

ELEVATING RECREATIONAL FISHING TO A NATIONAL PRIORITY

8 MILLION REASONS

A Vision for a Federal Course Correction



INTRODUCTION

A TIME-HONORED PASTIME INTEGRAL TO CULTURAL, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC LIFE IN EVERY REGION OF CANADA

RECREATIONAL fishing is an outdoor heritage tradition enjoyed annually by over 8 million Canadians of all ages, ethnicity and abilities. This time-honored pastime is integral to cultural, social and economic life in every region of Canada billions of dollars of economic activity and tens of thousands of jobs result from the time anglers spend in pursuit of their sport on lakes, streams and coastlines. According to the national Canadian Nature Survey, men and women fishing (over age 18) averaged 27 days a year on the water per person with 21% of the adult population participating in the preceding 12 months.

With close to 7 billion people on the planet every place is impacted in some way by human activity. So how does Canada have such healthy fish and wildlife populations and habitat?

In the early 1900's, with far fewer people in North America, many fish and wildlife populations were in serious decline due to commercialization and unregulated over harvest. A few passionate anglers and hunters recognized the imminent threats and formed the Boone & Crockett Club: the first

major conservation organization. Their vision and initiatives evolved and became the foundation for conservation and environmentally sustainable use of natural resources in Canada and the U.S. Their foresight resulted in the creation of government fish and wildlife management agencies, professional academic training and scientific standards, creel and bag limits with closed seasons enforced by game wardens, public ownership of fish, wildlife, parks and protected areas. **What today is known as the North American Model of Conservation has become the greatest environmental success story in world history.**

With the support of the fishing and hunting industries and like-minded conservation organizations, people who fish, hunt and trap continue to quietly dedicate more millions of volunteer hours and dollars in support of fish and wildlife habitat improvement and restoration efforts than all other groups combined. Many non-game species benefit as well. As government budgets for fish, wildlife and natural resource conservation continue to be cut across Canada, the efforts of anglers, hunters and trappers grow in importance to sustaining the future of our magnificent outdoor

heritage.

However, in the midst of these success stories Canada's federal fisheries management system has continued to fail in meeting the needs of this economy, millions of anglers and the scientific standards of sustainable use fishery management and conservation. Twenty years have passed since the elimination of two key positions in Fisheries and Oceans Canada : Chief, Recreational Fisheries Division and Recreational Fisheries Ombudsman.

Hundreds of millions of dollars from U.S. environmental organizations and supporting foundations have influenced Canada's federal agencies and bureaucrats to establish a clandestine anti-use policy and legislative initiative which directly threatens the future of recreational fishing. The goal is to replace the successful North American Model of Conservation by adopting ill-suited European strategies in the attempt to justify permanently closing vast areas of prime coastal and inland fishing habitat to Canada's recreational anglers - forever.

CSIA envisions the complete overhaul, regeneration and restoration of a national recreational fisheries management system at the two primary federal agencies: Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) and Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC).

The recommendations in this report prioritize nine key areas:

1. Establishing a national Made in Canada policy for recreational fishing.
2. Building the Made In Canada policy on the foundation of the North American Model of Conservation (with 7 components) as the time tested basis for federal recreational fishery policy, legislation, allocation, access and management. (Details in document).
3. Formally declare recreational fishing as a sustainable use priority in all management plans, policy and legislation for all lands and waters under federal jurisdiction. No Net Loss of public access to places to fish in public waters.
4. Allocate federal budgets to benefit recreational fishing in marine and freshwater fisheries in order to achieve the greatest social, cultural, conservation and economic benefit to the people of Canada.
5. Codify a process for a transparent, accountable and fairly balanced stakeholder review of all federal recreational fishery management plans and legislation and / or policy initiatives which will affect recreational fishing, angler access to public waters and lands.
6. Require all aquatic or terrestrial 'protection zoning' proposals (e.g. Marine Protected Areas, Freshwater Protected Areas, etc.) to have independent peer reviewed site specific scientific data proving the need for this management strategy (along with clear objectives), over other options. Require all such proposals to include a 'Sunset Clause' for periodic review and eventual removal of restrictions after objectives are achieved.
7. Establish a fully staffed Recreational Fishing Division at Fisheries and Oceans Canada and Environment and Climate Change Canada, with division heads to hold Assistant Deputy Minister rank. Re-establish DFO Ombudsman position as a liaison to recreational fishing community and industry.
8. Develop Criminal Code legislation and penalties to prevent foreign funding from being used by anyone to influence federal or provincial natural resource agencies, recreational fishing policy, angler access and natural resource use and conservation in Canada.
9. Develop Criminal Code legislation and penalties for any employees of a federal / provincial / territorial natural resource agency who collude or collaborate with foreign funding entities with the purpose of influencing policy or legislation affecting public access to or use of Canada's public waters, lands, fish and wildlife.





