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Chair

Mr. Mark Warawa

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•(1615)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. Mark Warawa (Langley, CPC)): I will call the meeting back to order. I want to welcome witnesses to the 27th meeting of the Standing Committee on the Environment and Sustainable Development. This is a continuing study, hearing from witnesses on creating a national conservation plan.

Welcome to each of you. We appreciate you taking your valuable time to help us in this study.

We will begin with Ducks Unlimited. You have ten minutes, and as you're approaching 30 seconds left, I will start giving you the wind-up signal. If all three witnesses take about 10 minutes, that will take about half an hour, and then we'll have enough time for about 45 minutes of questions.

So, Ducks Unlimited, Ms. Barnett, please go ahead. Thank you.

Ms. Andrea Barnett (National Policy Analyst, National Operations, Ducks Unlimited Canada): Good afternoon, and thank you, Mr. Chairman.

My name is Andrea Barnett, and I am the national policy analyst for Ducks Unlimited Canada, located here in Ottawa. I'd like to introduce you to my colleague, Karla Guyn, our director of conservation planning, who is based out of Winnipeg.

On behalf of Ducks Unlimited Canada and the 144,000 Canadians who support our work, it's our pleasure to present you with our vision for Canada's national conservation plan.

Before we get into that vision, I'd like to familiarize you with Ducks Unlimited, or DU. After almost 75 years on our mission, DU is the leader in wetland conservation. And why do we feel so passionately about our work? Because wetlands are incredibly valuable forms of natural capital that are being lost at an alarming rate. Up to 70% of wetlands have been lost in many settled areas of Canada, and we continue to lose an average of 80 acres, or 32 hectares, every day. To give you a sense of the magnitude of this loss, if you were to lump together all of the wetlands lost on a daily basis, it would be equal to 45 football fields. If you consider doubling the next day, and tripling the next, you get a sense the urgency of what drives us.

DU is committed to stopping wetland loss, retaining the wetlands that have not been lost, restoring those that have been lost, and managing those that require it. As a registered not-for-profit charity and a science-based organization, DU delivers on-the-ground habitat

conservation projects, and conducts research, education programs, and public policy work to conserve wetlands.

This work not only benefits waterfowl and other wildlife, it also provides Canadians with valuable goods and services because wetlands purify our drinking water, moderate the effects of climate change, reduce risks of flooding and drought, and generally support our well-being.

DU works in all provinces and territories, and we have many conservation partners including other conservation groups, such as our sister organizations in the U.S. and Mexico, all levels of government in Canada, federal and state governments in the U.S., hundreds of individual landowners, universities, First Nations, and industry partners from a variety of sectors.

In all of our conservation efforts, we have proven to be results-driven, science-based, targeted, collaborative, innovative, and adaptive. In our last fiscal year alone, DU realized many significant achievements.

We celebrated the successful conclusion of wetlands for tomorrow, a six-year campaign that raised and invested \$600 million in wetland conservation throughout Canada. We held over 500 fundraising events in communities across Canada, hosting over 68,000 people. We reached over 100,000 students, teachers, and others through our education programs. Finally, through partnerships, we secured almost 160,000 acres of habitat, and positively influenced over 34 million through extension, land-use planning, and stewardship. This brings our cumulative totals, since our inception in 1938, to roughly 6.2 million acres secured, and an additional 95 million influenced.

As a principal delivery agency for a successful continental conservation plan, the North American waterfowl management plan—or NAWMP, as it is commonly referred to—DU would like to offer a number of suggestions regarding the national conservation plan.

We strongly support the development of this plan, and we applaud the environment committee for undertaking this study. A country-wide plan will help position Canada as a world leader in habitat conservation, and pave the way for Canada to demonstrate international leadership on environmental issues. By taking a landscape- and habitat-based approach to conservation, this plan would ensure that future generations of Canadians continue to benefit from healthy ecosystems.

Canada's most important habitat should be conserved using a variety of tools, including land designations like protected areas, as well as conservation easements where private landowners still retain title of the land. In addition, restoration measures should be used to rehabilitate ecosystems that have already been lost or degraded, with emphasis placed on the most threatened and valuable, such as wetlands.

The plan should also connect people and habitat through a mosaic of working lands. This means we must engage all Canadians, particularly landowners, the agriculture community, and industry with a plan that makes it easier to conserve and steward Canadian landscapes, in addition to rewarding conservation actions that many of these sectors already undertake.

I'd like to pass it on to Karla.

● (1620)

Dr. Karla Guyn (Director of Conservation Planning, Ducks Unlimited Canada): DU believes that a national conservation plan should drive 10 key outcomes. First of all, a culture of conservation is created, instilling a sense of value, pride, engagement, and responsibility in all Canadians, including the traditional conservation community as well as new conservation agents such as young, new, and urban Canadians.

Second, negative habitat trends are stopped and reversed by directing impacts away from sensitive areas, mitigating impacts that are unavoidable, and restoring areas that have been lost or degraded.

Third, Canada meets and exceeds existing domestic commitments such as the Species at Risk Act, and the Fisheries Act, as well as international agreements such as the migratory birds acts and multilateral agreements, such as the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Aichi targets.

Fourth, the Canadian economy benefits directly from conservation efforts. Jobs are created by restoration and stewardship programs. Tourism and outdoor recreation sectors thrive. Businesses increase their market share through green branding and eco-certification, and farmers are compensated for conserving natural capital.

Fifth, goals, plans, and targets are effective at all levels. A science-based approach is used to plan, implement, and monitor conservation efforts and resources to ensure fiscal efficacy.

Sixth, an effective tracking, monitoring, and reporting system is developed. This national system tracks habitat outcomes on both public and private lands, and reports progress on national conservation plan implementation.

Seventh, conservation actions are better coordinated. Economies of scale are realized through partnerships and shared resources, better coordination between different levels of government, and more collaboration within the conservation community.

Eighth, existing tools are evaluated and new tools are developed. In some cases, this means continuing to do what we are already doing well. Programs such as the North American waterfowl management plan or NAWMP, the natural areas conservation program, the ecological gifts program, and the environmental farm plan are all highly effective, well-established conservation tools that

should be maintained and expanded. In other cases, we will require new tools, particularly on private land and on working landscapes.

Ninth, effective funding models sustain long-term activities and programs. This means continued support for existing programs that are effective, including those mentioned above. This also means designing new funding models, particularly ones that use private sector capacity. New approaches should target innovative cost-share models and new incentives to encourage conservation on private lands.

