

# 2011-2012 Parks Canada Agency Performance Report

## Parks Canada Sustainable Development Strategy and Strategic Environmental Assessment Reporting

### Parks Canada's Mandate

*On behalf of the people of Canada, we protect and present nationally significant examples of Canada's natural and cultural heritage, and foster public understanding, appreciation and enjoyment in ways that ensure the ecological and commemorative integrity of these places for present and future generations.*

### Parks Canada's Vision

*Canada's treasured natural and historic places will be a living legacy, connecting hearts and minds to a stronger, deeper understanding of the very essence of Canada.*

## 1. Parks Canada Sustainable Development Vision

The *Federal Sustainable Development Act* defines sustainable development as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. It states that the Government of Canada "acknowledges the need to integrate environmental, economic and social factors in the making of all decisions by government."

Sustainable development is central to Parks Canada's mandate and vision. It is ingrained in all aspects of the Agency's activities from establishing and conserving national parks and national marine conservation areas to designating and commemorating national historic sites. Parks Canada is committed to ensuring that Canada's treasured natural and historic places remain unimpaired for the understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of present and future generations.

Parks Canada activities also contribute to the Canadian economy. The combined annual expenditures of Parks Canada and its millions of visitors make a substantial and widespread contribution to the Canadian economy, both directly through its facilities, locations and services, and indirectly in the surrounding communities through spending on accommodations, restaurants, and other tourism-related businesses. In 2008-09, Parks Canada's organizational and visitor spending totaled \$3.3 billion and provided support for more than 41,000 jobs.

## **2. 2012 Federal Sustainable Development Strategy (FSDS) Progress Report and Parks Canada Sustainable Development Strategy**

The information provided on this website is supported by the 2012 FSDS Progress Report. State of the environment indicators presented in Departmental Performance Reports and FSDS Progress Reports demonstrate the Government of Canada's progress towards environmental objectives and sustainable development goals and targets as laid out in the FSDS. These indicators track progress on measures of environmental and socioeconomic issues at broad outcome levels.

This website outlines departmental FSDS implementation strategies and corresponding performance information applicable over the intermediate and immediate timeframe. Generally, progress toward a broad outcome is not always directly attributed to any one factor such as a government program or policy, however, the link between the broad outcome and government actions can be demonstrated, documented and made transparent. Moving from the implementation strategy performance measure to the state of the environment measure (indicator), the direct attribution to any one factor is reduced - nonetheless, the logical links between government programs and policies and broad outcomes remain.

## **3. Agency Decision Making and Sustainable Development Practices**

### **Managing Sustainable Development**

Sustainable development involves the consideration of environmental, economic and social objectives in the development and implementation of public policies and programs. The needs of the present as well as the needs of future generations are also taken into consideration. Integrated decision making and a long-term approach to planning are defining characteristics of sustainable development and represent the key management challenges.

Parks Canada's mandate is composed of three elements: protection, education and visitor experience. In recent years, Parks Canada has pursued the integration of these three elements in the planning, design and delivery of its activities. For example, Parks Canada carries out active management and restoration projects in national parks. These projects are designed in a manner that ensures the conservation of natural resources, while enhancing visitor experience and learning opportunities. This integrated approach to the delivery of Parks Canada's mandate has strengthened the Agency's contribution to all aspects of sustainable development - environmental, social and economic.

Parks Canada's decision making and sustainable development practices include collaborating with groups that share its values and have an interest in its work. The establishment of national parks and national marine conservation areas, for example, requires a high level of engagement on the part of provincial governments and Aboriginal peoples. The designation and commemoration of persons, places and events of historic importance equally demands the active participation of stakeholders, partners and community groups. The Agency recognizes that building and maintaining these collaborative relationships is essential to achieving its mandate of protecting and presenting Canada's natural and cultural heritage.

