



Special Places

NEWS AND VIEWS ON THE NWT PROTECTED AREAS STRATEGY

The NWT Protected Areas Strategy – Helping to Chart a Course for Protection

Protecting areas of land and water while keeping our options open for future economic development is an important goal for many NWT residents thinking about our future. A Protected Areas Strategy, or PAS, is a guiding plan or “road map” to help northerners meet this goal in ways that benefit both the environment and the economy.

A commitment to develop a Protected Areas Strategy for the NWT was announced in 1996 in conjunction with the federal Cabinet’s approval of the BHP Diamond project. Both the Federal and Territorial governments are committed to preparing this Strategy by December 1998 and making substantial progress on identifying and protecting new candidate areas by the year 2000. Steering this process is a multi-stakeholder PAS Advisory Committee made up of representatives from all regions in the western NWT plus industry, environmental organizations and government.

The purpose of this edition of the PAS Newsletter is to present the highlights of the **Working Final Draft of the NWT Protected Areas Strategy**. We encourage you to comment and provide suggestions to the PAS Advisory Committee as it works towards the development of a final draft. A formal open house and public discussion session together

with a PAS implementation and options workshop will be held the week of October 19, 1998 in Yellowknife. Further information will be available through local newspapers and radio. Based on the outcomes of these sessions the PAS Advisory Committee will finalize the Strategy and forward it to the Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development and the Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada.

PAS Advisory Committee Membership

- Inuvialuit Game Council
- Gwich’in Interim Land Use Planning Board
- Sahtu Land Use Working Group
- Deh Cho First Nations
- Dogrib Treaty 11 Council
- Akaitcho Territory Government
- South Slave Metis Tribal Council
- NWT Chamber of Mines
- Environmental Organizations – NWT
- Government of Canada – DIAND
- Government of the Northwest Territories – RWED

Nunavut organizations have been kept informed during all stages of Strategy development. They have chosen not to participate in the PAS Advisory Committee.

Some people said to me, ‘why don’t you put the money in the bank and save it for the future?’ I should have told him that time, ‘The North is my bank’.

– Bertram Pokiak, Tuktoyaktuk

Precedence of Land Claims Agreements and Treaty Rights

Northern Aboriginal peoples have always had strong ties to the land. Their rights concerning the resources of the land, and their responsibilities for managing those resources, are being constitutionally recognized through the settlement of land claims, the clarification of treaty rights, and the creation of regionally based resource management bodies. Such agreements affirm the leadership role of local

people in land and water management, giving them more control over protecting the land as well as maintaining resource development options for the future. This Protected Areas Strategy therefore is meant to support all existing land claims agreements and treaties and recognizes that the provisions of those agreements take precedence over the ones presented here.

Preservation of wild areas is increasingly important and I urge the involvement of everyone in this task: setting aside rivalries and pooling efforts among agencies, directing energy and time to the practical task of getting new areas established as quickly as possible.

– Stan Rowe, ecologist

Why have protected areas?

Across the North are areas of land and water that need protection, beyond standard land use controls, to conserve their natural and cultural values. These places may be important mainly to local people. They may also be of territorial, national, or even international significance. What these places have in common is that protection of their natural and cultural values deserves highest priority over other uses. This Strategy focuses on the process of identification, evaluation, and designation of such areas. It promotes the balanced and orderly establishment of new protected areas as defined by IUCN/The World Conservation Union:

An area of land or sea especially dedicated to the protection and maintenance of biological diversity, and its associated natural and cultural resources, managed through legal or other effective means.

This definition embraces a wide variety of scientific and cultural reasons for establishing protected areas. As well, it accounts for a wide range of levels of protection - from strict preservation to conditional accommodation of industrial activities.

What is a Protected Areas Strategy?

- A guide to help identify and establish protected areas.
- A set of shared goals, principles, processes and tools to support conservation and resource management concerns in regional or local land use planning.
- A set of specific action items and commitments to facilitate the implementation of protected areas.

Land Claim Regions of the Northwest Territories



Why do we need an NWT Protected Areas Strategy?

- It will facilitate representation of the full range of natural and cultural values in protected areas in the NWT.
- It will provide a more clearly defined context for resource development and conservation decisions.
- It will reinforce the leadership role of communities and regions in land and water use management.
- It will help alleviate concerns that future resource development will compromise the protection of special natural areas.
- It will help focus attention on the need for marine and freshwater protected areas.
- It will promote a more coordinated approach among agencies responsible for protected areas.

