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Chair: Shannon Miedema





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Tuesday, May 5, 2026

• (1550)

[English]

**The Chair (Shannon Miedema (Halifax, Lib.)):** Let's start.

[Translation]

Good morning, everyone.

Thank you for being here.

[English]

This is the 37th meeting of the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development.

For those who are here in person, please remember the health and safety guidelines as per the cards on the table to prevent audio feedback incidents.

This meeting is in public. The last 10 minutes will be in camera so that we can complete the adoption of our freshwater report.

I'd like to warmly welcome two new members to this committee now that we're having a meeting in public. We have MP Mr. Watchorn and MP Mr. Malette joining the Liberal members of this committee. We look forward to their contributions.

We also have with us the Honourable Nathalie Provost, Secretary of State for Nature, to provide a briefing on Canada's strategy to protect nature, along with several people from several different departments.

I'll welcome them. We have with us Kathy Graham, director general, marine planning and conservation, from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans; Kaili Levesque, associate deputy minister, president of the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario and direct support for the Secretary of State for Nature, from the Department of Industry; Tara Shannon, assistant deputy minister, Canadian Wildlife Service, Department of the Environment; and, returning to us, Andrew Campbell, interim president and chief executive officer of the Parks Canada Agency.

Welcome, everyone. Thanks for being here today.

We will start with Secretary Provost.

[Translation]

Ms. Provost, you have five minutes for your opening remarks.

**Hon. Nathalie Provost (Secretary of State (Nature)):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Members of the committee and colleagues, I am very pleased and honoured to be here with you today. Thank you very much for welcoming me to this committee.

Thank you for inviting me to appear before you to discuss the strategy "A force of nature: Canada's strategy to protect nature".

Nature is foundational to our Canadian identity and sovereignty. Protecting our lands and waters means protecting what defines us.

As Canada's first secretary of state for nature, my role is to work closely with my cabinet colleagues to advance Canada's priorities for nature conservation and our natural heritage.

I approach my duties as those of a project manager. My goal is clear: to help achieve the protection of 30% of Canada's lands and waters by 2030. This commitment is at the heart of the strategy "A force of nature: Canada's strategy to protect nature". A month ago, the Prime Minister unveiled this ambitious strategy to strengthen the protection of Canada's lands and waters and support biodiversity.

Today, I'll provide an overview of the topic. Afterwards, I will answer your questions.

Nature is essential to Canada's resiliency, community well-being, climate action, reconciliation and national security. However, in Canada and elsewhere, nature is under pressure due to climate change, urbanization and biodiversity loss. At the same time, floods, wildfires and extreme weather events are on the rise. In this context, protecting nature is not only an environmental priority, it's essential to building Canada strong.

Canada's strategy to protect nature sets out a clear plan to conserve nature, support economic growth and build a stronger, more resilient country. It includes a \$3.8-billion investment over five years to achieve our goal of protecting 30% of our lands and waters by 2030. It is based on three pillars.

The first is protecting nature in Canada by conserving and protecting ecosystems on a large scale.

The second is building Canada well by integrating nature into the planning of infrastructure and resource development projects.

The third is valuing nature and mobilizing capital by stimulating private investment and integrating nature into economic decision-making.

Under this third pillar, an expert panel on natural capital accounting and financing for nature will be established this spring. Its mandate will be to formulate recommendations for better recognizing the value of nature; repositioning conservation as a long-term investment; and mobilizing more private capital to complement the public funding that has traditionally dominated this field. Together, these three pillars demonstrate that nature conservation and economic growth can go hand in hand.

Furthermore, the recognition of indigenous peoples is at the heart of this strategy. Their leadership and traditional knowledge are essential to achieving concrete and sustainable results. That's why over \$230 million will be invested to support and strengthen indigenous-led conservation initiatives. This will include the implementation of a new program, the Arctic indigenous guardians program.

In closing, I would say that we need to recognize that the decisions made today will have lasting consequences. Either we leave behind a country where nature is protected and resilient, or future generations will have to deal with its degradation. Through the "A force of nature" strategy, our choice is clear.

It's up to us to take serious, ambitious and collaborative action to protect nature today so that it can continue to protect us tomorrow.

I would be pleased to answer any questions the committee may have.

• (1555)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

[English]

We will start with the Conservatives.

Mr. Leslie, the floor is yours for six minutes.

**Branden Leslie (Portage—Lisgar, CPC):** Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you, Minister.

Your nature strategy says that Canada must add at least 1.6 million square kilometres of protected or conserved terrestrial area by 2030. For context, that's roughly two and a half times the size of my home province, Manitoba. Can you tell this committee exactly where this land is coming from?

[Translation]

**Hon. Nathalie Provost:** Mr. Leslie, thank you for your question.

This land comes from all kinds of initiatives launched by indigenous communities, by the communities themselves, by private landowners or, sometimes, by the provinces, since they own and manage 76% of the land.

Like those that are already protected, the lands that will be conserved are the result of all kinds of initiatives, and they will be the subject of consultations and discussions with the provinces, municipalities and communities concerned, which will help us to achieve that result.

[English]

**Branden Leslie:** On this landscape that will be protected... will hunting and fishing be restricted in any way on any of the new

lands or waters that you plan to count towards your 30 by 30 target? Answer yes or no. It's a simple question.

[Translation]

**Hon. Nathalie Provost:** It depends. I know that many hunters and anglers are wondering about this.

It all depends on the type of protection that will be recognized and determined in the various contexts. For example, generally speaking, when the agreed-upon protection comes from Parks Canada, hunting and fishing are allowed for first nations out of respect for their ancestral activities. However, for all other conservation methods, hunting and fishing may be permitted, obviously within established frameworks defined through a collaborative process to ensure sustainable hunting and fishing.

[English]

**Branden Leslie:** What percentage of the land you count towards your 30 by 30 will be allowed to have hunting and angling on it, whether it's for first nations or non-indigenous people?

[Translation]

**Hon. Nathalie Provost:** Right now, we have not yet identified all the lands that will be protected. Therefore, it's not possible to give a precise answer to your question about the proportion of territory that will, or will not, allow hunting and fishing.

What we do know is that conservation doesn't automatically stop hunting and fishing activities on the land.

[English]

**Branden Leslie:** Thank you for saying that. I would agree wholeheartedly. I think that's why so many in the angling and hunting community are deeply concerned that the percentage might be higher than zero—perhaps significantly higher. I hope you take that into consideration.

Your government has referred the Churchill plus project to the Major Projects Office while it's also moving ahead, as indicated in this strategy, with the Seal River protected area in northern Manitoba. My question is simple. Can you guarantee that the Seal River designation will not limit any future road, rail, port, energy or transmission corridor that could impact that project?

• (1600)

[Translation]

**Hon. Nathalie Provost:** Projects of national interest are very important to our government. The projects we have are important for economic development. We remain committed to economic development and economic self-sufficiency. Major projects of national interest, which are discussed with the provinces, remain central projects.

However, as you heard, in the strategy we have a pillar called “building Canada well”. Using tools such as mapping, internationally recognized insights into a mitigation strategy and other conservation tools, such as working landscapes, it will be possible to mitigate and enable development and conservation projects.

Canada is a very big country. Thirty per cent of our territory is far from 100%. We're going to work with communities, with provinces and with developers to be able to meet the 30% target, but also to be able to carry out the development projects we want to do.

[English]

**Branden Leslie:** You mentioned the building Canada well section. To me, that looks less like a project approval and more like a layer of conditions that are going to be added to any project.

Our premier in Manitoba, Wab Kinew, has said the Prime Minister wants LNG moving through the port of Churchill by 2030. That would potentially be through some sort of energy corridor, which I assume would have to go through the Seal River watershed area via a pipeline.

Is it true that the Prime Minister has asked the premier to have natural gas flowing through Churchill by 2030?

[Translation]

**Hon. Nathalie Provost:** Major projects are important, and so are the large territories to be protected. In the discussion—

[English]

**Branden Leslie:** Minister, let me interrupt. I have only a few seconds left.

Do you see how these two things can be very much at odds? You have a massive area, which you're saying is protected, and directly behind it, where a pipeline would have to go through, is the port of Churchill. How do these two things line up?

[Translation]

**Hon. Nathalie Provost:** I am simply saying that we're going to work on development projects with the people of Manitoba to find a solution that will enable us to conserve land and ensure its development. That's our intention.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

Mr. Watchorn, the floor is yours for six minutes.

**Tim Watchorn (Les Pays-d'en-Haut, Lib.):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I'll be sharing my time with the member for Victoria.

I would like to welcome my esteemed colleague, who, like me, is an engineer and a graduate of the École Polytechnique in Montreal. I think the more engineers you have in government, the better.

That said, conservation in Quebec, particularly the conservation of the entire area in southern Quebec, is very important. When I was mayor of a small municipality, Morin-Heights, we kept 60 acres of land from an old site that belonged to nuns. We worked without subsidies from the federal government or the provincial

government. We paid \$2.1 million for the conservation of those 60 acres, but it was important to the people in my community.

In the coming weeks, there will be a big announcement about a protected scout camp in Mille-Iles. It's a joint effort between the federal government, the provincial government, private donors, foundations and the municipality.

How can projects like these contribute to conservation in order to meet the 30% land protection target by 2030?

