



## **RIO + 13**

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### **THE THIRTEENTH ANNUAL RIO (REPORT ON INTERNATIONAL OBLIGATIONS) REPORT CARD, 2005**

**Grading the Government of Canada and the Provinces/Territories  
on their Environmental and Sustainable Development Commitments**

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## FEDERAL GRADING

SUBJECT	GRADE
<b>Commitment to Increase Overseas Development Assistance to 0.7% of GDP</b>	<b>C+</b>
<b>Commitment to Reduce Greenhouse Gases</b>	<b>B-</b>
<b>Federal Commitment to Biodiversity</b>	<b>D+</b>
<b>Commitment to Review and Reform Pesticide and Toxic Policies</b>	<b>F</b>
<b>Commitment to Environmental Assessment</b>	<b>C+</b>
<b>Agenda 21 Commitment to Make Trade and Environment Mutually Supportive</b>	<b>F</b>
<b>Commitment to the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Living Marine Resources</b>	<b>F</b>
<b>Forests</b>	<b>C</b>

## PROVINCIAL/TERRITORIAL GRADING

PROVINCE / TERRITORY	SUBJECT	GRADE
<b>Newfoundland and Labrador</b>	<b>Biodiversity</b>	<b>B-</b>
	<b>Climate Change</b>	<b>B-</b>
<b>Nova Scotia</b>	<b>Biodiversity</b>	<b>C+</b>
	<b>Toxic Chemicals / Pollution</b>	<b>F</b>
	<b>Climate Change</b>	<b>F</b>
<b>Prince Edward Island</b>	<b>Biodiversity</b>	<b>B</b>
	<b>Climate Change</b>	<b>A-</b>
<b>New Brunswick</b>	<b>Biodiversity</b>	<b>B</b>
	<b>Toxic Chemicals / Pollution</b>	<b>F</b>
	<b>Climate Change</b>	<b>C-</b>
<b>Quebec</b>	<b>Biodiversity</b>	<b>B-</b>
	<b>Climate Change</b>	<b>B-</b>
<b>Ontario</b>	<b>Biodiversity</b>	<b>B-</b>
	<b>Climate Change</b>	<b>C+</b>
<b>Manitoba</b>	<b>Biodiversity</b>	<b>C</b>
	<b>Climate Change</b>	<b>B-</b>
<b>Saskatchewan</b>	<b>Biodiversity</b>	<b>D+</b>
	<b>Climate Change</b>	<b>C-</b>
<b>Alberta</b>	<b>Biodiversity</b>	<b>F</b>
	<b>Climate Change</b>	<b>F</b>
<b>British Columbia</b>	<b>Biodiversity</b>	<b>F</b>
	<b>Climate Change</b>	<b>F</b>
<b>Northwest Territories</b>	<b>Biodiversity</b>	<b>C</b>
	<b>Climate Change</b>	<b>F</b>
<b>Yukon</b>	<b>Biodiversity</b>	<b>D-</b>
	<b>Climate Change</b>	<b>F</b>
<b>Nunavut</b>	<b>Biodiversity</b>	<b>D-</b>
	<b>Climate Change</b>	<b>B-</b>

## **INTRODUCTION**

Sierra Club of Canada has been researching, writing and producing the RIO Report Card every year since 1993, marking the first anniversary of the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, and every anniversary since. The report card, now in its thirteenth year, continues under the name RIO, as an acronym and not a city. R.I.O. stands for “Report on International Obligations.” We continue to measure progress on environment and development commitments, whether reached in Rio, Kyoto, Johannesburg or Stockholm.

This is the first report card to grade an entire year of the federal government of Prime Minister Paul Martin. The year has been rocky, interrupted by a federal election that elected a Minority Government. Although hopes were high for environmental achievement in a Parliament with a majority of parties strongly favouring Kyoto, the reality was unpleasant. For a Minority Parliament to work, parties need to be able to set aside partisanship to achieve shared goals. Many in the environmental movement, including the Sierra Club of Canada RIO Report Card team, expected that Jack Layton and Gilles Duceppe would work with the Liberal government to achieve progress on Kyoto. Sadly, this was the most partisan, nasty and toxic session of Parliament in living memory. Statesmanship cannot exist when governed by daily polls to see who is up and who is “on the ropes.”

In the brinkmanship created by an election threat, Jack Layton and the NDP acted in the interests of the country and the planet. The assistance in passing the Budget Implementation Bill and additional budget measures was applauded by the environmental community and Canadians in general.

Against this backdrop, less has been accomplished than we had hoped when the minority Parliament was elected. If we were grading for effort, Stéphane Dion would deserve an “A.” But Sierra Club of Canada’s RIO Report Card team are not easy graders.

The record is mixed. Progress has been made. Significant amounts of money have been committed, but overall, the record is merely average.

## REPORT ON THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT OF CANADA

JUNE 2004 - JUNE 2005

### Commitment to Increase Overseas Development Assistance to 0.7% of GDP

#### 2005 Grade: C+

2004 Grade: C+  
2003 Grade: B-  
2002 Grade: C+  
2001 Grade: D  
2000 Grade: D+  
1999 Grade: D  
1998 Grade: D  
1997 Grade: F  
1996 Grade: F  
1995 Grade: F  
1994 Grade: B  
1993 Grade: F

In 1992 at the Rio Earth Summit, Canada committed to increasing overseas development assistance (ODA) to 0.7% of our GDP. This commitment represented a target set by Lester B. Pearson when he chaired a World Bank Commission. In 1992, Canadian ODA stood at 0.45% of GDP. In the “programme review,” deficit cutting era of the Chrétien Liberals, ODA dropped to 0.25% of GDP in 2000/2001.

The 2005 budget, plus the additional funds secured in the deal with Layton’s NDP, bring the amount for 2005 spending to 0.36%. The 2004/05 budget for international assistance was \$3,237 million, and grew by 12.4% in the 2005/06 budget to \$3,637 million. The additional budget measure negotiated between the NDP and Liberals generated an additional \$250 million.

Worse, and maddingly exasperating for the brilliant “Make Poverty History” campaign of the Canadian Council for International Cooperation, Martin has decided he cannot reiterate Canada’s commitment to meet 0.7% of GDP to ODA. Now that 11 other countries around the world have adopted the UN target, proposed by a former Canadian Prime Minister, Canada is dropping it. No wonder Bono is chastising Martin.

We are a very wealthy country with a growing economy. Canada’s economic circumstances, among the developed countries put us in an ideal position to commit to the UN target. Canada can meet the 0.7% with increases of 15% to the International Assistance Envelope each year until 2015. We must remain committed to the Pearson target.

To meet the 0.7%, choices may have to be made. Ceasing the subsidy to the nuclear industry (over \$200 million/year), would be a good start.

## **Commitment to Reduce Greenhouse Gases**

### **2005 Grade: B-**

2004 Grade: B for Chrétien's last six months  
incomplete for Martin's first six months  
2003 Grade: A (for ratification)  
incomplete (for implementation)  
2002 Grade: B  
2001 Grade: D  
2000 Grade: C  
1999 Grade: incomplete  
1998 Grade: incomplete  
1997 Grade: F  
1996 Grade: D-  
1995 Grade: D+  
1994 Grade: C+  
1993 Grade: A (for ratification) D (for implementation)

At the 1992 Rio Earth Summit, Canada was in the lead on climate change. Along with most of the world, including the US and the developing world, Canada signed and ratified the Framework Convention on Climate Change (FCCC). All nations pledged to reduce greenhouse gases to levels that would avoid "dangerous" climate change impacts. Ever since then, greenhouse gases have increased.

In December 1997, the same nations gathered in Kyoto, Japan to negotiate a more stringent agreement with targets and timelines for the industrialized countries.

On February 16, 2005, the Kyoto Protocol entered into force as binding international law. Nearly seven years after negotiating the Protocol at the Third Conference of the Parties, the international negotiating process can move forward to the urgently required reduction targets following Kyoto. Avoiding "dangerous" levels of greenhouse gases (GHG) will require global reductions on the order of 60% below 1990 levels. Kyoto only commits Canada to 6%. We are at serious risk of uncontrollable levels of climate impacts.

The scientific community is increasingly warning that actions must be swifter and deeper than anything contemplated by governments thus far. The most recent science makes the case that we must avoid a 2 degree Celsius average global temperature increase. A taskforce of the U.K. Institute for Public Policy Research argued that a "point of no return" in catastrophic interference with the climate system will be reached if the global average temperature increases by 2 degrees Celsius. This will occur if carbon dioxide levels increased from the pre-Industrial Revolution level of 275 parts per million (ppm) to an unheard of concentration in the atmosphere of 400 ppm. Current concentrations have already reached 379 ppm. This is essentially irreversible. The International Energy Agency projects, on current actions, a 63 percent increase in emissions by 2030. In order to avoid the "point of no return," 60-80 percent reductions from developed countries and a global reduction of at least 30 percent are required by 2030.

The scale of the challenge and the severity of the threat are still poorly understood by Canadian governments – federal, provincial and territorial.

The Kyoto file has clearly dominated the first full year of Martin's environmental performance. There has been a significant and impressive increase in the level of activity and the seriousness of purpose the federal government assigns to the issue. Points are awarded for improving the management of the issue by creating the Ad Hoc Cabinet Committee on Kyoto implementation, chaired by Industry Minister David Emerson. This committee should remain active through the Kyoto period, or until 2012. The effort to achieve 25% reductions in GHG emissions from Canadian car makers, although part of the Kyoto implementation plan since 2000, did not begin in earnest until the fall of 2004. The development of Project Green represented a political commitment to Kyoto targets in the face of bureaucratic intransigence. It is significant as the first time the federal government has committed to the use of regulations to meet targets. The Canadian Environmental Protection Act (CEPA) has been identified as the appropriate law within which to promulgate regulations. Environmental groups support the use of CEPA, but the majority of groups prefer that the Act not be amended for this purpose. All environmental law experts agree that amendments are not legally necessary and were only put forward to deal with a perception problem. The government should move forward, as planned, to regulate under CEPA.

Lastly, the government deserves extra credit for offering to host the 11<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties (COP) in Montreal, November 28-December 9, 2005. These significant negotiations will be both the 11<sup>th</sup> COP under the FCCC (COP11) and the first Meeting of the Parties under Kyoto (MOP1). Following a strong effort on climate change at the G-8 Summit to be hosted by UK Prime Minister Tony Blair in early July in Gleneagles, Scotland, the international negotiations under the UN will move for the first time ever to North America for COP11/MOP1. The stakes are high, but many in the international community are grateful to Canada for hosting, in hopes that the proximity to the US will increase pressure on the Bush Administration.

Nevertheless, these positive steps are against a backdrop of cushioning the worst polluters from their fair share of reductions. Chrétien's promise to hold economic impacts for the oil and gas sector to \$15/tonne for carbon reductions, with the remainder to be absorbed by the Canadian taxpayer, creates a large degree of financial risk and exposure for the government. It also constitutes a new type of potential future subsidy to the fossil fuel industry. The Chrétien government also set the reduction targets for big polluters through an "intensity-based" target. This is the Bush approach, allowing reductions in a ratio to unit of production. Under this system, emissions can increase in absolute terms while declining in intensity. The total amount of carbon that Canada must reduce annually to meet Kyoto targets is 270 million tonnes (or megatonnes). Since the heavy industrial sector contributes half of all emissions, it would be logical to expect these polluters to have a target of 135 megatonnes. Project Green calls for 39 megatonnes from what are termed "large final emitters" (LFE = oil and gas sector, large utilities). The previous Chrétien plan has called for 55 megatonnes reductions, although, as noted, based on intensity. The only "plus" was the fact that the 55 megatonne target was voluntary and the Project Green approach for the biggest polluters calls for the target to be regulated by law.

**Letting big industry off the hook sabotages Canada's Kyoto targets.** The Athabasca tar sands alone will, by 2010, account for 70 megatonnes of emissions. It is this aspect of the plan that has been universally condemned.

Nevertheless, it is not possible to deny that progress has been made in the 2005 budget and "Project Green." Together they deliver the following in a revamped implementation plan:

- ✍ 5500 megawatts of renewable energy (equivalent to 20% of all new energy source brought on stream in Canada) by expanding the Wind Power Production Initiative (quadrupling it with \$200 million), and creating a Renewable Energy Production Incentive (to stimulate co-generation, solar energy, small scale hydro, geo-thermal, etc; \$97 million);
- ✍ expanded the accelerated Capital Cost Allowance (CCA) treatment for equipment purchases for all renewables, and making it very attractive for investors, improving the accelerated CCA from 30% to 50% and expanding the types of equipment that qualify;
- ✍ \$1 billion Climate Fund to buy (and then retire) carbon credits in a competitive market;
- ✍ \$250 million for a Partnership Fund to engage provinces and territories in carbon reduction with federal support. It is from this fund that Ontario will find funds to shut down its coal plants and build an East-West grid to buy Manitoba Hydro power;
- ✍ an agreement with carmakers for 5.3 megatonnes in GHG emission reductions (which, although voluntary, could work if the monitoring is robust, environmental NGOs and organized labour are given a seat in the monitoring group, and regulations wait in the wings for the first sign of industry failure);
- ✍ significant enhancement (\$225 million more) for the home EnerGuide programme to retrofit 500,000 homes by 2010;
- ✍ the Green Municipal Funds administered through the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) is expanded by \$300 million (although not all these funds will be applied to Kyoto. The clean-up of "brownfield sites" is highlighted as a new category of FCM loans from this fund.)

As well, there are significant funds for green municipal infrastructure through the re-directed gas tax money labeled the "New Deal for Cities and Communities," although projects from these funds are not included in Project Green's assigned carbon reduction targets. It comes to \$7 billion over the next ten years, with \$600 million in 2005-2006, building to a steady \$2 billion/year by 2009-2010. Although some of these funds could be used for highways for rural communities, the language for large urban centres is heavily focused on "environmentally sustainable municipal infrastructure."

Reaching the 270 megatonne reduction target is likely not possible without following up on suggestions for further action in both the plan and federal 2005 budget. Sierra Club of Canada believes it is critical to push for the additional steps toward ecological fiscal reform suggested in the 2005 budget. We will need fee-bates to encourage the purchase of energy efficient cars and appliances. We will need to retune the plan going forward, and to force the biggest polluters to do their share.

Internationally, Canada needs to be prepared to show real leadership at COP11. Canada needs to join with Europe in advancing meaningful targets to avoid catastrophic climatic disruption at COP11. A tax on international aviation fuel, as proposed by the UK, needs Canadian support. Canada should avoid the temptation to bring the Bush Administration back into the process at the cost of emasculating the entire effort.

## **Federal Commitment to Biodiversity**

### **2005 Grade: D+**

2004 Grade: D

2003 Grade: B+

2002 Grade: D+

2001 Grade: D

2000 Grade: F

1999 Grade: D-

1998 Grade: F

1997 Grade: D-

1996 Grade: D

1995 Grade: C

1994 Grade: D

1993 Grade: A (for ratification)

C (for implementation)

Since 1993, and our first RIO Report Card, the federal government has been graded toward progress in upholding the UN Convention for the Protection of Biodiversity. Two indicators in protecting biodiversity have been used: progress in completing the national park system, and work to protect species at risk in Canada.

The mark this year would be a D, if not for the two positive steps this year. First, the passage of Bill C-15, an Act to Amend the Migratory Birds Convention Act, 1994 and the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999, is very good news indeed. The new law will increase fines to shippers that illegally dump oily bilge at sea. It is estimated that 300,000 seabirds are killed every year from illegally dumped oil, off the coast of Newfoundland and Labrador alone. Environment Minister Stéphane Dion worked diligently to ensure passage of this bill, initially introduced by his predecessor, David Anderson. Credit and thanks to a rare exercise of non-partisanship where all parties supported the bill through the House with no amendments. It all nearly fell apart in the Senate when Conservative Senators insisted the bill required amendments. Conservative MP and Environment Critic for his party, Bob Mills, put the seabirds ahead of politics and went to the Senate committee to support Minister Dion. Well done.

