

Wild Spaces

Protected Places



A Protected Areas Strategy for the Yukon



Compliments of:
Yukon Protected Areas Secretariat (R-4C)
Department of Renewable Resources
Government of Yukon
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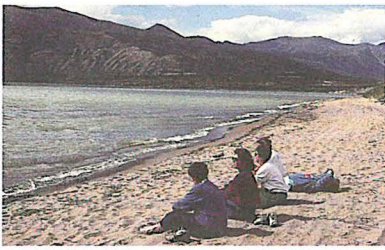
A Protected Areas Strategy for the Yukon

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How Yukon people participated in creating this strategy

The Yukon Protected Areas Strategy is built on ideas contributed by a broad range of Yukon people. Public participation began when the first protected areas workshop was held in May 1997. Yukon citizens continued to provide suggestions and ideas by commenting on the Discussion Paper published in the fall of 1997, and by participating in the open house gatherings held in most Yukon communities that winter. Many people also responded to the draft Protected Areas Strategy released in July 1998.

Public Advisory Committee

A Public Advisory Committee set up in September 1997 played a key role in developing this strategy and ensuring public input. The following organizations participated on the Advisory Committee and contributed considerable time, effort and heart to this project.

Alsek Renewable Resources Council
Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society
Klondike Placer Miners Association
Mayo District Renewable Resources Council
Teslin Renewable Resources Council
Vuntut Gwitchin Renewable Resources Council
Yukon Agricultural Association
Yukon Chamber of Commerce
Yukon Chamber of Mines
Yukon Conservation Society
Yukon Fish and Game Association
Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board
Yukon forest industry
Yukon Land Use Planning Council
Yukon Outfitters Association
Yukon Tourism Industry Association
Yukon Trappers Association

Public participation has helped create a Protected Areas Strategy that reflects the values and concerns of Yukon people. In many ways, however, this publication only marks the beginning of community involvement. Continued public participation is the key to implementing this strategy and setting up a network of protected areas in the Yukon.

Technical Papers

The Yukon Protected Areas Strategy is made up of this document and seven Technical Papers:

- No. 1: Roles and Responsibilities for Implementation;
- No. 2: Types of Protected Areas and Criteria for Selection;
- No. 3: Planning and Establishing Protected Areas;
- No. 4: Protected Areas and Yukon First Nation Final Agreements;
- No. 5: Socio-economic Assessments of Protected Areas;
- No. 6: Interim Protection and Third-Party Interests; and
- No. 7: Reviewing and Updating the Strategy.

Work Plan

Implementation details can be found in the Protected Areas Strategy Work Plan, which is updated annually. The current Work Plan is available on request.

Copies of this publication, the Technical Papers and the Work Plan can be obtained by contacting your local Renewable Resources office or:

Government of the Yukon,

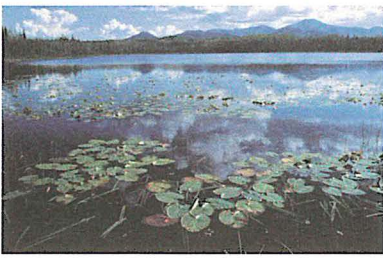
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For more information about the Yukon Department of Renewable Resources visit our website: www.renres.gov.yk.ca



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The Yukon Protected Areas Strategy

Wilderness and wildlife. Few things are valued as highly by Yukon people as the wilderness environment and wildlife around us. We gaze at the mountains, rivers and forests at our doorsteps every day. We look for wildlife along the roadside whenever we travel, whether it's from Mayo to Dawson or from home to work in the morning. We spend much of our free time poking around in the bush. And many of us live and work in the wilderness, seeing ourselves as part of nature.

The Yukon still has vast wilderness areas where nature is largely undisturbed. But we are not immune from the gradual loss of ecosystems, biodiversity and wilderness that is taking place around the world.

How can we best care for the natural legacy we share? By preserving the relationships between life forms and the ecological processes that make up what we call nature. By ensuring that future generations will always have places where nature's master plan remains intact.

Can we take care of ecosystems on all Yukon lands and waters? Yes. First, we can protect part of each of the 23 different ecoregions that scientists have identified in the territory. Second, we can protect the special places — the places wildlife need to survive, the places that lift our spirits. And third, we can use the principles of ecosystem management to conserve natural processes on other lands and



Lapie Lake, Pelly Mountains Ecoregion, Traditional Territory of Kaska Dena

Vision Statement

Our shared relationship with the northern land, water, air and life forms defines our character, sustains our spirits and unites us as people of the Yukon.

We have a duty to protect the ecosystems and natural processes that support this relationship.

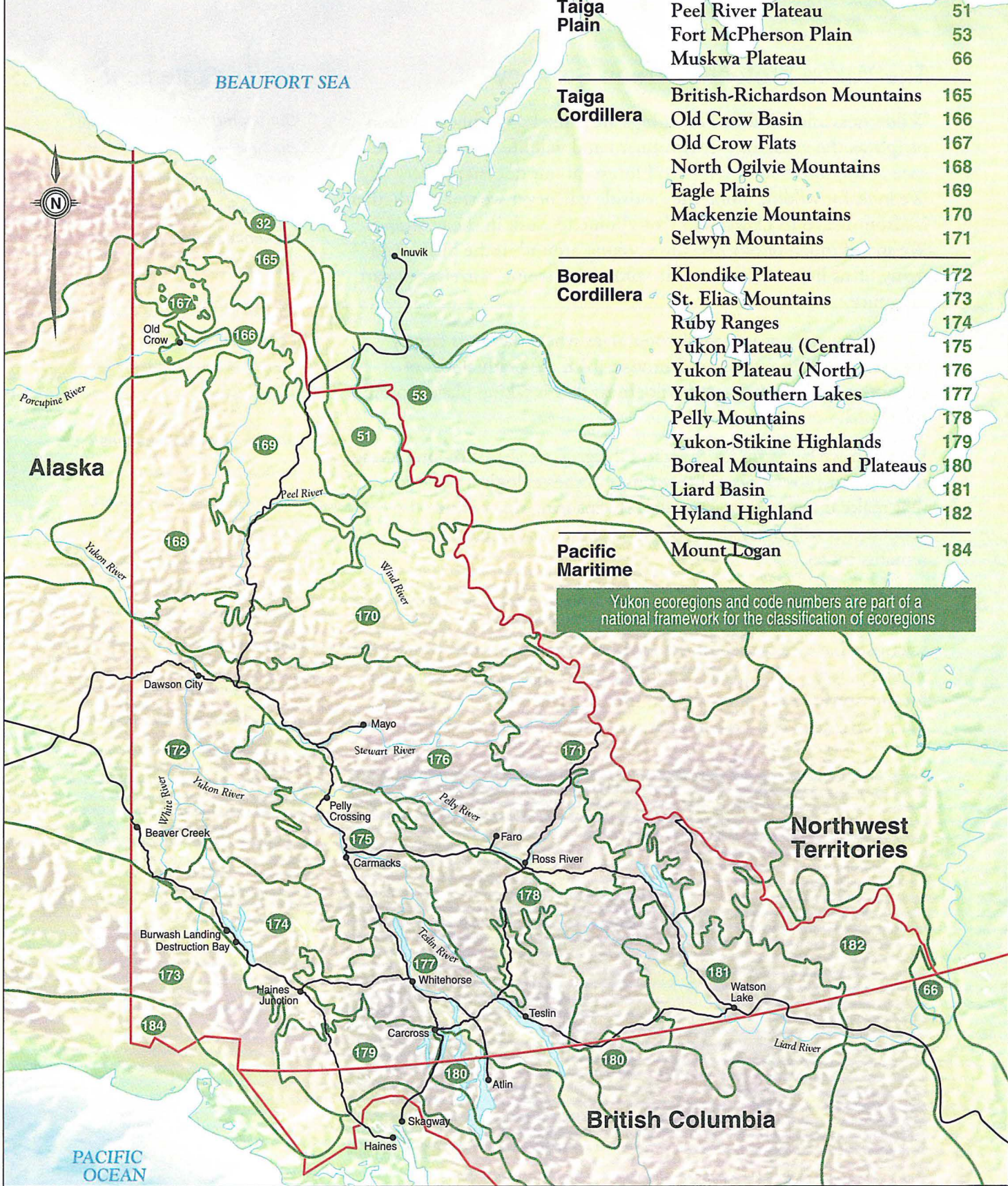
We will meet this responsibility for the benefit of ourselves and our children, and also for the benefit of other life forms and the earth as a whole — for biodiversity and the intrinsic value of wilderness.