Moreover, Parks Canada promotes sustainable development practices by encouraging the use of analytical techniques that compare and integrate environmental, social, and economic

objectives and that address multi-year or long-term concerns. For example, the Agency uses social science analytical tools, such as national polls, surveys and socio-economic studies, to understand and engage Canadians, particularly certain segments of the population (e.g. urban youth, new Canadians), in meaningful ways to ensure that its heritage places remain relevant for present and future generations.

Finally the Agency is engaged in several interdepartmental initiatives related to sustainable development, such as the Clean Air Agenda, Species at Risk, Federal Contaminated Sites, Greening Government Operations and the FSDS working group for Theme III – Protecting Nature.

## **Strategic Environmental Assessments**

Strategic environmental assessment (SEA) is a systematic, comprehensive process of evaluating the environmental effects of a proposed policy, plan or program and its alternatives. Parks Canada has integrated SEA as part of its decision-making process and undertakes SEA when a proposed policy, plan or program requires Cabinet or Ministerial approval and may result in important environmental effects, either positive or negative. The SEA identifies and mitigates any adverse environmental effects and enhances positive effects to support the achievement of FSDS goals and Parks Canada's expected results.

Consistent with the Government of Canada's commitment to strengthen the application of SEA in the federal government, Parks Canada posts public statements on the internet for all completed SEAs (in conjunction with the public announcement of the initiatives assessed).

The Agency has developed new guidance on the preparation of SEA public statements outlining the requirement to include, in the overview of environmental effects, any impacts on FSDS goals and targets. It has also revised its preliminary scan form to include consideration of FSDS goals and targets during the preparation of an SEA.

For additional information regarding Parks Canada's SEA program please visit Parks Canada's website at

<http://www.pc.gc.ca/eng/progs/eie-eia/itm3.aspx>

## 4. Summary of Performance Information for Parks Canada Sustainable Development Implementation Strategies Identified in Theme III – Protecting Nature, of the FSDS

### Species at Risk

<b>Implementation Strategy</b>
5.1.7 Lead the development of national recovery strategies for species at risk that are found primarily on Parks Canada administered lands and waters.
<b>Link to FSDS Goals and Targets</b>
<b>Theme III</b> Protecting Nature
<b>Goal 5</b> Wildlife Conservation: Maintain or restore populations of wildlife to healthy levels.
<b>Target 5.1</b> Terrestrial and Aquatic Wildlife Conservation: Population trend (when available) at the time of reassessment is consistent with the recovery strategy for 100% of listed species at risk (for which recovery has been deemed feasible) by 2020.
<b>Link to Parks Canada Program Activity Architecture</b>
<b>Strategic Outcome</b> Canadians have a strong sense of connection, through meaningful experiences, to their national parks, national historic sites and national marine conservation areas and these protected places are enjoyed in ways that leave them unimpaired for present and future generations.
<b>Program Activity 1.2</b> Heritage Resources Conservation
<b>Program Sub Activity 1.2.1</b> National Parks Conservation
<b>Program Sub Sub Activity 1.2.1.1</b> Species at Risk
<b>Description of the Implementation Strategy</b>
Over half of Canada's endangered and threatened species can be found in the protected heritage areas administered by Parks Canada. Parks Canada protects these species and their critical habitat in the Agency's heritage areas, and supports their recovery by leading the development and implementation of recovery strategies, surveying and monitoring their status, and conducting public education programs. Recovery planning is an obligation under the <i>Species at Risk Act</i> .
<b>Relationship with FSDS</b>
The Government of Canada is committed to protecting natural spaces and wildlife, including species at risk. To promote stewardship activities that protect and restore threatened ecosystems and endangered species, the Government works in partnership with the provinces and territories, private industry, Aboriginal communities, conservation organizations, and individual Canadians. Animals such as bison and black-footed ferret have been reintroduced to restored habitats and brought back from near extinction, along with the Banff Springs snail, Blanding's Turtle, and the pink sand-verbena. By helping maintain and restore the integrity of ecosystems, the habitats necessary for supporting the health of species are conserved.
<b>Non-Financial Performance Information</b>
Between August 2006 and December 2011, Parks Canada has completed final recovery strategies or management plans for 53 species at risk that are found primarily on lands and in waters it administers and posted them on the Species at Risk Public Registry. Of those 53 species, 12 have been reassessed since final recovery documents were released, 9 have seen their status remain unchanged, 1 has been found to be in a higher risk category and 2 have been reassessed as lower risk, including the Swift Fox which has gone from Extirpated status at the time of listing to a Threatened status following successful reintroductions in Grasslands National Park and surrounding areas.