Second, credit is given for the strong support to prevent the North Dakota government from completing and operating the Devils Lake “emergency” outlet project. Prime Minister Martin has spoken directly with President Bush, urging he support a reference to the International Joint Commission. The transfer of water from the closed-basin Devil’s Lake into the Sheyenne and Red Rivers could lead to ecological disaster. Ambassador Frank M’Kenna has also made this a priority. The project would cause an irreversible release of

foreign biota and invasive species into the Sheyenne River and thus into the Red River of Manitoba. North Dakota has ignored the concerns raised by not only the Federal government but also neighbouring US states that proceeding with this interbasin diversion without an environmental assessment risks untold economic and ecological consequences. Unilaterally proceeding with this project would also set a very bad precedent, contrary to the obligations under the 1909 Boundary Waters Treaty to not pollute and to not cause damage to Canadian waters.

The federal government continues to urge the US feds to refer the proposed project to the International Joint Commission (IJC) for an independent scientific review. It has also recently announced a \$1.1 million annual fund to improve the monitoring of Lake Winnipeg's and the Red River's water quality, setting a base line to assess the damage should the Devils Lake project proceed.

The grade for the federal government would have been higher, had it made a unilateral reference to the IJC under Article IX of the 1909 Treaty. While this option for an IJC examination and report has never been used for fear of upsetting the practice of joint referrals from both Canada and the US, the reckless action of the North Dakota government and indifference shown so far by the US federal government, speak to the exceptional circumstance of this case.

### **Species at Risk**

Since the Species at Risk Act (SARA) came into force in June 2003, the government has significantly undermined the Act's integrity. This brief addresses two serious listing concerns and the failure of the federal government to implement its much-lauded 'safety net'.

The Species at Risk Act provides for a period of nine months between when a wildlife species is listed by COSEWIC and when the Governor in Council must decide whether to list the species under the Act. However in April 2004, the federal government announced that it was delaying the listing of twelve aquatic species by an *additional nine months*, citing the need for 'extended consultation.' In May 2005, the government did it again holding back seven aquatic species designated for listing by COSEWIC for an extended period of consultation.

While the extended consultation for these twelve species was cause for serious concern, even more alarming is that the federal government is formalizing this extended consultation process as part of its ongoing listing process. The effect of this decision is that endangered wildlife will now potentially wait close to two years before receiving the legal protection afforded by SARA. This is completely contrary to the spirit of SARA, as well as to the letter of the law. Environment Canada defends the extended listing process by asserting the importance of consultation in the spirit of the Act's cooperative nature. Species that are at risk of extinction cannot wait for cumbersome listing processes; their only hope for survival is the expedient implementation of action and early development of recovery plans once a species is listed. SARA was designed to incorporate extensive consultations during recovery planning, where socio-economic impacts are to be carefully taken into consideration.

On October 22, 2004, Environment Minister Stéphane Dion recommended to the Federal Cabinet that the Cultus and Sakinaw sockeye stocks not be listed as endangered under SARA, despite evidence from the scientific authority the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) that the populations are in imminent danger of extinction. On January 12, 2005, the decision not to list these two salmon populations was upheld by Cabinet. Minister Dion's recommendations were based on deeply flawed socio-economic analyses of the potential economic impacts of listing the two salmon populations—analyses that have been heavily discredited and dismissed by key departmental officials within the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO).<sup>i</sup>

Minister Dion stated that “the Fraser River sockeye fishery would have to be virtually shut down if these two populations were listed under SARA,” and that the consequence to the BC fishing industry would be \$125 million in lost revenue over the next four years. A more thorough look at mitigation measures reveals that, in fact, even if a ‘zero tolerance’ policy were implemented as a result of legally listing the Cultus and Sakinaw salmon, such a policy would likely only mean temporary disruptions in fisheries of certain Fraser River sockeye stocks in certain approach areas, at limited times during the fishing season. This would hardly be a shut down of the sockeye salmon fishery.

A decision to list the Sakinaw Lake and Cultus Lake sockeye salmon populations would demand changes to the mixed-stock fishery, which DFO is reluctant to make. Yet the mixed-stock fishery threatens the demise of not just the Sakinaw Lake and Cultus Lake sockeye, but hundreds of other salmon populations; these two populations just happen to be among the best-researched.

Had DFO the leadership and will needed to move to innovative harvest approaches such as selective fisheries, more responsive and adaptive time-and-area closures, the movement of fishing effort away from mixed-stock areas, and the development of more ‘terminal area’ fisheries in cooperation with First Nations communities further along the migratory path of homeward-swimming Fraser sockeye, the economic impact of these disruptions would be negligible.

The Minister of the Environment has now adopted DFO's approach by recommending that the Plains Bison not be listed because of the alleged inability to genetically distinguish wild and domestic ‘plains bison and the potential economic implications for the Canadian Bison industry.

Section 80 of SARA enables the Environment Minister to recommend an emergency order to protect a species and its habitat if he is of the opinion that a species faces imminent threats to its survival. A petition seeking the emergency order for the northern spotted owl was submitted to the Minister of Environment in February 2004. The northern spotted owl is the most endangered bird in Canada. The BC government continues to allow logging in owl habitat while the recovery plan is being finalized.

In a letter of response to the petitioners, former Environment Minister David Anderson, recognized that the owl faces imminent extirpation, but failed to intervene, stating that: “If this collaborative approach [with the government of British Columbia] does not soon result in the province taking actions to protect the Northern Spotted Owl, I will be prepared to

consider making a recommendation under Section 80 of SARA.” Almost a year has passed, and logging continues in northern spotted owl habitat. The federal government clearly lacks the political will to protect endangered wildlife when provincial governments are failing to do so—an ominous sign for species in provinces across Canada that are receiving inadequate protection, species that the government claimed the safety net would protect.

Since enactment of the Species at Risk Act, the federal government has made a series of decisions that are inconsistent with Parliament’s intentions in enacting this statute. The unilateral and probably unlawful extension of the consultation period for listing some species, the decision not to list the highly endangered sockeye salmon populations of Sakinaw Lake and Cultus Lake, and the failure to issue an emergency order to protect the highly endangered northern spotted owl all point to a lack of political will to implement SARA.

### **Protected Areas**

In January of this year, another national park was created—Torngat Mountains National Park Reserve in northern Labrador. Measures to address the ecological integrity of Banff National Park were also announced. These projects, with a total cost of \$8 million, address traffic congestion and wildlife movement, restore grizzly bear habitat while improving the trail system, and engage and involve visitors in stewardship initiatives.

Unfortunately, Nahanni National Park Reserve, a World Heritage Site in Canada’s Northwest Territories, is threatened by the proposed Prairie Creek Mine – a risky mine proposal located upstream from the South Nahanni River. The federal government has promised to expand the national park but the NWT Supreme Court recently decided to exempt the re-construction of a winter road located upstream from Nahanni National Park Reserve from an environmental assessment. Meanwhile, conservation groups have called upon Minister for Northern Affairs Andy Scott, to stop issuing permits for mineral exploration within the South Nahanni watershed. While Stéphane Dion attempts to protect the area, Andy Scott is essentially sabotaging the effort. Also noted in the Alberta section, the Cheviot open pit coal mine now threatens ecological integrity of Jasper National Park.

The federal decision to provide funding for the NWT Protected Areas Strategy was very good news this past year. Establishment of a network protected areas in the Mackenzie Valley is essential if biodiversity of this wilderness is to be protected in the face of the proposed \$7 billion Mackenzie Gas Project and other oil and gas development that the Mackenzie Gas Project will induce. On the other hand, the extraordinary subsidies and political support lavished by the federal minister on the multinational corporations proposing the Mackenzie Gas Project is unholy given the harm to biodiversity and Canada’s Kyoto commitments, and limited economic benefits (e.g., 50 permanent jobs for northerners) associated with the Project.

## **Commitment to Review and Reform Pesticide and Toxic Policies**

### **2005 Grade: F**

2004 Grade: D  
2003 Grade: C+  
2002 Grade: C  
2001 Grade: F  
2000 Grade: D-  
1999 Grade: D  
1998 Grade: F  
1997 Grade: F  
1996 Grade: C-  
1995 Grade: D  
1994 Grade: C  
1993 Grade: F

### **Pesticides**

In 2002, we congratulated the government on the passage of the revised Pest Control Products Act. The Act would, for the first time in 30 years, amend the way pesticides were regulated in Canada. Now, 2 ½ years later, the act is *still* not in force. Promises to improve public participation and transparency in reevaluation decisions have not resulted in better decision making, as no regulations govern the processes, which lurch along in an ad-hoc fashion and with no standing rules or procedures.

Promises to fast track a review process for the most commonly used pesticides for lawns and gardens have been undertaken before the new regulations have come into force, so they are primarily governed by the old legislation, and give little comfort to health and environmental critics. Recently, changes in staffing at senior levels appear to have resulted in a management vacuum evidenced by miscommunications and extremely poor judgment in decision making.

The handling of the 20 year review of the phenoxy herbicide 2,4-D is very troubling. The evidence from multiple human exposure studies is that 2,4-D increases cancer risks, and it is an endocrine disrupter. Although Canada's Pest Control Products Act explicitly forbids the use of the word "safe" in advertising for pesticide products, the Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) - before the public comment period on its review of the phenoxy herbicide 2,4-D had even begun - declared that "2,4-D can be used safely on lawns and turf" in the information note posted on its website and in numerous media interviews. The PMRA continues to fail the public interest in its pro-chemical bias.

The PMRA also attacked a local environmental group in Perth for advocating non-toxic alternatives, which although promoted by well-known horticulturalist and Radio Noon guest Ed Lawrence as well as recommended on an Environment Canada website, had not been registered for that use by PMRA. A day after the PMRA's letter was placed in the mail, Landscape Ontario had distributed a letter to lawn care companies in the region as well as a staff member of the town. The contents of this letter were intended to discredit ecoPerth.

What is troubling is that this action demonstrates that the PMRA attempted to discredit ecoPerth and assist a chemical lawncare advocate.

And then there is lindane, a toxic, carcinogenic, persistent chemical. Although PMRA prohibited the use of lindane as a seed coating for canola in 2001, the manufacturer, Crompton Inc. called for a review of the decision, to which it is entitled by law. However, because the new Act has not come into force, as noted earlier, the procedure for setting up the review panel was ad-hoc.

Sierra Club of Canada (SCC) was the sole public interest intervener. No other environmental, indigenous peoples, or health organization or group was asked to participate. The Minister of Environment's office was unaware of the proceeding, despite lindane's candidacy for the Stockholm Convention Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) list or the current North American Regional Action Plan (NARAP) being developed by Canada, the US, and Mexico under the Commission for Environmental Cooperation. Further, none of the experts working on lindane were even aware of the review panel, let alone asked to provide input or advice.

Of the three members selected by PMRA to "impartially" review their decision to refuse the re-registration of lindane, one has a long and established reputation for often, but not always, supporting the chemical industry. The worrying record includes having defended the safety of DDT, 2,4,5-T and supported the use of bovine growth hormone, among other things. Another member runs an American consulting company that is dedicated to supporting pesticide companies in court. The third is a former US pesticide regulator. None is an expert on lindane or occupational exposure. The scope of the hearing was so narrow, that the expert panel rejected a large proportion of SCC's evidence on health and environment as irrelevant. SCC withdrew from the hearing. The entire process was so poorly designed and executed that if it was not deliberately set up to overturn the PMRA's decision and protect industry interests, it illustrates wholesale incompetence and a complete departure from PMRA's mandate to protect health.

### **CEPA (Canadian Environmental Protection Act)**

Late 2004 marked the beginning of the review of the 1999 Canadian Environmental Protection Act as legislated to begin after its fifth year in force. Environment Canada released a scoping document in December 2004 and the public had 60 days to comment. During this time, stakeholder consultations were held in various cities across Canada. The result of these meetings has been a document outlining major messages that Environment Canada heard over the course of the consultation. It is essential that the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development, charged with leading the review, ensure that the concerns for greater public participation, increased capacity, improved implementation of the precautionary principle are addressed.

### **POPs (Persistent Organic Pollutants)**

Finally, the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) came into force on May 17, 2004. Canada has until May 17, 2006 to develop a National Implementation Plan (NIP) outlining how it plans to eliminate POPs. Environment Canada released its draft NIP

in February 2005. As a draft, it's a good start, but the final version must contain information on timelines and targets, an evaluation of Canada's toxic programs as they relate to POPs, clear language that the NIP is Canada's guide for eliminating POPs and promoting safe alternatives and non-incinerating technologies, among other items.

### **Conclusion**

Minister of Health Ujjal Dosanjh has not yet made any impact on this area of his mandate. He must exercise the same instincts that led him to reject departmental advice against mandatory reporting of adverse drug reactions and clean up the pesticide performance of this government! He must start by rejecting the advice to continue the current registration of 2,4-D and by eliminating licensed uses where children play.

### **Commitment to Environmental Assessment**

#### **2005 Grade: C+**

2004 Grade: C+  
2003 Grade: C  
2002 Grade: D-  
2001 Grade: C-  
2000 Grade: F  
1999 Grade: F  
1998 Grade: F  
1997 Grade: F  
1996 Grade: D  
1995 Grade: B-  
1994 Grade: C  
1993 Grade: F

An encouraging trend in the last 18 months has been a marked increase in the use of full panel reviews under the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act. Panels have been announced for the Digby Neck Quarry proposal in Nova Scotia, the Belledune incinerator in New Brunswick (under appeal at the moment), the Mackenzie Gas Project and most recently the \$400 million proposal for clean up of the Sydney Tar Ponds. Over 4,000 local Sydney residents signed petitions opposing the plan to incinerate PCB waste. Concerns were raised about the so-called solidification and stabilization of the vast majority of the toxic sludge, which is slated to be left in place and covered (or mixed with) cement. Although a panel appears the obvious choice under the law, the province of Nova Scotia and its Crown corporation, Sydney Tar Ponds Agency, exerted tremendous pressure against a transparent and independent review. Ministers Stéphane Dion and Scott Brison, whose department of Public Works is in charge of the clean-up for the federal government, showed tremendous resolve in establishing a panel review for the clean up of the Sydney Tar Ponds in May 2005.

The federal environment assessment grade lost points for other developments. Environmental assessment of offshore developments emerged as a big issue in 2004. The deletion of offshore petroleum exploratory drilling from the Comprehensive Study List

regulations was a move in the wrong direction. Regional strategic environmental assessments and assessment of marine seismic operations relating to oil and gas were also important indicators of a failure on the part of the federal government to do EA properly.

Laughably inadequate funding for environmental groups to participate in the joint panel review of the \$7 billion Mackenzie Gas Project (MGP) is proving to be a serious problem. The Mackenzie Gas Project is the largest industrial project in the history of the North, and will trigger oil and gas industrialization up and down the Mackenzie Valley, as well as fueling a major ramping up of tar sands development in northern Alberta. The federal government is spending hundreds of millions of dollars preparing itself for the MGP developments, hundreds of millions of dollars more on the Government of the Northwest Territories and aboriginal organizations promoting the pipelines and gas fields, but can only spare \$5,000 for Sierra Club of Canada, which is leading much of the NGO effort on the environmental assessment. Even former premier and pipeline supporter, Steve Kakfwi, has labeled the process “sad and absurd.”

A growing issue in 2004 and 2005 is the policy of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) to scope the environmental assessments of projects as narrowly as possible. A multibillion dollar oil sands mine that causes massive air and water pollution and huge greenhouse gas emissions, destroys thousands of hectares of boreal forests, and generates massive tailings gets scoped as a stream crossing for the DFO assessment.