We will use the Yukon Protected Areas Strategy to guide us as we set up a network of protected areas based on ecosystem management, conservation biology, sustainable economies, and the values and knowledge of Yukon people.

Ecoregions of the Yukon

| ECOZONE | ECOREGION | CODE | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------|-----|
| Southern Arctic | Yukon Coastal Plain | 32 | |
| | Taiga Plain | Peel River Plateau | 51 |
| | | Fort McPherson Plain | 53 |
| Muskwa Plateau | | 66 | |
| Taiga Cordillera | British-Richardson Mountains | 165 | |
| | Old Crow Basin | 166 | |
| | Old Crow Flats | 167 | |
| | North Ogilvie Mountains | 168 | |
| | Eagle Plains | 169 | |
| | Mackenzie Mountains | 170 | |
| | Selwyn Mountains | 171 | |
| | Boreal Cordillera | Klondike Plateau | 172 |
| St. Elias Mountains | | 173 | |
| Ruby Ranges | | 174 | |
| Yukon Plateau (Central) | | 175 | |
| Yukon Plateau (North) | | 176 | |
| Yukon Southern Lakes | | 177 | |
| Pelly Mountains | | 178 | |
| Yukon-Stikine Highlands | | 179 | |
| Boreal Mountains and Plateaus | | 180 | |
| Liard Basin | | 181 | |
| Hyland Highland | 182 | | |
| Pacific Maritime | Mount Logan | 184 | |

Yukon ecoregions and code numbers are part of a national framework for the classification of ecoregions



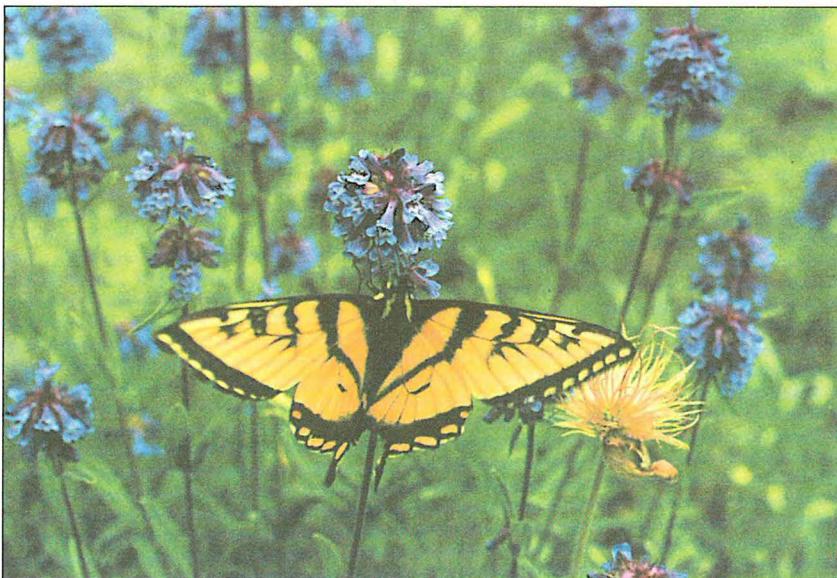
waters. We can do all of this while respecting economic interests and the many Yukon families whose livelihoods depend upon resource industries.

In this way, the Protected Areas Strategy will help provide a future with healthy ecosystems as well as certainty for new and emerging economic activity.

Our first goal: to protect representative core areas within each ecoregion

Each of the Yukon's 23 ecoregions is made up of a unique combination of natural features and living resources. For example, the Liard Basin ecoregion is a low-lying, heavily-forested area with important wetlands and large numbers of moose. The Selwyn Mountains ecoregion, on the other hand, is an area of rugged mountains and alpine tundra with thin forests on the valley bottoms. Sheep and caribou are more common in this ecoregion, and there are few significant wetlands.

By protecting representative core areas within each ecoregion, we can help ensure that the natural variety of life forms in the Yukon, with their unique habitat requirements, will always have places to live. It's called maintaining biodiversity. And it's one of the most important contributions we can make to our descendants and our planet.



Tiger swallowtail, Whitehorse, Yukon Southern Lakes Ecoregion, Traditional Territory of Kwanlin Dun First Nation and Ta'an Kwach'an First Nation.

Ecosystems

Ecosystems can vary in size, from the relationships among life forms on the entire planet, to the relationships among life forms in a single drop of water.

To help maintain biodiversity in our part of the world, the Yukon network of protected areas will:

- *represent the full range of terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems in the Yukon;*
- *sustain the natural functioning of these ecosystems;*
- *protect the needs of different species throughout their ranges; and*
- *set aside wilderness areas as a legacy for the future.*

The inherent value of wilderness areas will continue to rise as natural ecosystems worldwide become increasingly rare.

In this strategy:

- **biodiversity** means the variety of species and ecosystems on Earth and the ecological processes of which they are a part (Canadian Biodiversity Strategy);
- **protected** means carefully managed to conserve natural and cultural values;
- **core protected area** means an area selected to represent the range of ecosystem types that are present in the ecoregion; and
- **value** means an important quality or principle.

Criteria for selection of Goal 1 areas

Four criteria will be used to select core protected areas.

- **Representativeness:** Core protected areas should attempt to capture the full range of ecosystem types that are present in the ecoregion. In some cases, core areas will be shaped by the need to represent large-scale wilderness ecosystems.
- **Naturalness:** Core areas should be in a largely natural state with few human-caused disturbances.
- **Ecological viability:** Core areas should be able to sustain the natural functioning and evolution of ecosystems on a long-term scale.
- **Research and education values:** Core protected areas should be able to serve as benchmarks for studying and comparing natural processes.



Woodland caribou, Pleasant Creek, Yukon Plateau (North) Ecoregion, Traditional Territory of Nacho Nyak Dun First Nation.

Level of protection

To preserve biodiversity and ecological integrity, core areas will be afforded a high level of legislative protection. Developments such as townsites, mining, logging, hydro-electric projects, agriculture, and oil and gas surface work will not be permitted in core protected areas established under this goal.

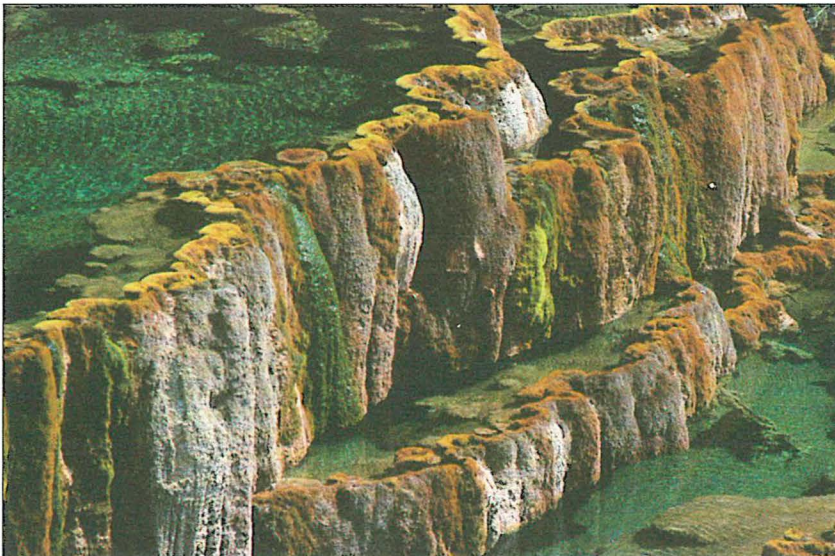
Process

The Yukon government will work in partnership with other governments, boards and councils, non-government groups and the public to create core protected areas within each ecoregion. The steps that will be followed are described on pages 19–24.

Our second goal: to protect the special places

Our second goal is to protect special places including:

- sites with important wildlife and habitat values such as calving areas, wetlands and migration routes;
- uncommon landforms or features such as sand dunes, hot springs, or fossil sites;
- areas of special cultural value such as heritage sites and sacred places;
- areas of special value for outdoor recreation; and
- wilderness areas with intact ecosystems.



Coal River Springs Ecological Reserve, Liard Basin Ecoregion, Traditional Territory of Kaska Dena.

A coordinating tool for the protection of special places.

The first priority of the Protected Areas Strategy is to protect representative core areas within the ecoregions. The second priority is to provide a coordinating tool for the protection of special places, relying on existing designations such as Heritage Rivers, Ecological Reserves, National Parks, Historic Sites and Habitat Protection Areas, to name a few.