Tenth, strong long-term partnerships are forged. By drawing ideas from successful models such as NAWMP, new conservation partnerships for planning, implementation, funding, and monitoring can be developed between all conservation agents in Canada.

It's clear that we cannot manage what we cannot measure. Monitoring and evaluation metrics that are aligned with plan goals will be critical to this plan's success. From a conservation standpoint, two types of metrics are crucial. Number one is habitat metrics, including habitat inventories such as wetland inventories that can be used to calculate a baseline, and then monitor habitat change and conservation impacts over time. Number two is fish and wildlife metrics, including surveys of populations in need of conservation as well as factors that threaten them, such as invasive species and climate change.

These two metrics will provide the clearest indication of progress toward the plan's overarching goals. We can suggest other metrics when we have more time for detailed discussion.

In closing, DU hopes the national conservation plan gains the full support of all conservation partners in Canada and serves to drive real, profound, targeted, and measurable actions and results. We challenge the Government of Canada to continue showing strong leadership and support, including funding, for the creation and implementation of this plan. As the old adage from one of our founding DU leaders goes, conservation without action and funding is just conversation.

With that, Mr. Chairman, DU looks forward to a continued role in this process and sincerely thanks the committee for the opportunity to appear before you today. We are drafting a short report and supporting materials that expand on some of our thoughts, and we will provide that report to the clerk of the committee for distribution to committee members. We would be happy to follow up with individual members if they have any questions on the material provided.

● (1625)

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you so much.

Next we will hear from CPAWS.

Ms. Woodley.

Ms. Alison Woodley (National Conservation Director, Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society): Good afternoon, and thank you for this opportunity to share with the committee our recommendations for a national conservation plan.

My name is Alison Woodley. I'm the national conservation director at CPAWS.

My presentation today will focus primarily on the fundamental elements that we believe are essential for a national conservation plan to effectively advance conservation in Canada. We will also present a more detailed brief in the coming weeks that will elaborate more on our detailed recommendations.

CPAWS is Canada's voice for public wilderness protection. Since our creation in 1963, we've played a key role in the establishment of over two-thirds of Canada's protected areas. We have 13 regional chapters in nearly every province and territory, as well as a national office here in Ottawa. We have over 50,000 active supporters across the country.

Our vision is that Canada will protect at least half of our public lands and waters.

Over the past few years, CPAWS has welcomed significant steps forward, including the sixfold expansion of Nahanni National Park Reserve in 2009 and the creation of Gwaii Haanas National Marine Conservation Area in B.C. in 2010.

CPAWS worked hand in hand for many years with first nations communities, other partners, and governments to support these protected areas. For our Nahanni work, we were honoured last fall—with Dehcho First Nations and Parks Canada—with the Royal Canadian Geographical Society's prestigious gold medal for our collaborative efforts to expand the park.

Establishing large protected areas like these is critical, but we now know that to safeguard healthy ecosystems, we need to do more. We need to integrate our protected areas into sustainably managed land and seascapes so that wildlife can move between them. It's particularly important in the context of climate change. We need to allow plants and animals the space they need to shift and adapt to changing conditions.

Nature conservation enjoys broad support in Canada. Wildlife and wilderness are part of our national identity. Polling consistently shows that Canadians strongly support conservation action. Canada stewards about 20% of the world's remaining intact wild spaces and we have the world's longest coastline.

Clearly, we have a unique opportunity to embrace an ambitious conservation agenda. A full 90% of lands are publicly owned in Canada, as well as all of our waters, so Canadians have an important role in determining their future. But to date, only 10% of our lands and 1% of our oceans have been protected.

This is less than the global average and much less than what's needed to secure our natural heritage for the future. We still have a lot of work to do.

Let me next share our recommendations for the basic elements of the national conservation plan. First, we believe the plan should focus on large land and seascape scale conservation. We support framing a plan with the basic elements of protect, connect, restore, and engage.

The “protect” component should focus on ensuring that large core areas of wildlife habitat are protected in each region of Canada, as a cornerstone of the plan. This requires completing networks of protected areas on land and in the marine environment.

The “connect” component should focus on ensuring protected areas are integrated within sustainably managed land and seascapes, with the goal of allowing wildlife to move between protected areas, and to support the healthy ecosystems we need to sustain our own human communities.

Strong environmental legislation, best industrial practices and certification, stewardship programs, and conservation-focused land and marine planning processes are among the key tools.

The “restore” component is about restoring degraded ecosystems and recovering species at risk. These two require collaborative stewardship tools and strong environmental laws.

Finally, the “engage” component reflects the importance of connecting Canadians with nature. We need to build a community of stewards who will support nature conservation in the future. There are lots of opportunities for partnerships here, including with conservation groups such as CPAWS, Ducks Unlimited, and the David Suzuki Foundation.

Different approaches will be needed in different regions of Canada, and the plan needs to reflect this. For example, in settled southern areas there is more focus on restoration and private stewardship. In the far north, conservation-first land-use planning, led by indigenous communities, offers a major opportunity for progress.

To drive progress, the national conservation plan needs to set clear and ambitious goals and science-based targets, and then measure and report progress toward these.

We recommend that Canada demonstrate international leadership by committing to exceeding the conservation targets under the Convention on Biological Diversity.

• (1630)

These so-called Aichi targets include a commitment to protect 17% of our lands and 10% of our waters by 2020. We suggest that Canada commit to more than that—that we commit to protecting 20% of our lands and 10% of our oceans in protected areas by 2020. We believe this is an ambitious and achievable next step.

To be successful, the national conservation plan needs to build on innovative, large landscape scale conservation initiatives that are already under way across the country. These are led by governments, citizens, indigenous communities, conservation groups, industry, and in many cases, broad partnerships between these various groups.

A great example is the Canadian Boreal Forest Agreement. CPAWS and eight other environmental organizations signed this agreement with 21 members of the Forest Products Association of Canada nearly two years ago.

The agreement is an example of a large landscape scale initiative in action. It applies to over 76 million hectares of forest from Newfoundland to British Columbia, and it commits the parties to work together towards six strategic goals, including maintaining protected areas, having world-leading sustainable practices, recovering species at risk—in particular woodland caribou—addressing climate change as it relates to forest conservation, improving forest-sector prosperity, and encouraging marketplace recognition for environmental performance.

