

The Lost Art of Conservation

Restoring Canada's
Leadership Role
in Conservation



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Canada as a Conserver Society

Forty years ago, Canada was a world leader in conservation. We even coined the term “a conserver society”¹ – ten years before sustainable development.

The Canadian public still believes conservation is a priority, they are willing to act, and they are looking for leadership².

Conservation – be it nature conservation, resource conservation, a conserver economy, or a conserver lifestyle – is widely recognized as the easiest and most cost-effective solution to solving major environmental and economic problems – including climate change, peak oil and rising gas prices, gridlock and urban sprawl, air quality, electricity supply, even health care and community development.

- So why is it that there are no clear government conservation strategies to show leadership in conservation and to help businesses and citizens to be conservers?
- And why do we not have a strong outreach and marketing campaign to promote a conserver lifestyle across Canada?

It's time we restore Canada's leadership role in promoting conservation.

Canada Conserves is an initiative to promote true conservation leadership through a series of strategic interventions that support a complex and voluntary transition to a conserver economy and society. The three key areas of focus are:

- 1. Conservation Research**
 - a. supporting the development of conservation strategies by all three levels of government across Canada
 - b. published research on a conserver economy and society
- 2. Conservation Marketing**
 - a. promoting conservation as a cultural value and a positive lifestyle choice
 - b. targeted conservation campaigns
- 3. Conservation Consulting**
 - a. Assisting organizations, businesses, and governments to become conservation leaders.

¹ *Natural Resource Policy Issues in Canada*, Science Council of Canada (1973). See <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/articles/conserver-society>

² A [2011 poll](#) conducted for the Conservation Council of Ontario found that 87% of the people polled said that conservation was important to them.

Understanding Conservation

Conservation is a deep-rooted Canadian value. It is how we express our connection with nature. It is the key to a sustainable future, a resilient economy, and a better, healthier lifestyle.

The conserver cycle starts with nature, including the preservation of wildlife and essential ecosystems. As we use natural resources to power our economy, conservation lowers our costs and ensures a sustainable supply for future generations. As a society, a conserver lifestyle reinforces sound policy and economic decisions. A conserver society also reduces waste and prevents pollution from entering natural ecosystems.

Above all, conservation is action: I conserve, you conserve, we conserve. To be a conserver is to put your values into action, whether as an individual, a company, or a government.

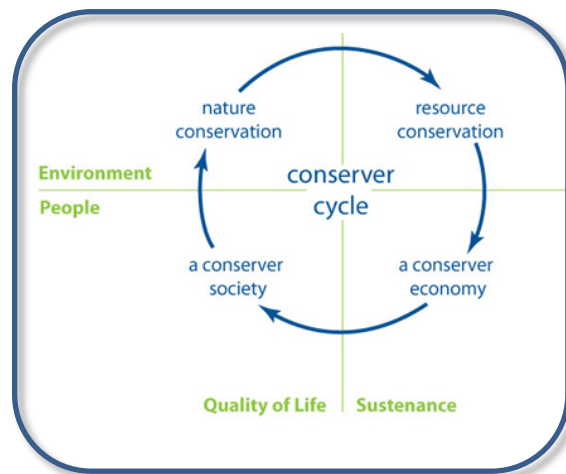


Fig. 1: The Conserver Cycle

Embrace Complexity. Promote Simplicity.

To promote simple solutions, it is important to understand and embrace the complexity in order to design interventions that have the greatest catalytic effect on shifting our society and economy onto a conserver path

Conservation is a simple concept that has bearing on the entire complexity of human development.

When you look at the many issues and challenges for a sustainable future, you begin to see the value of a simple concept like conservation: “use less.”

Now factor in human desire. To be long lasting, our solutions have to help people save money, feel good, or improve their quality of life. “Use less. Live better.” A simple message that reflects and supports a complex conservation movement.

