

Protected Landscapes in Canada: Current Practice and Future Significance

Canada's network of protected areas encompasses the complete spectrum of protected area management categories recognized by the IUCN. Although category V areas, protected landscapes/seascapes, comprise nearly 15% of Canada's protected areas as recorded in the official 1997 United Nations List, this designation and approach to protected area management is not widely known or its relevance fully recognized by many of the country's protected area agencies or Canadians in general. The article reviews the status of category V areas in Canada by providing a national overview that illustrates the diversity of designations included within category V. Notwithstanding some inconsistency in the use of category V in Canada, there is a growing appreciation of the significance of the protected landscape/seascape approach as evidenced through the adoption of bioregional conservation landscape models that involve connected networks and conservation stewardship by local people within working landscapes. In addition, there is increasing recognition of the interdependence of nature and human activity, and specifically the similarities that are found in the management approaches for protected landscapes/seascapes and cultural landscapes.

Canada's network of protected areas originated with the establishment of Banff National Park in 1885. Since then, a complex array of protected areas has evolved that reflects the involvement of federal government agencies and territorial, provincial, and regional levels of government. These commitments have been augmented by more limited participation by local levels of government but a growing involvement by non-governmental organizations (see Dearden and Rollins 2002; Turner, Wiken, and Lopoukhine 1999).

A number of observations can be made about Canada's protected areas that are relevant to the role of category V areas. First, despite considerable progress during the 1990s in the

expansion of Canada's protected area, less than 10% of the country is currently protected (see Boyd 2002; Dearden and Rollins 2002). Second, progress towards completing a representative system of protected areas varies considerably between the respective provinces and territories. Third, for the greater part of the history of protected areas in Canada, the prevailing approach has focused on the protection of pristine environments, wilderness, and wildlife. Canada's continuing commitment to the protection of its biodiversity and ecosystems reflects this perspective and together with the emphasis on public lands shows many similarities to the national park tradition of the United States. A fourth characteristic,

and one which is also similar to the situation that has existed in the United States, is the dilemma demonstrated by national and provincial park agencies in dealing with local people and their imprint on the landscape within protected areas (see Allen 1993; Swinnerton 1999). Finally, there is a recent growing recognition of the need to complement the more traditional approaches to protected area designation and management with what Beresford and Phillips (2000) have referred to as “a new paradigm for protected areas” (see Dearden and Rollins 2002; Swinnerton 2001). Illustrative of this new paradigm are many of the distinguishing characteristics of the IUCN protected area management category V, the protected landscape/seascape.

Protected landscapes are manifestations of the symbiotic relationship between natural and cultural heritage (see Mitchell and Buggey 2000). In these areas, biodiversity protection coincides with sustaining and enhancing the social and economic stability of an area and the quality of life of its residents. As such, category V areas are lived-in landscapes that demonstrate the on-going interaction between people and their means of livelihood that is primarily dependent on the basic resources (natural and cultural) of the area. The protected landscape concept refers not only to a product but also to a landscape management process that accommodates and guides change.

“Linking Protected Areas with Working Landscapes Conserving Biodiversity” was the theme of the Third Science and Management of Protected Areas Association (SAMPA) Conference, that was held in Calgary, Alberta in 1997, and pro-

vides evidence of this broadening approach in Canada (see Munro and Willison 1998). However, Searle’s (2000) subsequent observation that Adrian Phillips’ presentation on working landscapes and protected areas at the conference was an “intriguing idea” provides a cogent reminder of the relative lack of awareness of the category V concept in Canada. More recently, the 2001 Annual General Meeting and Workshop of the Canadian Council on Ecological Areas focused its attention on the IUCN classification of terrestrial and marine protected areas within Canada, and specifically on the application of category V protected landscapes/seascapes and category VI managed resource protected areas.

