

Natural Heritage Conservation Program
2024–2025

Conservation Impact Through Partnership

DELIVERED BY



WITH SUPPORT FROM



The Nature Conservancy of Canada, Ducks Unlimited Canada, Wildlife Habitat Canada, and local and regional land trusts as represented by the Alliance of Canadian Land Trusts respectfully acknowledge that the work we do across the country takes place on the traditional territories and ancestral lands of First Nations, Métis and Inuit Peoples, past, present and future. We thank and honour these caretakers and acknowledge the ongoing work and presence of Indigenous Peoples in Canada on the land today.

Through the Natural Heritage Conservation Program, we endeavour to build meaningful relationships founded in mutual respect, and to listen, learn and share our capacity and influence in support of Indigenous-led conservation.

As we face accelerating nature loss and climate change, Indigenous Peoples are leading the way in demonstrating how restoring relationships to land is an integral part of addressing these challenges. A collaborative approach to nature conservation not only offers solutions to biodiversity loss and climate change, but also an opportunity to build new pathways toward thriving communities and ecosystems, in relationship with Indigenous Peoples.

This project was undertaken with the financial support of:
Ce projet a été réalisé avec l'appui financier de :



Environment and
Climate Change Canada

Environnement et
Changement climatique Canada

ABOUT THE PARTNERSHIP

Launched in 2007*, this partnership with the Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC), Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC) and Wildlife Habitat Canada (WHC) mobilizes Canadians to conserve and care for the places they cherish — places that support resilient communities in the face of climate change.

The Natural Heritage Conservation Program (NHCP) directly contributes to Canada's ambitious goal of conserving 30 per cent of its lands and waters by 2030 by enabling its delivery partners to secure and steward natural areas, develop tools and research to accelerate progress on conservation targets and support Indigenous-led conservation initiatives.

And, through its Land Trusts Conservation Fund, the NHCP enables WHC to directly support local and regional land trusts' securement work, and to work with the Alliance of Canadian Land Trusts (ACLT) and others to grow the capacity of Canada's land trust community, further expanding Canada's ability to meet nature's and people's needs.

The delivery partners are proud to produce this NHCP Impact Report (2024–2025), highlighting how the partnership has mobilized Canadians to conserve nature in the past year.

ABOUT THE PARTNERS

Nature Conservancy of Canada

The Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) is a registered charity that collaborates with Indigenous Nations and communities, governments, individuals and businesses to secure proven and lasting solutions for nature and people. Since 1962, NCC has worked hand-in-hand with partners across the country to conserve and steward forests, wetlands, grasslands and coastlines that support species, people and livelihoods. Learn more at natureconservancy.ca.

Wildlife Habitat Canada

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

Ducks Unlimited Canada

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

Alliance of Canadian Land Trusts

At the Alliance of Canadian Land Trusts (ACLT), in partnership with regional alliances, we are dedicated to protecting Canada's most vital landscapes through stewardship and conservation. Representing about 150 local and regional land trusts across the country, we work to ensure that future generations can experience the natural beauty and biodiversity that make Canada unique. Our members are passionate about conserving spaces that matter most to Canadians — whether it's lush forests, vibrant wetlands, or expansive grasslands. Through collaboration with communities, Indigenous groups and partners, ACLT is committed to fostering a collective approach to conservation. Learn more at aclt-acoc.ca.

Contents

- 5 Partnering for nature and Canadians
- 6 Collaborating with Indigenous communities
- 8 Growing knowledge to amplify our impact
- 12 NHCP in 2024–2025: At-a-glance impact
- 14 Nature: Canada's greatest economic strength
- 16 Building legacies with landowners
- 18 Conservation is caring for communities
- 19 The people powering conservation
- 21 At-risk species supported by the NHCP
- 22 Land Trusts Conservation Fund



Read this document online.

*The partnership was launched in 2007 as the Natural Areas Conservation Program. It became the Natural Heritage Conservation Program in 2019.



Partnering for nature and Canadians



CANADA'S NATURAL

landscapes are essential to our identity, our health and our future. Protecting these landscapes helps conserve biodiversity, store carbon and ensure resilient ecosystems for generations to come.

Through the Natural Heritage Conservation Program (NHCP), the Government of Canada is making significant investments to conserve ecologically important land. Delivered by the Nature Conservancy of Canada, Ducks Unlimited Canada, Wildlife Habitat Canada, and local and regional land trusts in collaboration with the Alliance of Canadian Land Trusts, the NHCP is an important partner in Canada's strategy to conserve 30 per cent of land and water by 2030.

As of June 2025, more than 860,000 hectares have been protected under the NHCP. These efforts are further supported by the Ecological Gifts Program, which is celebrating 30 years of offering tax incentives to Canadians who donate land or interests in land for conservation.

