

## News Release

### **Major Canada-wide nature conservation milestone reached**

*\$1.5 billion invested in private land conservation across the country*

**Beaupré, QC (October 18, 2024)** — Environment and Climate Change Canada and its partners Nature Conservancy of Canada, Ducks Unlimited Canada, Wildlife Habitat Canada and Canada's local and regional land trusts, have reached a significant conservation milestone.

Together, they have surpassed a total investment of \$1.5 billion dollars in the protection of private lands across the country. These conservation organizations have delivered \$1 billion in funding and land donations to match \$500 million from the Government of Canada's Natural Heritage Conservation Program (NHCP). The NHCP is delivered through agreements with the [Nature Conservancy of Canada](#), [Ducks Unlimited Canada](#), and [Wildlife Habitat Canada](#) in collaboration with the [Alliance of Canadian Land Trusts](#) on behalf of 150 land trusts across the country.

The announcement was made today, as the Global Congress of the International Land Conservation Network kicked off in Beaupré, Quebec. Among the participants, involving representatives from over 60 countries, are Steven Guilbeault, Minister of Environment and Climate Change Canada and Benoit Charette, Minister for Environment, the Fight against Climate Change, Wildlife and Parks representing the Government of Quebec.

Since 2007, leveraging this federal funding has conserved 840,000 hectares (two million acres) of important wetlands, forests, grasslands and shoreline habitats. To put that into perspective, that equates to nearly 900 NHL-sized hockey rinks being protected daily.

Over 2,200 habitat conservation projects supported by the NHCP have created a lasting natural legacy in over 350 municipalities across Canada, conserving vital wetlands, forests, grasslands and shoreline habitats. NHCP funds have been leveraged by matching financial contributions from corporations, foundations, other levels of government, and private citizens. Many NHCP projects include donations of ecologically sensitive land through Canada's Ecological Gifts Program.

The NHCP partners are proud of this return on investment which has maximized conservation impact and helped grow Canada's network of protected spaces. These give wildlife and plants a place to live, while making communities resilient to the impacts of extreme weather events like flooding and drought, and providing areas where people can enjoy the outdoors.

#### **A conservation example for the world**

In advance of next week's United Nations Biodiversity Conference (COP16) in Colombia, NHCP partners point to this funding program as an example of Canadian leadership in nature conservation. It is a model of how all sectors can collaborate to mitigate the dual crises of biodiversity loss and climate change. Our privately protected and conserved areas have been achieved through negotiated, win-win arrangements with willing landowners while engaging community partners, neighbours, and Indigenous Peoples.

Many of these projects recognize the importance of working relationships on the land to support biodiversity outcomes, such as ranching landscapes in Canada's imperilled Prairie grassland habitats.

Land conservation contributes directly to a healthy environment and our quality of life, which are the foundations of resilient communities and a strong economy. Canada's natural infrastructure provides valuable goods and services, such as purifying our air and water, mitigating floods and severe weather and storing carbon. Continued financial investment by all sectors is essential for reversing nature loss and addressing climate change.

## Quotes

"Congratulations to the Nature Conservancy of Canada, Ducks Unlimited Canada, and land trust partners across the country on reaching this impressive milestone. We know that protecting nature is one of our most powerful allies in the fight against biodiversity loss and climate change, and everyone has an important role to play in helping Canada reach our conservation goals. Since 2007, the Natural Heritage Conservation Program has been a shining example of how private land conservation is contributing to our efforts—and it's a meaningful way for Canadians to get involved. By working together, we can conserve 30 percent of land and water in Canada by 2030." – **The Honourable Steven Guilbeault, Minister of Environment and Climate Change**

"The Nature Conservancy of Canada is proud to work with the Government of Canada and partner organizations to create and expand our conserved and protected spaces. These collective efforts are impactful to share with the international community to demonstrate the broad diversity of conservation happening in this country. Together we must continue this momentum and meet the challenges of biodiversity loss and climate change head-on by investing in land conservation and restoration". **Catherine Grenier, President and CEO, Nature Conservancy of Canada**

"Canada's natural heritage is shared by everyone and is essential for the survival of plants and animals, and the health of people and communities. Ducks Unlimited Canada is our nation's leader in the conservation of wetlands and is proud to work with the Government of Canada and our valued partners in the delivery of the Natural Heritage Conservation Program. The milestone we are celebrating today is so important in protecting the habitat upon which countless species depend and which is also fundamental in the fight against climate change. It is a testament to the value of partnerships—private landowners, governments, Indigenous Peoples and conservation groups—coming together to protect nature today and for future generations." **Michael Nadler, CEO, Ducks Unlimited Canada**

"Canada's goals for nature demand successful collective efforts such as those marked by the success of the NHCP. Wildlife Habitat Canada is honoured to work with partner organizations and the Government of Canada to support the protection, conservation, and enhancement of Canadian lands." - **Cameron Mack, Executive Director, Wildlife Habitat Canada**

