



Tuktut Nogait

National Park of Canada

Management Plan

2024



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2024

Tuktut Nogait

National Park of Canada

Management Plan

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Foreword



From coast to coast to coast, national historic sites, national parks and national marine conservation areas are a source of shared pride for Canadians. They reflect Canada's natural and cultural heritage and tell stories of who we are, including the historic and contemporary contributions of Indigenous peoples.

These cherished places are a priority for the Government of Canada. We are committed to protecting natural and cultural heritage, expanding the system of protected places, and contributing to the recovery of species at risk.

At the same time, we continue to offer new and innovative visitor and outreach programs and activities to ensure that more Canadians can experience these iconic destinations and learn about history, culture and the environment.

In collaboration with Indigenous communities and key partners, Parks Canada conserves and protects national historic sites and national parks; enables people to discover and connect with history and nature; and helps sustain the economic value of these places for local and regional communities.

This new management plan for Tuktut Nogait National Park of Canada supports this vision.

Management plans are developed by a dedicated team at Parks Canada through extensive consultation and input from Indigenous partners, other partners and stakeholders, local communities, as well as visitors past and present. I would like to thank everyone who contributed to this plan for their commitment and spirit of cooperation.

As the Minister responsible for Parks Canada, I applaud this collaborative effort and I am pleased to approve the *Tuktut Nogait National Park of Canada Management Plan*.

Steven Guilbeault

*Minister of Environment and Climate Change and
Minister responsible for Parks Canada*

Letter of recommendation from the Tuktut Nogait National Park Management Board



TUKTUT NOGAIT NATIONAL PARK
MANAGEMENT BOARD
P.O. Box 91, Paulatuk, Northwest Territories
XOE 1N0

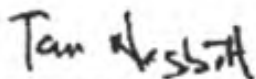
April 2024

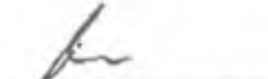
The Honourable Steven Guilbeault
Minister of the Environment and Climate Change and
Minister responsible for Parks Canada

Dear Minister Guilbeault,

This Management Plan represents the consensus of many organizations. They bring different perspectives to the task. And they sometimes have different interests and priorities. But they have learned to work together and to put the interests of the land and future generations of people and other creatures first. The Tuktut Nogait Management Board is privileged to be the primary instrument through which these organizations work together and find consensus. The Board wishes to thank them all. In particular, the Board wishes to thank those organizations that collaborated in this latest edition of the Management Plan, from 2019 to 2024. These organizations include: Parks Canada (representing the Government of Canada), the Paulatuk Hunters and Trappers Committee, the Paulatuk Community Corporation, the Inuvialuit Game Council, the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation, the Délne Got'ine Government, the Government of the Northwest Territories, the Fisheries Joint Management Committee, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, the Wildlife Management Advisory Council (NWT) and the 7ehdzo Got'ine Gots'e Na' kedı (Sahtu Renewable Resources Board). There have been and always will be different perspectives on the management of a place as unique as Tuktut Nogait. That is healthy. Our experience suggests that cooperation and consensus can and will prevail. It is in this spirit of cooperation and consensus that the Board recommends the Tuktut Nogait Management Plan to you.

Two further relationships are worth mentioning here. Through their participation in Board meetings, representatives of younger Inuvialuit have informed the Board that they need to re-establish their relationship with the land — including Tuktut Nogait — before they can truly consider what roles they might play in the future management of the park. Further, the Elders and the younger people are also working on strengthening their relationship with each other. Tuktut Nogait supports all of these healings, including the Elders-Youth cultural camps that Parks Canada holds every second summer in the park. It is, at the end of the day, from the Elders (Inuvialuit and Sahtugot'ine) that we have learned the practice of consensus decision-making that animates our co-management of Tuktut Nogait.


Tom Nesbitt (Chair)


Roy Ruben Sr.


