listen to the land
When people go out on the land, they go to a quiet place.

It’s deserted – it’s great for the mind, it’s relaxing.

Joe Arlooktoo, Kimmirut
When you live in a place all your life and it is very familiar to you and then you go away for a while, you miss it terribly. Then, when you come back, this [katjaqnaaq] is how you feel. It expresses joy in being in a place of great meaning to you.

Olayuk Barnabas, Arctic Bay
Nunavut, “our land”, is defined by its people and places. It is an arctic territory that evokes images of vast space and endless skies, wide tundra plains, ice-capped mountains, lands and seas teeming with wildlife, and rich cultural traditions still practiced today.

“Katjaqnaaq”, as much a feeling as an expression, reveals a depth of emotion and connection to a place of incredible beauty and significance. Uttered as a sigh, it can mean “ah – I am happy here, I am part of something.” As a joyful exclamation, it can mean “oh, what a beautiful place!” However it is used, it evokes connectedness to one’s surroundings and a sense of peace and meaning.

The Parks & Special Places division of the Government of Nunavut is working with Nunavummiut to identify and protect these significant areas as territorial parks and special places, understanding that they mean many things to many people: they are places of escape, places for reflection, places of power, and places that celebrate our cultural and natural heritage.

In the north, the idea of a park or special place is different. It is linked more to utility and being on the land than beauty and aesthetics, which are appreciated in a different way. In Nunavut, special places are prime hunting or fishing spots, good camping sites, places where groups of people gathered in the past, or places of mystical significance.
They are places that provide sustenance – a rich hunting ground where caribou are plentiful, or a raging river thick with plump char; a place where we join with family and community to share the bounty of the land and sea.

They are places of historical significance, marking the path of those who have come before, whose traditions and way of life inform the lives of people today.

They are places where berries carpet the late summer tundra, filling bucket after bucket with their juicy sweetness. Voices carry across the hills as family and friends work together harvesting the luscious crop.

They are places that offer a deep emotional connection to the land, like the treasured spot where a family builds camp each summer. Generations experience the magic and constancy of these treasured spaces as they return from year to year.

They are places where we can experience incredible uninterrupted vistas, the sheer majesty of a glacier, or the feeding ground of northern wildlife as they roam the tundra, foraging for lichen, or make their way to the floe edge in search of fish and seal.

They are places that bring joy to their inhabitants as they bask in the memories of happy times with family and friends, of celebrations, music, and games.

They are places that offer solace, perhaps in the shadow of a rustic cross, marking the place where a loved one rests, as whispers of the past keep company with the ones who remain.
They are places that ease our pain, strengthen our resolve, and nurture our souls.

They are places filled with awe, meaning and attachment. They are places that say “katjaqnaaq” – I am content in this beautiful and special place, I have found peace, I am home.

To understand them, we must experience them.

We must listen to these special places.

We must listen to the land.
I love the land like I love my family, like my own wife or my own children. That’s how close I feel to it because it has food, it has animals that live in it. My ancestors are gone, they’re dead and were buried on the land. My loved ones are buried there.

Davidee Itulu, Kimmirut
THE LAND

Visit an arctic land of incredible natural beauty and infinite space, offering sweeping tundra, winding rivers, soaring mountains, and unmatched vistas.

Stand in the shadow of soaring mountains and sheer rock walls crowned with the pristine white of vast icecaps. Gaze in awe at glaciers stretching icy fingers to the sea, calving icebergs into deep fiords. Sheer cliffs drop five thousand feet to the sea, and waterfalls trace thin lines of white down dark rock faces.

Your heart swells as you head out to Qaummaarviit Territorial Park on a dogsled, feeling the sharp bite of ice on your face, kicked up by the enthusiastic dogs. Visit the park’s ancient Thule sites, soaking up the rich history of travelers and our ancestors who have come before. Listen to the silence of the trail, where the only sound is the chuff of the dogs’ feet on the snow and the sharp pants of their eager breath.

Winter days are short, suffused with shades of blue, pink and violet as the sun disappears behind the horizon. North of the Arctic Circle, at Ovayok Territorial Park, the sun disappears for days around the winter solstice. On clear nights, watch the spectral dance of the aurora borealis, as millions of stars lend their light and the moon sheds a silvery sheen over the snowy landscape.
As spring comes, the darkness shrinks into luminous twilights and then to endless days. Squint against the brilliant spring sun in **Sylvia Grinnell Territorial Park** as you search for the first bright buds of purple saxifrage, blooming like bits of stained glass dropped into the snow. Soil peeks through on the ridges, as the land comes alive with the sights and sounds of spring.

