NAWCC (Canada) Celebrates a Decade of Influencing Change
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A letter from the Executive Secretary

The year 2000 marks the 10th anniversary of the North American Wetlands Conservation Council (Canada). The Council also stands at the brink of change, as we prepare to take on broader responsibilities associated with the North American Bird Conservation Initiative. It is a good time to revisit our first decade, to take stock of our accomplishments, to reinforce the effectiveness of our time-proven approach to conservation, and to acknowledge the people and partners who have contributed to our success.

Canada's Minister of the Environment established the NAWCC (Canada), in 1990, to fulfil a broad mandate. First, it would act as senior administrative authority to deliver the North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP). Beyond the Plan, the Council would facilitate the development of wetland conservation policies and programs across Canada and internationally. This mandate would be accomplished by working with all its partners, particularly the Canadian Wildlife Service, Environment Canada. In each of these roles the Council and its partners have demonstrated strong leadership:

- Jointly administering over $520 million into Canadian Joint Venture projects that secured and enhanced over 800,000 hectares of key habitat, helping to restore wetlands and waterfowl populations
- Requesting governments to re-evaluate policies for conservation, such as the improved tax treatment for ecological donations, and establishing statute law pertaining to conservation easements
- Partnering with industry to identify operating practices that are beneficial to the environment and profitable for business
- Clarifying national principles and guidelines that improve wetland assessment and mitigation practices
- Sharing expertise – in Canada and around the world – for creating policy and legislative frameworks to support wetland conservation

How has this partnership achieved such success? At the heart of the Council’s work is an approach to conservation that shapes each and every project. It is an approach that focuses on habitat first – then on species. It encompasses landscapes, rather than relying on protected islands, and encourages stewardship of public, private, and corporate lands. Working through partnerships, it has encouraged the involvement of all Canadians in conservation of our wetland resources, and particularly those who own and manage the working landscapes of our country. And finally, it is an approach built on innovation, finding new ways of doing centuries-old work on the land to ensure that both the environment and the economy are healthy.

Partnerships have been the backbone of the Council’s work. This retrospective describes many of the alliances that have been struck over the past decade to accomplish common objectives – with agencies such as the Canadian Pulp and Paper Association, the Canadian Institute of Planners, Ducks Unlimited Canada, Environment Canada, and other federal, provincial, and territorial governments. These partnerships position wetland conservation squarely in the realm of strong and sustainable economic development. It is through such relationships that the NAWCC (Canada) has substantially levered its core resources – multiplying the number of dollars and people working toward common goals.
The NAWCC (Canada) anticipates the challenges of our next decade. We are encouraged by past successes and strengthened by tough battles that are far from over. We are confident in our approach that produces results and our vision of wetland conservation that illuminates the way forward.

The North American Wetlands Conservation Council (Canada) also stands ready to assume the challenge of a broader mandate encompassing all bird species and habitats, including wetland systems.

Kenneth W. Cox
October 2000

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Milestones on the road to NAWCC (Canada)

**May 1986:** Canada’s Minister of the Environment and the United States Secretary of the Interior signed the [North American Waterfowl Management Plan](https://www.nawcc.org/index.php) (Plan), agreeing on continental objectives for waterfowl, and associated habitat conservation objectives. The Plan committed these countries to spend $1.5 billion over 15 years on habitat conservation. Mexico joined the Plan in 1994.

**December 1989:** U.S. Congress approved the [North American Wetlands Conservation Act](https://www.nawcc.org/index.php) (NAWCA), providing a legislative framework for transferring 50% to 70% of funds to support the Plan from the United States to Canada and Mexico.

**February 1990:** U.S. Secretary of the Interior appointed the [North American Wetlands Conservation Council](https://www.nawcc.org/index.php) (NAWCC) to evaluate wetland conservation projects according to criteria contained in NAWCA, and to administer Plan funds in the United States.

**April 1990:** Sustaining Wetlands Forum recognized wetland conservation as a national issue of environmental and economic importance. The Forum initiated partnerships among business, agriculture, planning and environmental conservation, and recommended over 70 actions required to conserve wetlands in Canada.