POLICY IN REVIEW

WHY WE NEED A MADE IN CANADA
POLICY FOR RECREATIONAL FISHING



VER the past decade, hundreds of millions of dollars from U.S. Environmental Non-Government Organizations (ENGO's) and their supporting foundations have been dedicated to influencing the government of Canada in a sustained clandestine initiative, ostensibly to 'protect habitat' by permanently closing public access to vast regions of prime fishing habitat on public waters and adjacent lands. While no documented threats have been proven to exist and supporting scientific data is absent, anglers are being falsely portrayed as a threat to habitat, fishery conservation and to healthy fish populations.

DFO has been at the fore of developing this Protected Areas plan since 2008, beginning in North West coastal British Columbia with access closures now mapped on 102,000 square km. of coastal and inland waters. According to DFO this plan has also involved formal (undisclosed) agreements with U.S. ENGO's including funding of B.C. provincial government employees to develop and implement the DFO plan.

Fishery management strategies and 'values' from Europe and the U.N. have been adopted by the government of Canada as the justification for establishing these permanent 'no take' networks that ban fishing on Canadian waters. European resource use concepts are not relevant to Canadian ecology or economy and they fall well short of meeting the North American gold medal benchmark of science based natural resource conservation and sustainable use standards. Identifying and managing legitimate challenges in Canadian waters requires fishery professionals to apply time tested natural resource management strategies that have been proven to fit circumstances in Canada.

According to DFO, the B.C. coastal initiative is a process template for the rest of Canada – including zoning of access to coastal waters, inland tributaries, and the Great Lakes.

This initiative has accelerated rapidly since 2016 and by Prime Minister Trudeau's 'Mandate Letter' to the DFO and ECCC Minister's, it now extends to arbitrary percentage access closures in the Great Lakes, Gulf of St. Lawrence and Lake Winnipeg Basin- 5% closures by 2017, 10% by 2020. Recent ENGO submissions to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans recommend 75% permanent 'no take' zones in all protected area designations. **While much of what is being planned is taking place at DFO and ECCC behind closed doors without any public transparency or stakeholder involvement, the evidence is clear that the threat to the future of recreational fishing is real.**

