



For immediate release

**The Government of Canada hits a home run for biodiversity conservation**  
*Now, the Government of Ontario needs to step up to the plate*

**Ontario, February 27, 2018** – A partnership of Indigenous and environmental groups commended the Canadian government for tabling the best federal budget for biodiversity conservation in decades. The budget creates hope that Canada will meet its commitment to protect at least 17 percent of lands and inland waters by 2020.

With the greatest single investment ever made to protect Canada's land, freshwater and oceans, the federal government is walking the talk. It's also following the will of Canadians – 87 percent of whom support the commitment to increase protection from roughly 10.7 percent to 17 percent.

“This money is essential for protecting natural areas identified by Indigenous communities, provinces, territories, municipalities and private land conservancy organizations across Canada,” said Caroline Schultz, Ontario Nature’s Executive Director. “It’s now high time for the Government of Ontario to do its part to protect the places that we all love.”

The federal government will invest \$1.3 billion over 5 years to support biodiversity and protect species at risk. That will include \$500 million to create a new \$1 billion Nature Fund to secure private land, support provincial and territorial species protection efforts, and help build Indigenous capacity to conserve land and species, for our benefit and the benefit of future generations.

“We are the elements governed by natural law and part of and responsible to all of Creation. Our rights flow from this relationship” said Larry McDermott, Plenty Canada’s Executive Director. “This budget has the potential to share our Ways of Knowing through achieving international treaty-based targets for biodiversity and climate change and even more importantly, to restore our relationships with the rest of the web of life.”

All levels of government are responsible for protecting Canada's at-risk wildlife and our country's spectacular natural areas for generations to come. “Every \$1 investment in nature yields a \$6 return,” said Amber Ellis, Earthroots’ Executive Director. “The federal budget presents a historic moment for nature protection in Canada.”

The planet has lost more than half of its wildlife since 1970. “We share the earth with millions of other species and our well-being is interdependent. Let’s hope the Province seizes the opportunity by tabling an environmentally-progressive budget as well,” said Linda Heron, Ontario Rivers Alliance Chair.

“Protected areas are the cornerstone of efforts to conserve the diversity of life. This remarkable moment, if seized, could provide untold benefit to wildlife, ecosystems and all inhabitants of Ontario,” said Alison Howson, Ontario Land Trust Alliance’s Executive Director.

- 30 -



**For more information:**

John Hassell, Ontario Nature: 416-786-2171, [johnh@ontarionature.org](mailto:johnh@ontarionature.org)

Larry McDermott: Plenty Canada, [larryplentycanada@gmail.com](mailto:larryplentycanada@gmail.com)

**Earthroots** is a grassroots conservation organization that protects Ontario's wilderness, wildlife and watersheds through research, education and action. Our dedicated staff and focused campaigns have achieved effective protection of threatened ecosystems for over 30 years on behalf of our 12,000 supporters in the province. [www.earthroots.org](http://www.earthroots.org)

**EcoSpark** is an environmental charity whose mission is to empower communities to take an active role in protecting and sustaining their local environment. We do this by giving people the tools for education, monitoring and influencing positive change. To date, we have directly worked with over 57,000 people from across Southern Ontario in over 20 watersheds. [www.ecospark.ca](http://www.ecospark.ca)

**Ontario Land Trust Alliance** promotes excellence in land conservation. OLTA represents the network of land trusts across Ontario. Land trusts are community based, non-profit organizations primarily focused on protecting significant natural landscapes for future generations. OLTA promotes land conservation by providing professional training and assistance, administering funds to support land securement, promoting organizational excellence and representing the collective voice of land trusts. <https://olta.ca>

**Ontario Nature** protects wild species and wild spaces through conservation, education and public engagement. It connects thousands of individuals and communities with nature through close to 150 conservation groups, and 30,000 members and supporters across the province. [www.ontarionature.org](http://www.ontarionature.org)

**Ontario Rivers Alliance** (ORA) is a Not-for-Profit grassroots organization acting as a voice for several stewardships, associations, individuals and Indigenous peoples that have come together to protect, conserve and restore riverine ecosystems. [www.OntarioRiversAlliance.ca](http://www.OntarioRiversAlliance.ca)

**Plenty Canada** is a registered non-profit organization that facilitates access to and shares resources with Indigenous peoples and other community groups around the world in support of their environmental protection and sustainable development goals. [www.plentycanada.com](http://www.plentycanada.com)

**Save the Oak Ridges Moraine Coalition (STORM)** is focused on protecting the ecological integrity of the Oak Ridges Moraine. Since 1989, STORM has been working at the local and regional levels to ensure that municipalities make good planning decisions to protect its ecological and hydrological functions. [www.stormcoalition.org](http://www.stormcoalition.org)