**April 1990:** Canada’s Minister of the Environment established the [North American Wetlands Conservation Council (Canada)](https://www.nawcc.org/index.php), to oversee the coordination and implementation of Canadian Joint Ventures of the Plan. Projects in support of these Joint Ventures are proposed each year for financial support through Canadian and American sources. The Council is the principal point of contact in Canada for NAWCC in the United States. However, the Minister conveyed a wetland conservation mandate to the NAWCC (Canada) that reaches beyond the Plan. It included the facilitation of national and international wetland policy and programs.

**1991-1993:** [Canadian Wetlands Conservation Task Force](https://www.nawcc.org/index.php), a Committee of NAWCC (Canada), identified strategies for accomplishing the recommended actions put forward by the Sustaining Wetlands Forum. The Task Force report set the groundwork for the NAWCC (Canada) to coordinate wetland conservation in Canada, and to foster Canada’s wetland initiatives abroad.
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Since 1990, the NAWCC (Canada) and its partners have:

- Guided planning and delivery of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan in Canada
- Helped influence public policy agendas on wetland issues of importance to Canadians
- Established a vision of wetland conservation in Canada, and fostered supporting policy and legislation
- Improved the valuation of wetland functions in economic development decisions
- Worked with resource-based industries to develop cost-effective practices for sustaining wetlands
- Challenged science to be relevant to the management of the resource
- Built an international reputation for leadership in wetland conservation policies and techniques

The measure of the Council’s value lies within its substantial efforts in each of these seven areas, and most importantly, within the real change to which the partnerships have contributed: to wetland habitat, to the institutions that influence it, and, to the attitudes and practices of Canadians who own and manage the land.
Guided planning and delivery of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan in Canada

Efforts...
- Jointly administered more than $520 million for habitat conservation in Canada
- Encouraged the work of Canadian Joint Ventures, regional partnerships that create and implement habitat projects together with Plan partners:
  - Demonstrated the tangible environmental, economic, and social benefits of sustainable development practices
  - Demonstrated the power of partnerships for finding practical and effective solutions to environmental problems
- Leveraged just over $1.00 from the United States for every $1.00 from Canada, and more than $2.00 from provincial and non-government agencies for every Canadian federal dollar

Influencing change
- Over 800,000 hectares of key habitat secured and enhanced in Canada by NAWMP
- Fall flight of waterfowl restored to the 100 million range from a low of 55 million birds
- Thousands of landowners adopting practices to conserve soil, water, and habitat
- Conservation increasingly important to rural economies, with increased farm profits, more jobs, and greater diversification and sustainability
- Expanding partnership now mobilized for habitat conservation – including corporations, municipal governments, volunteer organizations, communities – contributing an unprecedented range of skills and resources to habitat objectives

NAWMP benefits many species

Wetlands:
- Essential habitat for more than 600 game and non-game species
- Among most diverse of ecosystems
- Home to one third of species at risk
- Fortunes of several rare species improving as a direct result of NAWMP projects
North American Wetlands Conservation Council (Canada)

Helped influence public policy agendas on wetland issues of importance to Canadians

Efforts...
- Defined requirements for change in 12 reports on key public policy issues such as tax incentives for ecological gifts, climate change, and invasive species
- Participated in more than 50 policy decision processes at the provincial, federal, and international level on issues affecting wetlands
- Facilitated a national effort to modify Canada’s Income Tax Act to encourage ecological gifts
- Shared leading-edge expertise on Canadian legislation for conservation easements, restrictive covenants, and servitudes with many Canadian governments
- Distributed more than 100,000 copies of NAWCC (Canada) publications worldwide

Influencing change
- Improved tax treatment for ecological gifts announced in the 1995, 1996 and 1997 Federal Budgets, resulting in the donation of 14,000 hectares of important habitat
- Substantial capital gains reduction on ecological gifts announced in the 2000 Federal Budget, expected to dramatically expand the reach of parks, stewardship, and species at risk programs
- Legislation adopted enabling statutory covenants and easements by almost all jurisdictions across Canada, and increasingly applied to protecting natural heritage
Established a vision of wetland conservation in Canada, and fostered supporting policy and legislation

