

# Benefits of Protected Areas in the Northwest Territories

## The Northwest Territories Protected Areas Strategy



Protected areas are a key part of a sustainable future. As a key component of environmental stewardship, they provide benefits at the local, territorial, national, and international level.

### Protected areas help plants, animals, and people stay healthy.

- Protected areas maintain natural habitat and species diversity.
- Protected areas maintain healthy 'ecosystem services' such as filtering water, purifying air, moderating climate, and controlling disease.
- Protected areas support Aboriginal people and their cultures and traditions.

### Protected areas support information sharing.

- Protected area planning and management is one venue that brings together traditional knowledge and conservation science, providing a more complete understanding than either knowledge system could do alone.
- Protected areas provide ongoing opportunities to build knowledge about how ecosystems work, and to detect and monitor change

### Protected areas help us mitigate and adapt to climate change.

- Protected areas in the boreal forest absorb and store large amounts of carbon.
- A network of protected areas helps ensure that a variety of habitats remain healthy even if the land changes.
- By reducing the pressures of human activity, protected areas give ecosystems time to adapt to new climatic conditions.

### Protected areas attract tourism.

- Protected areas provide tourism experiences that feature wilderness, wildlife, and Aboriginal cultures.
- Protected areas provide a potential land base for eco-tourism and cultural tourism.

### Protected areas increase clarity in land use.

- Protected areas reduce the risk that industry invests in land that communities do not intend to make available for industrial development.
- If communities have realized their conservation goals, they may be more inclined to support industrial development proposals outside of protected areas.
- Protected areas provide a source of 'baseline' environmental conditions that can be compared with environmental conditions at industrial sites, and help identify possible cause and effect relationships.

### Protected areas help Canada fulfill national and international commitments.

- Protected areas reduce the current rate of biodiversity loss.
- Protected areas management respects and reaffirms the role of Aboriginal people and traditional knowledge in northern conservation planning