

2025 Northwest Territories Environmental Audit



What is the NWT Environmental Audit?

The NWT Environmental Audit (Audit) is an independent review that assesses how effective the regulatory regime is in the Mackenzie Valley. It also looks at the availability of the environmental information needed to make resource management decisions in the NWT, including information on cumulative impacts. The Audit looks at how the NWT environmental regulatory system is working and evaluates whether improvements have been made since the previous Audit.

Since 2005, audits have been conducted every five years as required by the federal *Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act* and land claim agreements.

Who conducted the Audit?

The Audit was conducted by an independent consultant with experience in the NWT contracted by the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT). A steering committee of Indigenous, territorial and federal government representatives provided guidance and direction to the Audit team.



What did the 2025 Audit look at?

The federal *Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act* includes a list of subjects the Audit must look at. These include:

- 1. How land and water use is managed**
The Audit looked at the tools used in the Mackenzie Valley to manage the use of land and water by people and industry to make sure all parts of the environment are protected.
- 2. How environmental monitoring information is collected and used**
The Audit looked at the different ways barren-ground caribou and cumulative impact information is collected and used by communities, governments, researchers and industry to manage the use of land and water.

What were some of the findings from the Audit?

The Audit did not identify any major new issues since the last Audit in 2020. Overall, the Audit found that there continues to be progress in many areas and there is confidence in how impacts are regulated in the Mackenzie Valley. The Audit found there are still improvements to be made in the areas of unsettled land claims, participation in the co-management system, community well-being, and approval processes. To address needed improvements, the Auditor made 25 new recommendations to governments and co-management boards and carried forward 19 recommendations from previous Audits.

What are some of the changes made from the last audit?

Examples of improvement since the last Audit include:

- Actions are being taken to bring parties together and conduct reviews to improve socio-economic outcomes, such as a socio-economic forum.
- The GNWT finalized the Cumulative Impact Monitoring Framework, which helps describe the approaches used by the NWT Cumulative Impact Monitoring Program (NWT CIMP) to prioritize and analyse cumulative impacts.
- Existing land use plans have been updated.

How will the GNWT address these recommendations from the Audit?

The GNWT is committed to addressing the recommendations of the Audit and to continue to improve our environmental management in the NWT.

Key actions the GNWT is taking include:

- Providing plain language summaries and links to GNWT-led research on barren-ground caribou on its website.
- Working with the Land and Water Boards to identify information and tools to address cumulative impacts in pre-screening decisions.
- Running a directed funding call entitled [Road Development Impacts: Understanding and mitigating cumulative impacts from road development](#).
- Identifying a list of indicators to monitor and report on community well-being.
- Work with Land and Water Boards and the federal government to create a communication material that explains the securities process in an accessible way.

Who will benefit from the Audit and its recommendations?

Audit recommendations will help decision-makers within the NWT regulatory system improve environmental and resource management tools in the NWT. The Audit benefits all residents of the NWT, as its goal is to improve the quality and health of the environment for present and future generations, through principles of sustainability, protection and conservation.