**Hon. Nathalie Provost:** Thank you for that very interesting question. It addresses the other aspect of our vision.

There's a lot of talk about this 30% by 2030 target and the overall protection of the big territories. Projects like the one you carried out in your community or the one in Mille-Iles are invaluable to locals, because they're close to home. People want access to nature. Over 80% of Canadians are committed to protecting and conserving nature. So these small-scale projects are essential.

The nature strategy's structure will enable the use of various drivers to ensure that the people continue to steer leadership, as in the examples cited. The strategy will also ensure that initiatives are supported by the government capacity, whether at the federal, provincial or community group levels.

In addition, by working on the third pillar, that is to say, valuing nature and mobilizing capital, we will ensure that we get results, not only through public funds but also through other sources of funding.

These are fine examples of projects that are highly valuable, but not necessarily in terms of the percentage of land. They are also of great value to the people.

● (1605)

**Tim Watchorn:** I'd like to reassure people. When we carry out a project, we may often work together with real estate developers.

In the second case I mentioned, that's exactly what we did. We protected a large part of the area's ecological value, but we still allowed the developer to develop a certain area so that their property would have value.

How can we combine these two uses in future projects for the nature strategy?

**Hon. Nathalie Provost:** This example, where the private sector could develop a project, is a small-scale example, but it's exactly the example I was trying to illustrate in response to Mr. Leslie's question. The goal is to have the ability to determine in which sector the project to be developed will have a limited impact on the environment and nature. The goal is to value nature and give access to it, to protect it permanently where it is most fragile and where the ecological benefit is much greater.

This allows us to move forward, reconcile land uses and increase social licence for conservation.

**Tim Watchorn:** That's excellent.

Mr. Greaves, I'll turn the floor over to you.

[*English*]

**Will Greaves (Victoria, Lib.):** Thank you, colleagues.

[*Translation*]

Hello, everyone.

Thank you for being with us, Ms. Provost.

[*English*]

My question for you, Madam Secretary, has to do with how the government is going about the process of identifying new lands in order to meet the 30 by 30 target.

In particular, is it often the case that rural, remote and northern parts of the country have more land available to conserve? What measures are contained in this strategy to try to conserve land closer to urban areas, where more Canadians would be able to access it?

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Nathalie Provost:** Thank you very much for your question.

When we look at Canada's geography, it's very tempting to say that it's not complicated and that, since there is no one up there, we will protect the Far North and develop the south.

However, as I was saying a little earlier, Canadians love nature. Canadians need access to nature, and their health depends on it. So it's important to find solutions for the southern part of the country, which is home to more Canadians.

As a result, all existing restoration methods will continue to be used. Restoring degraded environments is a promising strategy.

I come from a rural region in the riding of Châteauguay—Les Jardins-de-Napierville. Farmlands are not used much as of yet, for example. Even though we use working landscapes, we must learn to manage them while also being able to conserve biodiversity.

There are also all the other effective conservation measures. For example, in their forests or on their large pastures, our colleagues in Alberta have some incredible examples where those measures have a major impact on maintaining biodiversity.

These tools will serve as a means to promote conservation. They may not be entirely and directly linked to the 30% by 2030 target, but they will still help protect biodiversity.

**The Chair:** Mr. Bonin, you have the floor for six minutes.

**Patrick Bonin (Repentigny, BQ):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Because the Bloc Québécois is very generous, I'm going to give my first minute of speaking time to my colleague Ms. May from the Green Party.

**Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Thank you. This is another sharing moment between the Green Party and the Bloc Québécois.

Welcome, Ms. Provost.

[*English*]

I'll ask one question very clearly so I don't trespass too much on this generosity.

When the nature strategy on how we would get to 30 by 30 was first unveiled—that was two years ago, in June 2024—a key part was the nature accountability act. As we all know, Bill C-73 died on the Order Paper.

I wonder if the minister can update us on when we might see the nature accountability act reintroduced in Parliament.

• (1610)

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Nathalie Provost:** Thank you very much for your question.

At the moment, we're not working on that. We're in the process of coordinating the team's activities to implement the force of nature strategy. A lot of work has been done in the past, but it's mostly been done in silos by many organizations. As a result, the preparation work we need right now to be able to meet the 30% by 2030 target in four years likely wasn't done.

We'll get the structure organized first. If that element is still worthwhile and useful, we will probably consider it. However, right now, we're really focused on ensuring that we're coordinating effectively and that the tools are put in place to fully deploy all measures, such as those related to mobilizing capital.

**Patrick Bonin:** Thank you for that.

Thank you, Ms. May.

Ms. Provost, I unfortunately missed the beginning of your remarks.

Did you receive a specific mandate letter for your duties? I'm not talking about a generic letter, but a letter from the Prime Minister outlining your priorities and your duties. It's not entirely clear to people.

**Hon. Nathalie Provost:** Thank you for your question. I'll answer it in two parts.

The first part has to do with my mandate. Mr. Carney didn't put it in writing, but he was extremely clear in the Speech from the Throne. My role is to protect the land and meet the 30% target by 2030. That is exactly what I was working on with our colleague Mr. Guilbeault at the beginning of the mandate. He was told that. I have a very clear objective associated with my role.

**Patrick Bonin:** Did you receive a mandate letter related to that?

**Hon. Nathalie Provost:** It is not a letter. The objective was set out in the Speech from the Throne. I agree that it is quite powerful, as a mandate letter.

Would you like me to answer the other part of the question? You wanted to know what my mandate was as secretary of state.

**Patrick Bonin:** I thought you'd already said that.

What is it?

**Hon. Nathalie Provost:** What I said in my statement was that my role, as secretary of state, is that of a project manager. Ministers have an extremely broad and complex remit.

However, as I said to Ms. May earlier, the work carried out for the “A Force of Nature” strategy was done by several organizations in isolation. Appointing a secretary of state therefore allows for the coordination of all this.

**Patrick Bonin:** I will now talk about funding.

The nature conservation strategy that has just been implemented has a budget of \$3.8 billion. In the past, British Columbia received \$500 million for its nature plan. Quebec received \$100 million. At the time, the Minister of the Environment said that a further \$460 million was available for Quebec.

However, we have never seen this money. Is the \$460 million that was available for Quebec still available? If so, when should Quebec receive it?

**Hon. Nathalie Provost:** Thank you for your question.

The budget structure of the former government is not the budget structure of our new government.

**Patrick Bonin:** The \$3.8 billion is being invested over three years. With this sum, do you think you can achieve the target of 30% of protected areas by 2030 without needing any more money?

**Hon. Nathalie Provost:** The \$3.8 billion is being invested over five years.

**Patrick Bonin:** What I wanted to know is whether you can make it to 2030.

**Hon. Nathalie Provost:** Yes, we will make it to 2030.

The aim of the strategy as a whole is to free up capital, much of which is invested in philanthropic organizations, in particular. There is also money allocated to businesses that is likely available for nature conservation. That is more or less what I said to our colleague earlier. We want to maintain the government's leadership. That is important. In fact, this has been crucial, as 80% of the funding behind the results achieved today was public funding. This is remarkable and fundamental.

However, current economic conditions, if they remain as they are, will not allow us to complete the work by 2030.

Our intention is therefore to use the second and third pillars to increase our financial resources and achieve the objective.

• (1615)

**Patrick Bonin:** Canada's 2030 nature strategy, published in 2024, ran to 210 pages. I believe your new strategy is 15 pages long.

The 210-page document contained 23 targets from the Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, as well as indicators for each of these targets.

Are you still aiming for these targets?

Can you provide us with an update on these indicators as part of the strategy?

**Hon. Nathalie Provost:** The Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework remains an agreement adopted by Canada. Commitments have still been made. The two strategies go hand in hand. My colleagues will certainly be able to provide you with an update on the 23 targets.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Bonin.

[English]

We will now turn to Ms. Anstey for five minutes.

**Carol Anstey (Long Range Mountains, CPC):** Thank you, and thank you to the witnesses for appearing today.

I had a couple of questions specific to the province of Newfoundland and Labrador, where we are really hoping for natural resource development in the future as we experience decline, especially in our rural and remote communities. I'm curious about what consultation specifically you've done in the natural resource sector, as well as with municipalities, in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador as you prepared for this strategy.

[Translation]

**Hon. Nathalie Provost:** Thank you for your question.

Consultation on the strategy took place when Canada's 2030 nature strategy was being developed. What is contained in the current strategy is the implementation strategy. There was no consultation specifically on implementation.

When we are ready to finalize the conservation plan for your province, we will do so as we have done elsewhere, which means we will work with the province and local stakeholders. We will seek solutions that reconcile conservation objectives with economic development goals.

[English]

**Carol Anstey:** Thank you.

Recently, the Newfoundland and Labrador provincial government withdrew support for a proposed south coast fjords national marine conservation area because it felt that it threatened some opportunities in the fishing and mining sectors. With this strategy, does the federal government respect the province's position to not want to enter into these agreements?

[Translation]

**Hon. Nathalie Provost:** Thank you very much for your question.

Generally speaking, we cannot impose nature conservation on the provinces. The provinces are responsible for 76% of the territory. They have responsibilities recognized by the Constitution. Here, the intention is not to encroach on the provinces' jurisdiction, but rather to find strategies for sustainability.

