National Conservation Survey Highlights

- The vast majority of Canadians (83%) believes protecting the environment is one of the most important issues facing Canada today or at least “very important.

- Almost all (88%) support protected areas believing such areas are a good idea. Regional, age and political variations are largely in intensity of support, rather than outright opposition.

- Almost all (87%) support increasing the proportion of lands protected from development from the current level of 10% to at least 17% by 2020.
  - Support is found across all regions, age groups, levels of engagement, and among supporters of all three political parties (93% of Liberals; 92% of NDP; and 80% of CPC).

- Almost half of Canadians (49%) feel their government should do more to protect the environment. The sense is that Canada is not a world leader, but it should be in the top tier.
  - A majority thinks it is unacceptable for Canada to have a lower percentage of protected lands than any of the other G7 countries.

- 79% say they would support increased federal funding for the creation of new parks and protected areas.

- There is broad support for Indigenous communities’ creation and management of Indigenous protected areas to conserve forests, wildlife, waters and other special places.
  - 74% think it is a good idea.
  - Support is found across all regions, age groups and political affiliations. The least support is among CPC supporters, and even 60% of that group believes it is a good or very good idea.
  - Among those who think it is a good idea, the most commonly cited reasons are the importance of conservation and Indigenous knowledge of the land.

- When it comes to the Boreal Forest, most Canadians believe there should be a balance between conservation and development. Of those with a preference, it is overwhelmingly towards conservation. Few say they think development should be a higher priority -- this holds true across all demographics and supporters of all political parties. Among those who are pro-development, a large majority is in favour of increasing protected areas to at least 17%.

- The polling shows the most compelling reasons for expanding protected areas are: reducing carbon emissions/climate change, protecting wildlife, and maintaining natural spaces for public enjoyment.

- 85% of Canadians view creating more protected areas as a means to provide certainty for industry.
  - 82% think new protected areas can create jobs in rural Canada and attract tourism and investment.
National Conservation Survey
# About the Survey

## Our approach

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total sample</th>
<th>online survey</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Atlantic Canada (AC)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quebec (QC)</td>
<td>501</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ontario (ON)</td>
<td>752</td>
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<tr>
<td>Manitoba/Saskatchewan (MB/SK)</td>
<td>135</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alberta (AB)</td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British Columbia (BC)</td>
<td>266</td>
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## Field dates

November 6-10, 2017

The survey was conducted among respondents 18+ by the Earnscliffe Strategy Group for the Schad Foundation and the Boreal Songbird Initiative.

*Involved Canadians (mentioned throughout the report) refers to a proprietary segment of the opinion leaders -- roughly 30% of the population which follows current affairs and is most likely to engage on a matter of public policy debate.*
Key Takeaways

- Environmental protection, while not the top issue, is important to Canadians.
- Overall, support for protected areas is strong, with 88% believing such areas are a good idea.
- Almost all (87%) support expanding Canada’s protected areas from 10% to at least 17%, and 79% support increased government spending on new protected areas.
- Almost half of Canadians (49%) feel their government should do more to protect the environment. The sense is that Canada is not a world leader, but we should be in the top tier.
- Three in four support Indigenous communities’ creation and management of protected areas.
- The most compelling reasons for expanding protected areas are: reducing carbon emissions/climate change, protecting wildlife, and maintaining spaces for Canadians to enjoy nature.
- 85% of Canadians view creating more protected areas as a way to provide certainty for industry.
In your opinion, what is the most important issue facing Canada today – in other words the issue or problem that concerns you most? [OPEN END]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Economy</td>
<td>11%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigration</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment/Climate change</td>
<td>7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jobs/Employment</td>
<td>7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Taxes</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poverty/Homelessness</td>
<td>4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Among those who did not mention environment or climate change as their top priority, almost half feel protecting the environment is of equal importance to the issue they identified.

[AMONG THOSE WHO DID NOT MENTION ENVIRONMENT/CLIMATE CHANGE] And how important would you say protecting the environment is compared to the issue you just mentioned?
Federal Government Performance on Environment

Most believe the federal government is doing a “so-so” to “good” job on protecting the environment; this suggests there is room for improvement.

How would you rate the federal government’s performance when it comes to protecting the environment?

- 4% Very good job
- 27% Good job
- 46% So-so job
- 12% Poor job
- 5% Very poor job
- 6% DK/NR

Most believe the federal government is doing a “so-so” to “good” job on protecting the environment; this suggests there is room for improvement.
Canada’s International Environmental Reputation

There is a sense is that Canada is not a world leader when it comes to conservation and protecting natural and wildlife areas, but that we should be (at a minimum in the top half).