Who will benefit from this strategy?

- Communities, aboriginal organizations and regional resource management bodies will be supported in meeting their long term protection goals for lands and waters critical to the health of their economies and cultures.
- Resource-based industries will obtain greater clarity about land use access and development options.
- Environmental interests and the scientific community will see significant progress towards protecting representative examples of the NWT's natural regions.
- Present and future generations of north-erners will benefit from the ecological, cultural and economic values protected today.

Common Features of Protected Areas

This Strategy recognizes that any protected area:

1. Has clear boundaries;
2. Is established and managed by a legally empowered land management authority, such as a federal agency or a claims-based body;
3. Provides long-term protection for land-based cultural values and traditional harvesting activities;
4. Accommodates recreation and tourism development when compatible with the values being protected;
5. Prohibits or restricts industrial land uses such as mining, forestry, power generation, transportation and agriculture;
6. Gives higher value to long-term ecological benefits than to commercial benefits identified in a resource assessment process.

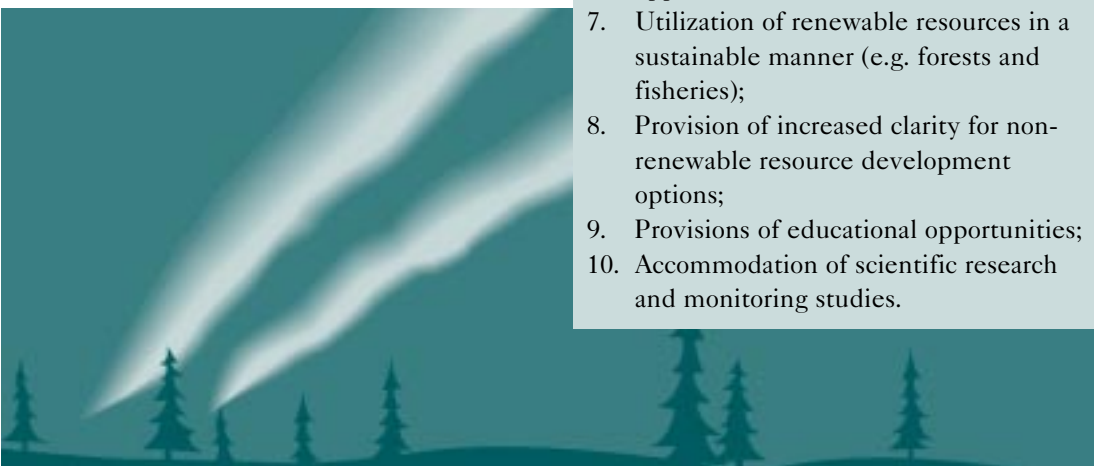
Purposes of Protected Areas

The specific purposes for establishing protected areas will differ from place to place. Some of the more common purposes include:

1. Protection of wilderness;
2. Preservation of species and genetic diversity;
3. Maintenance of ecosystems (e.g. protection of watershed or soils) and biodiversity;
4. Protection of specific natural and cultural features;
5. Protection of important harvesting areas;
6. Provision of tourism and recreation opportunities;
7. Utilization of renewable resources in a sustainable manner (e.g. forests and fisheries);
8. Provision of increased clarity for non-renewable resource development options;
9. Provisions of educational opportunities;
10. Accommodation of scientific research and monitoring studies.

**The land
is part of you.
It is in you.
To take it away
makes you sick.**

**– Neil Colin,
Fort MacPherson**



Vision and Goals – Where Do We Want To Go?

Vision Statement

The NWT Protected Areas Strategy will provide a practical guide to support the establishment of regional networks of protected areas that reflect conservation biology considerations and the local and traditional knowledge of northern residents. This Strategy will promote a balanced approach to land use decisions that takes into account ecological, economic and cultural factors. Developed by and for northerners, this Strategy will also

support the protected area goals of neighbouring jurisdictions and associated national initiatives.