We must consider the fact that Canadians love and wish to protect nature. They say so, and it is a recognized fact. For example, Parks Canada is one of the iconic symbols not only across the world, but also in Canada. It unites Canadians.

The initial strategies we wanted to adopt may not have aligned with the approach favoured by the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. However, we have other solutions to propose, not only to protect nature but also to support the province in the development of major projects. That is why we are focusing on the second pillar, namely “Building Canada Well”.

[English]

**Carol Anstey:** Okay, so if you go through another round of consultations and they still take the same position, will their decision be respected?

[Translation]

**Hon. Nathalie Provost:** It is not possible to disregard a province's decision, as the territory falls under that province's jurisdiction.

[English]

**Carol Anstey:** Okay. Thank you.

I'll just expand on that a little bit more deeply. When this decision was made by the provincial government, the FFAW also came out and was very supportive of that decision. It said, “This decision shows respect for fish harvesters and recognizes the real economic harm this proposal posed to adjacent communities”. Its position was that “the proposed NMCA threatened the owner-operator fishery while offering no evidence that it would achieve meaningful conservation outcomes” and that “further restrictions would only undermine [the] livelihoods” of the fish harvesters in that area.

I'm curious. When you're looking at all of these strategies, are these the sorts of things you keep in mind, and will these livelihoods be protected as you roll these measures out?

• (1620)

[Translation]

**Hon. Nathalie Provost:** As I must respond briefly, I will say that all efforts regarding the conservation of marine areas are made with the aim of maintaining the capacity to fish in the long term. There is therefore no question of banning fishing or other activities. Rather, the aim is to ensure that this remains a sustainable resource.

At present, given that there are no protective measures in place, it is uncertain whether the resource will be protected in the long term in certain respects. That is why we continue to believe that, even for Newfoundland and Labrador, there are excellent opportunities to be seized. We also believe that the province will maintain its fishing quotas.

[English]

**Carol Anstey:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Anstey.

We will now turn to Mr. Malette for five minutes.

**Chris Malette (Bay of Quinte, Lib.):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

[Translation]

I don't speak French very well.

[English]

Therefore, I will be asking my questions in English.

Secretary Provost, as you are aware, it's important to recognize the Great Lakes as both an environmental and an economic asset for communities across Canada—most notably today as it's Great Lakes day on the Hill. Through the federal nature strategy and the national water security strategy, the government has identified freshwater restoration, nutrient reduction and biodiversity recovery as key priorities.

In my riding, the Bay of Quinte, where local communities have long shown strong leadership on water quality and shoreline stewardship along Lake Ontario, how will the government build on that work to deliver measurable progress, and how will communities be able to track those results?

[Translation]

**Hon. Nathalie Provost:** Thank you very much for that question.

[English]

**Chris Malette:** I'm sorry, Madam Chair. I will be sharing my time with Mr. Fanjoy.

[Translation]

**Hon. Nathalie Provost:** The whole issue of freshwater protection in Canada is a real cause for concern for all of us. One aspect of the strategy will cover the national water security strategy in order to address citizens' concerns.

In Canada, we are all convinced that water is an infinite resource. I say “all”, but the more I travel across Canada, the more I realize that some provinces have long known that this resource is scarce and precious. I come from a region where we used to feel it was infinite. Unfortunately, we do not always use it wisely.

That said, I believe public awareness is growing. That is why we will support the national strategy in collaboration with the Canada Water Agency. We want to be able to provide not only today's Canadians, but also those of tomorrow and the day after, with good-quality water for their survival.

**Chris Malette:** Thank you, Ms. Provost.

[English]

**Bruce Fanjoy (Carleton, Lib.):** Thank you, Madam Secretary of State.

I love win-win solutions, and Canada's strategy to protect nature is one of those. Can you elaborate on the important role of indigenous communities in the development of this strategy?

[Translation]

**Hon. Nathalie Provost:** Thank you for this very important question.

Indigenous peoples represent us across vast territories, and they know nature. They know how to steward it, and they have demonstrated this.

I will take the example of a magnificent project that was not even launched by our government. It was launched, at the time, by Mr. Harper's government. This project concerned the Great Bear Rainforest. This major funding initiative, which aimed to ensure the rainforest's long-term survival in collaboration with communities in British Columbia, demonstrated not only the greatness and potential of nature conservation, but also its economic viability based on economic development led by first nations. It has therefore become a magnificent example of reconciliation between our nations.

Since then, there have been other projects, such as the Great Bear Lake project, as well as two others carried out in Manitoba and Nunavut respectively. Other projects are currently under discussion.

These major projects will enable us not only to protect vast areas of land and water, but also to accelerate our reconciliation while developing the economy in communities for which this has historically been very difficult.

• (1625)

[English]

**Bruce Fanjoy:** Thank you.

I have a quick question for Madam Levesque.

How can economic development align with nature protection goals?

**Kailli Levesque (Associate Deputy Minister, President of the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario, and Direct Support for Secretary of State (Nature), Department of Industry):** Thank you very much for the question.

In fact, the two can go hand in hand, and the second pillar of the strategy, “building Canada well”, is very much designed with that in mind. We have a variety of regulatory and legislative frameworks that the members here would be well familiar with, but it's about how we actually apply and deploy these tools.

If you're looking at a project of national interest or a project of high local interest that may not be at a national scale, it's how we interpret, whether it's through regional assessments at the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada; the fish and fish habitat protection program at the Department of Fisheries and Oceans; the regulations that underpin the Species at Risk Act; how we actually work with developers, communities and first nations; where these will be built to apply the mitigation hierarchy; and where we look to avoid or minimize the damage, to mitigate and offset so that we can actually have not only projects existing in a natural setting, but in some cases, offsets that build back better.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Fanjoy.

[Translation]

I now give the floor to Mr. Bonin for two and a half minutes.

**Patrick Bonin:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Ms. Provost, I mentioned that British Columbia received \$500 million under a tripartite agreement on nature conservation, whereas Quebec received only \$100 million. I repeat: \$500 million for British Columbia and \$100 million for Quebec.

Can you tell us the amounts that have been spent so far on nature conservation, by province?

I would also like you to table another document. You said you had spent billions of dollars. I would like us to see what they were used for. That would be much appreciated.

I also have questions about the \$3.8 billion announced in the latest strategy to protect nature, namely the strategy entitled “A Force of Nature”.

Of this \$3.8 billion, will any amount be allocated to the Government of Quebec?

**Hon. Nathalie Provost:** Thank you for your question.

The funding allocated in the strategy was agreed under the previous budgetary framework. I am sure my colleagues will be able to provide you with this information.

**Patrick Bonin:** Madam—

**Hon. Nathalie Provost:** As for the strategy, at the moment, we have not yet established how the budget allocation will work. We want to work on projects with the developers who will be present. We want to work on community-led initiatives to mobilize the capital that is already there.

**Patrick Bonin:** So you cannot tell me the amount that will go to Quebec. However, you will eventually provide us with a more detailed budget plan regarding the \$3.8 billion, so that we know exactly where this amount is going. It's very broad. If you could provide us with more detailed information, we would be grateful.

I would like to clarify something. In the document entitled “Canada's 2030 Nature Strategy”, which was published in 2024, there were 23 targets and indicators. I would like you to table before the committee a progress report on the indicators contained in this strategy. This would enable us to understand your progress.

Could you also provide us with a detailed list of the planned projects relating to terrestrial and marine areas?

In your nature strategy, you mention 14 projects related to protected areas. Could you also submit those to us?

What are the projects currently under way and what is their current status?

**The Chair:** Please give a brief answer.

**Hon. Nathalie Provost:** We will take into account the requests made by my colleague and we will forward the information to him.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Bonin.

[English]

We'll now turn to Mr. Bexte for five minutes.

**David Bexte (Bow River, CPC):** Thank you, Chair.

Welcome, everyone, to our committee today.

The 800,000 square kilometres is an ambitious target. You've described a few scenarios and some direction on what the plan is. It would be very easy to add that much land in the Arctic Archipelago without affecting very many people, but you're implying that a lot of this will be done in the southern belt, where there are a lot of people. It's in the lower part of the country, where the people are, so that people can have access. Our population density is in the big cities and urban areas, so they'll be adjacent.

Specifically more to Alberta, how many potential sites have already been identified for inclusion in this plan?

• (1630)

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Nathalie Provost:** Thank you for your question.

The list of sites will be tabled before the committee. This relates to Mr. Bonin's question. We will submit to the committee the list of sites that are formally under consideration by the government.

However, there are a number of sites of various kinds whose designation is in the hands of private landowners. These landowners are already working, at this very moment, with nature protection and conservation groups. It is therefore not the government that is the primary driving force. We provide the impetus through funding, but it is philanthropic groups and nature conservation groups, such as Ducks Unlimited Canada or the Nature Conservancy of Canada, that make the proposals.

[*English*]

**David Bexte:** Let me intervene, just due to the time.

Is the point to enable access, or is the point to protect it?

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Nathalie Provost:** I think we need to do both. We must bear in mind that we want to provide access to these sites.

That said, in terms of proportions, this is limited as the land has already been developed. Even if these are small private plots, we must take them into account. That is, in fact, why we are continuing to work on urban park projects.

If we really want to achieve the 30% target by 2030, we must also work on large open spaces whilst, in this context, balancing the needs associated with major economic development projects.

