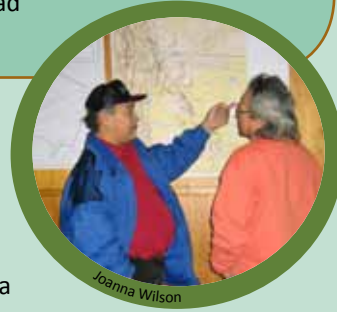


What is the Protected Areas Strategy?

The Northwest Territories Protected Areas Strategy (PAS) is a community-driven process to protect natural and cultural lands in the NWT and core representative areas within each eco-region in the NWT. These two goals are interlinked and complement each other; they cannot be separated or achieved independently. Currently three pieces of legislation are being used to protect land through the PAS process: the *Canada Wildlife Act*, the *Territorial Parks Act*, and the NWT's *Wildlife Act*.

The PAS is a partnership between communities, regional organizations, governments, environmental groups and industry. Complemented by other conservation initiatives in the NWT, work on PAS initiatives will contribute to a broad northern network of protected areas.



Protected Areas Strategy 2010-11 Highlights

- The Dehcho First Nations and Tłı̄chǫ Government submitted a joint request to the Minister of the Environment for Edézhzié to be established as a co-operatively managed National Wildlife Area of 14,250 km².
- Kwets'ootł'àà (North Arm of Great Slave Lake) candidate National Wildlife Area was sponsored by Environment Canada's Canadian Wildlife Service. This brings the number of sponsored candidate National Wildlife Areas to six in the NWT.
- Łue Túé Sųlái (Five Fish Lakes near Jean Marie River) candidate Cultural Conservation Area was sponsored by the Government of the Northwest Territories. This is the first area to be sponsored under the *Territorial Parks Act*.
- The Tłı̄chǫ Government submitted a proposal to the Government of the Northwest Territories to sponsor Yambahti (Daring Lake area) as a Critical Wildlife Area under NWT's *Wildlife Act*.
- The PAS Steering Committee published its *Establishment Action Plan 2010-2015: Fulfilling the Promise of the Northwest Territories' Protected Areas Strategy*. This plan outlines six objectives to help enhance the implementation of the Protected Areas Strategy in a co-ordinated and co-operative way.
- Boundaries for the Shúhtagot'ine Néné (Tulita Mountains) candidate National Wildlife Area were revised by Tulita community elders and the Tulita District Land Corporation in late February. The new study area boundary will be considered by Environment Canada before moving forward in the PAS process.
- Mineral assessment field work was done in Shúhtagot'ine Néné and Kwets'ootł'àà candidate National Wildlife Areas; ecological assessment field work was completed in Shúhtagot'ine Néné, Kwets'ool'àà, and Ka'a'gee Tu (Kakisa) candidate National Wildlife Areas.



Working Together

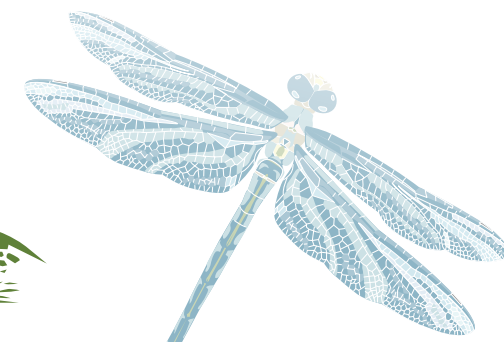
Partnerships are the cornerstone of PAS success. The PAS Steering Committee was established to guide the implementation of the Strategy, provide a forum to exchange ideas and to advise territorial and federal ministers on how best to develop a network of protected areas across the Northwest Territories.

Members of the PAS Steering Committee between April 1, 2010 and March 31, 2011 were:

- Inuvialuit (IRC/IGC) - Richard Binder
- NWT Métis Nation - Chris Heron
- Gwich'in Tribal Council - Mardy Semmler
- Sahtu Secretariat Incorporated - Freda Taniton/Rocky Norwegian
- Dehcho First Nations - Jonas Antoine (Vice-chair)
- Tłı̄chǫ Government - Eddie Erasmus
- Akaiicho Territory Government - Stephen Ellis/Don Balsillie
- North Slave Métis Alliance - Sheryl Grieve
- NWT and Nunavut Chamber of Mines - Ryan Silke
- Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers - Douglas Mead (Chair)
- Ducks Unlimited Canada - Shannon Haszard/Jason Charlwood
- Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society - NWT Chapter - Kris Brekke
- Government of the Northwest Territories - Mary Tapsell/Joel Holder
- Government of Canada - Teresa Joudrie

Note: If the representative changed during the year, both representatives are shown

Northwest Territories PROTECTED AREAS STRATEGY



"The land takes care of us, we take care of the land."



