



**@NewsroomGC tweet** (maximum of 255 characters):  
Framework Agreement on Nature Conservation signed in B.C. [link]

## **Government of Canada, British Columbia and the First Nations Leadership Council sign a historic tripartite nature conservation framework agreement**

From: [Environment and Climate Change Canada](#)

### **News release**

**November 3, 2023 – Vancouver, British Columbia**

Today, the governments of Canada and British Columbia (B.C.), and the First Nations Leadership Council (FNLC) signed a first of its kind, tripartite framework agreement to protect and conserve biodiversity, habitats, and species at risk in the province. The Framework Agreement enables action rooted in recognition of First Nations title and rights to reach B.C. and Canada's goal of protecting thirty percent of lands in B.C. by 2030.

To support the commitments in the Tripartite Framework Agreement on Nature Conservation (the Framework Agreement), the Government of Canada is investing up to \$500 million over the life of the Framework Agreement, which matches commitments from the Government of British Columbia. Together, this is one of the most significant nature investment plans in the history of Canada. Support includes a federal investment of \$50 million toward the identification and securement of up to 13,000 square kilometres of old-growth forest areas, and \$104 million from the 2 Billion Trees program that will be specifically focused on the restoration of species at risk habitat, wildfire mitigation and recovery, and watershed health.

The Framework Agreement enables Canada, BC, and First Nations to jointly identify tangible projects and investments that will help to halt or reverse biodiversity loss and create more resilient landscapes in the face of increasing risk of wildfire, flood and drought. The Framework Agreement commits to advance alignment with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in full collaboration with rights holders in its implementation.

The Framework Agreement will also create opportunities to enable the participation of other levels of government, non-governmental organizations, and industry consistent with the Agreement's aims.

### **Quotes**

"Canada, B.C., and regional First Nation leaders are taking historic action together to protect more of B.C.'s cherished natural world and the rich biodiversity of species who live within. This is a major step forward in support of Canada's goal to protect 30 per cent of lands and waters by 2030, which all provinces should get behind. Together, we are protecting more old growth forests, supporting the recovery of species at risk, and restoring ecosystems throughout British



Columbia. Moving forward, the Tripartite Framework Agreement on Nature Conservation will serve as a model of collaboration with First Nations to halt and reverse the loss of nature.

– The Honourable Steven Guilbeault, Minister of Environment and Climate Change Canada

"British Columbians care deeply about this province's natural heritage and abundance of biodiversity. Building on foundational work like our efforts to protect spotted owls and southern mountain caribou, the agreement signed today includes vital progress – such as the establishment of the \$50 million Old Growth Nature Fund – towards preserving more of our lands and waters and reinforcing vulnerable ecosystems and species at risk. This agreement is a model for how collaboration between the federal and provincial governments, as well as Indigenous peoples, can achieve real progress on our shared goals. This is a good day for Canada, for BC, and for our planet."

-The Honourable Jonathan Wilkinson, Minister of Energy and Natural Resources

"People in British Columbia share a deep connection to the coastal waters, iconic old forests, and rich farmland around us. Our province's landscape is a source of beauty, food, and economic opportunities for everyone. With this historic agreement, we're working together and in close partnership with the federal government and First Nations to protect our environment now and ensure we pass this natural inheritance on to our children and grandchildren."

– David Eby, Premier of British Columbia

"The Tripartite Framework Agreement on Nature Conservation is a groundbreaking commitment by the First Nations Leadership Council, the government of British Columbia, and the government of Canada to work together to ensure that this province's rich biodiversity is restored and maintained for future generations. It represents the largest conservation fund in our province's history and a more collaborative, ecosystem-based approach to better protect species at risk and critical habitat like old growth forests."

– The Honourable Nathan Cullen, British Columbia Minister of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship

"With the passing of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples provincially and federally, this trilateral Nature Agreement presents a foundation towards meaningful reconciliation amongst First Nations and the Crown in British Columbia. I uphold the Province of B.C. and Canada in their commitment to this collaborative partnership, which sets a precedent for co-developed conservation mechanisms that uphold First Nations rights, title and interests. With mutual recognition of First Nations as the original stewards and title holders to our lands and waters, we have reached a jointly developed framework with sustained funding to achieve our collective goals for biodiversity protection, restoration and stewardship."

- Terry Teegee, BC Assembly of First Nations Regional Chief

"Respect for the inherent title and rights and legal orders of First Nations must be the foundation for any conservation initiative in our respective unceded and ancestral lands. The framework agreement represents an important step forward in securing genuine nature conservation in this province. Any agreements about specific areas for conservation must be made directly with the First Nations whose territories are involved. We look forward to working with the provincial and federal governments to support the achievement of First Nations



conservation goals, and to improve conservation outcomes across the province while simultaneously working to slow fossil fuel extraction.”

- Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, President, Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs

“As we continue to witness year after year, First Nations are disproportionately impacted by the devastating impacts of the climate crisis. Now, more than ever, it is essential for First Nations to exercise their jurisdiction, laws, legal orders and environmental stewardship. They must be supported with the necessary financial and co-jurisdictional mechanisms so that they are supported to protect their members and their territories. After a year of constructive dialogue, we are pleased to have established this comprehensive framework that supports multi-jurisdictional approach to enhance and protect ecosystem health and biodiversity within B.C. This agreement creates the essential space, and opens up needed resourcing, for First Nation Title and Rights holders to engage directly with federal and provincial governments and to undertake territorial planning, priority-setting, and protection which will be critical for future generations.”

