



***Sierra Club Canada Foundation Submission on Finalizing Canada's 2030 National Biodiversity Strategy and the Milestone Document on Canada's 2030 National Biodiversity Strategy***

***Submitted: February 9, 2024***

## **Introduction**

Sierra Club Canada Foundation is a national grassroots organization with a mission to empower people to be leaders in protecting, restoring and enjoying healthy and safe ecosystems.

In 2019, in response to the urgent need for climate action and transformative change to confront the loss of biodiversity and the climate crisis, our membership committed to create a movement for positive change in the decade ahead in five key areas:

- We champion climate solutions and a rapid transition to clean energy,
- We fight for environmental and social justice,
- We work to protect and restore nature and endangered species,
- We believe in getting people outside to explore and enjoy the outdoors; and
- We promote the conservation of resources.

Our membership has embraced advancing the rights of nature as a policy and value framework necessary to achieving the transformative change we seek to achieve the vision of this Decade of Change. This idea reflects our commitment to environmental and social justice, as in our experience rights of nature are key aspects of the cultural and legal frameworks of many Indigenous allies and collaborators. Rights of nature also reflects the experience of on-the-ground advocates, who have observed the failure of existing frameworks to stop the loss of biodiversity and create positive relationships between human communities and the natural environment.

At the Fifteenth Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in Montreal, Quebec, rights of nature was included in the text of a global biodiversity agreement for the first time:

“The framework recognizes and considers these diverse value systems and concepts, including, for those countries that recognize them, rights of nature and rights of Mother Earth, as being an integral part of its successful implementation.”<sup>1</sup>

It is our recommendation that Canada take steps to better appreciate and understand rights of nature value systems and concepts that are actively being advanced and implemented in Canada today, and to develop pathways for acknowledging the rights of nature as part of its national Biodiversity Strategy.

Below, we highlight why right of nature approaches are necessary to the success of Canada’s Biodiversity Strategy and indicate areas where mechanisms to acknowledge and uphold the rights of nature can be included in the targets of the biodiversity strategy.

***“The river protects herself, we protect the river, we’re all protected.”***

- Jean-Charles Piétacho, Chief of Ekuanitshit<sup>2</sup>

### **It’s Broken - Let’s (Start to) Fix It**

As the Biodiversity Milestone document points out, Canada is home to 9% of the world’s forests and 24% of the world’s boreal forests, plus 20% of the world’s freshwater, 25% of the world’s wetlands, the world’s longest coastline, and one of the world’s largest marine territories. As a consequence, we hold great responsibility for reversing declines in wild species and protecting places needed to protect and restore nature.

In spite of current and historic legal, policy, and planning approaches, the diversity and abundance of wild species continues to decline in Canada, with one-fifth of assessed species in Canada being at risk of extinction.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cbd.int/doc/decisions/cop-15/cop-15-dec-04-en.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://thenarwhal.ca/opinion-muteshekau-shipu-magpie-river-personhood/>

<sup>3</sup>

<https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/species-risk-public-registry/general-status/wild-species-2020.html>

Clearly, we need transformative cultural and policy change to reverse biodiversity loss. Rights of nature is such an approach. Successfully implemented, rights of nature will formally recognize the relationship Canadians have to the natural world, create opportunities and structures that reflect this relationship, advance our commitment to Truth and Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples, and also establish key shared responsibilities to protect and restore biodiversity going forward.

### **What are the Rights of Nature ?**

According to the Global Alliance for the Rights of Nature (GARN):

Rights of Nature is the recognition and honoring that Nature has rights. It is the recognition that our ecosystems – including trees, oceans, animals, mountains – have rights just as human beings have rights. Rights of Nature is about balancing what is good for human beings against what is good for other species, what is good for the planet as a world. It is the holistic recognition that all life, all ecosystems on our planet are deeply intertwined.<sup>4</sup>

Many Indigenous laws, cultural frameworks, and policies acknowledge and uphold the rights of nature. Rights of nature are acknowledged in law by over 30 countries and tribal nations around the world. And - although the concept seems not to be aligned with current Western philosophies and Canada's current colonial legal systems - the *Magna Carta* - the framing document for establishing the rule of law and democracy in Commonwealth countries like Canada - itself had a sister agreement called the *Charter of the Forest* (1217), The Charter of the Forest focussed on ensuring that people had access to and shared responsibility for stewardship of public lands.<sup>5</sup> A new biodiversity framework and associated laws and policies could help revive this concept – one that existed in original Western legal framings, but that has subsequently been neglected when it comes to shared responsibilities to protect nature.