“In the vibrant landscapes of southern Canada, where biodiversity flourishes and faces unprecedented threats including climate change, the Alliance of Canadian Land Trusts (ACLT) represents 150 local and regional land trusts across the country that are multiplying federal investments into powerful conservation actions through the NHCP. By leveraging public and private support, we’re not just preserving land—we’re nurturing resilient communities, safeguarding wildlife, and ensuring future generations can experience the beauty of our shared environment. Without the NHCP, conservation-minded Canadians would have a much harder time protecting the natural legacy of their land.” - **Renata Woodward, Executive Director of ACLT**

### **Facts about the impacts of the NHCP**

- 95% of Canadians live within 100 kilometres of a NHCP-funded conservation project.
- Projects funded through the NHCP have conserved key habitats for more than 250 species at risk.
- NHCP projects have captured 263.2 million tonnes of carbon, equivalent to taking 24,639,048 passenger vehicles off the road.
- Lands protected through the NHCP sustain communities across Canada by protecting Canada’s natural ecosystems while addressing the effects of climate change.
- The NHCP supports Canadians’ ability to protect, restore and care for the lands we cherish and rely on; lands that sustain prosperous communities by providing clean air and drinking water, sequestering and storing carbon, and providing recreation opportunities.
- NHCP projects contribute to Canada’s commitment to protect 30 per cent of its lands and waters by 2030, achieve net-zero emissions by 2050, and advance Indigenous reconciliation.

### **About the ILCN**

In advance of the United Nations’ biodiversity and climate conferences this fall, the Nature Conservancy of Canada and the International Land Conservation Network are hosting the world’s conservation leaders in Beaupré, Quebec, from October 16 to 18, at the 2024 Global Congress of the International Land Conservation Network (ILCN), presented by RBC. Under the theme “Relationships for a Resilient World”, civic and private land conservation experts from six continents will share resources and chart a path to achieve the global target of conserving 30 per cent of the planet’s lands and waters by 2030. This target is what nature needs if we’re to protect biodiversity on Earth and safeguard communities from the impacts of climate change.

### **About COP16**

From October 21 to November 1, 2024, Canada will showcase its global leadership on nature conservation, at the 2024 United Nations’ Convention on Biological Diversity meeting in Colombia (COP16). This important international conference will be a landmark event with thousands of delegates from around the world gathered to report on and take further action for protecting nature.

## **About the Natural Heritage Conservation Program**

The Government of Canada's Natural Heritage Conservation Program (NHCP) is a unique partnership that supports the creation of protected and conserved areas through the acquisition of private land and private interest in land. To date, the Government of Canada has invested more than \$500 million in the Program, which has been matched with more than \$1 Billion in contributions raised by Nature Conservancy of Canada, Ducks Unlimited Canada, and the country's land trust community, leading to the protection and conservation of more than 840,000 hectares (over 2 million acres) of ecologically sensitive lands.

## **About the Ecological Gifts Program**

Canada's Ecological Gifts Program provides a way for Canadians with ecologically sensitive land to protect nature and leave a legacy for future generations. Made possible by the terms of the Income Tax Act of Canada and the Quebec Taxation Act, it offers significant tax benefits to landowners who donate land or a partial interest in land to a qualified recipient. Recipients ensure that the land's biodiversity and environmental heritage are conserved in perpetuity.

## **About Nature Conservancy of Canada**

The [Nature Conservancy of Canada](#) (NCC) is the country's unifying force for nature. NCC seeks solutions to the twin crises of rapid biodiversity loss and climate change through large-scale, permanent land conservation. As a trusted partner, NCC works with people, communities, businesses and government to protect and care for our country's most important natural areas. Since 1962, NCC has brought people together to conserve and restore more than 15 million hectares. To learn more, visit [natureconservancy.ca](http://natureconservancy.ca).

## **About Ducks Unlimited Canada**

Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC) is the leader in wetland conservation. A registered charity, DUC uses sound science and partners with government, industry, non-profit organizations, Indigenous Peoples and landowners to conserve wetlands that are critical to waterfowl, wildlife and the environment. To learn more about DUC's innovative environmental solutions and services, visit [www.ducks.ca](http://www.ducks.ca).

## **About Wildlife Habitat Canada**

Founded in 1984, Wildlife Habitat Canada (WHC) is a national, non-profit, charitable conservation organization that envisions a future where Canadians share a conservation ethic that recognizes the fundamental importance of wildlife habitats that are abundant, rich and support biodiversity. WHC conserves wildlife habitat in Canada through lasting partnerships and wise conservation investments. The grant programs administered by WHC support the conservation of important wildlife habitat, the securement of ecologically sensitive lands, engaging Canadians in nature. For more information, visit [whc.org](http://whc.org)

## **About Alliance of Canadian Land Trusts**

ACLT is a membership organization that represents 150 local and regional land trusts and serves as the land trust community's collective voice on the national level, advocating for the conservation of Canada's cherished diverse landscapes. ACLT works collaboratively with the regional alliances, and land trusts from coast to coast that have demonstrated capacity to acquire ecologically sensitive private lands and steward the land over the long term. Alliances' member organizations are led by more than 9000 staff and volunteers who manage thousands of properties - and hundreds of thousands of hectares - worth more than \$1.7 billion. To learn more visit: [www.aclt-acoc.ca](http://www.aclt-acoc.ca).

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