Protected Landscapes within Canada’s Protected Area System: A National Overview

As a result of the diversity of agencies and functions that protected areas serve in Canada, it is not surprising that consistent and comparable information on Canada’s protected areas is difficult to obtain. Despite this limitation, a number of sources do provide data on Canada’s protected areas in terms of the six IUCN protected area management categories. The Canadian Council on Ecological Areas sponsors the Canadian Conservation Areas Database (CCAD) that provides the most comprehensive record of protected areas in Canada (see Turner, Wiken, and Lopoukhine 1999). More limited in scope is the Parks and Protected Areas Land Base Inventory that is compiled by the former Federal-Provincial Parks Council (now the Canadian Parks Council). To varying degrees, these organizations, as well as individual park and protect-

ed area agencies, provide the basic data that are compiled in the United Nations List of Protected Areas and the World Conservation Monitoring Centre's (WCMC) Protected Area Database.

The following overview of category V areas in Canada is based on information taken from the WCMC Protected Area Database for 1997. Table 1 illustrates the relative importance of category V areas within Canada's total protected area network.

the largest number of areas occurs in Ontario (59.5%), whereas Québec accounts for a very substantial amount of the total area recorded as category V in Canada (83.1%). The large number of sites recorded for Ontario is largely the result of considering conservation authority areas as protected landscapes. In the case of Québec, the large area recorded as category V is primarily due to wildlife management areas and wildlife sanctuaries being included under this category. An indi-

Table 1. Canada's protected areas network.

IUCN category	Number of sites	%	Area (km ²)	%
Ia/1b	630	19.5	32,964	3.5
II	1,046	32.5	400,233	41.9
III	70	2.2	217	<0.1
IV	563	17.5	398,592	41.8
V	772	23.9	93,056	9.8
VI	143	4.4	28,041	2.9
Total	3,224	100.0	953,103	99.9

Source: WCMC Protected Area Database (1997)

Protected areas in Canada recorded as category V protected landscapes/seascapes account for less than one-quarter of the total number of protected areas in the country and less than 10% in terms of the total area protected. By comparison, the 1997 United Nations List, which is restricted to protected areas of at least 1,000 ha, records 127 category V protected areas for Canada with a total area of 9,217 km². This represents 14.8% of the 861 protected areas and 9.7% of the 949,005 km² that comprise the total protected area of Canada (IUCN 1998).

If the 1997 WCMC category V data are broken down on the basis of provincial and territorial distribution,

the diversity of different protected area designations within Canada that are recorded as category V is provided in Table 2. Based on the WCMC database, the 772 individual sites have been assigned to the designations used by the respective agencies and authorities. Conservation authority areas account for the largest number of sites (42.2%), followed by regional district parks (11.3%), wildlife management areas (8.8%), and recreation sites (8.5%). In terms of the actual area within respective designations, wildlife sanctuaries comprise by far the largest area (82.5% of the total) followed by provincial parks (5.5%) and wildlife management areas (4.9%).

Table 2. Category V areas in Canada and their protected area designations.

Designation/Description	Number of areas
Agreement Forest	28
Canadian Heritage River	3
Conservation Area	64
Conservation Authority	326
Crown Reserve	1
Ecological Reserve	4
Game Preserve	1
Heritage Area	1
Heritage River	1
National Capital Commission Area	13
National Historic Park	3
National Park	1
National Wildlife Area	1
Natural Area	1
Nature Park	27
Nature Reserve	1
Provincial Historic Site	1
Provincial Park	43
Recreation Area	2
Recreation Site	66
Regional District Park	87
Wilderness Area	1
Wildlife Area	1
Wildlife Management Area	68
Wildlife Protection Area	1
Wildlife Sanctuary	26
Total	772

Source: WCMC Database 1997

Although the numerical data presented in Table 1 and 2 provide an overview of the relative importance and composition of category V areas in Canada, caution should be exercised in assigning too much significance to specific figures. Some inconsistency and discrepancies exist, not

least because individual agencies include different protected area designations under category V. For example, although Québec accounts for 83.1% of the total area of category V protected lands in Canada, a more recent analysis of the province's protected areas system indicated that

there were no designations used within the province that currently equate to category V (Québec Ministry of the Environment 2000).

