

# **Integration of Biodiversity and Tourism: Canada Case Study**

For

**UNEP's Biodiversity Planning Support Programme**

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## CANADA'S INTEGRATION OF BIODIVERSITY AND TOURISM

### 1. OVERVIEW OF PRESENT STATE OF TOURISM IN CANADA

#### 1.1 Relative Importance of Tourism in the National Economy

Canada is the 7<sup>th</sup> most popular destination in the world (up from 10<sup>th</sup> in 1998, and 11<sup>th</sup> in 1996, according to the World Tourism Organisation), and has increased visitation of 15% over the past 5 years. International visitation has increased since 1986 (when it was 25% of total visitation, while 75% was domestic) to 31% in 1999 (and 69% domestic). This is quite an accomplishment for a country of 30 million population.

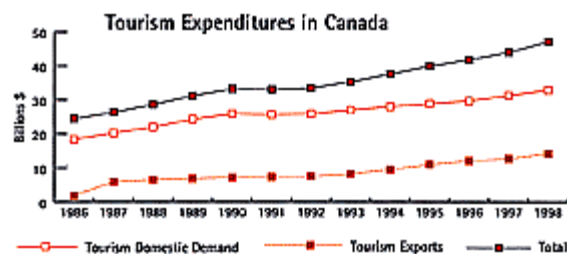
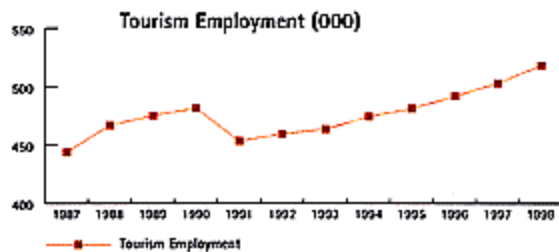
In terms of total overnight person trips, domestic tourists accounted for 79% in 1999, most residents travelling within the same province. Of the international visitors, about \_ are US visitors.

**Tourism in Canada 1996-1999 (000s of trips)**

Year	Foreign	Domestic*	Total
1996	17,285	71,585	88,870
1997	17,636	65,727	83,363
1998	18,828	74,409	93,237
1999	19,367	74,562	93,929

*\* In 1996, changes were made in the survey methodology for domestic travel making comparisons to previous years inappropriate*

Tourism is crucial to Canada's national economy. For thousands of Canadians, tourism is their basis for a good job and quality of life. There are 158,000 tourism businesses in Canada, of which 58,000 are small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) – only 46 of tourism businesses in Canada have over 500 employees. Tourism contributes 534,300 direct jobs. Tourism earns \$50 billion annually (up from \$24.2 billion in 1986). Tourism receipts have grown 25% in the last 5 years.



The CTC published the world's first long-term study of the industry's performance, which showed that tourism is a growth leader, outperforming the overall Canadian economy. It also produced a study that provided the first accurate picture of the industry's extreme seasonality, although this varied across the industry. Thus it provided a baseline for assessing the CTC's progress in off-season revenue development.

Inbound trips to Canada in 1998 increased 6.8% over 1997, and by another 2.9% in 1999 to 19,367,000. Outbound trips by Canadians decreased by 7.6% over 1997 to 17,648. In 1999, domestic tourism receipts increased by 60% to 34.8 billion, while international tourism receipts rose by 7.7% over 1998, reaching \$15.3 billion.



### International Tourism Receipts, 1994-1998 (millions \$)

Year	Total International Spending
1994	\$7,742
1995	\$8,837
1996	\$9,670
1997	\$9,871
1998	\$11,165
1999	\$14,900

Nationally, strong growth is generated by tourism employment. According to the National Tourism Indicators (NTI) released in January 2000 by Statistics Canada, in the third quarter of 2000, on a seasonally adjusted basis, tourism employment growth outpaced the growth of the overall business sector, increasing by 4.1% from the previous quarter (mainly due to gains in transportation of 6.2%). On a seasonally unadjusted basis, employment generated by tourism increased by 5.3% over the same quarter in 1999, reaching 571,500 persons employed full and part-time. The highest growth was generated by recreation and entertainment (9.2%), followed by air transportation (8.7%), and accommodation (7.7%).

#### 1.2 Relative Priority of Tourism in National Planning Policy

The impressive impact of tourism on the economy is the result of a deliberate strategy by the federal government. Canada used to “house” tourism planning responsibilities in the Department of Industry, Science and Technology (although this was more policy planning – responsibilities for implementation planning tend to be in the hands of the 13 provinces and territories). In 1995, the federal government led the process of establishing a partnership of all key stakeholders in the Canadian tourism industry with the hope of building on all strengths. The result was the Canadian Tourism Commission, a Special Operating Agency reporting to the federal Department of Industry. This started as a set of informal arrangements. However, huge changes have taken place. The federal government backed its commitment to tourism with \$221 million from 1995 to 1998. With matching contributions from the private sector and other levels of government, more than \$478 million was invested over the same period, in an effort to position Canada as the world’s premier four-season destination. Through the CTC, the tourism sector has made great strides in putting Canada on the world tourism map.

Just recently, the CTC received Royal Assent to become a Crown Corporation (as of January 2001). Although tourism as a sector does not “rate” sufficiently nationally to have its own department, its change in status to Crown Corporation means the CTC will have more flexibility to achieve its goal of partnering with the tourism industry to sustain a vibrant and profitable national tourism industry. The priority on partnership with the private sector is reflected in the CTC's Board, which includes representatives of the tourism industry, and federal, provincial and territorial governments. The Minister of Industry will continue to have responsibility for tourism policy. The CTC will be both responsible for marketing and product development, and will have a range of other functions. However, planning for tourism is not in the hands of one agency, but is spread through federal and provincial/territorial land/coastal/marine management agencies, as well as federal, provincial/territorial, regional and local tourism and development departments.

Crown Corporation status strengthens the commissions Board of Directors’ capability to lead the CTC and the industry in realising the shared vision.

#### 1.3 Institutional Structure of Tourism Government Planning and Policy

The CTC is seen as a key feature in the government’s economic tool kit. Its goal is to: convey Canada’s abundant natural and cultural assets to world markets interested in clean, authentic and safe tourism experiences. To some extent, Canada’s attractions sell themselves, but only if people outside the country

know of them. The CTC's proven industry-government partnership formula leverages the strength of each to:

- Raise consumer awareness
- Develop tourism industry products that are world class
- Respond to the needs of increasingly discriminating consumers
- Promote win-win cooperation among the thousands of organizations that make up the industry
- Build a firm, research-based foundation upon which to base business and policy decisions
- Heighten awareness of the tourism industry's scope and scale, and
- Earn recognition for tourism's contribution to the economy

Operating through private-public sector partnerships, the CTC promotes Canada, supported by a network of offices strategically positioned in its primary markets around the world.

The CTC is governed by a 26-member Board of Directors, with representatives from both private and public sectors. Industry contribution to the CTC more than matches core federal government funding. Partnering includes joint public and private sector planning and delivery of tourism initiatives. Commission staff work under the direction of 8 program committees. The chairpersons and members of these committees and their subcommittees are all volunteers. There are 6 marketing committees covering US Leisure, US Business, Europe, Asia-Pacific, Latin America, and Canada domestic travel.

Two other committees oversee activities which advance strategic interests of the tourism industry in Canada:

- The *Industry and Product Development Committee* devises, implements, and packages Canadian tourism products to help Canada compete with other destinations, and work to develop Canada as a four season destination
- The *Research Committee* oversees the production and development of authoritative econometric tools and economic analyses that provide a basis for informed industry decision making, and ensuring that the industry is recognised for its contribution to Canada's economy, and that marketing programs are aimed appropriately.

Canada became the first country to put its tourism industry economic reporting on a par with its other industries. Its econometric tools provide regular reports on industry performance, and form the basis for a range of economic analyses that improve the understanding of the industry, and help identify opportunities to improve growth and profitability. Several other countries are adopting the Canadian research model as a yardstick for their own tourism industry.

*Industry and Product Development* works with the tourism industry to develop new and appealing experiences, and to package those experiences for export, helping CTC partners to attract tourists from around the world. Industry-led subcommittees form the basis for in-depth study of specific tourism opportunities. Current subcommittees include *Winter Tourism*, *Cultural and Heritage Tourism*, and *Adventure Travel and Ecotourism*. The *Adventure Travel and Ecotourism Subcommittee* has led numerous tourism best practice initiatives, including one described in Section 1.7. The *Product Club Program* helps SMEs to do the research, forge the partnerships, and undertake the development activities necessary to get new products market-ready. Many product club partnerships are now finding their developing products can achieve a market presence that had previously only been attained by large organisations.

#### **1.4 Dominant Types of Tourism Practiced**

Canada offers what many tourists want – safe, clean cities; exciting attractions; plus the great outdoors. Canada is also a destination with proven appeal to retiring US baby boomers. This is important because

the US leisure travel market is the biggest and richest in the world, and is close. Canada offers a spectrum of tourism experiences, from great open spaces and magnificent scenery, to world-class cities, diverse cultures and friendly people.

The dominant types of tourism are: *nature-based tourism*, including ecotourism and adventure tourism; *cultural tourism*, including museums, historical, aboriginal, and ethnically diverse communities; as well as *conventional tourism*. There are many forms of urban tourism in Canada's cities, which feature considerable cultural diversity, conventions, shopping and so on, and Canada attracts nearly 1/3 of the US corporate meetings held outside the US and more than 1/3 of association meetings outside the US. In addition, such "site specific" forms of tourism as golf and skiing are very well established in Canada.

The main types of tourism could also be broken up by season. Summer is the main season. Seasonality is the main challenge for the Canadian tourism industry, according to the CTC. Almost half (44%) of Canada's visitors arrive during summer, when major cities, resort areas and transportation carriers are often fully booked and must turn away business.

The mix of tourism opportunities is fairly broad, however, Canada, through the CTC, has positioned itself to focus on nature and cultural experiences.

### **1.5 Participation and Degree of Interaction of Different Sectors and Stakeholders in the Tourism Process**

All walks of life participate in the tourism process, however, the degree to which government is involved varies from province to province, and NGOs get involved in a variety of ways – for example, both if there are perceived problems, and in constructive contributions to tourism projects, as well. Local communities are very key players in tourism, although they need assistance at times, for planning. Universities are sometimes involved in research with tourism partners, and in providing excursions to paying publics. The private sector is the main player in actual development of tourism on the ground, and its operations, and comes at all scales, including many family scale businesses – SMEs.

Much of the success of tourism in the last few years have been directly related to the ability to work together to make sure that the CTC is: *industry-led; market driven; and research based*.

During the last few years, the CTC has led the tourism industry in developing a vision and mission statement that help ensure all players are working together toward the same goals. Defining this unifying statement for Canadians has been a challenge and an achievement, but one that certainly involved a very diverse range of industry players – private sector, SMEs, educators, non-governmental researchers, consultants, communities, etc.

It is still difficult and costly for SMEs (and ecotourism operators are typically SMEs) to be to become involved with the CTC or other significant bodies. The CTC works on the basis of volunteer committees, and to physically go to meetings to contribute takes resources and time on behalf of the volunteers. The challenges related to the scale of the country are vast, particularly for the industry in remote and northern areas.