The release of the report of the External Advisory Committee on Smart Regulation in 2004 raised many red flags, given the poorly informed views of the Committee on environmental assessment. The government followed up on the Smart Regulation report in the October 2004 Speech from the Throne committed itself to consolidating federal EA, and providing a “unified and more effective EA process for Canada.” The government is proposing a hurried process for revising the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act (CEAA) with consultations in the spring, recommendations to Memorandum of Cabinet in the autumn, followed by legislative amendments. This agenda appears unlikely given political developments related to the Gomery inquiry, but it is nonetheless disconcerting given that CEAA was recently amended. Some positive changes could include giving the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency more authority to ensure the quality of assessments and to set out standards for approaches to scoping projects. On the negative side, the number of environmental assessments required by law could be drastically reduced.

Other provincial governments have also been reluctant to cooperate in joint panel reviews. For example, environmentalists have attempted to get joint panel reviews for major hydroelectric projects (including Wuskwatim in northern Manitoba), for years without success due to the fact that the province adamantly refuses to cooperate.

## **Agenda 21 Commitment to Make Trade and Environment Mutually Supportive**

### **2005 Grade: F**

2004 Grade: F  
2003 Grade: F  
2002 Grade: F  
2001 Grade: D-  
2000 Grade: D  
1999 Grade: F  
1998 Grade: F  
1997 Grade: F  
1996 Grade: F  
1995 Grade: F  
1994 Grade: F  
1993 Grade: F

How are trade rules and environmental laws supposed to relate to each other? The lingo is "mutual supportiveness." The language of "mutual supportiveness" is contained in a number of trade and environmental treaties, including Agenda 21. The Canadian government continues to rely on unproven claims that prosperity and environmental protection are positively linked. If trade as mutually supportive to the environment were a class, a teacher's comments might say: "Canada continues to have a high rate of absenteeism, and is highly disruptive when it does attend."

This year, the Canadian government set its agenda of neo-liberal economic globalization on a rolling boil. This agenda is proceeding unfettered by environmental concern, or even contemplation.

Despite the din of democracy, the government is proceeding virtually by stealth with an aggressive trade liberalizing agenda. For example, how many Canadians would know that their government is pursuing a free trade agreement with South Korea? Canada is also in discussions with four Central American countries (CA4), Europe (through the European Free Trade Association), the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), and a hemispheric agreement that expands NAFTA called Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA). Unless one combs through government documents, such as the recently released "International Policy Statement," or attends speeches given to business groups by the Minister of International Trade on the future of Canada's trade policy, it is not likely anyone would know. Canada is also increasing trade promotion with emerging markets such as Japan, China, India and Brazil.

This aggressive approach follows from the US lead. When multilateral trade negotiations fall apart, plan B is to seek the same objectives in smaller or bilateral deals. Increasingly the big deals are falling apart, like the WTO's Doha Development Agenda and the Free Trade Area of the Americas. Developing countries and emerging market countries with their insistent demands about fairness band together and make a stand against the high-income countries, especially on the contentious issues of agricultural subsidies and market access. The WTO negotiations, called "close to a crisis" by the WTO Director-General, will next come to a

head in Hong Kong in December 2005. When trade rules change and factories close, such as happened this year for fabric made in Lesotho, the people suffer. Yet trade deals seem impervious to larger commitments to poverty alleviation.

The government is bound by the *1999 Cabinet Directive on the Environmental Assessment of Policy, Plan and Program Proposals* to conduct environmental assessments of trade agreements. The process is supposed to inform Canadian negotiators and dialogue with Canadians about environmental impacts. The department has published Initial Environmental Assessments (IEAs) for only some of the agreements they are pursuing: WTO, FTAA, Canada-Singapore Free Trade Agreement, and CA4. In every case, the environmental assessments unbelievably conclude minimal consequences for the environment. North America has the highest ecological footprint in the world and the Canadian government continues to insist this has nothing to do with trade.

The government is also pursuing greater integration with the US under the guise of "security and prosperity" (sometimes referred to as "NAFTA Plus"). The environmental consequences of "deeper integration" will make NAFTA (a bad deal on the environment) look like the environmental high water mark. The basic concern with the idea of a "grand bargain" with the US was put nicely by former Liberal International Trade Minister Roy MacLaren:

A customs union, common market, or, more vaguely, a "single economic and security space" would, at the end of the day, mean submission by Canada and Mexico to US rules, practices, values and direction.

Our concern is that the US has the second largest ecological footprint in the world. In this context, Canadian sovereignty means being free to decouple ourselves from unsustainable economic policies and practices and an ineffective regulatory system.

In the next year, we will be watching closely as Canada begins to implement its commitment to the Kyoto Protocol. The government must be careful not to make good on the promises of international trade lawyers to sue the government under NAFTA for supposed preference of Canadian jobs and businesses. The government will need to try to stimulate new markets in alternatives, proliferate green technologies and establish an emissions trading regime all under the watchful gaze of foreign investors who may launch Chapter 11 actions in order to protect profits from dirty practices.

We renew our perennial call for a comprehensive review of NAFTA's environmental consequences - we beseech the government to stop gambling with the future of our environment by blindly pursuing greater trade liberalizing efforts. Serious efforts must be made to incorporate environmental assessment into the trade negotiation process allowing environmental concerns to shape negotiations and function as more than a public relations or credibility building exercise. The government's aggressive neo-liberal globalization agenda is proceeding without effective public engagement, in other words, without a mandate from the public. The consultation efforts to date do not allow the public (those who can penetrate the government web sites) to make an informed decision when it comes to environmental consequences. How many more boil water advisories, smog warnings and

blackouts do Canadians need to endure before this government takes seriously the links between environmental and economic policy?

### **Commitment to the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Living Marine Resources**

#### **2005 Grade: F**

2004 Grade: D  
2003 Grade: C  
2002 Grade: D-  
2001 Grade: F  
2000 Grade: D  
1999 Grade: C  
1998 Grade: C-  
1997 Grade: F  
1996 Grade: F  
1995 Grade: C  
1994 Grade: F  
1993 Grade: B-

In this, the 13<sup>th</sup> Annual RIO Report Card, it is time to demand extraordinary intervention to the crisis in Canada's fisheries policy. Having maintained passing, if not strong marks in the last three years, the record is back to an F. Remarkably few people close to oceans issues maintain that DFO is a functional department fulfilling its mission. The level of dysfunction increasingly appears to be cultural. The requisite corrective action will be radical.

The crisis is best understood through the threats to wild salmon on both the Pacific and Atlantic coasts. The failure of DFO salmon policy was also highlighted in the 2004 report of the Commissioner for the Environment and Sustainable Development within the Office of the Auditor General, Johanne Gelinas.

In British Columbia, the Fraser Sockeye Review was released in 2002 with specific recommendations supported by all stakeholders. Key among these was the creation of a Wild Salmon Policy for the BC stocks by the end of 2003 and a risk strategy for management that included consultation with all stakeholders. On April 8, 2003, former Minister Thibault committed to the full acceptance and immediate implementation of all of the report's recommendations.

In December 2004, a framework for a Wild Salmon Policy was finally released by Fisheries Minister, Geoff Regan. It was condemned by all the environmental and conservation organizations in the BC Marine Conservation Caucus and by nearly every BC First Nation. Concerns have also been raised by the BC Streamkeepers Constituency.

A revised version was released on April 22, 2005 and still there is no clear commitment to the conservation of the abundance and diversity of wild salmon and their habitat. In fact, at every opportunity, the document subverts and compromises that necessary objective, and

provides a wide range of opportunities for decision-makers to place any number of other “priorities” before that objective.

The first and perhaps most significant failing of the “Wild Salmon Policy” document is that it is not a real “policy” at all, at least not a clear *directive* policy of the kind that conservationists have demanded and were expecting. The policy permits bureaucrats the latitude to sacrifice entire genetic stocks of salmon for the benefit of fisheries or competing habitat demands. Also, there is nothing in the policy defining an objective scientifically-defensible threshold which when crossed would justify prosecutions under the habitat-protection provisions of the Fisheries Act. The radical nature of the proposed changes is far from the commitment to a conservation-first policy that wild Pacific salmon need to guarantee their survival and to ensure a sustainable fishery.

Moreover, DFO has acted to block listing of populations, pursuant to the Species at Risk Act (SARA), of salmon that are at serious and imminent risk of extinction. As noted in the Biodiversity grade for Canada as a whole, the highly endangered Cultus and Sakinaw Lake Coho salmon were not listed despite recommendation by COSEWIC, the government’s legislated committee of experts, that listing occurs on an emergency basis. The minister’s justification was premised on a flawed socio-economic analysis, thus setting a disturbing precedent.

Disbanding of the Cultus and Sakinaw Recovery Teams and failure to activate Action Teams to oversee recovery is a prescription for extinction. Proposals to over-fish these, among other endangered stocks, is in the proposed 2005 fishing plans.

In addition, it appears the Upper Fraser Coho, White Sturgeon and Boccaccio will meet the same fate. Documents prepared to assess listing under SARA [*“Socio-Economic Impacts of SARA – Interior Fraser Coho, White Sturgeon, Boccaccio”* (Gislason, 2004)] suggest a flawed analysis of financial impacts on commercial fisheries is the driver, rather than the conservation of endangered stocks.

Meanwhile on the East Coast, the Atlantic Salmon is in grave peril. The commercial wild fishery ended years ago, but measures to protect populations are still blunted by a political preference for the salmon aquaculture industry. The Inner Bay of Fundy Salmon are racing toward extinction. They were designated under SARA in 2004 as endangered. Historically, these salmon thrived in 33 rivers flowing to the Bay of Fundy in both New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. Only two rivers now have any populations and they are at very low levels. The federal government has created a live gene bank to save something of these populations in storage. The Inner Bay of Fundy salmon are treated distinctly because they do not migrate to Greenland in the winter, but remain in the outer Bay of Fundy/Gulf of Maine for their life at sea. The population has been in decline since 1990, having gone from a peak of 40,000 mature fish in 1970s to less than 200 adults in 2003.

The Recovery Team working under SARA has identified salmon aquaculture as a significant risk factor for their recovery on many counts. There are legal obligations here to act, but the political clout of the salmon pens is implicitly over-ruling the Recovery Team.

As well, the Atlantic salmon from the outer Bay of Fundy rivers, including those in the State of Maine are in decline. The US Endangered Species Act has listed the salmon runs from six downeast Maine rivers near the centre of the salmon aquaculture industry. The outer Bay of Salmon stocks may be doomed as well, unless decisive action is taken to reduce the pollution from salmon aquaculture. Atlantic Salmon could become extinct in all the Bay of Fundy rivers.

It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the federal government is reluctant to do anything to disrupt the salmon aquaculture industry, even if it means the likely extinction of the Inner Bay of Fundy Salmon and the possible extinction of the final remnants of the outer Bay of Fundy stocks.

Despite several years of warnings from conservationists and its own biologists, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans continues to allow uncontrolled fishing on dozens of Pacific fish species. Dozens of stocks and species on Canada's west coast remain completely unprotected by total-allowable-catch limits (TACs). These fisheries fail to comply with the basis standards set by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization. Among the species subject to these fisheries are 13 species of long-lived rockfish, which are acutely vulnerable to overfishing.

Meanwhile, DFO continues to allow directed commercial and recreational fisheries upon inshore rockfish species (quillback, copper, China, tiger, yelloweye, and black) which are known to be gravely depleted, especially in the Strait of Georgia. These fisheries continue despite repeated ministerial assurances that "conservation" is the primary departmental management objective, and despite the absence of rockfish harvest refugia that DFO's own scientists have identified as a minimum necessary component of a rockfish conservation and restoration strategy.

Worsening matters, DFO has quietly changed the triggers for habitat protection. Under the Act, harmful alteration and destruction of fish habitat (a HADD) is to be prevented. The original trigger for whether salmon cages were destroying fish habitat was if the sediment had become "hypoxic." Whenever the benthos is starved for oxygen and beginning to give off hydrogen sulphide and methane gas, the sediment is termed "hypoxic." With hypoxic sediment as the trigger, that level of impact was considered illegal HADD under the Fisheries Act.

However, when New Brunswick instituted its environmental regulations on the industry, thanks to excellent work by the Conservation Council of New Brunswick, and assembled the resulting monitoring data, it was discovered that 30 percent of the sites were *already* hypoxic.

Rather than crack down on the aquaculture industry, DFO quietly abandoned the hypoxic trigger and went to "anoxic." Anoxic sediments are devoid of oxygen and hence of most life forms (a species of sea worm can survive in anoxic sediments but virtually nothing else.). In other words, the benthos must be a dead zone before the HADD trigger applies. Wild salmon habitat is now routinely destroyed by the salmon farming industry, but the legal triggers under the Fisheries Act are not applied, through a policy sleight of hand. Under a plain reading of the Act, hypoxic sediments represent a clear violation of federal law.

The wild Atlantic salmon and the benthos of Fundy bays and estuaries are being sacrificed for the industry.

On both the Pacific and Atlantic coasts, the wild salmon is an essential element of land and culture, particularly for First Nations people, whether the Nuu-chal-Nulth and Haida in BC or the Maliseet of New Brunswick. Salmon are a key part of what makes up the tradition and culture of the Miramichi River in NB, the Margaree River in Nova Scotia and the mighty Fraser in BC. We are casually allowing these iconic populations to move to extinction.

Another industry is receiving preferential treatment from DFO at the expense of marine life. DFO has been ignoring advice of its regional scientists in order to allow greater predictability in the expansion of offshore oil and gas activity. DFO published a draft standard for the mitigation of environmental damage due to seismic testing in February. The draft guidelines were universally panned by scientists studying whales and seismic, many fisheries biologists and every major environmental group as well as many smaller regional and local groups. The proposed guidelines ignore huge levels of scientific uncertainty and act as though these gaps in knowledge can be safely camouflaged in an arrogant confidence. If these guidelines were to be approved, marine life in sensitive zones would be sure to be damaged by seismic testing in Atlantic Canada. In where the moratorium remains in place due to a large majority of public opinion, the draft guidelines may serve as propaganda in an effort to convince the public that oil and gas exploration can be protective of marine life.

More disturbing is the timing. Resources are being placed in smoothing the way for oil and gas prior to the mapping of sensitive zones and prior to the implementation of the Oceans Act's provisions for the development of public engagement in Coastal zone management.

Lastly, DFO is reducing resources in key areas through the Modernizing Compliance Initiative announced after the 2005 federal budget. According to a memo leaked to Alberta environmentalist Dr. Martha Kostuch, "It came as the result of an expenditure review exercise that was carried out in complete secrecy from staff, unions and the Canadian public. In fact, the department is still trying to quietly undertake this initiative, reducing both the level of service to Canadians and the level of protection of the aquatic environment. This is clear when one compares the information provided to staff on the internal Intranet site to the information provided to the public on DFO's Internet site."

Under the Modernizing Compliance Initiative, DFO is planning to cut 80 Fishery Officer positions and 42 Habitat Management positions. DFO plans to help offset the reductions of staff by the creation of 40 new habitat stewardship and monitoring officers' positions. The Fisheries Act has no provision for such positions and provides no authority for them to conduct inspections, to respond to complaints or to enforce the Fisheries Act.

Funding for fish habitat protection will be cut by \$2.3 million in 2005, with further cuts to a total of \$7 million a year by 2007.

The only bright spot we could find this year was the welcome decision, in response to public pressure, to maintain the DFO station on Sable Island, Nova Scotia, where the presence of the research facility is seen as a form of protection for the island's famous ponies.

It is hard to know where to start in reforming DFO. The problems within the department are well known on all three of Canada's coasts. Serious corrective action is long overdue. Or the government could simply rename the department: the Department of Fish Farms and Oil (DFO).