Goal 1:

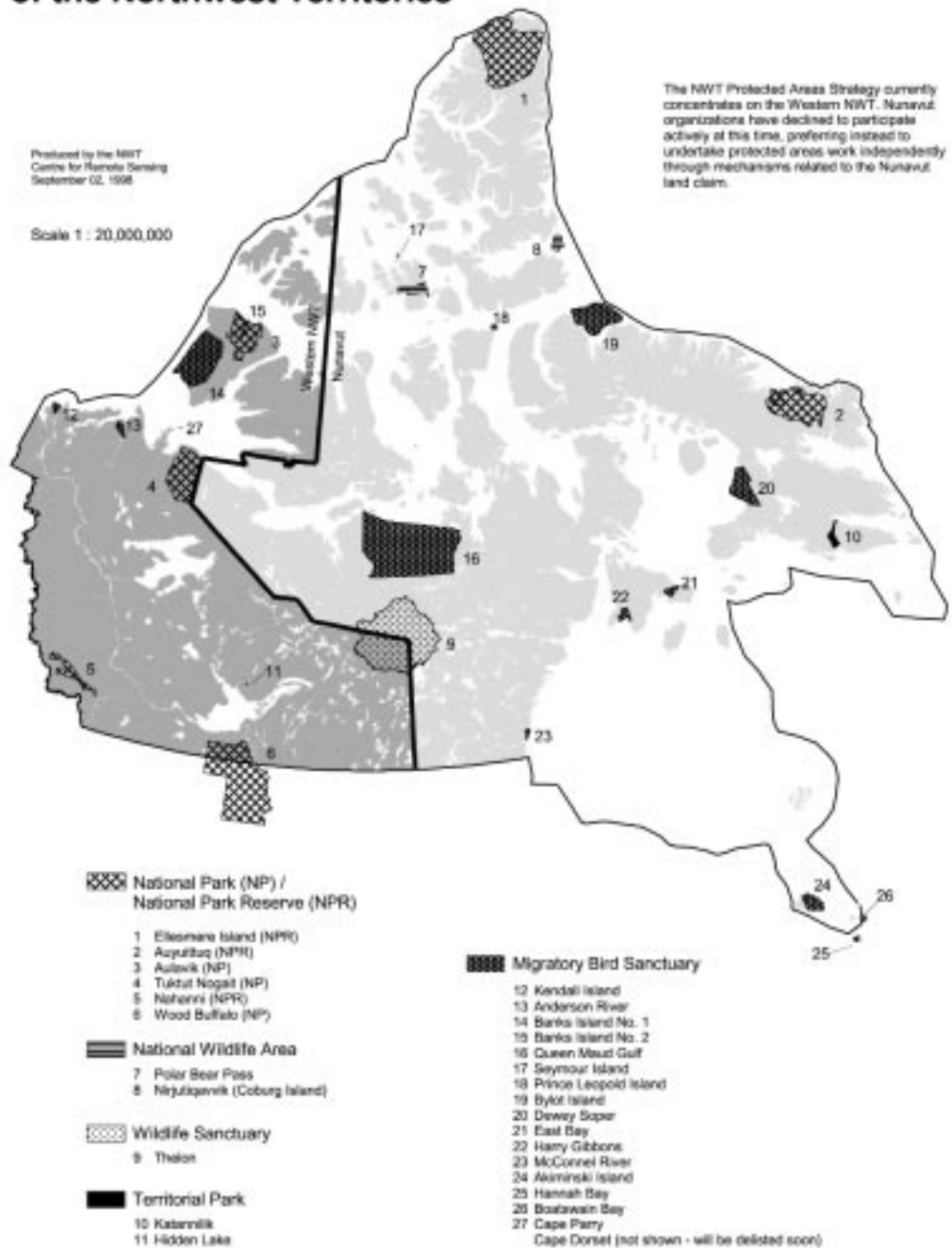
To protect key natural areas of importance to northern communities.

- Northern residents know best which lands and waters are most critical to their traditional economies and cultures.
- Key natural areas could include unique or significant wildlife habitats, traditional

The land forms part of a cultural landscape, full of signs and symbols which reflect history, knowledge and the values critical to Dene existence.

– Tom Andrews, Yamoria's Arrows

Existing Legislated Protected Areas of the Northwest Territories



Purpose of the NWT Strategy

The purpose of the NWT Protected Areas Strategy was defined during a multi-stakeholder Protected Areas Workshop in April, 1998:

“The Protected Areas Strategy should focus on developing an overall framework and set of criteria to guide the work of identifying and establishing parks and protected areas in the NWT. The task of developing concrete protected area proposals should primarily be left to regional management and planning bodies and processes.”

harvesting areas, sites of special cultural value, prime tourism areas, and unusual landforms or features.