It's an innovative approach that has significant potential to help deliver a national conservation plan across a vast area of Canada's boreal forest. It's also important to recognize the enormous co-benefits that are derived from conservation, including significant economic benefits.

We will elaborate on that in our more detailed brief, but just as one example, in 2009, Canada's national provincial and territorial parks contributed \$4.6 billion to Canada's GDP. They supported 64,000 jobs and provided \$337 million in tax revenues for governments.

CPAWS welcomes the opportunity to continue to participate in the ongoing discussions about the development of a national conservation plan. We appreciate the ability to present some of our initial high-level thoughts today, and we will be submitting a more detailed brief, as I mentioned, and would be pleased to meet with committee members at any time to continue this discussion.

Thank you once again for the opportunity to share our thoughts. I look forward to our discussion.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Woodley.

Next we'll hear from the David Suzuki Foundation, and Mr. Wareham.

Can you hear us okay?

Mr. Bill Wareham (Senior Marine Conservation Specialist, David Suzuki Foundation): Yes, can you hear me all right?

The Chair: Perfect. Please proceed.

Mr. Bill Wareham: Okay, wonderful, thank you.

And thank you for accommodating me online here.

My name is Bill Wareham. I'm a marine conservation specialist with the David Suzuki Foundation, where I've worked for 10 years. I've worked for the past 25 years for non-governmental organizations in Canada, working on a variety of conservation issues—terrestrial, wetlands, national and provincial parks, fisheries management, forest management—and have a broad range of experience, which I bring to this discussion here today.

In regard to the David Suzuki Foundation, we have a broad suite of goals that we operate under in trying to protect Canada's environment. One of our core goals is to really look at the systems that support us as a society in Canada—the agricultural land, the fisheries, the forests—and to have those systems not only exist in the future in a way that continues to support the economies that we count on, but also that supports the biological diversity and the wildlife that is representative of Canada, and that I think Canadians associate with.

In regard to the national conservation plan, three of our goals are specific to this. One is protecting nature, both from a diversity perspective and the health of these ecosystems, protecting our climate; transforming the economy to operate within the limits of these natural systems; and getting people to reconnect with nature at a level where we have stewards across the country, in communities, in municipalities, and in provincial governments, who take it upon themselves as a role to take care of and steward the land.

Our perspectives on the national conservation plan are that we think this is a very important initiative, but we also put a caveat on that. We think it has to be bold. To be branded and framed as a national conservation plan, it has to have substantive enough elements to warrant that framing, which is quite significant, I think, in the eyes of Canadians when they hear that.

Some of the key principles we think are important in the plan that I'd like to outline are: to establish and promote a clear vision and a goal; to identify achievable conservation targets; to focus on larger scale conservation initiatives; to facilitate engagement by provincial and municipal governments, where the jurisdiction overlaps with federal authority; to engage first nations governments at every step of the process; to ensure that the best available science is brought to the discussion and the decision-making around these issues; and also to develop a plan that's flexible enough to respond to changes in the environment over time.

Some of the recommended outcomes that we have as targets are—as CPAWS has mentioned, and we agree with this—to adopt the biodiversity convention targets, but also to go beyond those and to look at how we can be a global leader in biodiversity conservation. Another is to use the National Parks and Wildlife Act and the National Marine Conservation Areas Act to establish a network of large protected areas, and we agree with going beyond the targets, similar to what CPAWS has mentioned. Others are to provide incentives for collaborative capacity between provincial and territorial governments, and really encouraging them to get to work and designating more of their land; to provide economic incentives for provincial and territorial governments to restore at least 15% of the degraded ecosystems; and to provide funding to municipalities and non-government organizations to enable the analysis and planning required for protected areas and land stewardship.

We'd also recommend enhancing regulations related to toxics; establishing a national energy strategy that provides mechanisms and incentives for aggressive reductions to greenhouse gas emissions—we believe that clean water, clean air, and protecting the land and wildlife are all part of a valid national conservation plan—and investing in additional capacity and funding in our national fisheries so that we can have a fisheries recovery strategy and support rebuilding these fisheries, which really provide a lot of economic benefit to Canada.

In regard to process, I'd just like to mention a few things that we'd suggest in putting this together.

One is to provide opportunities for online support and feedback informing the national conservation plan targets and outcomes, and providing an ongoing web network, where people can see what's happening, they can track what's going on, they can contribute and participate, and they can have links to provincial governments or other initiatives that are helping fill out the plan.

The second one is establishing regional and national coordinating committees that include federal, provincial, and first nations representatives to facilitate the necessary dialogue and decision-making on some of these larger issues.

• (1635)

Our third recommendation is to establish federal inter-agency coordinating committees. In many of the conservation initiatives we pursue, we found a lack of coordination and alignment between the federal agencies, which can really slow down progress on the initiatives. We've recently seen some committees come together effectively, particularly in regard to oceans. We'd like to support that in the broader sense of the plan.

Our fourth recommendation is to enable accountability by monitoring and annually reporting progress towards these objectives, so people can see how we stand against the major outcomes.

Our fifth recommendation is encouraging individual Canadians to get involved in these initiatives and participate not only in the planning and design, but also in bringing information to the decision-makers and establishing a non-government national conservation plan advisory council. The council would consist of leading NGOs, academics, and industry leaders, who would review the plan and discuss challenges along the way.

In conclusion, I'd like to say that we're very supportive of the plan. We'd like to be part of the ongoing design development. We are also happy to provide additional information on specific concepts as you refine your approach and determine your key objectives.

We want to emphasize that it really has to be a bold plan. We can do that. If Canada, in our developed country with the wealth that we have, cannot develop something that serves as a global model on how to engage our human societies with their environment, I can't imagine how it could be done in other places in the world. We'd like to help make this a bold plan with bold outcomes. We're happy to engage our staff to help along the way.

Thank you very much.

• (1640)

The Chair: Thank you so much.

Ms. Rempel.

Ms. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Centre-North, CPC): I want to thank all of the witnesses for coming out today. We're all very excited to be embarking on this study. To echo your concerns, this study is very important for Canadians and for conservation in this country.

One of the themes I picked up on from all three witnesses was the concept of ownership and connecting people into the conservation model. I wanted to direct my questions along that line. First of all, for each of the witnesses, and I'll start with Ducks Unlimited, we've heard some back-and-forth about how best to get urban Canadians involved in the conservation dialogue.

Could all three witnesses discuss that concept very briefly? How are some of your programs and offerings are doing that?