The CTC has also encouraged and developed innovative strategic alliances, with, for example, MasterCard International. This is intended to help SMEs in a variety of ways, which include seminars, case studies, self-help guidelines, joint research, and so on.

Besides the range of sectors and stakeholders involved in the tourism process with the CTC, there are other national institutions who are very much involved in tourism in Canada. These, for example Parks Canada, are dealt with later in this document.

## 1.6 Education and Training of Tourism at the Different Levels

The Canadian Tourism Human Resources Council (CTHRC) is the National body for coordinating education related to all fields of tourism – those working in travel, accommodation, adventure, attractions, transportation, food & beverage service, events & conferences, and tourism services. The Council promotes and enhances professionalism in the Canadian tourism industry through industry standards, training, and professional certification. It is a national non-profit organization, and brings together tourism businesses, labour unions, associations, education/training providers and government, to address the tourism industry's human resource needs.

Most provinces and territories have a Tourism Education Council (TEC), which are founding partners of the CTHRC, and are the delivery agents of human resource products and services for the tourism industry.

The CTHRC produces National Occupational Standards, which are documents describing the skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary for competent performance in a specific tourism occupation. Training and certification in these is delivered by the TECs in each province and territory. The criteria for professional certification are established for each occupation by tourism industry professionals from across Canada. Standards are developed and validated by groups of people currently employed in the occupation (80% practitioners, 15% supervisors and 5% educators) to ensure they reflect the realities of the industry.

The CTHRC also provides individuals with information on planning a career in tourism. Tourism Careers for Youth assists people aged 18-24 with transition from school to work in a group setting. With the support and guidance of education and industry partners, the Canadian Academy of Travel & Tourism has been established to provide students with the tools they need to succeed. Selected schools across Canada participate in tourism courses, projects and activities as part of their high school curriculum (grades 10, 11 & 12), through the academy. This provides a nationally accredited "tourism" certificate with their high school diploma. Sponsors of these tourism courses are: the American Express Foundation, Air Canada, the Canadian Pacific Charitable Foundation, Signature Vacations and Cara Operations Limited.

There are also parks, recreation, and tourism programs in universities and colleges, dealing with outdoor recreation, tourism, and related programs. Most college and universities have tourism programs. For example, the province of British Columbia, alone, has 22 Colleges and Universities that offer Adventure Tourism.

## 1.7 Compliance with Existing International Guidelines on Best Practice for Sustainable Tourism

Canada is a leadership country in developing best practice materials. The Tourism Industry Association of Canada (TIAC) developed the first systematic *Code of Ethics and Guidelines for Sustainable Tourism* in 1992. This was developed by provincial and national level stakeholders, and involved several rounds of broad industry input. Unlike many codes and guidelines emerging at that time, significant positive aspects of the TIAC materials are that they were comprehensive, and included (suitable for framing or posting on brochures, etc.):

- a) Code of Ethics for Tourists
- b) Code of Ethics for the Industry
- c) Guidelines for the Industry

Plus specific Guidelines for five industry sub-sectors: 1) Accommodation; 2) Foodservice; 3) Tour Operators; 4) Ministries of Tourism; and 5) Tourism Industry Associations.

Not only this, but the guidelines included:

- The natural environmental and also socio-cultural perspectives and considerations
- A range for scales, from local to global
- A comprehensive range of guidelines, including:
  1. Policy, planning and decision-making
  2. Guests/the tourism experience
  3. The host community
  4. Development
  5. Natural, cultural and historic resources
  6. Conservation of natural resources
  7. Environmental protection
  8. Marketing
  9. Research and education
  10. Public awareness
  11. Industry cooperation
  12. The global village

The Canadian Tourism Commission has been involved for some time in sharing best practices. In 1999, they commissioned *Catalogue of Exemplary Practices in Adventure Travel and Ecotourism*. This was the first example of Best Practice Benchmarking in tourism, globally (not case studies, but a systematic study). It addressed best practices in a range of core competencies, including: 1. business management; 2. product and delivery; 3. customer service and relations; 4. training and human resources development; 5. resource protection and sustainability; 6. social and community contribution; 7. packaging; 8. marketing and promotion; and 9. product development. This gives systematic guidance for operators in *all types of ecosystems*, through numerous examples of best practices for environmental protection. In other words, the focus was not simply on protected areas, but to respect and conserve natural (and cultural) diversity wherever tourism operations take place. It essentially provides a menu of options for any given operator to select as appropriate to their season/ecosystem, rather than a series of Best Practice case studies, and is available on the CTC web site.

### 1.8 Brief Description of Main Ecotourism Attractions of Canada

The ecotourism attractions in Canada are too numerous to mention. However, Canada's attractiveness lies in its ability to deliver 4-seasons of ecotourism; many types of geography, climate and ecosystem; marine and terrestrial experiences (as well as rivers and lakes); and vast landscapes and undisturbed areas. It has a large system of protected areas, which include historic sites, heritage canals, marine conservation areas, representative ecosystems, and Biosphere Reserves, World Heritage Sites, and cultural diversity too. A large strength is the existence of large tracts of wilderness and opportunities of viewing wildlife, as well as natural and rural areas, which are primary "resources" for ecotourism.

A decade ago, ecotourism was considered a rapidly increasing segment of Canada's tourism economy. This continues to be the case. The range of products and attractions is extraordinarily varied and includes experiences built around the following activities:

- Nature/Culture Observation e.g., iceberg or northern lights viewing, unique plant life, aboriginal natural and cultural environments, landscape interpretation
- Land Based Ecotourism e.g., hiking and backpacking expeditions, mountain/rock climbing, trail riding, bicycling, interpretive walks, overland safaris
- Water Based Ecotourism e.g., canoeing, sea kayaking, river kayaking and rafting, sailing, scuba diving, expedition (shore) cruises, catch and release fishing
- Wildlife Viewing e.g. birds, whales, polar bears, caribou, seals, bear, moose, buffalo, deer, and many other and smaller wildlife
- Winter Activities e.g., hut-to-hut or lodge-to-lodge cross-country skiing, dog-sledding, snowshoeing, ice-climbing, winter camping



## 2. OVERVIEW OF PRESENT STATE OF BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION & PLANNING

### 2.1 Relative Priority of Biodiversity Conservation and Planning in National Planning Policy

For more than 100 years, the federal government has been establishing and managing national parks, and almost 150 national wildlife areas, and migratory Bird Sanctuaries, and other kinds of protected areas. The legislative and policy basis for the establishment and management of protected areas is well established, and continues to evolve.

In 1992, the Canadian Parks Ministers' Council met jointly with the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment and the Wildlife Ministers' Council of Canada. The chairs of each council signed "A *Statement of Commitment to Complete Canada's Networks of Protected Areas*". In so doing, the key commitment of Parks Ministers was to "make every effort to complete Canada's networks of protected areas representative of Canada's land-based natural regions by the year 2000 and accelerate the protection of areas representative of Canada's marine natural regions". Governments in Canada have been establishing protected areas for more than 100 years, but with the Statement of Commitment, they agreed on a consistent national goal for Protected areas. For those jurisdictions with marine ecosystems, it also reflected a commitment to the protection of areas representative of Canada's marine natural regions".

Later in 1992, Canada became the first industrialized country to ratify the *Convention on Biological Diversity*. A Federal-Provincial-Territorial Working Group was charged with developing the *Canadian Biodiversity Strategy*, Canada's response to the Convention on Biodiversity. The Biodiversity Convention Office of Environment Canada performs the role of national secretariat. A multi-stakeholder advisory group, now called the *Canadian Biodiversity Forum*, provided advice to the Working Group. Expert groups were also used to deal with specific aspects of the Strategy such as biological inventories, data and information management, and alien invasive species.

In November of 1995, all jurisdictions agreed to the release of the Canadian Biodiversity Strategy. A Statement of Commitment, signed by all jurisdictions pledging to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity and to use the Canadian Biodiversity Strategy as a guide to decision making was released in 1996, and is publically available on the Internet. The Strategy is a national framework that puts Convention commitments into the Canadian context. It provides a context within which each jurisdiction can determine its own priorities and actions as well as develop cooperative responses to national issues. The goals of the Strategy are to:

1. Conserve biodiversity and use biological resources in a sustainable manner;
2. Improve our understanding of ecosystems and increase our resource management capability;
3. Promote an understanding of the need to conserve biodiversity and use biological resources in a sustainable manner;
4. Maintain or develop incentives and legislation that support the conservation of biodiversity and the sustainable use of biological resources; and
5. Collaborate with other countries to conserve biodiversity, use biological resources in sustainable manner, and share equitably the benefits that arise from the utilization of genetic resources.

The Government of Canada working towards the establishment of a national park in each of the 39 national park natural regions defined by the *National Park System Plan* (1990) and establishing new marine conservation areas in the 29 marine regions defined by *Sea to Sea to Sea, Canada's National Marine Conservation Areas System Plan* (1995).

Recent park agencies' focus on establishing marine protected areas has involved identifying distinctive marine ecosystems, developing planning and legislative tools, and intergovernmental cooperation mechanisms necessary for creating systems of marine protected areas. Canada is at a very early stage in its efforts to establish marine protected areas. In 1996, the federal government passed *The Oceans Act*, providing a new mechanism for establishing protected areas in the marine environment. In 1998, the governments of Canada and Québec jointly created the Saguenay-St. Lawrence Marine Park, the first marine park resulting from a federal-provincial agreement. The federal government is cooperating with other levels of government to study the feasibility of establishing new marine conservation areas in the southern Strait of Georgia (BC) and Lake Superior (ON). Also, a *Marine Protected Areas Strategy* for the Pacific Coast is in preparation as a joint initiative of the federal and BC governments.

According to the 1988 amendments to the National Parks Act, a parks management plan must ensure the maintenance of "ecological integrity". It is now understood that existing parks and protected areas are rarely large enough for ecological integrity, and they are usually islands surrounded by development. Parks are subject to a host of ecological stresses from forestry and agriculture outside the boundaries, to tourism/visitor infrastructure inside and outside the boundaries. Thus Parks Canada has chosen to work toward the goal of Ecological Integrity by pursuing an ecosystem-based approach to management.

## **2.2 Institutional Structure of Government Planning and Policy for Biodiversity**

Experience in Canada has shown that legislation is an important component of an overall approach to conserve biodiversity and ensure the sustainable use of biological resources. Federal, provincial and territorial governments have enacted numerous acts and regulations that affect biodiversity, including:

- the Canada Wildlife Act and the provincial and territorial wildlife acts;
- the provincial endangered species acts;
- the National Parks Act and provincial parks, wilderness and ecological reserves acts;
- federal and provincial environmental protection acts;
- the Migratory Birds Convention Act;
- the Fisheries Act;
- the Wild Animal and Plant Protection and Regulation of International and Interprovincial Trade Act;
- the Oceans Act;
- the provincial forest acts; and
- the provincial land use planning acts.

Responsibility for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity is distributed across the breadth of Canadian society, rather than being in the hands of one body, such as the Canadian Biodiversity Office. Due to the complexity and pervasive nature of biodiversity and its importance to Canadians, much of the responsibility for ensuring its conservation and the sustainable use of biological resources remains in the hands of the various orders of government. Governments are enacting laws for environmental protection and conservation, facilitating and developing public policies for land and resources, acquiring land for conservation purposes such as parks and wildlife reserves, developing national policies and programs, entering into international treaties, providing conservation and sustainable-use incentives, undertaking scientific research and analysis, and supporting public education and awareness programs.

