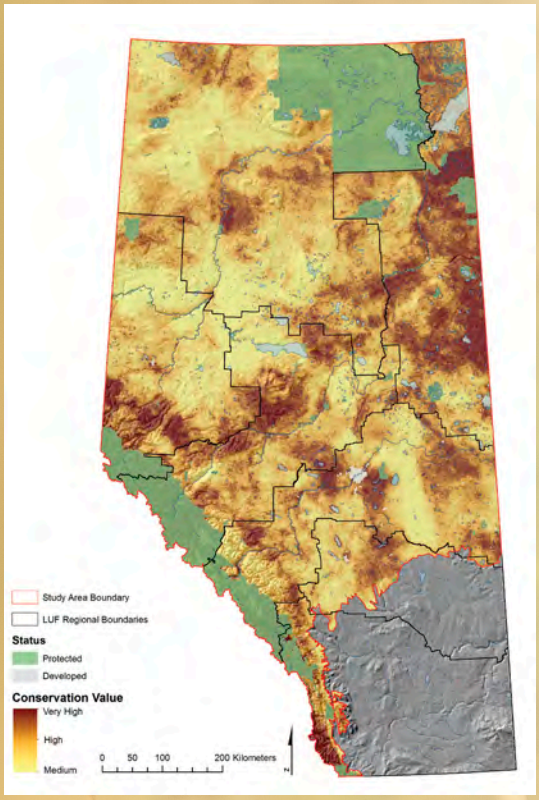
In October, the CPAWS Northern Alberta chapter launched its **Conservation Blueprint of Northern Alberta: Prioritizing areas for protected areas planning**. The Conservation Blueprint is an exciting new tool for CPAWS, providing a scientifically sound analysis of the areas of northern Alberta that have the highest value for protection. The goal of the Conservation Blueprint is to create a design in northern Alberta that protects biodiversity and achieves connectivity between the different landscapes found in the region, allowing for the migration of species and their adaptation to a changing climate.

Using 300 different conservation features – everything from geology to land cover to the habitat preferences of over 170 species at risk in Alberta – the Conservation Blueprint shows where the province needs to be focusing its energy to achieve 20%, 50%, and 80% protection. It also takes into account the staggering amount of habitat disturbance in Alberta, as well as the high value of the forestry and oil and gas industries. The result is a series of maps that inform and guide our ongoing conservation work.

For example, we are already using the Conservation Blueprint to effect on-the-ground conservation in partnership with forestry companies who are signatories to the Canadian Boreal Forest Agreement. We are also currently using it to determine the best areas in northern Alberta for conservation when the perspective is both conservation and forestry, and we hope our work will have positive impacts for both conservation and northern communities. Through 2017, we will be working alongside the CPAWS Southern Alberta chapter to expand the Conservation Blueprint's analysis to include the province's grasslands.

The Conservation Blueprint is a living, breathing tool that can be adjusted to address the priorities of different stakeholders in different climates, whether natural or political. It has the potential to be used with provincial, regional, or local governments for "zooming in" on important species or areas, as well as with Aboriginal communities to gain further protection for traditional territories, or to examine the impacts of climate change on our province.

If you would like your own copy of the Conservation Blueprint, visit http://cpawsnab.org/campaigns/conservation-blueprint-of-northern-alberta. Every purchase of the Conservation Blueprint supports CPAWS Northern Alberta's work in furthering protected areas and conservation planning in Alberta.



This map shows the Conservation Value of study area used by CPAWS Northern Alberta. The areas coloured yellow are of medium conservation value in the province, while the areas coloured brown illustrate areas of highest value for conservation. Conservation Value refers to the irreplaceability, rarity, diversity and species richness of the area. Map courtesy Danielle Pendlebury; Photo: Great grey owl by sduben/fotolia/Adobe Stock

CPAWS Northern Alberta's Conservation Blueprint: Using science to inform protected areas planning.

BY ALISON RONSON

PROMISING OUTLOOK FOR 2016

We expect 2016 to be an exciting year for Newfoundland and Labrador in terms of conservation advancements. Since the fall election, the new provincial government signaled that protected areas will be a higher priority. In the ministerial mandate letters, Premier Dwight Ball specifically directs Environment and Conservation Minister Perry Trimper to "finalize and publicly release a Natural Areas System Plan in collaboration with [his] colleagues."

Will 2016 be the year we save Gros Morne? Photo: Jeannine Winkel

Similarly, we look forward to working with the new provincial and federal governments to develop a buffer zone around Gros Morne National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site established in recognition of its unique geological features and spectacular natural beauty. UNESCO has called for a buffer zone around the park to ensure its globally significant natural beauty is not damaged by adjacent industrial activities.

Our province is a truly magnificent place. Here's hoping that 2016 will be a year when more of our natural heritage is conserved.

