

August 14, 2018 By [Jon MacNeill](#)

Conservation Council welcomes plan to protect more Crown forest lands, but calls lack of action on herbicide spraying a missed opportunity



A camera trap captures a bull moose as it descends to a forest wetland at Ayers Lake, New Brunswick.

Attention News Editors: Lois Corbett, Executive Director, issued the following statement with respect to today's announcement about changes to Crown forest management in New Brunswick. She is available for interviews.

"The moves announced today to set aside important natural habitat and better protect rivers and streams in our forests is a win for our organization, our partner groups, hunters and fishers, First Nations communities and New Brunswickers who all want to see our natural Acadian forest protected.

Increasing the area of conservation forest by 150,000 hectares is a smart and necessary move. This will be done, by and large, by expanding existing parks and areas of old growth forests, further strengthening these spaces and the important ecological and recreational services they provide, says the review. The important thing to monitor, though, is whether or not those new areas are given equal status in law, like provincial protected areas and parks.

A key part of the new plan also commits the government to aligning forestry practices

with new water protection laws, expected next year. That means we should expect to see wider buffer zones along streams and rivers, and more protection for wetlands in the Crown forests. The report also commits the government to examine the role forest-covered land plays in protecting towns and villages from serious spring flooding. such as this year's devastating flooding along the St. John River.

The review does not include a commitment to phase out herbicide spraying on Crown forest lands, like the government of Quebec did more than 17 years ago, but does promise to broaden public and especially First Nations consultation in the development of the next five-year management plans for large forestry companies.

Quick facts

- 150,000 hectares is roughly the land area equal to seven new Fundy National Parks (@20,700 hectares currently).
- The 2014 forest management plan dramatically slashed conservation forest areas from 30 per cent to 23 per cent, which conservation groups like ours, scientists, wildlife biologists and hunters criticized. Wildlife biologists at the University of New Brunswick say 28 per cent conservation forest area is the minimum threshold required to maintain a healthy forest and healthy wildlife populations in New Brunswick.

To arrange an interview, contact: Jon MacNeill, Communications Director. Office: 458-8747; Cell: 238-3539; Email: jon.macneill@conservationcouncil.ca