



CANADIAN  
BOREAL  
INITIATIVE



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BORÉALE  
CANADIENNE



le lundi 14 mai 2007

Chers chefs de gouvernements canadiens,

La région boréale d'Amérique du Nord est l'un des derniers écosystèmes forestiers et systèmes écologiques humides encore intacts sur la planète. Le Canada à lui seul abrite environ le quart des forêts vierges restantes au monde, lesquelles sont situées pour la plupart dans la région boréale<sup>i</sup>. La région boréale d'Amérique du Nord couvre une bonne partie de la région boréale qui encercle l'hémisphère nord. La région boréale mondiale stocke plus d'eau douce dans ses marais et ses lacs<sup>ii</sup>, et plus de carbone dans ses arbres, son sol et ses tourbières<sup>iii</sup> que tout autre endroit sur la Terre.

La région boréale du Canada héberge trois milliards d'oiseaux chanteurs migrateurs<sup>iv</sup>, les plus importantes hardes de caribous<sup>v</sup>, des millions de sauvagines et d'oiseaux de rivage, de grandes populations d'ours, de loups et de lynx et des poissons autochtones en abondance. Des processus écologiques à grande échelle comme les interactions prédateur-proie, les cycles de feu et hydrologiques façonnent encore la région — des processus naturels qui se font rares dans la plus grande partie du globe. Les écoservices fournis par la région, y compris la filtration de l'eau et le stockage du carbone sont estimés équivaloir à 2,5 fois la valeur des ressources naturelles extraites chaque année<sup>vi</sup>. Des centaines de collectivités autochtones dépendent des écosystèmes et de la faune de cette région. Il est évident qu'il existe une responsabilité qui intéresse le monde entier de protéger les riches valeurs naturelles et culturelles de la région boréale du Canada, une responsabilité enchâssée dans la recommandation du Congrès mondial de la conservation de l'UICN selon laquelle le Canada et la Russie devraient faire davantage pour assurer la conservation des régions abritant les forêts boréales<sup>vii</sup>.

Un large éventail de menaces pèsent sur la région boréale et des rapports récents de la Table ronde nationale sur l'environnement et l'économie ont conclu que les pressions liées au développement sur la région boréale du Canada s'intensifiaient<sup>viii</sup>. La grande majorité des forêts commercialement rentables de la région a été affectée aux sociétés forestières<sup>ix</sup>. En outre, une exploitation importante des ressources minières, pétrolières, gazières et hydroélectriques est réalisée un peu partout dans la région boréale. Les pressions liées au développement se font surtout sentir au sud de la région boréale, soit la partie la plus productive et où la diversité des espèces est la plus grande. L'effet cumulatif de ce large éventail de menaces a incité un comité sénatorial à conclure que la région était « assiégée »<sup>x</sup>. On prévoit que ces menaces se traduiront par une dégradation de l'intégrité écologique de la région<sup>xi</sup>.

L'état relativement vierge du nord de la région boréale du Canada<sup>xii</sup> offre une occasion de mettre en œuvre des stratégies de conservation visant à protéger l'intégrité écologique de la région. Le secteur de la biologie de conservation identifie quatre objectifs à remplir pour assurer la viabilité à long terme d'un écosystème<sup>xiii</sup>: 1) tous les types d'écosystèmes autochtones doivent être représentés dans les zones protégées; 2) des populations de toutes les espèces autochtones doivent être préservées selon des modèles naturels d'abondance et de répartition; 3) des processus écologiques tels que

les processus hydrologiques doivent être maintenus; et 4) la résilience aux changements environnementaux à court et à long termes doit être préservée. Pour atteindre ces objectifs, il faut disposer d'un réseau de grandes aires protégées interconnectées et pratiquer une gestion durable des régions avoisinantes. Un examen des initiatives de planification passées offre une perspective additionnelle car il indique que les zones protégées devraient couvrir environ la moitié des territoires si l'on veut atteindre les objectifs indiqués plus haut<sup>xiv</sup>.

Il sera difficile de mettre en œuvre des stratégies de conservation adéquates dans le sud de la région boréale<sup>xv</sup> où environ les deux tiers des terres forestières ont été affectés à l'exploitation des ressources<sup>xvi</sup>. Presque deux millions de kilomètres carrés situés dans cette région demeurent toutefois sous-développés<sup>xvii</sup>. Aussi, l'intégrité écologique peut être préservée pourvu que l'usage industriel soit réduit afin d'augmenter la protection et que les terres restantes qui ont été affectées soient gérées en appliquant des pratiques durables sur le plan écologique. Au nord de la région boréale, la plupart des terres n'ont pas encore été affectées à un développement industriel. Aussi, tant que l'on dispose d'une certaine marge de manœuvre, il est possible d'y réaliser un aménagement du territoire proactif, de concert avec les collectivités autochtones et ce, afin de renforcer la protection avant que l'affectation industrielle n'ait lieu, et de dégager des options de mise en valeur durable des ressources.