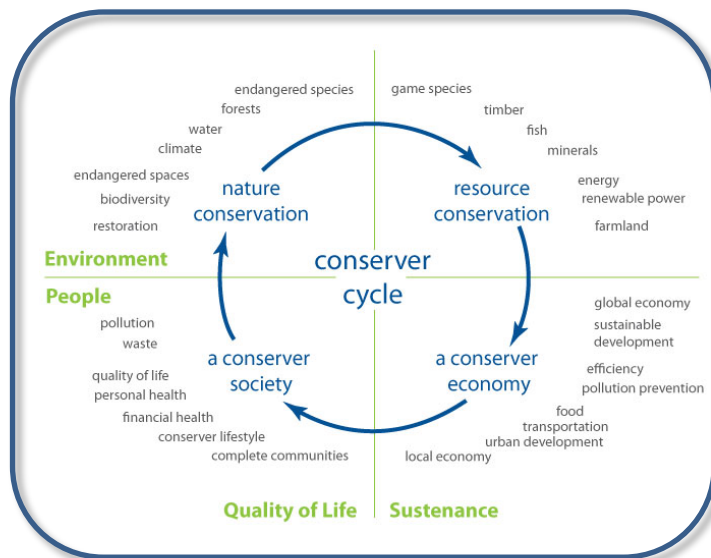


Fig. 2: The Complexity of Applied Conservation

Learn more about conservation at www.canadaconserves.ca

Recent Trends

Fifty years ago, things were a lot simpler. Conservation was the predominant term for expressing caring for the nature and the sustainable use of resources. Conservation was a strong cultural value, supported by a few lead organizations.

Today, we are faced with complexity and confusion. There are many different terms with similar meanings to “conserve”, including sustainable development, being green, eco-friendly, climate-friendly, a low ecological footprint. There are now many more organizations and businesses involved in promoting green solutions that can be listed on a single page – requiring new online directories such as the greatgreendirectory.ca. The complexity of the movement is a sign of success – but it also presents a major challenge in promoting common solutions.

Another trend of note over the last fifty years is the evolution of environmental priorities and government policy towards global environmental issues, resulting in a gap between public policy priorities and individual needs. In short, while environmental policy is focused on climate change, individuals are looking for solutions to save money, live greener, and live better.

Following on the heels of the sustainable development movement, a significant split in the environmental movement occurred around 1990. While traditional environmental groups focused on policy solutions, a new generation began to look for opportunities to provide green services either through new organizations or fledgling businesses.

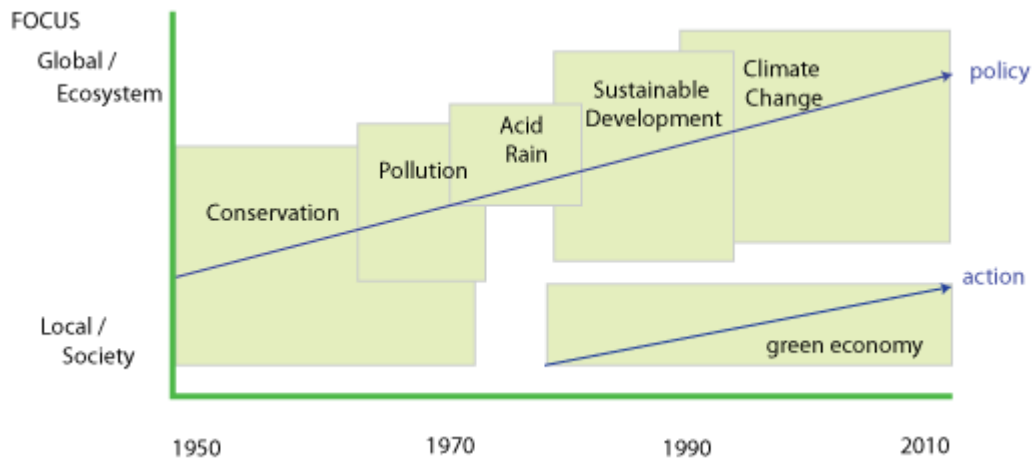


Figure 3: Environmental Issues and Trends

We need to reconnect public action with policy.

