

CANADA BORDER SERVICES AGENCY FOREST, QC

INTENTION MAKES A BIG DIFFERENCE

Photo: Canada Border Services Agency

OTHER EFFECTIVE AREA BASED CONSERVATION MEASURE (OECM)

Purchased by the Federal government in 1977 and inaugurated as its state-of-the-art training facility in 2012, the Rigaud Quebec campus of the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) Training Centre is a busy place. And the campus is also a safe haven for biodiversity.

While border services officers have always played an important role protecting biodiversity through the inspection and interception of food, plants and animals at Canada's borders – and the potential diseases, pests and invasive species they can bring with them – the CBSA wanted to do more. Recognizing the ecological importance of the 8.45 hectare maple grove forest at its Rigaud campus, they decided to explore how to maintain its biodiversity, including whether they could turn the maple grove into a conservation area.

Using the pan-Canadian tools to evaluate the maple grove forest, the CBSA determined that more was needed to ensure biodiversity on the site would remain conserved for the long-term. While legislation and CBSA Policy allowed the CBSA to control activities on the site, there

wasn't anything in place to monitor and manage human activity in the maple grove.

Undaunted, staff increased CBSA signage in the maple grove to let local trail users know what activities were prohibited. They also began monitoring activity on the trails and developed a site management plan. The agency even planned public announcements about the area's conservation status, released through the web and social media, emphasizing their intent to keep the forest intact for biodiversity. With these efforts, the area was officially recognized as an Other Effective area-based Conservation Measure (OECM) in 2022.

Since then, the CBSA has updated their Departmental Sustainable Development Strategy to include the recognition of an OECM at the Rigaud campus and is conducting a three-phase wildlife study at the site. The study, which includes engagement with Indigenous communities, will allow the CBSA to update and improve its management plan to actively promote habitat protection for species at risk found in the maple grove.

HOW DO WE KNOW THAT THE CANADA BORDER SERVICES AGENCY FOREST IS AN OECM?



Does the property have a defined geographical space?

Yes! The boundaries of the maple grove forest at the CBSA training campus are well identified and can be accurately placed on a map.



Is there an effective way of ensuring that biodiversity will continue to be conserved into the future?

Yes! Federal legislation such as the Real Property Act and Impact Assessment Act, as well as Agency plans, commitments and local policies, ensure biodiversity on the site will remain conserved.



Is there an expectation that the biodiversity on the site will be conserved for the long term?

Yes! The site has been used to train border officials for more than 45 years, and efforts by the CBSA clearly demonstrate that the Agency intends to keep the maple grove undeveloped for the long term.



Is biodiversity conservation the primary objective of the area?

No – and that's okay! The property's main purpose is training border services officers and candidates. However, the maple grove isn't used for active training and actions associated with the management plan will ensure that biodiversity in the area remains conserved.

Quick tip

If this answer was "yes" for the Canada Border Service Agency Forest it would likely be assessed as a Protected Area. Both types of areas are important and both achieve biodiversity conservation.



Is biodiversity on the site conserved?

Yes! Through efforts and commitment from the CBSA, forest biodiversity at their Rigaud Quebec training campus is conserved.