Special places protected under Goal 2 are set up through their own processes, which are described in Technical Paper No. 2. This strategy will not replace those processes. It will, however, improve coordination through the work of the Protected Areas Secretariat and the Local Planning Teams.

In this strategy:

• **ecosystem management**

means managing human activities to keep natural processes intact. It means stepping back, from the narrow approach of managing for a single species, to the broader approach of managing for the natural system of which the species is one part;

• **wilderness** means any area of the Yukon in a largely natural condition in which ecosystem processes are largely unaltered by human activity or in which human activity has been limited to developments or activities that do not significantly modify the environment, and includes an area restored to a largely natural condition (Yukon Environment Act); and

• **ecological integrity** means the unimpaired condition of natural processes and relationships.

Protected areas set up under Goal 2 can also contribute to the Goal 1 objective of protecting biodiversity and ecological integrity.

A variety of government agencies are responsible for protecting the different types of special places. Historic sites, for example, are set up by the Yukon Department of Tourism and the federal Department of Canadian Heritage.

This strategy will promote cooperation between the Yukon, federal, First Nation and community governments involved in protecting special places. It will do this by coordinating work plans and encouraging partnerships.

Criteria for selection of Goal 2 areas

Different types of special places are selected by using different sets of criteria. Areas with special wildlife and habitat values, for example, are chosen by looking at criteria such as the concentration and diversity of species and the productivity of the habitat. Complete descriptions of the criteria used to select special places are provided in Technical Paper No. 2.

Level of protection

The level of protection in Goal 2 protected areas will vary, depending on the objectives of the area. Protection levels will be determined through publicly developed management plans which will consider conservation needs as well as compatible activities and sustainable resource management practices.



Klukshu River, Ruby Ranges Ecoregion, Traditional Territory of Champagne and Aishihik First Nations.

Process

The processes used to create Goal 2 protected areas will also vary. Some types of special places may be set up through the steps laid out on pages 19–24. Other types of special places, such as Habitat Protection Areas aimed at conserving wildlife values, may be set up through their own processes. Brief descriptions of the processes used to set up different types of special places are provided in Technical Paper No. 2.

Conserving ecosystems on managed lands and waters

On most lands and waters, terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems will be cared for through good management rather than outright protection.

Land use laws and environmental assessment procedures provide the management tools outside of designated protected areas. When a company applies for a land use permit to do something on Crown land, government can attach conditions to the permit to limit any damage to natural processes.

How much land should be set aside in designated protected areas?

The Protected Areas Strategy does not set an upper or lower limit on the amount of land to be protected because there is no scientific basis for setting such arbitrary limits. Rather than aiming at a certain percentage of protection, the general approach is to protect the lands required to meet the goals of the strategy.



Tombstone Mountain, Mackenzie Mountains Ecoregion, Traditional Territory of Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation (proposed Territorial Park).

Core areas, buffers and corridors

Core protected areas are areas set aside to represent ecoregions under Goal 1. Most types of development activities will be excluded from these areas.

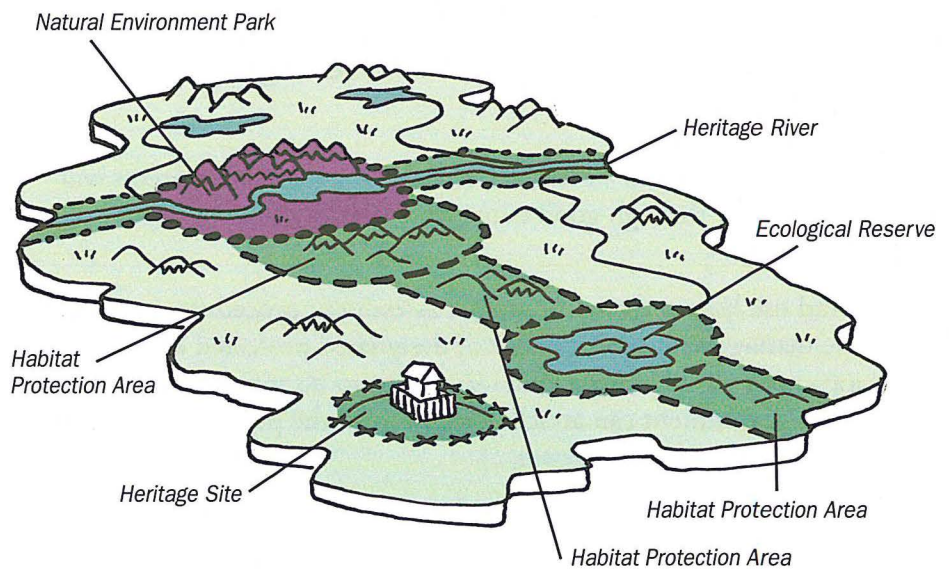
Buffer areas are the lands around core protected areas. Corridors are the migration routes and other habitat links which support the natural movements of species.

In many cases, natural processes in buffer areas and corridors will be cared for through existing land use regulations and the principles of ecosystem management.

In some cases, however, natural values located in buffer areas or corridors may be so important that they need to be cared for by establishing protected areas where land uses can be controlled through management plans.

Government will make best efforts to ensure that the conditions attached to land use permits reflect the principles of ecosystem management and sustainable development. This will be particularly important when permits are issued for land uses bordering on

Three levels of protection



Goal 1 protected areas: Representative core areas that contribute to the protection of biodiversity and ecological integrity will receive the highest level of protection through legislation. Developments such as townsites, mining, logging, hydro-electric projects, agriculture and oil and gas surface work will not be permitted in these areas.

Goal 2 protected areas: Special places will have varying levels of protection. Protection levels will be determined through publicly developed management plans, which will consider conservation needs as well as compatible activities and sustainable resource management practices.

Managed lands: Development activities taking place on other lands will be managed through existing land-use laws, environmental assessment procedures and the ecosystem management approach. Lands bordering on protected areas will be managed carefully to ensure the natural values being protected are not compromised.

Note: This illustration is included only as an aid to understanding basic concepts. The size and number of protected areas shown here should not be interpreted as a reflection of government policy.

designated protected areas, to ensure that the natural values being protected are not compromised. To help achieve this goal, management plans for protected areas may recommend guidelines for managing adjacent lands. This would provide greater certainty for industry as well as clear linkages between protected areas and nearby lands.

New laws may help

Land management rules in the Yukon are being changed and improved to bring them up to date and to implement First Nation Final Agreements. New mining land use regulations are coming into force as this strategy is being completed. And the made-in-Yukon Development Assessment Process is expected to be in place by 2000. The Yukon government will monitor the results of these changes to see how successful they are at helping to conserve ecosystems and supporting the goals of this strategy.

Guiding principles of the Protected Areas Strategy

Nine main principles will guide the creation of protected areas.

Ecological Integrity

Core protected areas will be shaped by the need to safeguard biodiversity and important ecological processes.



Beaver River, Hyland Highland Ecoregion, Traditional Territory of Kaska Dena.

