



Ducks Unlimited Canada
Conserving Canada's Wetlands

**Ducks Unlimited Canada
Pre-Budget Submission – August 2014**

August 6, 2014

Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC) is Canada's Leader in wetland conservation and has been investing in Canada's natural capital for 76 years. Working in partnerships with all levels of government, industry, NGO partners and the Canadian public DUC is committed to conserving and restoring habitats that benefit waterfowl, other species and people.

We wish to commend the Government of Canada again for the release of the *National Conservation Plan*, and especially for the focus that it placed on wetlands conservation through the new \$50 million *National Wetland Conservation Fund*. The evidence keeps mounting: conserving and restoring wetlands is one of the best ways to safeguard our social, economic and ecological wellbeing as a country. With nearly an estimated \$22 in social return-on-investment for every \$1 invested in wetland conservation, it is also a very effective way to generate jobs for Canadians – particularly in rural Canada where wetland restoration projects and project maintenance generate the need for skilled workers. Wetland conservation and restoration also provides Canadian communities with invaluable green infrastructure that helps to mitigate the effects of flood and drought; issues that are top-of-mind for many communities. DUC looks forward to partnering with the Government of Canada in the coming years as this fund is fully implemented and important conservation investments are made.

Through a suite of new and renewed programs, the *National Conservation Plan* strongly promotes conservation on private lands in Canada, a public policy approach that marks a very important step forward. With the aim of creating a comprehensive conservation plan for Canada that is supported by a suite of programs, DUC recommends that the Government of Canada consider including/ renewing the following additional items in the coming federal budget.

- 1. \$50 million in funding for the completion of the *Canadian Wetland Inventory*¹:**
The Canadian Wetland Inventory (CWI) is an essential tool for identifying and tracking the presence of wetlands on the Canadian landscape. This type of tool provides essential

¹ The following link provides additional information on the *Canadian Wetland Inventory*:
<http://www.ducks.ca/what-we-do/cwi/>

information to governments, industry and the public that aim to develop sustainably - avoiding and minimizing impacts to sensitive features like wetlands. While considerable work has been done on the CWI to date, there are still many information gaps. DUC asks the government to consider a 5-year commitment of \$10M per year (\$50M total) to complete the CWI.

Expected benefits:

1. Balancing the federal budget to ensure fiscal sustainability and economic growth:

Geo-spatial data, such as the CWI, provides government and proponents with information upfront that allows for informed decision-making about resource development. An extensive, pan-Canadian suite of data would provide a strong baseline of information in all provinces and territories, encouraging fair competition and improving the ability for the use of consistent best management practices across Canada.

2. Increasing the competitiveness of Canadian businesses through research, development, innovation and commercialization:

The CWI would increase the competitiveness of Canada's Natural Resource sector by improving the clarity and certainty around the existence of sensitive ecological features. This information would be available to all proponents and regulatory agencies and would streamline the project permitting and approval process.

3. Ensuring prosperous and secure communities, including through support for infrastructure:

A comprehensive CWI would allow communities to plan for the retention of their green infrastructure through proactive land use planning. This would help maximize human and social health and well-being and reduce communities' reliance on expensive engineered infrastructure.

4. Improving Canada's taxation and regulatory regimes:

The availability of accurate and up to date data has been shown to improve both the efficiency and effectiveness of regulatory regimes. It also provides clarity and certainty to proponents, allowing them to proactively plan.

5. Maximizing the number and types of jobs for Canadians:

A completed CWI would not only provide short-term job opportunities for Canadians, it would also help to safeguard the suite of resource sector jobs by promoting the sustainability of the resource sector, including jobs related to best management practices.

2. Additional funding to support the implementation of Canada's new Fisheries Protection Policy (FPP):

DUC has provided support in principle to the Government of Canada as it has made adjustments to the manner in which we manage our fisheries in Canada. We continue to work with Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) as the regulatory framework that supports the FPP is being fully developed. DUC maintains that the best available science

to inform decision making is essential, as is a commitment to adaptive management to ensure that policy changes are achieving their intended objectives. As such, we recommend that the government of Canada consider initiating an annual \$2 million dollar investment for 5 year (\$10 Million total) for monitoring the new program within DFO plus \$5 Million for 5 years (\$25million total) for scientific research in support of the new FPP.

Expected benefits:

1. Balancing the federal budget to ensure fiscal sustainability and economic growth:

Additional funding will ensure that recreational, aboriginal and commercial fisheries in Canada – all of which contribute significantly to the Canadian economy – are able to continue sustainably.

2. Increasing the competitiveness of Canadian businesses through research, development, innovation and commercialization:

The ability to point to concrete science and an adaptive management record will ensure that markets for our commercial fish continue to be sought after and that our recreational and aboriginal fisheries continue in the context of the best management practices.

3. Ensuring prosperous and secure communities, including through support for infrastructure:

An FPP that is based on science and adaptive management will ensure that communities in Canada can continue to rely on our fisheries as part of the social and economic fabric of communities and Canadians' way of life.

4. Improving Canada's taxation and regulatory regimes:

Additional science will improve the ability to implement the new policies and improve clarity and certainty for governments, proponents and the public. Improved science and adaptive management will also provide assurance to the Canadian public that the new FPP is achieving desired social, economic and ecological objectives and improve the credibility of the Government of Canada on this important issue.

5. Maximizing the number and types of jobs for Canadians:

Ensuring the sustainability of the sector, through science-based decision making and adaptive management will ensure that jobs related to this sector are maintained or enhanced moving forward. Investments in science also provide opportunities for the development of skilled scientific work in Canada and supports meaningful work for Canadian scientists.

3. Extending eligibility for Community Infrastructure Funding to conservation organization like DUC.

As we witness an increase in the incidence of extreme weather and the effects of flooding and drought across Canada, communities are increasingly investing in engineered infrastructure. Very compelling evidence has also emerged in the past several years about the critical role that wetlands play in supporting green community infrastructure that, in turn, helps to moderate the effects of flooding and drought. Not only do wetlands provide

a very broad suite of benefits, the benefits of retaining and restoring green infrastructure are often obtained at a lower cost than if engineered infrastructure is required. We appreciate the Government of Canada's commitment making these crucial investments and request that government consider expanding the eligibility for existing infrastructure funding to conservation organizations like DUC that submit project proposals that support community green infrastructure.

Expected benefits:

1. Balancing the federal budget to ensure fiscal sustainability and economic growth:

Conserving and restoring natural ecosystems is a cost-effective way to protect communities against the negative effects of flood and drought. These conservation and restoration projects also provide significant social, ecological and other economic co-benefits.

2. Increasing the competitiveness of Canadian businesses through research, development, innovation and commercialization:

A strong conservation industry and a focus on green infrastructure solutions to community issues helps position Canada as a world leader in green innovation. There are numerous opportunities to expand the wealth of knowledge related to green infrastructure solutions through research and development.

3. Ensuring prosperous and secure communities, including through support for infrastructure:

Green communities that employ green infrastructure are able to do so at reduced cost while also enjoying the numerous co-benefits that intact ecosystems provide like recreation opportunities, biodiversity, aesthetic values.

4. Maximizing the number and types of jobs for Canadians:

Taking a broader approach to building sustainable community infrastructure will create more different types of jobs that will a more traditional approach to engineered community infrastructure.

DUC is grateful for the opportunity to provide input during this pre-budget consultation. If you have any questions, or would like any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact our Ottawa office at 613-565-2525 or by email at j_brennan@ducks.ca.

Sincerely,

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