Efforts...
• Crafted A Wetland Conservation Vision for Canada to map out the cooperative work required of governments, non-government organizations, and the private sector
• Provided a comprehensive review of wetland laws and policies at the federal and provincial levels in Canada
• Spearheaded the design and communication of practical means for achieving “no net loss” of wetland functions on the ground
• Advised policy initiatives in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Ontario, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia
• Advised and trained federal agencies on implementing the Federal Policy on Wetland Conservation

influencing change
• Wetland policy statements adopted by Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, and the Government of Canada, since 1990
• Legal protection for wetlands strengthened in the Prince Edward Island Environmental Protection Act, Quebec’s Act Respecting the Conservation and Development of Wildlife, and the Forest Practices Code of British Columbia Act

Wetlands are integral to the welfare of Canadians
• Filter and purify water
• Control floods, augment summer water flows, reduce erosion
• Provide food, recreation, commercial activities such as fishing
• Store carbon: links to climate change
North American Wetlands Conservation Council (Canada)

**Improved the valuation of wetland functions in economic development decisions**

**Efforts...**

- Published the *Wetland Evaluation Guide* - a rigorous method that places the full range of wetland functions centrally in land-use decisions
- Established principles and guidelines for wetland mitigation in Canada, based on a workshop of North American experts and Canada-wide consultations
- Advised wetland mitigation processes at the local level across the country; documented results on seven major projects
- Developed methods and tools for considering wetlands in the environmental assessment process
- Trained more than 500 land managers and environmental assessment practitioners on Canada's commitment to wetland conservation, and how to live up to it
- Advised on wetland mitigation projects at the federal and provincial levels

**influencing change**

- "No net loss" of wetland functions recognized as a bona fide development objective; mitigation results better reflect the range and value of wetland functions
- Wetlands gaining recognition as valued ecosystem components under the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act
- More wetland inventories and management plans completed for wetlands on federal lands than ever before
North American Wetlands Conservation Council (Canada)

**Worked with resource-based industries to develop cost-effective practices for sustaining wetlands**

**Efforts...**

- Partnered with forestry, peat harvesting, agriculture and mining industries to develop best practices that benefit wetlands and sustain profitability
- Negotiated Memoranda of Understanding with Ducks Unlimited Canada and both the Canadian Cattlemen’s Association and the Canadian Federation of Agriculture
- Helped bring together industry and conservation organizations for the 2000 Biodiversity Stewardship and Resource Industries Forum, to establish a common vision and path forward for preventing harm to species and their habitats
- Created Canada’s most comprehensive on-line source of wetland stewardship information, technologies and advice - WetKit (www.wetkit.net)
- Promoted the creation and use of wetlands for wastewater treatment through educational reports and training

**influencing change**

- Conservation agencies and industry beginning to work together to advance voluntary initiatives for biodiversity stewardship, as evidenced by the Species at Risk Working Group and the Biodiversity Stewardship and Resource Industries Initiative
- Commitment by industry to wetland stewardship strengthened, as reflected in wetland guidelines adopted by the Canadian Sphagnum Peat Moss Association and the Canadian Pulp and Paper Association
- Codes of practice adopted by governments and industry for minimizing impacts on wetlands, such as those by the Ontario Woodlot Owners Association and the Prince Edward Island Cattlemen’s Association
- Hundreds of tools and technologies now available for working towards wetland objectives on the ground

**Wetlands directly benefit the economy**

- $1.2 billion spent annually on recreational waterfowl-related activities
  - $1.6 billion to the Gross Domestic Product
  - $694 million in government revenue from taxes
  - 28,600 jobs

1991 Survey on the Importance of Wildlife to Canadians, Government of Canada
Challenged science to be relevant to the management of the resource

