We live in a great Territory. Our land supports some of the world’s largest remaining pristine natural ecosystems. It is home to a variety of wildlife – from polar and grizzly bears, muskox and caribou; nesting areas for migrating birds; and waters teeming with fish and other sea life. It is rich in history and beauty; and its untouched landscapes bring people from all over the world for true wilderness experiences.

But our land is much more than a place of diversity, history and attraction. Our natural and cultural heritage and our relationship to the land contribute to our sense of identity and place, and is an important part of who we are. At the same time, Nunavut’s population and economy is growing and is placing new demands on the land. We recognize there is a need to balance development and conservation to ensure this growth does not adversely impact Nunavut’s natural and cultural heritage or our ability to protect places that are important to us.

And we have started. We have established Territorial Parks such as Katannilik in Kimmirut, Iqalugaarjuup Nunanga in Rankin Inlet, and Ovayok in Cambridge Bay; and Conservation Areas such as the Kazan Canadian Heritage River and the Thelon Game Sanctuary near Baker Lake. But there are many other important places that have yet to be identified and protected. They may be sites along the coasts of our oceans where our ancestors lived centuries ago; or rivers and trails that have been used for travel for thousands of years. They may be places where caribou or other wildlife like to feed or raise their young; places where there are unique features on the land; or destination places we want to promote as attractions for tourism. Or, they may simply be our favorite places to camp or collect berries.

They are all ’special places’ that mean something to us, places where we can be happy, and places that we can be proud of.

My department, through Nunavut Parks & Special Places will continue to work with Nunavummiut in identifying and setting these important lands aside. We want to make sure our children and grandchildren will have the opportunity to experience and learn from the land the same way we have. We want to make sure these places continue to be an important part of Nunavut’s future, and we look forward to building a system of parks and special places with you.

Patterk Netser
Minister, Department of Environment
ABOUT THE NUNAVUT LANDSCAPE

PEOPLE & PLACE

For 4,000 years, Inuit and their ancestors have survived in a place that others perceive to be one of the world’s harshest and most desolate environments – the treeless Arctic. In reality, at more than two million square kilometres, Nunavut’s landscape is stunningly varied – vast tundra, wide seas, wild rivers and small, friendly communities.

For Inuit, this Arctic landscape is home, its lands and waters the source of life and tradition. Far from being “inhospitable” or “desolate”, the region provides the plants and animals that give food, shelter, culture, and clothing. The traditional relationship between people and our environment places us as part of the landscape, not apart from it. Nunavut’s landscapes are places that have value and meaning for people – for cultural or archaeological values, as parts of our home or their hunting grounds, favorite places to camp, sites with outstanding landscape features, or places we value for their role in providing habitat for wildlife.

These places are also important parts of our experience on the land. Many value their relationship to the land in the same way we value relationships with other people – the places that are important to us help convey a sense of who we are. Developing an awareness of these places can help build respect for the landscape and its resources; increase our knowledge and understanding of its parts; and foster responsible behaviour and stewardship.

RISKS, CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Nunavut is part of a unique, circumpolar landscape that is almost 30 million km2, including an ocean, multiple seas, glaciers, icecaps, and rivers. It is a landscape shared by people of eight different countries and over 50 different indigenous communities. This Arctic contains vast natural resources including oil, gas, minerals and forests. Despite this wealth, the Arctic has, until recently, remained relatively immune to major development pressures. However, this is gradually changing and the Arctic is increasingly a focus for industrial development.

Nunavut’s landscape is threatened by numerous stresses. From explorers and European whalers in the
sixteenth century, fur trappers in the 1800s, and miners, oilmen and even tourists in the twentieth century, profit-seekers and adventurers have looked to the north leaving threatened or disrupted wildlife populations, loss of habitat, contaminated lands requiring clean-up, overused trails, and damaged archaeological and cultural sites. Today, Nunavut’s population growth, which is more than three times that of the rest of Canada, is placing new demands on the landscape and its resources. Mineral exploration and development is ‘removing’ lands from protection - over 1,000 exploration permits were issued in Nunavut in 2005 and more than 1,500 in 2004 committing more than 400,000 km2 (more than 20% of Nunavut) to development. Nunavut’s landscape is also being altered by rising temperatures, retreating sea ice, and thawing permafrost – changes no one could have predicted even ten years ago.