## National Parks Conservation

<b>Implementation Strategy</b>
6.1.12 Through active management and restoration initiatives address conservation challenges and demonstrate improvements in key indicators of ecological integrity in 20 of Canada's national parks.
<b>Link to FSDS Goals and Targets</b>
<b>Theme III</b> Protecting Nature
<b>Goal 6</b> Ecosystem/Habitat Conservation and Protection: Maintain productive and resilient ecosystems with the capacity to recover and adapt; and protect areas in ways that leave them unimpaired for present and future generations.
<b>Target 6.2</b> Terrestrial Ecosystem and Habitat – Park Protected Habitat: Maintain or improve the overall ecological integrity in all national parks from March 2008 to March 2013.
<b>Link to Parks Canada Program Activity Architecture</b>
<b>Strategic Outcome</b> Canadians have a strong sense of connection, through meaningful experiences, to their national parks, national historic sites and national marine conservation areas and these protected places are enjoyed in ways that leave them unimpaired for present and future generations.
<b>Program Activity 1.2</b> Heritage Resources Conservation
<b>Program Sub Activity 1.2.1</b> National Parks Conservation
<b>Description of the Implementation Strategy</b>
Parks Canada has responsibilities under the <i>Canada National Parks Act</i> to protect and conserve nationally significant representative natural areas on behalf of the people of Canada for their benefit, education and enjoyment and to ensure National Parks are maintained and made use of as to leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations. National Parks Conservation includes maintenance or restoration of ecological integrity through: ecological research and monitoring to gain a better understanding of the state of health, natural ecological processes and biodiversity of parks; and the impact of stressors on ecosystems. Protection and conservation occurs through scientific research, planning, reporting, public consultation, negotiation with stakeholders and others to influence actions that occur on lands located adjacent to protected heritage areas, cooperative management agreements, adaptive management and restoration of ecosystem processes and biodiversity. Protection and conservation also occurs through specific activities such as prevention, law enforcement, and fire management.
<b>Relationship with FSDS</b>
Canadians value the health of the country's natural environment, and the Government of Canada recognizes that our social and economic well-being depends on its sustainability. That is why the Government of Canada is taking action and investing in conservation and protection of ecosystems and habitat.
<b>Non-Financial Performance Information</b>
<p>Since 2009/10, 42 national parks have identified key indicators of ecological integrity. As of March 31, 2012, 38 parks have determined the condition of one or more of these indicators (up from 25 in 2008/09), and 34 parks have determined at least one trend (up from 23 in 2008/09).</p> <p>In 2011/12, Parks Canada continued the implementation of active management and restoration projects to address some of the most pressing ecological integrity issues in targeted southern national parks. These activities contribute to enhancing ecosystem resilience to the effects of climate and other global environmental forces such as biodiversity loss and exotic and alien/invasive species.</p> <p>For example, Parks Canada continued work towards the reintroduction of fire as a necessary process in support of the maintenance and restoration of ecological integrity, with 25 prescribed burns carried out in 10 national parks. In addition, the Agency coordinated suppression efforts for 74 wild fires affecting 16 national parks, as required in support of public safety in and around national parks.</p>

