

Indigenous-led Conservation in Canada

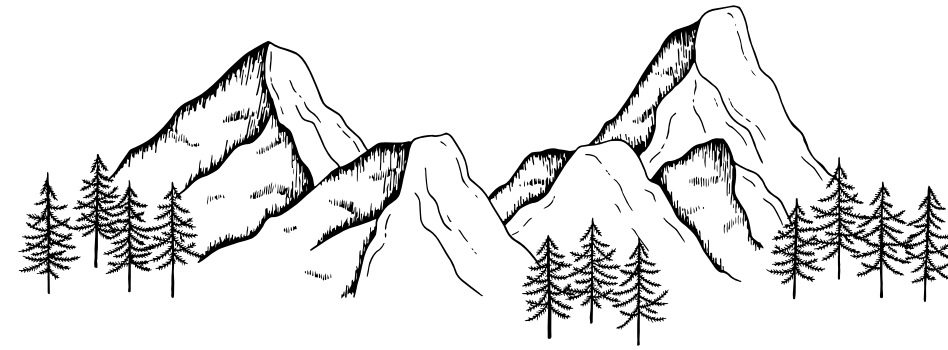
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Conservation in Canada: Past and Present

Throughout Canada's history and with respect to **conservation projects**, **Indigenous peoples** have:

- been **left out of decision-making** (Mansuy et al., 2023);
- been **displaced** from their land (Moola & Roth, 2019; Youdelis et al., 2021; Zurba et al., 2019);
- **lost access to traditional foods and cultural heritage** sites (Moola & Roth, 2019).

Current **conservation projects** can cause further **Indigenous displacement** and **land dispossession** if they are conducted without attending to **Indigenous rights** (Vogel et al., 2022).



Climate Change and Indigenous-led Conservation

Indigenous knowledge systems provide important contributions to a shared understanding of **climate change impacts** and our ability to **adapt**. (Bush & Lemmen, 2019)

Protecting lands and waters in Canada can help with climate **mitigation** (increased greenhouse gas uptake and storage) and climate **adaptation** (enhanced resiliency; Vogel et al., 2022)

Climate change can be linked directly to colonization (Gram-Hanssen et al., 2021). There is a **moral imperative** to underpin climate action projects with practices of **decolonization**.

Indigenous-led conservation as transformative climate action

“The concept of transformation implies deep-rooted changes to unsustainable societal systems and structures as well as the underlying logics and values that help maintain them” (Gram-Hanssen et al., 2021, p.2).

Indigenous communities are **disproportionately affected by climate change impacts** (Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, 2019). It is important that there is a focus on climate adaptation and resilience efforts in and around Indigenous communities.

Indigenous-led Conservation

Indigenous-led conservation can address the climate and biodiversity crises while ensuring Indigenous peoples have continued access to and connection with their lands (Tran et al., 2020; Vogel et al., 2022; Youdelis et al., 2021).

Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas (IPCAs)

IPCAs in Canada address :

- **Commitments to Indigenous rights:** for example, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (Mansuy et al., 2023; Zurba et al., 2019)
- **Conservation targets:** for example, the Government of Canada's target of protecting 25% of Canada's territory by 2025 and 30% by 2030 (Mansuy et al., 2023)

“IPCAs are managed in accordance with Indigenous legal and knowledge systems... [T]hey are designed to facilitate not only ecological conservation, but also sustainable livelihoods and self-determination, cultural and language revitalization, and the maintenance of Indigenous knowledge systems” (Youdelis et al., 2021, p.3).

IPCAs are *“lands and waters where Indigenous governments have the primary role in protecting and conserving ecosystems through Indigenous laws, governance and knowledge systems”* (Indigenous Circle of Experts, 2018, p.5).

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