

Using Resources from the Canadian Shield

Minerals, water, and forests are three natural resources found on the Canadian Shield. But since the **extraction** and use of these natural resources can cause environmental problems, Canada is working to balance the positive economic growth from these resources with environmental concerns and conservation.

Minerals from the Canadian Shield are valuable exports and help fuel many of the country's industries. Unfortunately, mining can cause great damage to the environments in many ways, including toxic waste materials seeping into nearby ground and water sources, habitat loss, and emissions from processing plants, leading to acid rain.

Rivers on the Canadian Shield are used to produce **hydroelectricity**. In fact, Canada is the largest producer of hydroelectricity in the world! However, hydroelectricity has caused problems due to the creation of dams, reservoirs, and change in river flow. These problems include habitat loss, shoreline erosion, changes in the aquatic food chain, and flooding of land farmed by local Native Americans.

Trees on the Canadian Shield are harvested to make wood and paper products. Environmental groups are concerned about the process of **clearcutting**, which cuts down entire groups of trees at one time and seriously disrupts forest habitats. New trees can be planted, but it takes decades for a forest to reappear. Clearcutting can lead to flooding and eutrophication, a process where nutrient-rich soil from clearcut forests moves into rivers, leading to excessive plant growth and less oxygen for fish.

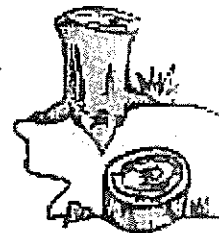
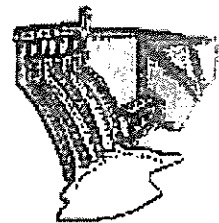
To help solve these problems, the Canadian government is implementing plans to monitor the environment more closely, restore damaged areas, and set aside protected land in parks and reserves.



Vocabulary

extraction: the action of taking out something

hydroelectricity: electricity generated by falling water



Key Concept Check-Point

L6-BRH2

Complete the table with what you have learned about environmental concerns on the Canadian Shield.

Natural Resource	Uses	Environmental Concerns
Minerals		
Water		
Trees		