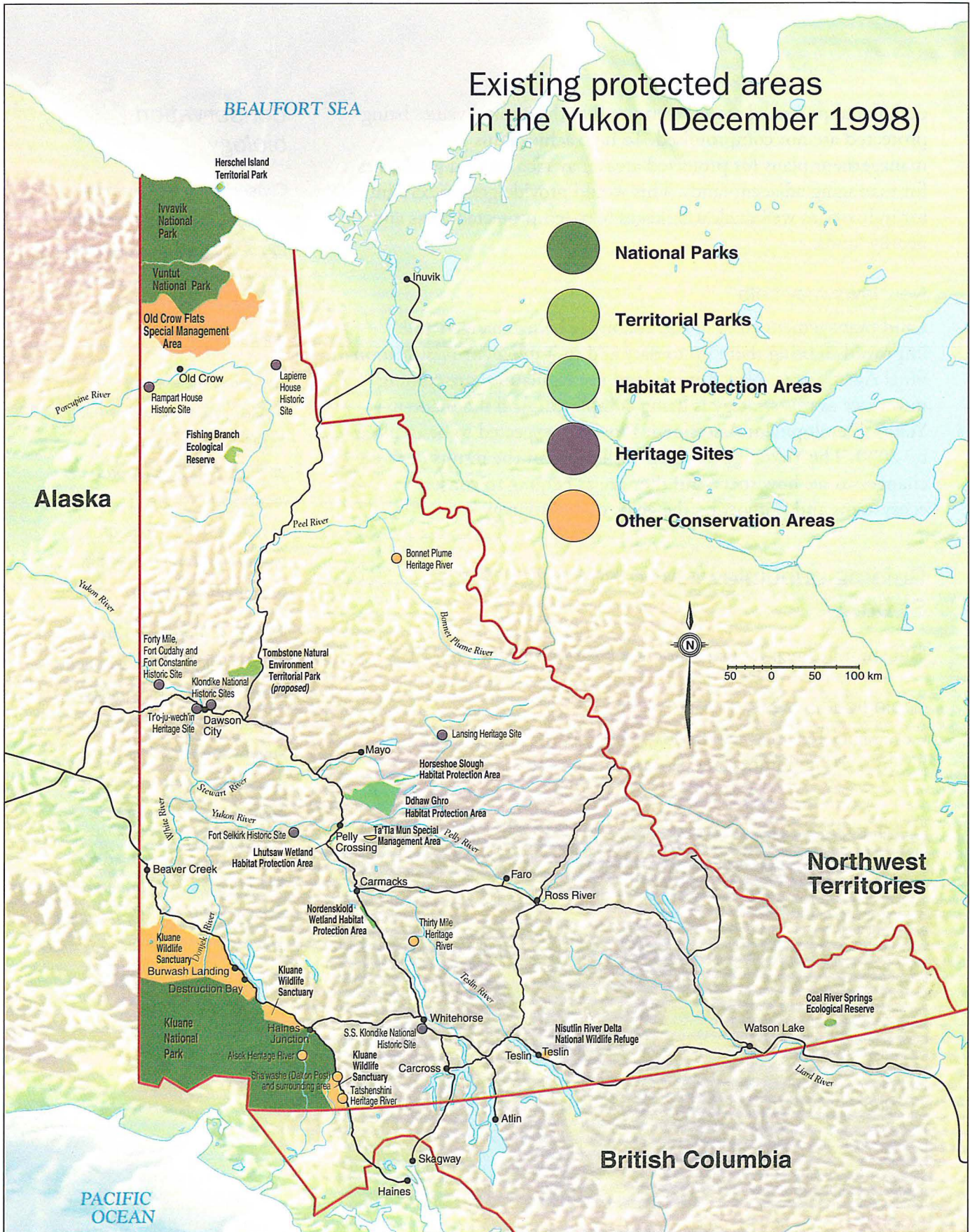
Conservation biology

Conservation biology is the study of how we can prevent the breakdown of ecosystems and the loss of species by managing human activities and land uses.

The basic message of conservation biology is this: to preserve ecosystems, species and populations indefinitely, we need to think beyond small islands of protected areas — beyond the islands of green.

Migration routes and other habitat links among protected areas need to be managed carefully so species can satisfy seasonal needs as well as the long-term genetic need to mate outside the immediate group.

The principles of conservation biology will guide the planning and establishment of protected areas in the Yukon.



Public participation

The Yukon government will encourage public participation throughout the full process of selecting and managing protected areas.

Partnerships

The Yukon government will set up and manage protected areas in partnership with federal and First Nation governments, local communities and the relevant boards and councils under land claim agreements.

Accountability

The Yukon government will carry out its protected areas work in an open, transparent and accountable manner.

Quality of information

Protected areas will be set up based on the best available traditional knowledge, local knowledge and scientific information.

Coordination

The Yukon government will use the Protected Areas Strategy to help coordinate the many processes involved in planning, establishing and managing protected areas in the Yukon.

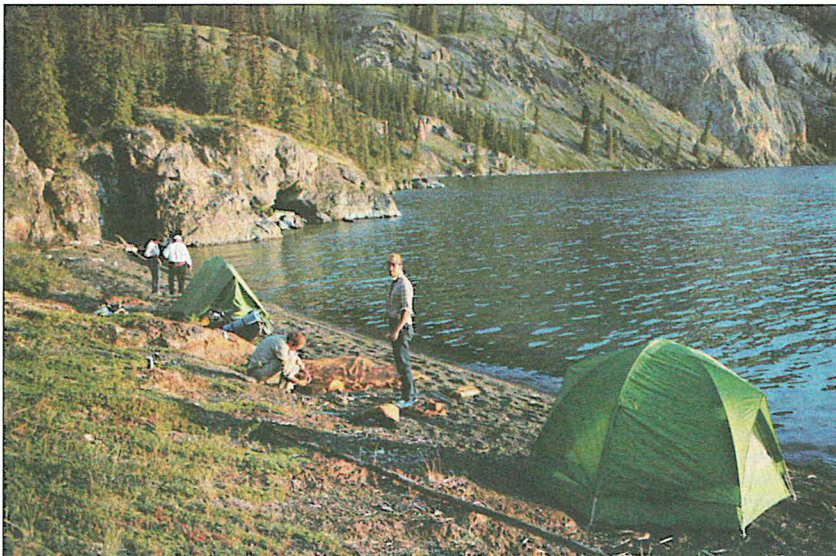
Meeting our national and global commitments

Maintaining biodiversity is a global responsibility that requires local action.

It is a task that can only be accomplished if each territory, province and country takes steps to protect ecosystems and life forms in its region.

Through good management and this strategy, the Yukon government will meet its share of commitments under:

- *The Canadian Biodiversity Strategy;*
- *The Statement of Commitment to Complete Canada's Network of Protected Areas;*
- *The National Accord for the Protection of Species at Risk; and*
- *The Whitehorse Mining Initiative.*



Lake Laberge, Yukon Southern Lakes Ecoregion, Traditional Territory of Ta'an Kwach'an First Nation and Kwanlin Dun First Nation.

First Nations — a special relationship

First Nation people have a special relationship with the Yukon's natural environment — a relationship based on subsistence needs and values extending back thousands of years.

One of the benefits of protected areas for First Nation people is that there will always be places where traditional pursuits can be practised and passed on to the next generation.

The Protected Areas Strategy recognizes and respects the rights of aboriginal people under Yukon First Nation Final Agreements, the Inuvialuit Final Agreement and the transboundary agreement of the Tetlit Gwich'in.

Respecting all values

Protected areas will be set up through processes that respect ecological, social, cultural, intrinsic, aesthetic and economic values and ensure representative participation of the range of interests that might be affected.

Recognizing economic interests

The Yukon government recognizes the importance of the resource base to the economic interests of Yukon people. The Protected Areas Strategy will be implemented in a way that respects and carefully considers these interests.

Contributing to sustainable development

Protected areas will contribute to sustainable economic development in the Yukon. Sustainable development objectives and protected area goals will be coordinated to more effectively conserve biodiversity and ecological integrity throughout the Yukon.

Protected areas and Yukon First Nation Final Agreements

Protected areas are called Special Management Areas (SMAs) in Chapter 10 of Yukon First Nation Final Agreements.

There are two types of SMAs: those created *during* the negotiation of Final Agreements and those created *after* Final Agreements are completed.



Porcupine River, Old Crow Flats Ecoregion, Traditional Territory of Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation.

Several SMAs have been established through the negotiation of Final Agreements already in place. Where mutual interests exist, the Yukon government will continue to support the creation of SMAs through the negotiation process as the remaining Final Agreements are completed. Management plans for all Special Management Areas will be prepared with public involvement as laid out in the Final Agreements.

Protected areas established after First Nation Final Agreements are completed are still called SMAs in the agreements and must meet specific conditions laid out in Chapter 10.

The Yukon government will apply the requirements of Chapter 10 to all protected areas. If there is any unforeseen conflict between this strategy and a Final Agreement, the Agreement will prevail.

Roles and responsibilities

The Yukon government recognizes that everyone has a stake in protected areas. People need a chance to participate and to be heard along with the voices of different interests. The Yukon government has a responsibility to provide overall leadership in protected areas planning to ensure full community participation and fairness to all.

The roles and responsibilities laid out here, and the process that follows, will help meet this challenge.

Protected areas and the Inuvialuit Final Agreement

The Inuvialuit Final Agreement (IFA) has created a number of Boards and Councils that have roles and responsibilities within the Inuvialuit Settlement Region, including the Yukon North Slope. Protected area planning on the North Slope will be carried out with the participation of appropriate Boards and Councils as required by the IFA.



Ruddy turnstone, Herschel Island Territorial Park, Yukon Coastal Plain Ecoregion, Inuvialuit Settlement Region.