On-going research by Swinnerton (2001) involving field verification of selected category V sites across Canada and discussions with relevant agency personnel suggests that more careful attention needs to be given to identifying protected areas as category V. Such an undertaking will inevitably enhance the accuracy and credibility of the resultant data that are assembled, but more importantly, the process should result in a clearer articulation of the relevance of the category V to protected areas in Canada. A substantial number of the areas that are currently recorded under category V would likely be assigned to a more appropriate IUCN protected area management category or in some instances deleted from the list where

adequate consideration for the protection of biodiversity is not the intent.

Examples of Category V Protected Areas

Many of the protected areas across Canada that are recognized as category V on the CCAD and WCMC lists provide very good working examples of the different circumstances within which the category V approach to protected area management is appropriate (Swinnerton 2001).

The Cooking Lake–Blackfoot Grazing, Wildlife and Provincial Recreation Area in Alberta is a 97-km² area that is managed in an integrated fashion to accommodate cattle grazing, wildlife management, trapping, natural gas extraction, and a wide range of year-round recreation pursuits (Figure 1). Limited-season recreational hunting and year-round Aboriginal hunting also occurs. Cattle



Figure 1. One of the improved meadows for cattle grazing in the Cooking Lake–Blackfoot Grazing, Wildlife and Provincial Recreation Area. This picture was taken soon after seeding of the meadows. Photo by Guy S. Swinnerton.

grazing within the area demonstrates the interdependence between the protected area and the adjacent agricultural landscape. One of the key features of this category V area is the importance of the multi-stakeholder process that was followed in the preparation of the management plan and its subsequent successful implementation.

A very different type of category V area is represented by the National Capital (Ottawa) Greenbelt. This area comprises 20,000 ha of green space and rural landscape that surrounds Canada's capital to the south of the Ottawa River (Figure 2). The greenbelt is publicly owned, and a master plan outlines a commitment to maintaining the natural environment and supporting a vibrant rural community. In practice, this commitment requires partnerships between the National Capital Commission, other levels and departments of government, local communities, and tenant farmers.

Through this approach, it is intended to protect the significant natural and cultural resources of the area, safeguard the working rural landscape found within the greenbelt, and provide opportunities for outdoor recreation.

Hecla/Grindstone Provincial Park is located on Lake Winnipeg in Manitoba. Approximately 2% (2,200 ha) of the park is assigned to a heritage land use category. This designation applies to sites that are of significance to Icelandic and Aboriginal cultures. The Icelandic village of Hecla is experiencing a period of revitalization with descendents of the original Icelandic settlers returning to the village to live. An advisory committee comprising former landowners and provincial parks staff has established guidelines to ensure that any development fits in with the essential character of the original Icelandic fishing village. The harbor at Hecla Village (Figure 3) continues to support commercial fishing,



Figure 2. Productive agricultural land and woodland within the National Capital Greenbelt.
Photo by Guy S. Swinnerton.



Figure 3. The harbor at Hecla on Lake Winnipeg with the Icelandic Village in the background.
Photo by Guy S. Swinnerton.

and bed-and-breakfast accommodation has been established in a number of homes.

Potential for Expanding the Application of the Category V Concept

The potential exists for justifiably adding a variety of areas to the category V list. The Great Sand Hills in Saskatchewan provide just one example. This area includes the largest native prairie remaining in the province and the current land use plan provides for both habitat protection and sustainable use within the working landscape. Other examples include appropriate sections of a number of the rivers in the Canadian Heritage Rivers System such as the Grand, the Humber, and the Thames in Ontario. The buffer zones of some of Canada's biosphere reserves exhibit many of the characteristics and planning and management approaches that are associated with category V areas (see Swinnerton 1999). Examples include Redberry Lake in Saskatch-

ewan, Mount Arrowsmith in British Columbia, Charlevoix in Québec, Riding Mountain in Manitoba, and the Niagara Escarpment in Ontario. Relevance of the category V concept to coastal and marine protected areas should not be dismissed either. The Saguenay–St. Lawrence Marine Park and the proposed Lake Superior Marine Conservation Areas are just two examples.