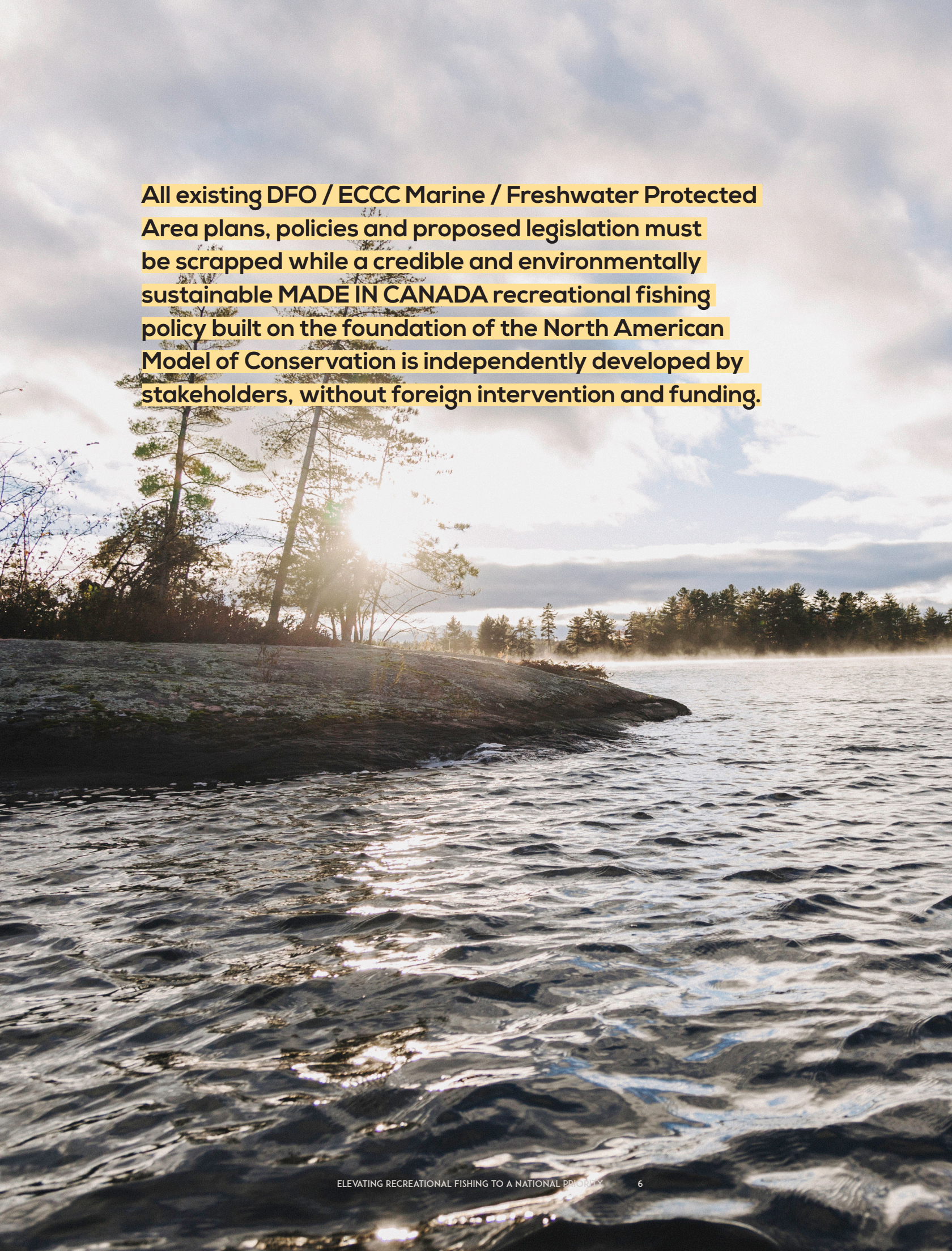
Looking five years down the road, the math around permanent fishing access closures is sobering for people who just want to take their kids fishing.

A recently announced new Marine Protected Area in the Gulf of St. Lawrence bans recreational fishing, in a location rarely visited by anglers. Why would DFO ban recreational fishing where only a few people actually fish? Where are the maps that show what else is being planned in other regions?

All existing DFO / ECCC Marine / Freshwater Protected Area plans, policies and proposed legislation must be scrapped while a credible and environmentally sustainable MADE IN CANADA recreational fishing policy built on the foundation of the North American Model of Conservation is independently developed by stakeholders, without foreign intervention and funding.



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CONSERVATION

THE NORTH AMERICAN MODEL OF CONSERVATION



VER 125 years of leadership by anglers and hunters in developing and funding successful science based fish & wildlife conservation efforts benefiting hundreds of species and their habitat, proves the enormous value of the North American Model of Conservation. People who fish and hunt (with support of related industry) are the backbone for the protection, funding & management of Canadian fish and wildlife resources.

The longest undefended international border in the world between Canada and the United States is of little consequence to fish and wildlife populations on the North American continent. Commonly shared coastal and inland waters and migration routes are but a few examples of why over a century of successful environmentally sustainable resource use management is common doctrine to both countries.

The wealth of healthy and abundant fish and wildlife populations, habitat, parks and protected areas we take for granted in Canada (and the U.S.) did not occur by accident and exist today as a direct result of the application of the components of this Model. No other continent in the world: Europe, South America, Asia, Africa – can claim anything close to this level of diverse abundance of species or healthy aquatic and terrestrial habitat. While some problems and challenges remain with conservation of our natural resources, the solutions for the future are proven to be found within the applied principles which continue to serve Canada so very well.