Annual Report 2010 - 2011



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR OF THE PAS Steering Committee

This has been a busy year for the Protected Areas Strategy. We can list many 'firsts' under the Strategy. Environment Canada's Canadian Wildlife Service sponsored the first Tłı̄chǫ-proposed candidate protected area: Kwets'ootł'àà, the North Arm of Great Slave Lake. For the first time, we have an area (Łue Túé Sųlái) sponsored by the Government of the Northwest Territories under the *Territorial Parks Act*.

As well, this year marked the first time a formal proposal to establish a National Wildlife Area has gone to the federal Minister of the Environment. Though Edézhzié, also known as Horn Plateau, is currently under a judicial review, the process continues to finalize Edézhzié as a National Wildlife Area.

Work continues on other aspects of implementing the PAS and the *Establishment Action Plan 2010-2015: Fulfilling the Promise of the Northwest Territories' Protected Areas Strategy*. The PAS is a transparent and inclusive process that effectively assesses cultural, ecological and economic values for candidate protected areas. Commitment by all the PAS partners continues for using the PAS process to establish protected areas in the NWT.

Many individuals and organizations worked hard this year to advance areas through the PAS process. We look forward to significant decisions this year on protected areas. My thanks to all involved for their ongoing efforts.

Please contact any of the PAS Steering Committee partners or the Secretariat for more information on specific areas or to get involved.

Douglas A. Mead, Ph.D.
Chair of the PAS Steering Committee
March 31, 2011



2010-2015 The Establishment Action Plan

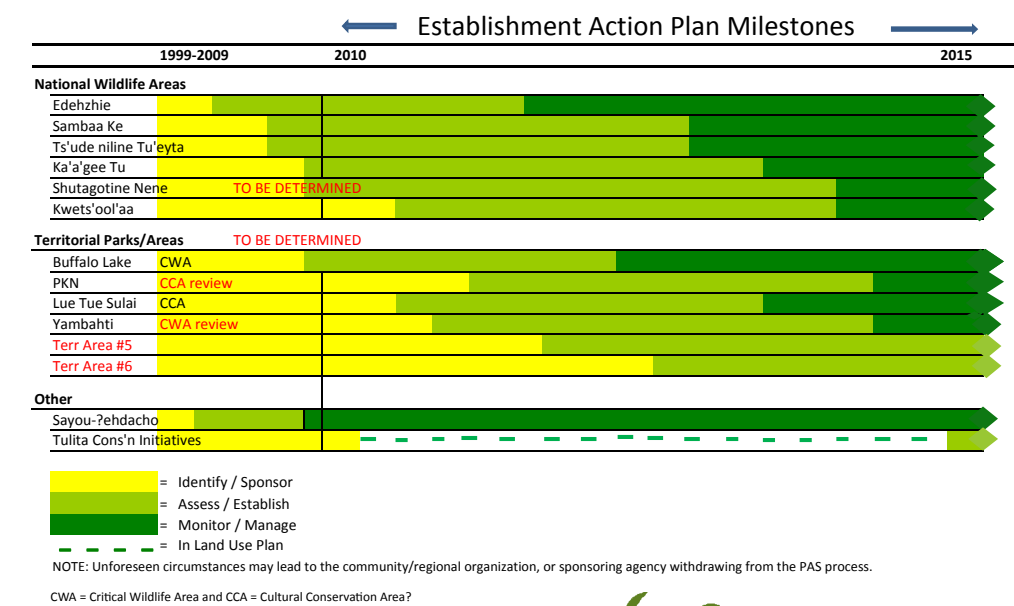
In June, the PAS Steering Committee released its *Establishment Action Plan 2010-2015: Fulfilling the Promise of the Northwest Territories' Protected Areas Strategy*. The goal of the Establishment Action Plan is to enhance the implementation of the Protected Areas Strategy in a co-ordinated and co-operative way.

