

## Assessing Ecosystem Conservation Plans (ECPs) for Some Canadian National Parks\*

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*The aim here is to focus on the Ecosystem Conservation Plan (ECP) as a major method for planning, managing and making decisions on land and resources uses and their effects in national parks and surrounding lands and waters. Ecological or ecosystem approaches to planning and management of national parks have been underway since at least the first Canadian National Parks Conference in 1968. However, this interest began to rise markedly with the work on the Yellowstone Greater Park Ecosystem in the United States and with advances in landscape ecology, conservation biology and other branches of ecosystem sciences in the 1980s. Interest accelerated even more after the 1988 amendments to the Canadian National Parks Act when ecological integrity was introduced as the basic guiding concept and prime mandate for Canadian national parks. ECPs were to relate land uses to ecological processes, conditions and changes both inside and outside of the national park boundaries in which they are located.*

*In this paper, we undertake an initial or strategic analysis and assessment of ECPs for national parks in Canada. The study is based upon general knowledge of ecosystem conservation planning gained from review of many documents, papers and reports, discussions with Parks Canada staff and other concerned parties, and involvement in ECPs for several national parks. Involvement in the preparation of ECPs for Georgian Bay Islands National Park, Bruce Peninsula National Park, St. Lawrence Islands National Parks and Fundy National Park was especially useful in this regard. A set of criteria have been developed for this use in this preliminary assessment ECPs for national parks in Canada: Context; Goals; Objectives and other Guidelines; Sources of Information Preparation of the ECP; Approach; Recommendations; Implementation; and Other.*

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