Canada is working to expand its network of protected areas to reflect both ecological priorities and community needs, strengthening the country's overall conservation landscape.

These conservation actions are part of a broader shift toward a more sustainable, inclusive and climate-conscious future — one that respects Indigenous leadership, supports biodiversity and strengthens Canada's environmental legacy.

On behalf of the Government of Canada, I extend my sincere thanks to the individuals and organizations contributing to the NHCP. Your commitment is helping protect Canada's natural heritage and advance meaningful progress toward our shared conservation goals.

The Honourable Julie Dabrusin

Minister for Environment and Climate Change Canada
Government of Canada



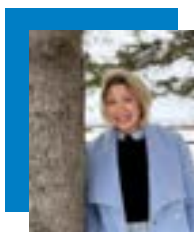
NATURE SHAPES OUR IDENTITIES AND CULTURES,

it anchors our livelihoods, and it fuels our food systems and our well-being. Nature offers opportunity and hope, as Canada faces threats from climate change, biodiversity loss and outside forces.

By protecting the ecological foundations of our economies, communities and well-being, we can fulfill a responsibility we owe to nature, to each other and to future generations.

The Natural Heritage Conservation Program has proven this true, time and time again. Over nearly 20 years, the partnership has demonstrated that when we conserve nature, Canada thrives.

Through its matching power, the program unites businesses, industries, Indigenous partners, governments, communities and private donors around nature conservation and enables us to pursue new opportunities with partners who are backing nature because they know their futures depend on it. Together, we're securing resilient landscapes and livelihoods in Canada.



The 2024–2025 NHCP Impact Report highlights how, for some, conservation represents resilient businesses; and for others, it represents safety in the face of natural disasters. The successes from the past year of the partnership demonstrate that, for all of us, conservation is at the heart of a hopeful future.

We thank our fellow NHCP partners in conservation: NCC, DUC and WHC. The partnership's success would not be possible without the many donors, landowners and collaborators whose passion, stewardship, generosity and expertise have made Canada a conservation leader. We also recognize the work of ACLT and the land trust alliances to support capacity growth among local and regional land trusts across the country. And we are grateful to Minister Julie Dabrusin and Environment and Climate Change Canada for this vital investment in conservation, as part of the Government of Canada's Nature Fund.

Through the breadth of our sector partners to the scale of our successes and the tangible impacts of our work, the NHCP's delivery partners are proving we can deliver on nature and Canada's needs through collaborative conservation, all while contributing to Canada's 2030 National Biodiversity Strategy. By partnering with all sectors, and with nature itself, we can secure a resilient future for Canada.

Catherine Grenier

President & CEO
Nature Conservancy of Canada

Michael Nadler

CEO
Ducks Unlimited Canada

Jessica Burns

Executive Director
Wildlife Habitat Canada

Collaborating with Indigenous communities

ACROSS CANADA, FIRST NATIONS AND INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES ARE reasserting their relationships with nature, embracing cultural connections and growing healthy communities and economies in the process. Indigenous-led efforts reflect conservation at its very best: thoughtful and impactful community-led initiatives that are unlocked by genuine collaboration.

The NHCP enables its delivery partners to work with Indigenous partners to unlock new opportunities and to build tools, relationships, skills and knowledge bases that can be used by partners to achieve enduring wins for nature and communities.



Engaging local communities in stewardship

By supporting NCC's Indigenous Conservation Engagement Framework and helping train its staff with cultural competencies, the NHCP has enabled NCC to build and steward meaningful relationships with Indigenous Nations and communities and to contribute toward Indigenous-led conservation successes.

In 2024–2025, these relationships took the form of stewardship and securement work, done in collaboration with Indigenous partners across the country. For instance, in eastern Manitoba, near St. Lazare, the NHCP brought NCC together with youth from nearby Waywayseecappo First Nation to sow native plants at the Fort Ellice Conservation Area.

Fort Ellice has long been a place where ceremonies have been held, students have come to learn, and scientists and archeologists have come to study. Now, seed by seed, Indigenous youth are stewarding the landscape to revive its rare Prairie grasslands.

In total, participants from Waywayseecappo First Nation reintroduced 1,300 native wildflower seedlings to the Fort Ellice landscape in 2024–2025, adding to years of youth-led restoration work. In past years, students from Waywayseecappo Off-Campus School and another local high school, Birtle Collegiate, have helped NCC restore riparian areas on the site as well, supporting the health of the waterways that flow through the landscape.



Supporting Indigenous-led conservation in the Seal River Watershed

In February 2025, a major milestone was reached in the protection of the Seal River Watershed in northern Manitoba. A Feasibility Assessment — developed by the Seal River Watershed Alliance (SRWA), the Government of Canada and the Province of Manitoba — confirmed that establishing a protected area in the watershed is both feasible and vital.