The Plan's six objectives are:

- **Establish** six federally-protected National Wildlife Areas sponsored by Environment Canada;
- **Evaluate** up to six potential territorial candidate areas;
- **Identify** land stewardship/management options for unsponsored areas;
- **Create** opportunities for enhancing consistency and collaboration in management and monitoring between areas;
- **Analyse** and evaluate the Northwest Territories protected areas network; and
- **Evaluate** the Protected Areas Strategy governance structure and develop long-term recommendations.

Implementation of most of these objectives will occur simultaneously. Establishing National Wildlife Areas and evaluating territorial candidate areas are the top Plan priorities. The remaining objectives will enhance co-operation and collaboration among the various agencies, and help determine the best course of action for the future.

The figure below shows the anticipated timelines and milestones in the next five years for establishing areas. Many factors will influence the actual timing and ability to achieve these targets, such as a sponsorship approval, so the targets will be updated annually.



Northwest Territories Conservation Overview

The PAS is part of a suite of tools that help balance conservation and development in the NWT. Other tools include regional land use planning, lands protected under land claims processes, the regulatory regime and sustainable development practices. The following summarizes the main conservation initiatives underway in each region that complement PAS projects.

Inuvialuit Settlement Region

- Tarium Niruyutait Marine Protected Area in the Mackenzie Delta has been protected under the *Canada Oceans Act*.
- A candidate Marine Protected Area near Paulatuk is being assessed.
- Community Conservation Plans were updated.

Gwich'in Settlement Area

- The five-year review of the Gwich'in Land Use Plan was released. The PAS Science Team submitted an ecological representation analysis for the review.

Sahtu Settlement Area

- Negotiations for the establishment of Naáts'ihch'oh National Park Reserve focussed towards concluding an Impacts and Benefits Plan and the determination of the boundary.
- Draft three of the Sahtu Land Use Plan was released. The PAS Science Team submitted an ecological representation analysis of the Plan.
- Tulita community Elders and the Tulita District Land Corporation proposed that a revised Shúhtagot'ine Néné candidate National Wildlife Area boundary be incorporated as a Conservation Zone in the Land Use Plan.
- The Deline Land Corporation and the Deline Renewable Resources Council requested that Edailla also be included in the Sahtu Land Use Plan as a Conservation Zone.