Protected areas and the Gwich'in Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement

Parts of the Peel River region are covered by the Gwich'in Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement. Protected area planning in this region will be carried out with the participation of the Tetlit Gwich'in in a manner consistent with the Agreement.

Yukon people

Yukon people of all cultures and interests have a right to participate in protected areas planning. Public input and participation will be ensured by:

- using local and traditional knowledge throughout the planning process;
- inviting Renewable Resources Councils to share leadership of Local Planning Teams with the Yukon government;
- assuring a balance of conservation and industry interests on Local Planning Teams;
- welcoming public participation in regular meetings of Local Planning Teams;
- providing broader forums for public discussion at key stages of the planning process; and
- providing a minimum of 60 days for public review of final protected area proposals.

Conservation and industry organizations

The participation of groups representing conservation and industry interests is vital to the success of this strategy. Local representatives of these interests will be invited to join the Local Planning Team as official members. Individual stakeholders will be welcome to attend planning team meetings to speak for their personal interests.



Eagle Plains, Eagle Plains Ecoregion, Traditional Territory of Vuntut Gwich'in First Nation and Tetlit Gwich'in.

Planning staff at the Yukon departments of Renewable Resources, Economic Development and Tourism will keep up their informal contacts with conservation and industry groups while carrying out their day-to-day work. These groups will also be asked to participate in annual reviews and updates of the Protected Areas Strategy Work Plan.

Renewable Resources Councils

Renewable Resources Councils can play a strong role in ensuring local participation. Made up of community residents, these councils will be invited to join the Yukon government in leading the Local Planning Teams described on page 18. They will also be asked to review all protected area proposals within their region.

Yukon First Nations

First Nations are playing a major role in setting up protected areas in the Yukon. Special Management Areas (SMAs) and Heritage Sites are now being established through the negotiation process of First Nation Final Agreements. This work will continue.

To help implement the strategy in a way that is consistent with Final Agreements, First Nation governments will be invited to participate in identifying the ecoregions and Traditional Territories that will receive planning priority under the Protected Areas Strategy.



Watson River headwaters, Yukon Stikine Highlands Ecoregion, Traditional Territory of Carcross/Tagish First Nation and Kwanlin Dun First Nation.

For more information about the rights and role of First Nations in protected areas ask for a copy of Technical Paper No. 4: Protected Areas and Yukon First Nation Final Agreements.

First Nation governments will also be invited to take part in the annual review and update of the Work Plan, and to sit on the Local Planning Teams that will be set up to support this strategy. In addition, the traditional knowledge of First Nation people will be respected and used throughout the planning process.

Local community governments

Community governments are interested in proposed land uses both inside their municipal boundaries and in the surrounding region. Community government representatives will be invited to sit on Local Planning Teams when protected area proposals are expected to have an impact on the community. A representative of the Association of Yukon Communities will also be invited to participate in the annual review and update of the strategy Work Plan.

Government of Canada

The federal government is a key partner in implementing the Protected Areas Strategy. Canada is the owner and manager of all Yukon water bodies and most Yukon lands. This means that most protected area proposals will require federal support and cooperation.

Canada is also responsible for the management of forests, minerals, migratory fish and wildlife, and nationally important species in the Yukon. Any recommendation affecting these resources will require federal approval.

For more information about roles and responsibilities ask for a copy of Technical Paper No. 1: Roles and Responsibilities for Implementation.



South Toobally Lake, Hyland Highland Ecoregion, Traditional Territory of Kaska Dena.

The federal government already has a strong presence in the Yukon protected areas network through its lead role in managing national parks and other conservation areas. Parks Canada, the Canadian Wildlife Service and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans all have mandates to plan and establish protected areas under federal jurisdiction. This presence will continue under the Protected Areas Strategy. The federal government will also be invited to conduct resource inventories, contribute technical expertise, provide input during the selection process, and participate on the Local Planning Teams and in the annual Work Plan review.

Local Planning Teams

A Local Planning Team will be set up in each First Nation Traditional Territory. The first teams will be set up in Traditional Territories where land claims are completed and where ecoregions are not adequately represented in protected areas. Local Planning Teams will be responsible for working with their communities, stakeholders and the Yukon public to prepare protected area proposals for ecoregion representation under Goal 1.

Renewable Resources Councils will be invited to co-chair the Local Planning Teams with the Yukon government. The teams will include representatives of the federal government and affected First Nation and municipal governments. Local representatives of conservation and industry interests will also be invited to participate on the Local Planning Teams to help bring a range of views to the table. Individual stakeholders will be welcome to attend planning team meetings.



Wolf Lake, Yukon Southern Lakes Ecoregion, Traditional Territory of Teslin Tlingit Council.

Fishing and hunting — a way of life shared by many Yukon people of all cultures

For Yukon people, the value and meaning of fishing and hunting goes far beyond outdoor recreation. These activities provide lean, chemical-free food, a spiritual connection with nature, a link with family and cultural traditions, and an opportunity to teach conservation ethics to children.

That's why fishing and hunting will continue in protected areas unless restricted by publicly-developed management plans.

In addition, subsistence fishing and hunting by First Nation people will continue inside all protected areas in a manner consistent with First Nation Final Agreements.

For coordination purposes, where Regional Land Use Planning Commissions exist, one or more representatives will also be invited to participate on the Local Planning Team.

Protected Areas Secretariat

A secretariat of government technical staff will be responsible for carrying out the research, planning and resource assessments needed for protected areas. This group, led by the Yukon Department of Renewable Resources, will provide and coordinate technical support for the Local Planning Teams while looking at protected area needs Yukon-wide.

One of the most important functions of the Protected Areas Secretariat will be to encourage and support cooperation among the different agencies involved in creating protected areas, by discussing and coordinating work plans.

Process: getting the job done

These are the steps that will be followed to protect representative core areas within the ecoregions, under Goal 1. (The processes used to protect special places under Goal 2 are described in Technical Paper No. 2.)



For more information about interim protection ask for a copy of Technical Paper No. 6: Interim Protection and Third-Party Interests.

Source peaks, Mackenzie Mountains Ecoregion, Traditional Territory of Nacho Nyak Dun First Nation and Tetlit Gwichin.

Step 1: Identify the first ecoregions and areas of interest where work will begin

The Protected Areas Secretariat, with its partners, will look at the territory-wide picture of ecological needs and risks and completed land claim agreements before recommending which ecoregions should receive first attention.

The Secretariat will then work with its partners to identify initial areas of interest for protection in these ecoregions. It will do this by:

- using widely-accepted scientific criteria for ecoregion representation;
- defining, as much as possible, the key values and features that make up the biodiversity, ecological integrity and representativeness of the ecoregion;
- studying local and traditional knowledge gathered through the day-to-day work of planning staff;
- examining ecological and economic resource assessments from all available sources; and
- working with the governments of the Northwest Territories, British Columbia and Alaska to ensure coordination with protected areas work in transboundary ecoregions.

Information used to identify areas of interest will be available for review by Local Planning Teams and the public.



Ice Lakes, Pelly Mountains Ecoregion, Traditional Territory of Teslin Tlingit Council.

Linking to other processes

The Yukon government will coordinate its protected areas work with related planning processes including those dealing with:

- regional land-use planning;
- fish and wildlife, agriculture, and forest management;
- transportation development;
- energy development;
- heritage resources;
- land-use permitting;
- land transfer;
- development assessment; and
- economic development.

Coordinating with land-use planning

The Yukon Land Use Planning Council (YLUPC) will be invited to:

- discuss how regional land use planning and protected areas planning can best be coordinated;
- participate in identifying the ecoregions that will receive planning priority; and
- participate in the annual review and update of the strategy Work Plan.

In areas where both regional land use planning and protected areas planning are in progress, discussions will be held with the Regional Land Use Planning Commission and YLUPC to:

- find the best way to coordinate the two programs;
- avoid duplication of work;
- ensure that protected area planning proceeds in a timely fashion; and
- ensure that First Nation Final Agreements are upheld.

Step 2: Build the partnerships

Once the initial areas of interest are identified, the Secretariat will work with local First Nations, Renewable Resource Councils and communities to set up a Local Planning Team.

Step 3: Identify a study area

The Local Planning Team will consult with community residents to decide which areas of interest meet local needs while still representing the range of natural features and ecosystems within the ecoregion. At this stage, Yukon people will have the opportunity to suggest other areas for ecoregion representation.

Using clearly identified criteria, the Local Planning Team will then evaluate and rank the different areas of interest according to ecological, social and economic assessments.