Inuit have long been stewards of the fragile arctic environment, and the practice of development in balance with environmental protection is enshrined in the new territory’s government and land claim agreement. Accepting the importance of these economic activities, the challenge is how to develop without such effects, and importantly, in a way that respects the importance of protecting the landscape and resource itself, and its inherent worth.

In Canada, the idea of parks and special places is not new. It has been around since Banff National Park was established in the late 1800s, and in Nunavut, since the Thelon Wildlife Sanctuary was first recommended for protection in the 1920s. In parts of the country where expanding economic activity has left few areas untouched, the designation of protected areas is obviously important for environmental and other reasons. However, most of Canada’s north, including Nunavut, remains close to its natural state, which invites important questions regarding parks and special places.

Historically, and not unlike anywhere else in...
North America, the growth of Nunavut’s parks, conservation areas, and other protected areas was driven more by opportunity than design, scenery rather than science, and economy rather than ecology. However, our increased knowledge and understanding of conservation and wildlife, cultural landscapes, tourism, and recreation; combined with the continued recognition of other valid land uses mandates a new approach to parks and special places.

**WHY DO WE NEED PARKS?**

**BENEFITS OF PARKS & SPECIAL PLACES**

Parks and special places in Nunavut, like protected areas anywhere, hold value. Some of the benefits for local communities can be measured as direct benefits from employment, operations, and tourism. Parks Officers, seasonal staff and summer students are hired to help manage, operate and promote parks. Park development and operations requires materials, equipment and other tendered services which provides further benefits to local and territorial companies. Promoting and marketing parks results in more visitors and new or expanded economic opportunities for communities. In experiencing and enjoying our landscape and culture, parks visitors spend money on purchasing local arts and crafts, hiring local guides and tour operators, and taking part in home-stay programs to extend their stays in communities. This is in addition to money spent on airlines and hotel accommodations which provide further benefits to communities and Nunavut.

“It is to our interest that we do develop conservation areas. Of course it is in our interest. It is our land and it is the animals that we have to conserve fully. At the same time there has to be room – without jeopardizing the animal populations of course – that there be economic development opportunities in the conservation area. That is something that we have to govern, because it is in our interest that we don’t deplete animals.”

Jose Kusugak, then President of NTI, 1999

Parks and special places also provide safe and sustainable recreational opportunities - enhanced by conservation officers and visitor services, registration systems and emergency response, and support facilities such as emergency shelters and camping sites which are used by residents and tourists alike.

There are also other indirect benefits that may be more difficult to measure, but are no less important. Parks and special places protect natural and cultural heritage values for everyone to appreciate, learn from, and enjoy. More so than other sectors, parks and parks-related tourism have considerable ability to promote,
strengthen and support Inuit culture, improve quality of life, and develop positive role models. This is because opportunities more closely reflect cultural traditions on the land and are at the community level. As such, they have the potential to stimulate pursuit of traditional activities and Inuit Qaujimaajuqtuq (IQ). By protecting and interpreting these important values and sites, parks encourage a sense of responsible stewardship in both individuals and communities.

Parks and special places are a means for people to protect their natural and cultural heritage, and traditional ways of life. Designating an area a ‘park’ means that it will be protected against unwanted or unplanned development; and safeguards the value for which the area is protected. By planning and managing these places in a way that reflects the traditions and aspirations of local communities, they become important sources of local pride and identity and give visitors and residents alike an increased appreciation of those things that define us as Nunavummiut.