Wek'èezhii Co-management Lands

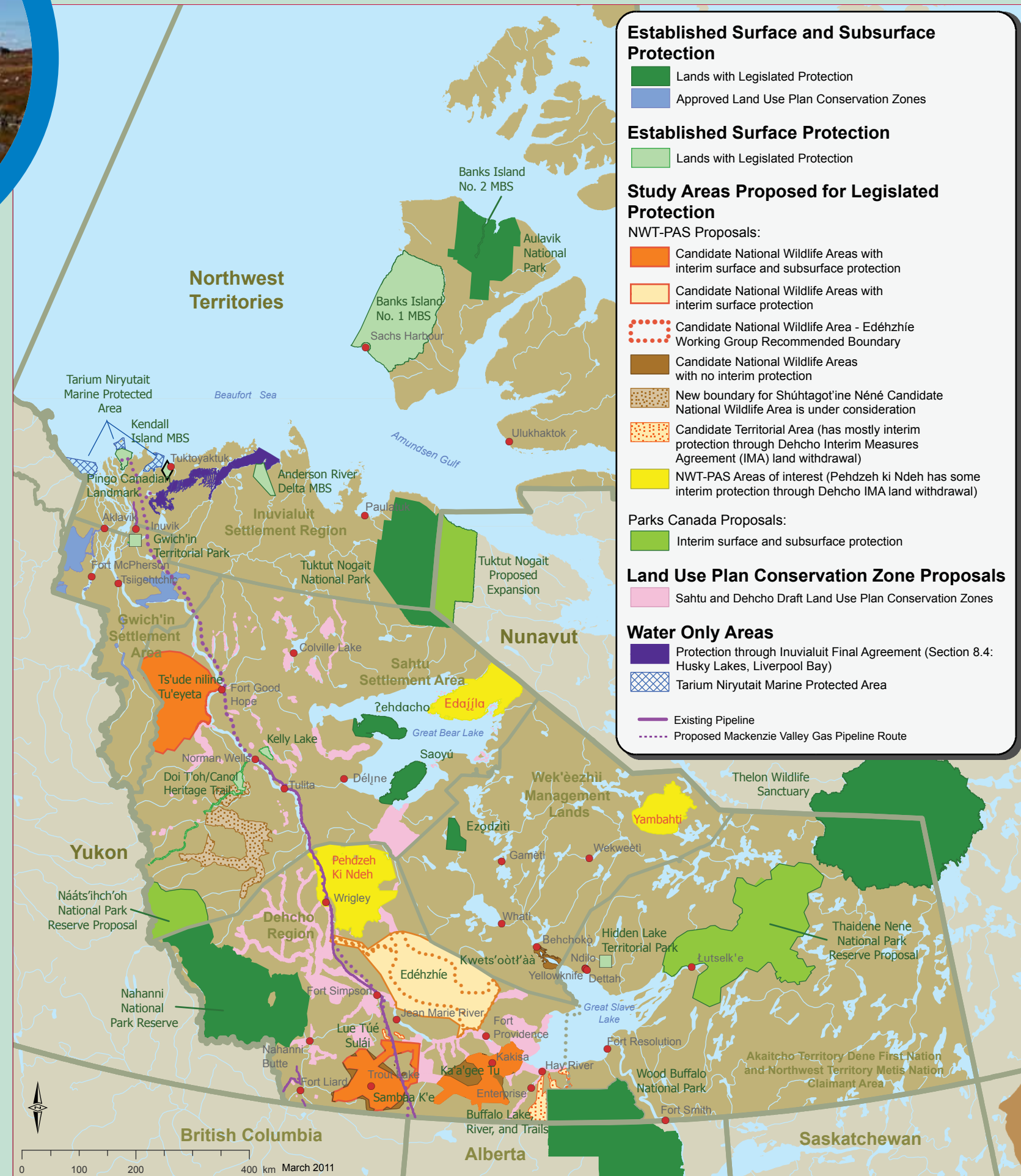
- Tłjichǫ Lands Protection Department continues to develop the Tłjichǫ Land Use Plan.

Dehcho

- The Dehcho Land Use Plan is being brought forward to the main negotiating table.
- The Dehcho Interim Land Withdrawal under their Interim Measures Agreement was extended for one year, until October 31, 2011.

Akaiicho, North and South Regions

- Work on the proposed Thaidene Nene (East Arm of Great Slave Lake) National Park Reserve proposal continues.



Protected Areas: When will they be done?

Protected areas are an important legacy for future generations. As a key component of environmental stewardship, they will help protect our cultures and biodiversity in the NWT.

In that sense, protected areas are never 'done': the story really begins with establishment. Protected areas are meant to be long term. They should protect significant cultural and ecological values. They can help buffer the effects of climate change, and can act as benchmarks to help measure changes due to industrial development. Protected areas can also be magnets for tourism because of their significant values. Monitoring for changes, and adaptive management in and around protected areas, are part of the protected areas story.

Cultural Values - The evaluation of cultural values includes documenting and discussing the historical, social, spiritual, educational and other cultural values of the candidate protected area.

Ecological Values - The evaluation of ecological values includes determining the significance of the habitats, plants, wildlife, and water of the candidate protected area. It also includes understanding how ecological processes like fire and climate influence the ecosystem as a whole.

Identify, Establish, Manage

The role of the PAS Steering Committee and the PAS process will continue to evolve. The first decade of the PAS focussed on communities identifying suitable areas for protection. The current focus of the PAS is on the establishment of protected areas, as emphasized in the 2010-2015 Establishment Action Plan released by the Steering Committee. In the later stages of the Action Plan, the Steering Committee will reassess its role and function, as management of established areas shifts to the sponsoring agencies, regional governments and communities. What is certain is that the protected areas that the PAS partners have worked to establish will play a critical role to safeguard our land, cultures and wildlife in the near and distant future.