



RIO + 14

THE FOURTEENTH ANNUAL RIO (REPORT ON INTERNATIONAL OBLIGATIONS) REPORT CARD - 2006

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

Sierra Club of / du Canada
412-1 rue Nicholas St.
Ottawa, Ontario, K1N 7B7
E-mail / Courriel: info@sierraclub.ca
Website / Site de web: www.sierraclub.ca./national/rio
Tel: (613) 241-4611
Toll-free: 1-888-810-4204
Fax: (613) 241-2292



Federal Report Card

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

Provincial /Territorial Report Card

PROVINCE / TERRITORY	SUBJECT	GRADE
Newfoundland and Labrador	Biodiversity	B
	Climate Change	B+
Nova Scotia	Biodiversity	C+
	Toxic Chemicals / Pollution	F
	Climate Change	D-
Prince Edward Island	Biodiversity	B-
	Climate Change	A-
New Brunswick	Biodiversity	C-
	Toxic Chemicals / Pollution	D
	Climate Change	C+
Quebec	Biodiversity	C
	Climate Change	A+
Ontario	Biodiversity	C-
	Climate Change	F
	Bonus Grade for Water	A
Manitoba	Biodiversity	C+
	Climate Change	B
Saskatchewan	Biodiversity	C-
	Climate Change	C+
Alberta	Biodiversity	F
	Climate Change	F
British Columbia	Biodiversity	B
	Climate Change	D
Northwest Territories	Biodiversity	D
	Climate Change	F
Yukon	Biodiversity	D-
	Climate Change	D
Nunavut	Biodiversity	C+
	Climate Change	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 fourteenth 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 the federal government of Prime Minister Stephen Harper. Although Mr. Harper has been Prime Minister less than six months, the slide in marks is clear and worrying.

The previous minority Martin Government was making limited progress. Former Environment Minister Stéphane Dion did superb work from June 2005 until the close of the climate conference in December. In fact, Minister Dion ignored the fall of the government on November 28, 2005 and conducted himself as a heroic President of the negotiations. International NGOs rated his performance as the best of any in the last thirteen years of Conferences of the Parties.

The provincial record is mixed, with special bonus marks to Ontario for water policy, and no progress at all for the Alberta government of Ralph Klein.

REPORT ON THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT OF CANADA

JUNE 2005 - JUNE 2006

Commitment to Increase Overseas Development Assistance to 0.7% of GDP

2006 Grade: C-

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

The Harper Government's first budget was silent as to Canada's obligations to alleviate poverty around the world and to increase aid to reach the target of 0.7% of GDP. This target had been embraced by the last Progressive Conservative Prime Minister of Canada, the Right Honourable Brian Mulroney.

The Harper budget did, however, continue with the implementation of Liberal aid policies and funding commitments. The Chrétien government, after years of slashing the aid budget, committed 8% increases to the International Assistance Envelope (IAE). The 8%/year commitment doubles aid from 2001/02 to 2010/11, with a one-time \$320 million increase for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2006. This last amount implements the first tranche of the \$500 million two-year budget deal between the NDP and Liberals (Bill C-48) in April 2005.

This is the first time since the late 1990s there are no **new** aid commitments in the Federal Budget and not even a mention of international cooperation in Finance Minister Flaherty's first budget speech before the House of Commons.

The Budget states that the \$320 million will be allocated to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (\$250 million), the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (\$45 million) and the International Monetary Fund Exogenous Shock Facility (\$25 million). These allocations will only be made once the Department of Finance has determined that there was

at least a \$2 billion surplus for 2005/06 (when the books close **in September**), which is very likely.

Meanwhile, although aid received no additional support from the Harper Government in this Budget, National Defence was allocated \$1.1 billion in new funding over the next two years, and promised an additional \$4.2 billion in the three years up to 2010. This investment of \$5.3 billion is **in addition** to the Liberal commitments of more than \$12.3 billion for National Defence in the 2005 Federal Budget. The 2006 Budget also invests more than \$400 million to further “secure Canada’s borders” and \$1 billion for pandemic preparedness.

Commitment to Reduce Greenhouse Gases

2006 Grade Breakdown:

	Domestic	International
Former Minister Stéphane Dion (06/2005-12/2005)	B-	A
Minister Rona Ambrose (02/2006-05/2006)	F	Expelled

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)

Domestic:

06/2005-01/2006

Last year, the federal government’s climate plan, Project Green, was released, setting goals to reduce emissions by 270 Mt annually in the period 2008 to 2012. This plan had several important elements such as the Climate Fund, a partnership fund to work in collaboration with the provinces, emission reduction targets for industrial polluters, reductions for the automobile industry and a program to boost the development of renewable energies. This program also included extension and expansion of funding for other climate change

programs through to 2012, such as significant enhancement for the home EnerGuide programme to retrofit 500,000 homes by 2010. The cost per tonne of Project Green ranged between 10\$ and 200\$ per tonne.

A very important step achieved by the former Minister of the Environment Stéphane Dion was to list greenhouse gases (GHG) under Schedule 1 of the Canadian Environmental Protection Act which set the groundwork for the federal government to introduce regulation of greenhouse gas emissions.

Progress in implementing Project Green was relatively slow, and certain aspects of the Climate Fund and Large Final Emitters emissions trading system, that was to be launched in 2006, were flawed. Most importantly, the oil and gas sectors retained Chrétien's promise of a \$15 per tonne price cap for carbon credits and emission intensity targets for these sectors would not be more than 15% below projected Business as Usual emission intensity levels for 2010.

International: 06/2005-01/2006

At the 11th Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), held in Montreal November 28-December 10, 2005, Canada demonstrated real leadership for the first time since former Prime Minister Brian Mulroney initiated global action on climate change. The objective of the conference was to win agreement among the nations of the world to begin negotiations of targets and responsibilities for a second commitment period under the Kyoto protocol. This required agreement of the 157 nations that are signatories to the Kyoto protocol, and the 180 nations under the UNFCCC.

In order to launch negotiations of a second commitment period, Canada, as President of the negotiations, had to stand up to the powerful effort by the United States delegation to derail the talks, as they stated early on that it would not support further negotiations. Despite these barriers, and despite an election being declared on the first day of the Conference, Stéphane Dion chose to remain as President of the conference, and solid progress was delivered. The Montreal Conference was a significant turning point for international negotiations. It reaffirmed the United Nations multi-lateral process as the primary forum for negotiation, confirmed the operating rules for Kyoto, and the commitment of the international community to press ahead with emission reduction targets.

Change in Government:

Domestic: 02/2006-06/2006

Many opportunities existed for the new government to improve and fix certain flaws in Canada's domestic plan to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions. Unfortunately, rather than seize the opportunity, the Harper government is reversing the progress made in the past fifteen years to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions. It has embarked on a campaign to dismantle and destroy Canada's climate change programs, touting a "Made-in-Canada" solution. The current Minister of the Environment, the Hon. Rona Ambrose, has launched a campaign of disinformation, stating that Canada's Kyoto targets are impossible to reach.

The much hyped “Made-in-Canada” plan has consisted only of cutting programs, many of which produced tangible results, such as EnerGuide for Houses, and EnerGuide for Low Income Households. The only program that has been introduced under the guise of a greenhouse gas reduction measure is the transit tax credit, included in the recent budget. Several studies have shown that this is amongst the most inefficient and expensive ways of reducing greenhouse gases, with costs of up to \$2000 per tonne.

International: 02/2006-06/2006

While the government is quietly slashing climate change programs while publicly renegeing on Canada’s Kyoto commitments, the current government is also embarking on an international campaign to discredit the Kyoto targets. Minister Ambrose has succeeded Stéphane Dion as President of COP11 and chairs the international negotiations on Climate Change. As chair, she is resisting mandatory targets under Kyoto, advocating a voluntary approach and longer time frames. She and Prime Minister Harper have expressed increasing interest in Bush’s Asia Pacific Partnership Pact, which relies on voluntary targets, and transfer of technologies such as nuclear and clean coal. Sierra Club of Canada believes that such a position is a dangerous abdication of responsibility for the President of the COP within United Nations International negotiations on Climate Change. Moreover, it is a betrayal of Canadians. The President’s role is to provide leadership and accelerate the process of reducing emissions, to encourage countries to take on targets that would achieve the needed GHG reductions which could avoid catastrophic climate change. The current government’s position on the Kyoto Protocol makes Ms. Ambrose unsuitable for Presidency of the international negotiations and she should step down from this position. Canada is alone among Annex 1 nations to renege on its commitments. All other Annex 1 countries are keeping to their commitment to meet their targets by 2012. In order to maintain the international momentum that was launched in Montreal, Minister Ambrose must either commit to Canada’s current target and negotiate in good faith for further reductions post-2012, or resign immediately as chair of the international negotiations.

Programs recently cut by Prime Minister Stephen Harper’s Government include:

EnerGuide for Houses and EnerGuide for Low Income Households; Natural Resources Canada

Description: This program provided performance-based grants to homeowners who made energy efficiency investments in their homes. EnerGuide for Low Income Households (EGLIH), was a new program launched in 2006, paid the full cost of energy efficiency upgrades for qualifying low-income households.

Urban Transportation Showcase Program; Transport Canada

Description: This program supported sustainable urban transport in Canada with the goal of reducing smog, relieving congestion, and improving public transit infrastructure.

Electricity Reduced Trade Barriers Part II and Electricity Reduced Trade Barriers Part III — Consumer Information; Natural Resources Canada

Description: These programs assessed regulatory and economic issues related to interprovincial electricity trade and provided an analysis and reporting of environmental information associated with electricity generation.

Environmental Supply Chain Management Pilot Project; Industry Canada

Description: This project was one of the industry cross-cutting measures to encourage Canadian industry to become more energy-efficient.

Feasibility of Afforestation for Carbon Sequestration Initiative; Natural Resources Canada

Description: This initiative was designed to explore the feasibility of afforestation for carbon sequestration to help offset greenhouse gas emissions.

Federal House in Order Leadership Measures — Built Environment; Natural Resources Canada

Description: This program provided one-time demonstration funding for energy-efficient practices and renewable energy technologies in Government of Canada facilities.

Forest 2020 Plantation Demonstration Assessment; Natural Resources Canada

Description: This initiative was designed to explore options to attract investment in fast-growing tree plantations for carbon sequestration to help Canada offset its greenhouse gas emissions.

Off-road Vehicle and Equipment Initiative/Off-road CO₂ Initiative; Environment Canada

Description: This initiative examined a series of tools to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions from off-road vehicles and equipment such as lawnmowers, power boats, mining trucks, bulldozers, snowmobiles and farm tractors.

On-Site Generation at Federal Facilities; Natural Resources Canada

Description: This program promoted the adoption of renewable energy technologies for on-site electricity generation in federal operations.

Pilot Emission Removals, Reductions and Learnings Initiative; Environment Canada and Natural Resources Canada

Description: This initiative provided Canadian companies and organizations with an economic incentive to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through projects in areas such as methane emissions from landfills, renewable energy and carbon sinks. Through this initiative, the Government of Canada purchased greenhouse gas emissions reductions and removals from qualified projects on a lowest-cost-per-tonne basis.

Market Incentive Program; Natural Resources Canada

Description: The program was intended to encourage electricity marketers in competitive markets to offer customers the choice of purchasing green power.

One-Tonne Challenge; Natural Resources Canada and Environment Canada

Description: This program encouraged individual Canadians to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions by 20 per cent or one tonne.

Studies and Monitoring for Greenhouse Gas Reduction Program; Natural Resources Canada

Description: This program was designed to increase knowledge of emissions-reduction opportunities.

Federal Commitment to Biodiversity

2006 Grade: D for Liberals/F for Conservatives

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)

Species at Risk

There has never been, nor likely ever will be, a more critical time for the government to implement the federal Species At Risk Act (SARA) than now. Spotted owl numbers continue to plummet and the BC provincial government announced its plan in April 2006 to abandon the owl in the wild, opting instead to bring it in for captive breeding out of the limelight of the 2010 Olympics.

SARA has a clause that enables the federal Minister of Environment to step in and protect the habitat of a species facing imminent extirpation (local extinction) if a province is failing to adequately do so. A number of environmental organizations, including Sierra Club of Canada, petitioned the federal government to intervene on behalf of the spotted owl in 2004, but the federal government remained uncooperative, waiting to see BC's plans for the owl.

BC's announcement that it is planning to bring the owl into captivity for captive breeding sends an unequivocally clear message that BC has no intentions to protect the forested habitat needed for the recovery of the spotted owl.

Both the Liberal government and the Conservative government have, to date, neglected their responsibility to protect this imperiled species. If the federal government continues to sit idly by while this species is wiped out of the Canada's old growth forests, F won't be a low enough grade. It should get an X, for extinction.

It was hard to imagine weaker commitment to species at risk than the Liberals. And then the Conservatives came to power.