When it comes to conservation and protecting natural and wildlife areas, would you say Canada IS...?
And, when it comes to conservation and protecting natural and wildlife areas, do you think Canada SHOULD BE...?

- **Canada IS**
  - A world leader: 13%
  - Not a world leader but in the top half: 32%
  - Around the middle: 42%
  - In the bottom half: 8%
  - One of the worst: 2%
  - DK/NR: 4%

- **Canada SHOULD BE**
  - A world leader: 43%
  - Not a world leader but in the top half: 31%
  - Around the middle: 18%
  - In the bottom half: 4%
  - One of the worst: 4%
  - DK/NR: 4%
Almost half feel that Canada should do more towards the conservation and protection of natural and wildlife areas.

When it comes to conservation and protecting natural and wildlife areas, would you say Canada IS...? And, when it comes to conservation and protecting natural and wildlife areas, do you think Canada SHOULD BE...?

- 49%: Canada should do more
- 41%: Canada is playing the role it should
- 6%: Canada should do less
- 3%: DK/NR
Awareness & Knowledge of the Boreal Forest

Although most have heard of the Boreal Forest, knowledge about it is generally limited.

Have you ever heard of the Boreal Forest?

And would you describe yourself as very knowledgeable, somewhat knowledgeable, not very knowledgeable or not at all knowledgeable about the Boreal Forest?
Almost half feel there should be a balance between development and conservation in the Boreal Forest.

Canada’s Boreal Forest is an unbroken band of forest and wetlands as large as the Amazon, spanning the north of Canada from the Yukon to the Atlantic. It is also a vast frontier for timber, mineral and energy resources. As well, it is home to wildlife and more than 600 Indigenous communities.

There’s a lot of debate about development in the boreal forest, with people having different views about how resources in this region should or should not be developed. Of these three views, which one comes closest to your own?

- Conservation should be the highest priority
- There should be a balance between development and conservation
- Development should be the highest priority
- DK/NR

39% 49% 8% 4%
Future of the Boreal Forest

Balancing development and conservation is preferred across all demographics.

[ALL] There's a lot of debate about development in the boreal forest, with people having different views about how resources in this region should or should not be developed. Of these three views, which one comes closest to your own?

Conservation should be the highest priority
Development should be the highest priority
There should be a balance between development and conservation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Conservation should be the highest priority</th>
<th>Development should be the highest priority</th>
<th>There should be a balance between development and conservation</th>
<th>DK/NR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>AC</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>54%</td>
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<td>QC</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>ON</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>MB/SK</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>AB</td>
<td>31%</td>
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<tr>
<td>BC</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>8%</td>
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<td>18-34</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>36%</td>
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<td>35-54</td>
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<td>55+</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>62%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>45%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rest</td>
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<td>50%</td>
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<td>Liberal</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>14%</td>
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<tr>
<td>NDP</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>9%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The majority of Canadians believes it is a good idea to have protected areas.

Canada has many parks and other protected areas that conserve nature, and where industrial activity such as forestry, mining and hydroelectric development does not occur. Overall, do you think this is a very good idea, a good idea, a poor idea or a very poor idea?

88% good idea

49% Very good idea
39% Good idea
7% Poor idea
5% DK/NR
Views on Protected Areas

*Having protected areas is supported by almost all respondents, regardless of demographics.*

Canada has many parks and other protected areas that conserve nature, and where industrial activity such as forestry, mining and hydroelectric development does not occur. Overall, do you think this is a very good idea, a good idea, a poor idea or a very poor idea?

Having protected areas is supported by almost all respondents, regardless of demographics.
National Progress on Protected Areas

Most feel the existing amount of protected areas (10% of Canada) is “too low”.

Right now, about 10% of Canada has been set aside as parks and protected areas. Does this percentage strike you as too high, about right, or too low?

- 3% Too high
- 37% About right
- 54% Too low
- 6% DK/NR
National Commitment to Increase Protected Areas

Support is high for Canada’s keeping its commitment to increase the amount of protected areas from the current level of 10% to at least 17% by 2020.

Together with a number of other countries, Canada signed an international agreement to conserve forests, rivers and other natural landscapes that support animal and plant life.

As part of this agreement, Canada committed to increasing the amount of lands and inland waters protected from development from the current level of 10% to at least 17% by 2020. Do you strongly support, support, oppose or strongly oppose this commitment?

87% support

Strongly support 45%
Support 42%
Oppose 4%
Strongly oppose 2%
DK/NR 6%
Support for increasing protected areas is very strong among those who prioritize conservation. Though support among those who feel there should be a balance between conservation and development is softer, the vast majority supports the increase. Even among those who prioritize development, over 80% support the increase.