Spanning 50,000 square kilometres, the watershed is one of the world's largest remaining intact ecosystems. It provides critical habitat for caribou, polar bears, migratory birds and fish, while storing vast amounts of carbon. The region is also of immense cultural and spiritual importance to the four Indigenous Nations who make up the SRWA: Sayisi Dene, Northlands Dene, Barren Lands and O-Pipon-Na-Piwin Cree Nations.

DUC is proud to be a member of the SRWA Advisory Committee. Thanks to the NHCP, DUC staff continue to support the Alliance's vision through regular meetings and conservation expertise, helping to shape this Indigenous-led initiative.

Formal negotiations are now underway to determine the type and scale of protection, which could include an Indigenous Protected and Conserved Area, a national park reserve, or both.

This work reflects what is possible when Indigenous knowledge, conservation science and government partnership come together. DUC remains committed to supporting the SRWA in achieving a lasting, equitable solution that protects one of Canada's most pristine and globally significant landscapes — for people, wildlife and future generations.



Telling a story with a name

In 2024–2025, with support from the Land Trusts Conservation Fund, the Island Nature Trust (INT) expanded the protection of a geographical pinch point on PEI. Known in English as Portage Bog, the boggy area at the south of Cascumpec Bay supports dozens of provincially rare plant and animal species and has deep cultural significance for Mi'kmaq people.

So, the INT collaborated with L'nuey and the Mi'kmaq Confederacy of PEI to determine the appropriate name for this new conservation area: Unikansuk, pronounced "oon-ee-gan-sook," which means "portage trail."

As L'nuey explains, the area served as a well-travelled connection route for Mi'kmaq people in the springtime, when they would cross the Northumberland Strait from New Brunswick, travel up PEI's Percival River and portage a handful of kilometres through Unikansuk before reaching Cascumpec Bay and Malpeque Bay.

INT continues to collaborate with L'nuey and the Mi'kmaq Confederacy of PEI to determine the appropriate names for its conservation areas, identify past and continued cultural uses, and support hunting, fishing, trapping and other traditional uses across its conservation areas.



Growing knowledge to amplify our impact

How NHCP partners are using tools and growing skills to generate valuable returns on program investments

N **EARLY TWO DECADES OF NHCP SUCCESS HAS DEMONSTRATED** that Canada thrives when we cherish and steward our landscapes. When we invest in nature, we are investing in community safety, sustained cultural connections, food and economic security, species and landscape resilience, and so much more.

Through its support for capacity building and technological innovation, the NHCP is helping partners deliver impactful solutions, faster and more effectively than ever before, to meet the needs of nature and people in Canada.



Better data, better decisions

For several years, the NHCP has supported the development of NCC's Where to Work and What to Do resources: data tools that can consider project budgets to help inform decisions on the most impactful conservation actions for a given landscape. This year, thanks to the NHCP, the team partnered with researchers from the University of British Columbia, Memorial University and McGill universities to create a new dataset that could feed into these tools. Their results reveal that more than half of Canadians live in communities where the loss of upstream natural areas would increase flood risks.

This is a critical insight, considering how much money Canadian governments, businesses and residents pay to protect against and rebuild from flooding.

But, the researchers didn't just highlight a challenge: they proposed a solution.

They found that conserving strategic landscapes in upstream areas of Canada can help prevent or mitigate flooding in 54 per cent of urban areas and 74 per cent of agricultural lands within floodplains. Meaning that investing upstream in nature conservation can create countless downstream benefits.

When compared to simply relying on built infrastructure, it's clear that securing and stewarding these areas embraces a natural — and more sustainable — solution to a growing threat to Canadians' safety.

Unlike built-up infrastructure, natural areas don't just sit waiting for the day of a disaster. Beyond standing by to protect people from floods, they are consistently cleaning the air, filtering drinking water and offering Canadians places to paddle, fish, hike and recreate. They're all-in-one solutions.

"At the end of the day, it's about ensuring nature can keep doing what it has always done: providing homes and food for wildlife and people, and keeping people safe. It's about creating better returns on investment," says Margo Morrison, NCC's director of stewardship.

NCC shares these and other findings with conservation, industry, Indigenous and government partners, enabling all land managers in Canada to make strategic decisions with the best available data.

MORE THAN TWO MILLION PEOPLE BENEFIT FROM FLOOD-ATTENUATING LANDSCAPES THAT INCLUDE NHCP PROJECTS.

"We've got to keep up the pace to achieve resilient landscapes, and being efficient is a key part of it," says Morrison, who has folded the insights from NCC's data tools into the organization's overarching land stewardship framework. This way, Morrison and her team are ensuring NCC makes the most of its efforts by doing work in areas that will have the biggest impact on resilient landscapes, resulting in compounded benefits to people and nature.