## National Parks Establishment and Expansion

<b>Implementation Strategy</b>
6.1.13 Establish one new national park by March 2013; complete feasibility assessments for five other potential national parks and one proposed expansion.
<b>Link to FSDS Goals and Targets</b>
<b>Theme III</b> Protecting Nature
<b>Goal 6</b> Ecosystem/Habitat Conservation and Protection: Maintain productive and resilient ecosystems with the capacity to recover and adapt; and protect areas in ways that leave them unimpaired for present and future generations.
<b>Target 6.2</b> Terrestrial Ecosystem and Habitat – Park Protected Habitat: Maintain or improve the overall ecological integrity in all national parks from March 2008 to March 2013.
<b>Link to Parks Canada Program Activity Architecture</b>
<b>Strategic Outcome</b> Canadians have a strong sense of connection, through meaningful experiences, to their national parks, national historic sites and national marine conservation areas and these protected places are enjoyed in ways that leave them unimpaired for present and future generations.
<b>Program Activity 1.1</b> Heritage Places Establishment
<b>Program Sub Activity 1.1.1</b> National Parks Establishment and Expansion
<b>Description of the Implementation Strategy</b>
<p>This strategy involves the completion of the national parks system in accordance with the National Parks System Plan. Canada is divided into 39 distinct natural regions based on unique physiographic and vegetative characteristics and Parks Canada's goal is to have at least one national park representative of each natural region. The completion of the system will protect outstanding examples of Canada's natural diversity, and provide Canadians with opportunities to experience understand and appreciate that diversity. Five steps are involved in the process to establish a national park: identify areas representative of a natural region; select an optimum national park candidate from the list of representative areas; assess the feasibility of establishing the proposed park through studies and consultations; negotiate new park agreements, including any that may be required with Aboriginal peoples or organizations; and formally establish the national park in legislation.</p> <p>Establishing national parks is essential to enhancing pride, encouraging stewardship and giving expression to our identity as Canadians, and involving Canada in the internationally shared objective of protecting the best of the world's natural heritage.</p>
<b>Relationship with FSDS</b>
Canadians value the health of the country's natural environment, and the Government of Canada recognizes that our social and economic well-being depends on its sustainability. That is why the Government of Canada is taking action and investing in conservation and protection of ecosystems and habitat.
<b>Non-Financial Performance Information</b>
<p>Over the last few years, the Government of Canada has added over 25,264 square km to Parks Canada's system of national parks, and taken additional actions that will add up to 45,300 square km to the system, thereby increasing the total land area that comes under Parks Canada's stewardship by 70,564 square km. Just in the past year, Sable Island in Nova Scotia was established as a new national park reserve. Parks Canada also made progress towards establishing national parks with its work on the Bathurst Island (Nunavut), Thaidene Nene (East Arm of Great Slave Lake), Mealy Mountains and Manitoba Lowlands proposals.</p> <p>In addition, Parks Canada is working towards the creation of a national urban park in the Rouge Valley in Ontario. Being the first of its kind in Canada, it will require an innovative conservation and management approach to respond to the park's unique urban context; one that fosters the interaction of people and nature while maintaining and restoring species and habitat diversity.</p>