- Suzanne Dooley and Tanya Edwards, CPAWS Newfoundland and Labrador
For more information, visit cpawsnl.org

Building community understanding of the local impact of climate change

The New Brunswick chapter has been busy raising awareness about the importance of conserving our green and blue natural spaces in an effort to build our communities' resilience to the impacts of climate change. Part of this initiative included producing fact sheets about how climate change will influence New Brunswick's forests, rivers, wetlands, and wildlife.

Residents are currently worried about extreme river flooding and coastal storm surges, which we began experiencing in February. Conservation is a natural, inexpensive solution that could include deliberately conserving intact forests in headwaters, and protecting wider streamside connecting buffers of trees and shrubs.

Always looking to the future, we have outlined strategic actions to manage our public forests, coastlines and parks to conserve their natural resilience and diversity. We've also given talks to service clubs, watershed groups, fish and wildlife organizations, and community planners around New Brunswick to garner support and a greater understanding of the need for strategic conservation and protection actions.

- Roberta Clowater, CPAWS New Brunswick
For more information, visit cpawsnb.org

Salmon rivers, like the Upsalquitch River in northern New Brunswick, are running unusually low or dry in summer. Photo: Steve Reid

65 new parks and protected areas created in Nova Scotia

Nova Scotia continues to make good progress expanding the amount of protected land in the province, officially creating 65 new parks and protected areas in December.

The new protected areas include rich coastal ecosystems at Forchu Coast Wilderness Area in Cape Breton, large intact forests within an expanded Tobeatic Wilderness Area in southwestern Nova Scotia, and a significant waterway at Liscomb River Wilderness Area along the Eastern Shore, plus many others.

With the new protected areas, Nova Scotia is now ranked third in Canada for the total percentage of lands dedicated toward protected areas. Only a few short years ago, Nova Scotia was ranked near the bottom of the pack.

About two thirds of Nova Scotia's 'Our Parks and Protected Areas Plan' has now been successfully implemented by the provincial government. An additional 100 protected sites are still awaiting official designation.

- Chris Miller, CPAWS Nova Scotia
For more information, visit cpawsns.org

Alberta's Caribou Range Planning

Caribou in Alberta are struggling. While provincial range plans for boreal caribou are due in October 2017, Alberta has yet to produce even one for public review. When that time comes, CPAWS Northern Alberta will ensure that participation in the process is well informed.

CPAWS Northern Alberta is hard at work creating an easy-to-understand caribou range planning guide for the public that will include an overview of boreal caribou in Alberta, their management history, and the threats they face. The guide will also map critical habitat for each range, highlight currently undisturbed habitat for immediate protection, and identify areas to prioritize for restoration.

The federal recovery strategy outlines the need for 65 per cent undisturbed range to ensure self-sustaining herds. Sadly, there are no herds in Alberta that meet this minimum threshold due to historic habitat disturbance and fragmentation. Once completed, the guide will enable all Albertans to advocate for and take action on behalf of our iconic caribou herds.

- Tara Russell, CPAWS Northern Alberta
For more information, visit cpawsnab.org

Salt-dominated wetlands near Red Deer, Manitoba. Photo: Ducks Unlimited

Meeting 17% conservation goal by 2020 is doable

In December, Manitoba unveiled a new provincial climate plan that touches on the importance of boreal protection to help address climate change. Covering 80% of the province, the vast carbon stores it contains is perhaps the greatest opportunity for this province to make headway in this effort.

CPAWS will continue to work with the province to ensure boreal conservation is a high priority. Positive signs have emerged with the designation of new protected areas including the 90,000 ha Red Deer Wildlife Management area. Blanketed in forest and five major wetland types, the region is not only a valuable carbon sink but important habitat for the Bog Range boreal woodland caribou herd.

Its announcement went hand in hand with the release of a new protected areas strategy which, most notably, included a commitment to protect 17% of lands and inland waters by 2020.

It has taken 40 years to reach our current level of 11% protection so a commitment to add another 6% in under 5 years is ambitious. If pursued, existing commitments to support Indigenous land use planning and rights-holder inclusive processes initiated toward protections in the Seal River watershed, the Fisher Bay region, and the polar bear park study area make this goal entirely within reach.

- Joshua Pearlman, CPAWS Manitoba
For more information, visit cpawsmb.org

Kermode (Spirit) bear at home in BC's Great Bear Rainforest. Photo: Andy S. Wright

Working collaboratively for conservation gains and setting worldwide precedents

In February, a landmark agreement was reached for the Great Bear Rainforest, which covers 6.4 million hectares of British Columbia's mid-coast. The agreement, two decades in the making, is the result of an unprecedented collaboration between First Nations, government, environmental groups, and industry, and introduces a number of newly protected areas to the BC land base.

We are thrilled about this new protection and hope the momentum of this much-needed progress carries through to the Great Bear Sea, which is so closely connected to the Great Bear Rainforest.