### **Is this the right time for Rights of Nature ?**

There are numerous benefits to adopting this approach in Canada right now:

---

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.garn.org/rights-of-nature/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/the-charter-of-the-forest>

1. Scientific and policy assessments show that transformative change is needed now to halt and reverse the decline in species diversity and abundance, as well as to adapt to and reverse the impacts of climate change. The Milestone document makes it very clear that previous global and national approaches have been insufficient to tackle the accelerating declines of biodiversity.
2. Healthy human societies rely on healthy natural systems, and currently both are under severe threat due to spiraling decline in biodiversity and accelerating climate change. Rights of nature recognizes the reciprocity of health of nature and healthy human communities.
3. If implemented correctly and with respect for Indigenous rights and cultural frameworks, rights of nature approaches will advance Canada's commitment to reconciliation.
4. Connections with the natural world are increasingly understood to be integral to human health and well-being. Rights of nature frameworks and policies will result in healthier, interconnected communities in Canada.
5. Biodiversity is being degraded by numerous, cumulative threats and activities. A rights of nature approach is a holistic concept and policy framework that centers our shared responsibility to protect and restore nature, and can provide a robust way to tackle mounting threats to biodiversity.

### **Rights of Nature Can Be Upheld in Canada**

The Executive Summary of the Biodiversity Milestone document points out: "First Nations, Inuit, and Métis cultures and spirituality are deeply rooted in relationship to all beings, and Indigenous Peoples have stewarded the lands, waters, and ice across Canada since time immemorial."

There are diverse cultural and legal frameworks for different Indigenous cultures in Canada; there will be no "one size fits all" approach to rights of nature. However, there are numerous examples of Indigenous law, treaties and cultural norms that reflect the concept of the rights of nature. As stated above, some of the foundational legal frameworks for Canada's legal system acknowledge both shared access *and* shared responsibility for stewarding public lands.

There are a growing number of examples of Indigenous leaders and communities that recognize the rights of nature in Canada and have created or are calling for frameworks for those rights to be upheld, such as:

- Recognition of the rights of the St. Lawrence River by the Assembly of First Nations Quebec-Labrador (AFNQL)<sup>6</sup>
- Efforts to establish the right to personhood of the Tenegadino Zibi/Gatineau River, and the St. Lawrence River, in Quebec<sup>7</sup>
- The declaration of the rights of Muteshekau Shipu (Magpie River) in Québec;<sup>8</sup> and
- The guardianship responsibilities of the members of the Board tasked with stewarding the Tihaidene Néné National Park Reserve, an Indigenous Protected Area in the Northwest Territories.<sup>9</sup>

### **How can Rights of Nature Further Targets for Protecting Biodiversity ?**

The new biodiversity framework can integrate rights of nature approaches and create space for acknowledging rights of nature in various ways. We suggest the following steps to ensure that rights of nature are upheld and frameworks for acknowledging and protecting these rights are created throughout Canada's Biodiversity Strategy.

#### **Step 1:**

The Global Biodiversity Framework already includes language which Canada could adopt in numerous processes, laws and policies that will be utilized to achieve the targets of the national Biodiversity Strategy. We identify some of these opportunities in the discussion of key targets in the strategy, below.

#### **Step 2:**

where appropriate and desired by Indigenous leaders and communities, ensure Indigenous Protected Areas and Indigenous Guardian Programs and associated legal and policy frameworks are drafted in consultation with Indigenous rights holders in order to adopt culturally appropriate rights of nature approaches.