There is also evidence that the category V concept will become increasingly relevant if completion of representative protected area systems and protection of their associated biodiversity are to be achieved. In Alberta for example, the inclusion of a “heritage rangeland” category within the proposed new Parks and Protected Areas Act has been necessary in order to provide the legislative basis for protecting representative areas of the province's Grassland Natural Region (see Swinnerton 1999).

Another situation where the category V approach is relevant to biodiversity protection involves establish-

ing connecting corridors between core protected areas. The Algonquin–Adirondack corridor along the Frontenac Axis and the Thousand Islands–Frontenac Arch Biosphere Reserve will require the continuation of small-scale agriculture and woodland management together with appropriate forms of rural-based sustainable tourism. This approach will reflect many of the underlying principles of protected landscapes. The applicability of the biosphere reserve concept and the category V approach to protecting the landscape of the Beaver Hills–Cooking Lake Moraine Area in Alberta has been suggested (Burak and Swinnerton 1998). At the present time, a “Beaver Hills Sustainable Community Initiative” is being actively pursued in order to protect this disjunct portion of the Dry Mixedwood Subregion of the Boreal Forest Natural Region of Alberta while supporting a high quality of life for local residents and adjacent communities. The initiative involves Parks Canada, provincial agencies, municipalities, industry, non-government organizations, and landowners. Finally, there are numerous opportunities in Canada to demonstrate the relationship between the category V concept and cultural landscapes.

Cultural Landscapes and Protected Landscapes/Seascapes

Conventionally, natural and cultural heritage have been widely separated in North American society. Rooted in distinct academic spheres of the sciences and the arts, the divide has been reinforced by many program administrative structures. This disjunction has long obscured the common ground shared by natural and cultural her-

itage. The recent emergence of protected landscapes/seascapes in the natural heritage protection movement, and of cultural landscapes in the historic preservation movement, has built awareness of mutual interest: places where human interaction with the environment over time has shaped the distinctive character of the landscape. The sphere of protection differs for protected landscapes/seascapes and cultural landscapes: protected landscapes/seascapes focus primarily on a harmonious relationship between human activity and nature, biological diversity, and ecosystem integrity, while cultural landscapes emphasize a societal interaction with nature, continuing historical processes, and cultural meaning. Nonetheless, protected landscapes/seascapes and cultural landscapes often have much in common, particularly the involvement of local people and communities in safeguarding social and cultural continuity related to place.

Like protected landscapes/seascapes, cultural landscapes center on human interrelationships with the natural environment, “a diversity of manifestations of the interaction between humankind and its natural environment,” to use UNESCO’s language in the World Heritage Convention’s Operational Guidelines. Cultural landscapes often encompass evolved techniques of sustainable land use, which have been developed in response to the characteristics and limitations of the natural environment and which support biological diversity; many embody a specific spiritual relation to nature. Many protected landscapes/seascapes are characterized by elements similar to those identifying evolved, continuing cultural landscapes: they “exhibit significant

material evidence of ... evolution over time,” they “retain an active social role in contemporary society closely associated with the traditional way of life,” and “the evolutionary process is still in progress.” In other protected landscapes/seascapes, the material evidence is much more limited, likening these areas more closely to associative cultural landscapes, where “powerful religious, artistic or cultural associations of the natural element rather than material cultural evidence” define the essential character (UNESCO 1999, cl. 37–39; Mitchell and Buggey 2000). The cultural processes of these landscapes, whether hunting and gathering, agricultural, or maritime, are steeped in knowledge and understanding of the natural environment. They have evolved over centuries in response to its opportunities and constraints as well as a society’s experiences. Scenic quality, diverse habitats, traditional land use patterns, and local customs, livelihoods, and beliefs, which are all significant to protected landscapes/seascapes, are also frequent characteristics of cultural landscapes. Management approaches for protected landscapes/seascapes and cultural landscapes may have many similarities.

