

Making Progress

Yukon Government Implementation of the Yukon Conservation Strategy 1990-1995

Report of the
Yukon Council on the Economy and the Environment



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Table of Contents

Part 1: Background	2
Introduction	2
The Strategy's Key Goals and Objectives	3
Part 2: Implementation Tools	4
Land Claims Agreements	5
Legislative Change	5
Environmental Protection: The Environment Act	5
Other Legislation	6
New Resource Management Processes	6
Integrated Resource Management	6
Land Use Planning	7
Intergovernmental Actions	7
National and International Cooperation and Commitments	7
State of Environment Reporting	8
Economic Development Agreements	8
Transfer of Federal Responsibilities	8
Oil and Gas	9
Forestry	9
Part 3: Implementation Highlights	10
Environmental Protection Programs	10
Government Conservation Programs	11
Wildlife and Habitats	12
Fish and our Fisheries	14
Subsistence	14
Wilderness Parks and Protected Areas	14
Water	16
Sewage Treatment	16
Soils and Agriculture	17
Public Education	17
Energy and Energy Conservation	19
Minerals, Exploration and Mining	20
Transportation	20
Gravel Pits	20
Wilderness Access	21
Demonstration Projects	21
Public Participation and Involvement	22
Tourism and our Culture, History and Heritage	22
Part 4: Future Implementation	24
Strategy Review and Revision	24
What is Happening Elsewhere in Canada?	24
Future Considerations	24
Appendix A	26



Part 1

Background

Introduction

The Yukon Conservation Strategy provides a comprehensive long-term guide for the Government's policies and practices in relation to the environment (*Environment Act*, Section 44) and is the Yukon government's plan for achieving sustainable development.

Similar plans or policies are in place in other jurisdictions in Canada, and in many other countries. They all recognize the need for human beings to "think globally" and "act locally" as stewards of our planet.

The plan includes 11 guiding principles and recommends 372 actions by government, businesses, communities, organizations and individuals.

The Strategy covers all sectors of the economy, as well as education and training, public participation, financial support, and implementation.

The 80-page document was completed in 1990 by a public working group as part of a three year process led by the Department of Renewable Resources. It was done in response to recommendations of the World Conservation Strategy (1980), the National Task Force on Economy and Environment (1986), and the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development (1987).

Sustainable development is defined as using our natural resources in ways that meet our economic, social and cultural needs, but not depleting or degrading these resources so they cannot meet these same needs for future generations. *Yukon Conservation Strategy*, p.5

The Strategy's key goals and objectives

The Yukon Conservation Strategy is intended to secure the economic and social well being of the Yukon's residents through the wise use and management of the territory's natural and heritage resources.

Such well-being includes:

- a healthy environment
- a stable non-renewable resources sector
- healthy small businesses
- community development
- maintenance of culture and lifestyles
- protection of the Yukon's heritage resources

The Strategy sets out the following objectives for natural, cultural and environmental resource management:

- sustainable use of our renewable resources
- development of a range of renewable resource uses
- active integrated management of our natural resources
- a stable, healthy non-renewable resource sector
- protection of a quality environment
- protection of our natural and human heritage
- benefits and opportunities for Yukoners from the development and conservation of our natural resources
- community involvement in decision-making about resource management
- understanding* of aboriginal resource management practices and knowledge
- public awareness and understanding of conservation principles
- public involvement and participation in conservation efforts

* YCEE believes the words "and respecting" should be included in this objective.



Part 2

Implementation Tools

Implementation Requirements

The Yukon government's commitments in the Strategy are being carried out by 10 departments and corporations. More than half of these commitments are being implemented by the Department of Renewable Resources, which is the lead Yukon government agency in conservation of the environment.

Other departments involved are Economic Development, Community and Transportation Services, the Executive Council Office, Government Services, Yukon Development Corporation, the Yukon Energy Corporation, Tourism, Education and the Yukon Housing Corporation.

The Strategy includes *A Statement of Environmental Responsibility and Ethics* which describes how the Yukon government will support sustainable development in its daily operations. (see Appendix A).

Results are also being achieved through partnerships with other governments, First Nations and with community and stakeholder groups.

Section 46 of the *Environment Act* requires the Yukon Council on the Economy and the Environment to conduct annual reviews of the Yukon government's performance in implementing the Strategy. The Department of Renewable Resources has provided technical support to YCEE for this review.

Making Progress

The first Implementation Report was released by Renewable Resources in September, 1991. At that time, about 85 per cent of the commitments had been met or were being implemented.

A recent review of Yukon government programs and policies shows that more than 95 per cent of Yukon government commitments have been met or are being implemented. Further implementation is dependent on the settlement and implementation of land claims, and the transfer of federal programs such as forestry.

The following mechanisms are helping the Yukon government achieve results:

Land Claims Agreements

Yukon Indian land claims implementation is important for achieving sustainable development.

Yukon land claim agreements identify conservation as a goal in natural resource management. They also create new cooperative ways to manage land and resources with First Nations.

The creation of the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board and Renewable Resources Councils under the Yukon land claim agreement will set local priorities for resource management. The Department of Renewable Resources has established regional biologist positions in Haines Junction, Dawson, and Watson Lake to support this goal.