## **Forests**

### **2005 Grade: C**

2004 Grade: C

2003 Grade: C+

2002 Grade: F

2001 Grade: Absent

2000 Grade: D

1999 Grade: D

1998 Grade: D

1997 Grade: D

1996 Grade: C-

1995 Grade: C+

1994 Grade: A

The 2003-2008 National Forest Strategy (NFS) is being implemented with most provincial governments actively participating. Only Quebec and Alberta have not signed the accord, although Quebec is actively participating. Alberta's deputy has informed SCC that the province does plan to cooperate in the meeting of the Strategy's goals. It is a significant national undertaking that could create meaningful changes in forest landscape management.

With forest management as a provincial responsibility, the federal role is reduced to reports, studies, and coordination of efforts such as the NFS. Research has been curtailed in recent years through large budget cuts that reduced the federal forest effort from what was once a stand alone department, under Mulroney, to a small branch within NRCan, with a budget less than half the amount of subsidies the same department provides to the nuclear industry.

The Canadian Forest Service (CFS) provides easily accessible and meaningful information on national forest trends in its annual State of the Forests Reports. It also continues to fund First Nations Forestry Programs, the Model Forests Initiative and conduct research on carbon sequestration and climate change indicators, such as the potential for drought in the borders of the boreal and prairie ecosystems.

One new effort in pursuit of the controversial Forests 2020 programme is an agreement with the Tree Ontario Foundation aimed at afforestation (ie. planting in areas not currently forest) on private lands. CFS is undertaking this work in Ontario in collaboration with Conservation Authorities. So long as planting is done exclusively with species indigenous to the area, this could be a very positive programme. Such tree planting is urgently needed in all the remaining areas of the Carolinian forest ecosystem. Many private land owners would be keen on participation in restoring the most threatened forest ecosystem in Canada. The Carolinian forest is reduced to less than 10 percent of its original area, hemmed in by

agriculture, urban sprawl and highways. The CFS-Tree Ontario goal is modest – 6,000 hectares planted by the end of 2005.

CFS newsletters increasingly recognize public concern for the boreal. The federal minister of NRCan, John Efford, extolled the multiple benefits of the boreal in the spring 2005 edition:

“The boreal forest contributes to our quality of life...It is our responsibility to ensure that the boreal forest continues to provide the social, economic and environmental benefits that Canadians value so much.”

Yet, the same department is pushing hard for industrial mega-projects that now constitute the biggest threat to the unfragmented northern boreal. The expansion of the Athabasca tar sands will lead to the local extinction of herds of woodland caribou, while the Mackenzie gas project threatens to industrialize one of Canada’s last fragile and intact wilderness areas.

The Government of Canada must at some point in the near future confront its competing policies. Pressing for oil and gas while claiming to want to protect the boreal forest and implement the Kyoto Protocol is like trying to put out a fire, while throwing on more logs.

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## PROVINCIAL / TERRITORIAL GRADES

### NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

#### **Biodiversity**

##### **2005 Grade: B-**

2004 Grade: B-

2003 Grade: C+

2002 Grade: F

2001 Grade: F

2000 Grade: F

1999 Grade: D

1998 Grade: C-

1997 Grade: D

1996 Grade: F

1995 Grade: D-

(Not graded in 1993, 1994)

Newfoundland and Labrador is holding steady. Progress is lagging in protected areas, but budget commitments suggest the province is moving, if slowly. The provincial government gets extra points for Environment and Conservation Minister Tom Osborne's strong role in championing the federal law to increase fines against shippers dumping bilge oil. This practice has been estimated to kill 300,000 seabirds off Newfoundland and Labrador every single year.

#### **Protected Areas**

The proposed National Park for the Mealy Mountains continues to move forward, if glacially. One positive step this year was the inclusion in the provincial budget of funds to monitor the Mealy Mountains caribou herd. This herd is, like many caribou herds across Canada, threatened with extinction. The monitoring was a condition of the approval of the Trans-Labrador Highway Environmental Assessment. The provincial Protected Areas Association of Newfoundland and Labrador is pushing for an expanded boundary for the study area, to include the entire Kenamu River Watershed Area. The inclusion of this area holds the potential of filling a significant gap in the provincial natural areas systems plan.

On the Island of Newfoundland, there is less positive news. The Gros Morne National Park is violated by the continued allowance of recreational snowmobiling. Unregulated snowmobiling continues in Gros Morne National Park, as a management strategy has not yet been implemented.

The Little Grand Lake Ecological Reserve has provincial status but remains to receive final designation. This area is critical for habitat of the endangered Newfoundland marten.

Unfortunately, no progress whatsoever has been achieved in realizing the dream of the Lac Joseph-Atikonak Wilderness Reserve in Labrador. This 1,650,000 hectare area is actually increasingly threatened by the increased pressure to develop more hydroelectric dams at Churchill Falls. The Lac Joseph-Atikonak region is home to a very significant threatened herd of woodland caribou. The provincial government must move to protection of this critical area.

### **Species at Risk**

Three new species were moved into protected status under the provincial Endangered Species Act. The Red Crossbill is now under provincial protection as well as two plant species, Low Northern Rockcress and Porsild's Bryum. As of 2005, Newfoundland and Labrador have listed a total of 23 species under the provincial act. One of the most iconic species continues to be the Newfoundland marten. Its survival depends on adequate protection of old growth forest habitat. A Newfoundland marten recovery effort has been undertaken under direction of the provincial wildlife division and with cooperation from provincial and federal forest departments, industry, and educational institutions. Logging in the Main Watershed by Kruger has been significantly modified to increase habitat opportunities for the marten. This is to Kruger's credit, although greater and more permanent protection of the Main, a national heritage river, is still appropriate.

### **Forests**

Forests in Newfoundland and Labrador continue to lose ecological health through decades of logging pressure.

For example, research recently completed by the Sierra Club of Canada shows that forest lands known as the Labrador Linerboard Licences and tenured by Abitibi-Consolidated have significantly degraded over the last twenty-five years, as a result of the liquidation of most old growth forests within the licence areas.

The research project titled *Twenty Five Years of Harvesting the Labrador Linerboard Licences: a Study of Forest Tenure in Newfoundland*, compared the initial conditions of the lands allocated for these timber licenses and their current conditions after 25 years of industrial logging.

Initial research shows a significant shift in the age class structure of the forests on these lands. Specifically, in District 14 the forests were largely old growth prior to Abitibi management and now there are severe deficiencies in age classes 41-60 years and 61-80 years, the age classes that are most attractive for pulpwood harvesting.

The Labrador Linerboard Licences were allocated to Abitibi-Price as a wood supply source on the Island in 1980 when the company purchased the Linerboard Mill in Stephenville from the Crown in 1979.

The Labrador Linerboard Licences are the first timber licenses to expire for Abitibi. As of December 31, 2004 over 200,000 hectares of land on the Island were released from tenure agreements with Abitibi Consolidated. Other 99 year timber licences covering over 1 million hectares will expire in 2010.

Sierra Club of Canada and other conservation organizations will be pressing for ecological indicators and standards in the next set of licenses to be issued.

The last opportunities for protecting significant old growth boreal forests in the Great Northern Peninsula are dwindling. The 20 year forest plan calls for a 15-20 percent target for protecting old growth. But this is unlikely to be effective in protecting the remaining areas of oldest boreal forest ecosystems and unfragmented watersheds. The 15-20 percent target is slated to be in small, moving forest pockets, not permanent intact areas.

## **Climate Change**

### **2005 Grade: B-**

2004 Grade: C-  
2003 Grade: C+  
2002 Grade: C-  
2001 Grade: C-  
2000 Grade: D+  
1999 Grade: F  
1998 Grade: F  
1997 Grade: D  
1996 Grade: D-  
1995 Grade: F  
1994 Grade: F  
1993 Grade: F

The province has started moving forward on climate change. Although the provincial climate change plan, reported to be prepared, has not yet been released, the provincial government has made some progress. It has signed a memorandum of understanding with the federal government to assist in the national Kyoto effort. As well, for the first time, it has established a small fund (\$300,000) to provide for partnerships with environmental groups to achieve climate change goals.

Most significantly, after decades of ignoring the Island's huge potential for wind energy, some projects are in the works. Other than a poorly sited proposal a few years ago, in the migratory flyway to the Baccalieu Sanctuary, the province has not been actively pursuing its wind potential. The island community of Ramea is first up to benefit from wind. The proposal for six windmills will provide up to 20% of the community's electricity needs. In addition, environmental reviews are underway for a total of 32 wind farm projects.

Let's hope that the plan when released will include upgrades to the provincial building code to achieve higher standards of energy efficiency.

The large climate change conflict with biodiversity is captured by the plans to develop the Lower Churchill River. The Ontario government is now in partnership with Hydro-Quebec and SNC Lavalin to develop the hydro potential for Ontario electrical demand. Based on energy analysis prepared for Sierra Club of Canada, the David Suzuki Foundation and the Climate Action Network, Ontario's needs can be met without any additional hydro, and allowing for closing down all its nuclear reactors and coal plants. The key is in improving energy productivity, not flooding caribou habitat.

## NOVA SCOTIA

### **Biodiversity**

#### **2005 Grade: C+**

2004 Grade: D+

2003 Grade: F

2002 Grade: C

2001 Grade: C

2000 Grade: C-

1999 Grade: C-

1998 Grade: C-

1997 Grade: F

1996 Grade: B-

1995 Grade: D

1994 Grade: F

(Not graded in 1993)

Nova Scotia's grade increases with the long-overdue protection of Eigg Mountain and Gully Lake. This long-awaited news brings the total number of protected areas in Nova Scotia to 33. Further credit must be given to government's recent plans to develop a provincial Biodiversity Strategy, which has been lacking in the province since the beginning of RIO Report Card. This plan, part of the "Strategy Policy Renewal and Development" initiative lead by the department of Natural Resources, includes the development of Biodiversity, Forest, Parks, and Minerals Strategies within the next 18 months.

Natural Resources Minister Richard Hurlburt avoided a major failing grade for rejecting a sloppy departmental review suggesting the de-listing of pocket parks. Hurlburt announced in early May that the province's 26 game sanctuaries and wildlife management areas will not be de-listed. Moreover, the minister raised the welcome possibility of a logging ban in these areas.

The Chigecto Game Sanctuary and Blandford Sanctuary are clearly areas that require full protection. Their listing as sanctuaries is not adequate to protect these areas.

The Nova Scotia government is expected to bring forward the Nature Reserves Act soon. As well, the government has been showing more support for the efforts of Nature Conservancy in the province. Thanks to the federal government, there is a panel review of the Digby Quarry, but the province is being cooperative. As well, the province has made progress with the controversy over Baltzer's Bog. On the other hand, the lack of response to the recommendations of the Off-Road Vehicles (ORV) Taskforce under Voluntary Planning was completely unacceptable. The province just announced in late May the creation of six ORV enforcement positions. While this represents some progress, the RIO Report Card grading team agrees with Raymond Plourde of the Ecology Action Centre in Halifax who was "thoroughly underwhelmed..." There has been no response to the other 39 recommendations made last November by the volunteer task force. The recommendations

were clear and the problem is growing. The Nova Scotia government needs to take action to protect natural areas from ORV.

The Hamm government continues to promote off-shore oil and gas development in sensitive areas, without meeting its own policy requirements for *a priori* mapping of such areas.

### **Toxic Chemicals/Pollution**

#### **2005 Grade: F**

2004 Grade: F

2003 Grade: F

2002 Grade: F

2001 Grade: F

2000 Grade: C+

1999 Grade: D

1998 Grade: F

1997 Grade: C

1996 Grade: F

1995 Grade: --

1994 Grade: F

(Not graded in 1993)

The Hamm government has avoided political accountability on the tar ponds issue through its reliance on the Sydney Tar Ponds Agency as a buffer with the public. Minister Ron Russell's hostile reaction to the announcement of a panel review for the tar ponds clean-up is unfortunate reflecting an anti-environmental, anti-democratic attitude.

The proposed clean-up features technology and an approach never reviewed through the JAG process. The province chose not to pursue the approach most favoured by the community in the JAG process. The full panel review will be the first time the proposal to incinerate PCB material in a mobile incinerator while burying the estuary in concrete has been studied. The health risks to the adjacent neighbourhoods have not been adequately taken into account. The RIO Report Card notes that local MLA Gordie Gosse has emerged as an important spokesman and critic of the incineration plan. In a minority provincial government, Premier Hamm and his Cabinet should listen to Gosse's concerns.

As well, the province's response to serious pesticide issues from forest spraying late last summer were not adequate. Local communities raised serious and thoughtful concerns about the use of forest herbicides, but these were dismissed by the Department of Natural Resources.

On toxic substances, there are simply no bright spots to outweigh the failing grades.

## **Climate Change**

### **2005 Grade: F**

2004 Grade: C-

2003 Grade: C

2002 Grade: C-

2001 Grade: F

2000 Grade: C+

1999 Grade: D

1998 Grade: D

1997 Grade: D+

1996 Grade: D

1995 Grade: D+

1994 Grade: F

(not graded in 1993)

Nova Scotia has slipped badly in the last year on its climate change commitments. Despite its participation in the Conference of New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers (CNEGECP), which has adopted Kyoto-like targets for the region, Nova Scotia has been intensifying its fossil fuel reliance. The Hamm government has been pushing to re-open coal mines, including strip mines, and add more coal fired power plants. Despite a few wind turbines, promotion of renewable energy seems to have stalled. In fact, this year the Hamm government shut down the Crown corporation set up under the previous Conservative Government of former Premier, now Senator, John Buchanan to harness tidal power in the Bay of Fundy.

With four coal-fired power plants the province's major source of greenhouse gases, the Department of Energy is unwilling to follow the lead of Ontario and start shutting them down. In fact, the director of climate change within the provincial energy department, Allan Crandlemire, told Canadian Press (May 10, 2005), "I wouldn't see decommissioning a coal-fired plant for the sake of reducing ...emissions."

Nova Scotia has not revised its building code to ensure R2000 and C2000 standards. The province does nothing to encourage the purchase of energy efficient appliances or cars through feebates.

At the same time, it is increasingly apparent that Nova Scotia has significant vulnerabilities to climate change. Warmer ocean temperatures increase the risk of hurricanes such as Hurricane Juan. Coastal areas of Nova Scotia are particularly at risk as climate change leads to increased severe storm surge events. Erratic climate leads to events such as White Juan, as well as the droughts, flooding and higher summer temperatures.

Nova Scotia needs to reduce its reliance on fossil fuels, expand renewables and assist consumers and industry in becoming more energy efficient.

## **PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND**

### **Biodiversity**

#### **2005 Grade: B**

2004 Grade: B-

2003 Grade: C-

2002 Grade: D

2001 Grade: D

2000 Grade: D

1999 Grade: C-

1998 Grade: D

1997 Grade: C

1996 Grade: C

1995 Grade: B-

(not graded in 1993, 1994)

The good news in Prince Edward Island this year was the forest policy review. Many islanders took part in the first public review in almost twenty years. Perhaps as an outgrowth of the public review, or due to the new role of biologist Kate MacQuarrie as Director of Forest Operations, the province has entered into an agreement with environmental organizations to manage 2000 acres of the province's forests. The goal is to explore more ecologically sound logging.

A promising move has been that of the Forest Division from the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries, Aquaculture and Forestry to the Department of Environment, Energy and Forestry. The inclusion of Forestry, Energy and Environment into a single department should enhance communication and encourage cooperation between these three pivotal areas of interest.

