



@NewsroomGC tweet (maximum of 255 characters):

Minister McKenna announces launch of the Natural Heritage Conservation Program in Toronto, Ontario

Canada invests to protect more nature in southern Canada

From: [Environment and Climate Change Canada](#)

News release

April 23, 2019 – Toronto, Ontario

It's in our nature to conserve our land and water, protect our wildlife and save the places we love. But the world's nature is in decline, with wilderness disappearing at a rapid rate and wildlife populations falling by 60% since 1970. That's why Canada is taking action, including by making the single-largest investment to protect nature in Canadian history, through Budget 2018, and aiming to double the amount of protected nature in Canada's lands and oceans.

Today, the Honourable Catherine McKenna, Minister of Environment and Climate Change, announced that the Nature Conservancy of Canada will lead the administration and delivery of a new \$100-million, four year national program, pending a final funding agreement, that will help protect more of Canada's nature.

The Natural Heritage Conservation Program will be delivered by Nature Conservancy of Canada and its partners, including Ducks Unlimited Canada, Wildlife Habitat Canada and the Canadian Land Trusts Working Group. The program will assist local, provincial and national conservation land trusts in securing land from private landowners, as well as to secure private interests (e.g. forest tenures) on land in order to establish new protected and conserved areas.

The new program will establish at least 200,000 hectares of newly protected land and freshwater, especially in southern Canada where nature and wildlife faces the greatest pressures and where the majority of land is privately owned. The program will also contribute directly to reaching Canada's goal of doubling the amount of nature protected in our lands and oceans.

For every dollar of federal funding, the Nature Conservancy of Canada and its delivery partners will provide a minimum \$2 matching funding from non-federal sources, including donations of lands.

The announcement comes as Canada is set to host an international summit with nature champions from around the world, on April 24-25 in Montreal, to ramp up collaboration and increase ambition for protecting the world's nature.

Quotes

"Nature is our most precious resource. By working together, we can double the amount of nature we're protecting in our oceans and our lands from coast to coast to coast. Today's investment will help protect nature closer to where Canadians live at the same time as



focusing on the parts of Canada that are facing the greatest threats to areas rich in biodiversity.”

– Catherine McKenna, Minister of Environment and Climate Change

“The Natural Heritage Conservation Program will bring Canadians together to take real action to protect our lands, freshwater and species at risk. We are grateful for the opportunity to lead this program, working alongside our partners to deliver a model of environmental leadership. There has never been a more important time to invest in the natural areas that sustain us all.”

– John Lounds, President & CEO, Nature Conservancy of Canada

“Many of Canada’s most important natural habitats, including wetlands, are located within its privately held or settled landscapes. In addition to providing critical habitats for waterfowl and other wetland-dependent species, these areas deliver essential benefits such as clean water, flood and drought mitigation and protection from sea level rise to citizens and communities across the country. Ducks Unlimited Canada looks forward to the ways that the Natural Heritage Conservation Program will deliver more of these benefits to wildlife and all Canadians through new protected areas. It’s a significant investment that will positively impact generations to come.”

– Karla Guyn, Chief Executive Officer, Ducks Unlimited Canada

“Wildlife Habitat Canada is excited to be a part of this significant project, which will protect and conserve important biodiversity in wildlife and their habitats across the country. We bring 35 years of grant administration experience to this initiative and look forward to helping the Land Trust community secure critical private lands that will further preserve Canada’s natural heritage.”

– Cameron Mack, Executive Director, Wildlife Habitat Canada

“Your community and local land trusts across Canada look forward to working with the Government of Canada and our partners to expand the protection of private lands to achieve Canada’s Target 1 goals. Canada’s local land trusts are a key partner in conserving Canada’s biodiversity, especially as our natural areas and species are further pressured by climate change. By acquiring natural heritage lands and by thoughtful stewardship, land trusts can help Canada both adapt to and mitigate climate change. Land trusts can be local solutions to the global problems of biodiversity loss and climate change.”

– Susan Walmer, Co-Chair, Canadian Land Trusts Working Group

Quick facts

- In November 2018, the Government of Canada launched a call for proposals for the Natural Heritage Conservation Program. The call sought proposals from organizations to develop, coordinate, and deliver a national program aimed at assisting local, provincial, territorial, and national conservation organizations in securing at least 200,000 hectares of ecologically sensitive private lands and interests in lands in Canada.
- Private lands are mainly located in southern Canada where the greatest biodiversity is found. These private lands are where most Canadians reside and where pressures from development are higher.



- The \$500 million Canada Nature Fund, which funds the Natural Heritage Conservation Program, is part of the Budget 2018 Nature Legacy initiative, which invests \$1.3 billion in nature conservation.
- Globally, Canada has 20 per cent of freshwater resources, 24 per cent of wetlands, 25 per cent of temperate rainforest area, and 33 per cent of remaining boreal forest.
- Canada also has almost one third of all land-based carbon storage. This is a vital element of action on climate change.

Associated links

- [The Government of Canada is protecting nature through investments in Canada's natural heritage](#)
- [Canada Nature Fund](#)
- [Canada's Nature Legacy: it's in our nature to protect](#)

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