Dr. Karla Guyn: That's something we also struggle with—trying to connect with the urban audiences. There are a couple of things that we've undertaken in the past few years. One is our education programs. We've been targeting grade 4 students, educating them about conservation. We've also put together materials in various languages for new Canadians, so as to better educate them about the values of wetlands. To target older students, we've put forward wetland centres of excellence, which are associated with high schools that have wetlands nearby. Those are a few of the things we've done to engage urban audiences.

Ms. Alison Woodley: CPAWS shares the challenges we're all facing in terms of the nature deficit disorder, as it's often called, and people being less connected with nature. CPAWS has a number of programs to try to deal with the challenge. We have education programs. For example, in our southern Alberta chapter where the mountain parks are not too far away from the city, we have in-classroom programs and take kids out into the parks. That's a traditional model, but it's still an important one to get kids out into nature.

We are also working with new technology. Two years ago we ran a video contest that targeted a younger audience. We asked people to make two-minute videos of their favourite parks. The winner won a trip down the South Nahanni River, and did an amazing rap video about Gros Morne National Park. It was quite phenomenal. We were really pleased. We had hundreds of applications. We've been doing social media contests.

We're also supportive of the government's initiatives around national urban parks. We're very supportive of the Rouge national urban park, for example, and are engaged in those discussions. We think it's going to be a really important opportunity because it's so close to so many Canadians.

It's really hard to find a replacement for people actually going out and having contact with nature, so this is a really important opportunity. We see it as a gateway to nature—a gateway to our national park system and our wilderness areas overall. People can start to have a bit of a nature experience there, and then hopefully gain enough interest that they will be brave and interested in going out beyond that into more remote areas. So those are some of the things we've been doing.

Thank you.

●(1645)

Ms. Michelle Rempel: Mr. Wareham.

Mr. Bill Wareham: We have a large focus on public engagement at the David Suzuki Foundation, with the intent of trying to lift awareness across a variety of issues. It's a process where we try to escalate the learning up the scale, because it's hard to get communities, individuals, children, or people who haven't been engaged in any kind of conservation planning or conservation concepts to just to jump into them.

We have programs like David Suzuki at work, where we get people in the workplace engaged in learning some of the basics about conservation of energy, water, and paper. Then we get those people engaged in some of the broader issues so they start to look at the footprint of their community, our cities, our economies, and our industries, and start connecting them to certain issues in their region. That might be fisheries, a wild-land park, or endangered species. We try to escalate these people. We call it the ladder of engagement of knowledge.

In our sustainable seafood initiative, we try to get people engaged at a basic level in buying seafood products that they think are more sustainable than not. We try to educate people and provide them with information on our websites, exciting recipes, and different things to engage them. But in that process they also learn about the need to maintain fisheries, that the fisheries are the very source of the food they're eating, and that there's an opportunity to recover these fisheries. We try to engage at that point source.

We also do education programs with the schools. We do national video conferencing. We have a CISCO TelePresence system, and can speak to schools and large numbers of people from our offices in Vancouver, Ottawa, or Toronto. We can engage them in lectures and learning videos about various topics.

Those are the main things we're doing right now. There's a whole social media presence as well that we're building on in trying to get people interested at various scales. Some of the primary themes are our interconnectedness with nature and the systems, whether it's freshwater, healthy oceans, or forested landscapes that provide many services.

We also promote the concept of natural capital and ecosystem services, trying to educate people about the value of their resources. In specific areas, like our green space corridor program around Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver, we're trying to profile those green space conservation concepts closer to home.

The Chair: Your time has expired.

Monsieur Pilon, you have seven minutes.

[*Translation*]

Mr. François Pilon (Laval—Les Îles, NDP): Thank you very much.

I also wish to thank the witnesses for accepting our invitation. Congratulations to you on your fine presentations.

My first question is for the representative of Ducks Unlimited Canada. I represent a riding in which the wetlands are in danger from urban development.

Do you think that the government is currently doing enough to preserve our wetlands? If not, what do you think it should be doing?

[*English*]

Ms. Andrea Barnett: Thank you very much for that question. It's a fantastic question, and it leads into something that I think is a very important part of this plan, which is interjurisdictional coordination, because when you're looking at wetland protection, depending on the impact and the location, we're often dealing with different levels of government. Specifically, when we look at what the major threats to wetlands are throughout Canada, a lot of it is urban and rural development, and so it's often about engaging local and regional governments.

We have a couple of examples of programs in Ontario and also in British Columbia—that's the one I'm most familiar with—which essentially provided a tool kit to local governments to try to, within the regulatory and planning provisions that exist, figure out a way to direct development away from the most sensitive areas. It isn't about no development, but it is about reimagining how development can happen in the context of wetland protection. That needs to happen at a local government level.

So my concluding message would be that I feel that to address situations like the one you've brought up, it's important that this plan takes into consideration the interconnectiveness of jurisdiction.

●(1650)

[*Translation*]

Mr. François Pilon: Yes, let us talk about the plan. My question is for all three witnesses. From your own experience, what direction should the national conservation plan be taking and what should its goals be?

The question is for all three witnesses, but Ms. Woodley can answer first.

Ms. Alison Woodley: Thank you.

[*English*]

I think the goal of the national conservation plan should be about protecting wildlife or biodiversity and healthy ecosystems to sustain the values we all share and our human communities.

Ms. Andrea Barnett: From what I've seen so far in terms of what's already been put together, I think that as overarching themes, the goals of protect or conserve—however you want to conceive that—connect, restore and engage the Canadian public are fundamental. From a conservation perspective, as Karla indicated in our discussion of measures and metrics, we're interested in habitat change on the landscape and the impacts that has in terms of wildlife population. So I think that's an ultimate goal, but a whole bunch of other things are required to meet those goals, including the engagement of all Canadians, particularly on working landscape.

Mr. François Pilon: Mr. Wareham.

Mr. Bill Wareham: Yes, thanks.

We believe that the large systems, as I talked about earlier—our ocean systems, the forest systems, the prairie wetlands, large river systems—that provide that core network of environmental function need to be protected on a much larger scale. We believe that in Canada we already have momentum on some of these things. We have a national marine protected area strategy. We have a national park strategy. We have momentum on these things, but progress has been very slow over the last 25 years.

I think the opportunity is there to escalate the work against some of our existing policies. We would like to see an outcome at the end of the day where we're not just maintaining remnant levels of species to say that we still have them, we're looking to a system that provides a robust opportunity to have viable populations, and particularly fisheries, which as we all know are very important to Canadians.