Various levels of government share responsibility for biodiversity in Canada. Some provinces have developed their own specific strategies and action plans to address the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, such as *Quebec's Biodiversity Implementation Strategy and Action Plan*. Aboriginal peoples also play a key role in conserving biodiversity and ensuring the sustainable use of biological resources, as they are gaining a greater share of authority over the management and development of their traditional lands. Self-government agreements and land claims, including co-management arrangements, are important components in the management of biodiversity in Canada.

The Government of Canada has been involved in protecting and presenting natural areas and commemorating significant aspects of Canadian heritage for over a century. Parks Canada was established as an agency of the federal government by an Act of Parliament in 1998. Its mandate is to protect and present nationally significant examples of Canada's natural and cultural heritage, and to foster public understanding, appreciation and enjoyment in ways that ensure their ecological and commemorative integrity for present and future generations (more info on Parks Canada is presented in subsequent sections).

### **2.3 Perceived Degree of Participation of Canada in the Convention on Biological Diversity and Perceived Benefits of being a Part of CBD**

Within Canada, the process used to develop the Canadian Biodiversity Strategy reflects the high degree to which consultation and participation contribute to the development of national environmental strategies and policies in Canada. Key elements of this process included:

- Agreement by provincial, territorial and federal ministers to develop the Strategy
- Assignment of responsibility for Strategy development to an inter-governmental working group
- The creation of a national biodiversity advisory group, now called the *Canadian Biodiversity Forum*,
- Establishment of expert groups when advice was required on specific aspects of the Strategy
- Distribution and public review of the draft version of the Strategy to ensure widespread opportunities for input
- Signing by provinces, territories and the federal government of a *National Statement of Commitment* to the conservation of biodiversity and the sustainable use of biological resources in April 1996.

Federally, plans and reports have been released on the implementation of the Strategy within the context of wildlife diversity, protected areas, agriculture, forestry, and education and awareness. Subsequent reports on aquatic biodiversity, ecological management, and international co-operation are planned for 2001. These reports identify both actions that have been taken in response to the Strategy, and planned activities. Some reports address biodiversity conservation and sustainable use within a particular sector, such as agriculture or forestry. Others are more integrative and take a more cross-sectoral approach. There has also been an attempt to integrate biodiversity into new and existing federal and provincial resource and land-use plans, strategies and legislation.

Canada has now entered the next phase of activity—action planning, implementation and reporting on a jurisdictional basis. This involves analyzing, interpreting and responding to strategic directions that reflect regional and jurisdictional circumstances and priorities. Although this work is not yet completed, four jurisdictions—Quebec, British Columbia, Alberta, and Saskatchewan—have already produced plans and/or reports on the implementation of the Strategy.

Most recently, in August 2000, federal, provincial, and territorial Wildlife Ministers met to review Canada's progress and to consider current challenges in implementing the Canadian Biodiversity Strategy. They renewed their commitments to the strategy, and mandated the Federal-Provincial-Territorial Working Group on Biodiversity with developing a report for ministers on implementation priorities that required inter-governmental collaboration.

Parks Canada represents the Government of Canada on various international bodies where Canada has obligations. Parks Canada contributes to the implementation of a number of international conventions, including the UNESCO Program on Biosphere Reserves, and the Convention on Biological Diversity. Canada has 10 designated BRs. However, it is a concern to all BRs in Canada that the federal government provides them with little or no support, particularly funding. They have not even been

provided with mechanisms for fundraising. Thus BRs represent globally significant areas, but Canada essentially only participates in supporting their designation.

On the positive side, many jurisdictions in Canada are using a landscape approach to protected areas. Federal, provincial, territorial, regional and urban governments and individuals and private organizations acquire and manage lands to conserve biodiversity. Within each jurisdiction there are examples of efforts being made to ensure that ecologically-significant and sensitive areas are protected.

## **2.4 Overview of the Role of NGOs and Local Communities in Biodiversity Conservation**

In 1990, the Canadian Environmental Advisory Council developed a document published in 1991: a *Protected Areas Vision for Canada*. This document described many of the ideas, issues and directions, as well as putting forward recommendations, that were later developed under different agreements. It indicated that Public pressure is essential to achieve the political action necessary to complete the protected areas network across Canada. In fact, public opinion and support has been gathering.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, more than 600,000 Canadians signed the *Wilderness Charter* as part of the *Endangered Spaces Campaign*, and called for government action to complete Canada's networks of protected areas. This support continued throughout the 1990s, as demonstrated by polls and surveys. A 1999 poll revealed that 91% of Canadians believe that it is important to them that their governments take action to protect wilderness, and that 80% of Canadians agree that consideration should be given to establishing protected areas in Canada's forests before decisions are made about where logging and mining can take place. Citizens also show high support for conservation organisations, and also donate land to governments and other organisations (such as the Nature Conservancy of Canada) specifically for the purpose of creating or contributing to a new protected area.

The role of private landowners is also critical to conserving biodiversity and the sustainable use of biological resources. In the southern parts of Canada, over 90% of the landscape is under private ownership and is used for agricultural production, forestry, and other purposes. Many areas of public land are also leased for a variety of land uses, such as grazing. In these areas, governments and non-government organizations work with landowners and land managers to achieve biodiversity goals and objectives. Forestry, mining, oil and gas and other private sector industries are also land owners and lease holders that have biodiversity responsibilities. They contribute to the conservation of biodiversity by ensuring that their activities comply with laws and regulations and through various conservation and sustainable resource-use measures.

Canada is fortunate to have numerous non-government organizations that have taken on responsibilities for the conservation of biodiversity and the sustainable use of biological resources. Their activities include enhancing public awareness, raising funds for projects, providing expertise, acquiring land for conservation purposes, and helping to develop and improve strategies, policies, legislation and programs. The *Canadian Biodiversity Forum* is the primary non-government body for advising governments on national biodiversity planning and implementation. Its membership includes representation from industry, academia, business, labour groups, conservation groups, Aboriginal organizations and the scientific community.

Canada has a number of long-established NGOs who are active in advocating for parks and protected areas – the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS), the Canadian Nature Federation (CNF), Sierra Club, World Wildlife Fund, and provincial/territorially based environmental NGOs, such as the Alberta Wilderness Association. As an example, the CNF is a non-profit conservation organization with over 40,000 supporters and a network of more than 100 affiliated naturalist groups. The CNF's mission is: to protect nature, its diversity and the processes that sustain it. The CNF has a number of volunteer

projects to help monitor the environment. Such NGOs tend to be supportive of appropriate forms of tourism, including ecotourism.

Non-government organizations have been instrumental in advancing biodiversity conservation efforts and contributing to related law and policy in Canada. These organizations have purchased land for conservation purposes, produced guides and training materials, raised public awareness and worked cooperatively with government and industry on joint ventures ranging from large ecosystem projects to local watershed planning and species-recovery programs.

Research, education and conservation institutions have made critical commitments. Facilities such as zoos, aquariums, universities, museums, arboreta and botanical gardens are committed to biodiversity research and education, and direct such areas as the captive breeding of endangered species.

Aboriginal people have played an important role with Parks Canada in the establishment of new protected areas recently, particularly in the north. Approximately 1/3 of Canada's 39 National Parks have cooperative management boards. Aboriginal communities are important service providers to visitors. Through jointly developed tourism strategies, there are many opportunities for Parks Canada and Aboriginal people to promote authentic visitor experiences. Parks Canada created the Aboriginal Affairs Secretariat in 1999 as part of Canada's Aboriginal Action Plan (Gathering Strength). It is partly intended to identify economic opportunities associated with National Parks for the benefit of Aboriginal Communities and Parks Canada. Aboriginal people also participate in environmental assessments and review panels, in a national Traditional Indigenous Knowledge and Biodiversity Working Group developed to assist with Canada's implementation of Article 8j of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Canadian industry has also contributed to the establishment of new protected areas. By surrendering or donating timber and mineral rights, exploration rights, oil and gas tenures and land holdings, individual companies have played a role in the creation of some of the new protected areas across the country. Corporations also make commitments to conservation and sustainable use through corporate environmental statements, codes of practice, resource management plans and development guidelines.

Parks Canada relies on the support and interest of members of the public (Stakeholders) which range from advisory boards, town councils, business partners, community groups, NGOs, environmental organisations, educators and volunteers. For example, the Canadian Parks Partnership is a national organisation representing 48 cooperating associations that work in every province. The roughly 15,000 members bring about community involvement in management and operations. They also coordinate special programs and events to increase awareness of special places. Revenues earned by cooperating association are re-invested in the park. In 1997-98, approximately 3,400 volunteers contributed over 90,000 hours of time to Parks Canada in various ways.

Although Canada's 1992 *Statement of Commitment* contains a common goal – complete Canada's network of PAs, it respects each government's authority to establish protected areas according to its own needs and priorities. Each province and territory has translated the broad direction of the Statement of Commitment into on-the-ground results, regarding the creation of new protected areas. Governments have worked actively with stakeholders, especially at the local level, to reach agreements on important and often difficult land use decisions. Through complex planning and consultation processes, governments and citizens have worked to achieve commonly shared land use and protected areas goals. As a result, parks agencies (federal and provincial/territorial) have added approximately 24,145,096 hectares to the various systems of protected areas since 1992. This is an area approximately the size of the United Kingdom, and includes small woodlots in southern Canada, to huge protected wilderness areas in more northerly regions.

Protected areas cannot be established unilaterally by governments. They must always be a product of negotiations with partners and stakeholders to generate the necessary understanding and support. Where competing land use interests exist, they must be addressed before a protected area can be created.

## 2.5 Overview of Canadian System of National Parks and Protected Areas

Through the National Parks program, representative examples of Canada's natural regions are protected, their value is communicated to the public, and services and facilities are provided so that people may use and enjoy them. The authority for this program is the *National Parks Act*. There are also a series of Acts related to such important support functions as national wildlife areas, or migratory bird sanctuaries, that are administered by the Canadian Wildlife Service.

The *Canadian National Park System Plan* was first published in 1971. In 1993, the government made a commitment to the National System of National Parks, and to complete the national parks system. This required the creation of 17 new national parks by the year 2000 to represent each of Canada's 39 distinct natural regions. With recent protected area initiatives, and 5 new parks, 25 of the 39 national park regions are now represented within Canada's national parks and national park reserves, compared with only 20 regions that were represented in 1992, and covering 2.5% of the landscape. However, there is still considerable work to represent all 39 regions.

There is also a system of National Park Reserves in addition to the national parks (bringing the total in the National Parks System to 39, for a total of 244,500 sq.km.) – these are usually “waiting” for agreement between First National peoples (aboriginals) and the Federal government, and under some form of co-management. The main task related to the completion of the national parks system is the selection of potential sites within each of the natural regions, and the negotiation of agreements between the federal government and other jurisdictions and with aboriginal people where appropriate.

