
Report of the Biennium

1985-1987



Canadian
Council on
Ecological
Areas

Conseil
canadien
des aires
écologiques

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CCEA Report of the Biennium 1985-1987

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Canadian Council on Ecological Areas

The Canadian Council on Ecological Areas is an incorporated, non-profit, independent national forum established in 1982 to encourage the selection, protection and stewardship of a comprehensive system of ecological areas in Canada. It draws its membership from federal, provincial and territorial governments, non-government organizations, universities and private citizens.

Objectives

1. To promote public understanding of and support for the establishment of a comprehensive Canadian system of ecological areas;
2. To facilitate the exchange of relevant information among governments and other interested organizations;
3. To advise and assist governments and others interested in the development and maintenance of a comprehensive Canadian system of ecological areas and in its integration with land-use planning systems;
4. To prepare guidelines on the selection, establishment, protection and management of ecological areas, and on evaluation and upgrading of the relevant data base;
5. To evaluate and report on the selection, designation, protection, management and use of established and proposed Canadian ecological areas;
6. To establish useful relationships with international organizations and organizations in other countries having similar interests and concerns;
7. To do all such other things as are incidental or conducive to the attainment of the above objects.

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1985-1986

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Dr. Robert Bergeron

Foreword from the Chairman

The Canadian Council on Ecological Areas is an independent and active group, conceived and developed in a world that focuses on high technology, monoculture and single use allocations of resources — a world becoming more and more product-specific, prone to examine parts and lose sight of wholes. This trend to adopt an incremental perspective continues to accelerate; we deal with “electrical systems”, “hydraulic systems” and “heating systems” with little consideration as to whether these systems are part of an apartment complex, a spaceship or a combine harvester.

It is not surprising, then, that society looks at individual parts of ecosystems in isolation from other parts and from the whole ecosystem. Inexorably, we encounter the concept of monoculture, recognize its apparent benefits to production and embrace its promise. Production costs are assessed in direct economic terms such as equipment and energy; benefits are assessed as product per acre or management unit. Benefits foregone are rarely recognized, let alone documented as costs. One result is the reduction of the number of species of plants and animals alive today compared with yesterday. Lost too are the opportunities to study these species, to learn from them and to use them for mankind's benefit.

Many biologically oriented scientists and administrators, along with scientifically oriented conservationists have been aware of this situation and its associated losses for some time. So too have they been aware, as through a dark glass, of the impacts on the present generation and potential impacts on future generations. Such impacts can be conceptualized, but rarely quantified. They are benefits foregone in the truest sense of the term — we do not miss what we have never had. Recognition of such losses and a desire to avoid or at least minimize further loss, helped to foster the concept of protected ecological areas where ecosystems would exist undisturbed by consumptive use or efforts to stimulate production.

As Canadians, we tend to be blasé about losing species. This is understandable since we live in a country which is mainly unpopulated, undeveloped and scientifically unexplored. The situation likely will persist far into the future, but it is by no means certain that it will exist to the end of man's tenure on spaceship earth. The undeveloped, unpopulated parts of Canada are that way primarily because of constraints inherent in land and climate. These areas support many natural ecosystems. Other parts of the country, blessed with higher levels of biological productivity, have been well populated and developed for many years. In these parts we can find, at best, a

few undisturbed remnants of the original ecosystems.

The opportunity to take action beckoned in undeveloped regions while urgency provided a spur in developed regions. Programs started in a number of jurisdictions, as the first protected ecological areas were established and legislation was proclaimed. Shortly after these programs were established, it was realized that a great deal of work needed to be done and that communication among proponents of protected ecological areas was severely limited. The need for a nationwide organization became apparent, hence the establishment of the Canadian Council on Ecological Areas.

At its inception the council's main roles were to encourage the establishment of a nationwide system of ecological areas and to facilitate communication among interested individuals and groups. These real and pressing needs continue. In response, Council provides an active forum for sharing ideas and enthusiasm, for informal, voluntary coordination of action and for encouraging development of the nationwide system of protected ecological areas. The Council also relates to the need for a common voice to speak to Canadians and with similarly minded people of other countries. Key areas for discussion include protection of ecologically significant areas, ecological diversity, conservation strategies and research in ecological areas.

While the Council is still young, it has grown steadily since its inception in 1982. The beginnings of a nationwide system of protected ecological areas are in place and their principle values have been recognized by knowledgeable people. The system awaits completion; the knowledge of the values of such areas and their potential benefits requires dissemination.

This is Council's second biennial report. It summarizes Council's achievements from 1985 to the end of 1987. I recommend it for your serious consideration.