[*English*]

**David Bexte:** In order to get the types of parcels you want in the places you want, will you consider the expropriation of land as well?

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Nathalie Provost:** Not at all.

[*English*]

**David Bexte:** Not at all? You can assure—

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Nathalie Provost:** This is not an expropriation strategy.

This is what we have done in the past, and this is what we want to continue doing in the future. These projects are defined in collaboration with committees, territories, provinces, municipalities and developers. They are the ones who will help and guide us. There are already some known projects on the table. There are others that are in the hands of, in particular, non-governmental organizations working in the field of conservation.

[*English*]

**David Bexte:** You suggest that the province or landowners have a veto on anything you might propose.

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Nathalie Provost:** Thank you for your question.

As I understand it, the projects that have already been completed were carried out collaboratively. Collaboration and partnership are at the heart of this strategy.

We have examples, such as in Quebec, in rural areas—

[*English*]

**David Bexte:** Again, my time is short.

You can assure the committee today that there will be no compulsion to participate on private land.

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Nathalie Provost:** So far, there have been none.

[*English*]

**David Bexte:** Thank you.

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Nathalie Provost:** I do not believe it is written anywhere that we will change our approach in order to achieve this. Canadians love nature. Businesses love nature. We therefore believe that they will contribute, to the best of their ability, to achieving the 30% target by 2030.

[*English*]

**David Bexte:** I have one final question.

Have you conducted a comprehensive economic risk assessment of removing lands from private...including lands in this scheme? What is the economic impact of that, positive and negative?

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Nathalie Provost:** Thank you for your question.

As I have just said, there is no obligation or plan in this regard. We are discussing it. The economic impact of conservation is very clear. We need air and clean water to be able to live. The economic impact analysis of conservation has been carried out. Mitigation mechanisms—

[*English*]

**David Bexte:** Can I intervene again? I have only a few moments.

If you're removing arable land from production to make conservation spaces, there's going to be an economic impact, whether it's willing or not. We need to know what that is.

**The Chair:** Mr. Bexte, I'm afraid your time is up.

**David Bexte:** Thank you, Chair.

Can you table that?

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

[*Translation*]

Mr. St-Pierre now has the floor for five minutes.

**Eric St-Pierre (Honoré-Mercier, Lib.):** I would like to thank my dear colleague for being here today.

Ms. Provost, thank you for the incredible work you are doing. Keep up the good work.

The third pillar of Canada's strategy to protect nature concerns not only the importance of mobilizing private capital, but also of using innovative financial tools to fund long-term environmental conservation.

Can you give us some examples of these innovative financing tools?

• (1635)

**Hon. Nathalie Provost:** Thank you very much for the question.

There are already several examples of sustainable finance around the world. Even just in terms of climate, all the tools, including the carbon tax, have made it possible to find a way to finance the fight against climate change.

In the field of nature itself, projects are being carried out. For example, in Australia, forestry projects have been carried out, and these have demonstrated the ability of major international financial institutions to value nature and get involved through private capital while promoting conservation to protect biodiversity. It is examples like this that we want to use and bring to Canada because, at the moment, 80% of the funds spent for conservation are public funds. We will not be able to achieve our objectives if we cannot change this dynamic.

It is a major challenge, but I believe Canada can be a leader. Private organizations must also shoulder a share of this responsibility. It must not fall solely on individuals and governments. It must be shared, as everyone benefits from nature. Everyone needs water. Everyone needs clean air. Nature conservation is a way of protecting the vast natural capital we have in Canada. We are privileged. We have extraordinary resources, but the responsibility must not rest solely on our shoulders or on public funds. We need to broaden the movement, and there is a desire to do so. Our mechanisms must allow us to harness these movements.

There was a finance ministers' summit on nature in Banff. I met people there, and the enthusiasm was incredible. This enthusiasm is present in many countries around the world, in Europe and within the United Nations. They want to support this initiative, because it is the only way to achieve major goals.

The work we have accomplished is already extraordinary, but the next step is extremely demanding. We need everyone to make an effort. That is what the third pillar will be for, as well as the expert committee we want to set up.

It was extremely important to highlight all of this.

**Eric St-Pierre:** Thank you.

I share your enthusiasm for private funding mechanisms, because there's a lot we can do with them. I know there are groups, like Nature United, that are actively working on this right now. So thank you.

Can you tell us why the government is setting up an expert panel on natural capital accounting?

**Hon. Nathalie Provost:** Thank you for your question.

We're in an accounting and financial paradigm. This type of paradigm is quite difficult, since it is defined by international agreements.

By bringing in experts working in the field, we'll be able to move more quickly and put forward proposals. Some of those proposals are even directed at our government, particularly the Department of Finance. However, if we can do this on a consensus basis that is recognized internationally, it will not only reassure our public servants about the approach we're taking, but also give us international momentum as leaders in nature finance. I think we're ready for that.

**Eric St-Pierre:** I'd like to ask you one last question.

Philanthropic foundations and environmental groups were very supportive of "A Force of Nature: Canada's Strategy to Protect Nature".

Can you give us some examples of these groups and, if possible, provide us with documents that show support for this strategy?

**Hon. Nathalie Provost:** It will be my pleasure. I thank the member for his question.

With the help of the teams here, we'll make sure we provide those names. I mentioned some of them. We have Ducks Unlimited Canada, the Nature Conservancy of Canada, Nature Canada, as well as the Indigenous Leadership Initiative, with Valérie Courtois as the executive director. She would hold it against me if I didn't mention her organization.

There are also large indigenous groups that lead conservation initiatives, which are supported by the permanent project funding program. They're very happy to continue working with us.

So far, this strategy has been very well received. However, we must continue to work on it, since it hasn't yet proven itself. We also hear the criticisms you're voicing here. We need to keep moving forward. However, I think we'll be able to build a strong Canada if we have a strong natural environment.

• (1640)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. St-Pierre.

[English]

We have finished our second round of questions for the secretary of state, but we did begin late. Technically, we have 10 minutes remaining.

I'll put it to the committee. Would we like to catch up on our time, finish off this round and move on to round two, or would we like to have one more question per party for Madame Provost?

Okay. We will have one more question for Madame Provost.

I propose that we do three minutes per party, and then we will close out round two.

[Translation]

Does that work for everyone?

I see that we're in agreement.

[English]

We will begin with the Conservative Party.

Mr. Leslie, you have three minutes.

**Branden Leslie:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

What share of the \$3.8 billion allocated to this will go directly to on-the-ground habitat work? What share is expected to go to administration of programs, consultants, mapping, advisory bodies, conferences and other things that don't do anything for the environment?

[Translation]

**Hon. Nathalie Provost:** Thank you very much for your question.

Unfortunately, at this point, I'm not in a position to answer that question. The team of officials will probably be able to provide details based on the information we have, but we're also refining our approach as we work toward a coordinated implementation.

Our initial answer may not be complete, but we'll be happy to share what we have and follow up with additional information.

[English]

**Branden Leslie:** Please continue to share with this committee what that looks like as it develops. Again, hopefully there'll be some certainty.

Will local groups be able to access federal conservation money through simple forms, fast approvals and, ideally, sweat equity? These are the people who actually do things. They put on hip waders and create cold water refuge and fish habitat, but they don't have money. Instead of giving it to a bunch of big organizations that don't do anything, are you going to give it to the people on the ground, who will actually make the environment a better place to live, work and play in?

[Translation]

**Hon. Nathalie Provost:** I love your question. Thank you very much.

When we say that we want to mobilize nature, it's because we think that what people are doing in their communities for conservation needs to be a priority. That's the spirit in which we're working.

You certainly noticed my enthusiasm when our colleague Tim Watchorn shared examples from his community. There's no question that these projects are of great value to Canadians. So we want to make sure we find strategies that allow us to support these types of initiatives quickly and efficiently.

[English]

**Branden Leslie:** Thank you.

I'm going to try to combine two questions into one here. I'm not sure if you're familiar with previous programs, namely the recreational fisheries conservation partnerships program, which was ended by the Liberal government, which trusted local angling groups to restore fish habitat, remove barriers and improve water quality.

I'm curious as to why that program hasn't been re-established and whether it could be folded underneath this, as well as whether or not there's consideration for a national ecological goods and services program that will pay farmers and landowners for doing real conservation work on their private property.

[Translation]

**Hon. Nathalie Provost:** I don't have a full answer for my colleague, but we will definitely need to go further. We'll present it to you based on what we already have.

Just as we want to work with groups on the ground, we also want to work with biodiversity conservation approaches, even in contexts where the soil is being cultivated. There are likely opportunities. To the extent possible, we'll get back to you on that.

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Leslie.

We'll now turn to Mr. Malette for three minutes.

**Chris Malette:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Secretary Provost, I've been working closely over the last year with land trusts in my area. The Bay of Quinte has several active groups, and I've been speaking with the national organization as well.

Can you expand a bit on how land trusts would become a crucial component of this plan for 30 by 30? Will there be any more incentives for land trusts, to attract more people to take part in donating to land trusts?

● (1645)

[Translation]

**Hon. Nathalie Provost:** Thank you for your question.

What you're saying is that there's a base of land trusts. Citizens and landowners across Canada recognize the natural value of their land and want to protect it over the long term. There is no doubt that these groups are key pillars, and we will want to work with them to achieve the goal of protecting 30% of Canada's territory by 2030.