The Wildlife Management Advisory Council (North Slope), created under the Inuvialuit Final Agreement (IFA), is preparing a conservation management plan for the Yukon North Slope. Under the IFA, cooperative wildlife research and management programs are underway by Parks Canada, the Northwest Territories and by Inuvialuit harvesters.

Environmental assessment mechanisms and requirements were established under the IFA for the Yukon North Slope. The Yukon government will be working with the federal government and Yukon First Nations to establish a new development assessment process (see Legislation).

Legislative Change

Environmental Protection — the Environment Act

Environmental protection commitments under the Strategy are being implemented through the *Environment Act* (1991) and regulations, and related public awareness activities (see page 10). The Act also gives direction for integrated resource management and supports efforts to achieve sustainable development.

An Environmental Protection and Assessment Branch was created in Renewable Resources in 1993 to coordinate and deliver the government's new environmental programs.

Since 1992, regulations have been passed covering pesticides, special wastes, beverage container deposits and a recycling fund. Regulations for ozone depleting substances were drafted in early 1995.

Provisions for managing contaminated sites, environmental spills, and related investigations have not yet been proclaimed and remain under federal jurisdiction.

The Yukon government's performance in meeting its responsibilities under the *Environment Act* will be audited by the Executive Council Office, Bureau of Management Improvement Audit and Evaluation.

Other Legislation

Action was also taken on the following legislative commitments:

- Changes to the *Highways Act* in 1990 allow roads to be closed for environmental or conservation reasons, in addition to public safety.
- the *Education Act*, passed in 1991, provides for curricula that recognizes Yukon First Nations cultures and the Yukon's natural environment.
- Yukon lands legislation is under review to support the implementation of land use plans and to improve lands administration.
- the *Economic Development Act*, passed in 1992, establishes sustainable development as one of the goals of the Department of Economic Development.
- changes to the *Wildlife Act* are anticipated to reflect Yukon land claim provisions.

A new Development Assessment Process (DAP) for assessing and reviewing development proposals, is to be enacted in legislation by February 1997 under the Yukon First Nations Final Agreements. There will be opportunity for public, business and industry involvement in preparing this legislation with Government and First Nations.

New Resource Management Processes

Integrated Resource Management

The Conservation Strategy's integrated resource management objectives were incorporated in Part 5 of the *Environment Act*. This section provides a framework for integrated land use and natural resource planning and management in the Yukon. Specific references cover land, water, forest, wilderness and wildlife management plans. Implementation of such plans is subject to program transfers from the federal government, and the implementation of land claims provisions.

The *Environment Act* also provides for cooperative resource management agreements locally, nationally and internationally. Such agreements, covering wildlife conservation and management, and environmental cooperation, have been in place for several years (see **National and International Cooperation and Commitments** below).

Land Use Planning

The land planning process provides an opportunity to consider appropriate land uses in the each region. Several land use plans and technical documents have been completed, covering Hootalinqua, the Klondike Valley, Dawson to Callison area, Carcross area, and Mt. Lorne/Carcross Road area. Work on the Greater Kluane Regional Land Use Plan was carried out under the former Canada-Yukon land use planning programme.

Yukon land claim agreements include provisions for regional land use planning commissions and plans.

The proclamation of the *Subdivision Act* in April 1995 requires that future subdivision of land is also subject to review of environmental concerns. Regulations are currently being drafted.

Intergovernmental Actions

A variety of intergovernmental activities, in addition to the land claims agreements, are underway which help implement the Strategy.

National and International Cooperation and Commitments

International and national agreements and programs, including the Canada-Yukon Environmental Accord, the Arctic Environmental Strategy, and the work of the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment (CCME) are key mechanisms for reaching mutual environmental goals.

Major research programs undertaken since 1990 include a study on the presence and impact of environmental contaminants in country foods, including caribou and fish. More work is planned in this area under the Arctic Environmental Strategy which ends in 1997. Other activities:

- Intergovernmental treaties guide the management of transboundary resources, such as the Porcupine Caribou Herd, migratory birds, and whales in the Beaufort Sea area.
- The Yukon government participates in the delivery of the federal Arctic Environmental Strategy and other federal Green Plan programs to enhance or clean-up the northern environment.

- Yukon government activities support international commitments to help protect biodiversity, reduce greenhouse gases, maintain the ozone layer, and meet other global environmental goals.
- The Yukon's Minister of Renewable Resources chaired the CCME in 1995. One of its main goals is to harmonize environmental legislation to streamline and reduce duplication. CCME is also working to meet national air quality and waste reduction goals.
- The Canada-Yukon Accord on Environmental Cooperation, signed in 1992, provides for increased coordination in addressing environmental concerns.
- Yukon signed the Western Accord on Environmental Cooperation (1991), which supports greater coordination by the western provinces and the two territories of environmental activities such as special waste management.
- The Yukon has established a transboundary lakes and fish conservation and management agreement with British Columbia.

State of Environment Reporting

A cost-sharing agreement was reached, under the Canada-Yukon Accord on Environmental Cooperation, for a Yukon State of the Environment Report. The first SOE report is scheduled for completion in late 1995. The report will incorporate traditional First Nations knowledge of our environment as well as scientific data, and will help decision-makers set priorities for natural resource policies and environmental protection.