As such, they are valuable educational and heritage appreciation tools which strengthen Inuit culture and help communities express and share their culture proudly. Through collection and documentation of oral histories, development of interpretive displays and park visitor centres, and developing and supporting community based programs, Park programs provide interpretive and educational benefits to communities through summer science camps, visitor centres and signage programs, and for visitors, act as windows to enhanced appreciation of Inuit culture.

NUNAVUT’S TERRITORIAL PARKS & SPECIAL PLACES

Nunavut’s Territorial Parks and other special places can be found throughout the Territory. They vary by landscape and purpose, and include wilderness parks, community parks, historic parks, and other special places.

Wilderness parks such as Katannilik Territorial Park which follows the Soper Valley and the Itijagaq Trail – a 120 kilometre traditional overland trail from Iqaluit to Kimmirut where visitors come and stay for several days to raft or hike. Katannilik is a surprisingly lush and fertile arctic oasis tucked in the middle of the ancient Meta Incognita Peninsula on southern Baffin Island which boasts willows over 3.5m tall; a range of wildlife and birdlife; and a reversing waterfalls which forces a mixture of fresh and salt water.

Community parks such as Sylvia Grinnell Territorial Park in Iqaluit where residents and visitors can camp, fish along the Sylvia Grinnell River or hike to Qaummaarviit Territorial Park (“the place that shines”);
learn from archaeological sites and semi-buried sod houses dating back to the Thule era, look at a variety of plants such as the woodsia fern, one the rarest plants in the country, or watch caribou, arctic fox or 40 species of birds which have been spotted in the area.

Nunavut’s territorial parks also restore and provide a picture of what life looked like in the days of our ancestor’s such as Iqalugaarjuup Nunanga Territorial Park in Rankin Inlet, which is the home of several important archaeological sites with house ruins, tent rings, graves, and other remains of the Thule culture and ruins dating back as far as the Pre-Dorset period from 1000 BC to 500 BC.

Other community parks interpret stories. Ovayok Territorial Park (Cambridge Bay) tells the legend of Ovayok, a giant, who died and became a mountain over time. The park is also home to a very high concentration of birds including nesting peregrine falcons, which make it a destination for bird watchers; and almost 100 species of plants and lichen.

Parks such as Kekerten in Pangnirtung shows us what life was like in a whaling station in 1840 and interprets the relationship between qadlunaat and Inuit. Knowledge of whales, the area, and of arctic survival made the Inuit people essential allies in the arctic commercial whaling industry. Among the many features of the site are the foundations of three storehouses built in 1857 by Scottish whalers, large cast iron pots once used for rendering whale oil, blubber-hauling pins, and the remains of a whaleboat ship.

“To me, the land is very important – it has its purpose and its use. ...You can use everything in the land, and even traveling, to have a sense of belonging by using it ...”

Jonah Oolayou, Voices of Lake Harbour, 1993
Our parks protect areas that we have used for centuries and still use today such as *Kugluk/Bloody Falls Territorial Park* (Kugluktuk), a traditional fishing area along the Coppermine River where thousands of years of human history have taken place. The park contains remnants of the Pre-Dorset and ancestors of the Inuit and Dene and was recognized as a National Historic Site in 1978 for its place in Canadian History.

Nunavut Parks also provide camping facilities at sites in Pangnirtung, Kimmirut, Pond Inlet, Resolute and Baker Lake to encourage extended stays in support of local tourism such as the Uqqurmiut Centre for Arts and Crafts in Pangnirtung or the Jesse Oonark Centre for Arts and Crafts in Baker Lake; or visits to other near by destinations such as Sirmilik National Park in Pond Inlet.

Nunavut’s special places include sites such as the restored *HBC Blubber Station* in Pangnirtung, which is part of the Kekerten Park program and houses recreated whale boats used in that era; and the *Northwest Passage Trail* in Gjoa Haven which tells the story of the quest to find the Northwest Passage, and the search for answers concerning the disappearance of the failed Franklin expedition, and the successful voyage through the passage by Roald Amundsen who spent several years over wintered in Gjoa Haven.

