

Wild Impact

YOU MAKE THIS POSSIBLE

JULY 2025



Good news for spotted owls



Photo: Spotted owl (Jared Hobbs).

Some welcome news for our campaign to protect spotted owls and their old-growth forest home! After nearly two decades of tireless grassroots advocacy and ongoing litigation, **at last the federal government has released the finalized recovery strategy for the near-extirpated spotted owl**, as per the requirements under the federal Species at Risk Act (SARA). We're thrilled to reach this long-awaited milestone — made possible by the power of your unwavering support.

Why does this matter? This strategy identifies over 4,000 square kilometres of forests in the lower mainland of B.C. as critical habitat for the spotted owl — which means these forests must be protected from logging. We joined our allies at Ecojustice and Spóẓem Nation to celebrate this exciting development, after an 18-year delay by the federal government. **But you and I never let up for a moment.**

"I never thought I'd live to see the day — and the spotted owl almost didn't either," said Protected Areas Campaigner Joe Foy. At last count, there were 37 known spotted owls in B.C., one wild-born individual, two owls released from the captive-breeding facility in 2023 and 34 more owls residing in the facility. This recovery strategy aims to restore a stable population of at least 250 mature individuals within 50 years.

You and I know, the fight isn't over. Despite the dire situation of the spotted owl, the B.C. government continues to issue permits for the ongoing logging destruction in the owl's critical habitat. For the spotted owl to survive and recover, logging of this habitat must stop immediately. But for today, let's take a moment to celebrate. **This win is proof that when committed people take action, real change follows.**

Lemay forest saved

You're part of a monumental victory that stopped chainsaws threatening the grand old trees in the Lemay Forest in south Winnipeg! **Your gifts landed directly in the community**, supporting Indigenous ceremony and powerful emotional storytelling about the truth of this forest. In just four months, your impact was massive. On April 14, Premier Wab Kinew announced he would expropriate the Lemay Forest and turn it into a new provincial park.

This win is about so much more than nature. What began as a public push to preserve the forest's pileated woodpecker cavities, grew into a province-wide effort to save old trees like a 237-year-old green ash, protect Indigenous sacred land, and preserve and memorialize a difficult history. The forest is the home of an orphanage — and burial sites — for young mothers and orphans. And the pivotal Métis history of Riel, Ritchot and Lemay.

The fight left a mark on us as we learned together the hard truths about burial sites, residential schools, care for women and children, and immediate termination of Indigenous ceremonies. At stake was a society that held profit over nature and people.

You and I know it's worth it to speak up for nature and community, and **what we win is a better place and a stronger community.** A place where nature is part of the healing fabric needed in our lives. Where we can reflect on past wrongs and build a place of learning and teaching. The spaces we protect can teach us the way and together we'll build a better community for our planet.



Photo: Lemay forest (WC files).

The fight against Bill 5 and beyond



Photo: Stop Bill 5 rally (Zach Baranowski).

Ford's Bill 5 was fast-tracked and passed on June 5 — giving the Ontario government unprecedented power to ram through environmentally sensitive projects and bypass the rule of law. **But you put up a fight proving this battle is far from over.** Hundreds of you rallied with powerful artwork outside Queen's Park to listen to speakers from First Nations communities and opposition parties. Hundreds more spoke out through our letter-writing tool.

While Bill 5 trashes the province's protections for endangered species and tramples Indigenous and democratic rights, **we'll continue to strategize ways to push back because of donors like you.** We've continued working to protect local nature that's at-risk through local events and alongside Indigenous allies and communities, and you've always showed up.

At the first annual "Turtle Trek" on Lake Huron's North Shore, dozens of you gathered with local naturalists, Indigenous elders and water protectors to experience the pristine wetlands and critical Blanding's turtle habitat at risk from a massive rock quarry.

Further east, **the proposed Highway 413 threatens to pollute the Greenbelt** and significant waterways, including some of the last viable habitat for the endangered reidside dace fish. With your support, we held a powerful water ceremony led by an Anishinabek Water-Walker for the Humber River in the Nashville Conservation Reserve.

In Catchacoma Forest, we partnered with Curve Lake First Nation to hold a public hike to protect this significant old-growth ecosystem and wetlands. Fifty of you joined in the event, which included a sacred fire, Indigenous drumming and a water ceremony.

Your gifts allow us to put up momentous fights where they're most needed — on the ground. We'll keep fighting together to force the repeal of the most heinous aspects of the Ontario government's new regime.

Another Bill that couldn't be killed

Funded almost entirely by individual donors like you, we can pivot in response to the government's most egregious and calculated decisions. So when the BC NDP government introduced Bill 15, the Infrastructure Projects Act, like a flock of birds veering mid-flight, we shifted course immediately.

Alongside First Nations, municipal governments and civil liberties groups, **you put us out in front as one of the first environmental organizations to condemn Bill 15** as reckless and dangerous legislation that weakens B.C.'s already fragile environmental review process.

You and I know this story didn't end as we hoped. The BC NDP ignored everyone but themselves and passed Bill 15 by the slimmest possible margin — requiring the unprecedented step where the Speaker of the House casts the tie-breaking vote. Rushed forward in the name of "speeding up economic development", Bill 15 gives the government power to skip environmental assessments and override consultation for major projects like pipelines and mines.

However, there's more to a story than how it ends. **You fought hard sending this simple message to MLAs and key ministers: don't pass this bill.** Over 1,100 of you wrote letters. Hundreds more joined a phone blitz to amplify the message. On the airwaves and social media, in news interviews and videos, we shared information about the threat Bill 15 poses to the lands, waters and wildlife we all cherish. And a high profile press conference, organized with First Nations partners and environmental allies, steps away from the legislature, turned up the pressure.

While we didn't kill the Bill, together, we'll continue to work with everyone we can to fight for thriving ecosystems, healthy biodiversity and a liveable climate.



Photo: Bill 15 press conference (WC files).



Your commitment to protect nature and ensure a wild Canada drives each of our campaigns. Since the Wilderness Committee is funded almost entirely by individual donors like you, your gifts have a huge impact.

QUESTIONS?

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Thank you

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