- Robert Phillips, First Nations Summit Political Executive

“The Syilx Okanagan Nation has consistently advanced and supported the work to align B.C.’s and Canada’s actions with UNDRIP and B.C.’s DRIPA. This is particularly important in the context of B.C.’s biodiversity and the climate crisis we are now witnessing. Our people, the Syilx people, have managed the diverse ecosystems found in Syilx Territory for millennia, and it is long overdue to be full partners on all aspects of ecosystem management. The Tripartite Framework Agreement on Nature Conservation, should it meet its stated objectives, is historic and imperative. We must continue to create space for advancement of Indigenous restoration and conservation efforts. The Framework Agreement has the potential to unlock unprecedented recourses to advance and restore our role as caretakers of what many call British Columbia, and to do it together.”

– Chief Clarence Louie, Syilx Okanagan Nation

“This agreement results from significant discussion and hard work by the B.C. government, the Canadian government, and the First Nations Leadership Council. It will help build a better, healthier future for all by protecting the environment that sustains us. We recognize the importance of conserving unique and irreplaceable species and ecosystems, particularly those found nowhere else in the world. By working collaboratively First Nations and our federal counterparts, this new agreement will strengthen biodiversity protections, ecosystem health and resilience to climate change throughout the province.”

– The Honourable George Heyman, British Columbia Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy

“CPAWS-BC is ecstatic to see this historic agreement and commitment to protecting biodiversity between First Nations Leadership Council, the Province of B.C and the Government of Canada. We have long been advocating for the recognition of First Nations leadership in nature conservation, and this level of commitment from B.C. and Canada is welcomed and long overdue. This landmark \$1-billion agreement has the power to support nature on its path to a positive future. We look forward to the ongoing collaboration between decision-makers, rights holders, and communities to support B.C.’s unique and endangered ecosystems.”



– Tori Ball, Terrestrial Conservation Manager, Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, British Columbia

“Our forests and natural landscape are facing increasing pressure from wildfires and climate change, which is impacting the health of our forests and natural environment. This tripartite agreement announced today represents an important investment in maintaining critical ecosystems in our province with strengthened Indigenous leadership and stewardship. Under this framework and other provincial initiatives, COFI and its members look forward to working within a collaborative approach to local landscape-level planning to help ensure goals of maintaining ecosystem health and conservation of biodiversity values in the province are met, while also ensuring forest health and resilience for the B.C. forest sector to continue to be a foundational industry for communities across the province producing low-carbon projects that are in demand globally.”

- Linda Coady, President & CEO, BC Council of Forest Industries

"Our environment is not divided according to federal and provincial authorities. This newly established Tripartite Framework Agreement on Nature Conservation is a positive shift towards our Indigenous perspectives of holistic ecosystems requiring the joint efforts of all governments collaborating in stewardship and conservation initiatives. This Agreement supports G3 partnerships. It also provides much needed capacity funding for Guardians programs that provide critical 'boots on the ground' participation of Indigenous stewards throughout B.C." - Chief Angie Bailey, Aitchelitz First Nation / S'ólh Téméxw Stewardship Alliance Political Spokesperson

## Quick facts

- Since 2016, the Government of Canada has made historic investments to protect lands, species, and biodiversity in Canada, including more than \$1 billion for the Nature Legacy initiative, and \$2.3 billion in Budget 2021. These investments support work to protect and conserve 25 per cent of land and waters by 2025 and 30 per cent by 2030; advance Indigenous-led conservation; protect and recover species at risk and their habitats; and advance natural climate solutions.
- Prime Minister Trudeau announced Canada's commitment of up to \$800 million in new federal funding in December 2022, including the Great Bear Sea Project Finance for Permanence (PFP), one of up to four Indigenous-led conservation initiatives. Once completed, these projects could protect an additional up to one million square kilometres.
- Canada and B.C. are aligning existing funding in new ways and adding new funding sources, including the significant commitment made by B.C. last week of \$150 million for conservation financing. This financial commitment will further support leveraging from third-party funders.
- B.C. is supporting the implementation of the Framework Agreement with matching investments through existing programs and conservation initiatives that are advancing the province's commitment to protect at least 30 per cent of terrestrial areas in B.C. by 2030, ecosystem health and biodiversity, and better outcomes for wildlife and species at risk including Modernized Land Use Planning, Forest Landscape Planning, Old Growth Strategic Review, Species at Risk Recovery, Together for Wildlife, Collaborative



Indigenous Stewardship Framework, Indigenous Guardian programs, and the Province's creation of a new Conservation Financing Mechanism.

- Canada, B.C., and the FNLC will publish joint annual reports to ensure transparency and accountability, and to share progress toward the conservation outcomes of the Framework Agreement.
- Canada and B.C. will work with First Nations throughout B.C. and other partners to restore or enhance at least 140,000 hectares of wildlife habitat by 2024/25, beyond regulatory requirements.
- Canada, B.C., and the FNLC will work with philanthropic organizations to encourage third-party investments in nature conservation and restoration efforts in British Columbia.
- The Framework Agreement establishes an interim Tripartite Nature Committee (the Committee). The Committee's membership will be comprised of representatives from Canada, B.C., and FNLC whose roles will be to coordinate activities under this Agreement.
- Complementary to the role of the Committee, Canada and B.C. will consult and cooperate with First Nations to establish agreements, understandings, or other constructive arrangements to co-create additional mechanisms to ensure First Nations involvement in the implementation of, and benefits from, this Agreement in their respective territories.
- Canada and B.C. will explore mechanisms complementary to the Committee that enable the involvement of local governments, stakeholders, and citizens.
- Actions supported by the Framework Agreement, together, will help protect and recover iconic species such as boreal caribou and spotted owls.

## Related products

- Link to Backgrounder: [Tripartite Framework Agreement on Nature Conservation between Canada, British Columbia, and the First Nations Leadership Council - Canada.ca](#)

## Associated links

- Nature Agreements webpage [on Canada.ca](#) <sup>(08)</sup>

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