There is also a systems plan for National Marine Conservation Areas, which divides Canada into 29 marine natural regions, and while the National Parks Act currently provides the authority to establish such areas, the proposed *Marine Conservation Areas Act* will provide the complete legislative framework for this program. The National Marine Conservation Areas program is still in its formative stages, with only three operational marine conservation areas. Five of the 29 regions are already represented or covered by federal-provincial agreements. These represent 4,400 square kilometers (e.g., Saguenay-St. Lawrence, Fathom Five, areas adjacent to Gwaii Haanas National Park Reserve/Haida Heritage Site, and a partial representation of an area adjacent to Pacific Rim National Park Reserve. Work is underway to establish additional areas in Lake Superior, Southern Strait of Georgia, Gwaii Haanas, and Queen Charlotte Sound.

The *Canadian Heritage Rivers System (CHRS)* was established in 1984 as a cooperative program, developed and run by the federal, provincial and territorial governments, and overseen by a Board. There are currently 35 rivers, 5 of which are within National Parks, and they have a total length of more than 6,000 km in the CHRS. There is at least one in each province and territory of Canada. After a nomination has been accepted by the Board, the nominating government has three years to prepare a management plan. Development of management plans is based on public consultation and consensus building.

The goal of the CHRS is to establish a system of Canadian Heritage Rivers that reflects the diversity of Canada's rich river environments and celebrates the importance of rivers in Canada's history and society. The objectives are to give national recognition to Canada's outstanding rivers and to ensure long-term management and conservation of their natural, cultural, historical, and recreational values. However, rather than have centrally located (federal) government decide CHRS designation, a fundamental principle is that the nomination and management of Canadian Heritage Rivers remains with the

responsible government – usually provincial or territorial, although the federal government is responsible, in national parks and other federal lands. Participation is voluntary. However, all agencies participating in the Canadian Heritage Rivers System, including Parks Canada, adhere to the objectives and policies described in the document, *The Canadian Heritage Rivers System: Objectives, Principles and Procedures*.

Canada continues to support international and world-wide heritage conservation initiatives such as the *World Heritage Convention* and the *Man and the Biosphere Program*. Besides National Parks, there are other forms of protected areas, such as *World Heritage Sites*, *Biosphere Reserves*, and provincial and territorial parks which themselves act as parks systems for their jurisdiction. Biosphere Reserves offer a cooperative approach to planning and enhancement of economic opportunities, while preserving environmental values. They are established under the MAB program of UNESCO.

The *Canadian Biosphere Reserves Association (CBRA)* supports the interdependence of the places and the people who share them, by helping Biosphere Reserve communities to mobilize government agencies, industries, businesses and individuals needed to support economic and environmental well-being. CBRA coordinates the collaboration of many communities in national projects and supports community initiatives to address local conservation priorities and sustainability concerns. CBRA is involved in an important initiative to develop ecotourism at its reserves (described later). It would be helpful to the goals of biodiversity if the federal government supported BRs not only in achieving designation, but also with assistance, particularly funding, or enabling mechanisms for funding.

The *Federal Provincial Parks Committee* is a group of Directors of Parks from the provinces and territories, who, with a federal equivalent, focus on parks issues. They are important for coordination and cooperation. More than this, they have recently been expressing interest in tourism-parks issues. The Council of Wildlife Ministers is also a means of coordination and cooperation.

In terms of budget, the Parks Canada Balance sheet as of March 31, 2000 was:

Assets (primarily capital assets):	\$1,444,383,000
Expenses:	\$444,434,000
Revenues:	\$74,788,000
Net Cost of Ops	\$370,649,000

The total parliamentary appropriations used by Parks Canada in 1999-2000, were \$388,884,000. The allocation of expenses varies, but key expenditure areas (service lines) are shown, as well as revenues for 1999-2000:

<u>Expenditures</u>		<u>Revenue Sources</u>	
38%	Visitor Services	69%	Entrance and recreation fees
28%	Protecting Heritage Resources	19%	Rentals and concessions
11%	Presenting Heritage Resources	4%	Townsites
9%	Managing Parks Canada	8%	Other (e.g., disposal of assets, staff housing, etc.)
6%	Through Highways		
4%	Establishing Heritage Places		
2%	Townsites		
2%	People Management		

It is extremely difficult to estimate visitation to all of Canada's protected areas. The country is vast, the PAs are vast and diverse, and many have several points of entry, some of which are not controlled. Parks Canada tries to measure its visitors, and uses actual entry counts, or estimates based on counts of vehicle

traffic in the park or site, as well as periodic surveys which identify the average number of people travelling by vehicle, drivers' reasons for visiting the park/site and the number of people reentering the park on the same day.

Estimates of total person-visits at all national parks and historic sites have remained fairly stable over the last 5 years, with between 24 and 26 million person visits per year, of which 14 to 15 million visit national parks. However, it should be understood that parks vary tremendously - some parks may have only handfuls of visitors, while others may have millions (e.g., Aulavik National Park on Banks Island in the high Arctic averages well below 100 visitors per year, while Banff National Park has about 5 million visitors).

### **3. OVERVIEW OF LINKS BETWEEN TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AND BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION AND PLANNING**

#### **3.1 Description and Critique of Existing National Strategy, Plan or Policy related to Interaction Between Tourism Development and Biodiversity Conservation and Planning – National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans**

There is no National Action Plan developed from the Canadian Biodiversity Strategy. However, shared responsibility for biodiversity among governments in Canada often results in the joint development of strategies, policies and action plans. In addition, each government has a wide variety of conservation and sustainable-use legislation, policies and strategies in place. In the context of this paper's topic it may be fair and important to summarise that in Canada, the interaction consists mainly of biodiversity considerations being integrated into planning in many sectors (including tourism), rather than that tourism is being integrated into national biodiversity planning.

The CTC developed their vision and mission with a 20-member team of industry experts, then presented them to industry stakeholders, provincial and territorial governments, and destination marketing organisations, to get consensus on a shared vision and mission:

*Vision:* Canada will be the premier four-season destination to connect with nature and to experience diverse cultures and communities

*Mission:* Canada's tourism industry will deliver world-class cultural and leisure experiences year round, while preserving and sharing Canada's clean, safe and natural environments. The industry will be guided by the values of respect, integrity and empathy.

Industry is encouraged to apply those guiding statements to their own strategies and tactics. This also forms the foundation of the CTC's own strategic plan. This industry vision and mission challenges all involved in tourism to rise to full potential, while encouraging and guiding small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs). In as much as there is a strong focus on Canadian tourism's connection with nature, it is incumbent on the industry to collaborate on efforts to maintain biodiversity. Their efforts toward sustainable tourism and sharing best practices are described elsewhere.

The various administrative jurisdictions responsible for the PAs described previously, all work to develop the expansion of their form of protected area within the context of a system plan, and to manage for various objectives. The objectives vary. For example, the provincial and territorial parks have a range of systems planning frameworks and objectives, and often tend to designate various PAs for objectives of science or education, wilderness, recreation, nature/heritage conservation, or tourism.

The National Parks System has, in the past, been represented as having the unenviable task of meeting two goals of enjoyment and protection of the parks. It is certainly true that in some popular parks, this



has not been a successful “balance”. National parks could be characterised as running into constant problems attempting to meet the two often contradictory objectives – providing opportunities for understanding, appreciation and enjoyment and recreation, as well as protection/conservation. This has led to sometimes divisive debate. However, while true, this is a somewhat unfair representation of parks, and historically unbalanced.

Parks Canada has existed since 1885, and there has been an evolution of reasons why parks were created. For example, in Banff NP, tourism was the driver, whereas in the new Arctic NPs, they are much more biological preserves. So as one observes the historical evolution of national parks, one essentially sees the building of a diverse “product line” (e.g., tourism, recreation, conservation) representing different states of the ideological balance over the years. In addition, it should be noted that once infrastructure is created in a park, it is essentially “cast in stone”. One of the dilemmas for national parks is that the pendulum is swinging, so there is a need to de-market and reengineer parks which were developed for other reasons.

There exist classic examples of National Parks which by their very attractiveness, are being “loved to death” by visitors. This perspective, however, is beginning to be viewed by the agency in terms of supply and demand management, rather than in terms of conflicting objectives (e.g., parks may have a limited supply of access/accommodation in some highly attractive areas, with excessive demand, usually due to a combination of pressures of visitation, and lack of application of the full range of direct and indirect management tools to deal with this). But not all PAs in Canada generally suffer from the same pressure that some of the parks in the National Park System do. In any case, one cannot judge the park system by one individual unit, which may have been created when there was a very different balance of the value dialectic, and been on quite different stages of the continuum.

The recent ecological integrity panel report highlighted the impacts of changes on national parks. This brought Parks Canada to a point where it had to focus on striking a more sustainable balance between its obligation to manage tourist destinations, and provide visitors with meaningful experiences, and its responsibilities to protect park ecosystems and the wildlife and natural processes dependent on them. Secondary to maintaining ecological integrity, is the provision of opportunities for understanding appreciation and enjoyment. Tourism is therefore a secondary consideration. Parks Canada realises that it cannot meet the challenge of maintaining ecological integrity alone. This is why national parks in Canada are increasingly working with private sector tourism industry partners on new approaches. The goal, mutually beneficial, is to protect the natural heritage and wild nature of the parks (the reason people come to visit them) while at the same time ensuring the quality of the visitor’s experience.

### **3.2 Analysis of Main Perceived Problems and Constraints at the National Level (including negative linkages and threats of tourism to biodiversity conservation)**

Some of the challenges that Canada continues to face in biodiversity conservation and planning with tourism include:

#### **3.2.1 Political**

- Tourism and conservation responsibilities are split among many departments, agencies and levels of government
- Need for improved horizontal coordination and federal, provincial, first nations, and operator cooperation
- Aboriginal land claims in unrepresented regions is an issue to resolve before a national park can be established.

- All jurisdictions routinely review and revise their legislation as required. The main challenge is to provide legislation as part of an overall approach that employs a range of policy tools, including education and incentives.
- There is rather more theorising, discussion and strategising, and not enough practical action, or model projects on the ground.
- Lack of follow through on commitment from government and lack of follow through from industry (increasing leading the concept of protecting the environment)
- PA agencies have not yet built accountability for maintaining EI into their programs
- If ecotourism opportunities are going to grow, PAs must grow. An approach to planning and managing landscape is needed that protects biodiversity and provides future economic opportunities. As long as tourism and PAs are seen as competing for a limited land base, the possible synergies between the two will likely not happen.
- Transboundary issues were identified as a major issue facing national parks in a 1987 CPS study. It concluded “the magnitude and frequency of transboundary concerns will increasingly become a problem because of continuing development and pollution”. These problems continue
- The existence of communities within park boundaries, who derive their economic sustenance from parks
- Some areas which represent significant opportunities to preserve biodiversity and offer tourism are not part of the “official” protected areas system (e.g., BRs), so they fall through the cracks politically, and thus financially.