Finally, the Local Planning Team will hold a public workshop aimed at narrowing down the choices to one large study area or two or more smaller study areas that could meet the goal of representing the ecoregion. At this point, any special features that fall outside a study area, and do not meet the goal of ecoregion representation, may be referred to their own processes under Goal 2.

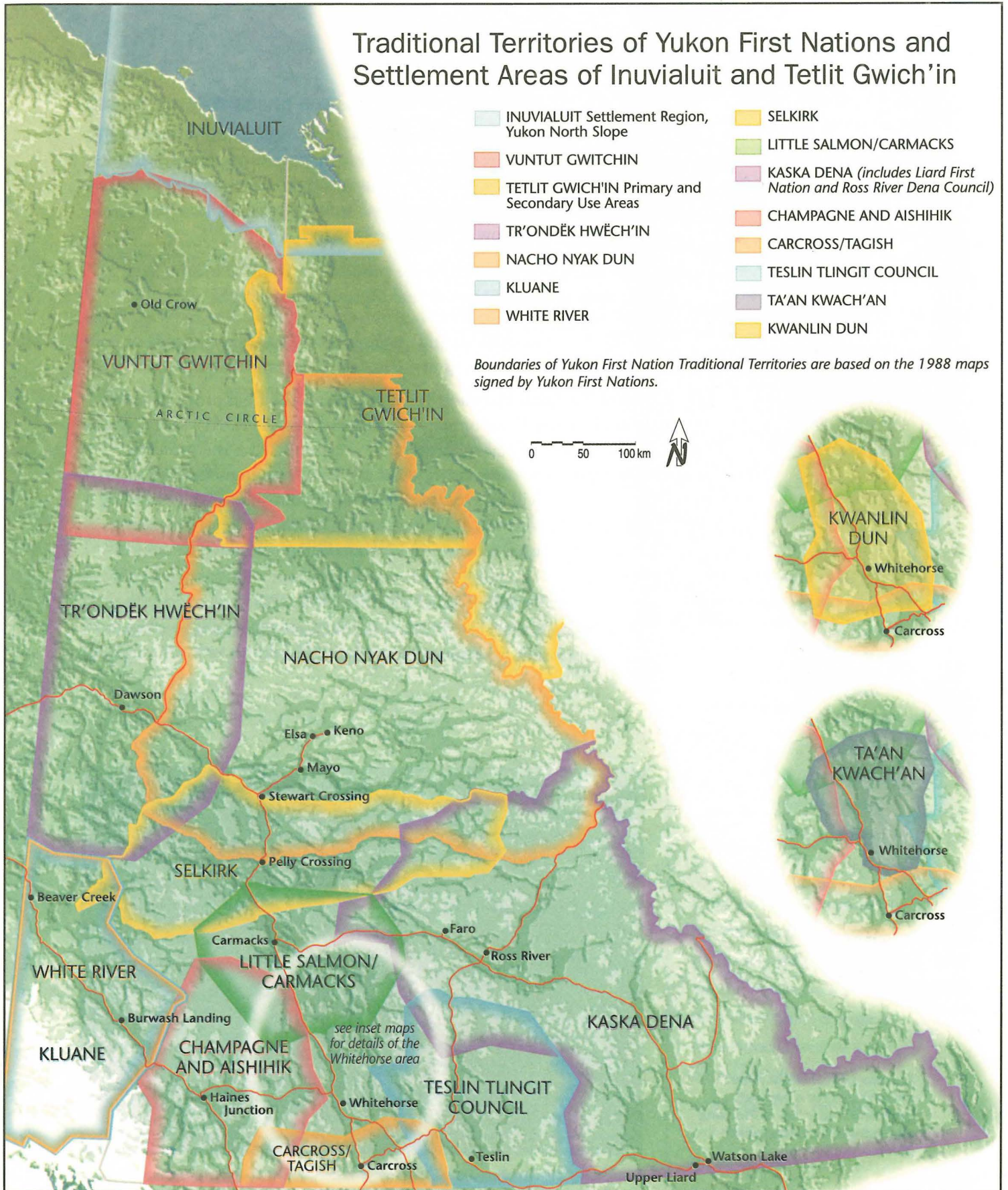
Step 4: Government review and approval of study area

Once the Local Planning Team reaches agreement on a study area, it will refer the proposal to the Yukon government for approval. When approved, the Yukon Cabinet will determine what interim protection measures are required and will work with the federal government to implement such measures (see sidebar on page 23).



Silver City, Ruby Ranges Ecoregion, Traditional Territory of Champagne and Aishihik First Nations, Kluane First Nation and White River First Nation (Richard Hartmier photo).

Traditional Territories of Yukon First Nations and Settlement Areas of Inuvialuit and Tetlit Gwich'in



Step 5: Complete the protected area proposal

After Cabinet approves a study area, the Local Planning Team will complete the protected area proposal by providing any additional information and assessments requested by Cabinet, setting out the protection goals, proposing a final boundary for the area, and recommending how it should be managed.

The team will then review the proposal in a public forum, such as an open workshop, before making any final changes.

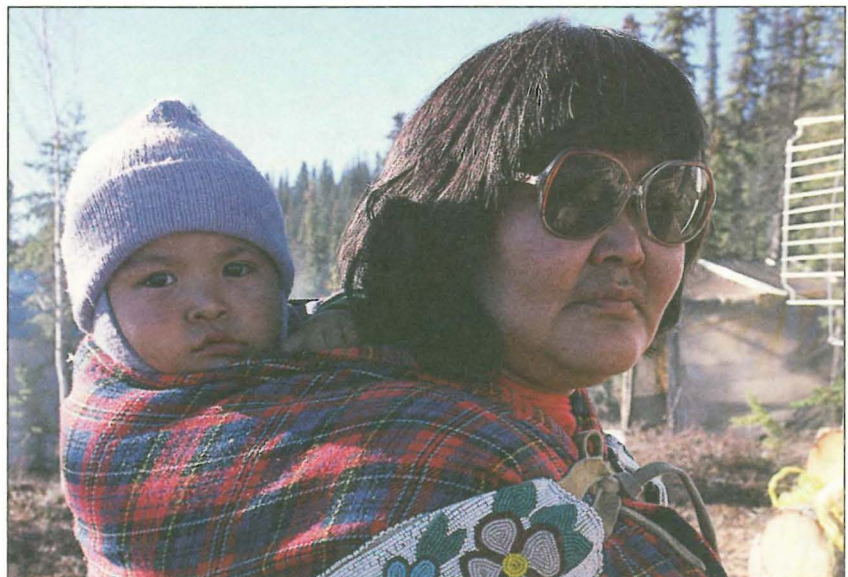
Step 6: Refer the final proposal to the Development Assessment Process

After the Local Planning Team completes the final proposal it will send it to the Development Assessment Process (DAP) set up under the Umbrella Final Agreement. It is expected that the protected areas planning process will meet the DAP requirements and duplication will be avoided. This will be accomplished by holding discussions with the DAP Executive Committee before planning begins, to ensure a common understanding of the requirements.

Step 7: Final government review and approval

The Yukon Cabinet will review the final proposal, and any DAP recommendations, before giving final approval.

For more information about process ask for a copy of Technical Paper No. 3: Planning and Establishing Protected Areas.



Porcupine River, Old Crow Flats Ecoregion, Traditional Territory of Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation.

Step 8: Designate the protected area

After Cabinet approves the final proposal it will take steps to provide the necessary legal protection, working with the federal government where required. The land will then be designated a protected area under appropriate legislation.

Step 9: Prepare a management plan

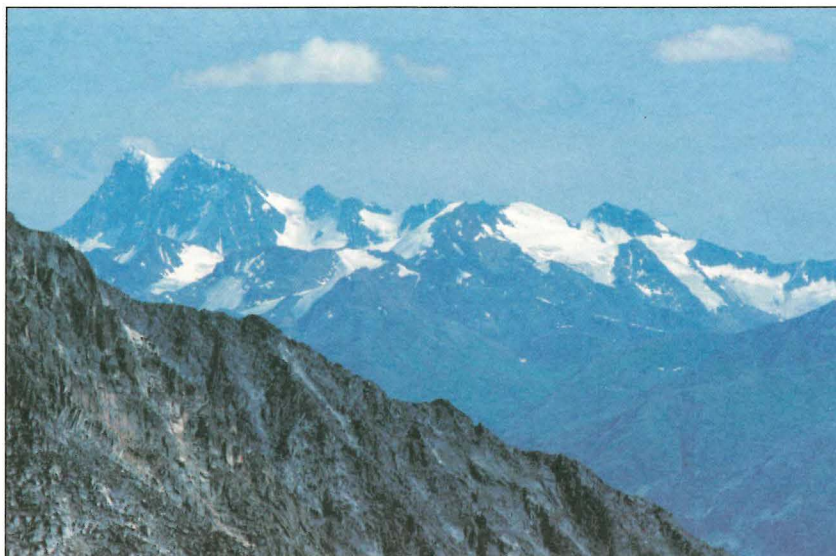
Once the area is protected, the Local Planning Team, supported by the Secretariat, will complete a publicly developed management plan to ensure protection goals are met. The interests of people who have existing uses in the protected area will be dealt with at this stage.