Economic Development Agreements

The Yukon has benefited from a number of economic development agreements (EDAs) with the federal government over the past ten years. There have been two interim agreements, from 1985-1990; the current 91-96 Economic Development Agreement provided funds through six cooperation sub-agreements, including Renewable Resources, Forestry and Tourism. Funding criteria called for the integration of environmental considerations into projects. The implementation of the Yukon Conservation Strategy was supported through a variety of EDA funded projects. The Department of Economic Development is involved in the evaluation of the EDAs.

Transfer of Federal Responsibilities

The Yukon government assumed responsibility for freshwater fisheries in 1989. Negotiations for the transfer of forestry programs and resources have been slowed by land claim considerations and policy-related issues. Land, mineral and water resource programs are other programs still under federal jurisdiction.

Oil and Gas

A Northern Oil and Gas Accord was signed in 1993. This Accord provides for the transfer of legislative authority and control over on-shore oil and gas resources to the Yukon. In addition, it provides a commitment to negotiate shared management of oil and gas resources in the Beaufort Sea.

Draft oil and gas legislation for the Yukon was released in September, 1995 for public review.

Forestry

Many of the proposed forestry commitments cannot be met until the federal forestry program is transferred to the Yukon government.

However, in anticipation of the federal forestry transfer, the Yukon government has released a framework document and a discussion paper towards the development of a new Yukon forest management policy. Yukon Renewable Resources expects to develop a new Forests Act following the program transfer and policy development

Industry and non-government stakeholders are also taking steps to educate the public about Yukon's forest values and management options. In support of this goal, YCEE sponsored a forestry conference in Watson Lake in November, 1995 .

Forestry research projects, including an ecosystem classification projects and regeneration survey manual have been completed, as well as forest management workshops, under the EDA Forestry sub-agreement.

Major reforestation projects initiated under the agreement resulted in 174 ha of planted seedlings. Some inventory work was done under the Southeast Yukon Forestry Management Plan.

Inventory work, reforestation, silviculture, and training for all aspects of the forest industry remain key challenges for the immediate future. Transfer of the resource must be achieved with adequate funding in order to fulfil many of the forestry commitments.

Economic infrastructure and planning is also needed to support local processing and use of Yukon forest products. .

The expiry of the federal Canada-Yukon Forestry Development Agreement is expected to have a negative impact on present and future management of this resource.



Part 3

Implementation Highlights

Environmental Protection Programs

The 1991 passage of the *Environment Act* established, in law, many of the Yukon Conservation Strategy's principles and objectives. The *Environment Act* states that the Yukon Conservation Strategy is the "long term guide for the policies and practices of the Government in relation to the environment."

The Act endorses many of these principles by providing for integrated resource management, environmental protection, and review and assessment processes support sustainable development.

The Department of Renewable Resources has been providing environmental protection programs since 1990.

The special waste program, which was transferred from Community and Transportation Services in 1994, has carried out:

- the annual collection and disposal of household special wastes, such as cleaners, paints and solvents, in cooperation with the Raven Recycling Society in Whitehorse;
- the development and enforcement of special waste regulations;
- management of an "orphan special waste" site in the Marwell area;
- the 1994 coordination of the disposal of two truckloads of PCB contaminated soil from the Granger residential area in Whitehorse;
- the preparation and public review of a discussion paper on solid waste (1995) management; and,
- a scrap metal clean-up program, in 1994 with the City of Whitehorse, to remove abandoned cars and other scrap metal litter.
- A territory-wide collection of special wastes occurred in 1993 and 1994 and was being planned for 1995. One hundred and three tons of special waste have been shipped to southern collection points. These collections allow the Branch to create an inventory of the types and amount of special waste in the territory and will help government to assess the need for a special waste facility.

Other branch programs or services include:

- Administration of a recycling fund to support the operation of 16 community recycling depots.
- An independent program evaluation in 1994 found that return rates for beverage containers are higher than in most other jurisdictions: 70 per cent of aluminum cans, 80 per cent of Yukon Liquor Corporation glass bottles, and 92 per cent of beer bottles sold were returned for refunds.
- The Department promotes an annual litter clean-up competition among government agencies. Since 1993, 1700 bags of litter have been collected by federal, territorial and municipal officials during the designated pickup day in May.
- Litter provisions in the Environment Act have been enforced since 1993, resulting in ten tickets and several court actions to date.
- The Branch operates an air monitoring station as part of the National Air Pollution Surveillance network.
- A pesticide use survey was begun in 1995.
- The Environmental Assessment section coordinates the review of 1,000 land use applications yearly, to assess and recommend ways to address impacts to fish, wildlife, parks and the environment.
- Public awareness advertising was started in 1995 to encourage RV travellers to dispose of their waste water properly, and not on to Yukon highways or into off-road areas.

Government Conservation Programs

The Yukon government's *Statement of Environmental Responsibility and Ethics* (see Appendix A) makes a commitment to support the Strategy and its goals and principles. As part of this commitment, the Department of Government Services has introduced a variety of environmental conservation activities and programs. Highlights of results to date:

- Eighty-five per cent of printing jobs use recycled paper and cover stock, from among the 47 recycled paper products in Central Stores.
- Enviro-friendly materials are specified in construction, maintenance contracts, and cleaning contracts.
- Oil consumption is reduced by almost 15 per cent in government heating.
- An energy reduction program is underway in Yukon schools.