John Max Kudlak (Muffa)


Linda Binder


Lanita Thrasher


Jonas Modeste

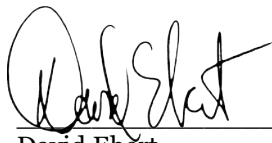
Recommendations

Recommended by:



For -

Ron Hallman
*President & Chief Executive Officer
Parks Canada*



David Ebert
*Superintendent
Western Arctic Field Unit*

Executive summary

The lands that are known today as Tuktut Nogait National Park are important to caribou. Tuktut Nogait is highly valued as relatively undisturbed northern wilderness that provides for fish, caribou, and other wildlife, supporting the connections between the land and Indigenous peoples who rely on the land to sustain all aspects of their cultures.

Located in the northeast corner of the Northwest Territories, Tuktut Nogait includes lands in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region and the Sahtú Settlement Area. Harvesting rights set out in the respective land claim agreements are respected in the management of the park. Tuktut Nogait is managed cooperatively. The Tuktut Nogait Management Board operates in a spirit of cooperation, mutual respect, and consensus, providing advice to Parks Canada and others on all aspects of the planning, management, and operation of the park.

Proposed by the community of Paulatuk in 1988, established in Parliament in 1998, and expanded in 2005, Tuktut Nogait protects 18,890 square kilometres of tundra, rolling lowlands and uplands, deep canyons, crystal-clear rivers with sand beaches and spectacular waterfalls. The vision for Tuktut Nogait as a place where people work together to protect arctic wildlife and support Inuvialuit (Siglit) and Sahtúgot'ine communities and cultures flows from the purposes established in the *Tuktut Nogait Agreement* (1996) and the *Impact and Benefit Plan for the Expansion of Tuktut Nogait National Park of Canada into the Sahtú Settlement Area* (2005).

Tuktut Nogait is remote and expensive to visit. While the park can be accessed overland from Paulatuk, 40 kilometres northwest from where the Hornaday River leaves the park, visitors generally fly in to Tuktut Nogait. All visitors entering the park require a permit. For those who visit the park to paddle or hike, Tuktut Nogait offers an unspoiled arctic landscape. Facilities in the park are limited to basic shelter (described as “rudimentary” in related guidance) at Camp Jonah Nakimayak on Uyarsivik Lake. The base camp supports youth camps, visits from Elders, park operations and visitor use. On the Hornaday River below Uyarsivik Lake the rock plateaus, slot canyons and La Roncière Falls offer stunning scenery.

Archaeological sites documented in the park highlight the human history in Tuktut Nogait. The park, past, present, and future, represents a landscape that offers many learning opportunities. In Tuktut Nogait people from different organizations and cultures to come together in a spirit of cooperation to share information about northern environments and northern cultures.

The management plan presents a 15-year vision for Tuktut Nogait and outlines two key strategies to guide the consensus decision-making of the Tuktut Nogait Management Board and Parks Canada:

Key Strategy 1: Taking care of land, water and culture

This key strategy focuses on the conservation of ecological and cultural resources and the connections between the land, caribou, and Indigenous people. The effects of climate change and the sharing of information among partners are important elements of this key strategy.

Key Strategy 2: Making connections with people near and far

This key strategy focuses on opportunities for people to experience and learn about Tuktut Nogait, including supporting the connections between the land and the communities of Paulatuk and Délne. Objectives under this key strategy include community programming in Paulatuk and other outreach opportunities, sharing stories about life in the Western Arctic, and providing safe and inspiring experiences for those who visit Tuktut Nogait.

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1.0 Introduction

Parks Canada and its partners in cooperative management administer one of the finest and most extensive systems of protected natural and historic places in the world. Parks Canada's mandate is to protect and present these places for the benefit and enjoyment of current and future generations. Future-oriented, strategic management of each national historic site, national park, national marine conservation area and heritage canal administered by Parks Canada supports its vision:

Canada's treasured natural and historic places will be a living legacy, connecting hearts and minds to a stronger, deeper understanding of the very essence of Canada.

The *Canada National Parks Act* and the *Parks Canada Agency Act* require Parks Canada to prepare a management plan for each national park. The *Tuktut Nogait National Park of Canada Management Plan*, once approved by the Minister responsible for Parks Canada and tabled in Parliament, ensures Parks Canada's accountability to Canadians, outlining how park management will achieve measurable results in support of the mandate.

