

## **2.1.1 Strategic and Cooperative Action for the Conservation of Biodiversity in North America**

### **Project Summary**

The Strategic Plan for North American Cooperation in the Conservation of Biodiversity (hereafter: the Strategic Plan) seeks to enhance collaboration among Canada, Mexico and the United States in furthering the conservation and sustainable use of North American biodiversity—in particular, its migratory and transboundary species as well as shared and critical habitats and corridors. Effective participation and collaboration of a wide range of sectors of society is essential to address common threats and opportunities in the three countries.

The implementation of the Strategic Plan will be based on five-year action plans that identify “priority actions.” These priority actions will be incorporated into projects to be undertaken by CEC’s Conservation of Biodiversity program and will be oriented towards concrete results to be evaluated and measured against agreed upon indicators.

### **Goals and Objectives**

The goal of this initiative is to develop, implement and monitor the effectiveness of a trilateral cooperation strategy for the conservation of biodiversity at the North American level. Specific objectives include:

- identify areas of emerging interest or opportunities for biodiversity conservation, as well as program and implementation approaches, including innovative public/private partnerships;
- develop the first five-year action plan to implement the Strategic Plan; and
- develop a system and procedures to monitor and evaluate the impact and effectiveness of the Strategic Plan.

### **Expected Results**

- A long-term cooperative agenda to guide CEC in its catalytic efforts to achieve effective, efficient, and mutually beneficial biodiversity conservation in North America.
- A permanent and systematic process by which the Biodiversity Conservation Working Group will be able to review, evaluate and provide guidance on the implementation of the Strategic Plan.
- Trilateral networks to ensure stakeholder involvement and expert guidance in relevant aspects of program design and implementation.
- Initiatives to support capacity building and training in regions or themes of common interest.

### **Rationale**

New initiatives are being implemented at national and local levels. However, it is becoming clearer that regional and continental action is not only a potentially effective approach but also an essential one, and the CEC is in a unique position to tackle this challenge.

The Strategic Plan aims to foster a continental, collaborative and integrated perspective to the management, conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and equitable distribution of benefits; contribute to the maintenance of the ecological integrity of North American ecoregions; and contribute to the mitigation, reduction and eventual elimination of current and future threats to North American shared species and ecosystems.

### **Progress to Date**

Previous CEC work in this area has produced *Ecological Regions of North America*, *Terrestrial Ecoregions of North America: A Conservation Assessment* and *Securing the Continent’s Biological Wealth: Towards Effective Biodiversity Conservation in North America—Integrated Baseline Summary*. In 2000, input and feedback was obtained through various fora and from numerous North American stakeholders, including public, indigenous people, academics, government agencies, the private sector, and NGOs. Also, in a workshop of North American experts, fourteen priority regions were identified by their ecological significance, conservation threat, and opportunities. In 2001, the results gathered were reviewed and incorporated into the development of the CEC’s preliminary Strategy for the Conservation of Biodiversity, defining lines of action the CEC could take on various themes in the short, medium and long term. In 2002, a “North American Round Table on Biodiversity

Conservation” was held to provide advice on North American priorities for the Strategic Plan. Through Resolution 01-03, the Council recognized the need to develop a long-term, comprehensive strategy to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity in North America. The Resolution established a working group to provide guidance and direction on the implementation of the Strategic Plan. This group convened for the first time in June 2002. Their first task was to finalize the Strategic Plan and to provide advice to the Council for its implementation.

## Actions

### Overview

During the period 2003–2004, work will move from the North American scoping stage to continental- and regional-scale<sup>1</sup> planning, implementation and evaluation. Existing and past initiatives such as the North American Bird Conservation Initiative (NABCI), Species of Common Conservation Concern (SCCC), Marine Protected Areas Network, and other program-related work will be reviewed as tools for conservation in each of the targeted geographic regions. The monitoring and evaluation framework agreed upon by the working group will bring long-term guidance on the implementation of the Strategic Plan. In the summer of 2003, the implementation of the Strategic Plan will begin. The first five-year action plan will be developed and a monitoring system for the Strategic Plan will be established.

<b>2003</b>	<b>Estimated Resources Required (C\$)</b>
<b>Action 1: Begin implementation of the Strategic Plan with the guidance of the Biodiversity Conservation Working Group.</b>	<b>55,000</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activity 1: Finalize the Strategic Plan for North American Cooperation in the Conservation of Biodiversity, and establish a monitoring and evaluation mechanism for it.</li> </ul>	20,000
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activity 2: Develop the first five-year action plan for the implementation of priority actions identified in the Strategic Plan.</li> </ul>	15,000
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activity 3: Edit, translate and publish the Strategic Plan.</li> </ul>	20,000
<b>Total Resources Required</b>	<b>55,000</b>

### 2004

<b>Action 1: Second Round Table on Biodiversity Conservation</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activity 1: Hold the Second North American Round Table on the Conservation of Biodiversity on emerging approaches and best practices related to the Strategic Plan and in support of the work of the BCWG.</li> </ul>

### Public Participation

Public participation has been and will continue to be an indispensable component of each phase of the implementation of the Strategic Plan. The development of the Strategic Plan benefited from the input of indigenous people. For the implementation of this North American agenda, emphasis will be given to their participation. Efforts

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<sup>1</sup> CEC Priority Conservation Regions: 1. Arctic Tundra/Archipelago; 2. Arctic Coastal Tundra/North Slope; 3. Bering Sea to Baja California/Gulf of California Coastal/Marine Systems; 4. Yukon/Yellowstone/Sierra Madre Corridor; 5. Prairies/Chihuahuan Desert Corridor; 6. Northern Forests/Softwood Shield; 7. Great Lakes/St. Lawrence Lowlands; 8. Greater Gulf of Maine/Coastal/Marine System (Nova Scotia to New England), Gulf of St. Lawrence/Grand Banks; 9. Chesapeake Bay; 10. Southern Appalachians; 11. Rio Bravo/Laguna Madre Corridor; 12. Transverse Neovolcanic Belt; 13. Maya Reef and Southern Florida Coastal/Marine Systems; and 14. “Selva Maya,” Tropical Dry and Humid Forests.

will be continued in coordination with JPAC and the National Advisory Committees to solicit public feedback and the active participation of a broad range of stakeholders.

### **Capacity Building**

The Strategic Plan for North American Cooperation in the Conservation of Biodiversity recognizes the different approaches and successful experiences in managing and conserving biodiversity between the three countries. To ensure the successful implementation of the Strategic Plan, outreach and capacity building activities involving biodiversity managers and the needs of stakeholders will be identified. Objective 4 of the Strategic Plan, “Promoting effective participation of North American society,” is aimed at fostering multidisciplinary, trilateral networks and training opportunities, as well as promoting effective exchanges of information among key stakeholders.

### **Expected Partners and/or Participants**

Partners and participants, including those from the academic community, environmental nongovernmental organizations, municipal, state/provincial and federal government agencies, indigenous/local communities, the private sector, and, in particular, the JPAC working group on the conservation of biodiversity and the Biodiversity Conservation Working Group, will be important contributors to the process of implementation, evaluation and review of the Strategic Plan. Stakeholders from these areas will also be involved in the development, implementation evaluation and review of the Regional Action Plans.

### **Linkages to other CEC Projects**

This project will continue to be carried out in consultation with the other CEC programs to devise an integrated approach to biodiversity conservation for the CEC.