Progress was also made in protected areas. Five Island Nature Trust areas were designated under the Natural Areas Protection Act. The province must however give serious consideration to allowing Island Nature Trust to be exempt from corporate ownership limits. As the Trust approaches 3,000 acres ownership, it is hitting ownership limitations meant to control corporate control over too much of the province. Lands set aside in the public interest should not face this limit as the rationale for the law does not apply. Alternatively, all land permanently protected under the Natural Areas Protection Act, regardless of ownership, should not be included in the corporate limits.

To protect biodiversity, Premier Binns should follow through on his proposal to consider making the province GMO-free. This would be brilliant marketing, but also an important environmental move. The province should be bold and put in place a plan to eventually have 100% organic agriculture. The soils of PEI are impoverished after years of heavily intensive chemical spraying. PEI is the most pesticide sprayed province in Canada. To protect human health and biodiversity, the province should depart from the industrial agriculture model.

## **Climate Change**

### **2005 Grade: A-**

2004 Grade: A-

2003 Grade: B+

2002 Grade: B+

2001 Grade: B

2000 Grade: D

1999 Grade: C

1998 Grade: D-

1997 Grade: D

1996 Grade: D

1995 Grade: C-

1994 Grade: C

(not graded in 1993)

Prince Edward Island has an excellent record in climate action, and if current plans are put into action properly, there is more good news on the way. In April, the Special Legislative Committee on Climate Change released an excellent report, [A Climate Change Strategy for PEI](http://www.assembly.pe.ca), <[www.assembly.pe.ca](http://www.assembly.pe.ca)> which has been accepted to be made into policy (according to the Climate Change Coordinator). The main difficulties may be getting enough government resources put into research and action programs, and getting cooperation from Maritime Electric, the privately-owned electric utility, which snubbed the PEI government last year by going ahead with construction of a 35 megawatts diesel generator.

Significantly, in terms of supporting funding for renewable energy projects, PEI Premier Pat Binns has stated publicly his opposition to the refurbishment of the Point Lepreau Nuclear Generating Station in New Brunswick. Also, the Renewable Energy Act has been passed which will institute net metering and support for community or wind cooperative systems, require Maritime Electric to file an Open Access Transmission Tariff, and introduce 'an approved energy efficiency plan and demand side management strategy.'

Long-awaited public transit for the Charlottetown area has just been finally given the green light and will be in place by October 2005. The challenge will be to design an efficient system that islanders will use. This initiative was made possible by community support, the City of Charlottetown, and finally the support of a Provincial Government tax rebate of \$120,000 which is linked to the purchasing of four buses which will be leased out to a local transit company.

PEI has continued to strengthen its Wind Energy development thru its announcements of the construction of the PEI Wind-Hydrogen Village Project and a 30 megawatts wind turbine project in the eastern region of PEI. This would mean that 15% of PEI electricity would be produced from renewable energy, meeting the province's 2010 targets in the Renewable Energy Act. Although wind energy is a very big part of the Island's climate change plans, greater diversity of energy development needs to take place, such as biofuels and biodiesel, in order to lower energy, environmental and economic risks to the Island way of life. Maritime Electric still plans to go ahead with its 50 megawatts Diesel Turbine which

has the potential of having a negative impact on the environment and on the health of Islanders.

In February 2005, a request for expressions of interest for the establishment of an oil seed extraction and biodiesel manufacturing plant in PEI was issued, and A Climate Change Strategy for PEI recommends that energy production from other sources of biomass (e.g. wood and straw) be explored.

The Strategy also recommends: electricity efficiency programs within PEI government buildings, enabling island residents to invest in local wind energy projects, having all new provincial government buildings and social / affordable housing projects meet or exceed the Model National Energy Code for Buildings (MNECB); educating builders on incorporating energy efficient designs into new residential and commercial construction; and, encouraging the adoption of both the National Building Code and the Model National Energy Code for Houses for new construction to reduce the per capita energy consumption within the residential sector.

PEI continues to have the highest tax rebate in Canada on the purchase of a hybrid gas/electric vehicle, up to \$3000, and has set efficiency standards for new or replacement vehicles in the PEI government fleet (e.g. 10 l/100km for cars).

Although PEI is moving in the right direction, there needs to be more support for communities to get involved in making our environment cleaner. New infrastructure needs to be implemented to support active transportation like walking and biking. New awareness programs are needed to get more islanders involved with curbing fossil fuel use. Agriculture is a major use of fossil fuels on PEI and very little is being done to help find solutions in this area. PEI's Waste Watch Program has shown that islanders are willing to change their behavior for the betterment of our environment; however there have been major problems with excessive use of trucking, improper storage of low-quality compost and a smoldering C&D (construction and demolition) dumpsite.

Finally, to really show long-term leadership, the PEI government must initiate a plan to forecast PEI's overall energy demands and sources for that energy.

## **NEW BRUNSWICK**

### **Biodiversity**

#### **2005 Grade: B**

2004 Grade: C+  
2003 Grade: C+  
2002 Grade: C  
2001 Grade: B-  
2000 Grade: C  
1999 Grade: D  
1998 Grade: D  
1997 Grade: F  
1996 Grade: D  
1995 Grade: F  
1994 Grade: C  
1993 Grade: F

Thanks to an unprecedented level of public engagement in forest issues demonstrated through the hearings of the Select Committee of the Legislature in the fall of 2003, the province has rejected industry demands for greater control of its forests. Industry supported a report by the consultant group Jaako Poyry, which recommended a guaranteed wood supply for forest companies for fifty years or financial compensation, a doubling of the area of tree farms on public forests from 20% to 40%, and cuts into buffer zones along streams, rivers and deer yards. Instead, in September 2004, the Select Committee recommended that the province move toward greater diversity in the provincial forests. On June 1, in a nick of time for the RIO Report Card grading team, Lord's government came through with strong recommendations. The forest industry may be disappointed, but democracy works. Minister of Natural Resources, Keith Ashfield, made a strong commitment to maintaining the character of the Acadian forest, protecting biodiversity, ensuring the health of a wide array of Acadian species, while setting timber objectives. Well done!

New Brunswick's protected areas network is still incomplete -- only 3.1 % of the province. Logging has already occurred in special management zones such as deer yards and buffer zones, with no pressure noted to decrease this practice. It is essential to extend the protected areas to the Restigouche watershed where some of the province's last unroaded areas of mature Acadian forest can be found.

Cable logging along the steep slopes of the River Gorges is taking some of the only old growth Acadian forest remaining in NB. Previously the inaccessibility to logging had protected these ecologically significant trees. Protection from cable logging is urgently needed.

There have been a couple of bright spot this year concerning progress in protecting wetlands. Buffer zones of 30 metres, such as have been required for watercourses, are now extended to wetlands, the current prohibition of logging in 26 new small candidate protected areas totaling 5,000 hectares is a definite step forward.

### **Toxic Chemicals/Pollution**

**2005 Grade: F**

2004 Grade: F

New Brunswick has not altered its support for the Belledune incinerator being constructed by Bennett, Inc. The area already has alarming levels of heavy metal contamination from previous industrial activity. Cadmium and arsenic levels are found in the blood of local residents. The evidence from Quebec that the incinerator in that province built by the same company is not meeting emission regulations, has failed to wake up the NB government. The community of Belledune and its surrounding population continue the fight. The Lord government should listen. .

### **Climate Change**

**2005 Grade: C-**

2004 Grade: C

2003 Grade: B

2002 Grade: B+

2001 Grade: D

2000 Grade: Incomplete

1999 Grade: F

1998 Grade: D

1997 Grade: C-

1996 Grade: D+

1995 Grade: C+

1994 Grade: C

(not graded in 1993)

New Brunswick has still not released its Climate Action Plan, but it gets points for the creation of the Energy Efficiency Agency, patterned on that in Vermont. The agency is expected to be fully up and running by fall of 2005. The private sector is installing 20 megawatts of wind power. The province is assisting municipalities to save energy by installing LED technology in traffic lights.

Still, clouding this progress is the Lord government's relentless campaign for federal funds to re-tube the nuclear reactor at Point Lepreau. A new low in provincial extortion campaigns to get money from the federal government was set when Lord cancelled a federal-provincial child care announcement until the feds agreed to fund Lepreau. Sacrificing child care was worse than Danny William's stunt of taking down all the Canadian flags.

The 600 megawatt reactor is at the end of its lifespan and will require nearly \$1 billion to re-tube it to extend its life. While Lord's government claims to understand the enormous potential of improving energy efficiency and productivity, it is unwilling to exploit that potential. Independent analysis has shown that it is possible to produce 640 megawatts of power in New Brunswick, over the next eight years (2012), at a cost of \$630 million or less than half the \$1.4 billion amount needed to refurbish Point Lepreau.

Topping the list of the four big energy items is a \$140 million investment into energy efficiency and fuel switching to enable New Brunswickers to cut their electricity consumption by an average of 12 percent and as much as 350 megawatts over the next eight years. This measure alone, at one-tenth the cost of refurbishing Lepreau, would represent an energy saving equivalent to more than half the electricity produced by the 635 megawatts nuclear reactor. Investments in this sector would also be spread across the province to target residences, businesses and public buildings.

Next on the list is a \$375 million investment to develop 220 megawatts of wind energy in New Brunswick (at 34 percent output) and \$115 million to generate 65 megawatts of electricity through other renewable forms such as micro-hydro, solar and biomass.

The final item is regulatory incentives to encourage New Brunswick's industrial energy users to produce their own electric power and heating, a move that could cut electricity demand by at least 150 megawatts over the next 8 years. The 90 megawatts Irving Oil refinery cogeneration project in St-John, set to become operational next year, is a good example of industrial cogeneration that shifts the burden of electric and heat power generation to industry rather than on public utilities.

Despite the province's historic leadership in the New England Governors/Eastern Canadian Premiers process, it is actually not delivering as much as some of the jurisdictions in the US.

The Public Utilities Board has clearly advised that pursuing the nuclear option in New Brunswick is not in the public interest. While some argue nuclear helps us solve climate change, the reality is different. The huge capital costs of nuclear rob the energy piggy bank and represent a huge opportunity cost. If the funds needed to refurbish Point Lepreau were placed into co-generation, demand side management and renewables, New Brunswick would have a safer and more secure energy future, with cleaner air as a bonus.

## QUEBEC

### **Biodiversity**

#### **2005 Grade: B-**

2004 Grade: B

2003 Grade: B

2002 Grade: D

2001 Grade: D-

2000 Grade: D

1999 Grade: F

1998 Grade: F

1997 Grade: D-

1996 Grade: C+

1995 Grade: C+

1994 Grade: D

(not graded in 1993)

The 2005 grade is in recognition of progressive forestry policies, but much more needs to be done on the province's protected areas strategy. The province is a long way from meeting its underachiever target of protecting 8% of Quebec's natural areas by the end of this year.

Other negatives are the planned Rupert River Diversion that will seriously damage the lake sturgeon and a subspecies of trout, as well as increasing mercury levels in the fish and the proposed private hydro project on the Magpie River in Quebec's lower North Shore that will destroy a magnificent falls and a world class white water rapids

Sierra Club of Canada's concerns about Quebec's intent to develop oil and gas reserves in the Gaspé peninsula, an area containing some of North America's last remaining Atlantic Salmon rivers, has contributed to Quebec's decreased grade.

While the lack of progress in protecting key ecological areas as well as its pursuit of the Rupert River diversion and the indecision in protecting the Magpie River are discouraging, the progress in implementing the recommendations of the Coulombe Commission brings the grade up. The current forest management cycle has been extended to 2008 to allow for a thorough reworking of the Annual Allowable Cut calculations, which the Commission identified as flawed. In the interim, the AAC has been reduced by 20% across the entire province. In some areas, such as those covered by the Adapted Forestry Regime in the Cree/Quebec Agreement, the cut was further reduced to 25%. This is an unprecedented move by any province. It deserves a Hallelujah chorus!

This year also, Quebec worked with Ontario to block large scale diversions from the Great Lakes in a scheme advanced by the Council of Great Lakes Governors. It is unfortunate that the grade did not at least remain constant, given the recommendation to the Coulombe commission, but because of the lack of progress in natural resource protection, the grade has slipped in 2005.

## **Climate Change**

### **2005 Grade: B-**

2004 Grade: B+  
2003 Grade: A-  
2002 Grade: B+  
2001 Grade: B-  
2000 Grade: B  
1999 Grade: C+  
1998 Grade: B-  
1997 Grade: D-  
1996 Grade: D+  
1995 Grade: C+  
1994 Grade: D  
(not graded in 1993)

Quebec continues to be one of the provincial leaders on climate change action. Its record, however, is not perfect. Quebec still does not have a plan to meet its own Kyoto targets. Events in 2005 point to the real leadership in Quebec – its citizen activists.

Thanks to a massive public outcry, the Quebec government was forced to abandon its approval of Hydro-Quebec's proposed Suroit gas-fired generation station, which would alone have increased Quebec's greenhouse gas emissions by 2.6%. While a natural gas plant would, in much of Canada, be seen as climate change action in a replacement for coal, in Quebec it was a move in the wrong direction. Over 5,000 people marched on a cold January day to oppose the Suroit plant.

In response the provincial energy board (Régie de l'énergie) was called upon to examine the provincial energy demand and supply.

After public hearings, the Régie reported that it was feasible for the province to substantially expand wind-energy production while increasing energy efficiency. It concluded that Suroit was not required to meet energy needs.

Since, the government has requested that Hydro-Quebec call for tenders for an additional 1,000 megawatts of wind-energy production. Hydro-Quebec's Demand Side Management plan for 2005-2010 (released May 6, 2005) has set a target of 3TWh by 2010. Hydro Quebec has invested over \$1 billion to meet this objective.

The government should focus on a transition towards sustainable energy by creating incentives or financing programs for geothermal heating, solar energy production, and increased electrical efficiency. It should also promote energy efficiency for other energy sources (gas, biomass, etc.), encourage public transportation and create incentives for the purchase of more efficient vehicles and appliances, and improve energy efficiency building codes.

Finally, the Charest government must give up its intentions of exploiting possible fossil fuel resources in the St-Laurence River, stop promoting means to increase natural gas market share and reject the possibility of retrofitting the Gentilly-2 nuclear plant.

*Editorial note: While not part of the last 13 years of grading, it must be noted that the weakest area in Quebec's environmental performance is its support of industrial hog farms. These operations threaten local water supplies as well as health of local residents. Action to control these operations is long overdue.*

## **ONTARIO**

### **Biodiversity**

#### **2005 Grade: B-**

2004 Grade: B

2003 Grade: D-

2002 Grade: F

2001 Grade: F

2000 Grade: F

1999 Grade: D-

1998 Grade: F

1997 Grade: F

1996 Grade: F

1995 Grade: C+

(not graded in 1993, 1994)

Many of Premier Dalton McGuinty's election promises remain to be acted upon. The creation of parks, their protection with a new parks act, and the protection of species at risk remain commitments, as do the promise to end unlimited clear-cuts.

It is good news that Ontario has developed a framework for a biodiversity strategy. The first meeting of the Ontario Biodiversity Council is to be held in June.

The most substantial progress in protecting the province's biodiversity is the Green Belt Plan, which would protect a two million acre Greenbelt across southern Ontario, although its primary purpose is to control urban sprawl. More than a third of Canada's species at risk are found in southern Ontario. However, there are significant problems with the Green Belt Plan in that it is too highway friendly, key ecosystems (such as Duffins Creek) are not included and the protection of any one area is not permanent.

Ontario's Northern Boreal Initiative planning process is not living up to its promise of employing comprehensive conservation land-use planning prior to new development. For example, it focuses only on forestry and does not coordinate with mining, hydro development, and road building.

Ontario ranked higher than other provinces on several of its forestry policies, such as its policies to retain species diversity and age class, and large areas of continuous mature forest. But data revealed that many of the progressive policies in Ontario are not implemented in practice.