---

6

<https://ici.radio-canada.ca/rci/en/news/1975522/first-nations-in-quebec-and-labrador-recognize-the-rights-of-the-st-lawrence-river>

7

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdofy\\_2AARxC9nyHGFZYcffefPz2Uer14sx2X1yB1C2bLHs7Q/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdofy_2AARxC9nyHGFZYcffefPz2Uer14sx2X1yB1C2bLHs7Q/viewform)

8

<https://www.cbc.ca/documentaries/the-nature-of-things/this-pristine-canadian-river-has-legal-personhood-a-new-approach-to-conserving-nature-1.7100728#:~:text=In%202021%2C%20the%20Innu%20Council,to%20exist%20and%20to%20flow.>

<sup>9</sup> <https://thenarwhal.ca/thaidene-nene-heralds-new-era-parks/>

### Step 3:

Many rights of nature approached in Canada have centred around rivers and watersheds. Canada's Water Strategy and other established mechanisms to protect rivers, such as the Heritage River program could create opportunities for rights of river and watershed approaches.

### Step 4:

In Ontario's Biodiversity Strategy, the province has committed to explore opportunities for rights of nature approaches. Nova Scotia's Environmental Goals and Climate Change Reduction Act recognizes the principle of Netukulimk<sup>10</sup>. A scan of provincial, territorial, and municipal and council bylaws would unearth other examples that explicitly or implicitly recognize the concept of the rights of nature. The federal government should support provincial and territorial initiatives to uphold the rights of nature, and integrate and support these initiatives in order to achieve the goals of the biodiversity strategy.

## **Rights of Nature is Key to Achieving the Targets in the Biodiversity Strategy**

Integrating the rights of nature approach will further all of the 23 targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF), which Canada is adopting in its approach to developing a new national Biodiversity Strategy. Rights of nature policies and educational opportunities will be particularly strategic in advancing the following targets, as outlined below.

### **Target 1: Spatial planning and effective management**

According to the Milestone document<sup>11</sup>:

Participatory, integrated biodiversity-inclusive spatial planning offers a way to consider land- and sea-use change at appropriate geographic scales, while respecting the rights of Indigenous Peoples. It supports

---

<sup>10</sup> "Netukulimk" means, as defined by the Mi'kmaq, the use of the natural bounty provided by the Creator for the self-support and wellbeing of the individual and the community by achieving adequate standards of community nutrition and economic well-being without jeopardizing the integrity, diversity or productivity of the environment  
(<https://nslegislature.ca/sites/default/files/legc/statutes/environmental%20goals%20and%20climate%20change%20reduction.pdf>)

<sup>11</sup>

<https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/biodiversity/national-biodiversity-strategy/milestone-document.html#toc8>

management decisions that can benefit wildlife and people as it considers a range of human activities, including potential conflicts among different uses, to ensure the diversity of species and ecosystems can persist and thrive. Target 1 addresses “all” areas, recognizing that biodiversity outcomes cannot be achieved through protected and conserved areas alone. Canada has an important role at the global scale to preserve ecosystems of high ecological integrity, including our arctic ecosystems and vast intact forests. Integrating biodiversity into spatial planning will support success on other targets (e.g., 2, 3, 4, 6) and provide an opportunity to further advance Canada’s actions to respect the rights of Indigenous Peoples. It also provides greater certainty to support sustainable use and the development of sustainable economies.

Rights of nature approaches will further these approaches by stressing shared objectives, establishing roles and responsibilities, and creating mechanisms to protect nature through planning, leadership, and improved understandings of nature-centric priorities. Combined with biodiversity-inclusive spatial planning, rights of nature will facilitate place-based dialogues between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities.

This will deepen our shared sense of stewardship for the wide variety of ecological areas across Canada. Participatory, biodiversity-inclusive, spatial planning processes that consider rights of nature and rights of Indigenous communities will enable achievement of all the targets. Target 1 is foundational. With federal leadership, indigenous and settler governments at all levels, in rural and urban areas across Canada, can play an important enabling role.

## **Target 2: Ecosystem restoration**

According to the Milestone document, Canada intends to achieve the 30% restoration target through the following focal activities: developing a restoration blueprint for defining priorities and gaps for restoration, partnerships and collaboration, on-the-ground implementation, addressing knowledge gaps, and preventing ecosystem degradation and facilitating ecosystem restoration.

Rights of nature approaches will achieve these priorities in a way that will create a springboard for restoration efforts by establishing and upholding shared stewardship models for natural systems inside and outside traditional protected areas.