- Replacement of more than 50 per cent of lighting ballasts containing PCBs.
- Alternative heating systems are assessed for all new buildings.
- Energy-efficient equipment is specified in tenders.
- Replacement of ten products in Central Stores with enviro-friendly products (eg. vegetable rather than oil-based ink).
- Four recycled plastic products are available from Stores.
- Replacement of CFC coolant with enviro-friendly coolant in Administration and Justice buildings .
- Use of enviro-friendly glycol (antifreeze) in hot water heating systems.
- Government Services provides space for the recycling depot in Haines Junction.
- Use of only latex paints and glues (no solvents).
- 95,292 lbs of shredded paper were offered to local potters.

In 1994, the Yukon government appointed one member of Cabinet as minister responsible for both Economic Development and Renewable Resources, as a step towards integrating economic and environmental decision-making.

Wildlife and Habitats

The YCS includes an entire chapter on managing wildlife and habitats in a sustainable way. Many affirm the existing Department of Renewable Resources goals and objectives, while others recommend new approaches in the department's diverse mandate.

Much progress has been made since 1990 to recognize and support the non-consumptive use of wildlife. The wildlife viewing program, developed by Renewable Resources and Tourism and supported by other departments, now includes 18 sites throughout the Yukon. The viewing facility at Swan Haven, opened in 1994 through a cooperative partnership with the Girl Guides of Canada and Ducks Unlimited, is one of the most noteworthy. Most recently, sites have been developed at the Top of the World Highway, the Dawson City Campground, Wye Lake in Watson Lake, and the Mt. Mye sheep viewing site near Faro, in response to community initiatives. Renewable Resources has also developed nature viewing and appreciation programs with the City of Whitehorse, which are offered at Swan Haven through the City's recreation program.

Yukon's traditional consumptive wildlife industries of outfitting and trapping continue to receive the government's support. Wildlife harvest quotas for outfitters are now being finalized after an intensive consultation process

involving all Yukon communities and interested groups.

Ongoing trapping courses ensure effective and humane techniques are practised, and the leghold trap has been prohibited for use on some species. Over 200 trappers have participated in the trap exchange program to date, and over 475 have graduated from trapper education programs. The Yukon government also supports federal efforts to protect wild fur markets in Europe.

At Faro, government and the mining industry have successfully cooperated to preserve the local population of Fannin sheep, to help mitigate the impacts of mining in the area.

The recovery program for the Aishihik and Kluane woodland caribou herds was in its third year. Indications are that calf survival is increasing through various controls on harvesting activity. Further results will be assessed in 1997.

The national wood bison recovery program was initiated in the Yukon in 1986 and has resulted in the establishment of a wild herd in the Nisling River Valley area west of Carmacks. A separate program has reintroduced an elk herd in the Takhini Valley and the area north of Champagne.

Efforts to protect and enhance threatened and endangered species such as the peregrine falcon, have produced the first breeding pair of falcons on the North Slope. British Columbia and the Yukon have a joint agreement for annual surveys and reports.

Population inventories and species management plans are continuing, for moose, sheep, bears, wolves and caribou. The Yukon leads the continent in wolf research programs. The Wolf Conservation and Management Plan was adopted in 1993, following its development by a public steering committee.

Cooperative wildlife management programs with Yukon First Nations include the Aishihik-Kluane Caribou Recovery Program, the Carcross Caribou Recovery Program, the Porcupine Caribou Herd Management Program, and the Wood Bison Recovery Program in the Nisling River Valley.

Ongoing cooperative programs with user groups include stocking programs with the Yukon Fish and Game Association, trapper education programs with the Yukon Trappers Association, and environmental education programs with the Yukon Conservation Society and the Raven Recycling Society. The Whitehorse Fish Hatchery is operated by the Yukon Fish and Game Association under a funding agreement between the Yukon Energy Corporation and the departments of Tourism and Renewable Resources.

The Mayo Regional Wildlife Management Plan was developed in conjunction with the Mayo Renewable Resources Council and the Nacho Nyak Dun First

Nation to incorporate both local and scientific knowledge and is now being implemented.

The installation of electric fencing at garbage dumps has reduced problem wildlife incidents and destruction of bears in Destruction Bay, Deep Creek, Braeburn, Teslin, Haines Junction, and Dawson City. New electric fencing in Faro is also planned. In addition, the Department of Community and Transportation Services is replacing litter barrels at rest areas with bear-proof garbage bins, with trials planned for a new, more cost-effective design.

Public requests and support led to the creation of a no hunting corridor along the Alaska Highway from the Slims River Bridge to the Yukon-Alaska border near Beaver Creek.

Wildlife habitat protection and enhancement is being achieved through land claims negotiations and agreements for special management areas, and through methods such as prescribed burning in limited areas. Amendments made to the *Wildlife Act* in 1992, and not yet proclaimed, are intended to enhance the Yukon government's ability to protect sensitive wildlife habitat.

Major habitat mapping projects have been completed on the North Slope in cooperation with federal and Northwest Territories agencies.