## National Marine Conservation Area Establishment

<b>Implementation Strategy</b>
6.3.8 Complete feasibility assessments for two potential national marine conservation areas.
<b>Link to FSDS Goals and Targets</b>
<b>Theme III</b> Protecting Nature
<b>Goal 6</b> Ecosystem/Habitat Conservation and Protection: Maintain productive and resilient ecosystems with the capacity to recover and adapt; and protect areas in ways that leave them unimpaired for present and future generations.
<b>Target 6.3</b> Marine Ecosystems: Improve the conservation of ocean areas and marine ecosystems by 2012.
<b>Link to Parks Canada Program Activity Architecture</b>
<b>Strategic Outcome</b> Canadians have a strong sense of connection, through meaningful experiences, to their national parks, national historic sites and national marine conservation areas and these protected places are enjoyed in ways that leave them unimpaired for present and future generations.
<b>Program Activity 1.1</b> Heritage Places Establishment
<b>Program Sub Activity 1.1.2</b> National Marine Conservation Area Establishment
<b>Description of the Implementation Strategy</b>
<p>This strategy involves the expansion and ultimate completion of the national marine conservation areas system in accordance with the National Marine Conservation Areas System Plan entitled Sea to Sea to Sea. Canada is divided into 29 distinct marine regions based on unique oceanographic and biological characteristics and Parks Canada's goal is to protect and conserve a representative example of each of the 29 regions. The completion of the system will protect outstanding examples of the diversity of Canada's oceans and Great Lakes and provide Canadians with opportunities to experience, understand, and appreciate that diversity. Five steps are involved in the process to establish a national marine conservation area: identify areas representative of a marine region; select an optimum national marine conservation area candidate from the list of representative areas; assess the feasibility of establishing the proposed marine conservation area through studies and consultations; negotiate new national marine conservation area agreements, including any that may be required with Aboriginal peoples or organizations; and formally establish the national marine conservation area in legislation.</p>
<b>Relationship with FSDS</b>
<p>Canadians value the health of the country's natural environment, and the Government of Canada recognizes that our social and economic well-being depends on its sustainability. That is why the Government of Canada is taking action and investing in conservation and protection of ecosystems and habitat.</p>
<b>Non-Financial Performance Information</b>
<p>Over the last few years, the Government of Canada has added over 13,500 square km to Parks Canada's system of national marine conservation areas, and taken additional actions that will add up to 60,700 square km to the system, thereby increasing the total water area that comes under Parks Canada's stewardship by 74,200 square km. Parks Canada completed the establishment of Gwaii Haanas National Marine Conservation Area Reserve and Haida Heritage Site during 2010 making it the first marine site to be legally protected under the <i>Canada National Marine Conservation Areas Act</i>.</p> <p>Parks Canada has also made progress in establishing national marine conservation areas in the following three marine regions: Lancaster Sound (Nunavut), an ecologically rich marine area that is of international significance, and the Southern Strait of Georgia (British Columbia) including the marine waters around Gulf Islands National Park Reserve, and for a marine protected area in the waters surrounding les Îles-de-la-Madeleine (Quebec).</p>

## National Marine Conservation Areas Sustainability

<b>Implementation Strategy</b>
6.3.9 Develop a national zoning framework for the national marine conservation area program.
<b>Link to FSDS Goals and Targets</b>
<b>Theme III</b> Protecting Nature
<b>Goal 6</b> Ecosystem/Habitat Conservation and Protection: Maintain productive and resilient ecosystems with the capacity to recover and adapt; and protect areas in ways that leave them unimpaired for present and future generations.
<b>Target 6.3</b> Marine Ecosystems: Improve the conservation of ocean areas and marine ecosystems by 2012.
<b>Link to Parks Canada Program Activity Architecture</b>
<b>Strategic Outcome</b> Canadians have a strong sense of connection, through meaningful experiences, to their national parks, national historic sites and national marine conservation areas and these protected places are enjoyed in ways that leave them unimpaired for present and future generations.
<b>Program Activity 1.2</b> Heritage Resources Conservation
<b>Program Sub Activity 1.2.3</b> National Marine Conservation Areas Sustainability
<b>Description of the Implementation Strategy</b>
Parks Canada has responsibilities under the <i>Canada National Marine Conservation Areas Act</i> to protect and conserve representative marine areas for the benefit, education and enjoyment of the people of Canada and the world. These areas are to be managed and used in an ecologically sustainable manner that meets the needs of present and future generations without compromising the structure and function of the ecosystems with which they are associated. The management of marine conservation areas involves agencies other than Parks Canada that have legislated mandates respecting activities such as fishing and marine navigation, activities that will continue subject to shared understandings that respect the principle of ecologically sustainable use. National Marine Area Sustainability includes ecological research and monitoring to gain a better understanding of the state of health, natural ecological processes and biodiversity of national marine conservation areas. These areas are managed through scientific research, planning, reporting, public consultation, negotiation with other involved management agencies, stakeholders and others to influence actions that occur in areas adjacent to protected heritage areas, cooperative management agreements, adaptive management and restoration of ecosystem processes and biodiversity.
<b>Relationship with FSDS</b>
Canadians value the health of the country's natural environment, and the Government of Canada recognizes that our social and economic well-being depends on its sustainability. That is why the Government of Canada is taking action and investing in conservation and protection of ecosystems and habitat.
<b>Non-Financial Performance Information</b>
In Summer 2011, the national marine conservation area sustainability program was reviewed to address weaknesses in the logic model. It was determined that the formulation of a policy framework, to be completed in 2013, is a prerequisite for the development of other policy tools such as the zoning framework.

