



INTERNATIONAL  
LAND CONSERVATION  
NETWORK

## Big, Bold, and Boreal:

### *The largest private conservation project in Canadian history*

*The Nature Conservancy of Canada*

*May 2022*

The Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) has launched a bold new project in the heart of the country's boreal forest. When complete, Boreal Wildlands will be the largest private conservation project in Canada's history – 1,450 square kilometres. The project will contribute to Canada's commitments to conserve 30 per cent of its lands and waters by 2030.

Cross-sector collaboration has been key to unlocking the potential for the project. NCC is purchasing the lands at a discounted price from pulp and paper giant Domtar Inc. The conservation organization is also drawing together federal and provincial government funding to kickstart the project and is now seeking support from private donors and foundations to complete it.

Located in Northern Ontario, about 900 kilometres north of Toronto, the project helps counter rapid biodiversity loss by conserving natural corridors for species at risk, including threatened woodland caribou. Other large mammals, such as lynx, black bear, wolf and moose, roam freely through the project area. Moreover, the area provides nesting, breeding and migratory stopover habitat for many bird species, including Canada warbler and olive-sided flycatcher.

Boreal Wildlands will ensure the future of more than 1,300 kilometres of rivers and streams, vast carbon-storing peatlands and seemingly endless stretches of interior forest. The project stores more than 192 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e, equivalent to the average lifetime emissions of 3 million cars, demonstrating a direct positive impact against global climate change.

Embracing innovation, NCC is developing a carbon credit initiative, its first in Ontario and second in Canada, in conjunction with the project. The boreal forest in Canada holds more than 10 per cent of the world's total land-based carbon reserves. Protecting these immense carbon sinks is a key to countering climate change. While keeping carbon in the ground, the project will also generate revenue from carbon credit sales to help secure the property itself. Over time this revenue will be used to help accelerate even more conservation projects and provide benefits to communities across the country.

The project area includes the traditional territories of many Indigenous nations, and holds great cultural significance for Indigenous communities. NCC is in conversation with several Indigenous communities to determine how the Boreal Wildlands might best support Indigenous people's rights and interests on the project lands and in the surrounding area. NCC is committed to enabling creative and durable conservation outcomes that honour Indigenous relationships with the land. This includes access for harvesting, a space for knowledge-sharing, joint research projects and supporting Indigenous-led

conservation, when invited to do so. The first joint monitoring project for woodland caribou is already underway.

“Working at a larger scale means we are taking a holistic approach. Habitats are integrated and connected. By conserving entire natural systems, we help nature deliver the essential services that support life,” said Lisa McLaughlin, NCC’s vice president of conservation policy and planning and past president of the Canadian committee of the International Union for Conservation of Nature. “We are excited to show Canadians that global impact starts with local action.”

Learn more at [Borealwildlands.ca](http://Borealwildlands.ca).

*Have news? Share updates from your organization or country by emailing [ilcn@lincolninst.edu](mailto:ilcn@lincolninst.edu).*