Goal 2:

To protect representative areas within each ecoregion.

- Each of the NWT’s natural regions - called ecoregions - is made up of a unique combination of landscape features, plants and animals.
- Some ecoregions are under-represented in existing protected areas. Establishing representative protected areas in these ecoregions will ensure that the entire diversity of life forms and their habitats in the NWT will have a secure future.
- The Federal and Territorial Governments have made numerous commitments to this goal through their endorsement of such agreements as the Convention on Biodiversity, the Whitehorse Mining Initiative, and the GNWT Sustainable Development Policy.

Objectives – What targets should the Strategy aim for?

- To provide the tools to support the identification, modification and/or establishment of protected areas in regions with and without settled claims.
- To raise awareness of the need for protected areas and assist with the development of regionally based protected area processes in regions with unsettled claims.
- To establish mutually beneficial partnerships while clarifying the roles and

responsibilities for identifying and establishing protected areas.

- To define clear commitments for implementing the provisions of this Strategy.

Principles – What general rules should guide us?

- **Precedence of Aboriginal Agreements**
Conform to all aboriginal treaties, land claims agreements, and self-government agreements. In the event of any unforeseen conflicts between this Strategy and such agreements, the latter take precedence.
- **Aboriginal Traditions and Consent**
Support the traditional land-based economies and cultures of aboriginal peoples.
- **Mineral Tenure System**
Recognize that the existing system for acquiring mineral rights allows entry on specified Crown lands for the purpose of staking claims and prospecting. Once a mineral claim is staked, the holder has the right to explore for and develop minerals, subject to all laws. The Crown does not have the ability, under the existing regulations to refuse to record a properly staked claim, or revoke a mineral right.
- **Land Use Planning**
Rely on locally based land use planning and resource management processes to take the lead on identifying community interests in protected areas.
- **Full Stakeholder Participation**
Include a full range of stakeholders at all stages of protected areas planning and establishment.
- **Ecological Integrity**
Plan and manage protected areas to maintain biodiversity and ecological processes.
- **Information**
Use the best available traditional knowledge, local knowledge, scientific data and resource development information to establish or modify protected areas.
- **Assessment of Representativeness**
Undertake an assessment of ecoregion representativeness as part of the evaluation of proposed protected areas.
- **Economic Opportunities**
Recognize the potential contributions of

Virtually all of the actions required to ensure the security and sustainability of life on Earth must be taken at the level of specific and often local situations. And virtually every success depends on the quality, commitment, and capability of those who lead the way.

*- Maurice Strong,
Secretary-General of the
UN Rio Earth Summit*

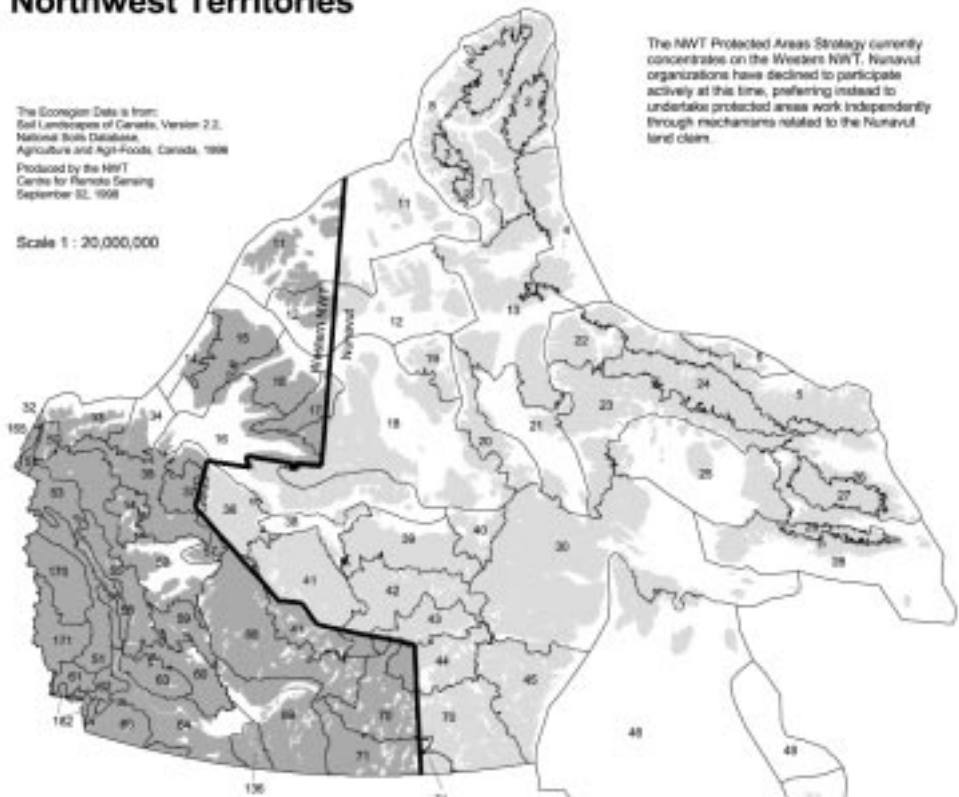
renewable and non-renewable resource development to the economic and social well-being of northern residents.