Nunavut Parks also administers and manages the *Canadian Heritage Rivers* program in Nunavut which recognizes rivers across Canada for their outstanding natural heritage, human heritage and recreational values.

The *Soper Heritage River* winds through the tundra-covered hills of Katannilik Park located on southern

“*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. That’s one of the things that is very useful for me.*”

Joe Arlooktoo, Voices of Lake Harbour, 1993
Baffin Island. Its valley, sheltered from harsh winds, supports a “forest” of willows up to 3.6 metres high and a lush profusion of Arctic wildflowers. Caribou, ptarmigan, and Arctic hare, and fish – Arctic char in the river and Greenland cod in Soper Lake – are plentiful. The Inuit have used the river as a vital source of food and travel for thousands of years. Named Kuujuaq (Great River) in Inuktitut, it gets its English name from northern biologist J. Dewey Soper.

The Thelon Heritage River is the largest river in Nunavut flowing into Hudson Bay. This boreal-Arctic oasis supports a rich and unusually diverse northern concentration of wildlife. Its neighbour, the Kazan Heritage River rises near Kasba Lake, close to the northern border of Saskatchewan, then flows northward for 850 km to its mouth at Baker Lake, which in turn drains through Chesterfield Inlet into Hudson Bay. The banks of both the Thelon and Kazan are rich with signs of former occupation, including inukshuk standing sentinel at river crossings, campsites, and caches. The Kazan River also contains a National Historical Site located at the Fall Caribou Crossing because of its importance to the historical survival of the Inuit community.

The nominated section of the Coppermine River winds 450 kilometres northward from the Nunavut boundary to the Arctic Ocean through five of the most dramatic and challenging rapids found on the entire river. Within the Coppermine River Watershed moose, muskox, and caribou roam the tundra landscape, along with wolf, wolverine, grizzly bear, and raptors.

Projects in Development

The Department is also actively working with communities on new parks projects in each of Nunavut’s three regions.

In Coral Harbour, the Department and the community have completed preliminary inventories, and associated conceptual plans for development of Alijivik (Ruin Point), which is on Inuit Owned Lands (IOLs). To further advance this project, discussions between Coral Harbour, the Kivalliq Inuit Association, and the Department must be held concerning use of IOLs for park purposes. The department has also initiated an interpretive program, including signage and publications, for Fossil Creek, a world renowned fossil site outside of Coral Harbour.
Similarly, in Kugaaruk, Nunavut Parks and the community completed preliminary resource assessments and consultations for five potential sites for Park Establishment in the Pelly Bay area which all exhibit the outstanding natural and cultural heritage values of the Kugaaruk and Pelly Bay area.

The Department of Environment has also been working with the community of Hall Beach to develop options for a possible future park and related tourism development based on the relationship between the Inuit and the Fox Main Distant Early Warning (DEW) Line site. An interpretive program and signage have been completed, and there are ongoing discussions between DoE, ED&T, and Heritage Canada regarding the potential nomination of the Dew Line Site as a National Historic Site to further recognize its importance.

The Clyde River area has also long been recognized as a potential park because of the region’s outstanding landscape, its cultural and natural resources and world renowned opportunities for adventure tourism. Based on preliminary inventories and assessments, the recently completed Phase II Feasibility Study recommended the Eglinton, Sam Ford, Clark and Gibbs fjord area for park development. This site is a distinct landscape of high steep-sided mountains covered with glaciers, pinnacles and spires; and the long narrow fiords interconnected by valleys and passes presents a beautiful, exciting, dramatic and dynamic setting that is increasingly used by visitors for hiking, mountain climbing, and other adventure sports. To advance this study, the Department has initiated a Cultural Resource inventory project to better understand the cultural connections with these lands to help guide future planning and development. The Minister, Department of Environment will be reviewing all of this information and the community recommendation.

