

Determining the minimum size of conservation zones within working forest community easements and their contribution to Canada's protected areas goals.

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The Nova Scotia Working Woodlands Trust (NSWWT) was established to fill a void in private woodland conservation in Nova Scotia. NSWWT upholds the long-term stewardship of working forests in Nova Scotia, through ecological forestry and conservation. NSWWT utilizes Working Forest Community Easements under the Community Easements Act to preserve the long-term stewardship legacy of responsible woodland owners. Within each easement agreement, a parcel of land can be broken into three different zoning classifications depending on land use: 1) Residential, 2) Working Forest and 3) Conservation.

Conservation zones within NSWWT easements have the potential to contribute to Canada's conservation goal of conserving 30 percent of its land base by 2030 as Other Effective Area Base Conservation Measures (OECM). To be included in Canada's Protected and Conserved Areas Database an area must be large enough to conserve biodiversity in-situ, an outcome that is broad and intended to be interpreted at a local (provincial) level. NSWWT conducted a literature review to answer the question, what is the minimum size of an area that can conserve biodiversity in-situ in Nova Scotia?

The literature review determined that there was not a blanket minimum area for all properties under consideration and each NSWWT property should be assessed individually. The result is a series of decision keys focused on five high conservation values that standardize the conservation zone assessment process for each participating property.

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