



## **CPAWS celebrates “historic investment” in nature conservation in Federal Budget 2018**

**February 27, 2018**

ALBERTA

CPAWS applauds today’s announcement of \$1.3 billion dollars over 5 years to protect Canada’s land, freshwater, and wildlife. This unprecedented investment will enable Alberta and Canada to achieve commitments to protect at least 17% of our land and freshwater by 2020. To date, Canada has protected 10.6% of our landscape. In Alberta 12.4% is currently protected, with only 4% under provincial jurisdiction.

“Today’s historic federal investment in protecting wildlands and wildlife could be a game-changer for nature conservation across Canada, including in Alberta” said Anne-Marie Syslak, Executive Director of CPAWS Southern Alberta Chapter. “Budget 2018 recognizes the scale of the biodiversity crisis we face, the need to move quickly to deliver on our promises, and the need to support efforts by all levels of government in Alberta, civil society, and other partners to protect our treasured natural heritage.”

For the first time, the federal budget not only allocates funding for federal action on nature conservation but also includes significant support for provinces, territories, and Indigenous governments’ work to establish more protected areas, recognizing their jurisdiction over land management in most of the country. This cost-shared model is similar to the approach used to deliver on other shared priorities in Canada, such as infrastructure, climate change mitigation, and health care.

Highlights of Budget 2018 conservation investments include:

- \$500 million over five years for a new \$1 Billion “Nature Fund” to support conservation partnerships and which will leverage funding from other government and non-governmental sources;
- \$800 million over five years to support:
  - New federal protected areas
  - Increased capacity for national park management
  - Increased capacity to protect species at risk
  - Funding to establish a coordinated network of conservation areas working with provincial, territorial and Indigenous partners.

“This is an opportunity for the Alberta to secure much needed funding to support the creation of new protected areas in our province, such as the Bighorn Backcountry and caribou conservation areas in the



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Northwest of the province,” says Kecia Kerr, Executive Director of CPAWS Northern Alberta Chapter. “With this additional support we hope to see accelerated action to protect these and other important natural areas.”

“We are particularly pleased to see funding for Indigenous protected areas. Indigenous governments are demonstrating leadership on conservation across Canada, and we hope this funding will help advance their work in Alberta, which could also contribute to reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples,” says Kerr.

“We thank the federal government for listening to the recommendations made by CPAWS and our environmental partners in the Green Budget Coalition,”<sup>1</sup> said Alison Woodley, CPAWS’ National Conservation Director, “and we deeply appreciate the efforts of many thousands of Canadians who wrote to the Finance Minister, and of the 116 parliamentarians who signed an open letter supporting our recommendations. Today’s investment confirms how much Canadians care about this issue and shows that raising our collective voice truly works!”

In 2010, Canada and other signatories to the UN *Convention on Biological Diversity* (CBD) endorsed a strategic plan to reverse a global biodiversity crisis, including a commitment to protect at least 17% of land and inland waters and 10% of ocean areas by 2020. The CBD was signed in 1992 alongside the UN *Convention on Climate Change*, recognizing the need to jointly tackle these two critical environmental challenges. Last year the federal government invested in a Pan-Canadian Climate Plan. This year’s investment will support a parallel pan-Canadian effort to protect biodiversity.

In February 2017, federal, provincial, and territorial governments launched the “Pathway to Canada Target One”, a process, co-chaired by Alberta’s Environment and Parks Minister and the Federal Environment minister, through which they are working with Indigenous peoples, civil society, and other partners to develop a plan to deliver on Canada’s international land and freshwater protection target.<sup>2</sup> This Budget 2018 funding is critical to support implementation of this collaborative work.

“Investing in protected areas will conserve Canada’s wildlife, water, and wilderness, provide more protected spaces for healthy outdoor activities, and create jobs in communities across the country by growing sustainable nature and culture-based tourism economies,” says Woodley. “This is an investment in the future of our country, which will deliver huge returns.”

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<sup>1</sup> <http://greenbudget.ca/budget2018/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.conservation2020canada.ca/home>





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## **About CPAWS**

The Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS) is Canada's only nationwide charity dedicated solely to the protection of our public land and water, and ensuring our parks are managed to protect the nature within them. In the past 50+ years, we've played a lead role in protecting over half a million square kilometres – an area bigger than the entire Yukon Territory! CPAWS has Chapters across the country. In Alberta we have two, the Northern Alberta and the Southern Alberta with a shared vision to protect at least half of our public land and water so that future generations can benefit from Canada's irreplaceable wilderness.

## **The UN *Convention on Biological Diversity***

In 2010, Canada and other signatories to the UN *Convention on Biological Diversity* endorsed a strategic plan to reverse a global biodiversity crisis, including a commitment to protect at least 17% of land and inland waters and 10% of ocean areas by 2020 and to improve the quality of protected area networks. The Biodiversity Convention (known as the CBD) was signed in 1992 alongside the UN *Convention on Climate Change*, recognizing the need to jointly tackle these two critical environmental challenges. Last year the federal government invested in a Pan-Canadian Climate Plan. This year's investment will support a parallel pan-Canadian effort to protect biodiversity.

## **The Federal Government's Recent Efforts towards Achieving Our Commitment**



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In March 2017, a unanimous report by the House of Commons Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development made a suite of recommendations for action on protected areas.<sup>3</sup> In February 2017, federal, provincial, and territorial governments launched the “Pathway to Canada Target One” process, working with Indigenous peoples, civil society, and private interests to jointly deliver on Canada’s land and freshwater protection target.<sup>4</sup> CPAWS staff were appointed to a Ministerial “National Advisory Panel” to advise on this work. The Panel’s report is expected to be released soon.

Fisheries and Oceans Canada has been leading federal government efforts towards protecting at least 10% of the ocean by 2020, and has made significant progress over the past two years, including the establishment of the Hecate Strait and Queen Charlotte Sound glass sponge reef MPA in BC, and St Anns Bank MPA in Nova Scotia.

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.ourcommons.ca/DocumentViewer/en/42-1/ENVI/report-5/>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.conservation2020canada.ca/home>



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