Fish and our Fisheries

Fisheries management regulations, policies, programs and plans have been established for 22 lakes; especially where species are heavily harvested. Live release fishing is promoted to sport fishers and stocking programs are continuing around communities in cooperation with the Yukon Fish and Game Association. The Yukon government supports ongoing Canada-U.S. negotiations on Yukon River salmon stocks.

Subsistence

Some research has been done on the value of the subsistence economy but data is lacking on this important part of Yukon's economy. Land claims provisions, and a variety of programs now support lifestyle opportunities based on traditional use of renewable resources.

Wilderness Parks and Protected Areas

Protected areas in the Yukon now include a system of four federal and two territorial parks (including one ecological reserve), 42 campgrounds and 9 outdoor recreation sites. Other areas are being protected under Yukon land

claim agreements. Areas designated under agreements which came into effect in 1995 include: Vuntut National Park, Old Crow Flats (Special Management Area), Nisutlin Delta (National Wildlife Area); Fishing Branch (Ecological Reserve); Horseshoe Slough (Habitat Protection Area).

As part of land claims implementation, the Department has also been working with the Mayo Renewable Resources Council and the federal government to include the Bonnet Plume River as part of the Canadian Heritage Rivers System. Similar work is in progress, in consultation with the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations to nominate and designate the Tatshenshini River as a heritage river. The Thirty Mile section of the Yukon River was designated in 1991.

A Parks and Outdoor Recreation Policy was approved in 1991; System Plans for Parks, Outdoor Recreation, Canadian Heritage Rivers, and Campgrounds were approved and accepted in 1992.

The goal of the Yukon government is to complete a Parks System by the year 2000 that has at least one territorial park in each of the Yukon's eight landscape regions, and representative examples of the Yukon's 23 ecoregions. The Department is working on a systematic inventory of areas of interest for protection under the *Parks Act*, with possible designation of some sites under land claim agreements.

Parks and Outdoor Recreation Branch officials meet twice each year with a cooperative working group comprised of the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations, Parks Canada, Glacier Bay National Park Alaska, and British Columbia government to discuss rafting management on the Tatshenshini and Alsek rivers.

The departments of Renewable Resources and Economic Development participated in the development of a mineral resource assessment process that will be used in parkland and protected areas planning. Extensive work was carried out in the Eagle Plains ecoregion towards identifying park candidate areas.

Managing commercial and non-commercial use of the wilderness has become an issue, especially in high-use river corridors. The Department of Renewable Resources is working with the Department of Tourism, wilderness operators and First Nations to research and address wilderness recreation management issues, through legal and administrative means. A survey of the Teslin and Big Salmon rivers was carried out in 1994 to help assess user impacts.

Still to do

Commitments to address subsistence and wilderness policy issues are being met through education and management programs and in the implementation of the *Environment Act* and land claims agreements. The federal Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development has drafted a policy for land tenure for commercial wilderness camps and outfitters.

The Concession and Compensation Review Board was established in 1989 to hear claims for compensation for impacts of Yukon government sponsored activities on trapping or outfitting concessions. The Board makes recommendations regarding the awarding of claims in accordance with the *Wildlife Act*. There are also provisions in the *Wildlife Act* to address compensation for loss of livelihood by trappers and outfitters. The Yukon Umbrella Final Agreement requires that a compensation process be established for resource development activities. Currently, there is no compensation policy or process for federally sponsored activities which impact on traplines. Efforts are underway to identify a process that addresses both federal and Yukon government compensation provisions.

A children's version of the Conservation Strategy was not produced because of limited funding and other program priorities. A variety of school programs (see below) currently support conservation and sustainable development goals.

Water

The Yukon government passed legislation to support its role in management of the Yukon, Mackenzie and Alsek river basins, and signed a water quality agreement in 1994 with the federal government.

Transfer of control over water resource management and sufficient resources is necessary to improve knowledge and management of transboundary water resources.

The government has historically opposed the diversion of rivers for water exports.

Cottage lot and lakeshore management land use planning guidelines will be developed through land claims implementation.

Sewage Treatment

In Whitehorse, the Yukon government and the City of Whitehorse have established a cost-sharing agreement with respect to development of the Whitehorse Sewage Treatment Facility. Construction of the treatment lagoons and storage impoundment is underway, with completion expected in May 1996.

The Marwell forcemain extension is almost complete. The remaining work, including upgrading the Marwell lift station, Porter Creek transfer station, outfalls, etc. is targeted for completion in fall 1996.

The Yukon government also participates on the Technical Support Panel for this project, and monitors project progress.

Yukon communities which have secondary sewage treatment, either by lagoons or aeration facilities are Carmacks, Faro, Haines Junction, Mayo, Teslin and Watson Lake. Since 1990 secondary sewage treatment facilities have also been constructed or upgraded at Old Crow and Destruction Bay/Burwash. A Needs Analysis for a treatment facility for the Marsh Lake area was to be completed in December 1995.

Soils and Agriculture

The Yukon agriculture policy approved in 1992 recognizes conservation goals. The policy is to undergo a review by the end of 1996.