The federal government decided not to list Interior Fraser Coho in the west and Northern Cod on the east coast. Clear scientific advice from the Committee on the Status of Species at Risk in Canada (COSEWIC) was ignored. Advice from scientists within the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) was rejected.

In a shameful decision, the Minister of Fisheries, the Hon. Loyola Hearn, blocked the listing of the Interior Fraser Coho salmon. The decision was entirely political, against the advice of DFO scientists. The steps that are essential to protect this species do not involve reducing commercial fishing. The recovery plan for the Interior Fraser Coho rests on habitat restoration. The decision to block listing of the Interior Coho is an extinction order.

In the same decision, Hearn blocked listing the North Atlantic Cod as endangered. The political interference in the scientific listing process is particularly acute in the case of marine species, where in theory, the act should work well.

The Minister of the Environment is now proposing, on the advice of the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, to not add five populations of Beluga Whale (Ungava Bay, Cumberland Sound, Eastern Hudson Bay, Eastern High Arctic/Baffin Bay and Western Hudson Bay), the Porbeagle Shark, and the Lower Fraser River and Middle Fraser River populations of White Sturgeon to Schedule 1 of SARA.

The Harper government needs to decide if it is interested in saving species or driving them to extinction faster.

Commitment to Review and Reform Pesticide and Toxic Policies

2006 Grade: F

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

Early this month, Health Canada gave an internal government document supporting the safety of 2,4-D, to industry representative, Ken Pavley. He distributed the document and it ended up on the website of the lawn-care company, the Weedman as verification that the Pesticide Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) has approved the pesticide.

Yet the final decision on the registration of 2,4-D is not expected until early 2007.

The draft decision document consultation period ended April 22nd, Earth Day, 2005. Since that time many studies have been released that continue to show that 2,4-D is a threat to our health and the environment.

In the House of Commons, the Hon. Tony Clement was questioned about the document and said that, "it was not a scientific document." Either the PMRA is working with science, or it is parroting pro-pesticide propaganda. As the 2,4-D review is finalized, we shall see which is the case.

CEPA Review

The review of the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999(CEPA) is underway – sort of – and the process is perplexing. At the moment, the Senate and House are doing independent reviews, with no method to their madness, no direction from two chambers regarding agenda for the review process. It is unclear even if formal review has begun.

The two reviewing bodies are the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development as well as the Standing Senate Committee on Energy, the Environment and Natural Resources. The question must be asked, "Who's on first?"

The Harper Government is derelict in informing the two houses their intentions for review. As the federal government's primary piece of environmental protection legislation, the CEPA review has the opportunity to become a world-class example of legislation that has real world relevance, but we must hear the government's intentions in clear language before this can occur, and quit relying on the promises of a forthcoming Clean Air Package.

Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs)

The Canadian government has consistently had an ENGO representative on the delegation to international environmental meetings. In preparation for the second Conference of the Parties (COP) to the Stockholm Convention, there was a call for an ENGO representative, as is standard practice. However, the request for recalled. The ENGO community cried foul at this change in practice of the Harper government, and at the last minute an ENGO representative was added to the delegation. The Harper government must respect this tradition of ENGO representation that has occurred since Mulroney government, it is unconscionable that the Harper government would not allow ENGOs on delegation.

Canada's National Implementation Plan was completed May 17, 2006, the deadline for the development of the plan.

Commitment to Environmental Assessment

2006 Grade: 2005 - Feb 2006: C+

(Note: To date, we cannot grade the Harper government.)

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

The trend noted last year towards increased use of full panel reviews under the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act continued this year. In May 2006, 10 review panels were underway across the country. Hearings for the Mackenzie Gas Project (Northwest Territories), Sydney Tar Ponds Cleanup Project (Nova Scotia) and Eastmain 1-A and Rupert River Diversion Project (Quebec) were underway. Panels are also underway for Digby Neck Quarry proposal in Nova Scotia, the Cacouna Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) Import Terminal at Gros Cacouna Quebec, and the Rabasca LNG project at Levis Quebec, among others.

Participant funding for environmental groups to participate in panel reviews remains inadequate. However, funding for participation of environmental and community groups in the joint panel review of the \$7 billion Mackenzie Gas Project (MGP) was increased by \$0.6 million to \$1.6 million at the urging of northern and national NGOs. Participant funding related to panel review of other smaller projects, such as the Sydney Tar Ponds Cleanup Project (\$170,000), the Eastmain 1-A and Rupert River Diversion (\$82,000), and the Keltic LNG Project (\$32,000) was far less generous.

The truly appalling policy of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) to scope projects for environmental assessment as narrowly as possible received a big boost from the Federal Court of Appeal in its January 2006 decision in the True North case. Prairie Acid Rain Coalition had challenged the decision of DFO to scope a massive tar sands mine project as a “destruction of a creek” project. The Federal Court of Appeal ruled that DFO has broad discretion to scope projects as it sees fit, thereby undermining the entire concept underlying federal environmental assessment. The fact that this multi-billion dollar tar sands project will generate massive air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, generate massive tailings held in “ponds” held back by some of the largest dams in the world, and destroy thousands of hectares of boreal forests do not figure in these minimalist DFO assessments. Even prior to the election of the pro-oil industry Harper Conservatives, federal departments

appeared to be covering under their desks at the prospect of undertaking serious panel reviews of the numerous multi-billion dollar tar sands projects proposed for northern Alberta.

While Prairie Acid Rain Coalition is appealing the judgment to the Supreme Court of Canada, it is becoming clear that the federal government must bring forward amendments to the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act limiting the discretion of federal authorities to scope projects in such an unreasonable manner.

In November 2005, the so-called Cabinet Directive on Implementing the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act was issued by the federal government. The Cabinet Directive may have a beneficial effect in reinforcing the leadership role of the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency in environmental assessment. If applied by the Agency and responsible authorities, the Cabinet Directive may also have a salutary effect in limiting abuses of discretion relating to project scoping, such as that which occurred with respect to the True North project.

With the election of the minority Conservative government in January 2006, the future of proposed amendments to the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act (CEAA) is uncertain. The former Liberal government had proposed 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 proposed CEAA amendments would have reduced the number of federal environmental assessments required by law.

In a first hint of the Harper government's approach to environmental assessment, Indian and Northern Affairs Minister Jim Prentice stressed the need to "streamline assessments" and "dramatically reduce project approval times." The phrasing is ominous for fair and impartial assessments. Minister Prentice went on to say:

"The Mackenzie Gas Project is going through hearings. And if it is deemed to be in the country's national interest, we will work constructively and diligently to assist in moving the project forward. At the same time, I am committed to ensuring that it proceeds in an environmentally sound and sustainable manner, with benefits flowing to Northerners and Aboriginal groups in the territory. We have a responsibility to minimize the risks and mitigate impacts while maximizing the project's potential."

Agenda 21 Commitment to Make Trade and Environment Mutually Supportive

2006 Grade: F

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

Trade issues and the environment remain in conflict and never remotely met the Rio challenge to make them mutually supportive.

The new Harper government, in capitulating to the Bush Administration on softwood lumber, missed the opportunity to ensure that export of forest products integrated any concerns for the environment.

It is now abundantly clear that the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) agreement is only honoured by the U.S. when rulings are in its favour. The Energy Chapter is entirely to Canada's disadvantage, requiring that Canada sell the largest historical percentage of our energy production to the U.S. in perpetuity. The pressure to continue to produce and sell fossil fuels to the U.S. is a threat to both the Canadian and the global environment.

The original rationale for NAFTA, freer movement of goods and people, is clearly now a lie. People will require a passport or other identity card for security purposes, and goods only move easily if the traffic is in the U.S. interest.

The threat posed by Chapter 11 of NAFTA continues to have a chilling effect on regulatory decisions. It is time to pull the plug and give the 6 months notice to leave NAFTA.

Meanwhile, the only aspect of NAFTA that has arguably had a benefit for the North American environment, the North American Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC), is in serious trouble. The current U.S. head, William Kennedy, has tread a far more conservative course than his Mexican or Canadian predecessors. Funding for the CEC was fixed at \$3 million U.S. per country in 1994 and has not changed since. Inflation combined with an escalating Canadian dollar in the past few years has effectively reduced the budget of the CEC by 33%. The so-called Security and Prosperity Partnership is eclipsing the role of the CEC as the key and publicly transparent mechanism for trilateral partnership.

Clearly the three countries are not using the CEC to address the most significant North American concerns: energy, water, climate change and others. At best this signals a lack of interest or vision in working together. At worst it suggests a desire to cut the CEC loose, or to so circumscribe its role as to make it pointless.

Commitment to the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Living Marine Resources

2006 Grade: F

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-

The mismanagement of life in our oceans continues to be a problem. This is one file where the change from Liberals to Conservatives has made no difference. This is the case despite



The East Sooke Coast with the Olympic Peninsula in the background.

the fact that the Conservatives' election platform actually included some encouraging promises for the oceans, including sustainable harvesting.

The only plus thus far in the Harper government was the approval of the integrated groundfish management plan for the West Coast groundfish.

The Oceans Action Plan - Phase II (OAP) is showing no visible progress. As the major implementation of government goals

to manage the oceans for sustainable development it is of critical importance. Publicly revealing the identity and degree of achievement of OAP Phase I deliverables would be a step forward for DFO.

As well, the Pacific North Coast Integrated Management Area (PNCIMA) is a priority area under the Oceans Act for integrated management, and a consortium of west coast ENGO's, including the BC Chapter of Sierra Club of Canada, is constructively engaged in the initial planning stages.

There is a huge demand for fisheries science and support for ocean planning obligations, with no sign of the necessary money forthcoming. It was a considerable victory to have conservation installed under the Liberals as the overriding principle in the new Wild Salmon Policy – which is entitled “Canada’s Policy for Conservation of Wild Pacific Salmon.”

Canada continues to refuse to ratify (or support) agreements to limit offshore trawling in international waters. The federal government, either under Martin or Harper, has failed to bring forward the Oceans Act Action Plan, to adequately fund marine science, to establish catch accounting and monitoring right across the board.

Cod on the East Coast are endangered, the Strait of Georgia rockfish are still endangered, the West Coast Salmon, whether Interior Fraser Coho, Sakinaw and Culis Coho are all at risk of extinction.

This is one environmental area with clear federal jurisdiction. The failure to protect the life of our oceans cannot continue.

Forests

2006 Grade: C

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), which should be gearing up as it enters the final stretch, appears stalled, with the exception of limited theme group activity. The NFS Chair who brought the Strategy into force in 2003, Jean Cinq-Mars, resigned in February 2006, and a new Chair, former forest industry leader, Bill Bourgeois, was elected, only to resign shortly after. A new chair has not yet been appointed.

Also stalled is the NFS mid-term evaluation--a critical tool in that it is needed to help identify gaps in progress, and to celebrate where progress has been achieved. Despite input from members across the country, a final report has not yet been released.

The federal government is investing in the exploration of bio-energy created from biomass. A visit to the federal government’s website (eosd.cfs.nrcan.gc.ca/biomass/index_e.html)

offers little detail as to the range of their work, as all of the links to the pilot projects they are supporting are dead and have been for months. It is unclear whether the government's explorations will focus on using waste from mills as biomass, which makes good ecological sense, or if biomass will be taken out of living forests, which would interrupt natural forest nutrient cycles.

The Canadian Forest Service still identifies a key objective as investing in research on genetically modified trees, which rings alarm bells for those working to protect biodiversity.

The Forest Sector Sustainability Table, created under the Liberal Government, has been stalled since the Conservative government took power. Its future is unclear.

REPORT ON THE PROVINCIAL / TERRITORIAL GOVERNMENTS

JUNE 2005 - JUNE 2006

NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

Biodiversity

2006 Grade: B

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)

The story in Newfoundland and Labrador is one of continued progress in protected areas locally, while failing to push through on key wilderness reserve proposals such as Lac Joseph-Atikokak in Labrador. Conflicts between biodiversity and industries such as mining, oil and gas, and forestry continue.

Protected Areas

For the first time in 17 years, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador has announced a significant investment in the Provincial protected areas strategy (Natural Areas System Plan or NASP). On March 30, 2006, as part of the 2006-2007 Provincial Budget, the government announced that over a quarter of a million dollars would be spent on preparing the NASP for public release.

Work began on the NASP in the early 1990s. Although candidate areas were designed in 1996, they have not been released for public review or discussion. As a result, Newfoundland and Labrador has protected only about 4% of its total land base. With the government's recent investment, the plan has finally been given the necessary resources.

The plan contains 25 provincial ecological and wilderness reserve candidates, as well as the proposed Mealy Mountains National Park.

Funds for official planning and consultation on the NASP have been allocated and although this is only the first step, we recognize this progress with an increase in the grade given to Newfoundland and Labrador.

Progress continues slowly on key projects such as the proposed Mealy Mountains National Park, and the provisional Little Grand Lake Ecological Reserve, and other candidates for full protection.