Efforts...
• Developed and promoted a list of priority wetland science research needs
• Conducted a major survey of wetland information users to identify requirements and priorities
• Gathered experts in wetland inventory and assessment to consider data integration on a nation-wide scale
• Participated in major science symposia, promoting the integration of science and wetland management

influencing change
• Wetland inventories and assessments cover all of the settled area of Canada
• Discussions continue on the coordination of a national roll-up of wetland inventory data
• Functional assessment methods that link wetland attributes to habitat, water quality, and hydrology are being developed
North American Wetlands Conservation Council (Canada)

Built an international reputation for leadership in wetland conservation policies and techniques

Efforts...
- Contributed expertise to the development of an international Wetland Evaluation Guide, based on the Canadian model
- Provided advice or training to governments in Australia, Ukraine, Malaysia, Bulgaria, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, Bangladesh, France, and Uganda
- Participated in Canada’s delegation to Conferences of the Contracting Parties, Ramsar Convention on Wetlands
- Promoted opportunities for habitat programming under the “Green Box” provisions of the World Trade Organization
- Helped organize and host Canada’s Millennium Wetland Event: A global conference on wetland and peatland science, policy, management, wise resource use, and regulation

influencing change
- National statements on wetlands adopted by more than 35 countries worldwide, many modeled on Canada’s federal wetland policy
- Ramsar Convention resolution on mitigation reflects global acceptance of the Canadian mitigation approach
- Millennium Wetland Event will result in expansion of global wetland and peatland science and policy networks, and 25 legacy publications
- Guidelines for Developing and Implementing National Wetland Policies adopted by Ramsar Convention provides a global reference guide

Wetlands directly benefit the economy
- At least three-quarters of Canada’s fish production depends on wetlands
- Recreational and commercial fishing
  - $12 billion annually to the Canadian economy
  - 465,000 jobs

M. Gross 1998
Fisheries Network Proposal
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The people who made things happen

NABCI/NAWCC (Canada)

Present members (2000-2001)
Ms. Karen Brown (Chairperson), Environment Canada, Ottawa
Mr. George Arsenault, Quebec
Dr. Arnold Boer, New Brunswick
Mr. Michael Bradstreet, Bird Studies Canada
Dr. Richard Elliot, Environment Canada, Atlantic Region
Dr. George Finney, Environment Canada, Atlantic Region
Mr. Rod Fowler, Ducks Unlimited Canada
Mr. John Lounds, The Nature Conservancy of Canada
Mr. Gerald McKeating, Environment Canada, Prairie and Northern Region
Mr. Bob McLean, Environment Canada, Headquarters
Mr. David Neave, Wildlife Habitat Canada
Ms. Caroline Schultz, Canadian Nature Federation
Mr. Dennis Sherratt, Saskatchewan
Mr. Trevor Swerdfager, Environment Canada, Pacific and Yukon Region
Dr. Steve Wendt, Environment Canada, Headquarters

Ex-officio
Dr. Art Martell, North American Bird Conservation Initiative

Past members of NAWCC (Canada)
Mr. Bob Andrews, Alberta
Mr. David Brackett, Environment Canada, Headquarters
Mr. Richard Chatelain, Quebec
Mr. Steve Curtis, Environment Canada, Headquarters
Mr. Jim Hancock, Newfoundland
Mr. Hugh Hunt, Saskatchewan
Mr. Gordon Kerr, Environment Canada, Prairie and Northern Region
Dr. Art Martell, Environment Canada, Prairie and Yukon Region
Mr. James McCuaig, Environment Canada, Headquarters
Mr. Jim McLean, Ontario
Mr. D. Stewart Morrison, Ducks Unlimited Canada
Mr. Art Smith, Prince Edward Island
Mr. Doug Stewart, Northwest Territories
Mr. Don Young, Ducks Unlimited Canada

Secretariat
Mr. Kenneth W. Cox, Executive Secretary (and Chair, Canadian Wetlands Conservation Task Force)
Mrs. Theresa Dupuis, Office Manager
Ms. Allison Grose, Program Coordinator
Mr. Clayton Rubec, Head of Secretariat

NAWMP International Coordinators
Mr. Kirk Andries
Mr. Ross Melinchuk
Mr. Len Ugarenko

Associates
Dr. Robert Bailey, Environment and Resources Inc.
Ms. Pauline Lynch-Stewart, Lynch-Stewart & Associates
Dr. James Patterson, Consultant
Partners
The NAWCC (Canada) and the North American Waterfowl Management Plan promote a partnership concept that can be compared to an investment club. Partners bring ideas and seed funding to the table, where the partners greatly expand resources and influence far beyond that of a single organization. The Council will continue to promote this partnership concept in the future. Many of our partners are listed below.