## 5. Additional Agency Sustainable Development Activities

### Clean Air Agenda

<b>Activity</b>
Parks Canada will deliver a program entitled "Understanding Climate-Driven Ecological Change in Canada's North" with funding in the amount of \$2.41 million over five years (2011-12 to 2015-16) received under the Clean Air Agenda.
<b>Clean Air Agenda Theme</b>
Climate Adaptation
<b>Clean Air Agenda Program name</b>
A-3: Understanding Climate-Driven Ecological Changes in Canada's North
<b>Link to Parks Canada Program Activity Architecture</b>
<b>Strategic Outcome:</b> Canadians have a strong sense of connection, through meaningful experiences, to their national parks, national historic sites and national marine conservation areas and these protected places are enjoyed in ways that leave them unimpaired for present and future generations.
<b>Program Activity 1.2</b> Heritage Resources Conservation
<b>Program Sub Activity 1.2.1</b> National Parks Conservation
<b>Description of the Activity</b>
Parks Canada contributes to the understanding of climate-driven ecological change in Canada's North by consulting with park co-management boards, conducting process-based ecosystem mapping, and completing scenarios modeling and reporting to help communities understand the risks to important country food, recognize the need for adaptation, and discuss options for action. Parks Canada also links key drivers to changing ecosystem composition and structure and discusses how these changes might impact other ecosystem components (such as caribou and other species) and the ecological integrity of parks. This activity supports communities in assessing the risks as well as opportunities arising from climate change, and provides them with options for adapting.
<b>Expected Achievements</b>
This activity contributes directly to the Adaptation Theme Immediate Outcomes for the Clean Air Agenda, specifically: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o targeted communities assess their risks and opportunities arising from climate change, and</li> <li>o adaptation measures have been identified to address risks and opportunities arising from climate change</li> </ul> <p>These outcomes will be achieved through the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completion of unique, process-based terrestrial ecosystem inventories that link key climate drivers to the distribution, structure and composition of tundra ecosystems, and to identify valued ecosystem components.</li> <li>• Based on consultations with Inuit co-managers, discuss potential changes to valued ecosystem components, e.g., caribou, ptarmigan, berries, that support traditional land-based lifestyles, and identify adaptation options, risks and opportunities.</li> <li>• Based on consultations with park managers and biologists, discuss potential changes to valued ecosystem components effecting park ecological integrity, e.g., new species migrants, impacts on park iconic species, accelerated disturbance rates and intensities, that inform proactive management decisions, and identify adaptation options, risks and opportunities.</li> </ul>
<b>Performance Summary for 2011-2012</b>
The ecosystem mapping and description has been completed for Wapusk National Parks and the southern portion of Torngat Mountains National Park. The co-management board consultations have been initiated for Ivvavik and Ukkusiksalik National Parks.
<b>Spending Information</b>
Total CAA Program Approved Spending within the Approved CAA Envelope: \$ 2,295,210 Total CAA Program Spending Achieved for 2011-2012: \$ 517,770

## **6. Additional Information**

Information on the Agency's contribution to the FSDS - Theme IV of Greening Government Operations can be found on Treasury Board Secretariat's website at

<http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/rpp/2012-2013/info/info-eng.asp>

For complete details on the Government of Canada's Federal Sustainable Development Strategy please visit Environment Canada's website at

<http://www.ec.gc.ca/dd-sd/default.asp?lang=En&n=C2844D2D-1>