Simply stated, Canadian natural resource management professionals and scientists at provincial and territorial agencies and academic institutions have successfully applied the seven basic components of this Model for decades. They are:

- **HELD IN THE PUBLIC TRUST** – Fish, wildlife, public waters and lands.
- **A BASIS IN SOUND SCIENCE** – The foundation for all natural resource management, access and harvest regulations, application of policy and environmentally sustainable wise use.
- **DEMOCRATIC RULE OF LAW** – For public access to public lands, waters and sustainable use of fish, wildlife and other natural resources.
- **OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL** – Every citizen has an opportunity, under the law, to hunt and fish in Canada (and the U.S.).
- **USER PAYS FUNDING** – Provincial, territorial, state fish & wildlife agencies / law enforcement funded by fishing & hunting license revenues and related taxes.
- **INTERNATIONAL RESOURCES** – The U.S. and Canada jointly manage fish, wildlife and habitat under various treaties, commissions, enforcement and professional organizations.
- **COMMERCE IN DEAD FISH & WILDLIFE** – Prohibitions, regulation & enforcement.

HAVING OUR VOICES HEARD

FORMALLY DECLARE RECREATIONAL FISHING AS A SUSTAINABLE USE PRIORITY IN ALL MANAGEMENT PLANS, POLICY AND LEGISLATION FOR ALL LANDS AND WATERS UNDER FEDERAL JURISDICTION IN CANADA

OUR marine and freshwater resources are used for many recreational and commercial purposes. In spite of its substantial constituency and major economy, the interests of the recreational fishing community are not considered when critical federal budgets, policy and legislation are decided. Federal policy and legislation is primarily focused on commercial fishing and has not kept pace with the growth, economy and popularity of recreational fishing.

The Prime Minister, Minister of Finance, DFO and ECCC do not give due consideration to the needs of recreational fishing in part because there is no federal directive or precedent to do so. At best, recreational fishing is ignored – at worst, federal direction to arbitrarily ban fishing access is a



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The precedent for a federal declaration on behalf of recreational fishing in Canada is found in actions taken at the White House.

On September 26, 2008 President George W. Bush signed an amendment to the 1995 Executive Order on recreational fishing. This historic amendment ensures that federal agencies must maintain recreational fishing on federal lands and waters, including marine protected areas. Once implemented, this policy will provide access to places where men, women and children can enjoy fishing now and in the future. The Executive Order revises Executive Order 12962 signed in 1995 by President Bill Clinton.

Specifically, the amendment to president Clinton’s Executive Order states “recreational fishing shall be managed as a sustainable activity in national wildlife refuges, national parks, national monuments, national marine sanctuaries, marine protected areas or any other relevant conservation or management area or activity made under any federal authority, consistent with applicable law.”

A similar mandate letter by the Prime Minister to DFO and ECCC could become a substantial positive step and precedent in addressing the deficiencies and existing threats to recreational fishing.

8 MILLION CANADIANS

ALLOCATE FEDERAL BUDGETS TO BENEFIT RECREATIONAL FISHING

8 **MILLION** Canadian anglers generate an annual economy of \$9 billion in support of their passion. More Canadians fish than play golf and hockey – combined. Together with hunting, fishing supports over 100,000 jobs coast to coast to coast. Recreational fishing supports jobs in tourism, transportation, retail goods, boating, vehicle sales, ATV's and snowmobiles. In 2016, 43% of Canadians went boating and supported 75,000 jobs in the \$10 billion marine industry.

The taxes generated on multiple levels as a result of people fishing are substantial, yet the federal government does not consult with CSIA or other stakeholders to allocate any significant funding to improve recreational fishing.

ENGO's who do not pay taxes or employ tens of thousands of people are trying to run anglers off the water. They also pressure the federal government for hundreds of millions of dollars a year, often directed at further restricting or banning angler access to places to fish. The irony is striking.

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A NEED FOR TRANSPARENCY

RESTORING FEDERAL TRANSPARENCY, ACCOUNTABILITY AND FAIRNESS

THE Canadian Sportfishing Industry Association (CSIA) is the only national recreational fishing industry organization in Canada. Representing retailers, manufacturers and sales agencies we work closely with our sister trade organization, The American Sportfishing Association, on issues of mutual interest. Many of the U.S. ENGO's and benefactors which threaten the future of fishing access in Canada are engaged in identical campaigns back home.