Nous sommes préoccupés par le fait que les efforts actuels de planification en matière de conservation sont insuffisants pour préserver l'intégrité écologique de la région boréale du Canada, l'un des derniers écosystèmes les plus vierges encore en existence dans le monde. En particulier, la superficie de la région boréale du Canada qui bénéficie d'une protection représente actuellement moins de 10 pour cent<sup>xviii</sup>; elle est insuffisante et doit être nettement augmentée. La Convention pour la conservation de la forêt boréale rédigée par les principales entreprises de l'industrie des ressources, les Premières nations et des organismes voués à la conservation, préconise d'accorder la même importance à la conservation qu'à la mise en valeur des ressources dans l'ensemble de la région boréale du Canada<sup>xix</sup>. C'est en qualité de scientifiques que nous demandons instamment aux gouvernements fédéral, provinciaux, territoriaux et autochtones, aux entreprises, aux collectivités et aux autres intervenants d'appuyer la mise en œuvre de la vision de conservation de la région boréale qui est formulée dans la Convention.

Nous vous prions d'agréer, Chers chefs de gouvernement, l'expression de nos sentiments distingués.

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<sup>i</sup> Bryant, D., et al., *The Last Frontier Forests: Ecosystems and Economies on the Edge*, World Resources Institute, Washington D.C., 1997.

<sup>ii</sup> Les lacs d'eau douce boréaux représenteraient 80 % ou plus de l'eau douce, non décongelée du monde (Schindler, D.W., « Sustaining aquatic ecosystems in boreal regions », *Conservation Ecology* [en ligne] **2**(2) : 18, 1998. Peut être consulté à partir de l'adresse : <http://www.consecol.org/vol2/iss2/art18>).

<sup>iii</sup> On estime que la région boréale stocke 703 Pg de carbone, soit davantage que les forêts tropicales et tempérées combinées ([http://www.whrc.org/Borealamerica/#overview\\_storage](http://www.whrc.org/Borealamerica/#overview_storage)).

<sup>iv</sup> Blancher, P., *Importance of Canada's Boreal Forest to Landbirds*, Canadian Boreal Initiative et Boreal Songbird Initiative, 2003. Pour obtenir de plus amples renseignements, veuillez consulter [www.borealbirds.org](http://www.borealbirds.org).

<sup>v</sup> La harde de caribous de la rivière George au Labrador et au Québec, qui compte environ 800 000 bêtes, est la plus importante au monde.

<sup>vi</sup> M. Anielski et S. Wilson, *Les chiffres qui comptent vraiment: Évaluation de la valeur réelle du capital naturel et des écosystèmes boréaux du Canada*, Canadian Boreal Initiative et The Pembina Institute, 2005. Disponible en ligne en ligne à l'adresse : [http://www.borealcanada.ca/pr\\_docs/Boreal%20Wealth\\_Fr\\_Final.pdf](http://www.borealcanada.ca/pr_docs/Boreal%20Wealth_Fr_Final.pdf).

<sup>vii</sup> Voir le texte complet de la recommandation de l'UICN RECWCC3.101 : « Advancing Boreal Forest Conservation » à l'adresse : [http://www.iucn.org/congress/2004/members/submitted\\_motions\\_fr.htm](http://www.iucn.org/congress/2004/members/submitted_motions_fr.htm).

<sup>viii</sup> *Avenir boréal : La gouvernance, la conservation et le développement dans la région boréale du Canada*, Table ronde nationale sur l'environnement et l'économie, 2005. Disponible en ligne à l'adresse : [http://www.nrtee-trnee.ca/fre/programs/Current\\_Programs/Nature/Boreal-Forest/Documents/Boreal-Futures/Boreal-Futures-Contents\\_F.htm](http://www.nrtee-trnee.ca/fre/programs/Current_Programs/Nature/Boreal-Forest/Documents/Boreal-Futures/Boreal-Futures-Contents_F.htm).

Lee, P., *Le Canada boréal: état de l'écosystème, état de l'industrie, questions d'actualité et projections*, Rapport à la Table ronde nationale sur l'environnement et l'économie, Global Forest Watch Canada, Edmonton, 2004, 85 p.

<sup>ix</sup> Environ 95 % de la forêt d'intérêt commercial (comme rapporté dans L'Atlas du Canada – voir ci-dessous) sont situés dans des territoires sous tenures forestières (*Commercial Forest Tenures*) désignées ainsi par Global Forest Watch (Observatoire mondial des forêts) Canada – voir ci-dessous. L'Atlas du Canada, Carte des secteurs protégés et forêts d'intérêt commercial. Disponible en ligne à l'adresse : [http://atlas.nrcan.gc.ca/site/francais/learningresources/theme\\_modules/borealforest/prot\\_comm.jpg/image\\_view](http://atlas.nrcan.gc.ca/site/francais/learningresources/theme_modules/borealforest/prot_comm.jpg/image_view) (l'expression « forêts d'intérêt commercial » est définie par L'Atlas du Canada comme « terrain forestier vacant de la forêt boréale, accessible et exploité pour le bois d'œuvre »).