One outcome of this piecemeal approach is a failure to consider larger landscape issues, such as the habitat needs of woodland caribou, a threatened species. Woodland caribou is wide ranging, dependent on large tracts of old growth forest, and sensitive to human disturbances. Without proper planning and protection of forest habitats, its long-term survival is uncertain in Ontario. There is a clear shortage of plans for the recovery of other Ontario species at

risk. Ontario has made progress in listing species at risk in recent years; however, only 36 of the 119 listed species are regulated.

Ontario was marked down for continuing the cormorant cull in Presqu'île Provincial Park, for the second year running.

The province deserves full marks for a 180 degree mid-course correction on the proposal from the Council of Great Lakes Governors with Ontario and Quebec to allow large scale diversions of Great Lakes water. Natural Resources Minister James Ramsay listened to the voices of concerned Ontarians in last fall's public hearings. As a result of a clear public message that no diversions should be permitted from the Basin, Ontario took the lead in negotiations. At this writing a revised version of the draft Annex to the Great Lakes Compact has not yet been released, but it appears substantial progress has been made.

However, the flow of manure continues in the Great Lakes. The International Joint Commission and the Federal Environmental Commissioner have flagged the need to keep untreated sewage out of the lakes; little response has been noted.

### **Climate Change**

#### **2005 Grade: C+**

2004 Grade: D +

2003 Grade: F

2002 Grade: Incomplete

2001 Grade: F-

2000 Grade: F

1999 Grade: F

1998 Grade: F

1997 Grade: F

1996 Grade: F

1995 Grade: C+

1994 Grade: C

1993 Grade: D

The Ontario Government mark for climate change goes up to a C+. The closing of the Lakeview coal-fired plant is a significant step for Canada in fighting climate change. The rest of the provincial plants must also be shut down and replaced with renewables and energy savings through aggressive implementation of demand side management and deployment of district energy. As well, the recent Request for Proposals for 2500 megawatts of clean energy supply and for almost 400 megawatts of renewable energy is very encouraging. These contracts are now under negotiation.

Another plus this year is the McGuinty government's commitment to have Ontario gasoline contain an average of 5% ethanol by 2007. This effort to drive the marketplace is positive, but will only make a significant difference in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions if the source of ethanol is cellulose based. Ontario also leads Canada in promoting the purchase of energy efficient cars through its feebate system. Inexplicably, it has ended a similar programme,

providing rebates on the provincial sales tax paid for energy efficient appliances. Given the provincial focus on meeting electricity demand, this move is significantly wrong-headed.

While the largest bonus marks go for shutting down Lakeview, the province has not made a similar commitment to shut down its aging nuclear reactors. The central imperative to do so is economic. There are only so many dollars available to buttress provincial energy planning. The billions required if Darlington and Pickering are to be kept in service could be dedicated to renewable energy and greater efficiency. With these priorities, Ontario's energy source would be more reliable, cleaner and cheaper, while creating far more employment than the nuclear option.

## MANITOBA

### Biodiversity

#### **2005 Grade: C**

2004 Grade: C-  
2003 Grade: D-  
2002 Grade: D-  
2001 Grade: D  
2000 Grade: Incomplete  
1999 Grade: D+  
1998 Grade: D  
1997 Grade: C+  
1996 Grade: F  
1995 Grade: F  
1994 Grade: F  
1993 Grade: F

Manitoba's grade came up this year due to two developments. The first is the Doer government's persistence in fighting the Devil's Lake Diversion in North Dakota. The appeal for a reference from the US State Department to the International Joint Commission might still result in an 11<sup>th</sup> hour reprieve. If it fails, no one could say the Doer government had not made every effort to stop an ecological disaster in the making.

The second positive development was the announcement June 1, 2005 that a new Bi Pole direct current transmission corridor would not be run south through the intact boreal on the East Side of Manitoba. Although more needs to be done to ensure all power corridors stay out of the boreal forest on the East Side, the announcement last week is very welcome. Part of this 'heart of the boreal' region is currently under consideration to become a World Heritage Site, largely through the efforts of four First Nations.

There have been no additions to the Manitoba Endangered Species Act (MESA) list in the last year. This is despite national expectations that Manitoba would acknowledge risks to woodland caribou in its forest regions and list the species. Conservation Minister Struthers told the Winnipeg national woodland caribou recovery workshop in late April that Manitoba needed to continue to study the woodland caribou issue. More recently, Lake Sturgeon have been listed under SARA. Manitoba has not yet acted for this species either, despite the current state of Lake Winnipeg and its aquatic species. There are over a dozen species waiting to be included in the MESA list, where inaction is the flavour of the year.

The Sierra Club Canada National Forest Strategy database released April 2004 features several aspects of Manitoba forest initiatives. Details can be found at <http://www.sierraclub.ca/national/programs/biodiversity/forests/nfs/database/index.php>

There is no new forest policy in Manitoba. The Doer government has not fulfilled policy and program goals in *Next Steps: Priorities for Sustaining Manitoba's Forests* released in 2002. So far the government has failed to provide capacity for community-led, conservation-based land

use planning for Manitoba's East Side boreal forest region. While to date there is no expansion of forestry on the East Side, the forest goals in the terms of reference for this planning initiative have also not been fulfilled. Both the government's forest policy document and the terms of reference clearly refer to protecting Manitoba's forests, maintaining forest ecosystems, and valuing intact forests. To see Sierra Club of Canada's case study regarding Manitoba's East Side Planning Initiative go to [www.sierraclub.ca](http://www.sierraclub.ca) or <http://manitobawildlands.org/lup.htm#top>.

The only new protected area in Manitoba's forest regions since the 2004 RIO report is the Manigotogan River Corridor, a 1500 meter protected buffer on the river. Also the Chitek Lake park reserve was extended for another five years of interim protection, at the request of the Skownan First Nation. To see full listing of protected areas actions in Manitoba since 2000 and specifics since the 2004 RIO Report go to [http://manitobawildlands.org/pa\\_announce.htm](http://manitobawildlands.org/pa_announce.htm)

Of significant concern is the lack of action, community consultations, steps for an agreement and interim protection of the proposed Lowlands National Park candidates. The current MOU, signed last year, follows a similar Canada/Manitoba MOU from 1993. Manitoba took most of the current MOU period of 15 months to put their representative in place for the required community consultations. At the end of the fifteen months there has been no announcement regarding the next steps the Manitoba government will take to rescue their commitment to this long awaited national park.

In December, 2004 the Doer government publicly stated its support for the Atikaki Woodland Caribou First Nations World Heritage Site (WHS) nomination of 4 million hectares, including protection of traditional lands of the First Nations who initiated the nomination. Two wilderness parks, in Ontario and Manitoba are also included in the WHS nomination. This potential WHS is on Canada's approved list for future World Heritage Sites. It is also included in the boreal forests conservation recommendation adopted by the World Conservation Congress, in Bangkok, November 2004. For a listing of Manitoba government commitments regarding this World Heritage Site go to <http://manitobawildlands.org/lup.htm#WHS>

The Manitoba government needs to immediately act on the requests of two First Nations involved in this WHS nomination to put interim protection regulations in place for their traditional lands. The communities will use the certainty provided by interim protection to undertake their lands management and protection plans.

Combined, the lack of action on the Lowlands National Park, and the World Heritage Site interim protection show a lack of understanding or will by the Manitoba government. Action is urgently needed. Both of these protected lands initiatives are joint federal-provincial initiatives. [Perhaps Manitoba needs to adjust its focus in federal relations to include conservation of its boreal forest regions!]

Otherwise Manitoba is now two years late in updating its *Action Plan for a Network of Protected Areas*. Environmental organizations in the province continue to hold the government to its protected areas commitments, including where consultations with affected stakeholders and communities are needed.

Manitoba continues to be in denial about the impacts of its hydroelectric expansion. The Wuskwatim Generation Project involves a 200 megawatt generation station, an extensive transmission system, with stations and lines, requiring the clearing of rights of way (of 60 and 120 meters) in areas of largely undisturbed boreal forest, flooding of an area of half a square kilometre (37 hectares) with water fluctuating to maintain one metre of lake storage of impounded water.

It is curiously referred to in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) as “modified run-of-river.” Although the EIS refers to this as a “compromise,” it could as easily be referred to as a slightly modified conventional dam. There is no similarity between the Wuskwatim Dam project and true “run-of-the-river” which, by definition, does not create permanent impoundments.

### **Climate Change**

#### **2005 Grade: B-**

2004 Grade: B-

2003 Grade: B+

2002 Grade: B-

2001 Grade: C-

2000 Grade: F

1999 Grade: F

1998 Grade: F

1997 Grade: F

1996 Grade: F

1995 Grade: D+

1994 Grade: F

(not graded in 1993)

Despite a strong record for rhetoric on Kyoto, the province still lacks a climate change implementation plan. Almost four years following the release of the recommendations from the Axworthy Climate Change Taskforce (“Manitoba and Climate Change, Investing in our Future” 2001), its recommendations have not been fully implemented.

Manitoba has still not established a carbon or emissions inventory. There is no budget or public reporting as to the carbon loss and emissions involved in operation of current or construction and operation of proposed industrial developments.

A huge opportunity is being lost to ensure that the new Winnipeg Floodway Expansion be a carbon neutral project. The carbon budget and emissions inventory of the project are being completely ignored as it moves ahead.

In positive news, the province is now operating its first wind turbine, with a new wind farm having the potential to deliver 99 megawatts of power per year. Another plus is that Manitoba leads the country in thermal heat generation pump installation. Demand side targets for Manitoba Hydro are also being increased.

## **SASKATCHEWAN**

### **Biodiversity**

#### **2005 Grade: D+**

2004 Grade: D-  
2003 Grade: D-  
2002 Grade: D-  
2001 Grade: D  
2000 Grade: F  
1999 Grade: F  
1998 Grade: C+  
1997 Grade: F  
1996 Grade: D  
1995 Grade: D  
1994 Grade: F  
1993 Grade: F

Saskatchewan's grade has improved solely through action on protected areas. If not for the stalling of progress on integrated land use planning, the grade would have been higher.

The positive news is the designation of 27,000 hectares of native prairie as an ecological reserve in the Great Sand Hills. The Ecological Reserves Act has been amended to control land use and exclude petroleum development in the new ecological reserve. The area will be the subject of a two year Environmental Review to develop an environmentally sensitive management plan.

Bad news for protected areas is the beginning of logging in Moose Mountain Provincial Park, the largest in the Saskatchewan prairies. While the logging is taking place under the guise of "vegetation management," everything about it looks like commercial logging: it is being conducted by commercial loggers and the species targeted for cutting are those with the highest commercial value. More bad news is the plan to re-open mining in the Lac La Ronge Provincial Park.

As well, even though the mining industry is not pressing to obtain access to Wapawekka Hills Ecological Reserve, 20% of the reserve is being left available by the province for mineral exploration and claim staking. Meanwhile a recent report notes that of the 78 abandoned mines in the province, 73 pose some level of hazard to public health and the environment.

Sadly, promising progress in Integrated Land Use Planning appears to have stalled. Key participants including First Nations, environmental groups and northern communities have walked away from the planning process on both the Athabasca and North Central Land Use Plans. The province continues to make decisions to allow forestry and mining development within the study area, leaving participants feeling powerless and used. "Talk and log" has never worked as a method of public consultation and it is not working in Saskatchewan.

Sierra Club of Canada's recently-completed database, monitoring progress by governments in meeting commitments made under the National Forest Strategy, indicates that the problems are serious. The Athabasca Land Use Planning Process has been stalled for 20 months. Meanwhile, Weyerhaeuser is over-building logging roads and conducting damaging logging violation of its FMA.

It appears that areas having relatively little mineral potential are considered for the province's Representative Areas Network.

On the plus side, Sierra Club of Canada has determined that Saskatchewan is at the top of the heap nationwide in terms of allocating forest land to Aboriginal groups.

Saskatchewan still has no specific endangered species legislation. It does have regulations under The Wildlife Act through which 15 plants and animals were officially designated in 1999. There have been no additions this year to Saskatchewan's endangered species list. Saskatchewan has developed recovery plans for the swift fox and four endangered bird species, with others are under review. Overall, the effort is under-staffed, under-resourced and falling behind recovery efforts elsewhere.

## **Climate Change**

### **2005 Grade: C-**

2004 Grade: C  
2003 Grade: C  
2002 Grade: C-  
2001 Grade: C+  
2000 Grade: C+  
1999 Grade: F  
1998 Grade: F  
1997 Grade: D-  
1996 Grade: F  
1995 Grade: D-  
1994 Grade: F  
1993 Grade: F

The Saskatchewan government's grade fell this year due to its continued reliance on coal-fired plants to generate more than half of the province's electricity. On the surface, the provincial government maintains its commitment to meet Kyoto targets, but there has been very little action. The 2-person Office of Energy Conservation, without funding, is inadequate to meet the task at hand. Saskatchewan Power's Energy Solution program as well as the utilities efforts to incorporate small produce in the grid also contributed to this respectable grade. The PST rebate on the purchase of energy efficient appliances is another plus.

One good piece of news is that the province's wind capacity will be increased. The Rushlake Creek power plant will add 150 megawatts of power to the provincial system -- enough for

64,000 homes. SaskPower already has 17.1 megawatts of windpower, making the Rushlake Creek project a major increase. [www.saskpower.com](http://www.saskpower.com).

The Saskatchewan government should be pushing for a major cellulose ethanol plant to be built in the province. While corn ethanol is, on a life cycle basis, of minimal benefit in reducing greenhouse gas, the use of straw and wood chips for cellulose ethanol is a clear winner. The Ottawa-based high tech company, Iogen, wants to move to a fully commercial facility. And Saskatchewan has lots of switch grass...ideal for the purpose. This proposal is also backed by Ducks Unlimited. Switch grass is excellent habitat for migratory waterfowl. When the ducks have moved on, a harvest of switch grass could be running your car.

## **ALBERTA**

### **Biodiversity**

#### **2005 Grade: F**

2004 Grade: F  
2003 Grade: F  
2002 Grade: F  
2001 Grade: F  
2000 Grade: F  
1999 Grade: D  
1998 Grade: F-  
1997 Grade: F  
1996 Grade: B  
1995 Grade: F  
1994 Grade: B  
1993 Grade: B

Alberta enters its centennial year as a province with the probability that wilderness and many endangered species will not be here come the next centennial - or sooner. The Klein government does not appear to have the slightest concern for the fate of wilderness and species known to be at risk, including mountain and woodland caribou, free-ranging herds of wild bison, grizzly bears, wolverines and northern leopard frogs.

The approach of the Klein government allows as much off-highway vehicle use, oil and gas development, open-pit coal mining, logging, irrigated agriculture and public lands grazing as the proponents could wish, with minimal environmental regulations and enforcement, no conservation strategy, no meaningful implementation of species recovery plans, no involvement of the public in decisions on development applications for their public lands and waters, unless they have a property or financial right that is directly affected, and little or no regard for the devastating, cumulative impact on biological diversity.

Alberta once had a well-functioning wheel for environmentally sustainable progress – the Environment Conservation Authority. No need to re-invent the wheel, just go back and pick it up from out of the ditch where the government discarded it years ago and add some new spokes.

### **Endangered Species**

Progress on the identification, conservation and recovery of endangered species has been dismal. Recovery is sliding backward under a lack of funding and government will to follow recommendations. The government appointed Endangered Species Conservation Committee (ESCC)<sup>1</sup> has not issued its annual report since 2002 and the hoped for 2004

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<sup>1</sup> Alberta created the Endangered Species Conservation Committee in 1998 under the authority of Section 6.1 of the *Wildlife Act*. The ESCC is charged with advising the Minister of Sustainable Resource Development on matters relating to the identification, conservation and recovery of species at risk in

report has yet to materialize. Although weak, recovery plans for two key species, Woodland Caribou and Grizzly Bear were completed in 2004. However, approval of both is still stalled at the ministerial level, while industrial development continues to fragment and remove the species' habitat. The Minister of Sustainable Resource Development, the minister responsible for endangered species, continued to ignore the Committee's 2003 recommendation that Grizzly Bears be listed as Threatened under Alberta's Wildlife Act. Woodland caribou have been listed since the early 1980s, but no recovery plan has been implemented.