The various programs, which have not yet been fully detailed, will enable us to scale up that effort thanks to the capital that will be made available. We're still in the process of developing them. My colleagues will likely be able to provide you with more details. These are clearly types of conservation strategies that are of great value to our implementation strategy.

[*English*]

**Chris Malette:** I'll ask one more quickly. You mentioned some of your colleagues. Could any of your colleagues explain whether that is in consideration? Are there any sort of enhanced tax breaks, say, for people who participate in land trusts?

**Tara Shannon (Assistant Deputy Minister, Canadian Wildlife Service, Department of the Environment):** Thank you for the question.

There are no additional tax breaks under way at the moment. We do work closely with the various land trusts, and we are looking at how to work best with them to unlock greater recognition across the working landscapes, because land trusts work both in purely protected areas and with partners who, say, are involved in agricultural activities. That's the kind of thing that we'd like to be able to focus on in our active conversation.

**Chris Malette:** Thank you for that.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Malette.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bonin, you have the floor for three minutes.

**Patrick Bonin:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Ms. Provost, you have quite a challenge ahead of you. We will, of course, work constructively with you. However, let's be realistic. Despite the billions that were recently announced for nature, you completely missed the 2025 protection target, which, I remind you, was 25%. Currently, only about 15% of Canada's marine and terrestrial areas are protected.

There are three years left. You're investing some money in the project, but if we look at how things have been done in the past, I don't know how you're going to change the dynamic. Right now, you're not on track. In addition, you told us that \$460 million had been promised to Quebec by the former minister of the environment, and your government withdrew it. That concerns me greatly.

Do you have a game plan for us? Where will things stand next year, in 2028, 2029 and 2030?

If we want to get there, we need a plan. Do you have one? Can you table it?

**Hon. Nathalie Provost:** Thank you for the question.

The strategy was launched a month ago. We're starting to work on the structure, the project office, this week. As soon as the de-

ployment and implementation plan is clearer about how we want to progress to 2030, we will be pleased to present it.

**Patrick Bonin:** When can we expect to have it?

**Hon. Nathalie Provost:** Let me have the first meeting, please.

**Patrick Bonin:** Okay.

Will you commit to coming back before this committee to update us on an annual basis with documents that show the progress?

**Hon. Nathalie Provost:** I would be more than happy to do that.

**Patrick Bonin:** Thank you.

You're talking about astronomical amounts of money, but I'd like the private sector to invest and protect the forest.

Of course, we have to find an innovative way forward, but I have my doubts. I think your 30% target is enormous.

Are you going to invest more in protecting public lands, where we need to invest? In the private sector, we can invest billions of dollars, astronomical amounts. Private land is extremely expensive.

**Hon. Nathalie Provost:** Thank you for the question.

Actually, your colleagues raised the issue about public lands, but seven of those lands are under provincial jurisdiction. Canada can't barge in and say it's important, that it's the provinces' responsibility, but that the government will decide how these lands are used.

Obviously, public lands are important places to consider protecting. However, that requires working with provinces and territories, and with first nations. Large-scale projects that have to be carried out also need to be taken into consideration. This will undoubtedly be the subject of collective discussions if we want to achieve our objectives.

• (1650)

**Patrick Bonin:** How will you balance the major projects, the pipeline projects that will pass through the territory? The act even makes it possible to suspend the applications of laws designed to protect the environment so these projects can get done.

How are you going to protect the land when it comes to these projects?

**The Chair:** Unfortunately, your time is up, Mr. Bonin.

[*English*]

This concludes our time.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Provost, thank you very much for joining us for this last hour. We really appreciate it.

Mr. Leslie, you have the floor.

[English]

**Branden Leslie:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Honestly, thank you, Minister or Secretary—I'm not exactly sure what to call you—for your answers today.

I just want to make sure to follow up. You mentioned several times that departmental officials would follow up. I'm hoping we can have the department share stuff on all those individual occasions.

Thank you very much.

**Hon. Nathalie Provost:** The project manager here will follow up.

**Branden Leslie:** Okay.

**The Chair:** Yes, thank you very much, also, to the officials for their time.

We're going to suspend briefly so we can switch to our second round.

• (1650) \_\_\_\_\_ (Pause) \_\_\_\_\_

• (1655)

**The Chair:** All right. We're going to get started with our second hour here, members.

We are welcoming witnesses from Parks Canada Agency this afternoon. We have Andrew Campbell, interim president and CEO; Patrick Boucher, vice-president, real property and assets; Andrew Francis, vice-president, finance and chief financial officer; David Millar, vice-president, protected areas establishment and conservation; and Nadine Spence, vice-president, indigenous stewardship and cultural heritage.

Thank you all very much for being here. We're going to begin with five minutes from Mr. Campbell.

The floor is yours.

[Translation]

**Andrew Campbell (Interim President and Chief Executive Officer, Parks Canada Agency):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Members of the committee, it's a pleasure to join you to outline Parks Canada's plan and priorities for 2026-27. I would like to begin by recognizing that we are meeting on the unceded traditional territory of the Algonquin Anishinabe people.

I'll start by highlighting some of the ways Parks Canada supported Canadians over the past year.

[English]

Last summer, Canadians were offered free admission to national historic sites, national parks and national conservation areas. This was administered by Parks Canada through the Canada Strong pass. Canadians enthusiastically embraced this opportunity to access affordable and meaningful experiences at iconic cultural and natural heritage sites across our country.

Preliminary figures indicate that Parks Canada welcomed approximately 26 million visitors last year, which was an increase of

13% over 2024. This was the second-highest level of visitation ever, surpassed only in 2017, when free admission encouraged 27 million visits to Parks Canada-administered places as part of the Canada 150 celebrations. This level of visitation underscores the growing importance of Parks Canada places as destinations Canadians cherish and also as engines of economic activity.

As Canada's largest tourism provider, visitation to Parks Canada-administered places contributed an estimated \$4 billion to Canada's GDP in communities across the country. With the renewal of the Canada Strong pass, Parks Canada looks forward to welcoming Canadians again this summer with free admission and a 25% discount on camping fees.

I will now turn to Parks Canada's plans and priorities for 2026-27, which are aligned with the Government of Canada's March 31 announcement regarding "A Force of Nature: Canada's Strategy to Protect Nature". This strategy, as the secretary of state indicated, includes an investment of \$3.8 billion over the next five years and \$48 million ongoing to accelerate Canada's progress toward protecting 30% of lands and waters in Canada by 2030—restoring critical habitats, strengthening ocean resilience and mobilizing new investments in nature.

Protecting nature is essential for biodiversity and climate resilience. It's also a smart and strategic economic investment. Parks Canada-administered places support roughly 40,000 jobs, \$2.4 billion in labour income and \$584 million in tax revenue for various levels of government.

These economic benefits are especially important for rural, remote, northern and indigenous communities, where nature-based tourism and conservation jobs provide stable employment and help diversify local economies.

• (1700)

[Translation]

Parks Canada will continue to protect nature this year by advancing negotiations with indigenous partners and provincial and territorial governments to establish new protected areas.

Parks Canada will also continue working toward the designation of new national urban parks across the country to establish a network of accessible green spaces for Canadians in Canada's urban centres, including Windsor, Saskatoon, and Victoria.

[English]

As a recognized leader in conservation, Parks Canada will contribute to the recovery of species at risk. Work in 2026-27 will focus on maintaining ecological integrity through climate and farm planning, species-at-risk recovery actions and collaborative restoration projects that integrate indigenous knowledge.

Parks Canada will also continue to implement its indigenous stewardship policy, which was developed in collaboration with the agency's indigenous stewardship circle. The policy guides our approach to the governance of protected areas, respecting indigenous stewardship for lands, waters and ice, both now and into the future.

This year, Parks Canada will invest in built heritage assets, prioritizing the most urgent repairs, maintenance and safety needs across the places it administers.

These investments are made possible by the \$545.1 million in temporary funding provided in budget 2024.

Parks Canada will also continue to broaden the stories that are told about Canada's history. In collaboration with partners, we will promote the nomination of new historical subjects that reflect the diversity of Canada and communities.

Parks Canada-administered places connect Canadians through powerful stories and iconic landscapes, fostering a shared sense of belonging. They're also vital public assets that support healthy communities, resilient ecosystems and a strong, inclusive economy.

Thank you.

[Translation]

I will be happy to answer your questions.

• (1705)

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Campbell.

We'll begin with our questions from committee members, with Mr. Ross for six minutes.

**Ellis Ross (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, CPC):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

It seems that part of the mandate for Parks Canada is to expand and establish new protected areas and improve connectivity to contribute to Canada's 30% conservation target by 2030.

I have experience in this area, as we did set aside lands for conservation back when I was chief in council for my small band, but it was a very unlevel playing field. We wanted to conserve land, of course, for sensitive areas, but money was an incentive, because we didn't have any. We didn't have any money, and there are a lot of first nations in Canada experiencing the same thing. That shouldn't be a glaring incentive, especially when we see that 30 by 30 is a permanent decision. You can't undo it and, kind of like us, you couldn't even get an exemption.

In terms of the expansion of 30 by 30 and the expansion of Parks Canada, what are the measures to ensure it's a level playing field for first nations that don't have the resources otherwise?