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Lee P, Z Stanojevic, JD Gysbers, *Canada's Commercial Forest Tenures, 2003: Background and Summary Report*, Edmonton, Alberta, Global Forest Watch (Observatoire mondial des forêts) Canada, 2004, 59 p.

<sup>x</sup> Sous-comité de la forêt boréale du Comité sénatorial permanent de l'agriculture et des forêts, *Réalités concurrentes : la forêt boréale en danger*, gouvernement du Canada, Ottawa, Canada, 1999. Disponible en ligne à l'adresse : <http://www.parl.gc.ca/36/1/parlbus/commbus/senate/Com-f/BORE-F/rep-f/rep09jun99-f.htm>.

<sup>xi</sup> Comme exemples de recherches prédisant la dégradation des écosystèmes boréaux, on peut citer : Schindler (« Sustaining aquatic ecosystems in boreal regions », *Conservation Ecology* 2: 18, 1998. Disponible en ligne à l'adresse : <http://www.consecol.org/vol2/iss2/art18/>) qui a prédit des déclinis continus dans les pêcheries boréales et la qualité de l'eau en raison d'une gestion non durable des systèmes aquatiques boréaux. Weclaw et Hudson (« Simulation of conservation and management of woodland caribou », *Ecological Modelling* 177:75-94, 2004) a conclu que les caribous des bois ont de fortes chances de disparaître dans les 40 prochaines années d'une partie de la région boréale de l'Alberta si le développement industriel se poursuit au rythme actuel.

<sup>xii</sup> 78 % des forêts boréales du Canada ne sont pas accessibles par la route (Smith, W. et P. Lee (éditeurs), *Canada's Forests at a Crossroads: An Assessment in the Year 2000*, World Resources Institute, Washington, DC., 2000). 63 % des forêts boréales du Canada demeurent en blocs de forêts vierges d'au moins 120 000 acres (Lee, Peter, Dmitry Aksenov, Lars Laestadius, Ruth Nogueron et Wynet Smite, *Canada's Large Intact Forest Landscapes*, Global Forest Watch Canada, Edmonton, Alberta, 2003).

<sup>xiii</sup> Noss et Cooperrider, *Saving Nature's Legacy: Protecting and Restoring Biodiversity*, Island Press, Washington, D.C., 1994.

<sup>xiv</sup> Un examen des initiatives de planification en matière de conservation réalisé par Noss et Cooperrider's (*Saving Nature's Legacy: Protecting and Restoring Biodiversity*, Island Press, Washington, D.C., 1994) a conclu qu'une protection de 25 à 75 % était nécessaire pour maintenir l'intégrité écologique. Un examen plus récent des initiatives de planification de la conservation (F. K. A. Schmiegelow, S. G. Cumming, S. Harrison, S. Leroux, K. Lisgo, R. Noss et B. Olsen, « Conservation Beyond Crisis Management: A Conservation-Matrix\_Model », Document de travail BEACONS No. 1, 2006, disponible en ligne à : <http://www.rr.ualberta.ca/research/beacons/resources.htm>.) a conclu que le pourcentage moyen recommandé de protection pour atteindre les objectifs écologiques se situait à plus de 50 %. Des exercices récents de planification de la conversation dans la région boréale canadienne ont corroboré les conclusions de ces examens. Au Labrador, par exemple, la prise en compte de principe de biologie de conservation au moment de l'aménagement du territoire de la région boréale encore largement intacte a permis de désigner comme aire protégée plus de 50 % de la superficie de la région, le reste étant affecté à une utilisation durable (Innu Nation et Silva Ecosystem Consultants, *Peer review summary: Multiple Spatial Scale Reserve Design for FMD*, 19).

<sup>xv</sup> La région boréale au sud vise ici les écozones boréales (par opposition aux écozones de la taïga) délimitées par les frontières des écozones terrestres du Canada.

<sup>xvi</sup> Environ deux tiers des écozones boréales ont été affectés aux sociétés forestières : un calcul réalisé à partir de la superficie couverte par des tenures forestières commerciales (GFWC).

<sup>xvii</sup> Calcul réalisé selon la superficie des fragments de plus de 10 000 ha de territoires forestiers restants qui sont révélés par les satellites Landsat (voir ci-dessous) et situés au sud de la région boréale (définie comme les écozones boréales par opposition aux écozones de la taïga), région délimitée par les frontières des écozones terrestres du Canada). Lee P, JD Gysbers et Stanojevic Z., *Canada's Forest Landscape Fragments: A First Approximation*, (Rapport du Global Forest Watch Canada), Global Forest Watch Canada, Edmonton, Alberta, 2006, 97 p.

<sup>xviii</sup> *L'enjeu boréal : Assurer l'avenir de la région boréale du Canada*. Un rapport sur l'état de l'Initiative boréale canadienne, 2005. Disponible en ligne à l'adresse : [http://www.borealcanada.ca/reports\\_f.cfm](http://www.borealcanada.ca/reports_f.cfm).

<sup>xix</sup> La Convention pour la conservation de la forêt boréale peut être consultée à [http://www.borealcanada.ca/framework\\_f.cfm](http://www.borealcanada.ca/framework_f.cfm).