Snow buntings swirl over shrinking drifts, their songs lifting spirits as the spring sun warms the earth, and a Lapland longspur floats on outstretched wings, caroling his territorial song. A cloud of gulls marks the presence of harp seals hunting at the floe edge, all surfacing together; then diving in a swirl of spray. The cries of thousands of birds catch you up in a tornado of sound – gulls, murres, and fulmars – all going about the vigorous business of nesting on the sheer cliff face, and grabbing at the small fish driven to the surface of the water.

Slivers of snowy white against deep blue-green waters, belugas patrol the shoreline, always alert to the threat of orcas. Narwhals rise and fall in unison, long tusks appearing and vanishing as they hunt along the edge of the pack ice.

Follow caribou and wolf tracks through the lush green valley of the **Soper Heritage River**, and flat plains dotted with tundra ponds that provide nesting habitat for waterfowl and shorebirds. Paddle the rushing waters of the **Kazan Heritage River**, near riverbanks bursting into riotous life with the bright rainbow of summer foliage. The yellows of cinquefoil, the pinks of rosemary, the bright magenta of rhododendron and wild sweet pea, and the silky white blooms of arctic cotton dazzle the eye and fill the air with their heady floral scents.
As summer fades and fall advances, berries ripen like jewels on the ground. Celebrate the bounty of the season as you gather these gifts of the land, and enjoy the delicate sweetness of blueberries and arctic cranberries. Night freezes paint the tundra with the rich colours of autumn, as snow geese pass in long lines overhead and caribou don their fall coats, with snowy manes and black stripes along their sides. Listen to the thunder of muskox across a bedrock slope in the Thelon Wildlife Sanctuary – ‘the place where God began’ – long guard hairs flying, their hooves like echoes from the ice age.

All too soon, the tundra turns bronze, and winter’s first snows frost the ridges and high land. The young raptors are flying, and the tundra swans walk their young down to the sea as thin fingers of ice stretch across the surfaces of the tundra ponds.

Finally, winter’s storms lash the seas and the temperature drops. The sea freezes, and land and sea put on their winter robe of snow.

Once again, the land sleeps, full of promise for the future.

... the land sleeps, full of promise for the future.
I have often said that I would like to go back and live in the camp. There, you don’t hear any noise from the community – no motors or generators. When you’re out [on the land], it’s so quiet you can hear any bird that goes by, loons or ducks. It’s all peace and quiet.

David Kunuk, Iqaluit
Nunavut is the land of the Thule and Dorset people, who hunted the bowhead whale, and lived on the rocky shores of a barren land. Snow houses provided shelter in the winter, as they travelled by dogteam in search of sustenance. Using tools hewn from stone, horn, antler and bone, they fed and clothed their families, travelling across land and sea to gather their bounty. Living at the edge of the world, they followed the stars and the weather, depending on their guidance for survival.

Walk the trails of these people who came before, trails marked by the remnants of sod houses, storage caches, and kayak cradles in Iqalugaarjuup Nunanga Territorial Park. Tent rings above the park invite you to sit and reflect on the past, and the ingenuity required to live a life on the land.

A wooden boardwalk takes you past relics of the whaling era at Kekerten Territorial Park in Cumberland Sound, and in Gjoa Haven, the Northwest Passage Trail leads you through the history of Amundsen and the desolation and despair of the Franklin expedition. Trace the route of Hearne, Back and Franklin on the Coppermine River to
Kugluk/Bloody Falls Territorial Park, which marks 4,000 years of history and reminds us of ancient conflicts. And, above the storm tidemark on an arctic shore, you may find a lonely grave, marked with a cairn of stones, with the gift of a soapstone lamp, enamel mug, or rifle, intended for use in the afterlife.

The rich history of the north colours modern Inuit life, as hunters continue their search for caribou and muskox, and for the marine mammals whose skins provide warmth and comfort to their wearers. At outpost camps, bright pink char dry over wooden racks in the hot summer sun. Canvas tents billow in the cool ocean breeze, anchored by rocks gathered by families as they set up their summer homes. Fires are lit for tea and bannock, and the laughter of children rings through the air as they chase each other over the slippery rocks.