**Andrew Campbell:** That's an excellent question. I'll start by answering and then turn to my colleague, Nadine Spence, to also talk about the—

**Ellis Ross:** Your answer will suffice.

**Andrew Campbell:** Great. The primary piece that happens when we are doing the establishment process is meeting with local com-

munities and ensuring there is capacity funding for local communities—

**Ellis Ross:** Maybe I didn't make myself clear. I'm very familiar with the process. I want to know how you level the playing field without making money a primary incentive.

**Andrew Campbell:** Again, I will start with the fact that we start the establishment process by ensuring there is capacity funding for first nations, for Métis and for Inuit organizations where the area is coming.... In many cases today, we have those communities coming to us, and then we sit down and we look at the capacity funding they have in order to make sure that—

**Ellis Ross:** Maybe I can be more clear on my experience. I get the capacity funding, but what it was, really, was forwarding money to us for the long term to protect land, and it was in two pots. One was a finite pot for economic development, which we spent, and the other one was ongoing funding for environmental management from our office, but that actually sterilized the land forever. We tried to go back for exemptions, and we couldn't get them. We're effectively tying the hands of future indigenous leaders.

To go back to my point, I thought it was very unfair to use that for a band that had.... Don't get me wrong. We have a lot of money now. We have forestry money and LNG money. That is not an issue for us now, but when we look back on some of those lands we protected, we can't undo it.

In my eyes, what I'm seeing now is the same formula being used. That will tie the hands of future first nations leaders, who might not see the inventory of opportunity on the land base. I'm talking about energy, mining and forestry. The governments, the ENGOs and the non-profits came to us and promised us the moon on tourism opportunities, and none of them have materialized.

In fact, they all left. They took the money they got from the federal government and the provincial government. They opened up big offices in San Francisco and Vancouver, and we got nothing. In fact, all we got from the provincial government was \$15,000 a year to manage protected areas. That example is living right there, right now, under the coast opportunity funds in B.C.

Is there any appetite from the government to ensure this process doesn't happen again?

**Andrew Campbell:** Yes. Absolutely. The Parks Canada indigenous stewardship policy is the piece that ensures that this happens. It ensures co-governance and movement toward co-governance of protected areas that are under Parks Canada's—

**Ellis Ross:** Does that include the possibility to exempt or amend those protected areas in the future?

**Andrew Campbell:** Certainly, within all the national parks, although there is permanent protection, there is always a way, through co-governance, to look at what opportunities there are within that protected area to continue to co-govern with the Government of Canada.

• (1710)

**Ellis Ross:** Thank you.

You can get back to me on this next question. The overlap issues in B.C. are a mess. It is absolute chaos. It has to do with the treaty negotiations that are going on. It has to do with DRIPA. It has to do with all sorts of different issues happening at the same time. In fact, first nations in B.C. are saying that they will block the highway to Prince Rupert if their overlap issues are not addressed within the B.C. treaty process.

You can get back to the committee on this in writing, if you please. How will you ensure that this is an open, transparent process with all the first nations affected by overlap issues when you plan to expand 30 by 30 initiatives in B.C.?

Madam Chair, I'm tabling a motion that I will move at a future meeting. With my remaining time, I'd like to read it into the record, as follows:

That the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development undertake a study, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), of at least two meetings, on the environmental and economic impacts of tire recycling and retreading in Canada, with particular attention to low-cost, single-use tire imports; examine their effects on domestic manufacturing, retreading, circular economy goals and waste diversion; consider implications for jobs, competitiveness and supply-chain resilience; and report its findings and recommendations to the House.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Ross.

We will now turn to Mr. Malette for six minutes.

**Chris Malette:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I will be sharing my time with my colleague, Mr. Fanjoy.

My question is directed to Mr. Campbell, I guess, but possibly more directly to Mr. Millar, owing to his purview.

I understand that Parks Canada has committed multiple years of support to studying the feasibility of eradicating such invasive species as water soldier, in particular from part of the Trent-Severn Waterway, which is under active management. For a little clarity, this is in my riding of the Bay of Quinte. It's commendable work, of course, but my one concern is that this work seems to be tightly restricted in areas explicitly within the parameters of the Trent-Severn itself. As some here know, such prolific invasive species as water soldier don't respect jurisdictional lines on a map.

How is Parks Canada as an agency protecting its important investment in dealing with invasives like water soldier, where both federal and provincial authorities must be part of the solution? Are Parks Canada, the Trent-Severn Waterway and other agencies or departments ensuring that collaborative solutions are being support-

ed to drive results on the water in such cases as this? The water soldier issue emanating from the Trent-Severn could eventually wind up at Thousand Islands, for instance, if it gets out of the bay. It's a big issue.

**Andrew Campbell:** I won't take extra time here. I'll turn it over directly to Mr. Millar.

**David Millar (Vice-President, Protected Areas Establishment and Conservation, Parks Canada Agency):** It's an excellent question. As you said, invasive species don't respect jurisdictional boundaries. While we take action on our own lands to try to remove invasive species and control them and monitor for them, we also, as you've alluded to, try to coordinate as much as possible with provincial agencies, conservation authorities and adjacent landowners to have joint and collective approaches wherever we can.

We do it with a range of different types of invasive species. As much as possible, we try to have regionalized plans to say where this might spread from and to, and to have common approaches. Certainly, as you said, it is an area where collaboration is important and where we work as closely as we can with our colleagues in neighbouring jurisdictions.

**Chris Malette:** Thank you, Mr. Millar. I appreciate that, because this is a very urgent, all-hands-on-deck thing. We have buy-in from the Province of Ontario right now. For Quinte Conservation, for instance, the federal government has provided funding through student summer jobs so that a good number of students can be on the water trying to mitigate this. The threat is real. I guess I don't really have to outline that for you, but I appreciate the fact that there is a commitment to collaborate on this.

Thank you.

I'll share my time again.

• (1715)

**Bruce Fanjoy:** Thank you.

I was very encouraged to hear about urban parks. We currently have one official urban park in Canada.

How would municipalities go about putting together proposals to Parks Canada for future urban parks?

**Andrew Campbell:** Thanks. That's an excellent question.

Right now, we have six national urban parks under study across the country. A couple of the first steps will obviously be working with the municipalities and any rights holders, first nations or Métis they have, and then the provinces.

At the moment, we are trying to make sure these are spread across the country. That is a big piece of how we are looking at it. Currently, as I said, we are working on the six we have in front of us.

**Bruce Fanjoy:** Thank you.

In my riding of Carleton, we're fortunate to have the Rideau Canal National Historic Site. We're updating some of the infrastructure and assets along that treasured park.

Can you update me on that project?

**Andrew Campbell:** Certainly.

We have a number of projects, so I will turn to my colleague Mr. Boucher to give you a further update.

**Patrick Boucher (Vice-President, Real Property and Assets, Parks Canada Agency):** Thank you very much for the question.

Budget 2024 provided Parks Canada with \$545.1 million specifically to support investments in capital assets in Canada's national parks, marine conservation areas and national historic sites. This funding has allowed Parks Canada to strategically undertake priority, time-sensitive capital investments and repairs across its portfolio of assets.

Primarily, the focus has been on assets of highest risk. Obviously, waterways are important assets that Parks Canada is a custodian of. We regularly prioritize this with a risk-based approach to make sure we're addressing the infrastructure needs in this portfolio. It's a very complex portfolio, as you can imagine. The replacement value of the overall portfolio is roughly \$32.8 billion, so we take that risk-based approach to prioritize certain projects, such as the one you referred to.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Fanjoy.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bonin, you have the floor for six minutes.

**Patrick Bonin:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I'd like to go back to the Canada Strong pass. Quebec has asked for compensation for this program. The Quebec government said that it only found out about the program two weeks before the holiday season and that it was too last minute.

Did the federal government compensate Quebec, which decided not to participate in this program as it considers it to be federal interference?

**Andrew Campbell:** That's for the Canada Strong program in general. I don't have any information on that. It would be better to ask my Canadian Heritage colleagues.

As far as Parks Canada is concerned, the pass started being used before the holiday season so Quebecers would have the opportunity to celebrate their national holiday in national parks.

**Patrick Bonin:** Can you tell us how much this measure cost in 2025?

If I understand correctly, the pass will once again be offered in 2026.

Is that correct?

**Andrew Campbell:** Yes, that's right.

Mr. Francis can answer that question.

**Andrew Francis (Vice-President, Finance, and Chief Financial Officer, Parks Canada Agency):** Last summer, the province was compensated for lost revenue.

[*English*]

Last year, the government compensated the agency in the supplementary estimates for that diminished revenue. For the summer, it was \$72.5 million. That was for the free accommodation, and there was a 25% reduction on camping fees. That amount was to cover our reduced revenue there.

The Canada Strong pass was extended in December or early January—I'll call it the holiday and Christmas period—and we were compensated for \$10.9 million of lost revenue during that season.

[*Translation*]

**Patrick Bonin:** Can you provide the committee with a document detailing how these \$76 million or so are distributed in Canada?

When I visit a national park in the U.S., I'm told I have to pay more than an American would, because I'm Canadian. I'm trying to understand the logic.

Why would we give free access—which is the case, this is what I understand—to people from other countries visiting us in Canada? Can you explain that to me?