We have a choice. We have a choice to either recover and rebuild and maintain those fish stocks at larger levels, and marine protected areas are a big part of helping accommodate that. I think these strategies would reduce the risk going forward, knowing that we're seeing changes in precipitation and forest cover and all kinds of things. So accommodating these things is our core interest.

[Translation]

Mr. François Pilon: My next question is for Ms. Woodley. You suggest that a significant reserve of carbon sinks be kept. How do you suggest doing that?

[English]

Ms. Alison Woodley: There is growing scientific evidence that there is a great deal of biological carbon that's actually stored in intact ecosystems. For example, the boreal forest is one of the largest storehouses of biological carbon in the world.

The wonderful thing is that when you conserve these ecosystems in their healthy state, you are also helping to ensure that biological carbon stays stored and is maintained in that state. It's a great co-benefit of conserving biodiversity or habitat. Wetlands and boreal forest are incredibly carbon-rich environments. By conserving them, you're also avoiding some significant emissions of carbon.

[Translation]

Mr. François Pilon: Mr. Wareham, in 2010, the David Suzuki Foundation concluded an agreement on the boreal forest.

Can you tell us what has become of this agreement? Is it going well or not?

[English]

Mr. Bill Wareham: It's been a challenge. We'll be honest. This is a big initiative. You can imagine, many jurisdictions, provincial governments, and first nations are very key in this.

When the agreement was signed, there was a need to do some reconciliation with first nations to build and respect their rights and interests, and have them feel they were part of the plan and that it accommodated their needs as well. I think that's an important message to everyone in the national conservation plan, that accommodating people's interests, whoever they are, in whatever form—municipal governments, first nations—is an important part of the mix.

Our experience is that having the multi-stakeholder dialogues and these opportunities to bring people together is absolutely key in building lasting solutions. Whenever we don't do that and we miss engaging people—first nations communities—it tends to come back and bite us and slow things down.

I would say that in the last couple of years there's been some good work rebuilding that stakeholder network, working with first nations, and recommitting some funding around the targets we're going to move on.

• (1655)

The Chair: Thank you so much.

Next is Mr. Sopuck.

You have seven minutes.

Mr. Robert Sopuck (Dauphin—Swan River—Marquette, CPC): Thanks. I have a comment first. I listened very intently to all the presentations, and I was quite surprised at the lack of mention of natural resource communities and agricultural communities. I would strongly recommend that your organizations revisit your philosophy. Those are the communities I represent, and they're always left out of these kinds of discussions.

My question for Ms. Woodley deals with the protected areas. Don't you think that the focus on protected areas is somewhat limiting? Shouldn't the national conservation plan be about conserving essential ecological processes regardless of whether an area is so-called protected or not? Aren't we all about the ecological processes?

Ms. Alison Woodley: I think there's fairly clear evidence, both internationally and in Canada, that in order to conserve those important ecological processes, and the parts... In order to protect healthy ecosystems we have to keep all the parts and the processes intact. In order to do that, I think there's pretty clear evidence that we need to both have these core areas of protected habitat, and also have them connected together and nested within a sustainable landscape.

Doing one or the other isn't going to work. We have to do them together. We have to do them in an integrated way, if we really want to achieve our goal of conserving healthy ecosystems—both the parts and the processes—into the future in order to sustain all of us and our human communities.

Mr. Robert Sopuck: In your view, Ms. Woodley, are changed landscapes always degraded landscapes? I'm talking about human-caused change.

Ms. Alison Woodley: Are changed landscapes always degraded landscapes? If they have lost species, they are degraded. If they have lost integrity, then they are degraded at some level.

Obviously there's a full spectrum of degradation. Depending on what you mean by changed, if they have lost integrity, then they're degraded in some way.

Mr. Robert Sopuck: In my constituency it's almost nothing but changed landscapes. What I would argue very vehemently is that in most of my constituency, ecological processes are being conserved.

For Ms. Barnett, don't you think that working landscapes should be the absolute top priority of the national conservation plan as opposed, for example, to putting lines on maps in remote areas? In terms of conservation gain, don't you think it's the working landscapes where we have the most to gain?

Ms. Andrea Barnett: I think generally speaking a good national conservation plan is going to be about using the right tool in the right circumstance. In some cases that's going to be a protected area and in a lot of cases—if you're asking Ducks Unlimited in terms of our core mandate—absolutely it's about the working landscape. I really think this is where the major paradigm shift needs to happen and this is where we need to go, absolutely.

I'm sorry if that didn't come across enough in our presentation. We're absolutely fixated on this as a core issue. For 74 years in Canada, the agriculture landscape and agricultural producers have been some of our primary partners. So absolutely, moving forward, that's where we need to go as a major focus, along with a bunch of other tools that are used appropriately, based on conservation responses.

Mr. Robert Sopuck: I would strongly agree with that, but setting priorities is what governments do and we can't do everything, so I'm very pleased to hear you say that you agree with a focus on working landscapes, as I do.

In terms of working landscapes, would you say, Ms. Barnett, that there is quite a difference between the private-land working landscape versus the public-land working landscape? How would you approach each of them?

• (1700)

Ms. Andrea Barnett: Oh, that's a very big question. How much time do we have?

I think you need to look at goals and what some of the barriers to conservation might be on both bases, and I think we need to approach the different circumstances differently. If we're looking at crown land, grazing tenure, for example—I'm from the interior of British Columbia where there's lots of forestry and lots of ranching—looking at ways to enhance conservation there, you're going to be looking at a different regulatory mix, a different set of stakeholders, and a different set of interests. There are lots of conservation gains to happen there.

When you're looking at private land, absolutely, you're looking at a different regulatory environment, and most importantly, you're looking at how you provide incentives to landowners to act and manage in a way that enhances or protects the ecological values in that particular landscape. I think that's where the work is. We need to figure out how to make it easy for the people who steward the land to make the right decision. It should be easier to do that than to impact.

Mr. Robert Sopuck: I couldn't agree more. The record is clear, though, that on the privately owned agricultural landscape, the incentive approach is the only approach that will deliver real conservation gains.

I have another question directed to Ducks Unlimited. I was quite surprised that in your presentation there was no mention of your core constituency, the anglers and the hunters. I find that quite surprising.

One of the things I certainly will be pushing for is that the sustainable use of fish and wildlife resources will be an integral part of Canada's national conservation plan. Why wasn't that a focus of your presentation, given that group provides most of your funds and is your founding constituency?