Women prepare skins to make kamiit, the slippery-soled boots worn by men and women alike, and sew the caribou parkas that provide the warmth needed for the long days of the hunt. A toddler’s head pops up from the hood of the amautiq, patting his mother’s hair as a grin breaks across his round cheeks.

The carver bends over his stone outside Kimmirut’s Soper House Gallery, watching as his subject reveals itself – perhaps the tail of a mythical sedna or the giant joy of a dancing bear. Threads of colour shine through the dust as the stone is polished to a beautiful gleam, and the carver smiles as his work reaches its completion.

The low beat of the drum echoes across the land as the drum dancers greet your arrival in Kimmirut after a week hiking the Itijjagiaq Trail – the traditional trail through Katannilik Territorial Park,
‘the place of waterfalls’ – welcoming you with the traditional sounds of the arctic landscape. The soft lilt of the *ayaya*, the ancient song sharing the stories of the Inuit, accompany the drums and soothe the listener, as sight and sound combine to provide a rich experience.

People gather as the throat singers begin, facing each other with fierce concentration as they try to outwit each other, rough syllables bouncing back and forth between them. The sounds of sled runners on the sea ice, the cry of the raven, or the whisper of the wind echo through the air as the singers reach low in their throats and create a rich tapestry of sound. They erupt into laughter and the song ends, the crowd breaking into encouraging applause.

The wheeze of the accordion and the whine of the fiddle announce the dance. These traditional instruments were brought to the north by Scottish whalers who entertained themselves with the sounds of home. Inuit have embraced this ancient music and made it their own, celebrating the hunt, or the return of the sun with square dancing and jigging, in community halls and in public spaces.

The evening draws to a close as the last strains of music are heard, tired children are bundled into their parkas, and smiling revelers make their way home.
I want to return again because the Thelon is the purest wilderness I have ever experienced.

The vastness of the land, the absence of other people, the closeness of the wildlife cannot easily be found...

I want to return to soak up more of the beauty and to revel in the sense of freedom and to also deepen my connection with the earth and with my ancient ancestors who once lived their whole lives as we did for two weeks.

A Nunavut visitor
EXPLORE

Visit an arctic land and take advantage of the opportunity to explore rocky outcrops, green valleys and heritage rivers, rushing to meet the sea.

Paddle from the taiga out onto the tundra along the Thelon Heritage River, passing immense esker systems lined with stunted spruce, white sand beaches, and high sandstone cliffs. Round a bend to find yourself paddling beside a herd of caribou darkening the riverbank, cows grunting to their scampering offspring. Awake to find a herd of muskox browsing peacefully beside your camp, and watch as the calves cavort among the stolid adults.

Pass long rows of *inuksuit* used to guide caribou into a place where they could be hunted by kayak, or speared from rock blinds on the hillsides. In the evening, listen to the hush of the land, when the only sound is the river flowing over stony rapids and the tremolo call of the Pacific loon on a nearby lake.

Raft the white water of the Soper Heritage River in early summer, and hike from your camp onto the open tundra. Walk through the summer vegetation that spreads a thin scarf of green over the land. Vertical stitches of sedges in the wetlands, appliqué mats of mountain avens, and the patchwork of lichens on exposed rock create a living tapestry of colour, all hurrying to seed before frost again claims the land.
Shiver at the crash of waves on an arctic shore, and delight in the next day’s twinkling ripples as the bright summer sun dances on the water. Travel by boat to **Mallikjuaq Territorial Park**, a Thule site that embraces the history of a long ago people, as you view artifacts attesting to their way of life.

Camp at **Tamaarvik Territorial Park** in the High Arctic, and look out over the islands and channels of the Arctic archipelago, part of the very fabric of our continent’s history. Trace the travel routes of the Inuit and of European explorers who searched for the Northwest Passage or a route to the North Pole. Feel the chilly breath of the ice, and listen to the groans and squeals of colliding ice floes, and the delicate tinkling of candelied ice. Hike over rocky plains stretching upward to icecaps that blend with the clouds. Listen as the wind whispers through sparse clumps of arctic grasses, and the thin howl of a wolf echoes along the mountain slopes.