However, when DFO and ECCC are developing major policy or legislative initiatives which directly impact the interests of our member businesses and millions of our customers, CSIA is never included. In contrast, the U.S. ENGO's who are aggressively working in direct competition to the interests of Canadian anglers and the sport fishing industry are welcomed as 'stakeholders' at every opportunity by DFO and ECCC. When CSIA

has asked to be included in these discussions, we have been refused and told we may offer comment 'after the fact' on policy matters decided 'in camera' between these federal agencies and ENGO's.

For a decade the clandestine process to map out the plan to permanently ban public access to vast networks of prime fishing habitat on public waters across Canada has continued at DFO and ECCC. Hundreds of millions of U.S. ENGO funds are reportedly involved in some way. The absence of process transparency and accountability which has evolved at both federal agencies over these years has made it increasingly difficult to obtain comprehensive zoning maps and detailed plans. This is completely unacceptable when public access to public resources is being decided.

To find a solution we need to clearly identify what has caused the problem.

Before an accountable, transparent and fairly balanced stakeholder policy process can be established at DFO and ECCC, there must be full disclosure by these agencies of the existing funding, partners, maps and plans involved in the Marine Protected Areas / Freshwater Protected Areas / Spatial Planning and access and use zoning and related initiatives across Canada. However, they have proven to be uncooperative in this regard.

In consideration of the seriousness of these issues, the multiple layers involved and potential overlap between these agencies, and in order to ensure public trust in the outcome, we recommend the Auditor General of Canada and appropriate committees of Parliament initiate a robust and thorough review of these matters. We also recommend a public report of findings and recommendations.

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Instead of science, arbitrary percentages and a 'one size fits all' approach for vast networks of 'protection zones' are now being mandated for Canadian waters – "No take' access closures in coastal B.C. and tributaries, the Great Lakes, Gulf of St. Lawrence and Lake Winnipeg Basin- 5% closures by 2017, 10% by 2020.

MARINE PROTECTED AREAS / FRESHWATER PROTECTED AREAS

DOES ONE PRESCRIPTION FIT EVERY ILL?

WHEN used as intended, Protection zones (e.g. MPA's) are one tool among many which fishery professionals can use to manage aquatic resources. They are established to purportedly protect threatened fish stocks and sensitive habitat within specified boundaries. Site specific scientific data is required to first determine what problems exist, before fishery managers can decide what solution fits best. MPA's span a range of habitats including open ocean, coastal regions, estuaries, Great Lakes and inland tributaries. They also vary widely in purpose, levels of protection, restrictions on human uses and sunset review provisions. **Most MPA's do not ban recreational fishing and they are often removed after the goals for which they were established, are achieved.**

However, U.S. ENGO's have hijacked the intended use of MPA's to suit an entirely different anti-sustainable use agenda based on European 'values' and DFO, ECCC and Prime Minister Trudeau have followed along. Fishery managers are no longer able to use (or not use) MPA's as appropriate to a given circumstance based on the scientific evidence. Instead of science, arbitrary percentages and a 'one size fits all' approach for vast networks of 'protection zones' are now being mandated for Canadian waters – "No take' access closures in coastal B.C. and tributaries, the Great Lakes, Gulf of St. Lawrence and Lake Winnipeg Basin- 5% closures by 2017, 10% by 2020.

Recent ENGO submissions to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans recommend **75% permanent 'no take' zones in all protected area designations.** And the proposed protection zones are massive.

The question which must be asked is, protection from what? From anglers?

Have the provincial, territorial and federal fishery agencies all failed so miserably in their professional duties that the only option left is to permanently ban recreational fishing over tens of thousands of square kilometers of prime fishing habitat in coastal regions and inland lakes, rivers and streams?

Or are we becoming the victims of a well funded manufactured crisis designed by ENGO's to raise millions of dollars for them to save the sky from falling?