Ross Thomasson
Chairman

1985 - 1987, A Resumé

The last two years have been a significant period of growth and strengthening for Council.

The Report of the Task Force on Northern Conservation was carefully reviewed by knowledgeable Council members. Their opinion, endorsed by the executive, was that the report was excellent and worthy of Council's support. The linkage between resource management and the establishment of protected areas was considered to be particularly significant. It was, however, suggested

in Council's response that ecologically representative areas should be protected along with areas which are ecologically unique. Concurrently, Council recognized its responsibility to improve the methodology and criteria for identification and evaluation of protected areas. The Council urged immediate implementation of the task force recommendations. It also had representatives participate in the Yellowknife Workshop on Northern Conservation.

Federal, territorial and provincial governments have been approached for financial support. A formula based on the one used for funding the Canadian Council of Resource and Environmental Ministers was used to determine the amount requested from each government. Funds, through grants and direct staff support, were received by the end of 1984. These grants required that a mechanism be established to receive and administer funds. This was accomplished with the able assistance of World Wildlife Fund, Canada. Thus, in 1985 Council began to function as a financially independent organization.

Council strengthened its international contacts in 1985. Communications were exchanged with similar organizations in Australia, South Africa and the United States of America. The CCEA Chairman attended the 1986 annual meeting of the Natural Areas Association in Missouri, and Dr. Glen Juday of Alaska, President of the Natural Areas Association, attended the 1987 CCEA meeting in Winnipeg. At the same meeting, Council endeavored to strengthen its association with numerous Canadian organizations including the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC), the Biological Survey of Canada and the Man and the Biosphere Program.

The format of annual meetings was broadened to include field trips and workshops. These additions were first implemented at the 1985 annual meeting in Saskatoon. It was also in Saskatoon that the decision to develop a national registry of protected ecological areas was re-affirmed. This registry, initially in hard copy, will provide a ready reference of protected areas for scientists, land and resource administrators, policy makers and the general public. All jurisdictions were asked to submit their data by the end of 1987.

Council's membership has grown so that by the end of 1987 there was representation from all the major governments in Canada. The 1986 and 1987 annual meetings, held in Montreal and Winnipeg, respectively, were extended to three days in recognition of the need for additional discussion and the desire of members to spend more time visiting local protected ecological areas.

Workshops have evolved as an integral component of annual meetings. Those dealing with private land stewardship and the development of a system of marine ecological reserves were of particular interest

in Montreal. The private stewardship workshop for which proceedings will be issued in 1988, has elevated awareness about the importance of private stewardship initiative in protecting ecological areas in private ownership, and has demonstrated some catalytic roles for Council to further such initiatives. The latter workshop resulted in Council establishing a Task Force to look into the concept of marine and freshwater ecological reserves. Dr. Robert Graham of the University of Waterloo was appointed to chair the Task Force.

Through annual meetings, and an ongoing basis, members have continued to refine the concept of the ecological areas registry, develop papers dealing with research in ecological areas and the criteria for establishment of these areas. At the 1987 annual meeting a workshop was held on environmental monitoring in protected ecological areas. Another task force is reviewing the Canadian Council of Resource and Environment Ministers report entitled "Environment and Economy" and the new National Forest Sector Strategy.

The Council's executive committee was apprised of and strongly supported the Biological Survey of Canada recognizing that the Survey presently deals only with insects. While recognizing provincial, territorial and federal government mandates to conduct research and manage wildlife, the executive expressed the opinion that expansion of the Survey to include other life forms would be valuable and hence it is supportive of such expansion. In a similar vein, Council remains supportive of the Rare Plant Project of the National Museums of Canada, and continues to encourage funding of this program, including the publication of lists and reports on Canada's rare flora.

Contact was maintained with and encouragement given to the Man and the Biosphere program. This occurred at both local and national levels with CCEA members actively participating in MAB.

The biennium also saw a change in chairmanship. With heartfelt appreciation, Council paid tribute to its first Chairman when Dr. David Munro stepped down at the 1986 annual meeting. David had been involved with Council since its early days and had nurtured it through the initial organizational period. Under David's guidance, Council developed into an independent organization and an effective force for encouraging the development of a nationwide system of protected ecological areas.

Ross Thomasson assumed the chair in 1987, and has tackled his responsibilities with enthusiasm and commitment. Under his direction, the administrative structure of the Council has grown to include the Atlantic Working Group of the Canadian Council on Ecological Areas. Recently Ross made presentations on behalf of CCEA at the Wild West Conservation Meeting in Regina (attended by Prince Philip) and at the Saskatchewan Natural History Society annual meeting in Moose Jaw.