Ms. Andrea Barnett: Would you like me to answer that?

Mr. Robert Sopuck: It's up to you.

Ms. Andrea Barnett: In putting together this presentation, we went from 30 pages down to five because of the 10 minutes. It's absolutely implied in terms of our organization, and perhaps it should have been underscored, but absolutely we need to provide due credit to our core supporters.

On the question of how to engage more conservation agents in Canada, I would really look to our existing core supporters, who are often hunters and anglers, and try to grow that and acknowledge the impact and the conservation gains that are directly attributable to that group of individuals.

Mr. Robert Sopuck: Acknowledgment of the group that pioneered conservation I think is greatly appropriate.

Ms. Andrea Barnett: Absolutely.

Mr. Robert Sopuck: Regarding—

The Chair: Unfortunately, your time has expired.

Ms. Duncan, you have seven minutes.

Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'd like to thank the witnesses. Thank you for your comments about the need for strong environmental laws, co-benefits, and the need for monitoring and metrics and protecting our climate.

I'm going to be very specific, and Ms. Woodley, may I begin with you? Can you explain what Canada's commitments are nationally and internationally for marine protected areas, please?

Ms. Alison Woodley: I can explain some of them. I'm sure I won't get the full suite, and I'm sure Mr. Wareham will be able to fill in the details, because he's our marine expert at the table today.

There was an original commitment to complete networks of protected areas by 2012. We're obviously not going to get there. There is a renewed commitment to protect 10% of our oceans by 2020 under the Aichi targets, which are those signed in 2010 under the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Ms. Kirsty Duncan: It was my understanding that we've protected 1% of that.

Ms. Alison Woodley: So far we are at 1%.

Ms. Kirsty Duncan: Can you tell us, please, how that compares internationally? What can we learn from what's being done internationally, such as in Australia, for example?

Ms. Alison Woodley: I think there are some interesting examples. Again, Mr. Wareham can fill in more details, I'm sure.

Australia has done some interesting things.

One of the challenges we face is that we tend to establish protected areas on land and in the oceans one at a time, and it takes a very long time. If you kind of line up one park or marine protected area at a time, it takes a very long time. The more efficient way to do it, and the more effective way to do it, is to use network planning to do it. Region by region, lay out plans for the areas that are most important to protect. How do they relate to each other, and how are they going to be connected together? Do that as one planning process, and then implement it as one process.

It's a much more efficient way, because you make much quicker progress. And it's a much more effective way, because you're looking at the bigger picture and are seeing how it all connects together.

• (1705)

Ms. Kirsty Duncan: Would you see 12 new marine protected areas? As you said, we won't meet them by 2012, but would you like to see that?

Ms. Alison Woodley: Yes, thank you.

CPAWS has an ongoing campaign to protect 12 marine protected area by 2012. We are making some progress on a number of those sites, which is great. We're continuing to work to encourage that to happen.

Ms. Kirsty Duncan: Okay, that's terrific.

If you could draft your ideal marine conservation plan, I'd like to know what it would look like. I also have to address something said earlier. I think what Ms. Barnett said is really important, which is that you have to use the right tool in the right area. You have to address that.

If you could draft your ideal plan, what would it look like? If you could make the recommendations for this report, what would they be?

Ms. Alison Woodley: Reiterating what I said earlier, I think we need to make sure that it addresses large land and seascape scale approaches. It would take us from one-off projects to a larger landscape, more integrated approach.

We need to make sure that we complete a network of core protected habitat areas in all of the regions. This isn't just the federal government. This is all of our jurisdictions and interests—private landowners, indigenous peoples—working together to bring under a common framework all the tools we have and to develop new tools where necessary to achieve that ultimate goal.

Obviously, we need to make huge progress on the working landscape. CPAWS works on public lands. That's why I'm talking about public lands. That's our mandate. But obviously, in the southern part, there is huge room for improvement on private lands, and that's essential. On the public lands that are allocated to industrial uses, and are used and are sustaining our communities, we absolutely need to make significant progress. That's where things like the Canadian Boreal Forest Agreement and other similar initiatives.... There are a huge number of initiatives under way across this country. That's the exciting thing here. We're not starting from scratch. In Quebec, the government has made a commitment to protect 50%.

Ms. Kirsty Duncan: Thank you.

Mr. Wareham, I really think this needs to protect the atmosphere, biodiversity, terrestrial landscape, freshwater, groundwater, and marine protected areas. You've mentioned climate change a number of times. What do you think this conservation plan should include to address climate change?

Mr. Bill Wareham: I think there's a large component about efficiency. Energy efficiency comes in a couple of ways.

The education component of energy efficiency brings people on board. As I mentioned earlier, try to engage people on issues they can understand. Work with them. They start to see the broader impacts.

Clean air is part of our goal. The reduction in greenhouse gas emissions also contributes to cleaner air.

Ms. Kirsty Duncan: Mr. Wareham, what specifically in the conservation plan could you recommend to this committee that would take action on air quality and climate change that would be part of the conservation plan?

Mr. Bill Wareham: I believe we need a national policy to reduce the emissions from transportation, both individual transportation and commercial transportation. It's one of the largest greenhouse gas emitters in the country and it's the largest urban pollution source. We need to get aggressive about transportation emission reductions.

Ms. Kirsty Duncan: Is there anything you would like to say about protecting wetlands and forests, because of the carbon?

Mr. Bill Wareham: I agree with what Mr. Sopuck mentioned. Our goal is to protect these systems and it requires a range of tools. Protected areas is one of them, but there are all kinds of things that we have to do to rebuild things. We have to maintain existing wetlands, while reconnecting natural corridors in places where either agriculture or industrial practices are marginal. We need to rebuild the carbon capture systems with forest wetlands.

Ms. Kirsty Duncan: Can you give us examples of carbon capture?

• (1710)

Mr. Bill Wareham: There are marginal wetlands that have been converted to agriculture under agriculture policies aimed at quotas. If we can change some of that to recover those wetlands, they will reform very quickly and can become carbon sinks. It is similar with forests. We need to protect intact forests while accommodating development in second-growth forests to capture more carbon.

The Chair: Thank you so much.

[Translation]

Mr. Choquette, you have five minutes.

Mr. François Choquette (Drummond, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chair. I also wish to thank the witnesses for being here today. Moreover, their presentations were very relevant and very interesting. My first question is for Mr. Wareham.

