

Protected Areas Highlighted in National Forest Strategy Review

May 5, 2005

In celebration of *National Forest Week,* the Sierra Club of Canada today released an extensive database of forest management across Canada, viewable at: www.sierraforestwatch.ca.

The database evaluates provincial/territorial 'progress' towards meeting commitments in the National Forest Strategy (NFS). The NFS is a voluntary road map towards more ecologically and socially sustainable forest management.

For the structure of the database, seven commitments were identified as key by the Sierra Club of Canada, and indicators were developed to evaluate progress made towards these commitments by provincial and territorial governments. The categories are:

- Ecosystem-Based Management Policy and Practice
- Integrated Land Use Planning
- Carbon Reservoirs in Forested Ecosystems
- Harvest Level Determination
- Tenure Reallocation
- The Role of Aboriginal People in Forest Management
- Completion of a Network of Protected Areas.

From the home page, you can click on each category to be taken to its database. Once in the database, you can click on the abbreviated indicator, and scroll down to the details box at the bottom to read the indicator in full. Then you can click on the box that marks the intersection between the indicator and the province that you are interested in, and read the data in the details box.

The ecosystem-based management database has some special features. It is the only section that was graded this year--next year all of the categories will be graded. You can read the evaluation of both policy and practice in the details box.

The ecosystem-based management page also has an interactive map that *toggles* between policy and practice grades. To view this map, click on the icon of the leaf beside the indicator that you are interested in viewing. The default setting on the map is the combined practice and policy grade; click on 'show policy grade,' to see a map of policy evaluations across Canada, and on 'show practice grade,' to see how provinces and territories fared in implementing their policies. (These instructions are on the site itself--you can skip them and go right to the database).

What is the coolest thing about the database? It can be upgraded at any time. Researchers with relevant experience were hired in each province to collect data, and also to input on the grades for their province/territory for the ecosystem-based management database. The grades were also balanced with other provincial/territorial grades for consistency. We will work to continually upgrade and improve the site; if you have any updated information, edits, thoughts on the grades, etc., please send comments to the Sierra Club at: forest@sierraclub.ca.

The Sierra Club of Canada's Executive Director, Elizabeth May, recently updated the book *At the Cutting Edge: The Crisis in Canada's Forests*. The newly released *At the Cutting Edge*, which is published by Key Porter Books and is available in most major

and independent bookstores across Canada, compliments the database, providing detailed information on all of the categories the database addresses.

We hope that the database will be widely used as a tool by activists to access information, and to pressure governments to improve both forest policies and the implementation of policies on the ground.

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