2015 marked an important milestone on the path to a sustainable future for Canada's North Pacific Coast with the ratification of world-class marine use plans by the BC government and 18 First Nations. The Marine Planning Partnership (MaPP) developed detailed marine plans that provide guidelines for sustainable use of the Great Bear Sea, in a way that benefits local coastal communities. This represents one of the largest marine planning projects in the world!

- Michelle Sz, CPAWS British Columbia
To find out more about the Great Bear Sea and MaPP, visit http://cpawsbc.org/campaigns/oceanplanning

CAMPAIGNING TO MAKE GATINEAU PARK A REAL PARK!

It's hard not to fall in love with the extraordinary biodiversity of Gatineau Park. It truly is a park of national importance that has 118 rare or endangered species, numerous wetlands, and 50 lakes. Outdoor enthusiasts love Gatineau Park because it provides unsurpassed recreational opportunities on over 200 kms of hiking and ski trails and 125 kms of bike trails, not to mention camping, paddling and rock climbing spaces, all only minutes from Parliament Hill.

Most of Gatineau Park belongs to the federal government and is managed by the National Capital Commission. However, it does not have the governing legislation and full parliamentary oversight given to all Canadian national parks under the *National Parks Act*. Without formal protection, portions of the park will continue to be subjected to use for housing development, the construction of shopping centres, and the creation of new roads as in the past, which all threaten the park's rich biodiversity.

Photo: Elena Kreuzberg

In March, CPAWS OV officially launched the Make it a Real Park campaign aimed at introducing legislated protection for Gatineau Park equivalent to a national park, with boundaries protected in law.

- John McDonnell, CPAWS Ottawa Valley
For more information, visit www.makeitarealpark.ca

From left to right: Alain Branchaud (SNAP Québec), Alice de Swarte (SNAP Québec), Mr. Braulio Ferreira de Souza Dias (CBD), Sophie Gallais (Nature Québec), Christian Simard (Nature Québec), Eduardo Fonseca Arraes (NMR)
Photo: Mélissa Vaitilingame / SNAP Québec

Unveiling the first assessment of Quebec Biodiversity

SNAP Québec and Nature Québec published a first assessment in January of the actions taken to protect Quebec's biodiversity. Unfortunately, analysis reveals that the province is likely to miss international conservation targets. The Nagoya + report proposes a series of recommendations to achieve the 2020 targets, particularly in how to implement the Plan Nord. Quebec will also redouble its efforts in the south of its territory and its marine environment.

The unveiling of the report was done in the presence of Mr. Braulio Ferreira de Souza Dias, Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the UN agency responsible for the Nagoya commitments. Mr. Dias said that "Quebec has a unique biodiversity and the achievement of these objectives is a necessary step to preserve this natural heritage for future generations." He also urged other provinces to do the same exercise and evaluate actions taken on biodiversity.

- Mélissa Vaitilingame, SNAP Québec
For more information, visit snapqc.org

CPAWS PEOPLE

CPAWS YUKON – CHRIS RIDER

Chris Rider recently joined the CPAWS family, starting in March as the Executive Director of the Yukon chapter. In his most recent role as the Executive Director of another Yukon-based non-profit, Chris worked to develop strong community relationships. His broad range of experience working in environmental, international development and youth-focused organizations have seen him move from his native Australia, to England, the Netherlands and finally here to Canada.

When he's not at work, Chris likes nothing more than getting on his bike or going out on a hiking trip to explore the Yukon's pristine wilderness.

Photo: Chris Rider

SNAP QUÉBEC – ALAIN BRANCHAUD

At the end of 2015, Alain Branchaud joined the SNAP Québec team as the new Executive Director. Alain has twenty-five years of experience in the conservation field and, most notably, has worked with Environment Canada on the development of the Species at Risk Program. He is also the co-founder of Projet Rescousse (Project Rescue), whose mission is to raise awareness of threatened or vulnerable wildlife in Quebec and to raise funds to help protect them.

Photo: Alain Branchaud

When he's not at work, Alain likes getting outside to go hiking and being close to nature. He also has a fondness for the history of natural science and old books on the subject.

WHAT LEGACY WILL YOU LEAVE?

When you leave a bequest to CPAWS, you are leaving a legacy of beautiful landscapes, seascapes and wildlife for future generations. No matter the size of your bequest, it will have a lasting impact and help provide a stable future for Canadian wilderness.

For more information on leaving a bequest, contact:

Vicki DiMillo
1-800-333-9453 ext. 229
donations@cpaws.org

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- ✓ Enables you to make a lasting difference to CPAWS and your environment

For more information, please contact us at wpc@cpaws.org.

Photo: Terry Shaddick

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2016 AGM NOTICE

The CPAWS Annual General Meeting will be held by conference call on Monday, September 26th, at 8:00 pm Eastern.

For more information, please contact us at
info@cpaws.org
or 1-800-333-9453

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TO: CANADIANS!