This national park is managed in cooperation with the Indigenous peoples of the Inuvialuit Settlement Region (Inuvialuit) and the Sahtú Settlement Area (Sahtúgot'ine), through the Tuktut Nogait National Park Management Board (the Board). The Board and related governments and organizations participated throughout the preparation of the management plan to shape the future direction of Tuktut Nogait National Park. Partners, stakeholders and the Canadian public were also consulted during the development of the management plan. The plan sets clear, strategic direction for the management and operation of Tuktut Nogait by articulating a vision, key strategies and objectives. Parks Canada will report annually on progress toward achieving the plan objectives and will review the plan every ten years or sooner if required.

This plan is not an end in and of itself. Parks Canada will maintain an open dialogue on the implementation of the management plan, to ensure that it remains relevant and meaningful. The plan will serve as the focus for ongoing engagement and, where appropriate, consultation, on the management of Tuktut Nogait National Park in years to come.

2.0 Significance of Tuktut Nogait National Park

Tuktut Nogait means "young caribou" in Inuvialuktun (locally, the dialect is Siglitun, also known as Sallirmiutun). As emphasized during the work of establishment in the 1980s, the national park is in place to protect the calving and post-calving habitat of barren-ground caribou, specifically what was known at the time as the Bluenose caribou herds. Protection of this important habitat for caribou, and the cultural significance of having caribou on the land, remain the park's primary purpose.

The purpose of the park was defined by the interests of the Inuvialuit community of Paulatuk¹, and supported by the subsequent establishment agreements between Parks Canada, the Government of the Northwest Territories, Inuvialuit of Paulatuk (the Inuvialuit of the region are known as Siglit), and Sahtúgot'ine of Délı̨ne (Sahtúgot'ine means "people belonging to Sahtú," Sahtú being the name for Great Bear Lake in the Sahtúgot'ine Kǎdǎ́ dialect; and Sahtúgot'ine includes Dene and Métis people of the Délı̨ne district). Since the establishment of Tuktut Nogait, researchers now distinguish between the Bluenose-West herd, which migrates to its calving grounds in the park each spring and uses post-calving

¹ The official, English spelling of Paulatuk is used in this management plan, using a *k* where a *q* would be used by Inuvialuit. Different spellings that reflect the use and pronunciation in Siglitun are also used, including Paulatuuq and Paolatuuq.

habitat in the park, and the Bluenose-East herd, which uses post-calving habitat in the park in years when that herd has high populations.

The lands in and around Tuktut Nogait National Park (Tuktut Nogait) have long been used by Indigenous peoples, including present-day Inuvialuit (Inuit of the Western Arctic) and Sahtúgot'ine (Sahtú Dene and Métis people of Great Bear Lake), and the Thule and Copper Inuit people who came before. Northern communities rely on the land to sustain all aspects of their culture, making Tuktut Nogait a park with important human history. Over 400 archaeological sites have been documented in the park, highlighting the long and rich human history of following the river valleys to access the interior. The traditions of knowing the land and demonstrating care for the land continue today.

Under the land claim agreements, community members maintain subsistence harvesting rights, primarily harvesting caribou and arctic char, along with other resources within and adjacent to Tuktut Nogait. Indigenous cultures and identities are tied closely to the land, and community members have unrestricted access to the park, as well as representation in cooperative management.

The park represents the Tundra Hills natural region and features expanses of tundra, rolling lowlands and uplands, deep canyons, and crystal-clear rivers with spectacular waterfalls. The park is home to elusive and interesting wildlife, including caribou, muskoxen, grizzly bears, wolves, red foxes, wolverines, arctic ground squirrels, collared lemmings, arctic char and lake trout, as well as numerous migratory birds. Ivvavik and Aulavik are other national parks located in the Western Arctic.