Conservation (using less and living better) provides a common and mutually supportive approach to both global and individual priorities. Individual choices lead to business opportunities and strong public policy; new products, services, and proactive policy makes a conserver lifestyle that much easier.

Our Theory of Change

*Sooner or later, by choice or by crisis, we will live in a conserver society.
We prefer sooner, and by choice.*

In time, resource scarcity and/or the impacts of climate change will necessitate the transition to a conserver society. Our objective is to get there sooner – by design and through voluntary change.

Our theory of change is based on individual action. For society to shift onto the conserver path, we need to make a conserver lifestyle easy, affordable, and (above all) desirable. If people do not see personal value in conserving, they will soon revert back to old habits. By contrast, conserver actions that are personally rewarding will be repeated, expanded to include other actions, and copied by others.

Individual action leads to new business opportunities. In turn, new products and services make it even easier for people to adopt conserver actions.

Individual action creates demand for government policies and investments. In the end, the government response to environmental and economic priorities will be based on a strong public desire for positive solutions that save us money and improve our lives.

Our theory of change is a cycle of positive reinforcement. It is driven by individual behaviour and choice and reinforced by business and government leadership.



This change is already happening – witness the rise of fuel-efficient cars, commuter cycling, solar power, energy conservation, local and organic food, community agriculture; and the new businesses emerging to meet the challenge. In the end, our role is to be a catalyst for the positive change that is already occurring all around us.

Our Role

Canada Conserves can be a catalyst for a voluntary transition to a conserver society through a series of strategic interventions. We believe in a distributed leadership model – where we are all leaders according to our abilities and priorities.

Our role is to build public support for conservation and to assist others in developing their own leadership potential.

Getting Started

Shifting to a conserver society will require leadership.

Canada Conserves will promote conservation and conservation leadership in Canada, through both policy research and public engagement. Our activities will be designed to spark leadership across Canada – by governments, businesses, organizations, and individuals.

Quick Start

1. **DIALOGUE PROJECT** (<http://canadaconserves.ca/dialogue/>)
 - a. Interviews
 - A series of interviews with Canadian thought-leaders on what conservation and a conserver society means to them
 - b. Public meetings
 - Community meetings to promote individual and community action for conservation
 - c. Next Steps
 - A report on how to strengthen Canada’s commitment to conservation.

Going Deeper

1. **CONSERVATION RESEARCH**
 - a. Canada’s Conservation Strategies
<http://canadaconserves.ca/canadas-conservation-strategies/>
 - A comprehensive survey of the conservation policies, incentives, programs and initiatives of Canada’s provinces and federal government.
 - b. Polling and Trends Research
 - Polling on attitudes and behaviours.
 - c. The Conserver Economy Project
 - This project will challenge people to imagine a conserver economy, including resource efficiency and an emphasis on personal development over material goods.
2. **CONSERVATION REVIEWS**
 - a. We will provide arms-length strategic advice on conservation strategies and programs in order to help organizations, businesses, and governments develop their own leadership role in conservation.
 - b. A primary market for this service is the municipal sector, matching local environmental and sustainability plans with opportunities for community engagement and integrated solutions.