The Rideau Canal, connecting Ottawa, Canada’s capital, and Kingston, on Lake Ontario, is an excellent example of the common ground between protected landscapes and cultural landscapes. Designated as both a national historic site and a Canadian heritage river and also listed as a category V protected landscape, the waterway is the central feature of a 202-km evolved, continuing cultural landscape in eastern Ontario. Constructed through remote wilderness between 1826 and 1832 as part of

Britain’s strategy for the defence of the Canadas, the canal joined the watersheds of two major river systems and opened the Rideau corridor to settlement and economic development. It utilizes a series of excavated channels, masonry locks, dams, weirs, and embankments to link existing natural wetlands into a through waterway. Extensive drowned lands resulted from the slack water system that engineers used to raise shallow waters to navigable levels and to regulate water flow. While this activity significantly altered the regional ecosystem, it also created new wetlands, including new or substantially enlarged lakes (Parks Canada 2000). Along the corridor, agricultural settlements, strategically sited villages, mills located to capitalize on water power resources, and field and circulation patterns that shaped the 19th-century rural landscape all have evolved economically, socially, and technologically in response to the natural and cultural environment over nearly two centuries. “Cottage country” emerged in response to the region’s scenic and recreational attractions. Now an active recreational waterway owned and operated by Parks Canada, the canal remains fully operational along its original course and is integrated through federal and municipal planning processes with its 26 adjacent heritage communities. Woodlands, wetlands, and islands of the corridor ecosystem, comprising a wide range of habitats for flora and fauna, are valued for their historical connection as well as their ecological importance (Figure 4). The canal’s commemorative integrity statement, which focuses on historical values and guides planning and management, recognizes a significant environmental stewardship role for the canal



Figure 4. Settlement pattern, wetlands, and woodlands at Burritt's Rapids on the Rideau Canal, Ontario. Photo by Paul Couture.

“because the waterway and the corridor’s ecosystem are inextricably joined” (Parks Canada 2000).

Many cultural landscapes associated with First Nations people may also qualify equally as category V protected landscapes/seascapes, although few have been listed as such to date. Even their identification as cultural heritage has been recent. The 1990s saw a significant shift in the recognition of values in places associated with the history of Aboriginal peoples from a focus on archeological resources and material culture analysis, to ethno-archeology, and then to cultural landscapes. The new direction underlines the involvement of local people, particularly elders, and their long and intimate connection with the land. A core principle accords respect and weight in decision-making to traditional knowledge related to the land, including traditional ecological knowledge, that incorporates Aboriginal world

views, oral narrative traditions, and the inseparability of cultural and natural values. Many indigenous peoples identify traditional knowledge closely tied to place at the heart of their cultural identity. This focus recognizes that many people conceive landscape fundamentally in spiritual rather than material terms, and that they regard the land as sacred and see themselves as an integral part of this holistic and living landscape, whose spirits, resources, and accommodation of them they respect (Buggey 1999). The approach shares considerable ground with the principles and guidelines with regard to indigenous and traditional peoples laid out in the World Commission on Protected Area’s series on best practices for protected areas (Beltrán 2000).