Ecosystem restoration is best done by allowing natural regenerative processes to resume. Given a right to flourish, Nature will restore herself. Humans and wildlife will benefit through provision of “ecosystem services”, or “nature’s benefits”. Of particular importance is to identify more places where successional processes can proceed unimpeded, and above- and below-ground biomass can increase. This protects and enhances the cycling of carbon, nutrients, and water; so important for mitigating and adapting to climate change.

A rights of nature approach can be incorporated into Canada’s commitment to restore 19 million hectares of degraded and deforested landscape by 2030 (the Bonn Challenge), and into existing restoration guidelines for protected areas. This approach can also be integrated in the North American Waterfowl Management Plan to protect waterfowl and their habitats. Exploration of the rights of nature approaches can be funded through stand alone initiatives, or through existing programs like the Habitat Stewardship Program for Species at Risk, the Aquatic Ecosystems Restoration Fund, and the Natural Climate Solutions Fund.

### **Target 3: Protecting 30% of Canada’s Land and Water**

While more resources are required to achieve this objective, there are well-established pathways for Canada to achieve the objective of 30% protection of land and water by 2030.

However, activities both inside and outside protected areas will affect the quality and effectiveness of parks and protected areas in reversing declines in biodiversity. This is where rights of nature approaches can create opportunities. As stated above, a model leadership structure that prioritizes the rights of nature already exists for the Tihaidene Nënë National Park Reserve in the Northwest Territories. Canada’s Biodiversity Strategy should create opportunities for other protected or conservation areas to adopt this mechanism and decision-making structures that uphold the rights of protected rivers, ecosystems, and/or regions.

This approach will advance the Milestones commitment to creating equitably governed protected areas through effective management that integrate principles of ecological connectivity and need for wildlife corridors. Such approaches must be co-developed with Indigenous Peoples, and if done correctly will advance reconciliation and Indigenous leadership, support the implementation of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* and Action Plan, and create opportunities for culturally relevant Indigenous-led conservation and co-management of conservation areas.



The Milestone document indicates that Canada is currently aiming to achieve Target 3 by identifying, establishing, and managing protected and conservation areas. The document also indicates that tools are being developed to “leverage conservation co-benefits of biodiversity and support connectivity.” Rights of nature approaches imbue co-benefits in framing desired outcomes of conservation frameworks and should be part of the toolkit being developed.

According to the Milestone document: “Effective management includes management planning, resource management and restoration activities, monitoring, compliance and enforcement, and reporting. It requires appropriate consideration of western and Indigenous science, only when the latter is authorized by Indigenous Knowledge Holders. It must also consider climate change and ecological connectivity.” Rights of nature approaches are consistent with and would advance effective management approaches that combine western and Indigenous ways of knowing. Management plans and laws that establish Other Effective Area Based Conservation Measures (OECMs), indigenous-led conservation, and ICPAs also represent opportunities for incorporation of rights of nature approaches.

So far in Canada, efforts to recognize the rights of rivers have transcended jurisdictional and cultural boundaries: for instance the declaration of the rights of the Muteshekau Shipu (Magpie River) involved the leadership of the Innu of Equinitsit, local municipalities, and collaboration with non-governmental organizations. Rights of nature approaches can assist and accelerate inter-governmental efforts of Indigenous, federal, provincial, territorial, municipal and other partners to work together in a shared initiative to protect biodiversity. Nature Agreements developed with provinces, in consultation with Indigenous rights holders, could establish opportunities to advance the rights of nature.

Because rights of nature approaches often reflect existing Indigenous laws and cultural frameworks they are also ideally suited to efforts to braid together Western and indigenous science and to uphold the rights of Indigenous Peoples in management and supporting Indigenous-led conservation.

### **Target 9: Sustainable use and management of wild species**

Rights of nature integrates the well-being of humans with healthy wild species populations. The Milestone document indicates the government intends “to co-develop, co-implement, and contribute to robust monitoring and management systems that promote the

customary use of wild species by Indigenous Peoples.” Where appropriate, such management and monitoring systems could adopt culturally appropriate rights of nature approaches to natural resource management - such as the Mi’kmaq concept of *Netukulimk*.<sup>12</sup>

The Milestone document indicates that barriers to achieving this target include:

regulatory gaps (e.g., harvest or take of some wild plants), knowledge gaps, climate change, balancing conservation goals with socio-economic goals of implicated communities, legal barriers, or challenges linked to declining resources and/or accessibility to resources (e.g., declines in availability of wild species for all interested users or limited access to traditional foods/areas with continued habitat degradation or declines in biodiversity).