- Industrial Development**
 Prohibit industrial developments such as mining, forestry, transportation and power generation in areas designated to provide the highest levels of protection. Industrial activities may be accepted in other designations of protected areas when it can be clearly demonstrated that the activities are compatible with the values being protected.
- Interim Protection**
 Provide interim protection to maintain

the values of proposed protected areas while detailed evaluation studies are in progress. Any interim protection measures should be applied with specific time horizons and promote balanced decision making.

- Resource Development Assessment**
 Undertake an assessment of resource development potential as part of the evaluation of proposed protected areas.
- Legislation**
 Use existing legislation where possible, and new or amended legislation where necessary. Any revisions or additions to legislation related to protected areas must

Terrestrial Ecoregions of the Northwest Territories



The Ecoregion Data is from:
 Soil Landscapes of Canada, Version 2.3,
 National Soils Database,
 Agriculture and Agri-Foods, Canada, 1998
 Produced by the NWT
 Centre for Remote Sensing
 September 22, 1999

Scale 1 : 20,000,000

The NWT Protected Areas Strategy currently concentrates on the Western NWT. Nunavut organizations have declined to participate actively at this time, preferring instead to undertake protected areas work independently through mechanisms related to the Nunavut land claim.

Ecoregions:

- | | | |
|--|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1 - 4 Ellesmere and Devon Islands Ice Caps | 33 Yukon Coastal Plain | 56 Mackenzie River Plain |
| 5 Baffin Mountains | 34 Tuktoyaktuk Coastal Plain | 57 Grandin Plains |
| 6 Baffin Island Coastal Lowlands | 35 Anderson River Plain | 58 Franklin Mountains |
| 8, 10 Ellesmere Mountains | 36 Dease Arm Plain | 59 Koller Lake Plain |
| 9 Eureka Hills | 37 Coronation Hills | 60 Great Slave Lake Plain |
| 11 Sverdrup Islands Lowland | 38 Bluenose Lake Plain | 61 Nahanni Plateau |
| 12 Parry Islands Plateau | 39 Bathurst Hills | 62 Sibbeston Lake Plain |
| 13 Lancaster Plateau | 40 Queen Maud Gulf Lowland | 63 Horn Plateau |
| 14 Banks Island Coastal Plain | 41 Chantrey Inlet Lowland | 64 Hay River Lowland |
| 15 Banks Island Lowland | 42 Teljusk Lake Upland | 65 Northern Alberta Uplands |
| 16 Arrandson Gulf Lowlands | 43 Gerry Lake Lowland | 66 Coppermine River Upland |
| 17 Shaler Mountains | 44 Rock River Plain | 69 Tazin Lake Upland |
| 18 Victoria Islands Lowlands | 45 Dulavert Lake Plain/Upland | 70 Kazan River Upland |
| 19 Prince of Wales Island Lowland | 46 Miguon River Upland | 71 Selwyn Lake Upland |
| 20 Boothia Peninsula Plateau | 47 Southampton Island Plain | 136 Slave River Lowland |
| 21 Gulf of Boothia Plain | 48 Otawa Islands | 165 British-Richardson Mountains |
| 22 Borden Peninsula Plateau | 49 Belcher Islands | 170 Mackenzie Mountains |
| 23 Melville Peninsula Plateau | 50 Mackenzie Delta | 171 Selwyn Mountains |
| 24 Baffin Island Uplands | 51 Peel River Plateau | 182 Hyland Highland |
| 25 Foxe Basin Plain | 52 Great Bear Lake Plain | 216 Hudson Bay Lowland |
| 26 Pangnirtung Upland | 53 Fort McPherson Plain | 217 James Bay Lowland |
| 27 Hall Peninsula Upland | 54 Corville Hills | |
| 28 Meta Incognita Peninsula | 55 Norman Range | |
| 29 Baffin Upland | 56 Mackenzie River Plain | |
| 30 Wager Bay Plateau | 57 Grandin Plains | |
| | 58 Franklin Mountains | |
| | 59 Koller Lake Plain | |

