



Nature is a relief for
pandemic-weary Canadians

Description

Nine out of ten Canadians say they value nature now more than ever before

Quebec, February 2021

Canadians have turned to nature in significant numbers to help them cope with the impacts of **COVID-19**. A new **Ipsos poll** conducted for the **Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC)** reveals that 94 percent of people credit time spent in nature with helping them to relieve the stress and anxiety of the pandemic's second wave. More than 85 percent of people surveyed say access to nature has been important to maintaining their mental health. Three in four Canadians say time spent outdoors is more important to them now than ever before.

... nine in ten surveyed say we need to invest more to restore and care for the natural areas that sustain us all.

From backyard birds and urban foxes to increased use of trails and parks, anecdotally, Canadians report a greater awareness of nature in their lives since the pandemic began. The survey is one of the first to try to measure that impact. The findings reinforce the inextricable connection between nature and health.

Clean air, clean water and healthy foods all come from nature. At a time when health is a top priority for Canadians, nine in ten surveyed say we need to invest more to restore and care for the natural areas that sustain us all. By taking care of nature, we take care of each other.



Exploring a Green Mountains trail – Image: Guillaume Simoneau

The survey coincides with the conclusion of the Nature Conservancy of Canada's **Landmark Campaign** – the boldest fundraising drive for nature ever in Canada. The **Landmark Campaign** mobilized thousands of people who took nature conservation into their own hands and gave to save the lands and waters that sustain us all. With more than \$750 million invested, an additional 115,000 km² was conserved – an area one and a half times the size of New Brunswick. The campaign protected habitat for 130 species at risk – seven of those are found nowhere else in the world!



Victorin Gentian – Image: Frederic Coursol

Gifts to the campaign came from every corner of the country along with contributions from corporations and governments of every political stripe. In fact, 94 percent of Canadians live within 100 kilometres of a *Landmark Campaign* project. But donations were also received from people in 40 different countries worldwide, underscoring the global significance of conserving Canada’s lands, waters, plants and animals.

The *Landmark Campaign* strengthened Canada’s collective commitment to nature. But with all major habitat types still in decline, combined with the impacts of a global pandemic and climate change, the Nature Conservancy of Canada is committed to building upon that momentum. When conservation becomes a way of life, it benefits us all.

“Our conservation mission has never been timelier. Nature is a lifeline for so many people as we cope with the fallout of a global pandemic. The *Landmark Campaign* has delivered conservation results just when Canadians need it the most! I want to thank our donors and our volunteers. Your unprecedented response has made a difference in the lives of so many. Together, we are committed to doing more to make sure the nature that means so much to us today will be there for generations to come.”

– Catherine Grenier, president and CEO, Nature Conservancy of Canada

Facts



Maritime ringlet butterfly – Image: NCC

NCC acknowledges that **Indigenous Peoples have protected and cared for the natural areas, plants and wildlife of their traditional territories for millennia**. NCC is striving to better its engagement with Indigenous People and communities. The NCC is pleased to be a collaborative and supportive partner in various parts of the country, contributing to Indigenous-led conservation and stewardship. Learn more at natureconservancy.ca/en/what-we-do/indigenous-conservation

- **The *Landmark Campaign* is global leadership in action.** Its conservation impact contributes to Canada’s commitment to conserving 25 percent of our lands and waters by 2025.
- **Nature cleans the water we drink:** the Landmark Campaign has protected more than 4,600 hectares (11,367 acres) of freshwater and 15,500 hectares (38,301 acres) of wetlands. When combined, this is equivalent to an area twice the size of the City of Vancouver.
- **Nature cleans the air we breathe:** 300,000 hectares (741,316 acres) of forest protected under the Landmark Campaign clean the air we breathe.



Eastern wolf – Image: Michael Runtz

Nature provides spaces for recreation and contributes to our wellbeing: 540 projects were conserved under the Landmark Campaign. These areas are accessible to local communities for recreation.

- **90 percent of donors** to the *Landmark Campaign* have given **less than \$1,000**.
- In Quebec, the campaign has helped **protect important natural environments**, such as **Lac-à-la-Tortue Bog** in Mauricie (largest bog in the St. Lawrence Valley), the large **Green Mountains forest corridor** in the Eastern Townships (one of the last regions in southern Quebec where large tracts of wilderness remain) and the large historical treasure **Kenauk**, located halfway between Ottawa and Montreal (with a corridor of major importance for the movement of wildlife species related to climate change).
- **The protection of aquatic environments** associated with one of the world's largest rivers, the St. Lawrence, remains one of the priority challenges that NCC will focus on in the coming years.
- In Quebec, **\$87 million** was invested in the protection of natural environments through the campaign.



Feature image: Green Mountains forest corridor – Image: Claude Co?te?

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Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) is Canada's leading not-for-profit private land conservation organization, working to protect our most important natural areas and the species they sustain. Since 1962, NCC has helped to protect 14 million hectares (35 million acres), coast to coast to coast, including 48,000 hectares (188,600 acres) in Quebec. To learn more, visit natureconservancy.ca



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