Rights of nature approaches can assist in overcoming these barriers by centring the responsibility to respect and honour the rights of the living world.

#### **Target 11: Ecosystem services and functions**

Target 11 of the Global Biodiversity Framework is:

“Restore, maintain and enhance nature’s contributions to people, including ecosystem functions and services, such as regulation of air, water, and climate, soil health, pollination and reduction of disease risk, as well as protection from natural hazards and disasters, through nature-based solutions and/or ecosystem-based approaches **for the benefit of all people and nature.**” [*Emphasis added*]

The Milestone document fails to emphasize the benefits to nature itself that this target is meant to achieve. We recommend reviewing existing policies, monitoring and assessment for nature-based solutions and ecosystem based approaches can be implemented to integrate rights of nature.

The Milestone document indicates further activities are needed to achieve this Target, including “factoring the maintenance and enhancement of nature’s resilience and its capacity to provide ecosystem services as a priority into policy, funding, management, and stewardship decisions.” This activity should be prioritized in order to better reflect the benefits to nature of achieving this target.

---

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.uinr.ca/programs/netukulimk/>

## **Target 12: Urban green and blue spaces**

Target 12 of the Global Biodiversity Framework is:

Significantly increase the area and quality, and connectivity of, access to, and benefits from green and blue spaces in urban and densely populated areas sustainably, by mainstreaming the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, and ensure biodiversity-inclusive urban planning, enhancing native biodiversity, ecological connectivity and integrity, and improving human health and well-being and connection to nature, and contributing to inclusive and sustainable urbanization and to the provision of ecosystem functions and services.

The outcome of rights of nature approaches and understandings are in essence “mainstreaming” the importance of biodiversity, and we applaud the objective of creating “nature-positive” policies to support thriving urban ecosystems. In urban areas there is increasing understanding of the importance of biodiversity to human well-being and that this connection to nature is an integral part of the human experience. Urban residents can have a passionate attachment to a small natural area, or even a single tree.

We urge collaboration with municipal, Indigenous, and regional leaders to ensure urban land use planning that integrates rights of nature and makes space for decision-making that reflects this approach. The new National Urban Parks program and the National Program for Ecological Corridors could establish mechanisms for adopting this approach in collaboration with Indigenous and municipal leaders.

## **Target 14: Mainstreaming of biodiversity values**

Rights of nature is both a value and policy framework that will advance Target 14 of the Global Biodiversity Framework as envisioned in the Milestone document. Adopting this approach means rights and responsibilities to protect nature are recognized and upheld through decision-making, planning, and cross-sectoral norms. As the document points out:

Successful implementation of Target 14 in Canada should result in the consistent inclusion of biodiversity considerations and its values into all relevant decision-making. It would be the norm to understand the full impact of decisions and activities on biodiversity, increasing the ability to avoid, minimize, and offset adverse impacts, while supporting positive impacts within and across all levels of government and economic sectors. Applying the appropriate knowledge, legislative mechanisms, policies, and tools can

enable consideration of the multifaceted intrinsic and extrinsic values of nature.

...

Taking biodiversity and its values into account when planning activities and processes that may affect it **is essential to meeting our collective goal to halt and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030**. [*Emphasis added*] Policy decisions around the world continue to underrepresent and underestimate biodiversity's vital social and economic contributions and its intrinsic value. In particular, the cultural, spiritual, physical, and mental well-being of Indigenous Peoples is inherently linked to the state of the lands, waters, ice, plants and animals of their traditional territories. Ensuring meaningful engagement and securing free, prior, and informed consent on matters impacting Indigenous Peoples and their lands and waters contributes to reconciliation. Indigenous science must also be respected and considered in identifying the values attributed to biodiversity. Mainstreaming the consideration of biodiversity in all relevant activities, while ensuring meaningful engagement with Indigenous Peoples, can help to ensure biodiversity is appropriately valued, conserved, and sustainably used.

Target 14 is cross-cutting and has a close and reciprocal relationship with many targets. For example, as biodiversity becomes more comprehensively integrated into major domains of society, more resources, effective management practices, and conservation practices can be supported, thus contributing to several targets. As contributions are made to other targets through research, best management practices, relationship-building, and other undertakings, Canada will be better equipped to ensure the full integration of biodiversity and its multiple values across all levels of government and across all sectors.