Set up camp with your guide beside the floe edge, where the sea ice meets the open ocean, and sit back and wait for the whales to breach. Or watch out for walrus and seal basking on the sea ice. Enjoy a cup of hot tea as you travel by **qamutik** across the frozen land, in search of wildlife feeding at the “line of life”. Don your cross-country skis and feel the crystal vibrations of the spring snow as you carve sweeping curves across rolling hills.

In winter, the seas are transformed into wide plains of ice traversed by huge pressure ridges and spotted with polynyas of open water. Watch in awe from your snowmobile as a mother polar bear shepherds her cubs through the jumbled tidal ice, vanishing
like phantoms as the aurora writhes overhead in the darkening sky. Vigilant guides watch for wildlife encroaching upon your camp, ensuring your safety as they monitor changes in the weather. Revel in the peace of this special place, knowing that you are surrounded by a land like no other.

Nunavut’s territorial parks and special places have been set aside for the enjoyment of Nunavummiut and for visitors who travel to this ancient land. Territorial parks, historic sites, heritage rivers – they are more than simply destinations or special places. They are part of our identity, and need to be experienced, used and celebrated in the context of Nunavut, and in the context of Inuit culture. Their value is immeasurable and far-reaching to their communities, their people and their visitors. The Parks & Special Places division of the Government of Nunavut continues to identify places of significance, so that future generations will have the opportunity to experience and learn from the land.

Come and explore Nunavut’s territorial parks and special places. Listen to the words of your guides, listen to your instincts, and most importantly – listen to the land.
We invite you to come north, to share the beauty of Nunavut,
to listen to the many voices of the land,
and join us as we gaze out
over its splendid magnificence
and exclaim, “Katjaqnaaq!”
TRAVEL

A trip to one of Nunavut’s territorial parks and special places is a trip to a place where history abounds, and a respect for the land and the people is an essential part of the experience. Ancient sites are meant to be undisturbed and artifacts left intact for the next visitor. A healthy respect for the weather and landscape is necessary to ensure your safety and enjoyment of this special place.

GETTING TO A PARK
No roads lead to Nunavut – our territory is accessible only by air and sea. Four main southern airline “hubs” serve Nunavut: Ottawa, Montreal, Winnipeg, and Edmonton/Yellowknife. Flights from Churchill are also available.

Once in Nunavut, parks are accessible to all. Most territorial parks are located near communities, and can be reached by roads or ATV trails from the community. Some (Mallikjuaq, Qaummaarviit and Kekerten) are located on islands, and can be reached by boat in summer and by snowmobile and dogteam in winter. Licensed tourism operators in most communities will be happy to take you to a park, and to provide information on the park and on their culture and way of life.

The Nunavut Parks website (www.nunavutparks.com) provides specific information on all territorial parks, activities, events, and things to consider when visiting.

GENERAL TRAVEL INFORMATION
Nunavut Tourism publishes a yearly Travel Planner, which provides not only practical information on how to access our territory, but also an up-to-date listing of all operators, accommodations, and airlines. Visit www.nunavuttourism.com to request your free guide.
Almost all communities offer modern accommodations, although these may be a bit more rustic than generally expected in the south. Licensed accommodations are listed in the Nunavut Travel Planner, and on the Nunavut Parks website. It's a good idea to make reservations well in advance of your arrival date.

**PRACTICAL INFORMATION**

Nunavut’s territorial parks are not like city parks in the south. Though they may be close to a community, they are also adjacent to a great deal of open wilderness, and subject to some hazards.

Keep in mind that even in mid-summer our waters are constantly only a few degrees away from the frozen state, and be careful along edges of the sea or rivers. Use a life jacket or floater suit in boats on the sea, or follow the instructions of your guide.

Bears (polar bears and grizzlies) can be a problem in any of our parks, and bear safety is a high priority for anyone spending time in a park or on a heritage river. Educate yourself on how to avoid bear problems – start at www.nunavutparks.com; and watch the bear safety videos at the local visitors’ centre or wildlife office before going out on the land. Firearms restrictions apply in all territorial parks. Check the Nunavut Parks website for more information.