The Yukon government was a contributing sponsor to the first Circumpolar Agriculture Conference in 1992, and has sponsored, or co-sponsored with the Yukon Agricultural Association, annual public workshops on sustainable agricultural practices such as greenhousing techniques.

Funding under the federal Canada-Yukon Agri-Food component of the Green Plan supported 24 sustainable agricultural projects, many of which implemented YCS commitments. Project funding is available until March 31, 1997.

A game farming policy and game farm regulations were developed and adopted to help guide the development of this industry and protect indigenous wildlife.

Public Education

There has been significant progress in the development and delivery of environmental and conservation education programs by the Yukon government. The Department of Renewable Resources, in cooperation with the Department of Education, delivers conservation education and awareness programs in the schools. Highlights include the following:

- Project Wild is now available as a supplementary program to teachers in all Yukon schools.
- Since 1992, 89 youth employees have been involved in the Yukon Youth Conservation Corps (Y2C2) in a variety of community-based projects.

- Since 1990, 180 students have attended the Conservation Action Team program.
- A summer camp was sponsored by the Yukon Fish and Game Association through the Environmental Initiatives Fund in 1992-93.
- The Department of Education has developed its own outdoor education program called ACES, for high school students.
- In the summer of 1990, Renewable Resources launched the Hunter Education and Ethics Development (HEED) Program to ensure the safe and responsible use of firearms by hunters, and an awareness of conservation and wise use principles. ("Respect wildlife. Take only what you need, use all that you take.") A field dressing video was updated and revised for public use, to help hunters abide by this creed. A total of 574 Yukon residents have taken the HEED course to date.
- Biologists and technical staff from Renewable Resources regularly visit Yukon classrooms and participate in field trips to increase student understanding of environmental issues.
- Public information programs have focused on low-impact wilderness camping, and Renewable Resources' No-Trace Checklist has been translated to German by Tourism. Conservation and wise use messages, including anti-littering reminders, are also included in the hunting and fishing regulation summaries, tourism literature and marketing activities.
- Planning is nearly completed for a new interpretation centre on the Dempster Highway, with construction anticipated in 1996-97.
- A Pine Lake Interpretive Trail was built in Haines Junction in 1995 as a joint project by Renewable Resources and the St. Elias Community School.
- A wolf ecology and management curriculum was jointly developed with the Department of Education and is being used in Yukon schools. The Yukon government recently funded a booklet on wolf management prepared by the Yukon Conservation Strategy, entitled "Yukon Wolves".
- A full-time Renewable Resources Management Program is now offered through Yukon College.
- A Renewable Resources Curriculum Advisory Group has been established to deal with the development of balanced and unbiased curriculum materials concerning renewable resources for school age children.

- A co-sponsored (Federal-YTG) Global Education Project prepared classroom materials on global issues including conservation and pollution, which are now available for use.
- The Department of Education has purchased the curriculum package "Land of our Ancestors Series" from the Council of Yukon First Nations and has made it available for use by Yukon intermediate grade teachers.

Energy and Energy Conservation

The Yukon government is committed along with other Canadian jurisdictions to reduce gaseous emissions which contribute to global warming. It has introduced energy management programs in six schools and in government facilities. It is developing regulations for ozone depleting substances. It now uses surplus hydroelectricity in two Yukon government buildings for space heat and domestic hot water heating in off peak hours to reduce costs.

Demonstration projects involving solar, wind energy and micro-hydro development have showed promise. Results from the wind-energy project at Haeckel Hill in Whitehorse have been particularly impressive. This has opened the door for opportunities for private electrical generation to supply the Yukon electrical grid.

Proposals for large-scale energy developments will have to be assessed under federal legislation, and by 1997, through a made-in-Yukon Development Assessment Process to determine possible impacts and ways to reduce them.

The Department of Economic Development, with the Yukon Energy and Yukon Development Corporations is finalizing options for a Yukon Energy Policy that will address short-term and long-term goals for developing and managing energy resources and demand.

A specific loan program, for energy housing retrofits, was cancelled as of April 1994. In its last year, the program provided 135 residential and six commercial clients with SEAL loans. The Yukon Housing Corporation provides assistance for residential energy retrofits through its Home Repair Program.

The Yukon Council on the Economy and Environment sponsored an energy sector conference in April 1995 to obtain views, on energy issues facing the territory, from a broad range of Yukoners.

The Northern Oil and Gas Accord was signed in 1993, and draft legislation was introduced in the fall of 1995 for the transfer of control over onshore oil and gas resources. This will ensure Yukon's interests are well represented in the development of this industry.

Minerals, Exploration and Mining

Mining plays an historic and important role in the territory's development. The Yukon and federal governments, the industry and other stakeholders have been working together to reform the existing Placer and Quartz Mining Acts, to provide for appropriate environmental regulation of the industry. As part of this process, a new federal *Yukon Waters Act* was passed in 1992, replacing the *Northern Inland Waters Act* in the Yukon. Regulations have been in effect since June 15, 1993.

A new Yukon Placer Authorization became effective January 1, 1994 to encourage the development of environmentally sound mines and mining infrastructure. These efforts have complemented a national mining industry accord first proposed in Whitehorse in 1992, at the annual Mine Ministers Conference, and tabled in 1994 as the Whitehorse Mining Initiative. The initiative is an agreement involving federal, provincial, and territorial governments, First Nations, industry and environmental groups. The Accord involves commitments from all of these groups to ensure a mining industry which mitigates environmental damage and considers aesthetic and First Nation values.