Following a long public consultation period, a new management plan was issued this year for Gros Morne National Park. However, Gros Morne's ecological integrity continues to be threatened through recreational uses such as snowmobiling, as well as permission of logging within park limits for domestic fuelwood. In the fall of 2005, the Draft Management Plan for snowmobiling for recreational and commercial activity was released and was registered for federal Environmental Assessment in early 2006. There has been no word from government as of the beginning of summer on where the review now stands.

Unfortunately, the snowmobiling management plan could formalize status quo recreational snowmobiling volume without adequate protection of the caribou within the National Park.

Resource Conflicts

Meanwhile, a new mining proposal in central Newfoundland, near Buchans, is being considered. This mine will recover Copper/Zinc and will be managed by Aur Resources. It is known as the Duck Pond project and has the potential to have serious environmental impacts on the fisheries and watershed of the Exploits River system in general.

Duck Pond mine proposes to destroy two ponds by using them to contain environmentally toxic mine waste (tailings). Both Trout Pond and another, unnamed pond, contain wild populations of trout and Atlantic salmon and are located in tributaries to one of the largest watersheds in Newfoundland.

The regulators, Environment Canada and DFO, have not made any objections known and have proposed that these ponds be included under Schedule 2 in an amendment of the Metal Mining Effluent Regulations that is currently being passed. Schedule 2, in essence, redefines natural water bodies as Tailings Impoundment Areas. If this amendment passes, the loss of the two ponds in Newfoundland will set a precedent as they will constitute the first use of Schedule 2 for a new mine in Canada allowing the legal destruction of healthy natural water bodies.

Environment Canada and DFO have said they are content with a "compensation plan" for the lost habitat and species and that there will be "no net loss" of habitat or species over the projects duration. This decision has the potential to undermine lakes and ponds nation-wide. At least nine mine projects across the country are proposing lakes for inclusion under Schedule 2 so they can be used to contain mine tailings.

The impact of offshore oil and gas is increasingly under scrutiny in terms of its impact on seabirds and other marine dependent species. Seabird biologists in particular have noticed

significant impacts from offshore oil production, yet the industry is not legally responsible for sharing information on its spills, and in fact, resists making key data available to biologists and the public. Flaring (the burning off of excess gas) damages the environment, contributes to climate change and impacts seabirds, but the industry is extremely resistant to scrutiny and heavily supported by government due to their massive economic influence.

Seismic testing associated with oil and gas exploration may damage not only resident seabird populations, but potentially have an impact on the recovering cod stocks. Research at Dalhousie University suggests that the sonic blasts interfere with cod reproduction.

Corner Brook Pulp and Paper Limited (CBPPL), one of two industrial logging companies on the Island, is planning to carry out forest harvesting and road building in and around key woodland caribou and Newfoundland marten habitat over the next five years. There have been conflicts between individual government departments over this issue and it is still on the front burner. CBPPL have also been approached by local citizens and tourism groups on clearcut harvesting in the viewscape associated with the Humber Valley to Gros Morne corridor on the Island's west coast.

Species at Risk

Newfoundland and Labrador has species recovery efforts underway for the pine marten, boreal felt lichen, short-eared owl, low northern rockcress, Long's Braya, Barrens Willow, wolverine, harlequin duck, piping plover, and the Labrador woodland caribou. At this point the Labrador woodland caribou has only a Recovery Strategy Plan in place and is awaiting a Recovery Action Plan.

The Caribou on the Island of Newfoundland are threatened by habitat loss and degradation from activities such as logging and road construction. As well recent decline in numbers is thought to be influenced, in part, by predation from coyotes. The coyote is a non-native species which arrived in the mid-1980s. The caribou population, including inside Gros Morne National Park, has been in serious decline. This is yet another compelling reason to reduce the snowmobile impacts in the park.

Forests

When the Abitibi Consolidated paper mill in Stephenville shut-down last fall, and at the same time almost a thousand forest workers were laid-off across the province due to both the ongoing fibre supply issues and rising costs associated with harvesting some of the most expensive pulpwood in the world, people around the province began to take seriously the fact that the local forest industry is in serious trouble. Sierra Club of Canada has long warned that over-cutting would lead to mill closures, but this is one instance where we grieve being correct.



The forest service has recently announced a drastic decrease in the total AAC for three forest districts across the Island (in district 9 up to a 34% decrease in one year, this over a

supposed 80 year tree rotation!), while at the same time increasing the amount of wood available to CBPPL. This is a direct subsidization of the failing pulp and paper industry in this province, and is already reflecting negatively on the pocketbooks of the other local sawmill and forestry industry businesses.

Progressive measures are required immediately in order to properly reform the province's ailing forest industry. A transition to a more sustainable use of the forests needs to be considered as the province and its people flex and strain against the ongoing tides of development and economic health while trying to keep their communities and ecosystems healthy for future generations.

Sierra Club of Canada believes that jobs in the forest industry should be sustainable and on-going. Admittedly, jobs in the fishery should have been sustainable, but this resource was neglected by central government management and left to flounder alongside many of Newfoundland's once vibrant and culturally diverse communities. The forest industry looks like it could be next. If business-as-usual concepts continue to *modus operandi* of decision-makers, it may come as early as the fall of this year when changes to the province's legislation and tenure arrangements will be announced.

Failure by government and industry to manage the resources of the province in a manner that ensures both on-going employment and healthy ecosystems is an economic and ecological debacle.

Climate Change

2006 Grade: B+

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 come a long way and its approach to climate change in a complete contrast to the current federal government.

The Governments of Newfoundland & Labrador and Canada signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in April 2005, with the federal government, outlining shared

priorities for climate change action. It has been moving to implement its responsibilities under that MOU. In July 2005, the province released its first Climate Change Action Plan, containing 40 items to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to climate change. Budget 2005 dedicated resources for the Plan.

The province held a series of consultations, through the Newfoundland Housing Corporation across the province with contractors and others to learn about energy efficiency in home construction and maintenance, EnerGuide programs, etc. Sustainable Housing Education and Education Consultants were awarded a contract.

Demand for the seminars was so high that more seminars were added.

Paul Shelley, Minister of Human Resources, Labour and Employment, and minister responsible for housing, championed the programmes built on the federal EnerGuide programmes just cancelled by the Harper government.

The province increased funding to the education outreach centre (50% increase last year, now doubled commitment).

The provincial government is participating in Eastern Canadian Premiers and New England Governors collaborative programme to achieve Kyoto-like targets for the entire region.

The Williams government also negotiated a Fleet Smart program proposal with federal Natural Resources Canada. The programme involves Fuel Management and green procurement standards for provincial government vehicle purchases. The Province launched an anti-idling initiative. Continued funding for the initiative will depend on a NRCAN submission to Treasury Board.

The province has augmented its climate change staff and funding.

Greenhouse gas emissions in Newfoundland & Labrador have increased 15.5% since 2001 (9.4 MT to 10.9 MT). The 648% increase in primary energy production since 1990 (including fossil fuel industries) is a major driver of the increase – spurred on by the province's emphasis on creating new energy supply through petroleum and large hydro mega-projects (a proposed oil refinery would further increase emissions). Energy savings from efficiency improvements should also be harnessed to finance climate change action.

NOVA SCOTIA

Biodiversity

2006 Grade: C+

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)

The provincial grade for biodiversity is stalled at C+, because provincial actions appear to be stalled as well.

On the eve of the election call, new Premier Rodney MacDonald announced a land purchase from paper giant Bowater Mersey. On May 12, the province announced the purchase of 12,000 hectares of ecologically significant land, spread throughout eight counties in the southwestern part of the province.

Provincial conservation groups continue to press for effective regulations to control damaging use of all –terrain vehicles in natural areas. In early December, 2005, Bill 275 to amend the Off Highways Vehicle Act became law. New regulations came in on April 1, 2006.

Additional regulations are still required, including¹:

- A general prohibition for Off Highways Vehicle (OHV) use in Nova Scotia parks, wilderness areas and nature reserves;
- A ban on OHV use in sensitive ecosystems, including wetlands, beaches, sand dunes, barrens, streams and lake shores, as well as core habitat for endangered species;
- Limiting use of OHVs on Crown land to a designated trails network (to be developed);
- Requiring written permission from private landowners to use their property;
- Mandatory vehicle registration and display of new, highly visible licence plates; and
- Significant new fines and vehicle seizure penalties for those who break the law.

¹ List adapted from opinion piece by Ray Plourde and Kermit de Gooyer

Protected Areas

The province continues to delay the draft management plan for the Tobeatic Wilderness Area. It has been a two year wait with no end in sight.

The Tobeatic Wilderness Area is a true wilderness by definition thence should have the highest level of protection, otherwise it will cease to be wilderness in any true sense of the word.

Game Sanctuaries

Following last year's announcement by then Minister Richard Hurlburt that game sanctuaries would not be de-listed, and, significantly, that logging in these pocket parks would be reconsidered, hopes were high for progress.

Unfortunately, progress has stalled.

Clear-cutting continues in the Liscomb Game Sanctuary and wildlife within this sanctuary are adversely impacted by logging nearby. A coalition of Nova Scotia environment groups, led by the NS chapter of the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society wants the status of intact lands within each sanctuary elevated to nature reserves or wilderness areas, which would allow for a full range of low-impact uses but would prohibit damaging activities such as clear-cutting, road-building, and development.

Seismic Testing

Points are lost to Nova Scotia for fast-tracking, with zero consultation with fishermen's organizations, First Nations, tourist groups or environmental groups, the pro oil and gas regulator, the Canada Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Board (CNSOPB) approved seismic blasting in the in-shore areas of Sydney Bight.

Hunt Oil's testing was "grandfathered" in and exempted from any environmental screening.

Toxic Chemicals/Pollution

2006 Grade: F

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 Tar Ponds clean-up continues to reveal the government of Nova Scotia's contempt for public opinion and negligence in protecting the health of local residents. The Nova Scotia government under John Hamm chose to ignore the strong consensus of Sydney residents through the Joint Action Group process. That consensus rejected incineration and burial of the toxic sludge in concrete. Yet that was the preferred technology announced by the Hamm government last spring.



Recent hearings under the federal-provincial environmental assessment panel have underscored the unaccountable decision-making that characterized John Hamm's government. Not only were the views of the 66% of residents who voted for a clean-up that actually removed toxic sediments and treated them without incineration rejected, but the decision ignored the technical assessments. The clean-up technology preferred by the province and its Crown agency, the Sydney Tar Ponds Agency (STPA), also failed in the bench-scale technology testing. The technology rejected by the province and supported by the majority of citizens scored well in the technology tests. The STPA was unable to defend its decision-making process in the panel review. It relied on its estimate of costs – an estimate disputed by the leading advanced technology company that continues to commit to doing the work within the government's budget. The STPA never adequately explained its behind-closed-doors arbitrary choice of clean-up technology.

Expert witnesses made it clear that the incineration plan put forward by the province represented a significant risk to human health and the environment, with a high level of probability of excess release of dioxins and furans. Experts also assailed the second part of the STPA plan, burying the majority of the pollutants in concrete, in place in the estuary. The so-called solidification and stabilization process has never been used on sediments containing such a high percentage of coke, coal and tar-like materials. In the bench scale

technology tests, nearly every sample from the tar ponds never solidified. In fact, with time, the concrete lost strength.

Mayor John Morgan accurately described the solidification and stabilization plan as “temporary” with the long term risk of pushing the toxic mess to our children.

Premier Rodney MacDonald should express his support for community choice by supporting the alternative technologies assessed by JAG and now the panel review. It is not too late. Otherwise, it looks as though the public will be exposed to more contaminants, toxic chemicals will leach into the harbour and another \$400 million will go into a failed clean-up.

Climate Change

2006 Grade: D-

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’s Climate Change grade has risen from an F to a D-, despite the fact that GHGs have increased 16.5% from 1990 to 2004. This year, the Nova Scotia government announced \$10 million for energy efficiency, as well as incentives for solar water heating. The ‘Green Energy Framework’ was announced presenting some potential targets. Although the framework is vague in parts, it does demonstrate a commitment to reducing greenhouse gases from coal-fired power.

The funds for the framework were primarily to come from the federal government, and with the cuts to climate change programs it is clear that the funds will not arrive, and the provincial government appears to be offering to fund some key programmes that lost funding through Harper’s anti-Kyoto first budget. The Climate Change Hub and public education projects are among those that have had a helping hand from the province. It remains to be seen if this offer will survive the provincial election.

An Affordable Energy Coalition (AEC) in Nova Scotia is urging the province to do more to install energy efficiency measures for low-income consumers. According to Service Nova

Scotia, less than 50% of the 73,000 eligible Nova Scotians are set to receive heating rebates. Yet, 146,000 Nova Scotians are considered poor. The Affordable Energy Coalition (a group of Nova Scotians working to eradicate energy poverty) has alleged that some provincial residents are so poor that they have burned furniture and used appliances just to keep warm. The province's Keep the Heat rebate program has now been cancelled for an energy sales tax cut and the program wrapped up at the end of March 2006. An estimated \$10 million from this program has gone unspent, and the AEC requested that this money be returned to low-income residents in the form of targeted energy efficiency - but this neglected to happen in the proposed budget.