Earlier, my colleague mentioned the Canadian Boreal Forest Agreement. Is this agreement between the major forest companies and several environmental groups working, even though they have different interests?

[English]

Mr. Bill Wareham: I think it can work and it will work. As for the scope of the outcomes, it's a bit of a guess how far we'll get, but without a consolidation of industry, first nations, and all levels of government with the academic and NGO community, we won't get lasting solutions. I believe it will work to increase the conservation benefit that we realize from the boreal forest overall.

[Translation]

Mr. François Choquette: Thank you very much.

I would like to ask another question of all the witnesses. Should the government grant priority in its national conservation plan to private lands or public lands?

I would like all three witnesses to give me a brief answer to this question.

[English]

Ms. Alison Woodley: We have to work on both private lands and public lands. About 90% of Canada is public lands, so if we work only on private land, we're missing a huge chunk of the country. However, there are significant numbers of species at risk, and there is lots of work to do on the private lands, where most people live. So there's work to be done, lots of work, in engaging Canadians and restoring healthy ecosystems. We really need to do both.

[Translation]

Mr. François Choquette: Briefly, Ms. Barnett, what do you think?

[English]

Ms. Andrea Barnett: I agree. I think it needs to be both, and it needs to be targeted at major issues, opportunities, and barriers within the private landscape and the public landscape. We need to have a lot of good minds working on things like developing incentive programs—that's the private-land piece that we really need to put our thinking caps on about.

[Translation]

Mr. François Choquette: Mr. Wareham, what do you say?

[English]

Mr. Bill Wareham: Proportionally, we have a lot of public land in Canada. If we're really going to have a national conservation plan that serves to protect those larger systems and larger populations of wildlife and fisheries, public lands and waters need to have proportionally more investment in this plan. But it's also important to do what we can on private lands.

[Translation]

Mr. François Choquette: I would like to ask one short question of the three witnesses.

At present, only 1% of our marine waters are protected. An ambitious project aims to increase this protection to 10%. Now we are hearing that the Conservative government would like to amend the Fisheries Act in order to remove the requirements respecting protection of the habitat.

Do you think that such a measure is compatible with conservation? Mr. Wareham can answer first.

[English]

Mr. Bill Wareham: When we talk about all the varieties of tools that we need to conserve nature, habitat provisions in the Fisheries Act are very important. They are one of the key tools we have used, and I think we need to continue to use.

With regard to the oceans, we have many tools—the National Marine Conservation Areas Act, the Wildlife Act, the Fisheries Act—which can protect areas at another level. So the Fisheries Act habitat provisions are one component. This applies to many different places, but we have other tools as well that are important to use.

• (1715)

[Translation]

Mr. François Choquette: Ms. Woodley, what do you think?

[English]

Ms. Alison Woodley: I agree with Mr. Wareham. Strong environmental laws are very important and the habitat provisions are part of that. A suite of acts are specifically designed to create marine protected areas, so those are in place. Absolutely, it's important.

Ms. Andrea Barnett: I won't address anything specifically about marine protected areas, but on the topic of the Fisheries Act, everything right now is speculative from our standpoint, so I'm not going to make any comment about what may or may not change. But I will say that fundamentally when you're trying to look after any species, be they terrestrial or marine, it's really important that habitat is a consideration. It's certainly not my position today to speculate as to what might need to happen at a legislative level to enable that, but Ducks Unlimited is a strong... We're a habitat conservation organization, and we do feel that a focus on habitat for the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans is important, however that happens. It's important to mitigate and compensate for impacts to fisheries' habitats, in some sense.

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Choquette.

[English]

We have Ms. Ambler, five minutes, please.

Mrs. Stella Ambler (Mississauga South, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to our guests for being here, and for your presentations today.

I'd like to talk to you about urban settings and conservation. We talked earlier about engaging urban audiences and ways to do this.

In particular, there is a project called the Lakeview Corridor project in my riding, which is on Lake Ontario in an area where access to the lake has been cut off for 120 years. There is a group in the community who is working to fix this problem and to bring nature back to those living in the surrounding area.

I listened with interest about the Ducks Unlimited program called wetlands for tomorrow, and about the \$600 million in wetland conservation. I want to hear a bit more about that, even though it's over. I am wondering if that will continue in any other fashion, or take another direction perhaps, and if there was any support in that program for urban projects.

I'd like your thoughts on the importance of habitat conservation within urban areas. The project I'm speaking about, the Lakeview Corridor project, is approximately a 20-year project. It replaces a coal-fired generating station in the area, with four very ugly smokestacks sticking out like sore thumbs on the shores of Lake Ontario. I think this is a project that could be a showcase for brownfield development in the Greater Toronto Area. It will include waterfront trails, eco-friendly homes, green businesses, and recreational canals. The idea is to restore wetlands and marine habitat to the area.

My part *b* question is that while I like the idea of educating young people in urban areas and field trips to parks, I also believe that conservation has to be part of how and where we live every day, and most Canadians live in urban areas.

Do you believe that smart growth can be combined with conservation? Should this government, this committee, this report on the national conservation plan, support urban projects that attempt to do this? What advice would you have for us as we study this issue as it relates to urban issues?

That was a long preamble. I'm sorry.

• (1720)

Dr. Karla Guyn: I tried to take some notes to include all of your questions.

Thank you. To address your first point about wetlands for tomorrow and whether any of the funding we raised was spent in urban areas, the answer is absolutely, yes. We did a number of large projects in the Vancouver area—in Surrey. We also did a number of habitat projects right in the city of Montreal, and a number of interpretative centres, which were more like boardwalks in urban wetlands, in Edmonton, Calgary, and Saskatoon. Fredericton has an interpretive centre as well.

When you're talking about having conservation within urban areas, one of the things you may not be familiar with is something that Ducks Unlimited is involved with, particularly in Winnipeg, through a segment of our organization called native plant solutions. It works with developers to naturalize stormwater ponds. They provide the functionality of a stormwater pond, but they look like a natural wetland. That gives the ability to educate urban audiences about the functions of wetlands.

When you're trying to implement any kind of urban conservation program, I encourage you to have very clear objectives about what you want that conservation program to achieve. Is it to engage Canadians? Is it to educate them? Is it for actual habitat? Be very clear about what you're trying to achieve with those programs.

The Chair: Thank you so much. Time has expired.

Monsieur Morin, you have five minutes.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Marc-André Morin (Laurentides—Labelle, NDP): Thank you.

