



# Conservation Network Planning NWT



## New Protected Areas Legislation

New NWT legislation for protected areas is being created in partnership with Indigenous governments, which will include shared governance and management and monitoring of protected areas.

The new legislation is expected to be tabled in 2019. The GNWT will continue to recognize and respect Aboriginal and treaty rights, including requirements of land, resources and self-government agreements, within the conservation network.

*Northern landscapes are diverse and are particularly vulnerable to a changing climate. The land, rich in biodiversity, contributes to the high quality of life enjoyed in the Northwest Territories (NWT). Food security and the traditional economy rely on continued biodiversity in the north.*

Biodiversity means the variety, of plants, animals and other living things in a particular area. A variety of genetically diverse species interact to form productive interdependent food webs, known as ecosystems. The relatively intact biodiversity of the NWT provides a rare chance to proactively plan for a healthy future for the land, water, wildlife and people. It is much more efficient and cost effective to responsibly conserve land now than it is to restore land in the future.

## A NWT priority

Making sure land in the NWT remains healthy into the future is a Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) priority. This includes protection of biodiversity through the establishment and management of protected areas and conservation areas, often referred to as conservation network planning. The GNWT set out its vision for land use and management in *Northern Lands Northern Leadership – The GNWT Land Use and Sustainability Framework*. Conservation network planning is an integral part of the overall land management regime in the NWT and helps to achieve the priorities of 18<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly of the NWT.

### Conservation Network

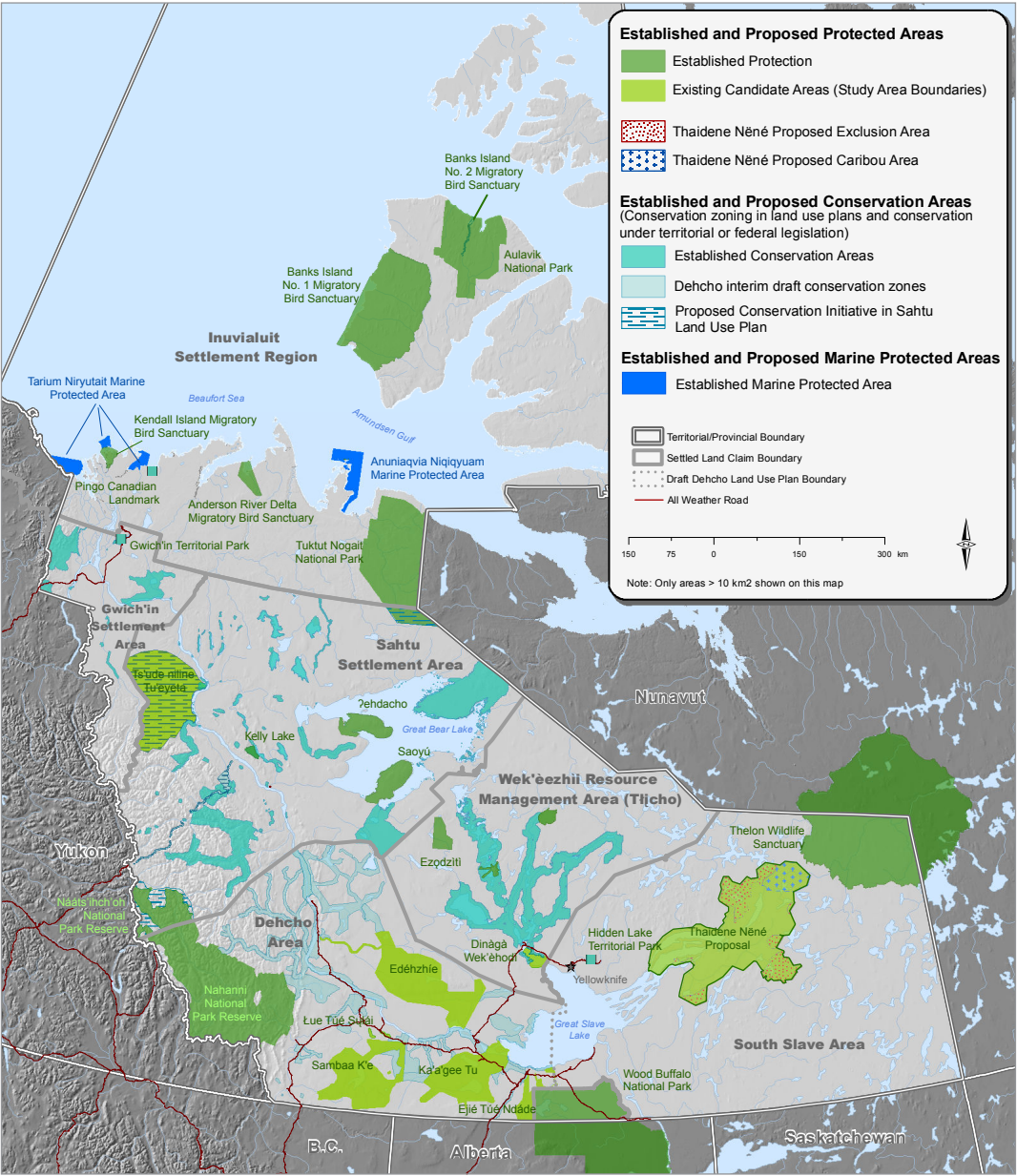
#### Protected Areas

Backbone of network, have the highest level of protection, no industrial development allowed, areas are permanent, and are jointly managed and monitored.

#### Conservation Areas

Provide complimentary but less restrictive protection. Do not guarantee management and monitoring. Allow species to move between protected areas.





Moving forward

In the fall of 2016, the GNWT released *Healthy Land, Healthy People: GNWT Priorities for Advancement of Conservation Network Planning 2016-2021*, which sets out priorities for how the GNWT will move forward over the next five years to make sure land in the NWT remains healthy for future generations in partnership with Indigenous governments and other planning partners.

Healthy Land, Healthy People includes two overarching priorities:

**Priority 1:** Conclude the planning and decision making processes for the eight existing candidate protected areas

**Priority 2:** Develop a renewed strategy for conservation network planning in partnership with Indigenous governments and other partners

**What is a conservation network?**

A conservation network includes protected areas and conservation areas of various sizes that collectively contribute to ecological, economic and social stability more effectively than individual sites could alone. A conservation network ensures the landscape is connected and provides corridors and reproductive areas for wildlife, aiding species migration and adaptation. As human-caused disturbances increase, intact areas become even more important.

**Why is conservation network planning important?**

In the NWT, the land and water are lifelines for Indigenous cultures and the wellbeing of all people. Often, the most biologically diverse areas are also the most culturally rich, providing long-term opportunities for the development of a diversified economy through tourism opportunities, important cultural,

recreational and educational activities, and other incomes derived through land-based activities. A conservation network is an effective and equitable way to ensure NWT’s cultures, land and water stay healthy for future generations.

Ecological resilience to climate change depends on the conservation of a wide diversity of habitats across a range of landscapes. Protected areas are considered one of the most effective, efficient and proactive ways to support people and protect land and biodiversity in a changing climate.

Biodiversity maintains Indigenous food systems and supports access to a traditional economy, thereby sustaining Indigenous culture and strengthening social systems within communities. Just as healthy communities can provide strong leadership in response to climate change, protected areas can also support both Indigenous wellbeing and reconciliation commitments to Indigenous peoples.