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OUR STANCE

ANGLER ACCESS TO MARINE AND FRESHWATER FISHERIES

In keeping with the principles of the North American Model of Conservation, the Canadian Sportfishing Industry Association (CSIA) has developed a Position Statement concerning angler access to marine and freshwater fisheries:

It is a long-standing policy of the federal, provincial and territorial governments to allow anglers (and hunters) public access to public lands and waters for recreational purposes consistent with sound conservation principles. Throughout Canada fish and wildlife is held in common ownership by the government for the benefit of all people. Governments allow sustainable use of sport fish by law, not market pressures, land ownership or special privilege. The public has input into how

these resources are allocated and the democracy of fishing as a responsible use of a public resource is emphasized. In the European Model fish and wildlife were allocated by land ownership and privilege. In North America anyone in good standing can participate. This policy is reflected in the principles of our Crown lands and waters, national and provincial parks and should be reflected in any decision to implement protected areas in public waters – especially no-take areas.

CSIA strongly supports scientifically based management of our marine and freshwater resources. Anglers (and hunters) fund conservation and lead all other groups in efforts to benefit fish and wildlife, including species that are not harvested. They have a long history of making sacrifices for the betterment of the resource. These accommodations

have sometimes included targeted closures where the science has clearly indicated they are the best solutions to protect fish and sensitive habitat. Marine Protected Areas (MPA's) and Freshwater Protected Areas (FPA's) should be just one tool among the options available for effective fisheries management. Because they can be the most draconian strategy to prevent angler access the use of MPA's and FPA's should be considered only after conventional resource management measures have failed.

As with any good fishery management decision, discussions about measures that restrict angler access to public resources must involve an open public process free from all private financial influence, a solid scientific basis, and specific guidelines on implementation and follow up monitoring.

The establishment of any protected area regardless of its level of restrictions should:

- Be based on the best scientific information available,
- Include criteria to assess the conservation benefits of the closed area,
- Establish a timetable for review of the closed area's performance that is consistent with the initial purpose for creating the closure, and remove closure designation once the management goals are achieved,
- Allow for recreational fishing to continue whenever possible,
- Acknowledge and allow for the significant differences between the often severe impacts on habitat and fish populations from some commercial fishing harvest methods compared to the minimal effects from recreational fishing practices.
- Be based on an assessment of the benefits and impacts of the closure, including its size, in relation to other management measures (either alone or in combination with such measures), including the benefits and impacts of limiting access to: users of the area, overall fishing activity, fishery science, and fishery and marine conservation.



POLICY STATEMENT ON MARINE PROTECTED AREAS

MANY of the member agencies have statutory management responsibilities for marine fish and the Association has a long history of assisting with the development of marine policy, regulations, and legislation.

The Association policy regarding Marine Protected Areas (MPA's) is:

- The Association expects a transparent, data-driven and science-based process for establishing MPA's. Clearly defined goals, coordination mechanisms, stakeholder input opportunities, and accountability measures are vital in order to obtain support and appreciation for MPA's from the fishing community.
- When MPA's are being considered, the Association believes that government entities should evaluate opportunities for maintaining sustainably managed fishing opportunities within MPA's. Low impact harvest strategies, like hook and line trolling, do provide fish stock and habitat protection which significantly reduce the necessity of having MPA's closed to all fishing. In addition, the Association believes fishery objectives or stock recovery targets should be established, with concomitant monitoring, so regulated fishing can be reinstated in those instances when it was necessary to close fishing at the outset.
- It is a long-standing policy of governments to allow the use of public lands and waters for purposes consistent with sound conservation. This policy is embedded in the principles of our state and federal managed lands and should be considered in any decision to implement MPA's – especially no-take areas.

In summary, due consideration should be given to the economic, societal, and cultural values derived from the Nation's marine resources during the deliberation on MPA's. Any final determinations should be science based and developed in an open public process. The Association recognizes the important role of fishing, e.g. the recreational angler, in fisheries conservation as both a data source and a key element in funding state fishery conservation efforts.

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State, provincial, and territorial fish and wildlife agencies in North America have safeguarded fish and wildlife for over 100 years. The public entrusts these agencies with primary stewardship over vital wildlife resources. The Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies lends collective voice to its agencies in fulfilment of that responsibility.



LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

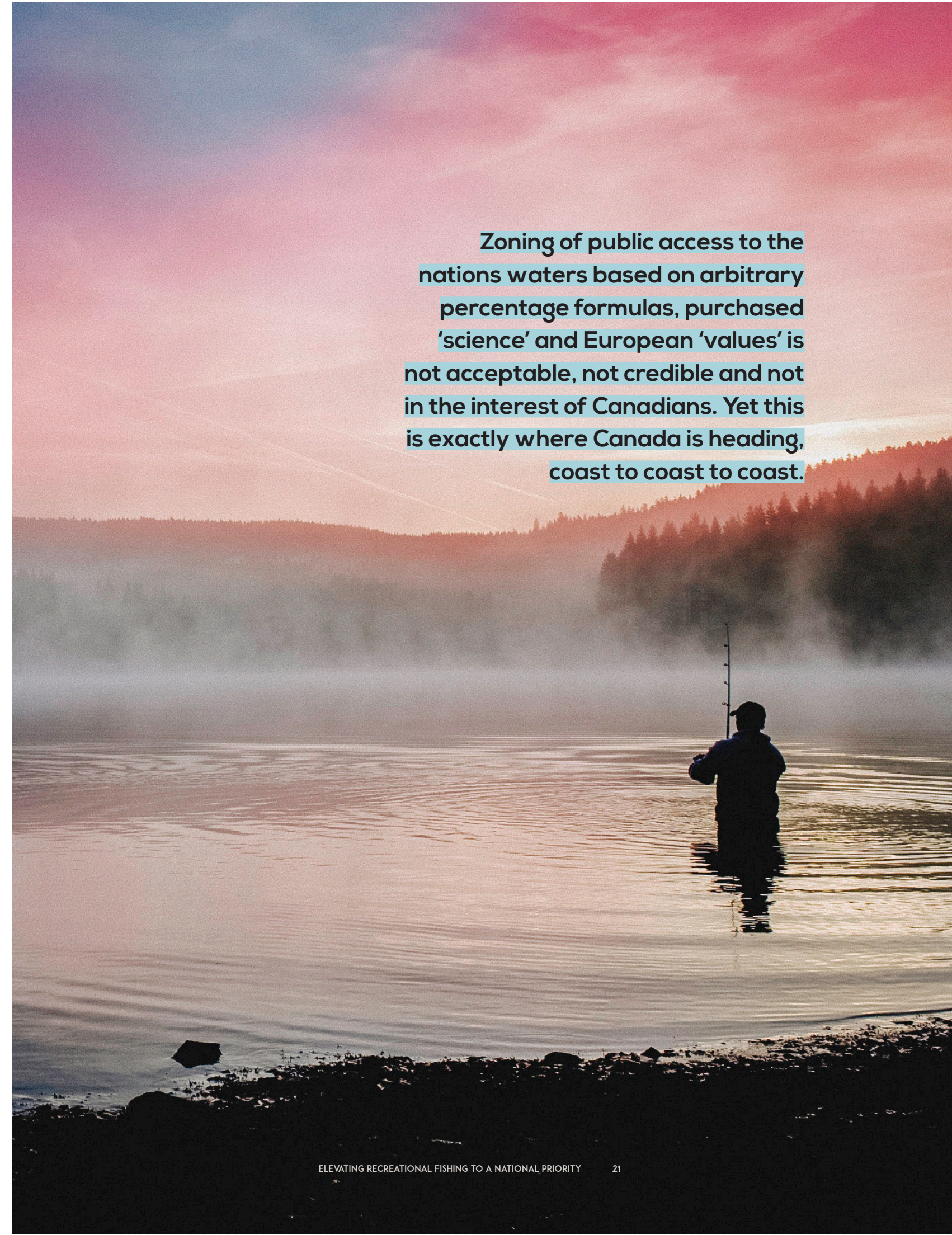
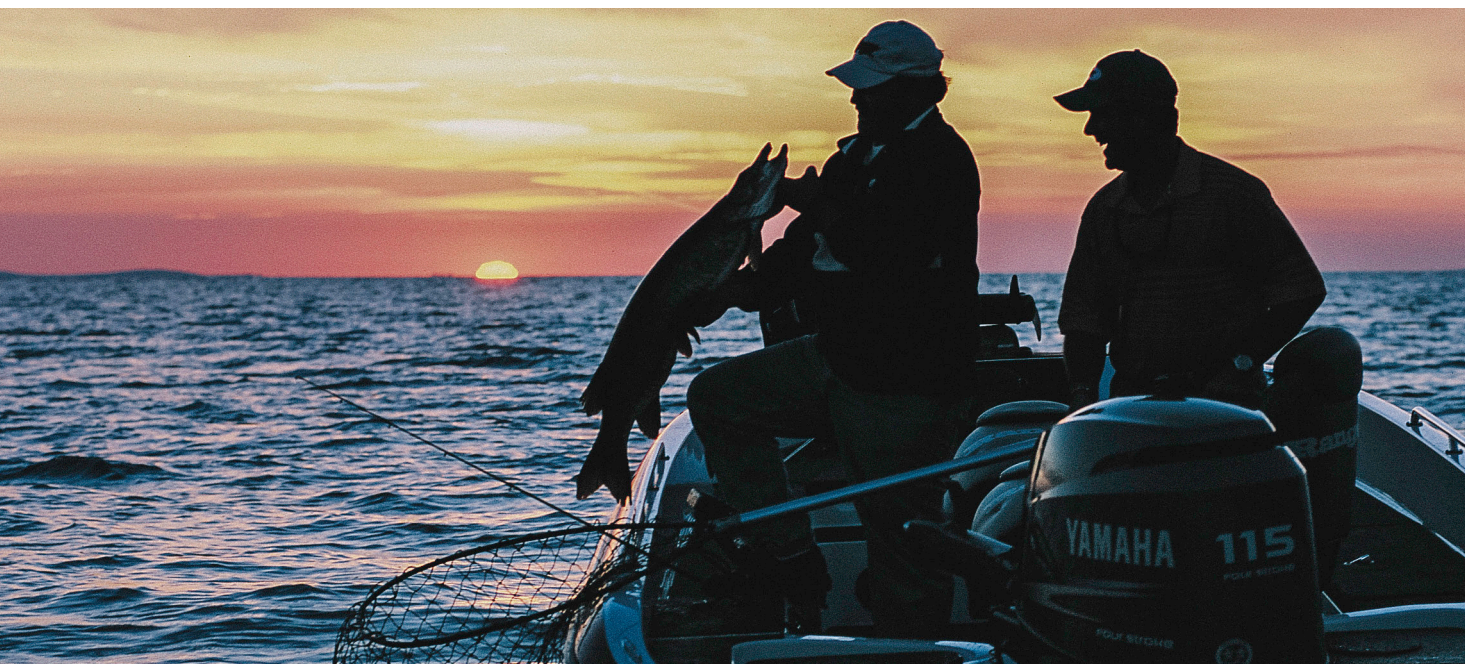
WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