Step 10: Cabinet approval of the management plan

The Yukon Cabinet will review the management plan and approve it if there are no major outstanding issues.

Step 11: Management plan review

Protected areas will be monitored over the long term to measure their effectiveness in contributing to the overall goals of the strategy. Management plans will be reviewed and updated on a regular basis. Five-year reviews are typical for these types of plans.



Keele Peak, Selwyn Mountains Ecoregion, Traditional Territory of Nacho Nyak Dun First Nation.

Interim protection

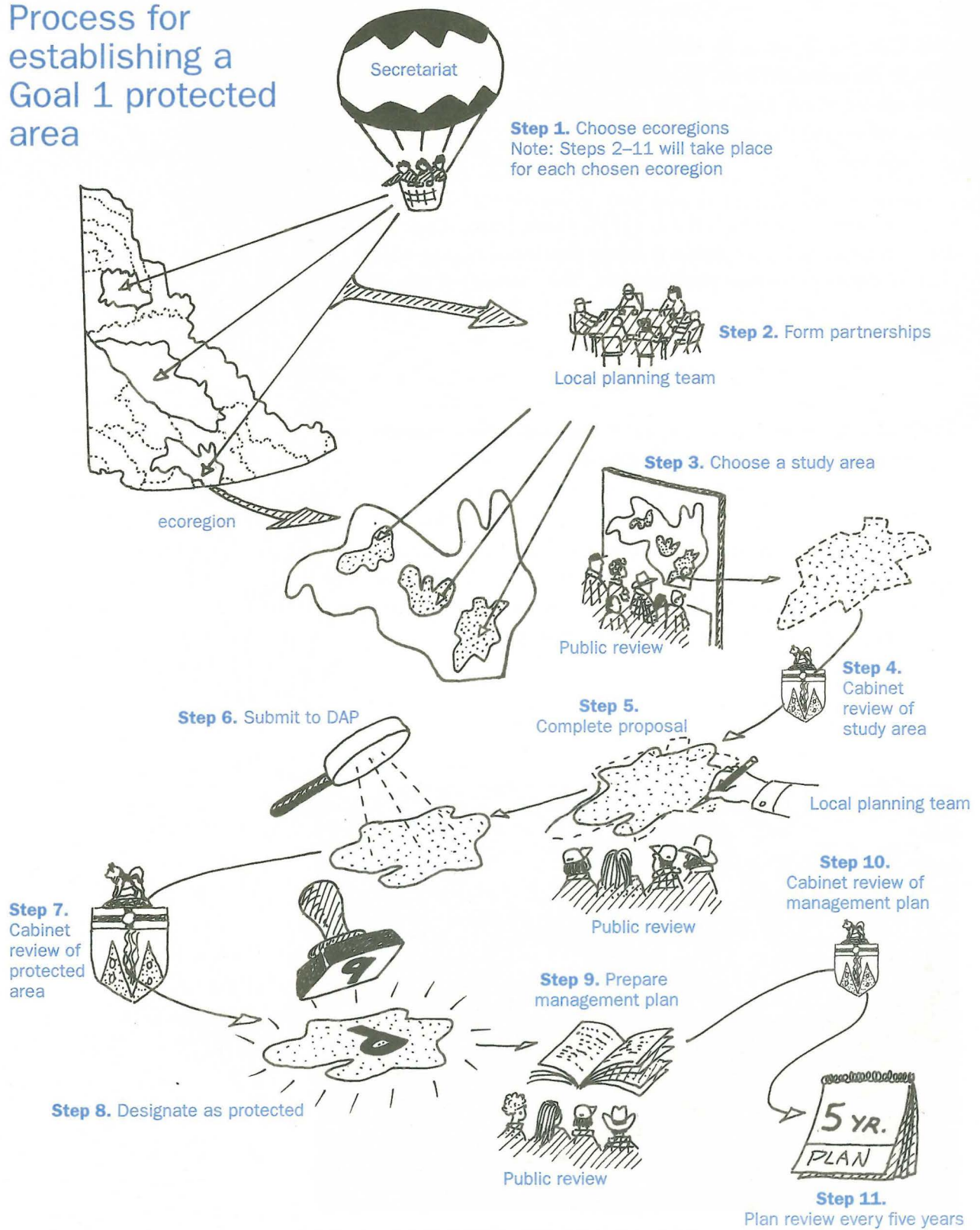
Interim protection will be applied to study areas approved under Goal 1, and may be applied to Goal 2 study areas as well. Interim protection measures include:

- *withdrawing the land from new mineral staking and other developments while plans are being made for long-term protection; and*
- *using map notations to indicate a public interest in the area.*

Land withdrawals that preclude mineral development activities will be requested by the Yukon government only when specific conditions justify such action, and only after economic and social impacts have been carefully considered. Interim withdrawals will last up to five years.

Land withdrawals should be regarded as pre-protection measures. Withdrawal will only be applied to a study area when there is a reasonable expectation that it will become a permanently protected area. Withdrawal will not be applied to initial areas of interest.

Process for establishing a Goal 1 protected area



How long will it take?

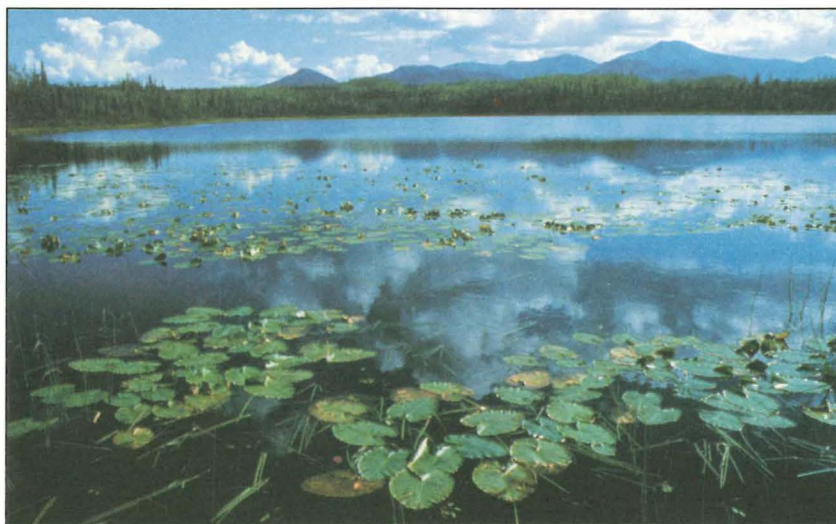
The full process of choosing and protecting part of an ecoregion is expected to take from one to three years, depending on the quality of available information and the breadth of public support. Governments will work in several ecoregions at the same time with the hope of achieving adequate protection in two or three ecoregions each year, once the ball is rolling.

Sustaining and diversifying our economy

Over time, protected areas will contribute to sustainable economic development by providing new jobs and opportunities in the tourism sector. Wilderness is a resource that is becoming increasingly rare and valuable in the tourism market. Protecting this resource will provide long-term opportunities for Yukon people to combine the outdoor knowledge and skills they already have, with new service and marketing skills aimed at the adventure and ecotourism sectors.

Nature tourism is a good fit for all Yukon communities. But industries such as mining, logging and agriculture are also very important to a diversified economy.

The Protected Areas Strategy is expected to create new tourism jobs in some areas, and keep existing industry jobs in other areas, while leaving plenty of room for future development.



Llutsaw Wetland Habitat Protection Area, Yukon Plateau (Central) Ecoregion, Traditional Territory of Selkirk First Nation.