WHAT IS RESILIENCE?

A resilient landscape is one that can withstand changes over time — something that's becoming ever-more important with climate change.

Strategic conservation strengthens and supports nature's ability to withstand, recover and adapt to these changes, helping ensure people and nature can thrive in a changing world.



Growing the conservation community

As part of the NHCP, the Land Trusts Conservation Fund (LTCF) doesn't just support securement, it also helps Canada's local and regional land trusts grow their capacity.

Managed by WHC and delivered by the ACLT, the Land Trust Alliance of British Columbia, Réseau de milieux naturels protégés and the Ontario Land Trust Alliance, the LTCF's capacity-building component helps grow Canada's ability to deliver sustainable benefits to people and nature through conservation. And its latest beneficiaries are already landing on-the-ground results.

Through 2023 and 2024, the capacity building support of the LTCF helped the Greenhough and North Bruce Wilderness Alliance, a land trust focused on the Northern Saugeen (Bruce) Peninsula, meet eligibility requirements.

In NHCP program year 2024–2025, the newly formed group secured its first conservation win: the Simon Bay Nature Preserve, in collaboration with the Escarpment Biosphere Conservancy.

This eight-hectare natural area is emblematic of the region, comprised of rocky shoreline, sand dunes, limestone alvars and mature cedar forest, and fits into a matrix of other natural areas conserved by NCC and others.

In supporting the Wilderness Alliance's launch and growth, the LTCF — and more broadly, the NHCP — is helping grow Canada's conservation community so that we can achieve more, together.

Balancing biodiversity and food security in the Prairies

Canada's Prairie grasslands are one of the most endangered ecosystems on Earth, meaning that the biodiversity they support is in a largely precarious state. The cause is clear: the land has been carved up and converted to support cities and agriculture operations, but at what expense? How do we balance our need for space to live and grow food to eat with those of the species that support our health and well-being in other ways? In 2024, supported by the NHCP, DUC researchers sought to find out.

By modelling the relationship between biodiversity loss and land cover change in the Prairies, the researchers found that conserving natural habitats within farm fields can support substantial proportions of the Prairies' biodiversity, particularly when such conservation actions are done in combination with larger, adjacent conserved areas. In other words, **conserving a network of big, medium and even small patches of agricultural land can support biodiversity and food production.**

The DUC research demonstrates the importance of prairie conservation easements, legal agreements between conservation groups and landowners who agree to keep the natural value of their lands intact while ensuring they can continue their agricultural operations in a sustainable way.

In fact, researchers found that areas with conservation easements boasted 39 per cent more species than neighbouring areas without conservation status.

"Land-use change is the largest direct driver of biodiversity loss," says James Paterson, a research scientist with DUC and a co-author of the study. "Our results highlight the importance of conserving natural habitat in working landscapes and highlight how we can use biodiversity data to identify places where conservation actions have the highest benefits to biodiversity."

The NHCP's impact to date

From 2007 through 2024–2025

\$1.5+ billion

Partners have matched every federal dollar invested in the NHCP with another \$2 in match value* from other sources.

2,200+ projects

that help protect against the impacts of floods, droughts and fires, sequester carbon and offer recreation opportunities for 350+ communities.

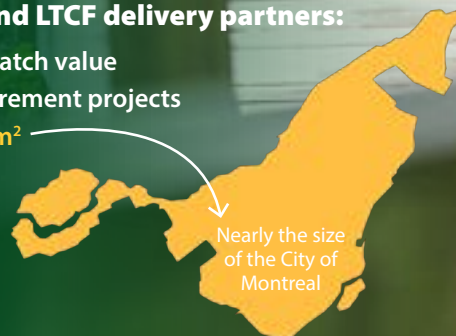
8,600+ km²

of conserved habitat for wildlife.

2024–2025 highlights

Together, NHCP and LTCF delivery partners:

- raised **\$58.5M** in match value
- completed **83** securement projects
- conserved **338.8 km²**



*Match value represents cash and in-kind contributions, including land donations.



At-a-glance impact

In 2024–2025, the NHCP rallied partners to invest in nature and communities from coast to coast

- Nature Conservancy of Canada project
- Ducks Unlimited Canada project
- Land Trusts Conservation Fund project



Nature: Canada's greatest economic strength

OVER THE COURSE OF THE PROGRAM, NHCP partners have built a body of conservation successes that demonstrate how effective, collaborative conservation can benefit multiple sectors. We continue to grow partnerships with all industries, as more and more people understand the business case for nature conservation.

Projects secured through the NHCP in 2024–2025 add to this legacy of cross-sector collaboration, showcasing how partnerships are our greatest asset in achieving impactful conservation.