The cancellation of the federal EnerGuide for Low Income Households (EGLIH) is a blow for the efforts to create greater energy efficient housing for the poor.

Meanwhile, the province continues to move too slowly to embrace renewable energy, from tidal and wind. Last year the 30.6 megawatt wind farm at Pubnico Point opened in southwest Nova Scotia. The utility had contracted for approx 100 MW, but implementation has stalled around 40 MW but it does demonstrate some of wind power's potential.

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

Biodiversity

2006 Grade: B-

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 Province of Prince Edward Island has not made any new substantial strides in the last year. Nevertheless, it has made a few modest steps building on past progress.

A quarter of a million dollars was announced in April 2006 to assist farmers in their understanding of the importance of riparian zones. Poor farm practices, and especially pesticide use along riparian zones has resulted in fish kills in previous years. Proper protection of buffer zones along streams and rivers can also help prevent flooding.

Wildlife enhancement efforts received a boost with the transfer of administration of the Wildlife Conservation Fund to a committee representing those who directly contribute to the fund.

Climate Change

2006 Grade: A-

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 (PEI) continues to demonstrate national leadership through its climate change actions. In the last year the province brought in a new Renewable Energy Act. The Act requires provincial utilities to buy at least 15 per cent of electrical energy from renewable sources by 2010. As well, the government brought in Minimum Purchase Price Regulations, Designated Area Regulations, and Net-Metering System Regulations. These are all crucial pieces of an electricity distribution system that allows renewable energy to contribute to the grid.

The PEI government trumpeted that with these steps PEI utilities will be able to provide 100 per cent of electrical energy from renewable energy sources by 2015!

The province also took steps to address the problem of energy poverty by expanding and extending an assistance programme to assist poor Island residents afford energy efficiency measures. A similar programme at the federal level was recently killed by Prime Minister Harper.

NEW BRUNSWICK

Biodiversity

2006 Grade: C-

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

The New Brunswick government's performance in this category has fallen substantially. The landmark recommendations of the all-party Select Committee on Wood Supply were accepted by the government with a pledge to protect the Acadian old growth forests of the province.

Despite having committed to adopting all of the recommendations of the Committee, the government has done the opposite. For example a recommendation to have fewer clearcuts has been thwarted by government action to increase clearcuts.

Toxic Chemicals/Pollution

2006 Grade: D

2005 Grade: B
2004 Grade: F

The province continues to defend and protect Bennett Incinerator Ltd. from public accountability or environmental assessment.

The residents and former workers exposed to Agent Orange, the phenoxy-herbicide mix used in Vietnam and tested at Gagetown, are making progress. The issue was raised in the election and Prime Minister Harper kept his word through Veterans Affairs Minister Greg Thompson. The promise of recognition and compensation is still in process with a proposal promised for late 2006-2007. One hopes the Harper government will recognize that half the Agent Orange mixture is now under review at Health Canada, 2,4-D.

In May and June of 2005, the Canadian media reported that the chemical defoliant agent orange was "tested" by the U.S. military at Canadian Forces Base Gagetown New Brunswick, Canada.

At the invitation of the Canadian government the U.S. military tested Agent Orange, along with other chemical defoliants, in order to determine their effectiveness for use in Vietnam. Canada's Department of National Defence cooperated with the U.S military to test the defoliant's effectiveness for its own brush control use in Canada.

According to the Department of National Defence (DND), only two barrels of the toxic defoliant "agent orange" were sprayed "under carefully controlled conditions" on 83 acres of land for a total of seven days in 1966 and 1967.

DND did not reveal that in the summer of 1966 the military also used the chemical defoliant Agent Purple. Agent Purple contained more than three times the level of lethal dioxin as Agent Orange. It was also laced with arsenic. Agent Purple is considered so harmful that the American military stopped its use in Vietnam, one year earlier, in 1965.

Documentation obtained from Canada's Department of National Defence via the [Access To Information Act](#) shows that DND's statement was lacking in its disclosure regarding herbicidal spraying at CFB Gagetown. The document proves that from 1956 to 1984 there was over **1.3 million litres of liquid defoliants and 2 million lbs of dry chemical defoliants** containing deadly **dioxin and hexachlorobenzene** were sprayed over 181,000 acres at CFB Gagetown.

According to the Department of National Defence there were 200,000 military personnel at CFB Gagetown from 1956 to 1984. This figure includes troops from Britain, Scotland and the United States that have trained at CFB Gagetown.

This tragedy is not only about the soldiers who have had their health affected. It is also about the soldier's spouses and children who have died or are sick.

For the Canadian government to say soldiers, families and civilians were not exposed to the defoliation chemicals in any way is not only **a callous dismissal of fact, but also a heinous lie.**

The Agent Orange Association of Canada (www.agentorangealert.com) has received thousands of emails, letters and phone calls from the victims of this tragedy that describe death, sickness and despair. They describe lives ruined by illnesses that in the minds of so many were unexplained.

In Canada there is a lack of medical professionals that are familiar with the diagnosis and treatment of chemical poisoning. The victims have no one to turn to for medical assistance. The Agent Orange Association of Canada is requesting that people sign the online petition which can be seen at www.petitiononline.com/aoalert and to also visit www.agentorangealert.com for more information regarding this tragedy.

Climate Change

2006 Grade: C+

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)

Progress this year includes the recent announcement of net metering, the creation of the new Energy Efficiency and Conservation Agency of New Brunswick, with former NDP leader Elizabeth Weir at the helm, and legal requirements for more renewable energy. New Brunswick has been a key player, and in fact, innovator, of the critical bi-national, regional effort, the climate pact of the New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers. The Kyoto-like targets of the governors and premiers climate plan calls for all jurisdictions to:

- Reduce regional greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels by 2010;
- Reduce regional greenhouse gas emissions by at least 10% below 1990 levels by 2020; and
- Reduce regional greenhouse gas emissions by 75-85% in the long-term.

New Brunswick's efforts received a C+ in the regional climate plan assessment, and Sierra Club of Canada Rio grading team concurs. New Brunswick's emissions increased by 33% between 1990 and 2003, reaching 21 million tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions per year in 2003 - representing 38% of Atlantic Canada's emissions.

The government's commitment to at least 10 percent of electricity sales to be supplied from certified low impact renewable sources within ten years is welcome. However, New Brunswick has lagged in its commitment to maximize utilization of energy through district energy and combined heat and power. The Energy Efficiency agency is a great idea, but has not yet delivered. (Not unlike the Energy Conservation branch of Ontario Power Authority under Peter Love.)

Premier Lord must continue to support Canada in meeting its domestic Kyoto targets, supporting Quebec Premier Jean Charest.

QUEBEC

Biodiversity

2006 Grade: C

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 year was dominated by a surprising biodiversity “hotspot” -- a small provincial park that has yielded a firestorm of protest. Charest government's plan to sell off about 600 hectares of Mount Orford parkland led to outrage. Meanwhile, large scale re-engineering of the Rupert and Eastmain Rivers for more hydro-electricity represents a much larger threat to wild places.

The Mount Orford Park controversy hinges on the Charest government's determination to sell off an area that includes a ski hill, a golf course and 85 hectares of old growth forest. The legislation authorizing the sale was seen to be designed to match the plans of the current operator and lead purchaser. Mount Orford Inc. will build 700-800 new condos on the property, paying \$20 million in total for the land, ski hill and golf course. From a biodiversity viewpoint it is a dreadful precedent to see the province in Canada, with the least and smallest protected areas system, sell off any old growth forest, removing it from protection.

Rupert River

A bargain-basement environmental impact process is underway for this \$4 billion mega project on one of the last largest untouched rivers in the world.

Hydro-Quebec has been charged by a coalition of environmental groups of withholding critical information, making it very difficult for intervenors to provide informed comment and critique. The panel review, which began March 15th, is also hampered by unusually short time lines and the low level of intervenor funding. The coalition protested the merging of what is usually a two stage process, as is normal under the Quebec's Environmental Public Hearing Bureau (BAPE), by which Hydro-Quebec would first hold information sessions and answer the public's questions in order to enable them, in a second phase, to give their opinion on the Rupert diversion.

Critical information that is still, at this late stage, unavailable, includes the environmental assessment of the impacts of the Rupert diversion on the marine ecosystem of James Bay and Hudson's Bay.

The Eastmain 1-A/Rupert mega-project plans to divert the Rupert River, one of the last great virgin rivers, over a distance of 350 km for hydroelectric production. The \$4 billion project includes the construction of 4 dams on 3 rivers, 75 dikes, and a 3 kilometre tunnel, all of which will allow Hydro-Quebec to reroute 90% of the Rupert River's flow toward the Eastmain-La Grande hydro-electric complex.

Forests

One piece of good news in Quebec falls outside of the government grade, but conservationists were pleased with the news that Tembec has achieved Forest Stewardship Council certification for Forest Management Units 85-51 and 85-62 in the La Sarre sector of Abitibi-Témiscamingue. This is the first public forest in Quebec to be awarded certification under the rigorous Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) standards for Canadian boreal forests. Tembec has pledged to have all its holdings in Canada receive FSC certification.

Climate Change

2006 Grade: A+

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)

Jean Charest's grade soared in the last days of the grading period due to his commitment to meet Kyoto, the release of the Quebec Action plan on Climate Change, and his challenge to Prime Minister Harper to implement the Kyoto Protocol. As part of Eastern Canadian Premiers and New England Governors forum, Quebec's climate change performance was graded earlier this year at B-.

Jean Charest has a long history with the climate change file as, in his previous Progressive Conservative lifetime, he was Canada's Environment Minister at the 1992 Rio Earth Summit where the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change went through the last stage of negotiations and was signed. The Kyoto Protocol is an instrument within the framework convention. Given that background, Charest's silence as Prime Minister Harper abandoned Kyoto targets was troubling. Premier Charest must use his clear leverage with the Prime Minister to go beyond committing Québec to its own targets, but for Canada to maintain a strong position in global negotiations for deeper long-term targets while committing to meet the 2012 legally binding Kyoto goals.

Sierra Club of Canada wishes to applaud the recently announced action plan on Climate Change released by the Québec government. Detailed measures in this plan reflect a true commitment by Québec to tackle the climate crisis and show leadership in reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Amongst the most encouraging and exciting measure in the plan is Québec's commitment to establish California standards for vehicle fuel emissions. Another element of the plan is the introduction of a greenhouse gas charge, similar to a carbon tax, to oil and gas companies. The annual \$200 million in revenues generated by this charge will be used to create a green fund which will be used for investments in public transit and other greenhouse gas reducing measures. Québec Premier Jean Charest also announced the province's Energy Strategy for 2006-2015 including a commitment to 4,000 MW of wind energy. This commitment will bring wind energy to 10 per cent of the province's installed electrical generating capacity.

Sierra Club of Canada wishes to congratulate the government of Québec for showing true leadership and moving forward in tackling the climate crisis.

The 24 measures included in Québec's plan are:

1. Put in place a financial program for energy efficiency for individuals, industries, institutions, businesses, and municipalities in Québec.
2. Amend the building code in Québec in order to improve energy performance in new buildings and residences built in Québec as of 2008
3. Use necessary intervention mechanisms so that manufacturers selling vehicles in Québec respect greenhouse gas emissions standards starting in 2010.
4. Aim for oil distributors to supply 5% ethanol in all sales of fuel between now and 2012.
5. Encourage municipalities in Québec to adopt a regulation to counter effects of idling by 2010
6. Encourage the development and use of public transportation for people.
7. Encourage the development and use of alternative modes of transportation
8. Encourage adoption of intermodal transportation projects for merchandise
9. Put in place a support program for integration of technological innovation in energy efficiency for transporting merchandise
10. Adopt regulation that will make activation of speed limiters mandatory on all trucks as well as establishing a maximum speed limit of 105 km/h
11. Negotiating voluntary Greenhouse gas reductions with the industrial sector in Québec
12. Implementing the regulation on Halocarbons

13. Implementing the regulation for incineration and burying residual matters.
14. Financially supporting biogas capture from storage sites not included in the regulation
15. Put in place a program for treating liquid manure and adding energy value to agricultural biomass
16. Improve by 2012, energy intensity of public buildings by 10 to 14% below 2003 levels and reducing by 20% fuel consumption in ministries and public organisations.
17. Require that all ministries by 2008 elaborate a program that aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions produced by employees traveling to work.
18. Launch a public awareness campaign on the solutions to climate change
19. Create a training program for businesses and Québec organisations on the different carbon credit systems.
20. Establish a program to support research and technological innovation aiming to reduce and sequestering greenhouse gases.
21. Establish mechanisms that will allow for prevention and mitigation of climate change impacts on health.
22. Consolidate networks which monitor the climate, water resources, and underground water.
23. Experiment with systems to mitigate the impacts of permafrost melt on transportation infrastructures
24. Determine the vulnerability of Québec forests and of the forest industry to climate change and integrate anticipated effects of these changes into forest management.