### 3.2.2 *Economic*

- Seasonality of tourism is a problem in Canada, for establishing a sustainable industry
- The PAs of Canada are underfunded, and lack many types of resources from dollars to staff
- The 1989 Auditor General’s Report on the Canadian Parks Service concluded that competing priorities have prevented the allocation of sufficient financial and other resources to national park resource conservation programs. Over the last 12 years several other reports repeat this comment about insufficient funding for Parks Canada, as does the 2000 report of the Panel on Ecological Integrity of Canada’s National Parks.
- Aging park infrastructure at both the federal and provincial/territorial level
- Conflicting land uses (e.g., mining, logging) and traditional use of land by local communities & may not support biodiversity in or adjacent to PAs
- Past conflicts of development vs. environment (or even conservation vs. preservation) may intensify, because the nation is no longer abundant in natural resources
- There is currently poor economic valuation of biodiversity. In a world governed by short-term economics, we often risk losing plants, animals and habitats that have no obvious or current commercial value. It is a challenge to assign value to individual lifeforms; it is even more challenging to assign value to the variety of lifeforms.
- There is huge economic benefit derived by some jurisdictions from the high visitation to parks, and thus an unwillingness to look at reducing visitation or demarketing
- There is lack of resources of all types, most notably money, for the parks system, for all purposes
- Lack of resources of all types to such categories of PA as Biosphere Reserves

### 3.2.3 *Social*

- Aging population, population growth, and rise in tourism nationally, internationally, compound visitor pressures

- The 1987 CPS study of problems and issues within each of Canada's national parks identified visitor impacts as one of the two major issues facing national parks. A decade later, the 1997 State of the Parks Report reiterates this, as does the 1999 State of Protected Heritage Areas Report.
- Pressure to develop and expand tourism-related facilities in PAs, especially in national and provincial parks will continue to increase. In properly designed and managed parks, tourism and non-consumptive recreation can be consistent with the objectives of PAs. Excessive visitation and use of park resources by tourists, however, can damage sensitive ecosystems. Thus restrictions on certain uses, and on overuse, must be part of PA management.
- Lack of public understanding and appreciation of biodiversity, and its need for protection and conservation
- The number of people who recently moved to live in Canada is about 5 million – just over 16% of Canada's population. Their experience is largely urban. The changing demographics challenges governments to develop programs that will reach more Canadians and foster an appreciation and understanding of the essence of PAs.
- Competing land uses in surrounding areas
- Unregulated activities (e.g. whale watching) are a challenge which are now beginning to be addressed
- The general use of an "industrial" tourism approach in sensitive landscapes is a problem – (many visitors getting a low or minimal quality of experience and potentially providing a low yield, vs. high value from limited numbers of tourists getting a quality experience).
- PA marketing tends to be general, rather than targeted or social marketing

### 3.2.4 *Technical (Managerial)*

- Need for improved data, information on both supply (biodiversity, recreation, tourism opportunities) threats to biodiversity, demand for use
- lack of data on the status of biodiversity and ecological integrity
- Integration of data sets is a key challenge, as well as the lack of data on human use, trends in use, tourism etc.
- The inability of many parks management staff to understand that there is a huge range of management strategies (and many tactics for each strategy) when dealing with pressures on parks. As a result, the simplistic and impractical notion of fixing a visitor limit (or carrying capacity) is favoured
- There are differing rules and policies which are applied to the commercial tourism operator in PAs, and Free Independent Travellers (FITs). For example, the commercial operator may have a limit of a party of 6 or 8 for a particular location, and arrives to find it crowded with FITs. In other words, commercial tourism operators are subject to the most severe (some say unfair) management controls, while there is an inability or unwillingness to manage FITs.
- poor relationships, to date, between a number (not all) parks managers and the eco-adventure industry, which is in a strong position to act as an ally for conservation and resource management
- agency attitudes, which tend to be militaristic and regulatory oriented, rather than enabling and client-service oriented (there are current initiatives which are likely to change this, see Section 4.6)

### 3.2.5 *Human Resources*

- Human resources and capabilities are very directly tied to levels of funding. For some time, protected areas agencies in Canada have been underfunded, particularly when one examines the multitude of demands expected of them. This has resulted in staff cutbacks and inadequacies, and continues to be a challenge and constraint.
- Most of Canada's citizens support biodiversity conservation goals, but often are unaware of the activities they could undertake to achieve them. Farmers, loggers, miners and others often request

information and training on how they can reduce impacts on the environment while continuing their economic activities. Therefore, training and education need to be key components of Canada's efforts to conserve biodiversity and use biological resources in a sustainable manner.

- The current Full Time Equivalent (FTE) staff at Parks Canada is 3,441 persons. This is the planned staff level for the next few years, despite the recommendations of the EI Panel that numbers should be increased, and its specific comments that there is a lack of human resources and appropriate capabilities in the natural and social sciences.

### 3.2.6 *Biodiversity Conservation per se*

- In general, tourists are least concerned about micro-level features. This results in there being highest concern for ecosystem preservation, and moderate concern for species as a whole, with tremendous concern for select species (usually large), and almost no concern or knowledge about the importance of species diversity. A challenge is also to identify and convey the full range of benefits of biodiversity to the public, especially landowners and local governments.
- lack of understanding by most personnel of what ecological integrity is, in practice of parks management
- lack of public understanding of the importance of biodiversity conservation at the micro or genetic levels
- Problems exist in identifying proposed park areas with acceptable ecological integrity in the more highly developed and fragmented southern regions of the country
- There is a need for improved biological inventories at the landscape, species and genetic levels, to make decisions for the conservation and sustainable use of biological resources. They provide a basis for determining the changing status of biological resources, setting sustainable harvest rates, conducting research, developing resource- and land-use plans, and assessing impacts of decisions on ecosystems.
- The debate has tended to be about representative landscapes, rather than about genetic resources. However, the concept of "representation" encompasses notions such as biological, geographical and physiographic diversity. Safeguarding biodiversity means identifying and protecting the full range of ecosystems, species and genetic variations found across the Canadian Landscape and seascape. Representative areas should also encompass ecological processes such as succession from young forests to old-growth forests.

### 3.2.7 *Examples of Bad Practices and Failures*

A problem is that Protected Areas are currently not integral parts of broader Sustainable Development plans and strategies, nor integrated into regional and local LU Planning and government land allocation.

The federal report *Implementing the Canadian Biodiversity Strategy: Protected Areas* discusses federal plans for implementing 8 of the CBS strategic directions related to the establishment and management of protected areas. With clearly-stated targets, the report describes the federal government's plans for fulfilling its commitment to complete the federal network of protected areas representative of Canada's land-based natural regions by the year 2000. The World Commission on Environment and Development recommended 12% of the landscape should be protected, and this was promoted by leading conservation groups, the federal government, and some provincial governments. Similarly, the 1990 federal Green Plan commitments, were to set aside 12% of the country as protected space, with completion of the terrestrial system by year 2000, including negotiating agreements for the parks. Also, establishing 3 national marine parks by 1006.

However, it is now 2001, and the government has yet to accomplish its 1992 commitment. The relatively small amount of land which is managed strictly for ecological conservation reflects past low priorities

which governments have placed on protection of special natural environments. Despite the efforts across the country, most of Canada's networks of protected areas have yet to be completed. Much work remains to be done to achieve the goals of the 1992 Statement of Commitment, particularly in areas where private land ownership presents special challenges.

Principle reasons for Resistance to establishing National Parks are said by CEAC to be:

- unwillingness by governments to preserve wilderness areas in perpetuity
- reluctance to transfer land to the federal government and to permit exclusive federal management
- lack of local community and landowner support
- prior allocation of Crown land for selective commercial exploitation (e.g., forestry, mines, oil and gas exploration)
- controversy over ownership, cultural and sovereignty issues
- outstanding aboriginal land claims

In addition to these challenges, the challenge in the marine environment is particularly significant, due to inherent jurisdictional complexity, a more limited knowledge base and inventory of marine resources and ecosystems, and the need to reconcile protected area status with established patterns of use. However, the legislative, policy and planning bases for future efforts to protect special features and representative samples of Canada's diverse marine ecosystems are currently being developed, where required.

#### **4. PROPOSED STRATEGIES AND SOLUTIONS (for improving Biodiversity Conservation and Planning into the Tourism Planning Sector)**

##### **4.1 Policy-Oriented**

Government political commitments to parks are provided through the Liberal Party Red Book 2 document, *Securing our Future Together*. It is oriented to working toward completing the National Parks System and maintaining long-term ecological integrity of national parks. What is needed is provision of resources to follow through in these directions, and more effort to get policies and legislation on line. It also is oriented to continuing to establish new national marine conservation areas and developing related legislation and policies. Policy direction specific to Parks Canada comes from *Guiding Principles and Operating Policies* (1994), and new park establishment is guided by the *National Park Systems Plan* and the *National Marine Conservation Area System Plan*.

Environmental assessment (EA) has been recognized as a key element in meeting the obligations of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Canadian Biodiversity Strategy. Article 14 of the Convention recognizes EA as an important decision-making tool for ensuring the protection of biological diversity. In addition, EA provides a useful model for integrated ecological management.

British Columbia's recognition of the role of Protected Areas is commendable (they have a system and set up targets to achieve a certain level of landscape in protection) in biodiversity protection and economic development (therefore much greater area and coverage of Protected Areas, providing benefits to many local communities).

Moves to complement protected area and systems planning are also being seen and may offer some solutions. For example, along the Rocky Mountains in the west, the *Yellowstone to Yukon* (Y2Y) Initiative has approximate boundaries which encompass lands extending beyond those within PA status, and cross not only provincial and territorial boundaries, but also the Canada/US boundary. A coalition of environmental groups, organisations and individuals are supporting this concept of reexamining the benefits of conserving the wilder lands, and pausing to evaluate broader values when considering future land use changes. Similarly, in the east, there is an initiative called *Adirondacks to Algonquin*.

## **4.2 Economic**

Parks Canada requires funds for both acquisition of new protected areas, for research, and for managing current parks within its system. Significant funds will be required to undertake these important tasks adequately. During 1990 – 2000, Parks Canada continued to face significant financial pressures in delivery of its programs. This was recognised in the Report of the Panel of the Ecological Integrity of Canada's National Parks. This recommended \$328 million in additional funding, to implement protection of ecological integrity. It also recommended that long term funding was needed to complete the National Park system, and that the majority of National Parks assets have now passed their expected lifecycle, thus an additional investment of \$475 million is required for infrastructure. But Parks Canada budgets are currently frozen.

Funding is required for other types of PAs such as CBRs

The economic valuation of the many goods and services that biodiversity provides to people is a fundamental requirement for sustainable development. Many of these goods and services, such as recreational opportunities, ecological functions and sources of gene pools, are public goods and, by their very nature, are not traded in the marketplace. Because of the general lack of economic data, these non-market goods tend to be undervalued or even ignored in decision making. Economic valuation of biodiversity could attempt to correct for such market imperfections by assigning values to these goods and services.

Ecotourism and the broader Sustainable Tourism is seen as one way of partially financing some PAs. Ecotourism is also seen by many as an unexploited force for protection, especially for more economically vulnerable areas, such as Biosphere Reserves. However, not all agency personnel see the potential that ecotourism operators offer in protecting the PA through their sensitive practices, the visitor management which they need to do, nor the opportunities for spreading Parks values through the interpretive programs which are intrinsic to ecotourism. Also, not all management staff in Parks appreciate the practical realities of commercial operators. More collaboration is needed to open up these opportunities, and indeed, improved collaboration is beginning, as explained in Section 4.6.