Pioneering a new model for sustainable ranching

NCC and the Waldron Grazing Co-operative share much more than a founding date (1962): the organizations have bonded over a love of Alberta's grasslands and all that they provide. They have worked together for over a decade to rally partners from government, the ranching community, the oil and gas sector and elsewhere to support conservation in Alberta's Southern Foothills and conserve more than 14,000 hectares since 2013.

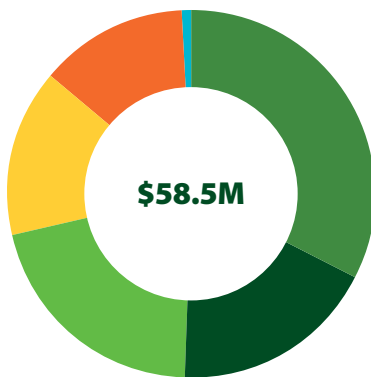
In 2024, the two organizations renewed their long-standing relationship through the NHCP to establish a conservation agreement on the first phase of Bob Creek Ranch, 836 hectares of ecologically significant and diverse habitat, including fescue grasslands, montane ridges and riparian areas west of Claresholm. The ranch fits into a conservation network of over 40,000 hectares, which includes provincially and privately protected areas.

The Waldron Grazing Co-operative, made up of nearly 80 ranching families, owns and manages the land of Bob Creek Ranch as part of a sustainable ranching operation, demonstrating that conserving working landscapes and supporting economic prosperity go hand in hand.

The Bob Creek Ranch conservation agreement exemplifies true collaboration. For its part, the Waldron Grazing Co-operative is assured nutritious rangeland for its cattle, which in turn approximate the historic actions of bison, which were a significant factor in the evolution of a healthy Prairie grassland ecosystem.

"Not only is [Bob Creek Ranch] a benefit to the shareholders who are gaining access to more grazing, it's a win for the entire population and community of Alberta and Canada, to know that this land will stay just as it is today: a home to an abundance of wildlife, both animal and plant species, along with cattle to maintain the grasses it produces," said Frank Welsch, board chair of the Waldron Grazing Co-operative.





2024–2025 NHCP match value, by source type

- Individuals: 32.7%
- *Organizations: 18.1%
- Corporations: 21%
- Foundations: 14.9%
- Other governments: 13%
- Other: 0.2%

*Organizations includes charities, community groups, associations, co-ops and nonprofits.

Conservation agreement helps Saskatchewan ranch family blaze their own trail

The cost of farmland today can pose a formidable barrier to young families looking to enter the ranching industry. Where most new ranchers inherit an existing ranch that's often been in the family for generations, Eric and Erin Yewsiuk have had to blaze their own trail to launch and grow their east-central Saskatchewan business, Dual E Cattle Company.

That's how they found an ally in the conservation easement mechanism, and DUC.

"We wouldn't have been able to get started without Ducks [Unlimited Canada]," Erin Yewsiuk says. "Conservation agreements opened doors for us that we might not have opened otherwise. We're really grateful for that."

The Yewsiuks' NHCP-funded easement protects six hectares of wetlands and 20 hectares of tame grassland, providing valuable habitat for waterfowl and many

other species, including grassland nesting songbirds like savannah sparrows.

"On our ranch, we want grass stands that grow healthy calves, while also promoting healthy wildlife habitat," Yewsiuk says.

Together with additional quarter sections purchased and rented, in part through other DUC programs, the Yewsiuks' 70 bred red Angus cows now have access to the hay and pasture needed to feed and grow.

The Yewsiuks credit community, partnership and good land stewardship with the growth of their operation, which started in 2015 with just eight animals.

"Because we believe in managing land holistically, a DUC conservation easement fits well with our approach," says Yewsiuk. "We're working together to help achieve each other's goals."



How partnerships power impactful conservation

Nature does not recognize the Canada-U.S. border that cuts through the Green Mountains of southern Quebec and Vermont. In this critical climate corridor, wide-ranging animals like moose and bobcat are finding their way north as climate change and development threaten their southern habitats.

To ensure these animals have the space they need to live — and that the people who rely on them for sustenance and eco-tourism can thrive — local land trust Appalachian Corridor sought to conserve its largest ever project: the Brière Forest. Through the partnering power of the NHCP's Land Trusts Conservation Fund, the land trust made it happen.

With the previous landowner, Guy Brière, pledging to donate a portion of the value of the land, the land trust rallied matching support from the Quebec and United States governments, as well as from NCC, companies, foundations, individuals and the local community, who recognized the forest's role in maintaining the water quality of the Missisquoi River.

Now conserved, the 540-hectare Brière Forest fits within a network of other conservation areas in the Green Mountains, managed by partners like NCC, land trusts and governments.