ONTARIO

Biodiversity

2006 Grade: C-

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)

The McGuinty government has not been paying attention to the plight of biodiversity, species at risk and endangered ecosystems in Ontario. (Attention to the issue of clean water and water policy is recognized in a separate **bonus** grade.) Having announced the Toronto Greenbelt, the government appears to believe the protection of nature is achieved. It is a very large province and urban sprawl, mining and logging continue to remove critical habitat.

The plight of species at risk in Ontario is desperate. Urban sprawl in London threatens Canada's only badger habitat; in Ottawa a provincially significant wetland is endangered with many species of endangered plants in Leitrim Wetland; in Kingston key natural areas are being lost. The reality is that municipal councils are overly influenced by the deep pockets of developers, while a normally inquisitive local media turns the other way due to the huge advertising revenue from the "new homes" sections of local newspapers. The province must begin to protect species at risk from urban sprawl.

Threats in our vast northern wilderness continue, particularly due to the favourable tax treatment of mining exploration, although logging is still a concern for the habitat of the woodland caribou in Ontario's boreal forests.

The outdated provincial Endangered Species Act must be updated to meet the current protection gap. An analysis by CPAWS – Wildlands League, Environmental Defence, Ontario Nature and Sierra Legal Defence Fund determined that 77% of the species at risk in Ontario currently have no protection.

Although the McGuinty government has already and repeatedly committed to updating and strengthening Ontario's Endangered Species Act, there is no visible progress. The only bright spot that is somewhat related was reform proposed to the province's land-use planning laws under Bill 51 – Planning and Conservation Land Statute Law Amendment Act. Sound land use planning is essential in confronting the issue of urban sprawl.

Meanwhile, in the northern boreal forests of the province, First Nations and environmental groups have demanded that government act to halt industrial development.

There has not been adequate consultation with First Nations governments, as required by recent Supreme Court of Canada decisions nor has there been conservation planning prior to resource allocation in the northern boreal. Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug and eight Ontario First Nations have called for a halt to all forestry and mining in their ancestral lands, stating that "the health of our ecosystems, waters and natural resources of our communities are endangered by mining explorations and other forms of resource development."

One of the worst mining proposals in Ontario's history has been fast-tracked despite the fact it involves unproven technology to mine in muskeg in the James Bay lowlands near Attawapiskat. The Victor Diamond Mine, proposed by DeBeers, will be a massive open pit operation in untouched northern boreal. The previous federal government decided to allow the mine to proceed despite huge levels of uncertainty about its environmental impacts.

One bright spot this year is the success of Sierra Legal Defence Fund and CPAWS-Wildlands League. They managed to get 8,000 km of controversial roads pulled from Ministry of Northern Development and Mines maps. The case was made that the department had neglected the fact that the information about these roads was confidential in nature.

Climate Change

2006 Grade: F

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

Two disastrous decisions by the McGuinty Government have earned them a failing grade. The announcement of the Government's commitment to build new nuclear power plants is the worst possible direction Premier McGuinty could have chosen in addressing Ontario's electricity needs. The decision to throw billions of dollars at the most dangerous and expensive means of generating electricity yet devised essentially forecloses the option of making the substantial investment in conservation and renewable electricity necessary to meet the challenge of climate change.

The history of nuclear power in Ontario is one of the projects that dramatically exceed budget and take years longer than planned to complete. Ontario's so called stranded debt is largely a nuclear debt. Insanity has been defined as committing the same act repeatedly and expecting a different outcome. By this measure, the McGuinty Government decision to build new nuclear power plants is an insane decision. Sierra Club of Canada, Ontario Chapter Director Dan McDermott has compared this act with allowing the captain of the Titanic to take another run at the iceberg.

The nuclear announcement came just four days after Energy Minister Dwight Duncan abandoned the Liberal Government's pledge to phase out coal-fired electricity generation by 2009. The original commitment to shut down coal-fired power by 2007 was a significant factor in the McGuinty Government winning the 2003 provincial election. This embarrassing policy retreat has numerous negative aspects. Coal-fired power is the most carbon intensive means of generating electricity. The massive amount of pollutants released by these same plants carries with it a quantifiable death toll. The retreat on phasing out coal also sends a negative message to the US states whose coal emissions comprise a significant component of Ontario's air pollution burden. With "clean hands" Ontario could leverage reductions in cross-border US emissions. Without clean hands Ontario's annual death count from air pollution is unlikely to be reduced from the annual figure of 5,800 premature deaths as reported by the Ontario Medical Association.

This perfect storm of disastrous decisions is even more unfortunate because there had been much hope that the McGuinty Government was committed to policy decision to address the challenge of climate change and to reduce air pollution. This promise and these hopes have evaporated over a four-day span. The McGuinty Government's former promise of leadership on both climate change and air pollution now lies in tatters. The McGuinty Government had promised to be part of the solution to these crises, the government is now adding to these critical problems.

BONUS GRADE FOR WATER!!! - A

Due to two critical pieces of progress, one through the Ministry of Environment and through the Ministry of Natural Resources, progress on the water front deserves a bonus mark of "A." Water policy has not been a Rio Report Card grading item, but this year the stellar work of Minister Ramsay's team in protracted negotiations with the governors of the Great Lakes states and Minister Broten's new Clean Water Act merit an extra grade.

The Clean Water Act is a response to the Walkerton Inquiry and recommendations to protect water at source. Sierra Club of Canada's only criticism was that the act should have embraced water efficiency measures at the same time it moves to protect water quality.

On the Great Lakes Annex, Ontario was clearly the lead jurisdiction in pressing hard for a "no diversions" principle within the new pact, which includes eight Great Lakes States as well as Quebec and Ontario.

MANITOBA

Biodiversity

2006 Grade: C+

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

The provincial government of Gary Doer receives an increased mark largely in recognition of its valiant and long term struggle to prevent the building of the Devil's Lake Diversion. Tragically, the issue was not referred to the International Joint Commission for a complete environmental assessment. The provision of the 1909 Boundary Waters Treaty that would have allowed Canada to make a unilateral referral was not used by the federal government. The Martin government, through then-Ambassador Frank McKenna and former Environment Minister Stéphane Dion did work tirelessly to persuade the US State Department to make the referral, but stopped short of making history by using the unilateral referral.

Tragically, the diversion has proceeded, with only inadequate filtration through a sand filter as Devils Lake contains high levels of salts, arsenic, boron, mercury and phosphorus. This however ignores the big issues. That filter does not uphold North Dakota's own standards, so there is currently no flow. In the meantime Sierra Legal Defense Fund has filed a request for investigation for its Environmental Non-Governmental Organization clients with the Clean Environment Commission under NAFTA. The threat remains of the introduction of exotic species with a potential to devastate Manitoba ecosystems.

Also, North Dakota's projected water needs, with no water conservation standards imbedded, are being touted in a draft EIS report that is so deficient that the State of Minnesota took the unusual step of participating in the public review. The deadline for comments on this plan for multiple pipelines (including to take water from the Lake of the Woods), and inter-basin transfers (including from the Missouri River system) keeps being moved back.

Meanwhile, the Government of Manitoba also gets points for supporting the protection of the boreal forests on the east side of Manitoba. The Manitoba government has committed to, "not building transmission lines through the East Side of Lake Winnipeg." The province

must move soon to finalize the protection of these forest ecosystems, known as the “heart of the boreal” as a World Heritage Site (WHS). There has been two years of rhetoric from the government concerning the creation of a World Heritage Site on the East Side of Manitoba with no help from either the province or the feds.

One current component of the proposed WHS is the Poplar / Nanowin Rivers Park Reserve. This 800,000 ha. interim protected area now has a completed lands management plan, and the Poplar River First Nation have notified the Manitoba government that they wish the current interim protection to be made permanent. Tens of thousands of letters have been sent to the Manitoba Premier and Conservation Minister through the Natural Resources Defense Fund’s “Save BioGems” website in support of the First Nations’ lands protection goals.

The time for action is long overdue. The Manitoba government needs to put interim protection in place where requested by other First Nation communities in advance of lands management planning and next steps for a World Heritage Site. The Manitoba Government also needs to respect Poplar River First Nation’s request for permanent protection of their traditional territory.

No lands management plans have been developed through the government’s East Side Planning Initiative, despite over 4 years of meetings. We are several years into the public intent for community driven lands use planning for the boreal regions and communities in those regions. The only lands management plan in place to date is from Poplar River First Nation, as noted above.

The government has turned East Side Planning Initiative (ESPI) into a development-planning group. The draft protocol document, like an MOU from two years ago, largely dodges the original set of goals and objectives for the ESPI, while providing vague assurances of Aboriginal rights being respected, while expecting all community data to be provided to government. Much of its content is about development planning only. The lack of clear consultation guidelines for the basis for decision-making that affects First Nations continues to be worrisome. These communities should be enabled to establish baseline information about traditional territories and these forest regions, in order to conduct lands planning before any development decisions are made.

The East Side of Lake Winnipeg planning process (now called Wabanong Nakaygum Okimawin [WNO]) was initiated by the Province in 2002, but since early 2005 the process has shifted to reconsider the approach to addressing Aboriginal and treaty rights and title, exploring a structure that secures greater leadership by the First Nations. The progress of this initiative has not been reported to the public in a transparent fashion, and to date no lands plans have been enabled by this process. Several First Nations on the east side of the Lake have also signed an Accord among themselves that commits them to support one another and work together in a shared vision of protecting their ancestral lands and resources. These communities have stated their intent to plan. One of the Accord First Nations, the Poplar River First Nation, completed its community-initiated and led lands management planning process in 2005, releasing its lands plan which calls for permanent protection of over 90% of its traditional territory. Other First Nations in Manitoba are in various stages of land use planning, or have undertaken studies (inventories, oral histories,

archeological studies, etc.) that are or will be used as a basis for community land use planning. The Northern Flood Agreement includes, but does not enable land use planning for signatory First Nations.

There is a partnership agreement between Tolko and Chemawawin Cree Nation, creating the Chemawawin/Tolko Forest Partnership Area.

Manitoba Conservation Minister Stan Struthers released a long-awaited updated woodland caribou strategy April 13, 2006. The 20-page document, Manitoba's Conservation and Recovery Strategy for the Boreal Woodland Caribou, has been in the works for a few years and is touted as an update to the previous 2000 Woodland Caribou strategy. The Manitoba government press release says the Province will be developing and implementing action plans and recovery based on the new woodland caribou strategy.

The western Canadian population of boreal woodland caribou was declared a vulnerable species by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) April 1984, with the addition of Manitoba ranges in the 1990s. In May 2002, the status for the species in Canada, excluding coastal populations, was reassessed as threatened. In 2003, boreal woodland caribou were listed as threatened under the new national Species at Risk Act. All assessments of woodland caribou acknowledge that habitat loss, degradation and fragmentation are major threats to the species.

This new strategy has omitted woodland caribou herd range areas on the east side of Manitoba, and down graded threat to others.

Finally, the Manitoba Government amended the Manitoba Endangered Species Act (MESA) list on June 12, 2006 to include boreal populations of Woodland Caribou (*Rangifer tarandus* caribou), excluding all coastal populations. This listing, although promising, does not increase the grade. Not until concrete plans are developed, resources are committed or work on the ground is underway will the grade improve.

Protected Areas

There are no new representative protected areas in the province. The new mantra of the government is to create small ecological reserves that do not provide representation of their landscape types or their natural region, but are touted as being of the highest level of protection. Dodging existing public policy regarding completion of representative protected areas in Manitoba, and hiding *minimum protection standards* that have been part of Manitoba public policy for over 15 years insults Manitobans who are expecting these protected areas commitments to be kept. Manitoba's boreal forest regions have many candidate areas, designed by the Manitoba government, stuck in technical reviews, and waiting for protected areas decisions.

Manitoba is now three 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. The province is not even reporting on the out of date action plan. Each year the Conservation Minister promises to update the *Action Plan*.

Overall, we have continuing and ongoing impacts on ecosystems and biodiversity that require a major commitment from the province that environmental protection is held in higher regard than unchecked development.

Case in point is the experience in Manitoba in Fall 2005 – there were record high waters, several islands disappeared, severe shoreline erosion and more freshwater in Hudson Bay in 30 years. All of these impacts can be related to Manitoba Hydro's \$800M in extra output. The great myth is that the impacts of the dams built in the 1970s are over but in fact we are still being impacted.