Deeper Still

1. CONSERVATION CAMPAIGNS

- a. Market a positive vision for Canada
 - The goal is to build personal commitment to conservation and to develop strong public support for conservation leadership by all levels of government. We will measure our success by monitoring the commitment in government strategies and political policies to support conservation.
 - The vision will describe the values and attributes of the country we wish to live in:
 1. Values that resonate with Canadians
 2. Attributes that counter our fears for the future
 3. A vision that can be delivered through conservation
 - The vision will have a broad basis of appeal and connect with the three core reasons to conserve:
 1. Save the environment, whether in our backyard or the entire planet;
 2. Save money, whether in our own pocketbooks, in business, or as a nation; and
 3. Live better, whether as individuals and families, or as a society.
- b. Targeted campaigns to promote conservation solutions
 - A renewed commitment to conservation in Canada will be a strong foundation for progressive solutions that will support a healthier economy, lower cost of living, improved health and a high quality of life, and a healthier environment. Canada Conserves will develop targeted campaigns to build consumer preference for conservation solutions.
 - Our campaigns will target the sweet spot where global issues and individual action converge. Ideally, our campaigns will emphasize solutions that are at the root of many priority issues, including climate change, air and water pollution, nature preservation, economic security, and healthy communities.
 - In particular, our focus will be within five areas where the choices we make as individuals have the greatest impact on environmental and economic health: Energy, Transportation, food, shelter, nature
 - Each campaign will run for one to three years, allowing for new campaigns to be introduced over time. Working at a national level, and with regional applications, we will create the space for our partners and allies to develop their own contributions to the solution, be it through services, products, programs, or policy.
 - In addition, Canada Conserves will work and collaborate with individual governments to support the development of government-led initiatives and campaigns that contribute to and align with the conservation movement.

Concepts and Ideas



Canada Conserves offers new ideas and integrated approaches to environmental, economic, and social issues.

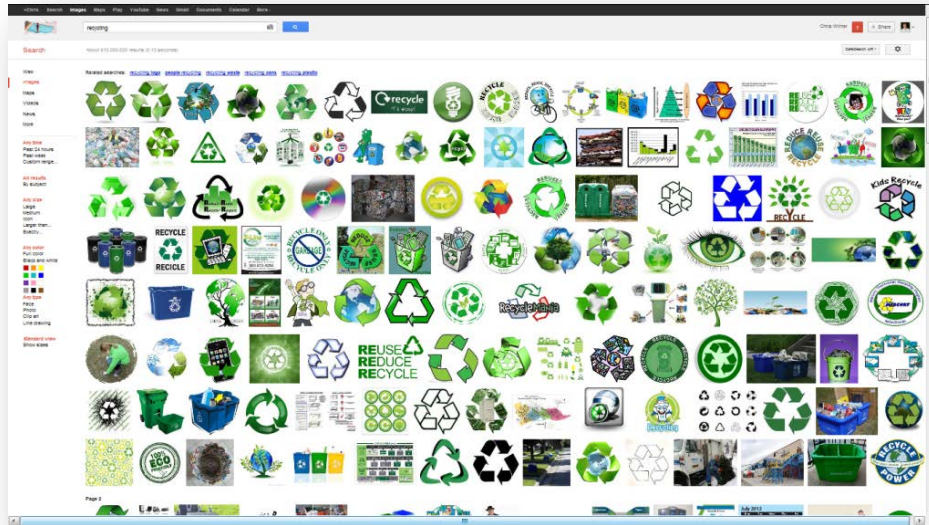
The next few pages will introduce you to some of the concepts we are working on, including:

- A universal conserver icon
 - A visual equivalent to the 3Rs loop
- Rating Canada's Conservation Strategies
 - Strengthening high level integrated strategies
- Understanding a Conserver Economy
 - Research into economic strategies for sustainability
- Conservation Reviews
 - Helping develop leadership

