



CANADIAN COUNCIL ON ECOLOGICAL AREAS
2020-2030 STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

INTRODUCTION

The Canadian Council on Ecological Areas (CCEA) is a national leader in providing evidence-based guidance in the establishment and management of a comprehensive network of ecological areas to contribute to the conservation and restoration of biodiversity and the social and ecological benefits it provides. The CCEA brings together experts from across the country including federal, provincial, and territorial governments, Indigenous Peoples and organizations, academia, non-governmental organizations, and other experts to foster understanding of contemporary policy, planning and management problems affecting ecological areas and to promote synergies and coordination in the development of neutral, solutions-oriented guidance.

This Strategic Framework, inclusive of a Mission Statement and measurable goals serves as a guide for the work of the CCEA and represents a transparent means upon which progress can be evaluated. The CCEA Board will use this framework in a flexible and adaptable manner to develop detailed annual work plans and associated outputs between 2020 and 2030.

The work of the CCEA over the next 10 years will be important in efforts to achieve the goals and objectives outlined in the 2019 Minister of Environment and Climate Change Mandate Letter. The mandate letter places a strong emphasis on the widespread expansion of protected areas in Canada through the use of science and other forms of knowledge (Box 1).

“Work with the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard to introduce a new ambitious plan to conserve 25 per cent of Canada’s land and 25 per cent of Canada’s oceans by 2025, working toward 30 per cent of each by 2030. This plan should be grounded in science, Indigenous knowledge and local perspectives. Advocate at international gatherings that countries around the world set a 30 per cent conservation goal for 2030 as well.”

Box 1: Minister of Environment and Climate Change Mandate Letter (December 13, 2019)

MISSION STATEMENT

To support the establishment and management of a network of ecological areas that will represent and conserve the natural diversity of Canada’s terrestrial, freshwater, and marine ecosystems for the benefit of all Canadians.

GOALS FOR 2020-2030

GOAL 1: To support the identification, establishment, integration, and reporting of ecological areas in Canada

GOAL 2: To support the effective and equitable management and monitoring of ecological areas in Canada

GOAL 3: To promote the understanding of the importance of ecological areas in connecting Canadians to nature

GOAL 4: To collaborate with partners to advance ecological area networks in Canada and globally



GOAL 1

To support the identification, establishment, integration, and reporting of ecological areas in Canada

Ecosystems of all types provide habitat for a vast array of plants, animals and other forms of life, and have sustained human populations for thousands of years. Although we continue to derive benefits from these natural systems, the true values and significance remain poorly understood. Further too, we do not fully understand or appreciate the potential threats to these areas caused by the expanding human footprint. With the loss of component parts or processes, ecosystems or ecological areas lose their ecological resilience - the ability to withstand and adapt to natural or human-caused disturbances. As ecosystems are complex, dynamic, and continuously evolving, it is paramount to the continued conservation of Canada's biodiversity that areas of ecological value be identified, protected and effectively managed.

It is the intent of the CCEA to:

- 1.1 Support and provide evidence-based guidance on the design, establishment and maintenance of a comprehensive network ecological areas in Canada and its integration within the broader landscape and seascape through effective and inclusive knowledge production and mobilization activities;
- 1.2 Support the accurate identification and reporting of ecological areas in Canada.

Products of this work could include:

- Providing evidence-based guidance and case studies on best practices in Canada for the establishment, identification and integration of ecological areas including ecological representation, connectivity and effective management;
- Guidance to support achievement of post-2020 Convention on Biological Diversity goals and targets for in-situ conservation of biodiversity in the Canadian context;
- White papers responding to emerging and existing issues in Canada and internationally;
- Hosting of national workshops for the community of practice to foster inclusive knowledge production and mobilization on outputs generated by the CCEA.



GOAL 2

To support the effective and equitable management and monitoring of ecological areas in Canada

Despite ongoing efforts, biodiversity is deteriorating in Canada and this decline is projected to continue or worsen under business-as-usual scenarios. Furthermore, climate change is having and will continue to have major impacts on biodiversity. It is understood that the rate of climate change will exceed the ability of most species to migrate and adjust their ranges to new conditions. With that comes the necessity of timely research, effective monitoring and other knowledge production and mobilization activities.

It is the intent of the CCEA to:

- 2.1 Advance sound evidence-based guidance for the effective and equitable management and monitoring of ecological areas;
- 2.2 Support the integration of different forms of evidence and knowledge systems in the management and monitoring of ecological areas.

Products of this work could include:

- Establishing metrics for assessing the effective and equitable management of ecological areas networks;
- Developing Best Practice Guidelines and white papers related to effective and equitable management and monitoring of ecological areas;
- Planning and hosting national workshops to provide the conservation community of practice with knowledge production and mobilization opportunities related to outputs generated by CCEA.



GOAL 3

To promote the understanding of the importance of ecological areas in connecting Canadians to nature.

Biodiversity provides a lengthy list of services critical to supporting life on earth. These ecosystem services directly and indirectly contribute human health and well-being, economic value and cultural values, such as opportunities for tourism and recreation, spiritual experiences and education. The importance of conserving biodiversity through the establishment of ecological areas and ecological networks and corridors will maintain options for future generations. However, the support for these efforts, and the intrinsic values of which intact ecological areas bring, cannot be accomplished without the promotion of understanding of their importance.

It is the intent of the CCEA to:

- 3.1 Support efforts to inform and educate Canadians about the importance and benefits of ecological areas;
- 3.2 Advance understanding of the role of social dimensions in ecological area policy, planning and management.

Products of this work could include:

- Advancing knowledge mobilization activities through, for examples, providing online access to CCEA publications and work products and providing a library or depository of case studies and best practice documents;
- Funding research and occasional papers through the available grants and awards (i.e., Stan Rowe Award);
- Co-publishing reports and articles with partners that align with CCEA's goals and missions;
- Peer-reviewing reports and articles completed by the broader international and national conservation community that align with CCEA's goals and mission.



The effective and contiguous protection of ecological areas is not a unilateral task but requires strong relationships with all levels of government, Indigenous Peoples, non-government organizations, academia, and national and international organizations.

It is the intent of the CCEA to:

- 4.1 Establish beneficial relationships and collaborate with international and national organizations having complementary goals;
- 4.2 Seek opportunities to engage and participate with the larger conservation community both nationally and internationally.

Products of this work will include:

- Co-hosting of workshops and conferences;
- Continuing as an active and engaged member of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), including the World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA), and participating in World Conservation Congresses, Members Assemblies and other IUCN processes and bodies as appropriate;
- Contributing to collaborative guidance development in national and international fora (e.g., Pathway to Canada Target 1, United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity, and others where appropriate);
- Participating in Canadian and international forums.

GOAL 4

To collaborate with partners to advance ecological area networks in Canada and globally.





Photo Credit: Sonya Richmond, iNaturalist

The Canadian Council on Ecological Areas (CCEA) is an independent national organization that encourages and facilitates the establishment, protection and management of a comprehensive network of protected ecological areas in Canada. CCEA draws its following and support from federal, provincial and territorial governments and agencies, non-governmental organizations, indigenous peoples, universities and citizens concerned with protected areas and the conservation of biodiversity.