Building legacies with landowners

IN 2024–2025, WITH SUPPORT FROM THE NHCP, CANADIANS

donated or chose to otherwise conserve their family farms, vacation destinations and other beloved landscapes. Some chose conservation to protect the places they've grown up with; others, because they felt the pressure building from development. All chose conservation because they have grown deep appreciation for what nature has provided for them and their families.

A hockey legend secures a landscape legacy

Wetlands are more than natural water filters, waterfowl habitat and carbon sinks. In Viking, Alberta, they can also be credited with shaping a hockey dynasty. And now, they'll be conserved for future generations, thanks to an NHCP-supported conservation agreement with local hockey legend Darryl Sutter and his wife, Wanda.

"We wanted to protect our water and the native grass and the old land and all the wildlife that comes with it," Sutter said in an interview with NHL.com. "Wanda and I feel very strongly about it. It's a legacy thing, to be honest."

Sutter and his six brothers grew up playing shinny on the slough of the family ranch, southeast of Edmonton. Their days spent looking after cattle, mending fences and

doing other chores instilled a work ethic that sports commentators would praise throughout their playing days in the NHL.

"My six brothers and I would go out behind the barn to the big slough after milking cows and play shinny under the stars," Sutter, the third-eldest of his siblings, says. "Six of us would go on to play in the NHL. If that slough could talk!"

Throughout his career, Sutter would routinely return home to lend a hand on the ranch. After his father passed away in 2005, Darryl, then an NHL coach, bought the 130-hectare ranch from the estate. Between coaching the Calgary Flames to the playoffs and winning two Stanley Cups with the Los Angeles Kings (2012 and 2013), he's continued to

return to the ranch, continuing the family business of raising cattle.

In 2024–2025, Sutter entered into a conservation agreement with DUC, with a vision to conserve the ecological and economic integrity of his family's home.

Now conserved, the lands where Sutter and his brothers first honed their ranching and hockey knowledge will continue to support the next generation of Sutters, as well as the wider community.

"We're lucky to have what we do," Sutter says. "To be so rural, there's less and less of that in this world."

With files from NHL.com



Conserving the land that's provided so much

Over 80 per cent of Canada's Prairie grasslands have been lost — degraded, converted, developed, dug up or otherwise altered. These changes result in less space for species, fewer landscapes that can efficiently clean our air and store our water, and a degradation of Canada's natural heritage. But, through her donation of 507 hectares of grasslands near Lethbridge, Alberta, Diane Glover is pushing back against this loss.

"I will pass on and this piece of property will still exist in its natural form, as it was created," Glover says. "There is something truly magical in knowing that."

Glover says that her donation was meant to honour her family, the land's legacy and Indigenous connections to the land. But her generosity also helps secure a healthy future for nature and the people in the area.

Nestled in a bend of the Oldman River, Glover's donation doesn't just protect her family's legacy, it helps protect the region's future.

Now conserved, its grasslands and coulees can continue to help store and clean nearby communities' drinking water. As cattle continue to graze on its grasses, Glover's donation will continue to support the ranching economy in the region, offering healthy, sustainable forage. Those same cattle will help maintain the grassland ecosystem, supporting important habitat for at-risk species, like barn swallow, long-billed curlew, prairie rattlesnake and Sprague's pipit.

"My parents taught us to respect, to protect and to honour what came before us," Glover says. "They would ask us to leave something better than we found it." That's the legacy Glover and the NHCP have helped secure.



Nature: A gift that keeps on giving

For 30 years, Canadians have been incentivized to donate ecologically sensitive land to conservation through the federal government's Ecological Gifts Program. Over that time, generous landowners have contributed more than \$1.3-billion worth of land to conservation: 2,600 square kilometres of natural areas, totally an area more than three times the size of Calgary, Alberta.

The NHCP helps facilitate and steward these donations. Ecological gifts are natural legacies that benefit all Canadians, offering water filtration and storage, clean air and other nature-based services.



A family's decades of care conserved for the future

The Patterson family has a long history in Neebing, Ontario. Over the generations, they've homesteaded, planted trees and supported university research projects on their 161-hectare property south of Thunder Bay.

In 2024, they chose to secure the future of their cherished homestead by donating a portion of the land, through Canada's Ecological Gifts Program, to the Thunder Bay Field Naturalists (TBFN), and selling the rest to the same organization.

The newly created Pardee Nature Reserve is rugged, ranging from cliffs and steep slopes to beaver ponds and meadows. This variety of habitats is of considerable value to wildlife: 60 bird species and four mammals have been observed by TBFN. TBFN is also using LTCF support to help track down the elusive and threatened gray fox, with the help of newly installed wildlife cameras on the property.