Federal Government Agencies
Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
Canadian International Development Agency
Canadian Museum of Nature
Environment Canada
Fisheries and Oceans Canada
Heritage Canada
Industry Canada
National Capital Commission
National Defence
Natural Resources Canada

Provincial and Territorial Governments
The NAWCC (Canada) has worked with the Directors of Wildlife in these jurisdictions on a variety of wetland policy, program, and/or project issues.

Other Organizations
Alberta Water Resources Commission
Arctic Goose Joint Venture
Black Duck Joint Venture
Canadian Bankers Association
Canadian Cattlemen’s Association
Canadian Federation of Agriculture
Canadian Forestry Association
Canadian Institute of Planners
Canadian Nature Federation
Canadian Pulp and Paper Association
Canadian Sphagnum Peat Moss Association
Canadian Wildlife Federation
CH2M Gore & Storrie Limited
Commission on Environmental Cooperation
Delta Waterfowl Foundation
Demeter Foundation
Ducks Unlimited Canada
Ducks Unlimited Inc.
Ducks Unlimited Mexico
Eastern Habitat Joint Venture
Ecologistics Ltd.
Foundation for International Training
International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
IUCN - The World Conservation Union
LandOwner Resource Centre
Manitoba Habitat Heritage Corporation
Nature Conservancy of Canada
Pacific Coast Joint Venture
Prairie Habitat Joint Venture
Ramsar Convention on Wetlands
Saskatchewan Wetlands Conservation Corporation
Sea Duck Joint Venture
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
University of Waterloo
Wetlands International
Wildlife Habitat Canada
World Oceans Foundation

Thousands of Canadian Landowners

Future Partnerships
As the new North American Bird Conservation Initiative gathers strength and the NAWCC (Canada) broadens its mandate to involve all bird habitats and species, including wetland systems, the Council is committed to strengthening existing partnerships and developing new alliances with government, aboriginal groups, industry, and conservation organizations.
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Taking stock…tools for influencing change

Publications
2000  Wetland Mitigation in Canada: A Framework for Application
1999  Wetlands and Government: Policy and Legislation for Wetland Conservation in Canada
       A Wetland Conservation Vision for Canada
1998  Wetland Mitigation and Compensation: Proceedings of a National Workshop
1997  Conservation Easement Valuation and Taxation in Canada
       Global Climate Change and Wetlands: Issues and Awareness
1995  Wetlands and Woodlots
       Canadian Legislation for Conservation Covenants, Easements and Servitudes: The Current Situation
1994  Wastewater and Stormwater Applications of Wetlands in Canada
       Wetland Policy Implementation in Canada: Proceedings of a National Workshop
       Conserving Wetlands in Managed Forests
       A Coming of Age: Policy for Wetland Conservation in Canada
       Summary Report of the National Workshop on Wetland Data Integration
       Wetland Conservation in Central America
       No Net Loss: Implementing “No Net Loss” Goals to Conserve Wetlands in Canada
       Canadian Peat Harvesting and the Environment
       You Can’t Give It Away: Tax Aspects of Ecologically Sensitive Lands
       Wetland Science Research Needs in Canada
Coauthored/co-published
1999, 1995 Canada and the Ramsar Convention
1995 Wetlands, Biodiversity and the Ramsar Convention
   Agriculture Chapter, State of Canada’s Environment Report
   Wetlands (A National Atlas of Canada Poster)
1994 Management of Canadian Ramsar Sites
1993 Procedures Manual for Designating Ramsar Sites in Canada

Unpublished Reports
1996-2000 Good News Stories (Wetland Conservation Initiatives in Canada)

