

### **INVESTING IN NATURE STRENGTHENS OUR ECONOMY**

According to the World Economic Forum (WEF), half of the world's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is moderately or highly dependent on nature and the services it provides<sup>1</sup>, and the global food-, land-, and ocean-use system provides up to 40% of the world's jobs.<sup>2</sup> Habitat loss and degradation and climate change are two of the top five global risks threatening our planet, economy, and way of life. **The benefits of protecting healthy ecosystems outweigh the costs by a factor of at least 5:1.**<sup>3</sup>

Protecting 30% of the world's land and ocean would create an increased economic output ranging from \$64 billion to \$454 billion USD annually, while also generating additional benefits from ecosystem services ranging from \$170 billion to \$534 billion USD annually by 2050<sup>3</sup>. **As a nation that relies on its rich natural resources, protecting nature and the multitude of services it provides needs to be a critical part of Canada's economic recovery strategy.**

### **INVESTING IN NATURE PRESERVES AND GROWS THE VALUE OF ECOSYSTEM SERVICES**

The estimated global value of nature's ecosystem services is \$125 trillion USD per year.<sup>4</sup> **These services include air and water quality, flood mitigation, urban heat reduction, climate regulation and carbon storage, and food production.**<sup>5 6 7</sup> The European Union's *Biodiversity Strategy for 2030* states that from 1997 to 2011 the world lost an estimated \$9-29 trillion EUR per year in ecosystem services due to land-cover change and degradation.<sup>8</sup>

**In Canada, various assessments have demonstrated the value our ecosystems provide.** For example, urban forests have been valued at \$7 billion CAD in Toronto, \$35 billion CAD in Vancouver, and \$11.5 billion CAD in Halifax for the control of stormwater runoff, air quality, carbon sequestration, and energy savings.<sup>9,10</sup> Municipalities across Canada have found that protecting natural assets, such as wetlands and forests, ranging from 150 m<sup>2</sup> to 203 hectares alongside rivers can save up to \$414 million CAD, depending on the built assets that would be protected from flooding damage as a result.<sup>11</sup> A study of eight ecosystem services across nine land classes in the Lower Mainland of BC found that the aquatic ecosystems are providing \$30 billion to \$60 billion in benefits every year.<sup>12</sup> **Many other studies done across Canada have found that natural assets, if maintained, already have tremendous value, which will increase as the climate changes.**<sup>13 14</sup> Despite the significant value of these services, ecosystem degradation and loss continues, resulting in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, loss of species habitat, and impacts on our water quality and quantity, among other challenges.

### **INVESTING IN NATURE CREATES JOBS THAT ADDRESS THE CLIMATE AND BIODIVERSITY CRISES**

**Protecting and restoring** forest, grassland, and wetland (including eelgrass, saltmarsh, and riparian areas) to reduce GHG emissions and increase GHG sequestration **would help to address the climate and biodiversity crises, create jobs, and expand a green economy in Canada.** The same is true for **using natural infrastructure solutions** to increase our resilience to climate change.

Natural infrastructure investments in Ontario generated \$8.6 billion CAD in revenues, \$4.6 billion CAD in GDP and directly employed 84,000 people in 2018; with additional investments this sector could support 146,225 direct jobs and \$10 billion direct GDP by 2030 in Ontario alone.<sup>15</sup> Meanwhile, habitat restoration activities are effective at generating jobs and economic returns: as many as 33 jobs per \$1 million invested, most of which result in localized employment benefits with higher-than-average wages

– similar to the construction industry at large.<sup>16</sup> This is higher than the 8.9 jobs created for every \$1 million invested in oil and gas development<sup>17</sup> and even some of the greener options put forward by the Task Force on Resilient Recovery.<sup>18</sup>

### **INVESTING IN NATURE SUPPORTS SUSTAINABLE INDUSTRIES**

Agriculture, forestry, fisheries, water and energy production, health and pharmaceuticals, and recreation and tourism rely on ecosystem services.<sup>19</sup> **The World Economic Forum estimates that transitioning industry to a more nature-positive model could result in up to \$10 trillion USD in annual business value and could create 395 million jobs by 2030.**<sup>20</sup>

**Conversely, without effective protected areas, continued declines in biodiversity will seriously harm Canadian industry.** A recent study demonstrated that a 50% reduction in wild pollination would result in a \$53 million CAD annual reduction in the value of Canadian fruit production, and a 50% reduction in water supply would result in a \$375 million CAD annual reduction in the value of Canadian wood harvest.<sup>21</sup>

Protecting ocean ecosystems is fundamental to ensuring sustainable fisheries. At present, 70% of Canadian fisheries are in decline and 17% are in a critical state.<sup>22</sup> Research indicates that existing fisheries management is not sufficient, and networks of strong Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) are needed to rebuild and support sustainable fisheries.<sup>23</sup> **MPAs can produce up to a 10:1 return on investment, creating and supporting tens of thousands of jobs in tourism and fisheries.**<sup>24</sup>

### **INVESTING IN NATURE GROWS CANADA'S TOURISM INDUSTRY**

Globally, nature tourism is estimated to contribute up to \$600 billion USD per year in direct in-country expenditure.<sup>25 26</sup> **In Canada, terrestrial parks and associated visitor spending support 64,000 jobs, generate a return of 6:1 in GDP, and return 44% of government investment back in taxes.**<sup>27</sup>

Parks and protected areas on land and in the ocean also boost and diversify rural and coastal economies by attracting new businesses and residents to park gateway communities.<sup>28 29</sup> This is especially important for many rural and coastal communities in Canada that benefit from economic gains including increased income, jobs, and taxes - which they would not have likely received otherwise.<sup>30</sup> **Canada's parks and protected areas are increasingly important for domestic tourism in the face of reduced international travel due to COVID-19.**

### **INVESTING IN NATURE IMPROVES THE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OF CANADIANS**

**Numerous studies show that nature improves human mental health and well-being.**<sup>31 32</sup> The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that depression and anxiety disorders cost the global economy \$1 trillion USD each year in lost workplace productivity<sup>33</sup>, and there will likely be serious and lasting mental health implications from the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>34 35</sup> The pandemic has highlighted just how essential parks and protected natural spaces are for people's well-being. **The benefits of visiting national parks for mental health provide an additional economic value estimated at \$6 trillion USD annually worldwide.**<sup>36,37</sup> More importantly, protecting natural areas has been directly linked to reducing the risk of new disease outbreaks, such as COVID-19.<sup>38</sup>

**In summary, investing in nature ensures a thriving, equitable, and sustainable economy that provides meaningful work and ensures the mental and physical well-being of all Canadians.**

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