TBFN has already gotten to work studying the new nature reserve and cleaning it up. With the help of volunteers and a local contractor, they even removed an abandoned cruise boat left in the middle of a field. The *Mary Ethel* once toured tourists around Thunder Bay Harbour in the 1960s and '70s before winding up in Pardee.

Conservation is caring for communities

LOOK CLOSELY AT A TREE AND YOU QUICKLY REALIZE

that it's so much more than a pretty view or a source of shade on a hot day. It may be supporting an at-risk bird's nest in the crook of a branch. It is almost definitely pulling carbon out of the air you're breathing and filtering water through its roots. Nature knows how to multitask, and these are the powers that conservation helps protect.

Forests, wetlands, prairie grasses and shorelines across Canada are caring for communities every day. In 2024–2025, the NHCP helped its delivery partners secure many of these nature-based solutions, delivering significant impacts that help ensure people's safety and quality of life.



Kiwto'qitek, PEI 202 hectares of forest and shoreline

At the southeast corner of Prince Edward Island lies a place known to the Mi'kmaq as Kiwto'qitek (pronounced “Geyou-dough-ed-deg”) — “reverberating echo” or “surrounding” in English, referring to the Greek River, which winds around a natural point of land commonly known as Point Pleasant.

“I can almost imagine one of our ancestors shouting down the river or across the water and hearing an echo, amplified by the long, narrow opening the river provides for sound to reverberate,” says Sean Doke, media relations officer with L'nuey, an initiative dedicated to advancing, implementing and protecting the constitutionally entrenched rights of the Mi'kmaq of PEI.

The land's M'ikmaq name is apt in another sense, too, because its protection also has reverberating impacts on the natural areas and communities around it. By keeping coastlines such as those surrounding Kiwto'qitek (Point Pleasant) intact, we allow them to adapt and change naturally. With nearly five kilometres of living shoreline reinforced by native plants, the point buffers the coastline from waves and winds, stabilizing sediments and soil when the island is battered by storms.

With shoreline erosion being one of Prince Edward Island's greatest threats, conserving Kiwto'qitek is critical to naturally reinforcing the island's resilience.

The new conservation area's forests are also a rare asset in a province that has lost more than half the forests that shaded it before European settlement. Beyond supporting species like red pine and red oak, Kiwto'qitek's forests sequester carbon and help break up winds that roar from the Atlantic.

As of September 2025, NCC continues to fundraise to secure and steward this rare and iconic landscape. NCC is currently exploring a potential shared stewardship with the Epekwitnewaq Mi'kmaq on the Kiwto'qitek Natural Area.



THE PEOPLE POWERING CONSERVATION

Conservation doesn't end when a project is secured. It is a life-long responsibility. That's why NCC, DUC and land trusts across the country work with landowners, land managers, volunteers and contractors to secure, steward and care for conservation areas: so they can continue to thrive. From generous donors to expert staff and eager volunteers, hundreds of people had a hand in delivering the NHCP in 2024–2025.





Healey Farm, MB

65-hectare farm produces endless community benefits

An environmental scientist by trade, Pat Healey loved nature. He understood the intricate links between the wetlands, native grasses, birds and wild animals that dotted his 65-hectare farm near Belmont, Manitoba. In fact, he leaned into its power, producing and canning his own food, growing iris plants for sale, and nurturing the many species that have long called his farm home.

Having left the farm as a legacy gift to DUC in his will, upon his passing in 2023, Healey ensured that many more will benefit from the life his land supports.

DUC completed the Healey donation with NHCP support in 2024–2025, adding it to a robust and intricate network of more than 36 other DUC conservation areas within 10 kilometres of the farm.

Today, the farm and its 19 hectares of wetlands can continue to clean water and provide many benefits to humans and other species in the area. Hay produced will be made available to local ranchers, and the public will have access to the land for low-impact activities, like hunting, wildlife viewing and hiking.

Puntledge River, BC

37 hectares of life-enriching forest

The century-old cedars and Douglas firs that line the banks of the Puntledge River breathe life into Vancouver Island's Comox Valley. Not just in the clean air they offer or in the stories and lessons they carry, but deep within their roots, too, where water trickles through, down into the river.

That's why the Comox Valley Land Trust (CVLT) has been conserving the lands along the banks of this river. Recently, the land trust has concentrated its efforts on protecting a 100-hectare timber reservation that lined the river. Bit by bit, it secured blocks of the area, and, in 2024, in collaboration with the timber reserve license holder, BC Hydro, and more than 630 donors, CVLT leveraged the NHCP–LTCF to secure the final 37 hectares. In doing so, it secured a life-giving resource for the Comox Valley and the Salish Sea.

Every fall, endangered Chinook salmon, which are a critical food source for endangered southern resident orcas and culturally important to the K'ómoks First Nation, spawn in the river's blue waters. And every day, the people, businesses and communities in the valley depend on the water levels for their electricity.