We could not agree more!

However, solutions laid out in the Milestone document for achieving Target 14, emphasize almost exclusively using accounting and analytical frameworks to analyze ecological "assets" and biodiversity. While such measurement is important and often well-intentioned, policies and analyses claiming to integrate principles of biodiversity protection and sustainability have proved unsuccessful to confront, much less counteract biodiversity loss. Measurement of the impacts of activities on

biodiversity is insufficient to prevent impacts from occurring. Currently, such tools to measure biodiversity loss are insufficient to confront this problem not because impacts are unknown or unexpected, but rather because nature is not valued by decision makers and in planning.

### **Target 16: Sustainable consumption**

This Target contains the critically important concept of “living in harmony with Mother Earth” that is central to the rights of nature approach. The Milestone document emphasized the importance of transitioning to a circular economy, reducing overconsumption, increasing the re-use and repair of consumer items as means to achieve this target. These concepts are very much aligned with a rights of nature approach where resources are culturally valued and stewarded through responsible management and policy.

Educational programs such as Canada’s draft National Environmental Literacy Framework and Canada’s National Ocean Literacy Strategy provide opportunities to integrate concepts of rights of nature and integrate culturally appropriate understandings that reflect Indigenous Peoples values and laws on sustainability that reflect the importance of honouring natural systems and what they provide for us.

### **Target 22: Inclusion of Indigenous Peoples, women, and youth in decision-making**

Given the importance of the values implicit in rights of nature approaches to many Indigenous cultures and legal frameworks in Canada, the commitment to the central role of Indigenous Peoples in decision-making and co-management and co-development should be thoughtfully developed to recognize rights of nature approaches in planning, consultation, ways of knowing, and policies.

The diversity of Indigenous Peoples and Canada’s provinces and territories means the rights of nature will not be implemented in a one-size-fit-all approach across the country. However, Canada’s Biodiversity Strategy should include consultations that directly address rights of nature in the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (UN Declaration Act), including the review of federal laws and policies to ensure their consistency with the UN Declaration in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples, and implementation of the UN Declaration Act Action Plan (2023-2028).

The Milestone document fails to address the objective in Target 22 for “full protection of environmental human rights defenders.” There have been numerous incidents in Canada where the human rights of land and water defenders has not been upheld.<sup>13</sup> Canada needs to reflect that such conflicts often arises from under-valuing the connection between nature, human well-being and Indigenous rights, and adopt approaches that will ensure such rights violations do not continue. Furthermore, when correctly developed and implemented, rights of nature approaches can serve as a platform to agree on shared values and avoid conflicts in the future.

Sierra Club Canada Foundation supports connecting children and youth with nature through our Wild Child forest school and outdoor education programming. Through Wild Child, we emphasize creating a sense of belonging for everyone in nature, and we provide programming for BIPOC and 2SLGBTQI+ children and youth. This programming reflects our understanding on the connection between ourselves and the natural world, and the need for children and youth to have this need met in their day-to-day lives. In addition to the forae mentioned in the Milestone document, Wild Child and hundreds of other not-for-profit programs across the country would be excellent platforms for integrating youth in decision-making with regard to biodiversity protection.

### **Target 23: Gender equality**

“[T]here is a direct link between natural resource extraction and violence against largely Indigenous women and girls, which serves as an important reminder: violence against the land begets violence against women.

...

The path toward a cleaner, safer and more just world means reconciliation with all women, girls and Mother Nature alike.”<sup>14</sup>

In some Indigenous and other cultural communities in Canada, women and girls play a key role in protecting aspects of the natural environment, such as being responsible for safeguarding and actively protecting healthy and clean water and rivers.

---

13

<https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/g23/139/12/pdf/g2313912.pdf?token=U80zOxLdM3lOfsnYkR&fe=true> (see especially Section G of the Report)

<sup>14</sup> <https://thenarwhal.ca/violence-against-land-begets-violence-against-women/>

Rights of nature approaches would recognize and integrate these gendered aspects of biodiversity protection and gender rights and recognize and support culturally appropriate participation and leadership roles for women and girls.