The recovery plan for Woodland caribou, although very weak, was at least completed by the recovery team, approved by the ESCC in the summer of 2004 and forwarded to the minister for release. There it sits while industrial activity, identified as a contributing factor to the species' decline, continues across the range of caribou herds, including right in the core range of herds identified as "on the verge of extirpation." It is hoped the federal status of this species will bring additional pressure on the province to act on their Recovery Plan and conservation organizations have brought forward a petition under the federal Species at Risk Act.

In 2003 the ESCC recommended to the minister that the grizzly bear be designated as threatened under Alberta legislation. Although refusing to make the designation, the Minister initiated a Recovery Plan. The Recovery Team echoed the request for a threatened designation, but that was again ignored. The grizzly bear study partially funded by provincial and federal tax payers through the Foothills Model Forest, concluded that for virtually the entire Eastern Slopes region (Rocky Mountain and Foothills study area of 77,248 km<sup>2</sup>), the grizzly bear populations may not be sustainable given human caused mortality and cumulative impacts on habitat. To make matters worse, the Minister authorized spring hunts for grizzlies in 2004 and 2005, ignoring the recommendation of the Recovery Team. With no legislated threatened status for this species, it's hard for Albertans to hold the government and industry to the Recovery Plan and recommendations of the ESCC.

### **Best Practices and Co-Management Initiatives**

There have been no new initiatives beyond the two that have been around for years now, focusing on two of Alberta's internationally significant wildlands. The Hay-Zama Committee focused on the Hay-Zama wetland in northwestern Alberta and the Milk River Management Committee focused on the Milk River native grasslands in the southeast. These were not government initiated. Additional funding and additional protected areas on the ground are still lacking.

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Alberta. One of its obligations is to review and report annually to Albertans on the progress of programs for the identification and recovery of species at risk in Alberta. The most current report from the Committee, that of June 2002, can be obtained off the internet as a pdf file at <http://www3.gov.ab.ca/srd/fw/escc/>.

## **Forest Ecosystems**

Despite the recommendations of a government appointed expert panel years ago, Alberta still has no policy for the identification and protection of virgin or “old growth” forests. With the exception of the sub-alpine region of the Rocky Mountains, a protected areas system, including wilderness areas and parks, has not been completed to represent Alberta’s forested Natural Regions, which comprise 85% of the province and the vast majority of which are public lands. The greatest shortcomings remain in the Foothills (Alberta’s most southern portion of the great Canadian boreal region, with less than 2% protected) and the Parkland (less than 1%) regions.

Alberta’s public forest lands still remain in the tight grip of multinationals. In 2004, the Minister for Sustainable Resource Development, in no uncertain terms, told the Grande Cache Town Council that the Alberta government is unwilling to consider the concept of community based forest tenure in Alberta. Following US based Weyerhaeuser’s closure of the Grand Cache sawmill, the community studied community-based forest operations in BC and asked if the Alberta government was prepared to let them pursue it for Grande Cache. The Minister instead backed a BC logging company purchase of the mill. At least twice in the past few years, companies have left the community in a lurch by walking away from the Grande Cache forestry operations.

## **Protected Areas**

Only one small park, the 14 km<sup>2</sup> Lois Hole Centennial Provincial Park, has been established over the past year. The park is an important bird area centered on Big Lake by the city of St. Albert, but its designation does not fully protect it from industrial developments. Alberta’s Protected Areas System is far from complete and little protection is afforded to many of the existing sites, including a number of Provincial Parks and Natural Areas where off-road vehicle use and industrial activity continues to be approved within them. The lack of sufficient funding and staff have left the Parks and Protected Areas Division struggling to meet basic operation requirements, leaving little room in most protected areas for ecosystem protection and monitoring, effective enforcement and environmental education programs.

Protection of the ecological integrity of existing protected areas took a significant step backward with the government’s leasing of rights for the drilling of coal bed methane gas in the Rumsey Natural Area and their approval of off-road vehicle use in the Whaleback protected area; both wildlands of national significance. The 144 km<sup>2</sup> Rumsey Natural Area and adjacent ecological reserve were established in 1996 to protect the continent’s largest remaining wildland of Aspen Parkland and Northern Fescue Grassland. The 285 km<sup>2</sup> Whaleback (the contiguous Bob Creek Wildland Park and Black Creek Heritage Rangeland protected areas) is Canada’s best remaining example of the Montane Natural Subregion. The province amended protected area legislation to allow off-road vehicles in the Whaleback. This is the very same wildland where last year a gallant effort by area residents and conservation groups resulted in the Energy and Utilities Board decision to turn down an application for a road and sour natural gas well.

The government's own targets for representation of Alberta's diverse natural regions within parks and other such protected areas still have not been met for four of the six natural regions that comprise Alberta. There are not enough parks to represent the biological diversity of the Grassland, Parkland, Foothills and Boreal Forest Natural Regions. Alberta's largest numbers of endangered species are residents of the Grassland. The Foothills, Boreal and Rocky Mountains are home to two of the most threatened large mammals – grizzly bears and woodland caribou.

The provincial department responsible for endangered species and public forest lands in Alberta, the Sustainable Resource Development Dept., has not moved off its public position that there will be no new parks or other such core protected areas. The same position has been taken by the Energy Department since the summer of 2001.

Pressures from industrial development and motorized access also continue to grow on park boundaries and threaten to further severe ecological connectivity. For example is a large wind-farm proposed in nationally significant grasslands on the boundary of Cypress Hills Provincial Park. There have been no government efforts for land-use planning on a landscape scale in Alberta, with the goal of addressing cumulative impacts and maintaining ecological integrity of public lands and waters. Land-use plans from the 1980s are out of date.

### **Mining Issues**

The Cheviot coal mine highlighted the unwillingness of the federal government to heed its own legislation when it comes to Alberta and the shortcomings of Alberta's environmental assessment and appeals process when it comes to protecting biological diversity. As a quick answer to shipping problems on the CP railway line, the mine is now partially underway on a nationally significant, biological hotspot adjacent Jasper National Park, in the heart of the proposed Mountain Wildland Park. Assessment of the modified project was at the discretion of the provincial Environment Minister, so assessment was not done and the appeal board does not have the authority to order one. Conservation groups took the federal government to court for its failure to uphold the Migratory Birds Convention Act and Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, with that court hearing to be in June of 2005.

Research released earlier this spring highlighted the importance of the proposed Mountain Wildland Park for the survival of the region's grizzly bear population. It documented that the population will likely be extinct in the region in 30 years or so, unless prime habitat is set aside in protected areas and human induced mortalities are reduced by measures as cutting back on the maze of industrial roads in the region.

An even larger open-pit mining operation – the Tar Sands developments at Fort McMurray – is expanding with its adverse impacts on biodiversity reaching from internationally significant sites in the area through to those along the route of the proposed Mackenzie Gas Project, which will be supplying natural gas to fuel the oil extraction from the tar sands, and then reaching out globally by further fueling climate change.

## **Climate Change**

### **2005 Grade: F**

2004 Grade: F

2003 Grade: F

2002 Grade: F-

2001 Grade: F

2000 Grade: D

1999 Grade: D-

1998 Grade: F-

1997 Grade: F

1996 Grade: F-

1995 Grade: F

1994 Grade: D

(not graded in 1993)

Alberta is developing an export of electricity system that will rely on excess electricity from the Tar Sands and from new coal fired power plants. With that comes a significant impact on biological diversity and ecological integrity, including wildlife and internationally significant wildlands. An example is the McClelland Lake Wetland in the Fort Hills area, which is one of the world's most spectacular Boreal wetland complexes, including large patterned fens, sink holes and McClelland Lake. It is slated for destruction under Tar Sands development.

The government promised a public review on electricity export, but that never happened. The power lines are being assembled at this time, with a key link occurring through Montana.

Regarding the excess of electricity from the Tar Sands, there are a number of disconcerting points. First, the majority of the fuel being used to mine and develop the Tar Sands is natural gas, with an expectation that the 120 billion dollars in new tar sands development will require half of the known reserves from the North. To make matters worse, they are using a high-end fuel (natural gas) to produce a low-end fuel (oil), a very carbon intensive project. There is a ratio of 3 carbon units of input to 1 carbon unit of output.

Some folks think that it is neat idea to use the excess of electricity from the tar sands as a way of improving on this ratio. These folks have their heads in the sands. In fact, there is one such group right now conducting an awareness campaign in the United States that says the development of Tars Sands is okay as long as "appropriate technology" is used.

Why should we use up our limited natural gas reserves to produce oil in the first place, is one very good question. How is exporting electricity to far off places like California making sense? If there is excess electricity from the Tar Sands, why isn't Alberta using it to shut down the dirty coal-fired power plants and to alleviate the need for more of these plants? Also, if there is excess electricity, we could dismantle the old, inefficient hydro dams on the North Saskatchewan River and restore the ecological integrity of river systems.

## **BRITISH COLUMBIA**

### **Biodiversity**

#### **2005 Grade: F**

2004 Grade: D-  
2003 Grade: F  
2002 Grade: F  
2001 Grade: C+  
2000 Grade: D-  
1999 Grade: F  
1998 Grade: D-  
1997 Grade: D-  
1996 Grade: B-  
1995 Grade: C+  
1994 Grade: C-  
(not graded in 1993)

Gordon Campbell's BC government, with its commitment to significant cut-backs in the civil service, emphasis on reducing the "regulatory burden" for forest companies and commitment to lifting the offshore oil and gas moratorium, has brought down BC's grade considerably.

Even last year's bright hope – progress on land-use planning in the Great Bear Rainforest – has taken a negative turn with government choosing not to make a decision on a broadly supported land-use package prior to the recent election. After more than seven years of planning by stakeholders, and a year of final negotiations directly with First Nations, the proposed solutions package includes setting aside one third of the area from logging, a new sustainable approach to logging outside protected areas, and millions of dollars for economic revitalization in the region. The lack of a decision jeopardizes key components of a land use package that could be a model for sustainability globally. A government decision is still required to move this solution forward.

Earlier in the year, the federally appointed Priddle Panel on offshore oil and gas found that most British Columbians oppose lifting the oil and gas moratorium. As a result, the BC government has toned down its offshore development agenda, but it is clear that it continues to work behind closed doors to move forward with developing offshore oil and gas resources as soon as possible.

### **Species at Risk**

Along with Alberta and Saskatchewan, British Columbia is one of the last provinces still lacking stand-alone endangered species legislation. While the BC Cabinet now has the power to designate species as endangered and protect specific habitat features such as nesting sites, there is no requirement that those decisions be science-based or consider broader habitat requirements critical to species survival. In March 2005, BC's Forest Practices Board, an arms-length, government appointed forestry watchdog, noted that "There is a systemic

failure in government policy to protect endangered species such as marbled murrelets on crown forest lands.” BC forest policy prevents habitat protection from having more than a one-percent impact on timber supply. The Board’s findings were in response to a Sierra Club of Canada, BC Chapter complaint regarding marbled murrelet habitat on Vancouver Island.

The plight of the spotted owl is particularly distressing. Between 1992 – the year scientists identified the owl as endangered – and 2002, the spotted owl population fell by 76 percent. By 2003, only 14 adult pairs were confirmed to exist in BC. While the two major private logging companies with tenures in spotted-owl habitat have voluntarily stopped logging in these areas, the BC government’s own publicly run logging enterprise, BC Timber Sales, continues to log spotted owl habitat. Indeed, the situation facing the spotted owl is dire.

Despite vocal opposition from thousands of citizens, the BC government awarded an environmental permit to the proponent of the proposed Jumbo Glacier ski resort near the town of Invermere, BC. The four-season resort is sited in sensitive grizzly habitat and, with a capacity of over 6,000 beds, would double the local population and put additional stress on local environmental services such as water and sewage treatment.

## **Aquaculture**

The BC government continues to promote open-pen salmon farming despite evidence linking it to a wide range of negative ecological impacts. Recently leaked government documents show government is ignoring science in favour of an explicitly political approach to fish-farm expansion in BC waters. Under pressure from the finfish aquaculture industry, government amended BC’s Right to Farm Act to include aquaculture and allow the BC government to override municipal aquaculture decisions. BC’s aquaculture industry had described local government zoning as an “impediment” to their interests.

The leaked documents also show the province is attempting to address what it perceives as federal government bias against salmon-farm expansion by seeking to expand its jurisdiction in the area of fisheries management. The BC government accused Fisheries and Oceans Canada of “an extreme application of the precautionary principle” in its approach to salmon farming. Yet, the mounting evidence showing salmon farming’s impact on wild salmon populations means a precautionary management approach has never been more important. In fact, by any objective measure, the federal fisheries ministry has a conflict of interest in promoting and regulating aquaculture and also has a pro-aquaculture bias, though perhaps less pronounced than the BC bias.

## **Forest Practices**

The Campbell government has replaced BC’s Forest Practices Code with the Forest and Range Practices Act, a supposedly “results-based” code that removes many of the prescriptive protections of the former legislation. Environmental protections can now only be applied to the extent that they do not “unduly impact the timber supply of BC.” The new Act was largely written behind closed doors with industry.

Tenure consolidation is continuing rapidly, spurred on by the BC government’s removal of the ‘social contract’ that once linked logging activities with wood processing jobs in local

communities. Removing government oversight of tenure transfers from one company to another has also speeded up tenure turnover, and effectively shut out First Nations and the broader public from engagement in decisions around who accesses public forests and on what terms. Public-land tenures are now treated much more like private property.

As a much-reduced Forest Service struggles to enforce regulations, anecdotal reports of sloppy road building and the consequent land slides are increasingly common. The BC Chapter's *Axing the Forest Service* report details cuts to the Ministry of Forests and their implications for forest management. The Association of BC Professional Foresters has expressed concern that their members' ability to make sound forest management decisions may be compromised by these cuts.

British Columbia is a signatory to the National Forest Strategy (see [www.sierraforestwatch.ca](http://www.sierraforestwatch.ca) for details of commitments). With timber values clearly overriding non-timber values, it is unclear whether BC can meet the Strategy's ecological integrity goals.

### **Mining and Coal bed Methane**

Mining sector subsidies continue: BC taxpayers pay for 65 cents of every dollar spent on mining exploration in BC. A particularly worrying development is BC's interest in developing coal bed methane resources. Such development has been shown to have devastating implications for water quality and wilderness values, and the end use of methane gas contributes to climate change. BC's reluctance to provide the information and assurances related to test drilling for coal bed methane in southern BC has even led the governor of Montana to request that the International Joint Commission step in and conduct an environmental feasibility assessment.

### **Climate Change**

#### **2005 Grade: F**

2004 Grade: F

2003 Grade: F

2002 Grade: F

2001 Grade: B-

2000 Grade: C-

1999 Grade: D-

1998 Grade: D-

1997 Grade: C-

1996 Grade: D+

1995 Grade: C+

1994 Grade: C-

(not graded in 1993)

Evidence shows climate change has already cost the BC economy billions of dollars. While increased wildfire occurrence in recent years is likely linked to a warming climate, the most dramatic economic impact relates to the mountain pine beetle infestation in the BC interior. In the absence of the cold winter temperatures required to curtail the beetle's spread, the

beetle infestation has grown to a point at which government estimates place lost timber values at \$3.6 billion.