Now conserved, the Puntledge Forest will continue to filter and replenish the water of the river, supporting salmon and people. Its trails will continue to bring joy to visitors and locals alike, and its trees will grow ancient and thick as they sequester carbon from the atmosphere.





SUPPORTING SPECIES AT RISK

From grasslands and glacial rivers to wetlands and ocean shorelines, the NHCP helped NCC, DUC and land trusts across the country secure and steward habitat suitable for 180 species at risk in 2024–2025:

13 mammals | 66 birds | 41 reptiles & amphibians | 33 plants, mosses & lichens | 25 arthropods | 2 molluscs



Land Trusts Conservation Fund

AS PART OF THE NHCP, THE LAND TRUSTS CONSERVATION FUND

(LTCF) provides more than \$5 million annually to land trusts and conservation organizations to work in their communities. NHCP partner Wildlife Habitat Canada (WHC) administers the funding program.

A portion of the LTCF also goes toward growing the delivery capacity of Canada's local and regional land trusts. This work is managed by WHC and delivered by the Alliance of Canadian Land Trusts (ACLT), the Land Trust Alliance of British Columbia, the Ontario Land Trust Alliance and the Réseau de milieux naturels protégés, who work together to represent local and regional land trusts.

In the past year, the LTCF supported 26 new conservation projects, delivered by 21 land trusts across six provinces, resulting in the protection of over 2,600 hectares of new conservation areas.

As demonstrated through the examples showcased throughout this report, these important projects protect natural spaces for wildlife while offering nature-based solutions that support healthy and prosperous communities.

The NHCP partners gratefully acknowledge the work done by Canadian land trusts through the LTCF in 2024–2025:

- Appalachian Corridor
- Comox Valley Land Trust
- Connexion Nature
- Fondation pour la conservation et la protection environnementale du bassin versant du lac des Sittelles
- Greenough and North Bruce Wilderness Alliance Inc.
- Haliburton Highlands Land Trust
- Huronia Land Conservancy
- Island Nature Trust
- Kawartha Land Trust
- Land Conservancy for Kingston, Frontenac, Lennox and Addington
- Long Point Basin Land Trust
- Memphrémagog Nature Foundation
- Mississippi Madawaska Land Trust
- Nova Scotia Nature Trust
- Ontario Nature
- Rainy Lake Conservancy
- rare Charitable Research Reserve
- Société de conservation du Mont Brome
- Southern Alberta Land Trust Society
- The Couchiching Conservancy
- Thunder Bay Field Naturalists Club





This project was undertaken with the financial support of:
Ce projet a été réalisé avec l'appui financier de :



Environment and
Climate Change Canada

Environnement et
Changement climatique Canada



Nature Conservancy of Canada
365 Bloor Street East, Suite 1501
Toronto, Ontario, Canada M4W 3L4
Phone: 800-465-8005
Email: supporter.services@natureconservancy.ca

DELIVERED BY



Ducks Unlimited Canada
PO Box 1160
Stonewall, Manitoba, Canada R0C 2Z0
Phone: 800-665-3825
Email: info@ducks.ca



Wildlife Habitat Canada
2039 Robertson Road, Unit 247
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K2H 8R2
Phone: 800-669-7919
Email: admin@whc.org

WITH SUPPORT FROM



Alliance of Canadian Land Trusts
569 Johnson Street, Unit 201
Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V8Z 1M2
Phone: 506-261-1260
Email: info@acoc.ca

PHOTOS: Cover: Adam Cornick/Acorn Art and Photography. P4: Nick Nault. P6: John E. Marriott, NCC.
P7: Frank Baldwin/Government of Manitoba, Island Nature Trust. P8: Aliqa Piers. P10: Irwin Barrett, Inspired Planet. P11: Black Box Productions.
P12: NCC, Sean Feagan/NCC, DUC, DUC, Andie Cloutier, Nova Scotia Nature Trust, Jason Headley. P14: Sean Feagan/NCC. P15: Erin Yewsiuk, Appalachian Corridor.
P16: Grace Sutter, Howie Borrow/Hockey Hall of Fame via NHL.com. P17: Sean Feagan/NCC, Mike Bryan. P18: Lanna Campbell/NCC, Stephen DesRoches.
P19: Megan Bonenfant/NCC, NCC, Thunder Bay Field Naturalists, Nick Harper/NCC, Steven Godfrey/NCC, Appalachian Corridor. P20: Scott Henowitch/DUC, David Schostek.
P21: Gord MacPherson, Sean Feagan/NCC, Gen Pintel/NCC, Amanda Henderson/NCC, Leta Pezderic. P22: Chelsea Marcantonio/NCC.