The remoteness and relatively undisturbed environment of Tuktut Nogait are highly valued by the people of Paulatuk and other northern Indigenous communities. As lands that provide for the fish and caribou, the significance of the park is larger than its boundaries. Communities that do not access the park directly with any regularity also benefit from the protection of caribou habitat, and value the park as a fundamental touchstone of their food security, cultural identity and economy.

3.0 Planning context

Tuktut Nogait is among the first of a growing number of national parks in Canada, and around the world, where the park is managed cooperatively with Indigenous partners. These national parks are aimed at reconciling the interests of Indigenous authorities and the Government of Canada. Tuktut Nogait flows from an agreement among four Inuvialuit authorities and the Governments of Canada and the Northwest Territories: *The Tuktut Nogait Agreement* (1996). Without limiting in any way the duties before Parliament or the Minister responsible for Parks Canada, the *Tuktut Nogait Agreement* provides for the management of Tuktut Nogait by the age-old Indigenous tradition of consensus decision-making. In essence, the minister and the Indigenous authorities agree to make all reasonable efforts to manage the park, through the Tuktut Nogait Management Board (the Board), by consensus.

The Board has functioned in a spirit of cooperation, mutual respect and consensus among different organizations throughout the park's history. This consensus approach fosters dialogue, collaboration and the inclusion of both scientific and traditional knowledge in management decisions.

Indigenous rights

Harvesting rights for Inuvialuit and Sahtúgot'ine are set out in their respective land claim agreements for the Inuvialuit Settlement Region and Sahtú Settlement Area: *The Inuvialuit Final Agreement* (1984), and the *Sahtú Dene and Métis Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement* (1993). This management plan for Tuktut Nogait flows from those land claim agreements and the subsequent park establishment and benefits agreements. Nothing in this management plan impacts Indigenous rights for park access and subsistence harvesting as set out in those agreements.

Park establishment and cooperative management

Originally proposed by the community of Paulatuk in 1988, and then through the Wildlife Management Advisory Council (NWT) in 1990, Tuktut Nogait in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region, in the northeast corner of mainland Northwest Territories, was formally established by Parliament in 1998. Following negotiations with the Délne Land Corporation (now the Délne Got'ine Government), the park was expanded south into the Délne District of the Sahtú Settlement Area in 2005. The park is located 170 kilometres north of the Arctic Circle, and encompasses an area of 18,890 square kilometres (Map 1). The Inuvialuit Hamlet of Paulatuk (population approximately 300) is located 40 kilometres west of the park boundary at the northwest corner of the park.

Map 1: Regional setting



The *Tuktut Nogait Agreement* (1996) establishes the Board and defines its role in advising the federal minister responsible for national parks. The agreement was signed between the following Parties:

- Government of Canada (now represented by Parks Canada),
- Government of the Northwest Territories,
- Inuvialuit Game Council,
- Inuvialuit Regional Corporation,
- Paulatuk Community Corporation, and
- Paulatuk Hunters and Trappers Committee.

Following the completion of the *Impact and Benefit Plan for the Expansion of Tuktut National Park of Canada into the Sahtú Settlement Area* (2005) and the southern expansion into the Délı̨ne District of Sahtú Settlement Area, an appointee of the Délı̨ne Got'ı̨ne Government was included on the Board.

Supported by Parks Canada, the Board is the primary instrument through which the Inuvialuit, Délı̨ne Got'ı̨ne Government and the governments of Canada and the Northwest Territories manage Tuktut Nogait. Board membership includes appointees by the following management parties:

- One member by the Paulatuk Hunters and Trappers Committee and the Inuvialuit Game Council;
- One member by the Paulatuk Community Corporation and the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation;
- One member by the Délı̨ne Got'ı̨ne Government;
- One member appointed by the Minister responsible for Parks Canada;
- One member appointed by the Minister responsible for Parks Canada, as recommended by the appropriate minister of the Government of the Northwest Territories; and
- A Board chair, jointly appointed by the Minister responsible for Parks Canada and the Inuvialuit Game Council, on the advice of the Paulatuk Hunters and Trappers Committee and Paulatuk Community Corporation.