● (1720)

**Andrew Campbell:** We're looking into whether something like that's possible. As part of the Destination Canada program, we recommended offering this discount to everyone. It's a Government of Canada policy.

**Patrick Bonin:** What you're saying is you have nothing to do with this. You don't have an opinion on the matter and you can't say whether it's a good idea or not.

Is that correct?

**Andrew Campbell:** No, I don't have an opinion on that.

**Patrick Bonin:** Is there any documentation on all that, maybe an economic analysis?

Do we know how many foreign tourists take advantage of this pass in Canada's parks?

**Andrew Campbell:** For parks, it's hard to know, because everything is now open.

**Patrick Bonin:** You have no idea how many passes are given to foreigners visiting Canada.

Is that correct?

**Andrew Campbell:** For this program, no, we don't know.

**Patrick Bonin:** You say an economic analysis was done.

Will you send it to us?

**Andrew Campbell:** Yes, when we finish the study, we'll be able to send it to the committee.

**Patrick Bonin:** Okay.

Does Parks Canada keep statistics on the percentage of Canadian visitors and foreign visitors?

**Andrew Campbell:** Yes, but not for the related period.

**Patrick Bonin:** I imagine you have some fairly recent figures.

Can you send them to us so we know how many visitors come from elsewhere?

**Andrew Campbell:** Yes.

**Patrick Bonin:** That's great. Thank you.

I don't understand your role.

Do you have a role to play in achieving the goal of 30% protected areas by 2030?

**Andrew Campbell:** As an organization trying to meet that target for the government, yes, we have a target, a certain percentage.

**Patrick Bonin:** What is that percentage?

**David Millar:** For terrestrial areas, it's up to 3%, and for marine areas, it's up to 6%.

**Patrick Bonin:** Those are the numbers for Parks Canada.

Is that in your 2026-27 plan?

Do you have a plan until 2030?

**Andrew Campbell:** Yes, we have a plan for each year and the various negotiations.

**Patrick Bonin:** You have plans until 2030.

Is that correct?

**Andrew Campbell:** Yes.

**Patrick Bonin:** Will you provide that information to the committee, if you haven't already?

**Andrew Campbell:** Yes.

**Patrick Bonin:** In the Montreal area, people would like to turn former golf courses into natural spaces, into urban parks. The Communauté métropolitaine de Montréal is asking for \$100 million to help purchase these lands.

What would be the benefit of having the federal government manage urban parks rather than municipalities or provinces, the local governments with the expertise?

Why wouldn't we want to send funds to the municipalities or provinces to help them?

**The Chair:** I would ask you to keep your answer short, please.

**Andrew Campbell:** In terms of urban parks, different levels of government have their own land within an urban park and they work together. The strategy is the different levels of government work together.

You're right to say it's better to have all levels of government at the table.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Bonin.

[English]

We'll now move to Mr. Leslie for five minutes.

**Branden Leslie:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Recognizing that this is our second and last round for the hour, I'm hoping that we can have you submit your answer in writing, Mr. Campbell. Is that okay?

**Andrew Campbell:** I think we can do that.

**Branden Leslie:** I just have one question, and then I'll hand it over to Mr. Stevenson.

The government obviously is talking about 10 new parks as part of the nature strategy.

We all recognize when we go to parks that, as beautiful as they are, they have very much aging infrastructure in many different facets. I'm sure this has been brought to light for the government. In some places, it's crumbling infrastructure.

My concern is how we trust Parks Canada with the existing budget to manage more land, 10 new parks, while it is struggling to maintain and enhance what it already has. What is that budgetary ask on behalf of Parks Canada to achieve that objective? Is that part of the \$3.8 billion allocated in the announcement?

• (1725)

**Andrew Campbell:** It is not part of the \$3.8 billion as part of the announcement. There are very limited asset dollars within that \$3.8 billion. We can certainly share with the committee studies that we have done saying what our annual deficit is for asset repair and maintenance. We're happy to do so.

**Branden Leslie:** Thank you.

I will hand my remaining time to Mr. Stevenson.

**William Stevenson (Yellowhead, CPC):** Thank you.

This is my first time at the environment committee. I'm going to brag that I have absolutely the most beautiful riding in the country, with Yellowhead, Banff and Jasper taking up a good chunk of my riding.

The first question I have and, actually, all my questions are regarding Jasper and the wildfires that we had in 2024. The first one is specifically about the Grande Yellowhead Public School Division, which has had much correspondence with the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change regarding that 2024 wildfire. It indicated that it had not yet received any formal response to its requests about reimbursement of the \$500,000 insurance deductible incurred from the wildfire contamination. Are you aware of this request?

**Andrew Campbell:** Yes.

**William Stevenson:** Okay, so you are aware of it. Can you tell us when they might get a response to that? They have not yet gotten one.

**Andrew Campbell:** I'm not sure with whom you have been discussing it, but we are happy to share with you the response that we get back to them if you would like that.

**William Stevenson:** Okay, I guess maybe I'm a week or two out from your responses, and that's fine. I want to make sure that we get back to those guys.

I had a question with regard to the Minister of the Environment. They said that \$187 million was allocated for critical infrastructure, yet only \$44.6 million has been spent. I'm hoping that it would fit into critical infrastructure, but can you explain why progress on that core infrastructure rebuilding has been lagging? When will the key infrastructure be completed, and when will they be spending more?

**Andrew Campbell:** A large piece of the infrastructure is in housing and temporary housing. There's probably somebody here with a binder who can tell you, but it is over 600 spots that we have created from a temporary housing perspective. For most of the other projects, the first year and a half of those projects—and we are on schedule with those projects—was doing the design and engineering that was required, as well as the cleanup. From those perspectives, we are on track for what our expenditure was to be in what year.

**William Stevenson:** Okay, I guess I've done a bunch of questions for the minister and ministry about the housing, and I guess your numbers are not equalling the same numbers that I'm getting back on what they were talking about, like 240 additional homes that were supposed to be built for \$9.4 million through the accelerator fund and then also part of the 40 units they were trying to do at \$4.3 million, which was around \$357,000 apiece. Some of those numbers, I guess, are not quite the same.

I have one other question, which is completely unrelated, with regard to the avalanche control, which they were going to change. Who's going to do it? I believe that it's no longer going to be the military. Was there a plan for Parks Canada? What's their plan to deal with avalanches, considering that there were over 20-some days that highway 93 between Banff and Jasper was closed this year? This is fairly important for planning and going forward, and people in the Jasper—

**The Chair:** Mr. Stevenson, I'm sorry. Your time is up.

Please give a short answer.

**Andrew Campbell:** I can give a very short answer to that. We are in discussions with the Canadian Armed Forces for a transitional plan for the services that they will no longer be able to provide.

• (1730)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

We will now turn to Mr. Watchorn for five minutes.

**Tim Watchorn:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I will be splitting my time with the member for Victoria.

Just to add to what Mr. Stevenson, my honourable colleague, was saying before, I was a ski instructor at Lake Louise for a year in 1990, and we made friends with the avalanche patrol because that was the best skiing we could ever have. I have to give him that.

[*Translation*]

With regard to parks in Quebec, I know for a fact the provincial government also wants municipalities to protect 30% of their territory. A number of municipalities have submitted projects under a program, which should be unveiled by 2028.

Some municipalities have submitted projects that include public lands currently used for recreational tourism, but that the provincial government keeps as potential logging lands.

How could you help municipalities convince the Quebec government to protect these lands?

**Andrew Campbell:** Some of our programs, such as Parks Canada's national program for ecological corridors, involve co-operation between municipalities, the Quebec Government and the federal government. This is one of the best ways to reassure the Quebec Government.

We also have excellent agreements, particularly with the Saguenay—St. Lawrence Marine Park, for projects co-managed with the Province of Quebec and all the municipalities along the St. Lawrence River.

I think that gives municipalities opportunities to be successful on that front. As I always say, this is one of the preconditions for future success.

**Tim Watchorn:** Before turning the floor over to my colleague, I'd like to talk about working with Sépaq.

Do you have a good relationship with Sépaq?

**Andrew Campbell:** We have a great relationship with Sépaq.

Perhaps my colleague would like to comment further on that.

**David Millar:** We share ideas and we work together. Our relationship is positive.

**Tim Watchorn:** Thank you very much.

I will now turn the floor to my colleague.

[*English*]

**Will Greaves:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Good afternoon, colleagues.

Good afternoon to our witnesses. Thank you so much for being here.

I'll direct my question to Mr. Campbell.

Potentially, this is also for Mr. Millar. Given your role, you'd be well suited to answer.

We heard from one of our colleagues about the fires in Jasper. I'm a representative of a British Columbia riding, and as we approach a wildfire season after a year with a low snowpack and other concerns about water availability, wildland firefighting is very much on the mind at this time.

The plan discussed under the nature strategy takes seriously the need to invest in wildland firefighting, especially in western Canada, which is acutely vulnerable for reasons I've already touched on. We recognize that climate change is a major driver of our worsening fire season. Fires are burning hotter and longer and are stretching farther than ever before, endangering many communities.

Can you speak to the kinds of investments being made in services through Parks Canada to help address wildfire risk through a mitigation perspective or to help with response through a firefighting perspective?