It is illegal to disturb any archaeological site, and a federal offense to remove artifacts. Few sites are clearly marked in Nunavut, so if you even suspect it is a site, do not disturb anything. Never camp on a site or use rocks from a tent ring.
# Glossary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Roman Orthography</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Syllabics</th>
<th>Innuinaqtun</th>
<th>French</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>aqsarniit</td>
<td>aurora borealis</td>
<td>ᕧᖅᐅᖅᑐᒻ</td>
<td>ahlait</td>
<td>aurore boréale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>igloo/igluit</td>
<td>snow house/houses</td>
<td>ᐆᒃᒡᐅᓗᒃ/ᐊᖅᒡᐅᓗᒃ</td>
<td>iglu/igluit</td>
<td>igloo/igloos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kamik/kamiit</td>
<td>skin boots</td>
<td>ᕧᐅᖅᒋᐊᒻ ᕧᐅᖅᒋᐊᒻ</td>
<td>kamik/kamiit</td>
<td>bottes faites de peau d’animaux</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>qamutiqi</td>
<td>sled</td>
<td>ᕧᐅᑲᐅᖅ</td>
<td>aliak</td>
<td>traîneau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nanuq</td>
<td>polar bear</td>
<td>ᕧᓐᐅᖅ</td>
<td>nanuq</td>
<td>ours polaire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tuktut</td>
<td>caribou</td>
<td>ᕧᒃᑲᒻ</td>
<td>tuktut</td>
<td>caribou</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>umingmak</td>
<td>muskox</td>
<td>ᕧᒥᒻᒃ</td>
<td>umingmak</td>
<td>bœuf musqué</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tugaalik</td>
<td>narwhal</td>
<td>ᕧᒃᑭᐅᒻ</td>
<td>tugaalik</td>
<td>narval</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>qilalugauq</td>
<td>beluga</td>
<td>ᕧᑭᑭᐅᑲᐅᖅ</td>
<td>qilalugauq</td>
<td>beluga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aupilaktuqnguatu</td>
<td>purple saxifrage</td>
<td>ᕧᐃᐃᐅᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐊᖅᐅᑎᔪᓐᖅᐦᒻᒻᑦ</td>
<td>aupilaktuqnguatu</td>
<td>saxifrage à feuilles opposées</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>qimmiq</td>
<td>Canadian Inuit dog</td>
<td>ᕧᑭᒦᒥᒑᒧᐊᑲᖅ</td>
<td>qimmiq</td>
<td>chien Inuit canadien</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>paurngaq</td>
<td>berry</td>
<td>ᕧᐅᐸᖅ</td>
<td>paurngaq</td>
<td>baie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>qulliq</td>
<td>Inuit stone lamp</td>
<td>ᕧᖅᐅᑭᑲᐅᖅ</td>
<td>qulliq</td>
<td>lampe de pierre Inuit</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

# Photo Credits

Cover photo: Nunavut Parks & Special Places (Katannilik Park)

Photos courtesy of: Nunavut Parks & Special Places, Nunavut Tourism, Mike Beedell, Page Burt, Dr. Ansgar Walk and Fe Wyma

All historical photos courtesy of NWT Archives.

- Fleming/NWT Archives/N-1979-050-0655
- Fleming/NWT Archives/N-1979-050-0467
- Fleming/NWT Archives/N-1979-050-0729
- Wilkinson/NWT Archives/N-1979-051-0172
- Fleming/NWT Archives/N-1979-050-0985
- Fleming/NWT Archives/N-1979-050-0670
- Learmonth/NWT Archives/N-1987-033-0073
- Fleming/NWT Archives/N-1979-050-0357
- Wilkinson/NWT Archives/N-1979-051-1844S
- NWT Dept. of Information/NWT Archives/G-1979-023-2307
- Wilkinson/NWT Archives/N-1979-051-0196
- Wilkinson/NWT Archives/N-1979-051-0167
- Fleming/NWT Archives/N-1979-050-1122
- NWT Dept. of Information/NWT Archives/G-1979-023-1242
- Fleming/NWT Archives/N-1979-050-1193
- Wilkinson/NWT Archives/N-1979-051-0405
- NWT Dept. of Information/NWT Archives/G-1979-023-1451
- Wilkinson/NWT Archives/N-1979-051-1231
- NWT Dept. of Information/NWT Archives/G-1979-023-1792
- Wilkinson/NWT Archives/N-1979-051-0552
listen to the land

Photo: Nunavut Parks & Special Places (Burnside Falls)