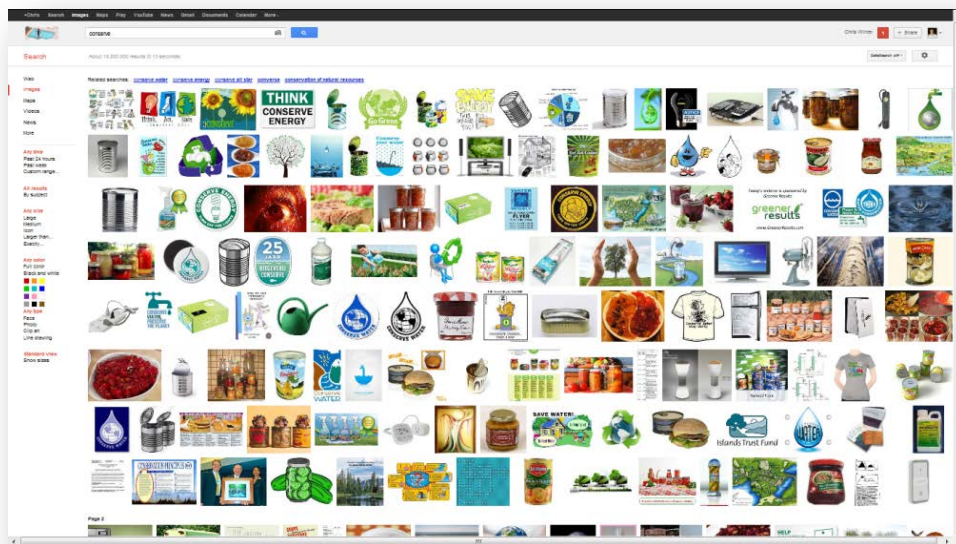
The Conserver Icon



This is probably the best-known environmental icon. Google images for “recycling” and you get many variations on the Mobius loop...



Google images for “conserve” and you get this...



There is no universal symbol for conservation. We aim to change that.

Introducing the Conserver Icon



Our icon is built around a simple definition of conservation: Use less, live better.

- The left side of the arrow represents “using less” – it goes down and gets smaller.
- The right side represents “living better” – our quality of life increases when we choose conservation solutions that reflect our values and our individual priorities.
- Together, “use less, live better” reflects our belief that positive, voluntary change is at the heart of a voluntary transition to a conserver society.

As a visual image, the arrow can also be used to represent living green, a smaller ecological footprint, sustainable development, or any other term that embraces the concept of living lightly on this planet.

As with the 3Rs symbol, we fully expect that the conserver arrow will be adapted to many different applications. Creativity is good. Our initial task is to get the symbol to be universally recognized, and then it can be integrated as a common visual link within a diverse and complex movement.

Our logo for Canada Conserves is an example of integrating the green arrow into a conservation message:



Conservation Scorecard

The shift to a conserver path requires strong leadership from the upper levels of government. Our conservation scorecard will provide a common framework to assess conservation strategies. We've already started the process of documenting Canada's conservation strategies – and a report card will look at the relative strengths and opportunities for improvement in each jurisdiction.

| PROCESS | Identified | Addressed | Results | Weighting |
|-----------------------|------------|-----------|---------|-----------|
| Issues Scan | | | | 5 |
| Identified Priorities | | | | 5 |
| Action Plan | | | | 5 |
| Implementation | | | | 20 |
| Monitoring and Review | | | | 10 |
| Public Engagement | | | | 5 |
| | | | | 50 |

| COMPREHENSIVENESS | Internal Action | External Action | Community Support | Weighting |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------|-----------|
| 1. Nature Conservation | | | | 15 |
| Ecosystem Health | | | | |
| Protected Areas | | | | |
| Endangered Species | | | | |
| Pollution Prevention | | | | |
| 2. Resource Conservation | | | | 20 |
| Water | | | | |
| Energy | | | | |
| Minerals and Aggregates | | | | |
| Forests | | | | |
| Game Species | | | | |
| Food Species | | | | |
| Farmland | | | | |
| 3. A Conserver Economy | | | | 15 |
| Regional Economies | | | | |
| Efficiency and Resilience | | | | |
| Greening Businesses | | | | |
| Green Business development | | | | |
| 3. A Conserver Society | | | | 15 |
| Community design | | | | |
| Local Economies | | | | |
| Conserver Lifestyle | | | | |
| Integrated Solutions | | | | |
| | | | | 50 |

| CONSISTENCY | Weighting |
|---|-----------|
| Consistency of all actions with conservation strategy and conservation principles | ± 10 |