I have seen a lot of Canada. I know the Canadian west almost as well as Quebec. I wonder about something. How can a single strategy work in the Prairies, Quebec and the Maritimes, when the contexts are so different?

With regard to Saskatchewan and Alberta, we are almost always talking about cultivated land. The issues are pretty straightforward. They are always about wetlands located in the migration paths of ducks, and so forth.

In Quebec, as soon as we leave a city or a village, we are nearly always on crown land. The owners or users cannot be readily identified, the way farmers are on the Prairies.

How can we develop one plan that factors in the particularities of the Prairies and the St. Lawrence Valley? As soon as there is something to conserve in the St. Lawrence Valley, we are talking about special resource land and we know it is going to be expensive. We cannot protect such land.

How do we determine different strategies, when we have different conditions?

• (1725)

[*English*]

Ms. Andrea Barnett: It's a great question, absolutely, and I think it's really both the challenge and also the potential great achievement of this plan.

I'd like to—and maybe my colleague Karla can help me a little bit—draw the example of the North American waterfowl management plan, which involves Canada, the United States, and Mexico, and has been one of the most successful conservation plans or strategies potentially ever. It has been about—taking into consideration your question—how you bring together all of these different geographic areas and stakeholders that are present, the barriers, and the opportunities.

At the end of the day, it's really about establishing a goal and looking at what your different priorities are, whether there are priority issues, priority sectors, or priority regions for conservation, and then figuring out what is happening on that landscape and what the potential tools are.

When you establish your priorities and you establish a very large, comprehensive toolbox—we have discussed using the right tool in the right circumstance—it really allows you to make an assessment of what to do on a particular landscape.

For example, in urban areas, the challenge to habitat loss might be development. You need to look at how you engage the development community and how you engage local governments on these sorts of strategies. In other cases, it's going to be about engaging industry in the north—the mining industry, the forestry sector, the oil and gas sector. There are a whole bunch of different opportunities that you can work on there. Then, in settled Canada and on private landscapes, there are a whole bunch of other things.

It's about creating this comprehensive plan that has different targets.

Karla, do you have anything to add to that?

Dr. Karla Guyn: I'll reiterate what Andrea is saying.

The North American waterfowl management plan is a great example. As for Quebec, it is part of the eastern habitat joint venture. It brings together the partners within the province of Quebec to develop a conservation plan just for Quebec. What is planned for in Quebec is very different from what is being done in Alberta.

It needs to be very situational, depending on what the key issues are in the location, and it needs to bring the partners from that location together to develop the plan.

The Chair: Unfortunately, time has expired.

Mr. Lunney, you have the last five minutes.

[Translation]

Mr. James Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

[English]

I want to pick up on a comment from my colleague, Monsieur Choquette, who raised the spectre of Conservatives destroying fish habitat.

What you're talking about at this stage is, of course, speculative. You have situations recently.... In Quebec, there was the flooding.

[Translation]

It was the Richelieu River.

[English]

In 2003, I had a farmer fined for draining his field after the flooding, because some fish had come from the river into his field. The same farmer this time had to get a fishing permit in order to drain his own field after the recent flooding in the Richelieu River.

We're concerned that regulation needs to be smart regulation. We can meet our conservation objectives without being punitive and unreasonable in other manners. So what the discussion is actually about is making sure our regulations are smart.

For our friends from Ducks Unlimited, I want to say that I see from your remarks that you have 500 fundraising events hosting 68,000 people. I know, having attended a number of those, that they're very popular in my region, where we have a lot of outdoors people. Both the Pacific Salmon Foundation, for habitat restoration, and Ducks Unlimited raise a lot of money in our area, because people are very enthusiastic about maintaining our wetlands and marshlands on the coast. Estuaries and habitat restoration attract a lot of volunteer activity on the coast, where I'm from on Vancouver Island.

I notice, though, that in your remarks you talk about taking a landscape- and habitat-based approach to conservation.

Would you first just define a "landscape approach"?

Dr. Karla Guyn: Well, it's always very tricky to discuss what a landscape is, because I don't think there is any one definitive answer.

In my mind, a landscape is an expansive area that tends to provide habitat for a number of species. It could be a township. It could be many townships together.

I don't think there is one definitive area that you would say is a landscape. It's simply the approach of thinking about conservation from a broader perspective than thinking about it on an individual project-by-project basis. You need to look at the cumulative impacts of conservation actions, instead of thinking site by site by site.

Look at the landscape in general and at what the needs of that landscape are, as opposed to those of individual specific locations.

• (1730)

Mr. James Lunney: So you're basically talking about an ecosystem approach.

Ms. Andrea Barnett: It can be even smaller than an ecosystem. It really depends on the conservation scale you're working at.

Mr. James Lunney: Rather than looking at one item in isolation, try to determine what other factors are at work?

Ms. Andrea Barnett: Let me add that what is also intended, behind that, is a focusing comment, in terms of what DU sees as an important focus for this plan, because there are other outcomes—for example, healthy wildlife populations in general, or a carbon strategy.

We feel that a focus on habitat is a really good way to achieve all of those other benefits. In addition to the scoping conversation, we feel that a focus on habitat—conservation, restoration, all of the things that you've identified—is really helpful. It will create all the other benefits that we want.

Mr. James Lunney: I think my time is really short. I want to throw this question out quickly.

You talked about effective funding models to sustain long-term activities and programs, designing new funding models—particularly ones that could use private sector capacity, saying that approaches should target innovative cost-sharing models—and new incentives to encourage conservation of private lands.

Can you help us out with new incentives? Do you have any ideas?

Ms. Andrea Barnett: It's really not a short answer. I would recommend that we convene a national discussion on this with relevant industry sectors and the conservation community, and that we really think about what might be a helpful approach.

DU has done a lot of research in the last little while into the realm of ecological goods and services, and this is basically providing the basis, or the background, for a whole variety of different incentives that could be developed. Likely, most of them would be market-based systems that would provide specific currency for a system that would provide a conservation incentive to landowners.

This will take up way too much time, if we start going into all of it, but we do need to convene a discussion. There are some good examples of incentive programs that already exist in Canada, and expanding on the ones that currently exist and building new ones is going to be really important.

The Chair: Unfortunately, our time has expired.

I want to thank each of the witnesses for spending time with us today and providing testimony from the organizations they represent —Ducks Unlimited, CPAWS, and the David Suzuki Foundation.

The meeting is adjourned.

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