Another emerging economic impact of climate change is the loss of BC's wild salmon stocks. Warmer water temperatures in rivers such as the Fraser mean that migrating fish metabolize at a faster rate and use up their reserves before reaching upstream spawning grounds. Such increased mortality poses an imminent threat to BC's salmon fishing industry.

Gordon Campbell does not seem to make the connection between climate change and BC's economy. Instead of arguing that all Canadian jurisdictions need to do more to reduce greenhouse gases, the premier appears to be on a campaign to increase BC's reliance on fossil fuels. The BC government continues concerted efforts (through subsidies and legislative, regulatory and political support) to increase fossil fuel production and export across the board: northern natural gas, coal bed methane, coal, and offshore oil and gas.

It is showing little regard for the fact that BC's greenhouse gas emissions are rising faster than the national average, and that climate change is threatening BC's economic future.

In late 2004, the BC government released its climate change plan, entitled *Weather, Climate and the Future: BC's Plan*. The plan lacks substantive details such as targets, goals or timelines—indeed, it fails to include any measures whatsoever to reduce greenhouse gas emissions or limit the production, use and export of fossil fuels. It even goes as far as anticipating expanded fossil fuel production in BC

The following passage from the plan exemplifies its appalling shortcomings:

“...because of the uncertainties with respect to federal actions, future international commitments and the introduction of new greenhouse gas-reducing technologies, the determination of a quantitative **emission reduction target is considered to be neither feasible nor meaningful at this time.** (p. 10)”

The Campbell government is moving to increase BC's dependence on energy from coal, at a time when Ontario is shutting down its coal-fired plants in recognition that they are too dirty, too unhealthy, and too dangerous given climate change implications.

Despite a wealth of renewable energy resources, only a tiny percentage of BC's energy comes from low-impact (i.e., not large hydro) renewable energy sources. BC's wind power resources have been rated the best in the world by the World Energy Council and others, yet BC does not have a single wind turbine in operation. Environmental certificates for BC's first wind turbines have only recently been granted for northern Vancouver Island.

An Alternative Energy Branch has been established within the BC's Ministry of Energy and Mines. Government has allocated a staff of five and a small annual budget (approximately \$300,000) and limited their work to research. In contrast, the BC government has allocated 13 full-time employees with a \$5.8 million annual budget to push for oil and gas development along BC's coastline. This support comes despite the opposition of a majority of BC residents to coastal oil and gas activities.

In the 2005 provincial budget, the BC government allocated \$92 million in subsidies to land-based oil and gas expansion. These subsidies included \$50 million for road building and upgrading, \$25 million for research in support of exploration in the mining and oil and gas sectors, and \$17 million to foster a competitive industry by engaging stakeholders and communities.

Ignoring the Greater Vancouver Regional District's Livable Region Strategy, the BC government is proposing to expand Highway 1 leading into Vancouver and twin the Port Mann Bridge. Rather than alleviating traffic congestion problems, experience worldwide shows that building more roads leads to more traffic, congestion and air pollution – not less.

The BC government's few positive steps this year fall into two categories: lip-service and tangible actions. The former includes a vague, unlegislated commitment to have renewable energy make up half of BC's new power generation. It also includes the release of a planning document with the word "climate" in the title (see above), indicating at least some level of acknowledgement of the climate change issue. Tangible actions include providing a \$2,000 subsidy to purchasers of high-efficiency hybrid vehicles, committing to acquire hybrid vehicles for the government fleet, and granting environmental certificates for wind-power projects on Vancouver Island.

The BC government's record on climate change is nothing short of appalling. Perhaps now, with a newly expanded opposition in the BC Legislature, Gordon Campbell will finally feel some heat on BC's warming climate.

## **NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**

### **Biodiversity**

#### **2005 Grade: C**

2004 Grade: B  
2003 Grade: B-  
2002 Grade: B  
2001 Grade: B+  
2000 Grade: C-  
1999 Grade: C  
1998 Grade: C  
1997 Grade: C-  
1996 Grade: D  
(not graded 1993-1995)

The grade falls due to the lack of progress on protected areas and the support for the ecological disaster known as the Mackenzie Gas Project. The Territories avoid a failing grade for progress in other areas

### **Forestry/Oil and Gas**

Much progress had been made in the Territories in establishing better forest management practices. The Territorial government, First Nations and the Inuvialuit governments have begun the overdue process of forest inventories. The revamped federal inventory, released in the fall of 2004, relied on advanced satellite interpretation. The Northwest Territories went from an estimated 61.4 million hectares to a new estimate of 33.3 million hectares, described as “forest and other wooded land.” Not a small drop in the forests that existed on paper! Fortunately, the surge in forest industry activity in the mid to late 1990s has decreased. The health of the NWT boreal forest is now more threatened by oil and gas expansion than by logging.

The Mackenzie Gas Project is slated to drill two major wells with associated production facilities in the Kendall Island Migratory Bird Sanctuary, where the highly endangered Eskimo Curlew was last spotted. From there the pipeline is slated to run nearly 1300 kilometres through the most productive boreal ecosystems in the territories to provide natural gas to the Athabasca tar sands of northern Alberta.

### **Protected Areas**

Sahoyué - Aedacho (S-E) has still not progressed much further. The major obstacle is funding. There is huge support (and growing impatience) in the community of Déline to protect this land. In spite of the recent federal funding for the Protected Areas Strategy (\$9 million), there still seem to be questions about the availability of resources even to proceed from meeting to meeting. There is no funding committed to Parks Canada to establish the permanent protection required. There was a request in the previous budget as part of the Historic Places Initiative, but this was not successful (the preferred option is that S-E is to

be protected as a National Historic Site). S-E is important as a protected area in the boreal forest, and as part of the Mackenzie Valley Five Year Action plan and as the first site to proceed through the NWT Protected Areas Strategy. It is also of extreme importance to the community of Déline.

Nahanni is another site specific challenge. There is a federal commitment to expand the national park, with the area of interest being the Nahanni watershed, and studies are underway to determine boundaries. Meanwhile, mining potential threatens the whole park. Canadian Zinc's proposed Prairie Creek Mine is advancing within the watershed, upstream from the current national park. A recent decision (May 6<sup>th</sup>) of the NWT Supreme Court determined that a winter road could be re-opened to the Prairie Creek mine site without an environmental assessment. This road will cut right across the Nahanni karstlands, an area of sensitive and globally significant limestone formations that are under interim protection and are identified as important to add to the national park. CPAWS is to be congratulated for its public campaign, launched May 11<sup>th</sup>, with Justin Trudeau and Grand Chief of the Dehcho First Nations, Herb Norwegian (among others), to stop the proposed Prairie Creek Mine and expand the park to protect the entire South Nahanni Watershed. This should be a no-brainer. The territorial government and federal Department of Northern Affairs must get their act together and work in concert with the Parks Canada Agency to complete the park establishment.

### **Species at Risk**

The territorial government is developing its own endangered species legislation. It will likely be released for consultation within the next year. In the meantime, the federal Species at Risk Act (SARA) applies. As noted, the endangered Eskimo Curlew is clearly threatened with extinction should the Mackenzie Gas Project be approved. Questions of listing the Peary caribou will provide the First Nations and NWT government a chance to use SARA creatively by engaging traditional knowledge, protecting the caribou and the way of life of the North. The alternative, a refusal to list, would be a tragic mistake based on misinterpreting the flexibility innate in SARA.

### **Climate Change**

#### **2005 Grade: F**

2004 Grade: F

2003 Grade: C

2002 Grade: C

2001 Grade: F

2000 Grade: C+

1999 Grade: C-

1998 Grade: C

1997 Grade: C

1996 Grade: C-

1995 Grade: D

(not graded 1993-1994)

With the release this year of the Arctic Climate Impact Assessment, it is abundantly clear that the Canadian Arctic is already significantly damaged by the effects of climate change. Some Arctic voices, such as Sheila Watt-Cloutier of the Inuit Circumpolar Conference, are in the lead internationally in demanding action.

The Arctic Climate Impact Assessment makes the extent of the threat clear. The Arctic region faces melting permafrost (which in turn releases the powerful warming gas, methane), reduced sea ice, declining snow cover, increased exposure to storm surges in coastal areas, shifts in species and loss of species, with an increase in rain.

Yet, the government of the NWT has no targets for reducing its own emissions. On the contrary, emissions from the NWT are skyrocketing. Currently the emissions increase in the NWT is three times more than that on average for Canada. Nationally, it is estimated current emissions are 20% above 1990 levels; the NWT emissions are 60% above 1990 levels.

There is only minimal effort in renewables. No building code improvements, to R2000 or C2000, have been instituted.

At this rate, residents of the NWT could soon be, on a per capita basis, the world's worst contributors to climate change.

## YUKON

### Biodiversity

#### **2005 Grade: D-**

2004 Grade: D-

2003 Grade: D-

2002 Grade: C

2001 Grade: F

2000 Grade: C+

1999 Grade: C-

1998 Grade: C

1997 Grade: C

1996 Grade: C-

1995 Grade: D

(not graded 1993-1994)

The Yukon Party seems to have no understanding of the importance of protecting the range of species and ecosystems across the landscape. Even with the priority placed on promoting the Yukon as an eco-tourism destination, the current government is far more intent on industrial development. (Note under Climate Change the threat to the Turner Lake wetlands to allow Hunt Oil natural gas exploration rights). There is no meaningful endangered species legislation, no action to protect habitat for species at risk and no new protected areas created this year.

The Yukon government has not resurrected its abandoned Protected Areas Strategy. In fact, things are moving in the wrong direction with placer mining taking place within the Territorial “Kluane Wildlife Sanctuary” near Kluane National Park (as far as we know, logging occurred sometime between 1990-2002). The only good news in progress in protected areas has come about due to land claims. Long term commitments to protect the Kusawa Lake area and Lewes Marsh are moving forward thanks to resolution of land claims. The legal designation of Tombstone Territorial Park only occurred after the Tr’ondek Hwech’in First Nation began legal proceedings to force the Yukon government to honour land claim provisions contained in the agreement to create the park, signed more than six years ago.

Premier Fentie has been strangely silent in the face of public demands that he speak forcefully for the defense of the Porcupine caribou and against the Bush Administration’s plans to drill in the Porcupine caribou calving grounds. The opening of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil and gas is a global concern. The Gwich’in people have long been in the lead in opposing the project. The Canadian government has continued its opposition. Where is the territorial government? Are its members too busy boasting to investors to open the Territory to oil and gas exploration? The priorities are clear when one considers the territorial contribution of \$3 million toward a feasibility study for a railroad to Alaska.

Some hopeful developments involve forest management plans with First Nations. The Kaska First Nation is applying ecosystem-based forest management planning in the Yukon

portion of their Traditional Territory. As well, the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations (CAFN) have developed a Strategic Forest Management Plan, signed by the Yukon government and the CAFN in 2004. It is in the early stages of integrated landscape level planning and is intended to be inclusive and focused on conservation and ecological health.

## **Climate Change**

### **2005 Grade: F**

2004 Grade: B-

2003 Grade: B-

2002 Grade: C

2001 Grade: B-

2000 Grade: C-

1999 Grade: C

1998 Grade: C

1997 Grade: C

1996 Grade: D

1995 Grade: D

(not graded 1993-1994)

The Yukon is the epicentre for the gathering disaster known as global climate change. While the Territory and its residents have played only a trivial role in creating the problem, it and its peoples, as well as the non-human species of the Yukon, will be among the first victims of its effects. Hot dry summers lead to the kind of conditions that led to a serious and persistent forest fire that compromised air quality in the summer of 2004. The melting of glaciers led to high water levels in rivers, and a startling retreat for those who came to explore glaciers that have lost tens of metres in size in a few short years.

The Arctic Climate Impact Assessment makes the extent of the threat clear. The Arctic region faces melting permafrost (which in turn releases the powerful warming gas methane), reduced sea ice, declining snow cover, increased exposure to storm surges in coastal areas, shifts in species and loss of species, with an increase in rain.

Yet, amazingly, the Yukon territory has no plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. It has not raised building standards to the R2000 and C2000 levels to improve energy efficiency.

The government has compromised its own land use planning by granting Hunt Oil, a major multinational company with a questionable human rights record, rights to explore for natural gas in the sensitive Turner Lake wetlands. Oil and gas leasing is being allowed in the Northern Yukon in advance of land use planning. The Yukon government has done nothing to promote renewable energy sources, but is pushing coal development and coal bed methane, despite the lack of regulations on this form of development.

Does the Yukon government really want to increase the rate of global climate change or set an example to shame the economies that are threatening the future?

## NUNAVUT

### **Biodiversity**

#### **2005 Grade: D-**

2004 Grade: D-

2003 Grade: D-

2002 Grade: B

2001 Grade: B-

The Nunavut government wildlife service conducts and funds a variety of important wildlife research programs and works closely with federal agencies and the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board to develop and implement wildlife management policy that ensures sustainable use. The Nunavut government is in the process of negotiating new memorandums of understanding with Nunavut communities to ensure better management of the territories polar bear populations. Government (both territorial and federal) and Inuit Organizations are likewise working to develop and maintain new and existing wildlife conservation areas (e.g. Thelon Game Sanctuary, East Bay Bird Sanctuary).

However, when environmental protection and industrial development are in conflict, the focus seems to be exclusively on industrial development. There is no protected areas strategy in place, although the Nunavut government is moving forward in developing management plans for Territorial Parks. Two new national parks have also been established in Nunavut in the last three years. There is no endangered species legislation.

The Nunavut Wildlife Management Board has blocked action to protect grizzly bears, wolverine and polar bears, despite a strong recommendation from the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC). COSEWIC had recommended the species be added to the list as of "special concern." Federal scientists said that territorial scientists had been involved in the assessment, although the Nunavut board said the affected communities had not been consulted. Despite their opposition to the COSEWIC process, Inuit communities have independently to curtail harvests of populations (eg. Peary caribou) targeted for special protection.

The government is developing a Nunavut Wildlife Act, currently in the process of regulations.

Meanwhile, mineral prospecting activity and mining claims have been increasing, leading to concerns about potential environmental impacts.

## **Climate Change**

### **2005 Grade: B-**

2004 Grade: C-

2003 Grade: C-

2002 Grade: B+

The Nunavut government drafted a climate change strategy and implementation plan in 2003 to reduce territorial greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, monitor climate change impacts and develop adaptive strategies to deal with impacts.

The Nunavut government has also signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the federal government to cooperate on climate change mitigation initiatives (first Canadian province/territory to sign such an MOU). The government also sits on a northern climate change coordinating committee tasked with developing national climate change adaptation strategy for northern Canada. So far most of the territorial government initiative has centered around developing broad GHG reduction policy; examples of specific mitigation actions/measures are poorly documented.

Much more exciting progress on the GHG reduction front has occurred at the municipal level. In November 2002, for example the city of Iqaluit joined the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' Partners for Climate Protection Program. In doing so, the city committed to reducing its greenhouse gas emissions from all municipal operations within 10 years. To date the city has completed a GHG emissions inventory, approved an action plan to reduce emissions (including specific reduction targets), and is now developing an implementation strategy. The city is in the process of building a sustainable subdivision to help achieve its goals for GHG reduction and sustainability. The new subdivision features energy efficient building design, energy demand management, alternative energy systems (e.g. use of waste heat from the power plant), waste reduction strategies, and other green measures never before implemented in an Arctic municipality.

There is a minor investment in renewables, with a solar wall demonstration project in Rankin Inlet.

Recognizing the loss of ice cover also threatens the way of life of Nunavut hunters, the government has created a disaster relief fund. The fund will help hunters who lose equipment due to thin ice. Ironically, the polar bears are threatened by exactly the same conditions – loss of ice cover reducing their ability to hunt.

Of the territorial governments threatened with the immediate impacts of climate change, only Nunavut appears to be taking the problem seriously.

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The opinions expressed are those of the Sierra Club of Canada, as are any errors.

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