The Board advises relevant governments on all aspects of the planning, management and operation of the park, including coordinating the preparation of the management plan and recommending the plan to the Minister responsible for Parks Canada. The Board and Parks Canada work closely with the Wildlife Management Advisory Council (NWT) and the Fisheries Joint Management Committee, organizations that are partners in cooperative management at the regional level through the *Inuvialuit Final Agreement* (1984). The Board also contributes to the trans-boundary management of barren-ground caribou through its membership on the Advisory Committee for Cooperation on Wildlife Management, with Parks Canada sitting as a member of the committee's working group.

Landscape and visitor use

Due to its remoteness, Tuktut Nogait receives few visitors and has limited in-park infrastructure. On the other hand, the remoteness of the park and its unspoiled arctic landscape are a draw for some visitors. Whether experiencing the park by boat or on foot, in summer Tuktut Nogait offers an incomparable northern experience, complete with the midnight sun, wildlife, colourful tundra wildflowers, sand dunes and wetlands. The park includes three main rivers, the Roscoe River coming in from Nunavut in the northeast, the Brock River running parallel to the Hornaday in the north end of the park, and the longer Hornaday River that flows the length of the park from the Sahtú Settlement Area to the Arctic Ocean. The Hornaday River, whether paddled from upper Hornaday or the Little Hornaday tributary, can be paddled as an eight- to 12-day canoe trip, opportunities that are profiled on the park's website and receive requests every year. The rock plateaus, slot canyons and La Roncière Falls on the lower Hornaday River offer spectacular whitewater and stunning scenery for hikers.

Given the logistics and expense of northern travel, Tuktut Nogait receives only a handful of visitors each year. The park also sees limited use by members of local communities, who spend more time on the land closer to communities and along the coast. Given the low use and the year-to-year differences (ranging from zero to 15 visitors per year), there are no trends evident about the numbers of visitors or the interests in different activities. Following the closure of the park during the COVID-19 pandemic, Parks Canada has received a number of expressions of interest about visitation, and believes interest is stable or increasing.

However, it is expected that visitation will remain low with minor year-to-year fluctuations, with the main interests continuing to be hiking and paddling.

The establishment agreements and the initial management plan for the park (2007) consider the potential development of ecotourism and economic opportunities related to the park. While modest improvements have been made at Camp Jonah Nakimayak at Uyarsivik² Lake, conservation, research, the maintenance of ecological integrity and protecting the park for future generations (of people and caribou) remain the priorities of people from Paulatuk and Délı̄ne. Also lending support to these priorities is the practical reality that the costs to travel to Tuktut Nogait strongly limit visitation. However, where visitor interests are consistent with these priorities, Parks Canada and the Board give applications for visitor permits full consideration. All entry to the park by visitors requires a permit. Visitor inquiries are also assessed with respect to present and future economic opportunities for community members.

In cooperation with the Board, Parks Canada maintains procedures for the approval of permit applications from potential visitors (and also for various research permits). To get detailed information on recreational opportunities in the park, potential visitors must contact the Parks Canada offices in Inuvik or Paulatuk. Based on safety and conservation considerations, the permit process requires a higher level of detail for high-risk activities or activities in proximity to sensitive areas. Prior to arrival in the park, all visitors must register with Parks Canada and participate in a pre-trip orientation session. For visitors flying into the park, a landing permit (aircraft access permit) is also required. As a safety measure, visitors are required to contact Parks Canada and deregister at the conclusion of their trip.

Facilities

In-park facilities are limited to Camp Jonah Nakimayak at Uyarsivik Lake (Map 2). To better support youth camps, visits from Elders, park operations and visitor experience, upgrades at Uyarsivik Lake were completed in 2021. In addition to the pre-existing modular cabin, there are now two structures that provide shelter for going to the toilet, and another for showering. Other improvements include the addition of a multi-use platform tent and improved storage, including for garbage management. The site also has storage for aviation fuel, to support operations and visitor safety.