The implementation of the Yukon land claim agreements will also provide mechanisms, such as the Surface Rights Board and Dispute Resolution Board, to resolve conflicts over land use on privately held lands. The Development Assessment Process set out in the land claim agreement will also help to ensure that mining developments have minimal or manageable impacts on the environment.

Transportation

In designing highways, the Department of Community and Transportation Services incorporates aesthetic considerations, along with environment, recreation and economic factors. Examples of this are the open viewsapes offered in reconstructed sections of the Alaska Highway in the Shakwak and Rancheria areas, and the process of revegetating disturbed ground following construction of new roads.

Gravel Pits

Commitments to clean up gravel pits along Yukon highways and roads are being met by the Department of Community and Transportation Services (CTS), which is responsible for gravel pits on Commissioner's Lands and also abandoned highway pits. Pits located outside of Block Land Transfer areas are managed by the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development.

Old quarries are being rehabilitated following the expiry of leases, with three to four pits reseeded annually since 1990.

Pits are reclaimed on an annual basis by recontouring (which assists in erosion control and makes the area less hazardous to wildlife) and hydroseeding, as well as removal of the access road. Examples in the Whitehorse area include the pit adjacent to the Yukon Alaska Transport truck yard, Takhini, and the old Dawson Construction paving site at the north side of the South Access Road. The department has developed a granular resource management plan, which is being followed for all new pit development.

A review of the Quarry regulations is currently underway towards addressing commitments to clean up gravel pits along highways and roads.

Wilderness Access

The impacts of increased transportation access to fish and wildlife habitats, such as by all-terrain vehicles, is an ongoing concern to wildlife managers, and will be considered by the Fish and Wildlife Management Board and Renewable Resources Councils.

The *Highways Act* (1991) allows for the designation of restricted use roads, and permits the temporary closure of roads for environmental/wildlife reasons. An example of this is the seasonal closure of the Blind Creek Road in the Faro area, to protect a local sheep population.

A commitment to address concerns about refueling at float plane bases is being addressed in Whitehorse through a joint study sponsored by the Yukon government, Transport Canada and the City of Whitehorse. The study will identify the concerns of all users at Schwatka Lake and develop and evaluate options for safe and environmentally sound practices.

Demonstration Projects

The Yukon Conservation Strategy Demonstration Program funded 51 successful community-based projects before it ended in 1994.

The Fisheries Initiatives for Sustainable Harvests (FISH fund) has, since 1989, supported 28 projects, for such things as stocking, enhancement, public education, and reclamation activities by community groups and First Nations throughout the Yukon. Recent projects included Arctic Charr and rainbow trout stocking, the McIntyre Creek Salmon Enhancement project, and an interpretation display at the Whitehorse Fishway and Viewing Facility. The Yukon Fish and Game Association was one of the key sponsors of many fish and wildlife conservation projects, some of which were funded through the Renewable Resources Cooperation Agreement of the EDA.

Public Participation and Involvement

The Kluane First Nation Community Conservation Strategy was produced in 1992 with funding under the Yukon Conservation Strategy Demonstration Project Fund. Preliminary work was also done on a conservation strategy in Old Crow.

The establishment of Renewable Resources Councils and fish and wildlife and land use planning programs will help to meet the practical objectives of community conservation strategies.

The Yukon government can support increased information exchange between communities on conservation projects and ideas and encourage the development of conservation strategies at the community level.

There was opportunity for public participation through the work of the Yukon Mining Advisory Committee. The government's Industrial Support Policy encourages community involvement in large development projects.

Tourism and Our Culture, History and Heritage

The Department of Tourism has begun consultation with First Nations and stakeholders on legislation to implement provisions under the UFA and Final Agreements respecting heritage resource management.

Tourism, Yukon First Nations and Yukon museums are taking steps to help visitors learn more about aboriginal culture, lifestyles and traditions.

Archaeological work has been completed at Annie Lake, Fish Lake, Frances Lake, Tatlain Lake, Lake Lebarge and Ft. Selkirk, in cooperation with area First Nations. Public awareness and a record of these activities are supported by educational booklets and displays.

Guided tours have been offered for two years at the Canyon City site at Miles Canyon in Whitehorse in cooperation with the Kwanlin Dun First Nation, the Yukon Conservation Society and the MacBride Museum.

Management plans have been completed for Fort Selkirk, 30 Mile and Herschel Island historic sites.

Other Heritage Branch activities include:

- Publication of a guidebook for researchers and scientists studying in Yukon communities
- Completion of a Yukon Museums Artifact Conservation Policy

- Assistance with the completion of oral history projects on the Yukon North Slope, in the Klukshu area, at Moosehide near Dawson and Rampart House

The Yukon government participated in the preparation of a national code of ethics for Sustainable Tourism. The Department of Tourism reports that visitors are becoming more interested in destinations that provide protection for environmental and heritage resources.

The Umbrella Final Agreement and Yukon First Nation Final Agreements, as well as the Inuvialuit and Tetlit Gwich'in Final Agreements, support the conservation and wise use of heritage resources in the Yukon.