The Fall Caribou Crossing National Historic Site on the lower Kazan River (Harvaqtuuq) in Nunavut is a cultural landscape which com-

memorates the importance of the fall caribou hunt to the inland Inuit and to their survival through the long, harsh winter in the eastern Arctic. It is “an example of the cultural meaning of the arctic landscape to the Inuit whose application and adaptation of their cultural knowledge allowed them to survive for centuries...” (Harvaqtuuq 1997). Flowing through a series of lakes across tundra barren lands to its mouth at Baker Lake (Qaman'tuaq), the Kazan lies on the migration route of the Kaminuriak caribou herd. Estimated at 320,000 strong, the herd moves north across the river in June/July and then in August/September crosses south again for the winter, reportedly the “largest movement of land mammals in the world” (Canadian Heritage Rivers System, n.d.). The herd's calving grounds are not far away, and caribou trails criss-cross the area (Figure 5). For centuries

the Inuit have frequented this river north of the treeline, where spring and fall caribou hunts shaped their seasonal rounds. Downwind of where the caribou crossed the river, the Inuit established camps to await the animals' crossing. Traditional beliefs and practices guided preparation and behavior for the hunt. Tent rings, hearths, hunting blinds, and food caches, especially in rocky areas, speak to the long Inuit presence. Inuksuit mark the landscape; the meaning of each can be interpreted only by those who hold the traditional knowledge related to it. Songs composed primarily of series of place names tell their journeys (Keith 1995).

Conservation planning and presentation undertaken for the cultural landscape, which lies on Inuit-owned lands in the traditional territory of the Harvaqtuurmiut people, have been designed to safeguard the integrity of

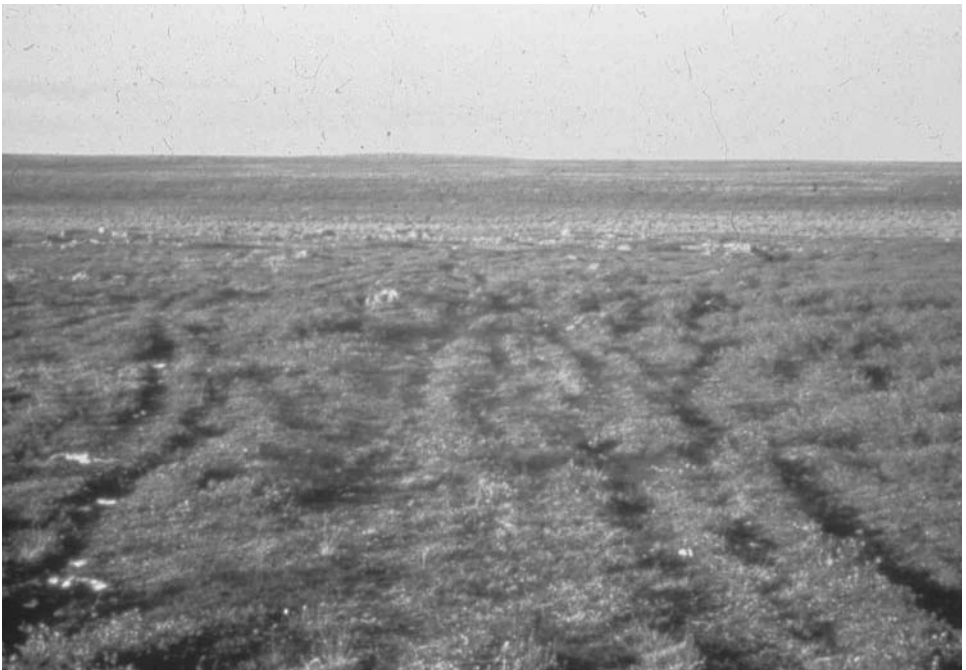


Figure 5. Caribou trails near Piqqiq, the fall hunting camp on the Kazan River, Nunavut. *Photo by Archaeological Services Branch, Parks Canada.*

the traditional relationship of the inland Inuit to the fall caribou crossing place. In the absence of legal protection, the Harvaqtuuq Historic Site Committee of Baker Lake and Parks Canada developed a conservation and presentation report with indicators for measuring the “health” of the site. Its implementation plan addresses low-impact land use, future land use policy, developments affecting water quality and water levels of the river, and the health of the caribou herd, as well as recording Inuktitut place names, oral traditions, and archeological sites into a GIS. Items in the implementation plan are linked with various Nunavut planning and resource management authorities. A community guardian monitoring program relies on member observations of significant changes, threats, or looting. Traditional Inuit values and beliefs give direction for

proper conduct in visitation, operation, protection, and interpretation at the site (Harvaqtuuq 1997). The Kazan is also a designated Canadian heritage river, in part to help in preserving the traditional Inuit way of life and in part for its outstanding wilderness recreation values.