account for the needs and concerns of affected Aboriginal peoples.

- **Transboundary Protected Areas**
Promote a coordinated, partnership approach to protected area efforts that cross regional, territorial or provincial boundaries.

- **Third Party Interests and Access Considerations**

Recognize and respect third-party interests and access considerations, and provide fair compensation when those interests are affected by the establishment of protected areas.

The Broader Context – How do Protected Areas Fit with Other Lands?

The establishment of protected areas is a conservation component of regional land use planning processes including integrated resource management planning. To meet the goals of this Strategy, protected areas must not be planned and managed as isolated “islands” of nature. Rather their potential interactions with surrounding lands and waters should be considered so that management regimes for both protected areas and adjacent lands can be harmonized for their mutual benefit. The creative application of standard land use regulations can often promote such compatibility. However in some cases protected areas must be linked with mechanisms such as buffer zones or corridors to ensure that the integrity of the core protected area is maintained.



Who will implement this Strategy?

One of the primary purposes of this Strategy is to set out a general framework within which any proposal for a protected area can be processed. The details concerning the use of the framework will vary from region to region. However in all cases, regional resource management bodies will provide the main driving force along every step of the way - from identifying initial areas of interest to requesting formal designation of a new protected area.

The Federal and Territorial governments plus industry and environmental organizations will contribute directly to the implementation of this Strategy by providing technical and administrative support to regional protected area initiatives. A newly mandated advisory committee and supporting secretariat will help coordinate implementation activities. For more information on implementing the Strategy, contact the Secretariat at the address below.

**If you
don't know
who the
Creator is,
just go outside.**

**– Joe Boucher,
Dene Kede**

We'd Like to Hear from you...

Your comments will help the PAS Advisory Committee finalize a draft of this Strategy that reflects the widest possible range of interests and hopes for the future of northern protected areas. You may want to answer the questions on the following page and mail or fax them to us at the address below. Or you may want to contact us directly by phone or email to provide your general comments. If you would like to discuss this Strategy with the Committee member representing your particular area of interest, call us and we will help you get in touch with the right person. Also, please let us know if you would like to receive a complete draft of the Strategy. The draft Strategy and several of the supporting documents are available on the PAS web site at: www.rwed.gov.nt.ca/special/pas.htm.

The PAS Advisory Committee hopes to have a final draft of this Strategy ready for consideration by the Federal and Territorial governments by early November. To meet this deadline we would like to hear from you by Friday October 16th. The Committee would be grateful for any input you can give. Thank you!

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Questions

There may be requests for your comments to be distributed outside of the PAS Advisory Committee for wider consideration. This would happen only with your permission. Please check one of the possibilities below. Please use additional pages if you need more space for your comments.

- I do not want my name or my comments released to the public.
- I have no objections to my comments being released to the public but I want my name withheld.
- I have no objections to my comments and my name being released to the public.

Name

Community or Organization

1. Do the **vision** and **goals** of the Strategy reflect your own long term vision of protected areas in your region?

2. Do the **objectives** and **principles** provide a useful approach to achieve the vision and goals of the Strategy?

3. What do you see as the major **implementation** challenges and opportunities for the Strategy?

4. In implementing the Strategy, what do you think are the appropriate **roles and responsibilities** of the partners to achieve our common purpose?

- Regional and community bodies

- Environmental organizations

- Industry

- The general public

- Governments