Follow our progress online at www.canadaconserves.ca/strategy/

Understanding a Conserver Economy

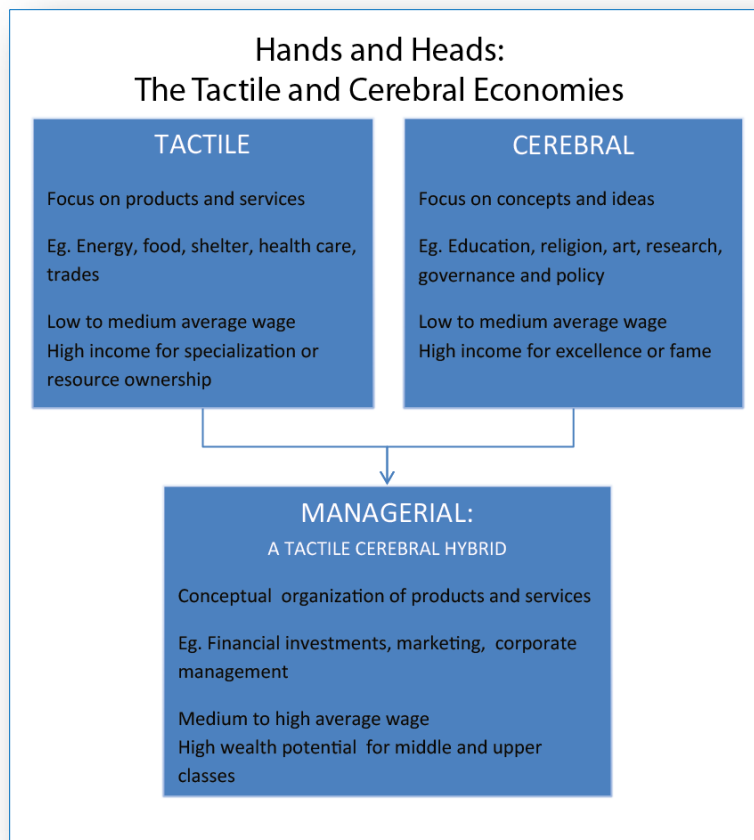
Understand, first, that a conserver economy is inevitable.

When Canada's population will rise from 34 million to 43 million by 2036 ([Statistics Canada](#)) and the global population is expected to reach 9 billion by 2050 ([Population Reference Bureau](#)), is there any question that an already stressed global ecosystem will be unable to find the food, timber, and minerals to sustain the increasing demand for material wealth?

Understand, too, that resource scarcity will likely lead to higher commodity prices, an increase in the cost of living, and increased pressure to develop more remote and environmentally sensitive resources.

If reshaping our economy onto a conserver path is essential for our continued prosperity, the first step is to understand the conventional economic forces that are at play and how they can be adapted to promote a conserver ethic.

This chart, first posted on the [Canada Conserves blog](#), looks at the economy from a resource perspective. It shows that, while there is opportunity for applying conserver values at all levels of the economy, the true challenge in developing a conserver economy lies in recalibrating the relatively new economic activity of the management of information, people, and finances.