## **4.3 Technical/Managerial – including mechanisms for intersectoral coordination**

Developing effective and improved use and distribution of data and information from a wide range of sources is one key to developing sound biodiversity strategies, policies and programs.

So too are government moves to encourage public-private partnerships to harmonize land use practices are a step in the right direction.

The Federal Provincial Parks Committee (FPPC), a body of provincial/territorial parks directors, with a federal liaison representative, could assist. This could be a challenge, because due to Ministry structures, a Parks Director may come from a ministry whose other mandates are wildlife and natural resources, while another may have ministry responsibilities for tourism and economic development. However, the FPPC could represent a mechanism for communication and coordination of activities, particularly related to collaborating on tourism and biodiversity initiatives

## **4.4 Human Resources (including education and training)**

Parks Canada staff suffered significant reductions more than once during the 1990s. As a result, the agency is stretched, in terms of human resources, to the extent that in whole program areas, there is only one staff person at the national level (e.g., Public Safety, Human Use Management, Law Enforcement). There is a clear need for more staff. Besides this, appropriate areas for staffing also needs to be examined, with considerations about the visitation numbers and types of markets to each area. For

example, there is not much point in having on-site interpreters in parks which have very little visitation. However, there might be a great deal of need for research or other functions. Not only is current staffing a concern, but attrition is continuing, since a large number of people are retiring over the next 5 years (approximately 50% of the National Parks Directorate in the next 5 years), which exacerbates the current staff shortage.

There is a need to enhance understanding of both the short- and long-term impacts of human activity on the ecosystem. Only when the impacts of human activities are understood can environmental, economic, social and cultural objectives be fully integrated. Improving our understanding of the human uses of ecosystems will not only improve biodiversity conservation approaches, but also assist in reducing negative economic impacts from environmental policies and programs.

The dissemination and understanding of Traditional Knowledge offers many opportunities related to considering and using traditional knowledge in decision making processes. This holistic approach to learning and using knowledge has direct application to the study and use of biodiversity, and much effort is now being expended to reduce the gap between traditional scientific approaches and aboriginal approaches with a view to combining the best of both. Many communities, families and individuals have accumulated traditional knowledge that is relevant to the conservation of biodiversity and the sustainable use of biological resources. For example, farmers, loggers, trappers and other people that depend directly on natural resources have experience and knowledge that is valuable to addressing biodiversity needs. Measures that allow and facilitate these individuals to control and communicate their knowledge and information as part of land and resource planning and management would be helpful.

Biodiversity education and training are necessary to achieve the objectives of the Convention. Numerous government agencies, non-government organizations and private-sector interests are engaged in training and education. Quebec, for example, is promoting the creation of local biodiversity resource centres to provide easy access to biodiversity planning information for resource managers and local government. Training and education can help improve public understanding of the value of biodiversity and our dependence on it. They could reinforce the notion of civic responsibility, and help to identify the actions required to ensure full societal support for developing and implementing new and improved strategies, policies, plans, programs, legislation and management approaches. It is often most effective to create forums in which all participants may exchange ideas and information.

Interpretation is a potentially powerful tool. There have been tremendous advances in interpretation in Canada since the 1920s. The focus has moved from: acquainting visitors with features, often focussing on the most dramatic/majestic/exceptional; to stressing interrelationships, ecology and the landscape in general including management issues; to fostering an environmental consciousness among visitors. Most park interpretation program objectives refer to the role of interpretation in resource protection.

It is in this role of interpretation that ecotourism may perform its most valuable protection services to parks, biosphere reserves and other protected areas, through fostering awareness, insight, knowledge, understanding, appreciation, respect, and love for the areas.

#### **4.5 Biodiversity Conservation per se**

Including the elements of biodiversity conservation in the interpretive materials and messages for tourists, describing the benefits, and why it matters, would be a good start for improving understanding of the concept. Visitors are more able to relate to concrete things, so examples should be used, rather than concepts. If protected area managers build protection of genetic diversity into their other activities, that may be sufficient (it is a stretch to imagine that most tourists will be moved by this element of biodiversity at first). Focussing on the bigger picture elements of ecosystems and species is easier for visitors to relate to.

Use of consistent language might help improve tourists' understanding of biodiversity conservation. For example, in Canada, the term "ecological integrity" is the current watchword. It is very poorly understood, particularly by visitors. However, what this means in practice is also poorly understood by commercial tourism operators and by some parks staff. Parks is making a good start by aiming to make the transmission of park values and messages more of a goal in its operations. However, the term does not resonate with the average visitor, at least not yet.

Biodiversity conservation is not part of the key language in use by tourists. There needs to be some simple language which captures the essence of biodiversity conservation. In addition, there is a need to identify and convey full range of benefits to the public as landowners and local governments.

## **4.6 Examples of Best Practices in Linking Tourism Development and BCP**

### **4.6.1 Parks & Eco-Adventure Operators: Best Practices in Natural Heritage Collaborations**

**Background:** The Canadian Tourism Commission has been involved for some time in sharing best practices (as described in Section 1). The Catalogue of Exemplary Practices in Adventure Travel and Ecotourism was only the first important step in the direction of tourism Best Practices. In it, the focus was not simply on protected areas, but on respecting and conserving natural (and cultural) diversity in all natural locations. The CTC has maintained leadership in commissioning other studies such as *Best Practices in Tourism Partnerships*, and the more recent *Parks and Eco-Adventure Operators: Best Practices in Natural Heritage Collaborations*.

The CTC industry advisory group recommended this topic, due to the mounting tension between some parks agencies and eco-adventure operators. Much of this tension has been evident in the highly visited Four Mountain Parks (which include Banff and Jasper). More recently, the federal government responded to the report of the expert panel on maintaining ecological integrity in Canada's National Parks, by agreeing with the experts' conclusion that the National Parks are under serious threat from stresses both inside and outside the parks. The minister indicated that there are to be several actions, to be undertaken *in dialogue with Parks partners*, including:

- Legislation reconfirming that maintaining ecological integrity is the first priority in planning and managing national parks
- Working with staff and partners to develop a charter for Parks Canada which revolves around protecting ecological integrity
- Designating legal wilderness areas in national parks
- Improving relationships and ways of working with Aboriginal people
- Collaborating with other agencies to improve ecosystem-based management
- Working with those who market and use National Parks to ensure an understanding of the ecological integrity mandate, to attract visitors to the right place, at the right time, in the right numbers, and with the right expectations
- Reviewing appropriateness of visitor activities in the park (through input to park management planning process and public consultation) without removing historic uses
- Ensuring maintaining ecological integrity is the first consideration in capital redevelopment of facilities, accommodation and infrastructure (whether Parks Canada or commercial operators)
- Obtaining scientific advice for decision-making
- Developing a training/orientation program in ecological integrity for all Parks Canada staff, managers and partners

As a direct outcome, Bill C-27 received royal assent on in October, 2000. It gives *first priority* to the "*maintenance or restoration of ecological integrity*, through the protection of natural resources and



natural processes," in all aspects of parks' management. With the passage of this legislation, National Parks managers now have the full range of management tools to ensure these areas are protected. This signals a new direction in Protected Area management. In addition, some provinces' PA managers, as well as the tourism industry, are following this lead in their Protected Area management priorities, and are involved in improving biodiversity conservation.

The Canadian Tourism Commission, with the input from Parks agencies and individual operators, has led the move to examine how better to ensure that collaboration for appropriate tourism can take place, nationally, in protected areas. The project examines best practices in collaboration between parks agencies and the eco-adventure industry.

**Location:** The initiative relates to all areas of Canada in and adjacent to provincial, territorial and national parks.

**Management and Coordination:** The CTC managed the project. (Subsequent to the initiation of the project, the Tourism Industry Association of Canada developed a further initiative in cooperation with Parks Canada, to expand the topic of Best Practices to many types of tourism – resorts, golf, skiing, and touring in and adjacent to National Parks. Now the CEO of Parks Canada and the Tourism Industry Association of Canada have agreed on underlying principles, and have signed an accord to work together to protect and preserve Canada's national parks and national historic sites. Co-operation and communication are seen as key elements. There are multi-players involved in this other evolving project which has yet to begin implementation).

**Objectives:** Objectives were:

- To assess current collaborative Best Practices, (both by operators and agencies), which address currently identified issues
- To assess existing relationships between the two potential collaborators
- To determine strengths and weaknesses, opportunities, interpretation and parks values transmission from both parties' perspectives
- To identify unresolved issues
- To identify opportunities around the parks new focus on ecological integrity
- To benchmark best practices by Eco-Adventure operators currently operating in parks

### **Constraints**

The constraints of the project were the dependence on all agencies to generate names of suitable operators to survey for the project, and to respond to the survey themselves. There was not always responsiveness from all parks agency representatives. Also, due to timing, the project was at its height during the summer period – hardly the best time of year to be administering surveys to the eco-adventure industry. Other challenges were: difficulty obtaining responses which provided sufficiently meaningful detail; many respondents (particularly operators) found it easier to “beef” before providing best practices or suggestions for improved practices; the inability of National Parks representatives to respond at a provincial level (instead, each administrative unit required to reply, creating a large data management burden). It should be noted that the nature of these constraints were project management difficulties, rather than any real lack of intent to cooperate, and in fact the massive amount of information generated enriched the final product.

**Achievements:** This study surveyed both eco-adventure operators (Canada-wide), and parks agencies (Canada-wide, provincial, territorial and national), thus obtaining input from all players who manage parks in the country. The findings were extremely rich and diversified. An important topic area in the findings related to integrating ecological integrity into the eco-adventure sector: future directions, concerns, opportunities, new product possibilities, target market opportunities, collaboration opportunities

and suggestions. The project presents best practices as a menu of options so as to share lessons most appropriately to a country with tremendous diversity in both its tourism product and its ecosystems.

The initiative provides information to both the industry and parks managers on the topics which cause the most concern (e.g., regulation and policy making, implementation of rules and procedures, communications, need for relationship building and trust). It also showcases really good practices on behalf of both parties – practical examples of collaborative planning; managing for ecological integrity; operators' stewardship of the environment; and suggestions for future improvements.

**Opportunities:** As a result of this initiative, the CTC wishes to hold a series of regional workshops to bring together key players. There is an opportunity for both PA managers and tourism operators to address the areas of weaknesses in their operation, to learn from the experience of more successful relationships, and to build on strengths in collaboration. The CTC intends to place the results of this project on its website, to further share best practice information. Parks Canada is interested in moving forward together with the tourism industry, and the new direction/accord to integrate Parks objectives (with ecological integrity being the prime mandate) with tourism industry objectives, where possible, has emerged.

#### **4.6.2 The Banff/Bow Valley Heritage Tourism Strategy**

##### **Background**

The Banff/Bow Valley Heritage Tourism Strategy was developed in 1997, and designed to celebrate and preserve the park's ecological and cultural integrity. By encouraging a common vision, direction, and set of objectives for the local tourism industry, and by fostering a sense of shared responsibility for park protection among tourism industry partners, visitors and residents, the strategy is intended to guide and guarantee a sustainable future for the natural and cultural values of the park.

