

## Backgrounder: Boreal Wildlands Conservation Project

### Location

Located in the heart of northern Ontario's boreal forest, the project area lands are situated southwest of the community of Hearst, about 900 kilometres north of Toronto. The Boreal Wildlands project is within Treaty 9 (James Bay Treaty) and is both the traditional and current homelands of many Indigenous Nations and communities.

The project lands are within the Great Northern Clay Belt, a vast area of rich soil created when an ancient glacial lake drained. The Clay Belt is an island of fertile lands surrounded by rocky Canadian Shield and muskeg.

Most of northern Ontario is considered public land. The Boreal Wildlands project is a rare opportunity for conservation action on a large, privately owned landscape.

Project at a glance	
<b>Project cost</b>	\$46 million*
<b>Size</b>	1,450 square kilometres (twice the size of Toronto)
<b>Habitat</b>	Boreal forest, wetlands, rivers and creeks
<b>Nearby protected areas</b>	Nagagamisis Provincial Park, Missinaibi Provincial Park
<i>*NCC continues to raise stewardship funds to ensure the property's long-term care.</i>	

### Project history

On Earth Day, April 22, 2022, NCC launched a public campaign to raise the final \$13 million required to close this \$46-million project. In four months, NCC successfully reached that milestone. It has officially purchased and taken ownership of the lands from Domtar Inc., which sold the lands below appraised value to facilitate their conservation. NCC is grateful for the support it received from the governments of Canada and Ontario, along with foundations, businesses, local communities and individuals.

### Conservation values

Boreal Wildlands falls within a natural area that is under increasing pressure from further human activity, development and the introduction of invasive or problematic species. These factors are exacerbated by climate change.

The area is part of an important ecological corridor that connects to other areas and supports many wide-ranging mammals, including:

- lynx
- black bear

- wolf
- moose
- woodland caribou (threatened)

Rare birds rely on the natural area as a place to raise their young, including:

- olive-sided flycatcher (threatened)
- Canada warbler (threatened)

With more than 100 lakes and over 1,300 kilometres of rivers, streams and shorelines, the project protects habitat for aquatic species. At-risk lake sturgeon are likely present in the rivers that flow north toward James Bay.

By working with partners, Boreal Wildlands is an example of the large-scale private land conservation that is needed to help Canada reach its commitments of protecting 25 per cent of this country's lands and waters by 2025 and 30 per cent by 2030.

Boreal Wildlands is estimated to store more than 190 million tonnes of carbon in its forests and wetlands. That is equivalent to the lifetime emissions of three million cars. Its conservation will prevent the release of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere and allow the natural area to absorb and store more greenhouse gases. This is a nature-based climate solution in action.

### **Boreal Wildlands Carbon Project**

The Nature Conservancy of Canada is playing a leadership role in ensuring the long-term future of Canada's natural areas. Boreal Wildlands is the second carbon credit project for NCC and also its largest. Revenue from carbon credits will be used in addition to gifts from other generous donors to directly support this project and to accelerate conservation efforts across Canada.

Recently, NCC announced an agreement with TD Securities, which is investing \$10 million into NCC's work in the Boreal Wildlands and other conservation projects across Canada. NCC will continue to explore further partnerships in the coming months.

This carbon project is an important tool for protecting the lands and waters that clean our air, filter our water and provide habitat to many at-risk species. The carbon project will also contribute to UN Sustainable Development Goals through additional certifications under the Sustainable Development Verified Impact Standard.

NCC is at the forefront of conservation innovation. For more than a decade, NCC has been generating high-quality credits from its award-winning Darkwoods Forest Carbon Project, located near Nelson, BC.

For further information on carbon projects, visit our [website](#).

### **Next steps**

Presently, NCC is raising funds for the active care and management of the property. It is also developing a property management plan to guide future work, including considerations around access, forest management, invasive species control and more. This plan will incorporate input from local communities.

Additionally, NCC is actively engaging with local First Nations communities whose traditional territories overlap the project about how they might engage directly on and benefit from the project.