Conservation Reviews

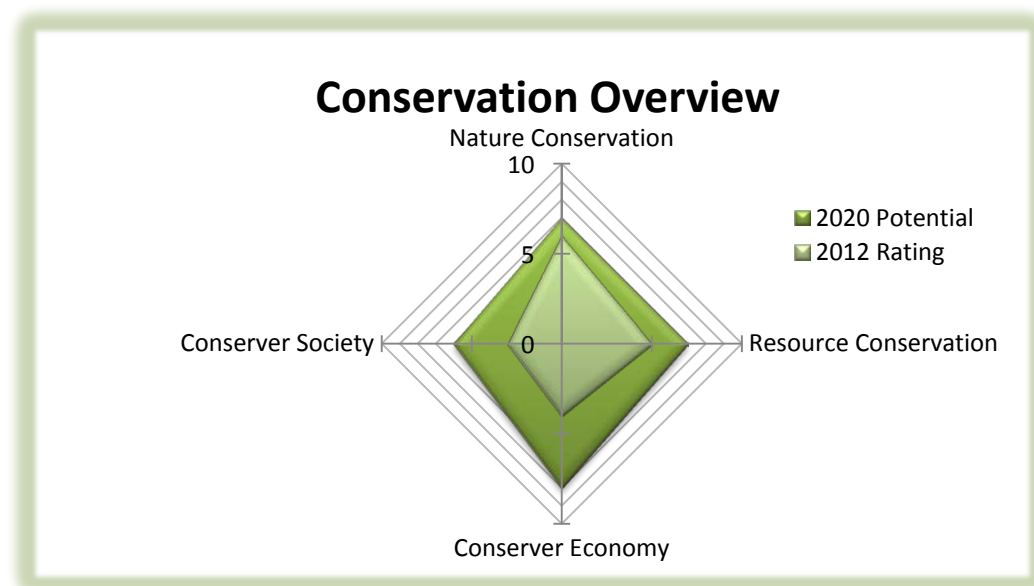
At Canada Conserves, we believe in conservation leadership.

We've done our best to make it as easy as possible to look at environmental issues and initiatives through the conserver lens, but if you are looking for a little advice, we can help.

A high level conservation review can be done for companies, municipal governments, provincial or federal ministries, or for organizations – the overall approach and concepts are the same. For example, we recently conducted reviews for the Municipality of Clarington (Ontario) and the Community Bicycle Network (Toronto) – providing both a municipality and a community organization with sound strategic advice.

Our research compares your strategic goals and priorities with both the relevant conservation issues and public priorities. The research can be scaled from a superficial analysis up to incorporating detailed polling data. The results can be shown through radial charts that provide a strong visual image of your strengths and prospects for leadership.

Each review will take between 3 – 5 days, depending on amount of material to cover. It's an excellent way to introduce yourself to Canada Conserves, and to help us build up a database of conservation leaders across Canada.



See <http://canadaconserves.ca/conservation-review/> for more details.

Moving Forward: 2013

This is the initial prospectus. It presents a few key concepts and activities as a foundation for a new, much-needed national initiative. It also presents some challenging ideas, and I have found that while there is much support for conservation as a principle, most people need a bit of time to work through the implications of how a conserver ethic might change our economy and society. We all need to understand what it means to use less and live better.

There are two ways we can get the ball rolling...

The Dialogue Project: Restoring the Lost Art of Conservation

As a kick-start project, I am proposing a simple dialogue project – six months to talk to thought leaders across Canada about conservation and Canada Conserves. Key questions include:

- How does a conserver ethic mesh with your values and guiding principles?
- How are you leading in conservation?
- What would a conserver society and economy look like to you?
- How can we promote and support a voluntary transition to a conserver model?

The purpose of the project is twofold:

1. To research and report on the state of conservation across Canada, including an initial report card on high-level strategies and case studies of conservation leadership by all levels of government, business, and organizations
2. To develop recommendations on a long-term initiative to restore Canada's leadership role in promoting and supporting conservation.

Conservation Reviews

If your company, organization, or government is undergoing a strategic review, now is the perfect time for a conservation review. If you wish, a conservation review can be combined with a workshop with community stakeholders or an advisory committee.

For more details on how you can help – as a sponsor or through a review of your initiatives – see the [Support Us](#) Section on the [Canada Conserves](#) website, or send me an e-mail.

Please let me know how you can help.

Sincerely,



Chris Winter

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www.canadaconserves.ca

<http://www.facebook.com/MyCanadaConserves>

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