**Andrew Campbell:** I am happy to turn that over to Mr. Millar directly.

**David Millar:** Thank you.

I think we make investments in a number of different areas. We try to coordinate these very much with the provinces and territories through the Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Centre, so that we can align capacity where it's most needed across the country. We have approximately 300 wildfire-related staff, who are either front-line crews or incident management specialists. They work across the country to prepare for and respond to wildfires.

We have resource-sharing agreements with provinces and territories, so that we can move personnel back and forth as needed. For example, if they need a little extra capacity on the ground in B.C., we can share our staff with them and vice versa.

We are also working actively with communities to reduce the risk of wildfire. Obviously, with climate change, we are seeing more intense wildfire seasons, and we're paying close attention to that risk. We are working on using prescribed fire, forest thinning, vegetation management and community fire guards to reduce the risk to valued assets and communities.

In the past year, we conducted 44 vegetation management initiatives at 20 parks to create guards and buffers around communities in wildfire-prone areas. Last year, we treated about 2,000 hectares with prescribed fire to reduce risk, and that was on top of about 1,000 hectares the year before.

All that is to say that there's a lot of work going on, from prevention and risk reduction to being ready to respond and the actual response.

• (1735)

**The Chair:** Thank you.

**Andrew Campbell:** If I can add one quick piece, Madam Chair, I know this has been a concern of this committee in the past. We use not only prescribed burn, as Mr. Millar mentioned, but also mechanical reduction. Mechanical reduction is being used extensively above the bench in both Banff and Jasper. We had a question on that, and I wanted to make sure we provided that response.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much to you both.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bonin, you have the floor for two and a half minutes.

**Patrick Bonin:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I want to come back to the Canada Strong pass.

Would it be possible this summer to ask people where they're from when they enter the parks?

If they don't have proof of their Canadian citizenship, they'd have to pay a fee. It wouldn't be free for them.

Would that be feasible?

**Andrew Campbell:** It depends on the location. It's not possible at all Parks Canada sites. In some places, such as Jasper and Banff, many employees are normally at the park's boundaries, but inside the park. No one can say where the visitors come from. In a number of major parks, such as those two, that's not possible.

**Patrick Bonin:** Would you have data on visitors to certain parks who received a pass last year?

You told me you don't have data for all parks, but would you for some parks?

**Andrew Campbell:** We have data for all periods of the year, except for the Canada Strong pass period. We could extrapolate, but it would be difficult, because it was during the summer period, not in the fall or the spring.

**Patrick Bonin:** Is Parks Canada under increased pressure when it comes to infrastructure projects, such as major projects?

Is there some pressure on you in that regard?

Could this be an issue for the park preservation?

**Andrew Campbell:** Like all government organizations, we use a system for prioritizing our investments. Obviously, we should choose the best places to invest.

**Patrick Bonin:** Are any of the so-called projects of national interest, such as the Major Projects Office created by the Prime Minister, a threat to current or future parks?

**Andrew Campbell:** There is no issue with national parks and major projects.

**Patrick Bonin:** Not yet. Okay.

Have you suffered any cuts in the past year as part of the new budget?

Could you tell us?

In the years to come, will there be cuts at Parks Canada?

**The Chair:** A short answer please, Mr. Campbell.

**Andrew Campbell:** In last year's budget, Parks Canada suffered a \$75 million cut.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Campbell.

Mr. Stevenson, you have the floor for five minutes.

[English]

**William Stevenson:** I have a few other questions in regard to following up on what my colleague here has talked about—the Canada strong pass.

Some residents of Banff, not necessarily the business owners, have coined the term “over-tourism” because of the Canada strong pass and the requirements to handle a bunch of things, mostly in transportation. They have now turned to cutting off certain areas and roads, like Johnston Canyon and Moraine Lake, where you can only take a bus. It's the only possible way of doing that.

Can you elaborate on what kinds of plans they have to fix the situation? For most of them in Banff, their solution is not to have the Canada strong pass. That doesn't help the businesses. The other problem is that Parks Canada allows only certain operators, after being pre-approved, to work on that. Can you just explain how they are going to address this problem? Banff has a different situation from parks in many other places across the country.

• (1740)

**Andrew Campbell:** I'll use a couple of the examples you put forward.

One of the ways we have done this is by continuing investment in public transport. We are a major contributor to Roam Transit, so that people can use public transport as they go around. Of course, the Roam network has expanded.

As you mentioned, we also have a process for business licensure in order to take people into some of these areas. That business licensure ensures that people are being taken there safely by tour operators. Like any place in the country, we're looking for good business operators. They are permitted, as good business operators. That is, again, one way we are moving. From that perspective, we continue to have growth in all those areas. The number of Canadians who have been able to go and appreciate.... I know you are well aware. It means they are doing things other than taking their cars to those places.

We are also working on a full plan to ensure that people are looking at all the opportunities that exist around Banff, Jasper, the Lake Louise area, Kootenay and Yoho. There are many great places. People tend to congregate around a few. As we know, people—

**William Stevenson:** They only go to the best. That's what you're saying.

**Andrew Campbell:** They often go to the spot where an online influencer took a selfie.

We are trying to quickly figure out how to enable them to do it, because some spots have a more impacted visit.

**William Stevenson:** I'm going to pivot back to Jasper, because I have limited time here.

In some of my questioning of Parks Canada.... Of the \$15 million allocated for rent and licence fee relief, only \$7.5 million has been delivered to those experiencing problems after the Jasper wildfire.

How many tenants have actually received that support, and why has only about half of it been allocated since it was distributed there?

**Andrew Campbell:** I believe what you're discussing is direct support for people to deal with soil remediation after the wildfire.

That was \$15 million. Through the Red Cross—

**William Stevenson:** Well, I understand that people—businesses, specifically—have to pay rent to Parks Canada to operate there, and that there was some relief for their rent and licence fees. Only about half of that has been done, and we're two years in now.

**Andrew Campbell:** All the rent relief people applied for during that period—we weren't charging for rents during the period of the rebuild—was on a submission basis. I'm just going to say the same thing. If we're talking about soil remediation, that was based on people submitting to us.

One of the issues that have come up, certainly, is insurance. People have to look at both their insurance and their payments in order to see whether they disqualify themselves and—

**William Stevenson:** A lot of those insurance companies have a two-year rule for applying, and two years is only 60 days out.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Stevenson. Your time is up.

We will now go, finally, to Mr. Grant for five minutes.

**Wade Grant (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you to the witnesses who have come forward today. I really appreciate it.

As you know, I'm from Vancouver, the third-largest metro area in Canada. I believe it was Mr. Fanjoy who asked a question about urban national parks—something we're keenly aware of. You mentioned that six have been put forward already.

How does that work? Are there any others coming forward, or was there a limit set on which parks could be available?

**Andrew Campbell:** We continue to work with municipalities that have the support of first nations and their province. We are trying to do that on a rollout, so that there's equitable distribution across the country. We await some other places.

As you, I'm sure, are well aware—not everybody is that well aware—Stanley Park in Vancouver continues to be part of Parks Canada's family of places, although it is managed through a lease to the city and the park board. Although we do not count it on the national urban park list, one could say that we're doing well in Vancouver.

• (1745)

**Wade Grant:** Great.

I want to talk a bit about national historic sites. There's a national historic site near my community for one of our ancient village sites. I was proud to be able to attend the designation of the Tk'emlúps Indian residential school as a national historic site.

I know that they are designated as that, but how are we protecting them? I know that they're not protected in a way that.... People can still go and develop on the midden, where we live. What sort of criteria are put in place there?

**Andrew Campbell:** I will turn to Ms. Spence to answer that question.

**Nadine Spence (Vice-President, Indigenous Stewardship and Cultural Heritage, Parks Canada Agency):** Thank you for the question.

Parks Canada proudly protects 171 national historic sites as part of its portfolio, but there are more than 1,000 national historic sites that designate people, places and events of historic significance to Canada. With the broader family of national historic sites, as we call them, we have a cost-share program that supports both presentation and reconstruction of fabric every year. We have a public

call-out, and we spend about \$2 million in support of projects each year.

**Wade Grant:** Going back to the establishment of parks, you talked about local indigenous communities being a part of that.

How much work is going into bringing in indigenous knowledge and other things to ensure that the traditional historic overseeing of these beautiful pieces of land is properly a part of that?

**Andrew Campbell:** Madam Chair, I will turn that immediately to Ms. Spence and then go back to Mr. Millar, if he has anything to add.

**Nadine Spence:** Andrew mentioned earlier the new policy on indigenous stewardship, which provides a framework for us to work collaboratively with Inuit, Métis and first nation communities in more than 300 relationships that we have across the country in every province and territory. It's to co-govern and also to ensure that indigenous knowledge is applied in the management of our places to the benefit of Canadians and our mandate for ecological integrity, cultural integrity and connection.

**David Millar:** What she said.

**Voices:** Oh, oh!

**Wade Grant:** I'll cede my minute, Madam Chair.

**The Chair:** Thank you so much, Mr. Grant.

That wraps up our round of questioning. I give a very warm thank you to all of our witnesses today. We really appreciate your time. I know that a lot goes into preparing for being in the hot seat, so thank you very much.

We're going to suspend briefly to go in camera. Members, please don't go far, because we're going to do this quickly, and then we have about 10 minutes of work. Thank you.

*[Proceedings continue in camera]*







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