Social and economic assessments

The social and economic impacts of protected area proposals will be studied to help us understand how the proposals might effect:

- *public use and enjoyment of the areas;*
- *traditional activities of First Nation people and other Yukon citizens;*
- *opportunities for public education;*
- *spiritual, cultural and mental health values;*
- *potential employment in the region;*
- *long-term benefits and costs of protection; and*
- *impacts on existing land and resource users.*

Resource management and economic development agencies of the Yukon and federal governments will coordinate inventories of economic resources and provide advice to the Local Planning Teams.

Resource assessments

Where reasonable options exist, the Yukon government will avoid areas of high mineral potential and development activity while setting up protected areas.

Meeting this commitment requires a reasonable knowledge of where mineral and other economic resources are likely to be found. That's why resource assessments, carried out at a reasonable level of detail and within prudent time frames, are an integral part of the Protected Areas Strategy.

Resource values that may be studied in areas proposed for ecoregion representation include minerals, timber, fuel wood, fur, agriculture, oil and gas, hydro-electric potential and tourism. The economic contribution of functioning ecosystems will also be considered. Wetlands, for example, have an economic value for flood control and water purification.

Resource assessments will be carried out in three stages.

First, resource assessments will be carried out at a regional scale to help identify areas of interest where ecological values are high and resource values are low. At this stage, the assessments will be based on existing knowledge of mineral values and other resources.

For more information about socio-economic assessments ask for a copy of Technical Paper No. 5: Socio-economic Assessments of Protected Areas



Kusawa Lake, Yukon Stikine Highland Ecoregion, Traditional Territory of Carcross/Tagish First Nation and Champagne and Aishihik First Nations.

Second, once the areas of interest have been identified, a more detailed analysis will be done, with field work if necessary. The results of this work will be used to help narrow down the areas of interest to one or more study areas.

Third, once the study area is approved by Cabinet, further detailed work may be carried out to help set the final boundaries for the area.

This is how we can foster a win-win relationship between environmental health and economic health — by doing the homework before taking action.

Managing industry uses

The Yukon government recognizes the human value of industrial development — jobs as well as products essential to our lifestyles.

On most lands, ecosystems will be cared for by applying existing land use regulations and the ecosystem management approach, as much as possible. Development proposals will be reviewed by the Yukon Development Assessment Process once it is in place. Until then, the Canada Environmental Assessment Process will apply. Both processes make recommendations to government as to whether the project should be given the go-ahead and, if so, how it should proceed.

In protected areas set up under Goal 2, natural values may be secured through a protected area designation that does not necessarily exclude industrial development. Protection levels will be determined through publicly developed management plans which

The Beaufort Sea

The Beaufort Sea, off the Yukon's arctic coast, lies within one of Canada's 29 natural marine areas and is not yet represented in a protected area. The Yukon government currently has no jurisdiction to legislate the protection of offshore areas. The federal government manages Yukon's offshore areas subject to the requirements of the Inuvialuit Final Agreement.



Logan Mountains, Selwyn Mountains Ecoregion, Traditional Territory of Kaska Dena (photo courtesy E. Caron Diamond Drilling Ltd.).

Protected areas in combination with a healthy and sustainable economy will best ensure the conservation of ecosystems and biodiversity in the Yukon.

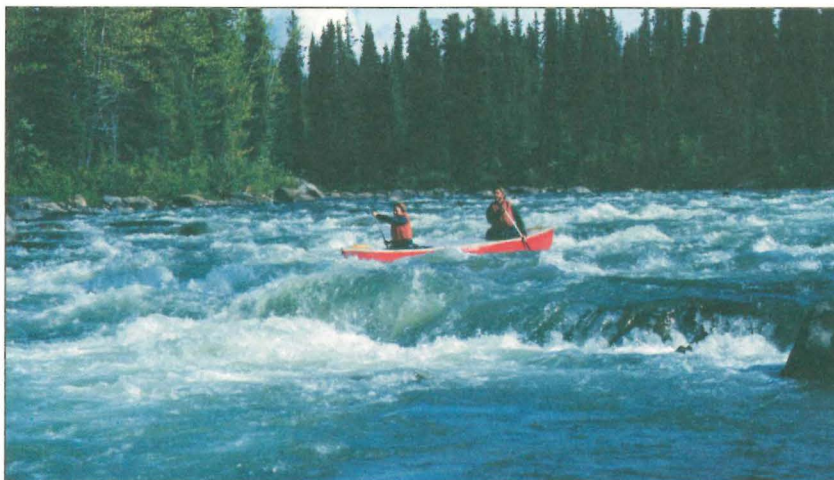
will consider conservation needs as well as compatible activities and sustainable resource management practices.

Finally, in the core protected areas set aside under Goal 1 — the backbone of a protected areas network — surface disturbance due to development activities will be restricted. Townsite developments, mining, logging, hydro-electric projects, agriculture, and oil and gas surface work will be excluded from these areas. Trapping, outfitting and wilderness tourism, where compatible with Goal 1, will be permitted and controlled through publicly developed management plans.

Yukon people have a wide range of tools that can be used to keep ecosystems intact and maintain biodiversity. The most powerful tool — the ability to exclude development — is a necessary part of the Protected Areas Strategy. Equally important, however, is our commitment to use this tool carefully, when it is needed to achieve the objectives of conserving biodiversity and ecological integrity. In this way, we can preserve economic opportunities now and in the future.

Managing recreational uses

The enjoyment of outdoor recreation is a value shared by all Yukon people. As this strategy is implemented, the desire for outdoor recreation and tourism development opportunities will be balanced with the need to protect ecosystems from the impacts of these activities. The environmental education benefits associated with recreational uses will also be considered.



Upper Hess River, Selwyn Mountains Ecoregion, Traditional Territory of Nacho Nyak Dun First Nation and Kaska Dena.

Outdoor recreation activities in protected areas will be controlled through publicly developed management plans. Activities such as camping, hiking, fishing and hunting, which are an important part of Yukon lifestyles, will be permitted in protected areas unless specifically restricted by a management plan. These plans will consider conservation needs as well as compatible uses and sustainable practices.

Implementing the Strategy

To help implement the Protected Areas Strategy, first efforts will be directed at the following tasks.

- The Yukon government will set up a Protected Areas Secretariat to coordinate the planning and establishment of protected areas in the Yukon.
- The Yukon government will identify the policy and legislative changes required to implement the Protected Areas Strategy, including amendments to the Yukon *Parks Act*.
- The Yukon government will work quickly to set up protected areas in ecoregions that are not adequately represented and where land claim agreements are completed.
- Management plans will be completed for Special Management Areas set up under First Nation Final Agreements.



Needle Rock wetlands, Yukon Plateau (Central) Ecoregion, Traditional Territory of Little Salmon/Carmacks First Nation and Selkirk First Nation.

Boards and councils

The protected areas planning process will respect the roles and responsibilities of mandated boards and councils such as the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board, local Renewable Resources Councils, Wildlife Management Advisory Council (North Slope), Yukon Heritage Resources Board, Yukon Land-Use Planning Council, and Regional Land-Use Planning Commissions.

- The Yukon government will work with the federal government to coordinate territorial and national protected areas initiatives.
- The Yukon government will prepare a Wetlands Protection Strategy within the framework of the Protected Areas Strategy.

Current implementation goals and details are provided in the strategy Work Plan, available on request.

The Strategy is a beginning, not an end

The Yukon government will review the Protected Area Strategy with its partners through a public process every five years. The review will examine how well the strategy has been working and recommend changes if necessary.

The Yukon government will also review the strategy Work Plan every year with its partners so it can be monitored and updated as required.

For more information about updating the Strategy ask for a copy of Technical Paper No. 7: Reviewing and Updating the Strategy.

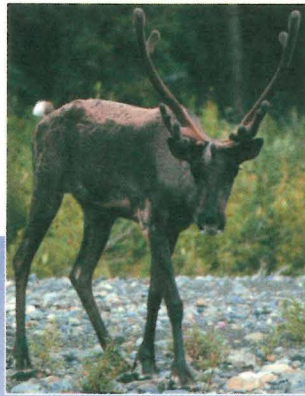


Fox Lake, Yukon Southern Lakes Ecoregion, Traditional Territory of Ta'an Kwach'an First Nation and Kwanlin Dun First Nation.

*Our shared relationship with the northern
land, water, air and life forms defines our
character, sustains our spirits and unites us
as people of the Yukon.*

*We have a duty to protect the ecosystems
and natural processes that support
this relationship.*

*We will meet this responsibility for the
benefit of ourselves and our children, but
also for the benefit of other life forms and
the earth as a whole — for biodiversity and
the intrinsic value of wilderness.*



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