Scientific Committee

(Co-ordinator: Dr. Paul Keddy)

We are all dependent for our survival and standard of living upon the biological resources of our planet. Scientific research is essential to ensure the sustainable use of these resources, and ecological reserves are essential for this scientific research. It therefore follows that renewable resource management is dependent upon the existence of ecological reserves. Reserves have at least four important roles in science. They provide 'control' areas with minimal disturbance as reference points for study of disturbed systems. They provide areas where long term research can be conducted without risk of interruption. They often provide increased protection from vandalism. Most importantly, as research on protected sites grows, they provide the opportunity to conduct research in areas with a solid base of already existing data.

Only a small subset of Canadian ecosystem types is currently protected within ecological reserves, and remaining remnants of natural systems are rapidly being lost. While trained personnel, research funds, and research facilities are all accepted as essential foundations for scientific research, ecological reserves must be recognized as an important fourth component. The Canadian scientific community can assist in setting up a national system of protected areas by (1) emphasizing the relationship between research and reserves, (2) lobbying for increased rates of acquisition, (3) providing scientific data for the selection and management of reserves and (4) ensuring that reserves are used in existing or planned research.

Possible projects to be undertaken by the Scientific Committee on a long term basis would be the development of a national systems plan for ecological areas and the development of a national priority list of candidate ecological areas.

Management and Administration Committee

(Co-ordinator: Tom Beechey)

Guidelines for the Selection of Ecological Areas is being finalized for publication by CCEA in 1988. These guidelines prescribe concepts and principles, which have proven useful to jurisdictions involved in the survey, selection and evaluation of ecological areas. The guidelines have been developed with extensive input of jurisdictional and scientific members of CCEA. Proceedings of the workshop on *Private Stewardship of Ecological Areas* held in conjunction with the 1986 general meeting in Montreal also will be published in 1988 for distribution to members of Council and other audiences. Building on the resolutions of this workshop, CCEA is encouraging in-

novative efforts to promote stewardship including alternative methods and incentives to protect areas.

Jurisdictional Report Guidelines have been revised to reflect substantial input and testing and will be issued as an occasional paper. Adherence by all jurisdictions to these reporting guidelines at annual meetings will facilitate national synopses for inclusion in future reports of Council, and will aid members and others to make comparisons of progress on identifying, protecting and managing ecological areas across Canada during the fiscal year period.

Consideration is being given to future initiatives for Council. Following are some potential projects: the preparation of guidelines for environmental monitoring in ecological areas; the compilation of a catalogue of scientific research completed in established ecological areas (jointly with the Science Committee); the preparation of selective bibliographies on management; the maintenance of supplementary documentation on ecological areas listed in the national registry; and the staging of a symposium on private land stewardship.

Education and Information Committee

(Co-ordinator: Diane Griffin)

The Council started publication of a regular newsletter in February 1987 which is available in both official languages. The newsletter contains jurisdictional updates, reports of new projects, updates on committee work and information on related topics of interest such as the status of provincial conservation strategies.

A new tabletop exhibit on the Council's work was inaugurated at the 1987 Federal/Provincial/Territorial Wildlife Conference in Tuktoyaktuk, Northwest Territories. Accompanied by brochures and other CCEA literature, it has been used at several functions across Canada.

In 1987 CCEA initiated an awards program to honour individuals and groups who have made significant contributions to the preservation of ecological areas. The first two awards were presented to Dr. Stewart MacDonald of Ottawa and to the Wagner Natural Area Society of Edmonton during Council's 1987 annual meeting in Winnipeg.

Dr. MacDonald, an employee of the National Museum of Natural Sciences, was a key force in having Polar Bear Pass designated for protection under the Canadian Wildlife Act. It is jointly managed by the Governments of Canada and the Northwest Territories. The Wagner Natural Area Society leased the 400 acre Wagner bog from the Alberta Government. The society has set up an ambitious management program to protect the area and facilitate appropriate educational use.

Milestones Toward a Nationwide System of Ecological Areas

At the same time that Council has been advancing its work in very substantial ways, it has been encouraged by the significant progress toward identifying, protecting, and managing ecological areas throughout Canada. Among the achievements, the following developments and trends are especially noteworthy:

- ongoing work in a number of jurisdictions toward strengthening legislation for ecological areas;
- declaration of two new national parks — Bruce Peninsula National Park and South Moresby National Park Reserve — each of which also includes a marine national park;
- establishment of the first territorial park — Herschel Island — located off Yukon's north coast, and established to protect its terrestrial, coastal and marine landscape;
- creation of a number of other protected ecological areas including nationally important sites, such as Backus Woods in the Carolinian Region;
- continuing developments and progress in many regions of the country to identify candidate ecological areas using a systems perspective;
- new initiatives, with additional funding commitments, such as Ontario's programme for Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest, and Manitoba's Ecologically Significant Areas Voluntary Protection Activity;
- continuing evolution of policies and guidelines for ecological areas, with increasing emphasis on public consultation;
- a dramatic strengthening of regional co-operative programs involving jurisdictions and non-governmental organizations working together to protect critical sites;
- rapidly evolving developments across Canada to enhance the protection and stewardship of private lands by utilizing landowner contact, landowner recognition programs and incentives such as property tax rebates, conservation easements and agreements;
- expansion and strengthening of volunteer programs to assist in managing ecological areas;
- greater recognition of the importance of using ecological areas as baselines for environmental monitoring;
- continuing research, covering a wide range of disciplines, in many ecological areas;

- stronger promotion for protected ecological areas resulting in greater public awareness and support; and,
- the maintenance of ecological areas advisory committees to advise government officials on identifying, protecting and managing ecological reserves.

Through its annual meetings, ongoing dialogue among members and specific representation on issues, Council is pleased to have assisted in stimulating and supporting these and other initiatives that so clearly advance its aims.

Representations by Council

As a key part of its work, Council continues to encourage initiatives and programmes for ecological areas. Noteworthy in this regard are the following:

- the endorsement offered by Council in support of the newly announced legislation for ecological reserves and programme developments for Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest announced for Ontario;
- the co-ordination of the proposed Atlantic Coastal Canada project by the Council's Atlantic Working Group.
- The encouragement of non-government organizations such as Nature Trusts to work with provincial and national agencies to promote preservation of ecological areas on private lands.

Publications of the Council

Readers familiar with the previous *Report of the Biennium*, covering 1982-1984, will notice the condensed style and content of this edition. This in no way reflects reduced output by Council for the 1986-1988 work term; rather it marks a decision by the Executive to limit the annual report to a synopsis of Council's activities, and to initiate a new publication series of "Occasional Papers" to disseminate the increasing number of technical contributions of Council. This new series, to be introduced in the current work term of Council, offers greater flexibility to communicate a variety of reports, such as workshop proceedings, guidelines, technical papers and other contributions furthering Council's aims. Coupled with the CCEA Newsletter, the "Occasional Papers" series is viewed as an important initiative to advance Council's objectives.

Publications and Reports of Council

- The Status of Ecological Reserves in Canada*. 1985. P.M. Taschereau. Canadian Council on Ecological Areas and The School for Resource and Environmental Studies, Dalhousie University, Ottawa, Canada. vii + 120 pp., illus. (\$8.00 per copy)
- Report of the Biennium 1982-84*. 1985. Board of Directors. Canadian Council on Ecological Areas, Ottawa, Canada. 23 pp., illus. (\$5.00 per copy)
- Canadian Council on Ecological Areas Newsletter*. (semi-annual newsletter, issued in winter and summer, to report news on ecological areas and Council's affairs) (free)
- Canadian Council on Ecological Areas. 1985. Colour Brochure on the Council and its work. (free)

Occasional Papers

In 1987, the board approved the issuing of technical reports by council in a new series of "Occasional Papers". This series will carry reprints of existing papers and provide a forum for issuing future reports that record and advance Council's work. Initial papers to be issued in this series during the 1987-89 work term are expected to include the following:

- Guidelines on Management and Research in Ecological Areas*. Management and Administration Committee. (first edition published in the report of the Biennium 1982-84).
- Ecological Areas Decision-Making Processes and Case Studies*. Management and Administration Committee. (first edition published in the Report of the Biennium 1982-84).
- A Survey of Canadian Data Bases on Ecological Areas*. Registry Working Group. (in press)
- CCEA Jurisdictional Report Guidelines*. Management and Administration Committee.
- Ecological Reserves: A Necessary Foundation for Scientific Research and Renewable Resources Management*. Science Committee.
- Guidelines for the Selection of Protected Ecological Areas*. Management and Administration Committee.
- National Registry Guidelines*. Registry Working Group.
- Provisional Summary of Protected Canadian Ecological Areas*. Registry Working Group.
- Proceedings of the CCEA Private Stewardship Workshop*. Management and Administration Committee.
- Report of the Marine Ecological Reserve Task Force*. Task Force Report.

Occasional papers will be issued through the Secretariat, with announcements on their availability reported in the CCEA Newsletter.

Also available from Council is a three panel, coloured, table-top display on ecological reserves and Council's role in their establishment and use. This display is available, for the cost of shipping, to member's and other parties for use at meetings. Booking and arrangements for borrowing the display can be made through the Secretariat.