In each of these projects, in the coming years, Parks will again work with the communities in completing field research and assessments of cultural, wildlife, archaeological and mineral resources to select the most suitable sites for a park and initiate Master and Management Planning, and park development.

**FUTURE PARKS PROJECTS**

Nunavut’s Territorial Parks and Special Places program was originally designed to provide tourism opportunities for local communities. While still a significant goal of the program, Territorial Parks are seen as a way of protecting cultural and natural sites that are important – from increased industrial development, or simply as special places. Tourists, too, are increasingly attracted to
wilderness and adventure travel opportunities and are looking for new options in Nunavut.

The Territorial Parks program is responding to meet these changing expectations. There has also been interest for Parks to identify and explore a number of important sites throughout Nunavut. Napartulik, the ‘fossil forest’ on Axel Heiberg Island is a globally significant resource that is being impacted by visitation, development, and research. The calving grounds of the Beverly Qamminariak caribou have been identified as needing protection. Similarly, the coasts of the Belcher Islands and Sanikiluaq present a very unique marine ecosystem.

**Katannilik Park: A Model for Nunavut Parks**

Like most current Territorial Parks in Nunavut, Katannilik was first identified in a Regional Tourism Strategy for its potential park-related tourism benefits. The significance of this tourism potential, and the special qualities and significant features of the Soper River valley encouraged the Government to undertake a feasibility study to confirm the natural and cultural heritage significance of the area, and

Katannilik Park, the first and largest ‘natural environment park’ within the Territorial Park system, covers over 1,500 sq. km, connecting Iqaluit and Kimmirut along the Itijjagiaq Trail. The rivers, tributaries and streams flowing down the sides of the Soper River Valley, some 110 kilometres of meandering wilderness, give Katannilik its name – “the place of waterfalls”. Known locally as Kuujjuaq, or “big river”, the Soper River was designated a Canadian heritage river for its cultural significance in the lives of Inuit, its natural beauty, and its countless opportunities for tourism and recreation.

Katannilik is a highly significant ecological system that includes unique features not found elsewhere – such as the “meromictic” characteristics of Tasiujajuaq Lake where reversing falls force a mixture of fresh and salt water, and a microclimate five degrees warmer than elsewhere in the area which supports a lush vegetation including arctic willow that grows more than three metres. The park’s vegetation provides extensive habitat for wildlife and birdlife. Caribou are common in the park, as are small mammals such as Arctic hare and Arctic fox. More recently, polar bears have been observed in the park and river valley. Many bird species are also found in the park, including upland and shore species such as ptarmigan and sandpipers; and Gyrfalcons and peregrine falcons which nest along the cliffs.

The park celebrates the long history of Inuit heritage and protects a number of cultural and archaeological sites. Parks-related research, oral histories, and interpretive planning has increased and documented the knowledge base of the park and area, and can be found in the Katannilik Park Visitor Centre in Kimmirut.
tourism opportunities to determine what approaches might be taken to encourage growth of the local economy and create benefits for residents. The results of the feasibility study, which was approved by the community, recommended the creation of both a Territorial Park and designation of the Soper River to the Canadian Heritage River System (CHRS).

With this support, the Government initiated a planning process for Katannilik Park with the Community Tourism Committee, who received and reviewed all comments and concerns throughout the feasibility and planning process. Many elders and residents were interviewed directly; many attended meetings; and many participated in community radio programs. It was important to ensure Kimmirut supported the park, participated in developing its master and management plans, and establishing its operational guidelines. This community-driven process is now the model for community-based joint planning and management approach negotiated in the Territorial Parks IIBA.

The Katannilik Park Master Plan established the park’s goal to provide high quality recreational opportunities while maintaining the natural and cultural resources that underlie its significance. In developing the plan, the Government completed cultural and natural resource inventories and tourism impact studies. As well, the Government compiled oral histories and place name studies of the park area with elders to help guide park planning and interpretation.