Sahyoue/Edacho in the Northwest Territories are sacred sites of the Sahtu Dene people, which they have used since time immemorial. The two peninsulas comprise nearly 6,000 km² known as Grizzly Bear Mountain and Scented Grass Hills at the western end of Great Bear Lake. Open boreal forest leading up from beach ridges (Figure 6) provides woodland caribou winter habitat. Moose, caribou, beaver, marten, ducks, fish, and other resources have sustained Sahtu Dene traditional land uses and lifestyles based on hunting, trapping, fishing,



Figure 6. The beach at Sahyoue/Edacho, Northwest Territories. *Photo by John McCormick.*

camping, gathering medicinal plants, and knowing the land. While the physical resources of the peninsulas are largely natural, cultural values transform these places from natural to associative cultural landscapes.

The fundamental relationship of the Sahtu Dene with Sahyoue/Edacho is expressed in the continuing cultural meaning, ecological integrity, and biological diversity of the landscape. While Western science has long viewed culture and nature as separate spheres, Aboriginal world views see a holistic universe in which the cosmological, geographic, ecological, cultural, and spiritual are intimately intertwined. Ancient narratives of the Sahtu Dene related to Sahyoue/Edacho tell of giant animals whose bodies comprise specific features of the landscape as well as ancestral spirit beings and shamans whose heroic actions made the earth safer and sustaining for those who continue to practise behavior respectful of the spirits. Other stories guide them in land use and relations with animals; still others warn of dangers and direct behavior. Through shapes, names, spirits, and behavior, places act as mnemonic devices for recalling the narratives that instruct the people from generation to generation in knowing and living with this complex landscape. Protection of these sacred sites and the associated telling of the stories are therefore essential to the continuity of Sahtu Dene culture and livelihood (Hanks 1996). While designation as a national historic site (1996) carries no legal protection, interim land withdrawal in accordance with the Northwest Territories Protected Areas Strategy (2001) provides such protection while stakeholders apply its framework to work towards long-term

safeguards and management consistent with its ecological and cultural values.

As these case studies illustrate, cultural landscapes often share common ground with protected landscapes/seascapes, where human interaction with the natural environment has resulted over time in a distinctive landscape. In evolved, continuing cultural landscapes such as the Rideau Canal corridor, the ecosystem is an integral part of the historic canal landscape, from construction to settlement to recreation. In Aboriginal cultural landscapes, biological diversity and ecosystem integrity are intimately bound up with cosmological, social, cultural, and spiritual relationships of the people long associated with the land. Further explorations of this emerging common ground in natural and cultural heritage as represented by protected landscapes/seascapes and cultural landscapes can continue to contribute to better understanding of their values, resources, and effective protection mechanisms.

Conclusion

This article has demonstrated the relevance and applicability of IUCN protected area management category V, protected landscapes/seascapes, to Canada's protected areas network and heritage conservation in general. The perspective confirms that protected landscapes should no longer be considered solely as a Eurocentric concept. Consequently, an on-going task is to convince protected area agencies across Canada and Canadians in general of this reality.

[Author's note: The 2003 United Nations List of protected areas reveals that the 765 category V sites in

Canada account for 16.9% of the total number of sites assigned to one of the six IUCN management categories, and that their combined area of 1,191,307

ha represents 1.2% of the country's protected area assigned to a specific IUCN category (Chape et al. 2003).]

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