A Heritage Resources Board formed under the Yukon land claim agreement will guide government activities in heritage conservation.

Aboriginal language training and interpretation services are supported through the Executive Council Office, Aboriginal Language Services, under an agreement with the federal government.



Part 4

Future Implementation

Strategy Review and Revision

The *Environment Act* provides for a revision of the Strategy and for public involvement in that process.

This document is designed to assist in the revision of the Strategy.

The first Yukon State of Environment Report will also provide important information on environmental issues that will help identify requirements for future action.

What is happening elsewhere in Canada?

Most other provincial and territorial jurisdictions have adopted policies or strategies supporting sustainable development. PEI was the first jurisdiction to complete a conservation strategy, in 1988. It published a renewed version of this plan in 1994.

The Northwest Territories revised its Sustainable Development policy (1990) in 1993. Using principles, objectives and 11 sustainability guidelines, the policy sets out how sustainable development will be applied in government activities relating to natural and heritage resources.

Manitoba is now putting the final touches on a new *Sustainable Development Act*, which will establish a framework for the implementation of sustainable development in that province in all sectors of the economy.

Round Tables, like the Yukon Council on the Economy and Environment are also active in Manitoba, Ontario, and Nova Scotia, to provide advice to government on sustainable development.

Future Considerations

As governments deal with fiscal restraint, cooperation and partnerships will be essential in achieving the goals of the strategy.

Increased intergovernmental coordination is needed to meet sustainable development goals and to comply with sustainable development principles.

Federal funding cutbacks and the cancellation or downsizing of government programs and departments have affected many resource programs.

The expiry of Economic Development Agreements in 1996 and 1997 will reduce funding for sustainable development initiatives. Many of the programs being carried out under the Arctic Environmental Strategy, such as the northern contaminants program and related clean-up activities, will also end in 1997.

The disappearance of these and other programs will leave a major gap in research and demonstration programs in our natural resource sectors and in environmental management.

Other programs under the federal government's Green Plan, including the Community Resources Management and the Yukon Environmental Action Program, are under review. Funding for the Northern Land Use Planning Programme was discontinued in 1990 and funding for State of Environment Reporting has also ended.

As a result, the Yukon government will face new fiscal and management challenges in achieving the goals of the Strategy. Among these, the YCEE recognizes the need to develop an environmental review process that will avoid or eliminate overlap and duplication of existing review processes. The Council recommends that such a process clearly define the proponents' responsibilities at each stage of the new process, to provide for greater certainty and cost-effectiveness.

New resource management processes under land claims, and new partnerships with First Nations and non-profit, community, and industry groups will be essential in this effort. Completion of the remaining 10 First Nation Final Agreements is necessary to achieve long term implementation of sustainable development plans in the Yukon. Increasing awareness of our limits to growth, and ways that we can use resources wisely, will also enable individuals to make the choices they need to make to help preserve our natural and heritage resources for future generations.

The Yukon Council on the Economy and Environment will endeavour to guide the Yukon government in its implementation of the Strategy in the coming years, through public conferences on key sectors of our society, and through regular reports on implementation progress.



Appendix A

The Yukon Government's Stand on the Environment

A Statement of Environmental Responsibility and Ethics (p.63, Yukon Conservation Strategy)

The people of the Yukon, native and non-native, have called for balanced and sustainable development of our natural resources. To be sustainable, development must be environmentally and economically sound. It must meet the needs of the present generation, but not compromise the needs of future generations.

The people of the Yukon have also called for the continued protection of lifestyle choices, including the opportunity to live off the land, and the maintenance of the natural environment that nurtures and inspires us and our many visitors.

To help achieve these objectives, the Government of the Yukon pledges to:

- Assess the positive and negative effects of all resource development activities. The negative effects of development, whether social or environmental, will be minimized.
- Consider all environmental attributes in the government's decision-making and regulatory processes. In particular, this means recognizing the important value of wildlife in supporting the food, recreational and cultural needs of Yukoners. And it means respecting the Yukon wilderness as a resource in its own right that has both economic and non-economic value.
- Protect essential ecosystems and ecosystem processes and ensure that water, trees, wildlife and other resources are available for all time.
- Protect the biological and genetic diversity of all Yukon plant and animal species.
- Educate Yukoners and their children to help them understand the value of our land and resources and to recognize the fundamental relationship between a healthy environment and cultural, community, social, economic, and individual health and well-being. This includes explaining that we are

individually responsible, in our everyday lives, for protecting the environment.

- Provide all Yukoners with the opportunity to be involved in, and contribute to, all decisions about our land and resources.
- Recognize and respect the international significance of the Yukon's environment. This means cooperating with our neighbours on the management of shared resources at the local, national, and international level.
- Reflect the principles of sustainable development and sound environment management in all government projects, policies, and programs.
- Ensure Yukon government employees understand their individual responsibility for protecting the environment when carrying out their duties.

The Government of the Yukon is committed to these principles and will carry out its duties in a way that is consistent with the expressed objectives of Yukoners.

In its commitment to these principles, the Government of the Yukon will continue to support the social and economic development of Yukon communities and the health and social well-being of Yukoners.