Conferences and Workshops
2000 Sponsor/Organizing Committee: Quebec 2000 Millennium Wetland Event, Quebec City, Quebec
   Sponsor: Caring for Our Land and Water Conference, Guelph, Ontario
   Organizing Committee: Biodiversity Stewardship and Resource Industries, Regina, Saskatchewan
1997 Organizer: National Workshop on Wetland Mitigation and Compensation, Ottawa, Ontario
   Sponsor: Wetlands and Global Climate Change, Stonewall, Manitoba
1994 Organizer: National Workshop on Wetland Policy Implementation in Canada, Stonewall, Manitoba
   Co-Organizer: National Workshop on Purple Loosestrife Management
1993 Co-Organizer: National Workshop on Wetland Data Integration, Elgin, Ontario

Training Courses
2000 Working with Wetlands: A training course for the Department of National Defence, Chilliwack, British Columbia
1999 Working with Wetlands: A training course on considering wetlands in environmental assessment under the Canadian
   Environmental Assessment Act, Halifax, Nova Scotia
1998 Working with Wetlands: A training course for the Department of National Defence, Ottawa, Ontario
1998 Working with Wetlands: A training course for federal officers on Canada’s commitment to wetlands and how to live up
   to it, Ottawa, Ontario
1997 Working with Wetlands: A training course for the National Capital Commission, Ottawa, Ontario
1995 Protection of Fragile Ecosystems: The Case of Wetlands, University of the Black Sea, Romania
1994 Wetland Evaluation Seminars, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and British Columbia

Websites
Lead agency on WetKit: Tools for Working with Wetlands (www.wetkit.net)

Key Papers/Presentations/Interventions
   Water Conference, Guelph, Ontario
   “Tool Kits and Training Courses: Preparing Canada’s Federal Agencies to Implement Wetland Policy,” presentation to the
   International Association of Ecology Wetland Conference, Millennium Wetland Event, Quebec City, Quebec
1999 “Wings Across the Border,” presentation to Workshop on Regional Approaches to Parks and Protected Areas in North
   America, Tijuana, Mexico
1996  Participation on the Eastern Habitat Joint Venture negotiating team for mitigation for the Realignment of the Trans-Canada Highway through Grand Lake Meadows, Fredericton, New Brunswick
      Participation in the National Round Table on the Environment and Economy “Greening the Budget” Workshop, Ottawa, Ontario
      “Private Land Management in Canada,” brief to the Senate Committee on Energy, the Environment and Natural Resources, Ottawa, Ontario
      Presentation to International Canada/United States/United Kingdom Countryside Stewardship Exchange
1995  Presentations/advice to the Canadian Bankers Association Agriculture Committee Meeting and Agricultural Lenders Conference, Des Moines, Iowa
      Presentations/advice to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada’s Advisory Committee on Cooperatives, Ottawa, Ontario
      Keynote address to the Australian Conference on Wildlife Management on Private Lands, Brisbane, Australia
1994  Presentations/advice to the National Round Table on the Environment and Economy Task Force on Rural Renewal, Ottawa, Ontario
      Presentations/advice to the Task Force on Economic Instruments and Disincentives to Sound Environmental Practices, Ottawa, Ontario
      “NAFTA Opportunities for Conserving Continental Biodiversity,” presented to the Advisory Session of the Secretariat of the North American Commission on Environmental Cooperation, Montreal, Quebec

Panels/Committees
2000-  NAWMP National Communications and Marketing Steering Committee
1999-2000  Board of Directors, Millennium Wetland Event
1999-  Interim National Steering Committee for the North American Bird Conservation Initiative
1997-1998  Working Group on Stewardship/Habitat Conservation
1995-1996  National Round Table on the Environment and Economy Task Force on Rural Renewal
1994-1995  Great Lakes Wetlands Action Plan Committee
1991-1993  Canadian Wetlands Conservation Task Force

Memoranda of Understanding
NAWCC (Canada), Ducks Unlimited Canada and the Canadian Cattlemen’s Association
NAWCC (Canada), Ducks Unlimited Canada and the Canadian Federation of Agriculture