

## **NWT Protected Areas Strategy Steering Committee Appoints New Chairperson**

The Northwest Territories Protected Areas Strategy (PAS) Steering Committee welcomes their new Chairperson, Chris Heron. Mr. Heron was appointed for a one-year term by the PAS Steering Committee, on December 1, 2005.

The Protected Areas Strategy was created in 1999. There are currently 11 nominated areas at various stages of completion. The Mackenzie Valley 5-Year Action Plan was developed by the PAS Steering Committee to identify and establish a network of protected areas along the Mackenzie Valley. This conservation plan is being implemented in advance of pipeline development, in order to maintain a healthy ecosystem and ensure a sustainable future for the people, lands, waters and wildlife of the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Heron, who has represented the Northwest Territory Metis Alliance on the PAS Steering Committee since 2003, says, "I am pleased to take on this leadership role and look forward to advancing the work of the Committee. Aboriginal Governments, and all residents of the Northwest Territories, will benefit from Protected Areas Strategy initiatives, through our mandate to protect areas of natural and cultural significance."

Chris Heron takes over from former Chairperson, Stanley Sanguetz of the Jean Marie River First Nation, who represented the Dehcho First Nations on the Steering Committee. Mr. Sanguetz will continue his involvement with the PAS through his participation on the Edehzhie Working Group and other PAS initiatives in the Dehcho.

The PAS is a partnership among communities, government, environmental non-governmental organizations and industry. The partners work together to establish permanently protected areas across the NWT. The PAS process is driven by community participation and decision.

Funding to implement the PAS is provided by the Government of Canada, Government of the Northwest Territories, World Wildlife Fund, Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, and Ducks Unlimited Canada. These partners have committed an additional \$16 million to implement the Action Plan through 2010.

For more information, contact:

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