In 1997, staff of Banff National Park, tourism groups, and private industry banded together to decide how to assure Banff's sustainability and ecological integrity. They recognised that the Park's reputation as a tourism destination and World Heritage Site is founded on its nature, its history and its culture. They also recognized that the regional population had grown, that the park was beginning to be surrounded by other forms of land use, and that these changes would have a cumulative effect on the park in the future. They felt that heritage tourism, which offered experiences promoting culture, understanding and respect, which would contribute to a solution to sustaining Banff's natural environment. From this grew the Heritage tourism strategy.

There is recognition that while the park is primarily a place for nature, it is also a place for people. In Banff National Park, tourism gave birth to the park and it will always be a place to visit, experience and learn. It is a place for community and environmental stewardship, where residents and visitors have a special responsibility to behave in an environmentally sensitive manner.

**Location:** Banff National Park, Alberta. Part of the Four Mountain Park system, and encompassing a World Heritage Site

**Management and Coordination:** The heritage tourism project is a joint effort between the Parks agency, municipalities, industry associations, and institutions. These players are: Parks Canada, the Town of Banff (which is within the National Park), the Town of Canmore (which is just outside the park boundaries), the Banff/Lake Louise Tourism Bureau (to which businesses in Banff and Lake Louise belong), the Banff Centre, the Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies and the Mountain Park Heritage Interpretation Association. There is a volunteer board, the Banff Bow Valley Heritage Tourism Council, which guides the implementation of the strategy in and around Banff National Park. This council includes those players named above, and senior members of the Banff Lake Louise Tourism Bureau, as

well as the Banff-Lake Louise Hotel Motel Association, the Lake Louise business community, outlying commercial accommodations, and Tourism Canmore-Kananaskis.

**Objectives:** The primary aim of the Heritage Tourism Strategy is to sustain Banff as a tourism destination by preserving and celebrating the beauty and ecological integrity of the park, and by encouraging the same goal in surrounding areas. Objectives are:

- to make all visitors and residents aware they are in a national park and World Heritage Site by actively fostering appreciation and understanding of the nature, history and culture of Banff National Park and surrounding areas
- to encourage, develop and promote opportunities, products and services consistent with heritage and environmental values
- to encourage environmental stewardship initiatives upon which sustainable heritage tourism depends
- to strengthen employee orientation, training and accreditation programming as it relates to sharing heritage understanding with visitors

**Constraints:** Some of the constraints on Banff National Park relate to internal and external stresses (increasing human use and facilities expansion; and a range of external stresses from pesticides and invasion of exotic species to increasing regional population and development leading to habitat loss and fragmentation). Other factors range from ecosystem dynamics and human use, to global influence of media and increasing urbanisation and homogenisation of world culture, which would impact the park. Challenges include:

- low levels of awareness, understanding and support
- increasing front-country and day use
- demand exceeding capacity of ecosystem and infrastructure in some locations
- excess capacity at historic sites
- insufficient resources for interpretation, outreach and infrastructure

**Achievements:** Achievements of the Heritage Tourism Council include:

- delivering Banff's Best Heritage Orientation program to 1,000 employees in the summer of 2000, bringing the total trained over the last three years to 4,500 staff
- creating a heritage tourism video for training business owners, staff and residents
- facilitating the development of courses towards accreditation in private and public sector interpretation
- expanding the heritage tourism concept beyond Banff, resulting in strategies for Field, Jasper and Waterton Lakes (all in the Four Mountain Parks). Discussions have also begun with Golden and Radium, towns just adjacent to the Mountain Parks of Kootenay and Yoho

In addition, the Council and the Park work closely with the regional tourism industry. Travellers can learn about ecological integrity and commemorative integrity (in national historic sites) through portable and travelling exhibits).

Local tourism businesses are responding to the strategy with new programs and developments. In April 2000, the first annual Banff Bow Valley Heritage Tourism Awards were granted to local businesses and individuals for good environmental practices and respect for Banff National Park's natural heritage. As an example, a hotel now incorporates heritage programming into conference packages, offers guests guided hikes with naturalists, and requires that tour groups wishing to visit the site take a guided tour, which includes a talk about Banff's heritage. A tour operator has contributed to seed funding for the strategy, to training, to programming, and to facility development.

Current activities include moving to accreditation in private and public sector interpretation, and establishing benchmarks in awareness, knowledge, understanding and behaviour, against which heritage actions and activities can be monitored and measured.

**Opportunities:** Opportunities are to:

- increase awareness and understanding
- influence expectations and use to support ecological and social goals
- educate visitors and residents on “soft practices”
- profile national historic sites
- create a “community of communicators” to extend the reach of communications
- collaborate with partners to enhance visitor experience
- to expand this initiative to other parks

#### **4.6.3 Ecotourism Product Club: Canadian Biosphere Reserves**

An initiative of the CTC is to examine what makes for best practices in tourism partnerships. One of the partnerships in which the CTC is itself a partner, is a strategic tourism alliance among Canadian Biosphere Reserves and adjacent communities, called the *Ecotourism Product Club*.

##### **Background**

The CTC, for some time, has been interested in sharing best practices which support sustainable tourism. Their Product Club Initiative is oriented to bringing together the many small and medium-sized enterprises that make up the tourism industry, to increase the range and quality of the Canadian tourism experience. It encourages partnerships comprising members with a common vision. By the end of 1999, the CTC had invested more than \$3 million in 24 Product Clubs, involving about 250 partners organisations and more than 4,000 associated members and businesses. It is a 3-year program for each partnership, in which the CTC acts as one of the partners, and partially funds, on a decreasing scale, successful projects.

The program helps SMEs pool their efforts to build networks they could not otherwise afford on their own, and the CTC selects the best applicants in any one year for Product Club status, and contributes dollars, information and advice. Product Clubs cover the entire spectrum of tourism types, from urban to cultural to nature-based, to thematic. The CTC sponsored an initiative (*Best Practices in Canada's Tourism Industry – Partnerships*) which examined the range of activities which are required for creating successful tourism partnerships - planning, identifying and selecting partners, implementing, managing, measuring results and monitoring, and marketing partnerships. These practices will be shared with industry via the CTC web site.

A number of Product Clubs operate in protected areas, and are oriented to rural tourism, ecotourism or adventure tourism. Some, such as the *Conservation Lands of Ontario* initiative, and others, are founded upon principles of sustainable tourism, and actually have stipulations that part of their membership fees should go back to the environment and local projects, and have developed their own more detailed codes and guidelines under which to operate tourism.

One such partnership has particular relevance to the UNEP project, because it is a national level initiative. This is the partnership of the *Canadian Biosphere Reserves Association (CBRA)*, called the *Ecotourism* partnership by the CTC. Biosphere Reserves (BRs) are "multiple purpose protected areas established to conserve species and natural communities and to use environments without degrading them". They offer a co-operative approach to planning and enhancement of economic opportunities, while preserving environmental values. They are established under the Man and the Biosphere Program (MAB) of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). CBRA has, as its major goal, to encourage and package sustainable tourism initiatives in Canada's Biosphere Reserves. It does

this through working with nearby communities and the tourism industry, on a reserve-by-reserve basis. It also shares its information, lessons, and success among the reserves, with a newsletter and other mechanism. For example, it holds Market Ready Workshops related to ecotourism.

**Location:** Biosphere Reserves across Canada

**Management and Coordination:** The *Canadian Biosphere Reserves Association (CBRA)* is a non profit organisation formed in 1997 to provide support and networking opportunities that help develop and maintain biosphere reserves throughout Canada. Through CBRA, people in biosphere reserves can maintain communications among themselves and with other related organizations, collaborate on shared projects, and exchange local expertise among biosphere reserves in Canada and elsewhere. CBRA successfully applied to the CTC partnership program, to become a Product Club.

**Objectives:** The objectives of the Ecotourism Product Club are:

- to encourage involvement among the biosphere reserves within a tourism context
- to create a greater awareness of the positive opportunities tourism can bring within protected areas
- to create “well-managed” packages within these protected areas

**Activities:** The key activities undertaken in the program are:

- establishing principles and guidelines for nature tourism
- hosting market-ready workshops among the operators
- assisting each biosphere reserve club member to connect with tourism organisations in their jurisdiction to create “well-managed, sustainable packages”
- increasing awareness among the tourism industry of the potential of biosphere reserves
- partners are buying into the idea of identifying unique ecotourism packages and setting up the proper process and tourism network

**Achievements:**

- It is assisting operators identify what they need to better deliver the experience to customers, not just a product
- It provided tools to assess marketability through workshops
- It helped further refine the guiding principles and standards for sustainable tourism in protected areas
- The process has served as incentive for other operators currently not involved in the program
- The development of a national newsletter for the Ecotourism Product Club. This is posted on the their internet site, and increases internal and external communications (for example they have received communications from outside Canada in positive response to it)
- The arrangement where the ecotourism product club has a one page insert into the CBRA’s annual newsletter, providing promotional opportunities. Copies of this newsletter go to each of the biosphere reserves in Canada; to eman conferences, and over 200 copies go to individuals around Canada and other countries who have expressed an interest in Biosphere Reserves.

An important achievement is in developing *Principles* for its tourism experiences, which are:

- The visitor will have enjoyed and learned about natural habitats, wildlife species and conservation issues.
- The tourism activity will yield a tangible benefit to the conservation of habitats and species in the area visited.
- The tourism activity will yield an economic benefit to host communities.
- The tourism operation will have the concurrence of affected communities and cultures.

In addition, all suppliers of nature-based tourism products are expected to ascribe to the principles by responding to each of the following criteria (which are based on criteria initially developed by the Redberry Lake Biosphere Reserve)

*Ecotourism Criteria for Operators in Biosphere Reserves*

- Does the operation practice the 5-Rs: Respect, Re-use, Recover, Recycle, Reduce in all aspects of the package?
- Is promotional material free of guarantees of seeing specific species of wildlife?
- Are promotional materials culturally sensitive and accurate?
- Are visitors provided with pre-trip materials detailing the trip itinerary and providing background information about habitats, species, and local cultures?
- Do wildlife viewing activities avoid repeated or sustained disturbance?
- Does your operation avoid altering the behavior patterns of wildlife species?
- Does the activity minimize impact on sensitive natural areas?
- Does the operator ensure that culturally sensitive sites are protected from visitor impact or inappropriate activity?
- Has concurrence been obtained from affected communities about the nature and scope of the operation?
- Does the program inform the visitor about habitats, species, and local human communities?
- Does the program include a recognition of the significance of the area visited for conservation?
- Does the program address relevant natural area management issues and possible solutions?
- Are supplies purchased from within the local community whenever available and reasonable to do so?
- Does the operator hire guides and other labour from the local community where available?
- Does the operator give financial or measurable in-kind support to the local community?
- Does the activity involve visitors in volunteer conservation activities?
- Does the activity contribute financially to local conservation?
- Does the operator keep a record of observations of visitor impacts and share it with resource managers?
- Is the operator prepared to deal effectively with environmental emergencies caused by the tour operation?
- Is there an understanding of the Limits of Acceptable Change for the area visited?
- Are all necessary operating licenses in place?
- Are staff members readily available who are trained in First Aid
- Has the operator purchased liability insurance?
- Does the operator apply the correct use of waiver forms?