HUNDREDS of millions of dollars from U.S. environmental organizations and supporting foundations have influenced Canada's federal agencies and bureaucrats to establish a clandestine anti-use policy and legislative initiative which directly threatens the future of recreational fishing. The goal is to replace the successful North American Model of Conservation by adopting ill-suited European strategies in the attempt to **justify permanently closing vast areas of prime coastal and inland fishing habitat to Canada's recreational anglers - forever.**

Given the present direction by the government of Canada, U.S. ENGO's and benefactors are deciding the future of angler access to Canada's public waters and lands. This has already occurred in coastal British Columbia and inland tributaries, and this initiative is spreading.

Zoning of public access to the nations waters based on arbitrary percentage formulas, purchased 'science' and European 'values' is not acceptable, not credible and not in the interest of Canadians. Yet this is exactly where Canada is heading, coast to coast to coast. When viewed together with the fact that Canada's federal agencies and fisheries management system has continued to fail in meeting the needs of the recreational fishing economy, millions of anglers and the scientific standards of sustainable use fishery management and conservation – clearly a major federal course correction is required.

The recommendations in this document are only a beginning at elevating recreational fishing to a national priority. Eight million Canadian anglers are counting on it.



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Suite 102, 171A Rink Street, Peterborough, ON CANADA K9J 2J6
Tel 705-745-8433 | Fax 705-750-0542 | TF 877-822-8881
www.csia.ca | www.catchfishing.com | info@catchfishing.com