Climate Change

2006 Grade: B

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)

Premier Gary Doer has been lauded and feted for pro-Kyoto rhetoric, more than for delivery. Heralded in the *Business Week* Low Carbon Leaders awards in December 2005 as one of the strongest individual leaders in the world, along with Tony Blair and Arnold Schwarzenegger, Doer had better deliver. Manitoba's emissions have actually risen 11% since 1990.

The recently released climate change action plan was signaled out by the David Suzuki Foundation as the best in the country. Yet, many Manitobans wonder why follow up has been so weak in pursuing the recommendations of Lloyd Axworthy's Climate Change Task Force.

Manitoba gets points for leadership in dissemination of heat pumps, and much of the training of installers for the rest of Canada is being done here. A huge new sub division for south western Winnipeg is planned, with all homes using heat pumps. Concerns have been expressed about the risk of rationalizing urban sprawl with energy efficiency design.

The province's wind strategy, however, is a shambles. Wind farm projects and proposals are sprouting up in Manitoba. No environmental assessment standards exist for these or other alternative energy plants and projects in the province. Currently the province is in the midst of significant changes to the Environment Act (which also governs environmental assessments, reviews etc) so that regardless of cost, size or location no wind energy project will ever receive a public hearing. The wind energy projects being touted include some on open crown land – where no notification or consultation with affected First Nations has occurred.

Wind power is a large component of a low-carbon energy future, but pushing through projects without an environmental assessment (EA) and without consultation is a huge mistake that could discredit the whole industry. Wind projects must be properly sited to avoid proximity to residential areas (due to noise) and to keep them from significant migratory fly-ways. Generally speaking, properly sited wind power poses a negligible threat to birds, far less than over-lit urban office towers.

As the regulatory review date for Environment Act approaches, draft amendments have been prepared that would have excluded the Wuskwatim Dam from a mandatory EA.

To date, the Manitoba government has not prepared the basic first steps for a low-carbon strategy. There is no registry, voluntary or otherwise for reporting emissions. Nor is there a carbon inventory or budget for province. The only data available is of a very high level aggregate variety. For example, no data is publicly available on Manitoba Hydro's performance.

The Doer government appears to still be of the view that GHG reductions are really not required due to dam construction. Yet, the Wuskwatim Dam is still not approved, and the referendum hasn't happened, ongoing since 2002.

The grade rises to a B largely because every Premier who is willing to defend the climate goals and address the climate crisis is worth thanking when one considers the federal stance.

SASKATCHEWAN

Biodiversity

2006 Grade: C-

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 receives an improved mark for its progressive forest policies, but loses points for its initial reaction to the Land Use Plan for the North Central Area.

The North Central Area – Draft #2 was released for public review January 2006, review period ended March 17th. The NCLUP region is a forested landscape, much of it in pristine condition. While it may be hard to imagine this vast area (3.2 million hectares) being severely impacted by human activities, a look next door to Alberta's boreal forest shows us what can happen in a very short time frame. There, the impacts can be seen from space.

The 'ecological backbone' of the NCLUP region is the Churchill River. Research shows the river to be ecologically sensitive and easily damaged from developments like mining, forestry and hydro. The Churchill is critically important to the overall health of the planning area (and beyond), providing for a diversity of wildlife and important genetic exchange throughout much of the forest. As with other areas in the region, many soft-footprint human activities along the river are entirely appropriate and can provide for a diversity of long-term activities and economic pursuits in the area.

The draft plan has not incorporated many of the accepted principles of conservation biology, understood by scientists as necessary to maintain the long-term health of the forest. The result is a zoning structure designed to accommodate industrial forestry and mining, but which offers little to address the long-term health of the ecosystem. This in turn risks damage to the long-term sustainability of the region's local communities both economically and culturally.

Almost 90% of the planning area is going to be opened up to industrial development. Important and highly valued places like the Churchill River, Foster Lakes/River system, and the Paull River system are being zoned to allow for commercial logging and mining. In so

doing, the ecological significance of these waterways to the overall functioning of the forest and to the ongoing economic, cultural and recreational pursuits of citizens are not being considered or addressed.

The government plan proposes two protected sites (ecological reserves) known as Pink Lake and Geike River. Unfortunately the sites are not good choices to help preserve the ecological integrity of the planning area. The Geike River is a narrow 2 kilometers wide corridor. The Pink Lake site is appreciably large (342,000 ha), but conservation values were not used to select it. Both sites were selected largely for their low mineral and timber values and environmental representation was based solely on abiotic features (rocks, soils and land form).

Four years of research, data, analyses and mapping was provided to the planning process by CPAWS, Sierra Club of Canada and other colleagues at the planning table. The results show a strong need for caution because the land is particularly fragile and sensitive to unnatural disturbances like logging and mining. This sensitivity is due to many things ranging from poor nutrient cycling in cold boreal soils, to short growing seasons and a harsh climate. The data also demonstrates that industrial forestry is both ecologically and economically unsustainable for the region. An initial look at the tourism industry reveals it to be a promising option for future economic growth in the region, but highly dependant on intact ecosystems and wilderness values. Unfortunately, government consistently refused to consider any of the information.

Saskatchewan Government Relations is reviewing The Planning and Development Act, 1983 and is currently accepting comments. The Act empowers municipalities to govern local development and land use. The Act is under review in order to ensure that it meets municipal and provincial goals for sustainable communities.

Forest Policy

Provincial policy exists to identify old forests and maintain their proportion on the landscape using a natural disturbance emulation approach. The natural fire cycle influence is incorporated directly into the forest estate modelling process. The policy vehicle to accomplish this is the natural disturbance emulation standard on maintenance of old forest, which went to public review in February 2006. The government is currently developing 'Landscape Standards and Guidelines' which will address old forest distribution and patch size.

At present, there is a perceived abundance of old seral classes due to fire suppression, so there is not a great deal of effort invested in maintaining late seral stages. In the Weyerhaeuser Forest Management Agreement, the rotation age was lowered to allow quicker turn over and harvesting has largely targeted older growth spruce and pine. This was clearly identified as a problem by the independent review panel that commented on the FMA long term plan in 2000, but the harvesting model was not changed.

Climate Change

2006 Grade: C+

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

Saskatchewan's energy picture is a worst of all worlds scenario -- exporting uranium to create nuclear waste and/or weapons, while burning coal at home. Wind power is only now coming on stream. The province has a bright and committed environment minister, David Forbes, who participated vigourously at the Montreal climate negotiations last fall, but an environmentally regressive premier and cabinet whose NDP orange verges on brown.

Still, some progress was made this year through federal-provincial cooperation with the previous federal government. The \$64,000 question is, did Lorne Calvert actually agree with Harper that killing current climate change plans was acceptable, as Harper's Western Premiers Summit attempted to claim? If Calvert accedes to a Harper abdication of responsibility on Kyoto, Saskatchewan's grade moves to an "F."

In November, the two levels of government announced cooperation, and \$40 million funding, for initial feasibility work on two projects that will help Saskatchewan reduce greenhouse gas emissions as part of new five-year Memorandum of Understanding on climate change between the Governments of Canada and Saskatchewan. The funding was to be supported through the Partnership Fund which Prime Minister Stephen Harper has cancelled.

It is not clear how the cancellation of funds will impact the Saskatchewan climate programme.

Meanwhile, Saskatchewan has made progress in promoting energy efficiency in the residential sector. In November the province created Saskatchewan Energy Share. Since then \$1.7 million in combined federal and provincial grants were issued to more than 1,000 Saskatchewan homeowners through the EnerGuide for Houses programme. As well, early in 2006, the Energy Share programme announced grants to homeowners to reduce home heating costs. With the cancellation of the federal EnerGuide programme, this entire programme is on the ropes.

Wind power began to come on stream in 2005, with more in this year. The Centennial Wind Power Facility began generating power to the electrical grid in late 2005. The 150-megawatt (MW) project being built by SaskPower International 25 kilometres southeast of Swift Current is moving closer to completion. In all, 83 wind turbines have been delivered to the site, 64 of those wind turbines have been fully constructed and 50 have been commissioned and are delivering up to 90 MW of power to the Saskatchewan electrical grid. All existing projects on completion will deliver 172 MW of clean and renewable wind generated electricity to Saskatchewan. A top priority for the Saskatchewan government should be the construction of an operational plant to make cellulose ethanol. Corn ethanol has borderline benefits in fighting climate change, whereas cellulose ethanol is a clear winner.

Saskatchewan's comparative advantage as the location for a cellulose ethanol plant is its abundance of switchgrass and straw. The switchgrass provides excellent habitat for migratory waterfowl and in the fall can be removed for making ethanol. It is a brilliant solution, but if governments in Canada do not act fast, this Canadian technology will be first commercialized south of the border.

ALBERTA

Biodiversity

2006 Grade: F

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

Endangered Species

Progress on the identification, conservation and recovery of endangered species still remains dismal. The plight of bull trout, grizzly bears and woodland caribou (both the mountain and boreal variants) is indicative of the lack of effective action for recovery of threatened and endangered species, particularly regarding habitat protection and restoration.

One bright spot was the suspension of the grizzly bear hunt in Alberta, where the population now only numbers 500 or so. This is less than the 700 estimate of last year and way under the internationally accepted threshold of 1,000 breeding adults, below which a population is considered endangered. At one time the province had 10,000 to 16,000 grizzlies, but the prairie sub-population is extinct and the rest are now headed in that direction.

Although finally suspending the annual hunt, the province did not list grizzlies as threatened in the legislation. This is now the third year that the province has failed to follow the recommendation of its Endangered Species Conservation Committee that it do so. Hence, there still is no legal obligation to put in place an effective recovery plan, including habitat protection and restoration. Resource companies thus, continue to maintain that grizzlies are not threatened and therefore no changes are needed in their operations.

In the face of a lack of action on habitat, the west-central Alberta portion of the population has collapsed in the once productive Foothills habitat adjacent Banff and Jasper National Parks. In 2002, the province estimated there were 147 grizzlies between Highway 16 to Jasper and Highway 11, leading to Banff National Park from Rocky Mountain House. The grizzlies there now number only about 53.

The remaining range for woodland caribou totals about one-quarter of Alberta (26%) and is located in the Rocky Mountain, Foothills and Boreal Natural Regions. Nine of the twelve Alberta herds have been determined by the province to be under immediate risk of extinction or in decline. Only 14% of the intact forests within their ranges are protected within parks or other such protected areas, pointing to a future of further declines in the face of unbridled resource development. The recovery plan, including herds in immediate peril, allows new resource development in their critical habitat, particularly logging and petroleum activities.

Although provincial endangered species legislation, including habitat protection was promised years ago by Premier Klein, none has materialized. Eight species listed as endangered or threatened under the federal legislation do not have legal protection under Alberta's laws. The general status report on wild species in Alberta, to be published every five years, is a year overdue.

Forest Ecosystems and Bull Trout

It is in the province of Alberta where the issues of forest conservation, watershed protection and climate change solidify the importance of protecting and restoring biological diversity in order to sustain ecological systems for our daily lives. Alberta's forest ecosystems occur within the Boreal, Foothills, Rocky Mountain and Parkland Natural Regions, and are rapidly disappearing. On the large, landscape scale, there are no ecologically intact forest landscapes left in Alberta. Thus, conservation efforts now refer to "forest landscape fragments," which are remnants of an ecologically intact forest landscape. A forest landscape fragment is a contiguous mosaic of a naturally occurring ecosystem, including forest, bog, water, tundra, and rock outcrops, that is within a forest ecozone, and that is essentially undisturbed by significant human influence. Of the 63 forest management units in Alberta, only seven have more than half their area remaining as forest landscape fragments.

Research published this year has also concluded that Alberta is facing an unprecedented water crisis due to a combination of climate change, increased human activity and the historical climate indications that we are now in a century much drier than the past 20th century.

It has long been known that virgin or intact forest ecosystems produce the highest quality of water. Plus, because they are colder and moister than open areas, such as logging clearcuts, they delay snow melt and act like a sponge, releasing water later into the summer season when it is in heavy demand by people and wildlife. Intact riparian forests also buffer the natural cycle of floods. With climate change, there is already a decline in glaciers, which also supply the flows, snowpacks are dwindling and there is higher evaporation of precipitation which further emphasizes the importance of intact forests. Of the 114 watersheds in Alberta's forest ecosystems, almost two-thirds (71 watersheds) have less than half their area remaining as forest landscape fragments.

Bull trout are an indicator of healthy, natural watersheds flowing from the Rocky Mountains and Foothills. That region, known to many as the Eastern Slopes, is the source of flowing water for Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. Appreciable declines in the bull trout, a threatened species, have coincided with dramatic expansions of commercial logging and

petroleum exploration and development. There are no plans for reversing that downward trend towards extinction. There is no provincial recovery team or plan, let alone a plan integrated with watershed protection in Alberta's forest ecosystems.