Feedback/monitoring of operators is obtained by requesting that tourists comment to both the business operators, and to The Canadian Biosphere Reserves Association Tourism Consortium office, about whether or not the criteria have been met throughout the tour:

**Constraints:** There are a number of challenges for this Ecotourism program. These are:

- Lack of government funding for Biosphere Reserves in Canada
- Developing tourism opportunities among the biosphere reserves and get people working together
- Working with protected area managers so they see tourism as a positive opportunity with proper ecotourism packages - not all Biosphere Reserves are currently participating equally in the program. Of the 10 designated Biosphere Reserves in Canada, 7 are actively participating in the Ecotourism program
- Need to create models on how to approach this type of nature tourism experience
- One of the BRs is under pressure from existing tourism numbers visiting (it is also a National Park), and they are apprehensive of marketing the area and thus attracting even more people into the Park.

**Opportunities:**

- Biosphere Reserves are very well recognised within the UNESCO context internationally, especially among European markets.
- An ecotourism adventure within the CBR system will add to Canada's nature products and expand the ecotourism experience available
- Opportunity to offer excellent, high-end, well-managed tourism products
- Opportunities of offer a second round of advanced market-readiness workshops
- Moves to make the program more operator-driven than Biosphere Reserve driven, so there is a form of local capacity building ongoing
- A recent idea is developing a Passport. The Ecotourism Product Club has adopted the idea, and is currently working to move the Passport from a concept to a reality. The goal is an international BR Passport, but even a Canadian Passport to the Biosphere Reserves represents a positive opportunity

#### **4.6.4 Charlevoix Biosphere Reserve**

**Background:** By early 2000, the CBRA ecotourism initiative had developed a number of tours, in various locations across Canada, including one which comprises a cross-Canada tour. These provide specific examples of what ecotourism can be for both protection and support to communities. Within the CBRA system, some BRs are more active than others in promoting biodiversity conservation through tourism and ecotourism (and cultural heritage conservation). An example is at Charlevoix Biosphere Reserve, which is particularly adept at integrating various sectors, values and perspectives, both natural and cultural and economic.

Once Charlevoix obtained the status of BR, this enabled setting up a regional context in which numerous activities dedicated to the protection of the environment and its use have emerged. Charlevoix management believe that BRs have to be multifunctional, and go beyond the idea of a protected natural area. They are attempting to create a new model for a living park, expressing tangibly, a unifying and dynamic society project. In Charlevoix, this collective project links many ideas of planning, environmental protection and the involvement of the local population, within the context of sustainable development. Tourism is one of the essential components of the regional economy in Charlevoix, with a long evolutionary history. UNESCO designation has led to numerous initiatives that have had important effects on the tourism industry (e.g., depollution of waterways, development of natural sites, reintroduction of some animal species, creation of organisations dedicated to the protection and development of protected areas, creation of tours featuring local agricultural products, etc.).

**Location:** Charlevoix is located on the north shore of the St. Lawrence River, 400 km east of Montreal, in the province of Quebec, and covers 5,500 sq. km.

**Management and Coordination:** Charlevoix Biosphere Reserve Corporation, a Not-For-Profit corporation. This status provides them with the independence necessary to lobby or advise governments, and have a voice.

**Objectives:** Overall, there is often not very much direct cooperation between BRs in developing tourism, since BRs tend to have very different interests and directions. However, they can support each other in developing sustainable tourism. At Charlevoix, they look at all three major functions of a BR: conservation; logistics (research, education); and rural development. Charlevoix aims to integrate these three functions. Their objectives were:

- express the strengths and weaknesses of existing tourism product
- evaluate the potential of tourism development by activity and location
- develop an action plan to expand tourism demand for the supply available

- support the creation of a regional initiative focusing on regional tourism potential for specific target markets
- discuss and endorse a code of ethics for companies that want to operate ecotourism businesses in the BR

### **Constraints**

- There can be a problem of visitor numbers in one place, particularly on good days at scenic sites. Charlevoix is attempting to manage these sites through restrictions to numbers of visitors.
- In some locations (provincial parks in the core of the BR), some visitors want to engage in sports that have no connection with the BR or surrounding natural environment.
- The lack of visitors in off-peak periods is a challenge for tourism businesses developing along the trail.
- During hunting season, depending on the specific locations, commercial operators may have problems with hunters, who may have an aggressive attitude. There is a feeling by some that nature-based tourism takes the second place to hunting and fishing activities
- Lack of support and funding (whether a grant, or a mechanism for generating revenues) for the BR from Canada or Quebec is a large constraint

### **Achievements:**

- In the 1980s, Charlevoix developed a 5-year tourism development plan from which aimed to achieve BR status, which it accomplished.
- They proposed 15 major projects, all of which were realised (e.g., creation of the provincial park “Hautes-Gorges”; creation of an academy of music and dance and the construction of a concert hall; creation of an art and exhibition center; concretisation of an old project – a “green”ski station in a site that included the highest downhill skiing facility in all of Quebec, creation of a marine park at the confluence of the Saguenay and the St-Lawrence rivers).
- They are currently working on a new plan, in which protection of the landscape will be introduced as a major focus
- The BR Corporation, despite lack of support from Quebec or Canada, has achieved support from the regional and local municipalities. For example, they have influenced regional municipalities to change their regional management plan to take the landscape and its protection more into account.
- Tourism companies which are allowed into the region must conduct activities in an appropriate manner, and provide information or interpretation about the park. Some have gone quite far in this direction. For example, Traversée de Charlevoix is a commercial tourism operation, but is also a Not-For-Profit Corporation. The Traversée de Charlevoix is a corridor between the two Charlevoix parks (Grands-Jardins and Hautes-Gorges) in the heart of the BR. The company developed a code of ethics for its clients. This relates to activities in their cabins (e.g., taking responsibility for one’s own clean-up, outhouse rules, voluntary fee payment) since the maintenance of cabins is a collective responsibility. There are also guidelines about respecting the environment outside the cabin and along the route, and a reminder about the rules in the park. Tapping into the opportunities of the BR, this company alone attracted over 1,000 visitors in 1998, representing 3,286 user days.

### **Opportunities:**

Charlevoix BR currently has tour packages available now for sale. They are looking for support as they strengthen their tourism initiatives. Contacts at CBRA’s AGM have proved invaluable, and it appears as though Charlevoix will become an important part of the Ecotourism Product Club project, especially as their Director has been involved in tourism in the past through tourism associations, and knows the French market very well.

Opportunities exist to tap into the importance of protecting the environment which is so important for modern society and urban populations, and to increase visitation through:



- taking action to restore degraded sites, protect wildlife habitats, create “eco” activities, and be generally active in the conservation of natural sites in general.
- creating a group which includes all the “eco” enterprises to facilitate the contacts between those businesses and the creation of new opportunities
- basing marketing actions on the prestigious status of “Biosphere Reserve” that conveys an image to future visitors that Charlevoix is a special place, where local populations want to improve their conduct relative to other places and to their previous actions

Another opportunity is the development of a code of ethics for operators. Charlevoix created a specific non-profit association as an experiment, which can include some private enterprises. The association is oriented to the collaboration and development of ecotourism in the BR. This NGO is attempting to work on and elaborate a code of ethics connected with international standards, such as those developed by the World Tourism Organisation. These are intended to be adhered to by all partners in the group. This should prove to be a good marketing tool.

#### **4.6.5 Pacific Rim National Park Reserve Wildlife Viewing Guidelines**

**Background:** Pacific Rim National Park Reserve is not a gazetted park. Thus the Park management had little control over operators due to its nongazetted status. Staff can only provide ecotourism and other commercial operators with “recommendations” and guidelines. In order to solve or prevent potential problems, Parks staff have worked closely with operators to establish codes which the industry agrees to.

**Location:** Pacific Rim National Park Reserve is located on the West Coast of Vancouver Island, in British Columbia. This PA is not one discrete land area, but is broken into different units.

**Management and Coordination:** Pacific Rim National Park Reserve – Parks Canada.

**Objectives:** The major objectives were to develop guidelines for the tourism industry, specifically commercial operators, which would assist in managing the natural resources of the park and area, particularly wildlife.

**Constraints:** Due to its gazetted status, Parks staff had very little control over commercial operators. Therefore, they had to take a collaborative approach to developing cooperation and implementation. Other problems than those solved, need to be tackled, such as location of group camping areas, or identifying appropriate outfitting services to maintain the wilderness character and visitor experience.

- Pressures are also increasing as off season is gaining popularity.
- Operators are constantly pushing the park for more access, greater numbers, or uses considered inappropriate for the park by agency staff.
- Some operators were unwilling to adapt to change, or accept the emergence of parks as primarily PAs.
- Insufficient park resources (dollars, staff, or time)
- Difficulties in getting all players together on a regular basis (cost, distance, time commitment)

#### **Achievements:**

Parks Canada held a Marine Wildlife Viewing Workshop with parks and operators to work on the development of guidelines. The overall initiative resulted not in general wildlife viewing guidelines, but in specific documents related to key sensitive species in the region, and one sensitive habitat. All Guidelines included specifics related to sections on: Getting into Position; Viewing; and Leaving the Area (and even distance viewing or waiting). Draft guidelines were developed for:

- Shoreline Wildlife Viewing
- Seabirds Viewing
- Pinnipeds Viewing

- Killer Whales / Orca Viewing
- Gray and Humpback Whale Viewing
- Grice Bay Wildlife Viewing (this is an area recognised as being a vulnerable, unique, ecologically sensitive area requiring specific guidelines. The intent of the proposed guidelines are to provide a high degree of protection to the essential habitats and to minimize disturbance to whales foraging in high and low tide conditions)

Other achievements of the collaboration include:

- Generating cooperation between agency and operators, and between operators themselves, sufficient to implement the wildlife viewing guidelines on a voluntary basis. This was facilitated by strong operator interest and enthusiasm in protecting and presenting wildlife to visitors, as well as willingness to talk to each other
- Willingness to adhere to the guidelines and codes of conduct
- Regular information exchange of information has come from the initiative
- Development of respect between agency staff and operators

**Opportunities:** There are opportunities to:

- build on the successes of the wildlife viewing guidelines initiative to tackle some of the other PA problems.
- increase operator appreciation of their role in presenting and protecting park values
- form a regular working group with the park
- partner to help defray costs for services, protection and research
- develop a common code of conduct although this needs “teeth”
- common training sessions for staff and operators

## 5. SUMMARY

The establishment of protected areas is an important element of Canada’s effort to conserve biodiversity. They need to be complemented by sound stewardship across the entire country, and close attention must be paid to the areas surrounding them. Tourism has developed, over time, in many of Canada’s Protected Areas, and in some places is creating a management challenge, whereas in others, is contributing to financing of the areas, to the welfare of local communities, to conservation and increased understanding and value for that place. Many agencies and levels of government are involved in both biodiversity planning and in tourism, whether directly or indirectly, thus there are different layers of initiatives. For a country the size of Canada, it is a challenge to put forward one approach that is equally applicable in all ecosystems, and at all times and seasons. There are still tremendous challenges related to completing Canada’s representation of terrestrial and marine systems, managing Protected Area resources, visitors, and their potential impacts, and challenges in collaboration between the tourism industry and PA managers. However, a number of initiatives are beginning to integrate the two perspectives (biodiversity conservation and tourism), and represent a range of good practices which should be considered building blocks for the future.

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