For many in Kimmirut, park status for the area was considered a land use that would ensure future uses of the area were compatible with the existing and foreseeable community use of the area. However, there were some who remained concerned that park development would impede their use of and access to the area that they had experienced in the past. The community supported the park, and wanted to continue to be involved in its operations.

Since the approval of the Master Plan, the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement further confirmed Inuit rights would remain regardless of park designation. The Inuit Impact and Benefits Agreement for Territorial Parks, approved in 2002, also ensures these rights will continue
Katannilik Park was a ‘destination park’ - that is, they traveled to Nunavut for the primary purpose of traveling to, and within, the park.

The Government encouraged this growth by organizing “familiarization trips” to promote Katannilik Park to key outfitting and tour companies. The Government and the community cooperated on business development opportunities related to the park, where local companies were able to access development funding. Guide training courses were offered to residents, and tour companies also took on local trainees. A park brochure, Itijjagiaq Trail hiking guide, and a Soper River guide were produced in English and translated in Inuktitut to provide information and route information to tourists and Nunavummiut.

The increase in visitation created substantial economic benefits in Kimmirut. Total economic activity in Kimmirut grew from $115,000 in 1993, the first year of park operations, to over $400,000 four years later. Direct visitor spending for local accommodations, traditional meals, rentals, outfitters and arts and crafts purchases in Kimmirut by park visitors increased from under $50,000 in 1993 to over $280,000 in 1998.

This does not include travel through the Park on the Itijjagiaq Trail in spring and winter, which has enjoyed similar if not greater increases because of the park.

Because of Katannilik’s reputation and its importance as a destination, the park and visitor centre have also helped the growth of Kimmirut’s arts and crafts and cruise ship industries. Through a partnership

Sandy Akavak, *Voices of Lake Harbour*, 1993

“I’ve seen a lot of rocks for the tents, rings, with the stones piled up. We used new ones when we went up because we used to travel by boat, not by foot. Those old ones are quite a ways from the river. You can tell they’re old because of the moss on the rocks. Sometimes you can see the old paths too, from when they were walking along the river, before the caribou came ... like footprints.”
with Kimmirut, the Soper House, which is part of the Park Visitor Centre, has become a community gallery and training centre that showcases local sculpture, jewelry and other arts and crafts for sale. Carving alone has been estimated at over $800,000 annually to the local economy. Katannilik Park is also a highlight of cruise ships through Baffin Island and especially visits to Kimmirut which have increased from none in 1993 to 5 ships and more than 450 visitors in 1998 which represented more than $35,000 in rentals and arts and crafts. In 2005, there were nine cruise ships in Kimmirut, and in 2006, more than twice as many cruise ships will be visiting Nunavut than in 2005.

There are also benefits to Kimmirut from developing and operating the park. Since the master plan was approved, more than $1 million has been spent in construction of operational and visitor facilities (emergency and group shelters, campgrounds, operational facilities, etc). An additional $2 million was spent in planning, constructing, and programming the Kimmirut Park Visitor Centre. The Park also employs a number of permanent and seasonal staff to assist in park operations, visitor centre management and park registration, and coordinate summer science camps for students, and cruise ship activities. These positions provide direct benefit to Kimmirut and importantly, create land-based jobs that are closely linked to traditional values and activities.

But the benefits from Katannilik Park are not limited to just economic impacts. There are conservation benefits arising from the protection of a highly significant ecological system. In addition, the park plays an important role in encouraging a greater sense of identity and community pride. The cultural history of the Inuit of Kimmirut is an important focus for visitor interest, and Kimmirut residents have an opportunity to contribute to the community image portrayed.

Katannilik Park has benefited from a great deal of good, strong cooperative efforts and is an example of how territorial parks are developed in Nunavut. It shows how successful parks can be when they are developed in partnership with communities, and with ongoing community support and involvement.
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