Despite government inaction, one company has taken action. In September 2005, Alberta-Pacific Forest Industries Inc. (Al-Pac) received Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) Certification for 55,000 km² of its Forest Management Agreement (FMA) lands in the public forests of northeastern Alberta. Al-Pac's FMA is larger in size than the total of all the five national parks in Alberta, including Wood Buffalo, the world's second largest national park. It is twice the size of the total of all the provincial protected areas. Not included in the certification is the tar sands (mineable oilsands) portion of their FMA, which is comparable in size to more than a quarter of all the provincial protected areas.

The FSC certification for Al-Pac's operation, located in the Boreal region, sets out implementation conditions to be met to sustain the forest ecosystem over time. FSC is not just about how to log, but also where not to log. Thus, there is an expectation of habitat protection for wildlife and adequate areas set aside for the establishment of parks and other such legislated protected areas.

Protected Areas

Alberta is the only place in North America where the prairie, boreal forest and mountains meet, rendering a treasure trove of wild landscapes, rivers and species. But, in this first year of Alberta's next 100 years as a province, protection continues to slide backwards in the face of unbridled resource development, and not for lack of citizen action.

Even though 70% of Alberta is public land, virtually all of its waters are public and the protected areas systems is still not complete, no new protected areas have been established since last year's report. The government has no park initiative under which new parks can move forward to designation and two powerful departments still hold their position that there will be no new protected areas in Alberta.

Two candidate Rocky Mountain/Foothill parks identified by a government committee as backlogged sites to be established by the end of 1994 are still not protected. That includes the Castle wilderness, the most biologically diverse area in Alberta, although, the government is showing interest in moving forward with establishing it as the Andy Russell – P'tai sah kòp Park. By comparison within the Crown of the Continent ecosystem where the Castle and Waterton Lakes National Park are located, land-holders through the work of the Nature Conservancy established conservation easements for 100 km² of private ranchland in the Waterton Front.



The prairie grasslands meet the Western Alberta Foothills meet the Rocky mountains in this unique and unprotected ecosystem near Yaba Tinda Ranch in Big Horn Country.

When it comes to representing and protecting Alberta's biological diversity, the system of parks and other such legislated protected areas is far from complete, even by the measure of the government's own low targets; set to meet the province's 1992 commitment to complete the system. Targets haven't been met for four of the six Natural Regions: Parkland, Grassland, Foothills (a unique part of the Boreal region on the national scale) and Boreal. The largest numbers of endangered species are those resident in the Grasslands. The Foothills, Boreal and Rocky Mountains are home to two of the most threatened large mammals – grizzly bears and woodland caribou.

Existing protected areas are under continual pressure by resource industries, off-road vehicle use and lack of resources for park management. Companies want to move forward with coalbed methane drilling in the 144 km² Rumsey Natural Area – the continent's largest remaining wildland of Aspen Parkland and Northern Fescue Grassland – where the province issued mineral rights last year. Encana has applied to drill 1,275 gas wells in the 458 km² CFB Suffield National Wildlife Area. A joint federal-provincial panel will make the decision on that application, but the track record from the Cheviot open-pit mine does not bode well for this nationally significant remnant of our once extensive prairie wilderness.

In the richest region of Canada, the provincial Parks and Protected Areas Division still lacks sufficient operational funding and staff, leaving it struggling to do effective enforcement, environmental education and management. Less than half of the protected areas have a management plan and of those plans, half are out of date. There is no capacity for monitoring and reporting on the health of the protected areas.

Mining Issues

The tar sands mining in the Athabasca region represents the largest scale direct assault on boreal forest ecosystems anywhere in Canada. The loss of wetlands, peat, forests and caribou habitat can never be replaced even with the operating principle of reclamation. Forests may grow again on recovered open pits, although this has not been accomplished in open-pit mine reclamation in the Foothills and Rocky Mountains, but peat lands take centuries to form. This is a permanent loss of ecological integrity, as well as an assault on water resources and climate stability.

The worse case scenario is playing out at the massive Cheviot open-pit coal mine located in west-central Alberta, adjacent Jasper National Park – no effective implementation of mitigation measures to lessen the significant environmental losses and no protection for the remainder of this national significant wildland (significance as rated by federal and provincial assessments). The federal government assured Canadians that effective mitigation would be in place. Alberta disbanded the provincial-federal committee responsible for overseeing mitigation and compensation.

Losses now occurring range from selenium contamination of the McLeod River headwaters through to the destruction of critical wildlife habitat; habitat zoned by the province in the 1980s as crucial to the survival of specific fish and wildlife species. Simply put, the province refused to do an environmental assessment of the substantially changed mine development and the federal government, despite concerns of its own officials, authorized activities that are resulting in the destruction of prime habitat for grizzly bears, Alberta's largest breeding

population of Harlequin ducks (next to that protected in Banff National Park), a number of other threatened or rare species, and thousands of migratory song birds. The Federal Court was unable to correct this oversight.

The joint federal-provincial review panel stipulated in its 2000 report on the earlier mine proposal that it would review its recommendation of approval, if by April 2004, there was no evidence that effective compensation, through habitat measures elsewhere in the region, was in place for the destruction of grizzly bear habitat in the mine development. That review has not happened. The 2001 federal response to the report assured Canadians that threshold landscape conditions to protect grizzly bear habitat and limit road densities in the region would be in place by February 2003. That has not happened. For the 9,752 km² region where the massive mine is located, research published last year concluded that unless protected areas are set aside and habitat fragmentation from all development is reduced, there will be no habitat left for female grizzly bears within 30 years. With the province's release of population numbers this past spring, the extent to which this part of the Alberta population has collapsed is now quantified through the most rigorous techniques available – DNA census.

Climate Change

2006 Grade: F

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)

For years the saying has been “The West wants in.” Well, now the West is officially in, and “in charge.”

It is time for Preston Manning’s Green revolution to start. Instead, the province’s climate strategy remains in the grip of Ralph Klein while Canada’s national performance is dragged down by Stephen Harper. The province of Alberta is now Canada’s largest polluter, having taken over from what used to be the land of belching smokestacks in southern Ontario.

Klein has refused to budge on Kyoto; meanwhile he continues to shovel money to the oil industry. With the lowest royalty rates in the world for conventional oil and gas, and the lowest rates for tar sands oil (one percent until all costs of production are recovered), Klein’s strategy is of greater benefit to Houston than Alberta, including the rapidly expanding Fort McMurray - the base for the tar sands production.

It should be a national scandal that Fort McMurray with 70,000 residents lacks basic infrastructure for health care, sewage, and housing. Twenty per cent of Fort McMurray’s population has no fixed address, and there are only 2.1 doctors for every 6,500 people. The acute shortage of labour is cited as the limiting factor on tar sands expansion, but it should be lack of water, dirty air and climate impacts that limit the unsustainable levels of expansion in the tar sands. Meanwhile the First Nations people experience higher rates of cancer, the tailing ponds stretch to cover over 50 square kilometres (larger than the average size of provincial parks and other such protected areas in Alberta). As if this weren’t reason for concern enough, the energy demand to extract the gel-like tar from the sands is so acute that gas from the pristine Mackenzie Valley may virtually all be headed for the Athabasca tar sands, and still not be enough to get the viscous bitumen into commercial crude.



Tar sands mining threatens to tear a 3000 square km hole in Canada’s boreal forest.



The Athabasca Tar Sands are a major contributing factor, as the dirtiest and most energy intensive oil extraction process, to the provinces rapidly increasing GHG Emissions

The greenhouse gas impacts are the single biggest reason Canada is so far off its Kyoto target and why Alberta now produces nearly 40% of the nation's total greenhouse Gas Emissions. Tar sands production of greenhouse gas emissions was 17 megatonnes in 1990, and is projected to increase 57 to 97 megatonnes by 2015 --the largest single addition to Canada's greenhouse gas emissions.

In November of 2005, the government released its Mineable Oil Sands Strategy, developed by Alberta Energy. The strategy placed a primary land-use purpose, for over 3000 square kilometers of Boreal Forest, on mineable oil

sands operations and clearly disregarded any ecological or health benefit the region contained.

Kudos need to be awarded to the Minister of Environment (and MLA for Fort McMurray) Guy Boutelier for advocating a rethinking of the strategy. As a Christmas present of sorts, the strategy was momentarily shelved while a consultation process for a broader strategy for the region is determined. The report and plan for the consultation will contain a multi-stakeholder committee and panel review tasked with assessing a broad vision and strategy for the entire oil sands region; an area that is best described, in scope, to contain a surface area comparable to that of the state of Florida.

This committee may take up to a year or more to completely fulfill its mandate. The Ministry of Energy, in the meantime, shows no trend for slowing oil extraction from the tar sands. In the absence of a moratorium on new approvals in the zone, and a continuance of a business as usual approach, this consultation process stands to gain little in meaningful overall outcomes to protect the health of communities and ecosystems in the Athabasca region or to reduce the levels of greenhouse gases arising from the projects.

In light of the rapid expansion of tar sands oil and the greenhouse gases contributed by this intensive industrial process, the province has been looking towards solutions for curbing emissions. Unfortunately, this has not resulted in a slowing of Tar Sands projects, nor has it resulted in a strong provincial regulatory system for the industrial processes contributing to the increased emissions. Alberta Environment is trying to push through legislation on Large Final Emitters. Although this is a very small baby step, the anticipated connection to the government's climate action plans carbon intensity measure will prevent this regulation from achieving absolute emission reductions.

In lieu of regulations on absolute emission reductions, the Government of Alberta is placing all of its hopes in curbing GHGs in the technological basket of Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS). CCS – the piping and storage of large quantities (largely from industrial emitters) of carbon dioxide in the earth's crust – does sound tempting. It could be one tool in the toolbox of those aiding in the achievement of deep reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.

It is however, a very new technology that does not come without its risks (the mass release of carbon dioxide, for example, could be catastrophic).

Furthermore, as the only tool in the box, Carbon Capture and Storage does nothing to reduce the end point sources of greenhouse gas emissions caused by the continued extraction of natural gas, coalbed methane, oil and coal from Alberta. Tar sands oil, for example, is used largely to power the energy needs of transportation demands. This is a sector that contributes to nearly 1/3rd of both Canada's and the United States' total greenhouse gas emissions.

In order for Carbon Capture and Storage to have a place in any management system around Climate Change, it needs to be a part of a package outlining a plan for a transition to a renewable and clean energy future in the province.

A clear incentive or level playing field between the fossil fuel industry and renewable energy sectors, has yet to be accepted by government. The Integrated Energy plan in Alberta clearly continues to set this standard of inequality in the energy sector. According to the Canadian Renewable Energy Association, although Alberta has prime location for the generation of solar and wind capacity, provinces such as Ontario will nearly double Alberta's installed renewable energy capacity.

The province's action plan on climate change fails to measure up to international obligations and achieve absolute reductions in emissions. By choosing to measure Carbon Intensity (a measurement that connects emissions targets to increased GDP), the Government of Alberta has given the green light for a substantial increase in the provinces GHG emissions.

There have been some initiatives within corporate operations, that do constitute baby steps but unfortunately fail to be sufficient to increase the provinces grade. These include:

- 90% target for Green Power Purchasing; and
- Alberta Infrastructure has adopted standards for new government building construction that are 25 per cent more efficient than the National Energy Code.

Climate Change Central, the arms length organization tasked with implementing climate change programs and research in Alberta, continues to produce good work and their furnace replacement program, although massively under-funded was a good initiative.

Unfortunately, even their funding was substantially cut allowing for their impacts on reducing emissions in the province to be even further limited.

Unfortunately, we would be amiss to not recognize those two politicians in Alberta most responsible for eroding any national resemblance to a climate change program – Prime Minister Stephen Harper and Environment Minister Rona Ambrose – both elected as Alberta Members of Parliament. It's time that the province of Alberta steps up to the plate and show concrete leadership in the area of Climate Change.

With the Federal Conservative government's dismissal of the Kyoto Protocol, the responsibility for meaningful climate action, for the immediate future, rests with the provinces and municipalities. In Alberta, given the absence of meaningful reductions at the

provincial scale, the largest two of the province's cities have embarked on admirable processes to address Climate Change emissions within the municipality.

BRITISH COLUMBIA

Biodiversity

2006 Grade: B

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)

We may be grading too generously, considering the litany of poor performance areas described below in the last year. However, any year in which a provincial government sets aside two million hectares and protects a vast ecosystem with species of global significance from the ravages of logging, a reward in easier marking is in order! The B could have been an A+ for the landmark announcement of the Great Bear rainforest, but poor policies for the fishery and logging elsewhere hold the Campbell government to a B.

Fisheries Policy

Failure to list Interior Fraser Coho on SARA Schedule I has compromised the Wild Salmon Policy and reinforces the perception that any endangered fish species whose protection has commercial implications will never be protected under SARA. We fear the scenario will be repeated as sturgeon is considered for protection. Prior engagement of BC Conservative MP's in supporting the sports fishing lobby's desire not to list Coho does not bode well.