As part of this agreement [SEE SLIDE 15], Canada committed to increasing the amount of lands and inland waters protected from development from the current level of 10% to at least 17% by 2020. Do you strongly support, support, oppose or strongly oppose this commitment?
There is resounding support for increasing the amount of lands and inland waterways protected from development to at least 17% of the country by 2020.

As part of this agreement [SEE SLIDE 15], Canada committed to increasing the amount of lands and inland waters protected from development from the current level of 10% to at least 17% by 2020. Do you strongly support, support, oppose or strongly oppose this commitment?
Most feel Canada’s record on protected lands, particularly as compared to other G7 industrialized countries, is unacceptable.

Canada currently has a lower percentage of protected lands than the United States, Germany or any of the other G7 industrialized countries. As far as you are concerned is this record completely acceptable, acceptable, unacceptable or completely unacceptable?

62% unacceptable

5% Completely acceptable 26% Acceptable 39% Unacceptable 23% Completely unacceptable 7% DK/NR
One of the steps the federal government can take to support the creation and management of new parks and protected areas is to increase federal funding for them. Would you strongly support, support, oppose or strongly oppose that government expenditure?

Most would support increased federal government funding for protected areas.

79% support
Arguments for Increasing Amount of Protected Areas

Most agree new parks & other protected areas will create jobs in rural Canada.

From your own perspective, please indicate if you believe each of the arguments below represents a very good reason, a good reason, a poor reason or a very poor reason for increasing the amount of protected lands and waters in Canada.

- Keeping forests & wetlands areas intact reduces our carbon emissions & helps fight climate change: 51% Very good reason, 36% Good reason, 8% Poor reason, 5% DK/NR
- Meeting Canada’s protected area goals will protect wildlife living in these areas: 49% Very good reason, 40% Good reason, 7% Poor reason, 4% DK/NR
- Parks & other protected areas are some of Canada’s best places to enjoy nature: 46% Very good reason, 43% Good reason, 7% Poor reason, 4% DK/NR
- Protecting special wilderness areas is part of who we are as Canadians: 41% Very good reason, 42% Good reason, 12% Poor reason, 5% DK/NR
- More parks & other protected areas also means more places that we can all enjoy: 40% Very good reason, 45% Good reason, 10% Poor reason, 4% DK/NR
- Defining which areas are protected provides certainty for industry so they know exactly where they can and cannot operate: 40% Very good reason, 45% Good reason, 10% Poor reason, 5% DK/NR
- By achieving its protected area goals, Canada would demonstrate leadership in environmental protection & would gain a larger role on the world stage: 35% Very good reason, 43% Good reason, 17% Poor reason, 6% DK/NR
- Protected areas allow Indigenous peoples to maintain their traditional way of life: 34% Very good reason, 40% Good reason, 19% Poor reason, 7% DK/NR
- New parks & other protected areas will create jobs in rural parts of Canada through increased tourism & investment: 34% Very good reason, 48% Good reason, 12% Poor reason, 5% DK/NR

Earnscliffe
Indigenous Communities’ Creation and Management of Protected Areas: Good or Poor Idea?

A large majority of Canadians believes that Indigenous communities’ creation and management of Indigenous protected areas is a good idea.

Many Indigenous communities in Canada want to create and manage Indigenous protected areas to conserve forests, wildlife, waters and other special places. Overall, do you think this is a very good, good, poor or very poor idea?
Indigenous Communities’ Creation and Management of Protected Areas: Good or Poor Idea?

Majority support for Indigenous creation & management of Indigenous protected areas exists across all regions, age groups, and political affiliations.

Many Indigenous communities in Canada want to create and manage Indigenous protected areas to conserve forests, wildlife, waters and other special places. Overall, do you think this is a very good, good, poor or very poor idea?

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Very good</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Very poor</th>
<th>DK/NR</th>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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Arguments for Indigenous Communities’ Creation and Management of Protected Areas

*A large majority thinks the creation of Indigenous protected areas could bring greater certainty to industry.*

From your own perspective, please indicate if you believe each of the arguments below represents a very good reason, a good reason, a poor reason or a very poor reason to go ahead with this idea.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Argument</th>
<th>Very good reason</th>
<th>Good reason</th>
<th>Poor reason</th>
<th>Very poor reason</th>
<th>DK/NR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It’s better for industry to have the certainty of knowing exactly in what areas they can and cannot develop natural resources</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous peoples live in the region so have a better knowledge of the areas most in need of protection.</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous protected areas will generate jobs and economic activity that will benefit Indigenous peoples’ standard of living</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Indigenous peoples have a different relationship with the land and are better guardians of the environment</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>A program like this would go a long way towards reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous peoples are more likely to make the right decisions regarding the management of protected areas than non-Indigenous decision-makers</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>13%</td>
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</tbody>
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Trusted Advisors to Canada's Leaders