As industry eyes an estimated return of 17 million sockeye to the Fraser River this year, salmon fishing plans for the 2006 season have already proposed that endangered Cultus sockeye and other rare runs be subject to greater than 40% fishing pressure. We have contributed to the formulation of conservation-first negotiating principles for the direction of ENGO participants at this table. We suspect political interference from BC's Conservative MPs was the likely culprit in undermining action for conservation.

In BC generally, 38 of 130 BC sockeye runs are endangered by COSEWIC criteria; while 98 are decreased, depressed or unknown – only eight have shown increases. There is an urgent need to better assess sockeye runs and shift toward terminal fisheries, neither of which is happening.

Forestry Practices

As noted in last year's Rio Report Card, environmental protection can now only be applied to the extent that they do not "unduly impact the timber supply of BC." This is still the case. This cap creates an impossible downward pressure on environmental protection.

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.

New higher level forest plan called the Forest Stewardship Plan (FSP), is being developed, and it is seriously inadequate for the purposes of a public. Forest Practices Board, arms-lengths body from government has released report that FSP's are not adequate.

The May 1 report from the BC Forest Practices Board raises major concerns about B.C.'s forestry laws and the lack of information available to the public about logging plans throughout the province. In the wake of the report, environmental groups demanded the B.C. government to halt approval of all logging plans until forest companies provide citizens with information on where and how they intend to log.

The numerous deficiencies with the Forest and Range Practices Act referenced by the Board's report include:

- The public is given no information about road building and logging locations in areas that average over 300,000 hectares in size (sometimes as large as 800,000 hectares);
- Forestry laws are vague and do not require logging companies to make enforceable commitments about how they will log;
- The legal requirement to consult with the public about logging plans is meaningless because companies do not provide relevant information about prospective logging;
- The Ministry of Forests has no discretion to refuse logging plans that meet only minimal requirements; and
- Environmental protection measures can be ignored if they unduly impact logging.

The tenure take back process through the forestry revitalization plan which was implemented 2004/05 states that 20% of the Annual Allowable Cut (AAC) will be redistributed to the first nations (forest and range agreements), community forests, and the BC timber sale. However, the First Nations agreements are short-term volume-based tenures which are incompatible with their land use planning.

Spotted Owl

The spotted owl recovery plan is essentially an extinction plan. Without federal engagement through the Species at Risk Act, British Columbia appears to be only interested in an illusory plan in place long enough to get through the potential international embarrassment of the 2010 Olympics with no plan in place to protect the country's most endangered birds.

The controversial new plan by the British Columbia government allows logging of critical owl habitat and focuses on capturing and breeding owls instead of protecting the old forests the owls need to survive. The plan also ignores the recommendation of the government's own spotted owl recovery team to protect enough habitat to recover the diminishing owl population to 125 pairs of birds. Under the plan, the B.C. government, through its Timber Sales Program, will continue as the largest logger of owl habitat.

Climate Change

2006 Grade: D

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)

In 2005, the B.C. government continued the same fundamentally unsatisfactory performance on climate change that it established in previous years. Its energy policy continues to be premised on producing fossil fuel resources at the maximum rate, so as to help generate revenues to cover B.C.'s operating expenses that would otherwise be covered by higher corporate taxes. There is no commitment to address the fundamental unsustainability of this course.

Government resources continue to be heavily weighted toward fossil fuel production. Of the Ministry of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources' \$72 million budget, \$11 million is for the oil and gas sector, and a further \$4.3 million is aimed at promoting offshore oil and gas development (despite repeated strong statements of opposition by the people of B.C.). Only \$1.5 million is budgeted for the Electricity and Alternative Energy Division, which is responsible for developing alternative energies. There is no change in the formal climate change policy (laid out in *Climate, Weather and the Future: B.C.'s Plan*, 2004), which sets no

definite targets or significant policy actions for greenhouse gas emissions reductions. B.C.'s energy plan, currently under revision, also does not set any targets for cutting greenhouse gas emissions. (The state of California, by comparison, has said it will reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 25 percent by 2020.)

There is a commitment to maintain B.C.'s rank as having the third lowest per capita greenhouse gas emissions among Canadian provinces. However, there has been no indication of what this means in practical terms, or how this relates to actually addressing climate change. B.C.'s greenhouse gas emissions are forecast to grow at the second fastest rate in Canada up to 2020. Province-wide emissions rose 27 percent between 1997 and 2002, from 53 million tonnes CO² equivalent a year to 67.5 million tonnes annually. The mining and fossil fuels industries comprise almost 20 percent of B.C.'s total emissions, while emissions from transportation and buildings together make up almost one-half of emissions.

The government's transport strategy is to increase highway capacity to accommodate, and ultimately encourage, more traffic without regard for greenhouse gas emissions. The strategy includes a highly controversial commitment to twin the Port Mann Bridge. As well, the government has proceeded quickly to double the lanes on the "Sea-to-Sky" highway between Vancouver and Whistler as part of a plan to meet 2010 Olympics transportation needs with more car traffic--the most inefficient and greenhouse gas emitting form of transport. Slightly more than one-third of BC's greenhouse gas emissions are attributable to motor vehicle use.

One potentially positive initiative is the Alternative Energy and Power Task Force. Chaired by Barry Penner (now Environment Minister) and high-tech-energy promoter Mossadiq Umedaly, the task force promotes a vision of a thriving high-tech energy industry in B.C., exporting products all over the world. If the technologies promoted are genuinely sustainable, there is potential to reduce reliance on fossil fuels through increased efficiency and the development of renewable energy sources.

The year 2005 also saw the publication of *Energy Efficient Buildings: A Plan for BC*. This outlines the government's plan to achieve significant increases in energy efficiency in B.C.'s building stock. There appears to be a modest commitment to achieve results, albeit still relying on a voluntary approach rather than instituting obligatory standards. Increased efficiency in buildings could help reduce B.C.'s GHG emissions.

NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

Biodiversity

2006 Grade: D

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 single biggest industrial mega-project in the history of Canada's North and one of the largest industrialization plans in the nation's history is being pushed through without adequate concern for the wildlife and environmental impacts. The support of the territorial government for the Mackenzie Gas Pipeline project is appalling. In the words of its own press release "The Premier and Minister Roland sent a letter of support to the project proponents confirming the intentions of the Government of the Northwest Territories to develop a stable fiscal regime for the project."

This amounts to a letter of support for even more subsidies to the wealthiest corporations on the planet. Exxon, parent company of Imperial, made over \$30 billion (US\$) last year in what can only be termed windfall profits. Why should the Premier go to bat for even more federal subsidies?

The pipeline project with 1300 kilometres of subsurface piping under "continuous" and "discontinuous" permafrost is a major threat to biodiversity in the north, in the construction stage and subsequently. The subsequent industrialization expected along the pipeline's route as other gas fields are developed will change the Mackenzie Valley and one of the world's last wild rivers – forever.

The fact that two of the three gas production facilities are slated for the Kendall Island Bird Sanctuary increases the outrage.

Meanwhile, the territorial government has undermined the biodiversity of the Nahanni National Park, with more mineral staking within the watershed. Canadian Zinc is receiving approvals on a piece-meal basis, without having to complete an environmental assessment. The Dehcho land use plan proposed to protect 53% of the territory with full watershed protection, but the governments have failed to follow up.

As well, Cantung Mine was a tungsten producer in the Northwest Territories from 1962 to 1986, and during 2002 and 2003. The original company that developed the mine was Canada Tungsten Mining Corporation Limited, with Cantung being a short abbreviated form of the company name. The small community of Tungsten was established for workers and their families. It was an open pit operation until 1974 when the newly discovered underground deposit was brought to production. It closed due to low tungsten prices in 1986. With higher prices in the new millennium, the new owner North American Tungsten Corporation reopened the mine for production in 2002. The mine again closed in 2003 when the company's creditors recalled their loans, putting the company on the verge of bankruptcy. They have since re-financed and the mine was reopened in 2005.

The efforts of the people of Deline to move Sahyoue-Edacho Candidate Protected Area to achieve permanent protection through the Protected Area Strategy with Parks Canada and Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) are strongly supported by the conservation community. The community intends to have the area receive meaningful legal protection. The Territorial government must move to support their effort!

Premier Joe Handley has recently reiterated the support of his government for an NWT Protected Areas Strategy, a positive development. This must be contrasted with the statement by Michael Miltenberger, his Environment and Natural Resources Minister, that every square inch of the territory must be opened to development.

Climate Change

2006 Grade: F

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)

The territorial government's support for the Mackenzie Gas Project (MGP) is not only a biodiversity disaster; it is also a climate change disaster as the gas is headed for the carbon intensive Athabasca tar sands. The NWT has buried its head in the tar sands, pretending that the end use of Mackenzie gas – accelerating tar sands development – is not its concern.

GHG emissions in the NWT will skyrocket if the Mackenzie Gas Project is approved. Yet the NWT government refuses to propose policies that guarantee that Mackenzie gas is used to displace carbon intensive fossil fuels such as coal and oil.

YUKON

Biodiversity

2006 Grade: D-

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 continues to drag its feet in establishing protected areas as an effective means to maintain the clean flowing waters, intact boreal forests and healthy woodland caribou populations that Yukoners value. Conservation is clearly not a priority for the current Yukon Party government, which shelved the Protected Areas Strategy upon coming into power. Although a new Protected Areas Strategy is not in order, the Yukon is well equipped with the necessary tools to plan for and implement protected areas. The missing ingredient is the political willpower.

Although the Yukon Party Government has made announcements regarding protected areas, these areas had been negotiated years ago through the land claims process. Therefore, they are arguably not responsible for establishing any “new” protected areas in the territory.

Effectively managing existing protected areas is under question with the Tombstone Territorial Park Management Plan yet to be approved after being completed for several years.

Despite the Department of Tourism’s new wilderness promotional materials that frame the Yukon experience as “larger than life” the current government appears to be more interested in resource development as a way to get the Yukon economy going.

The Yukon has four regional forest management plans in process across the southern Yukon from the southeast to the southwest. These management plans have the opportunity to consider landscape scale conservation measures and to implement progressive and sustainable resource management policies, but time will tell as the results unfold. The recent release of 1 million cubic metres of wood in the southwest Yukon, prior to completion of planning has raised a lot of local concern and hopefully will not be the model followed for the remaining forest management plans.

The Yukon has some forestry guidelines that are deemed progressive by Sierra Club of Canada, however, these guidelines are not legally enforceable. There is a citizen-based process in place to provide consensus input to the Yukon government as it develops the territory's first Forest Act and related policies. The new forestry legislation is expected to be tabled in 2007.

Climate Change

2006 Grade: D

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 grade moves up in recognition of the First Nations pursuit of energy efficiency and conservation.

In Mayo, a new "Government House" for the Na Cho Nyak Dun will be anywhere from 50 to 75 percent more efficient than an average commercial building, while in Atlin, the water of Atlin Lake will heat a new health centre for the Taku River Tlingit.

These leading projects are only a small indication of what is possible in embracing high-tech energy efficiency and demand side management to reduce greenhouse gases and energy costs in the North.

While First Nations deserve credit, the Yukon government needs to do far more!

NUNAVUT

Biodiversity

2006 Grade: C+

2005 Grade: D-

2004 Grade: D-

2003 Grade: D-

2002 Grade: B

2001 Grade: B-

The Nunavut grade has improved with the passage of the Nunavut Wildlife Act, which came into force on Nunavut Day, July 9, 2005. The Nunavut government proclaimed its act as “the country’s most modern and innovative wildlife legislation.”

The act implements the Nunavut Land Claim Agreement wildlife management plan, engaging many stakeholder, hunter and wildlife organizations.

The grade would be higher had the Nunavut government not blocked the proposed listing of the peary caribou as endangered. The listing was recommended by former Environment Minister, Stéphane Dion, but the Nunavut Wildlife Board objected to this status and criticized the consultation process.

A plus for the grade was Nunavut’s Minister of Environment, Olayuk Akesuk, endorsement of Greenland’s Government for instituting a new system of polar bear management.

Nunavut and Greenland share the Kane Basin, Baffin Bay, and Davis Strait polar bear populations.

Climate Change

2006 Grade: B

2005 Grade: B-

2004 Grade: C-

2003 Grade: C-

2002 Grade: B+

Nunavut’s grade on climate change moves up in recognition of innovative, cutting edge energy efficiency projects. The Joamie School in Iqaluit is the first building in Nunavut to receive national recognition for its energy efficient design. Natural Resources Canada provided the recognition through its Office of Energy Efficiency.

As well, energy efficiency measures are being taken by Qulliq Energy Corporation to help Nunavummiut reduce greenhouse gas emissions while cutting energy prices.

The Nunavut government announced approval for the Nunavut Energy Centre with a mandate to provide public education on energy conservation and energy efficiency. The mandate extends to NGOs, businesses and municipalities.

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

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