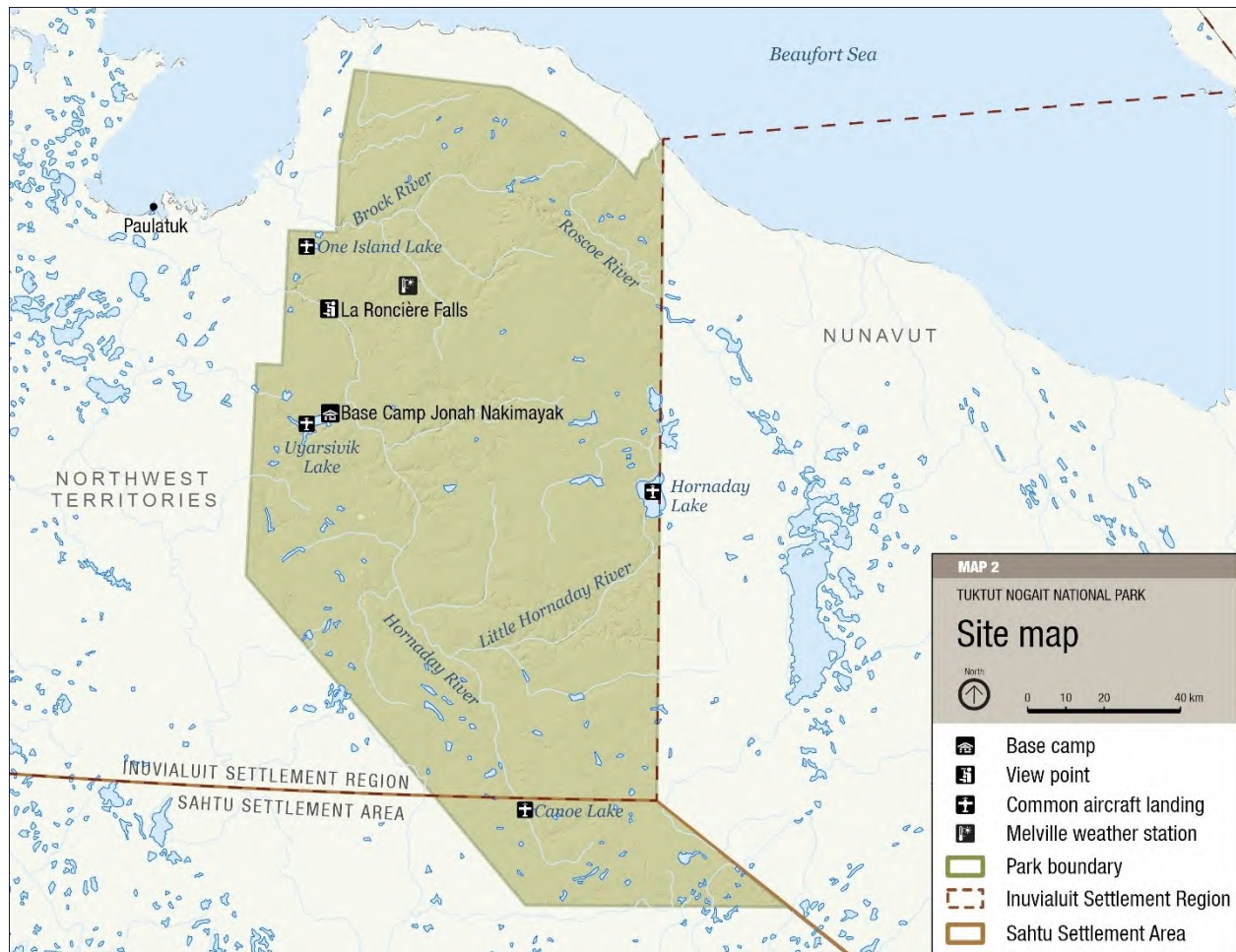
Parks Canada assets in the community of Paulatuk include a truck and two buildings: a garage and a three-bedroom housing unit. Parks Canada also leases office space in the Paulatuk Visitor Centre, along with a two-bedroom “transient unit” upstairs. The office space includes two offices, a boardroom, exhibit space and a washroom. In addition to visitor reception, the space is actively used by the community for Elders’ teas, youth movie nights, community meetings, board meetings and more. This building is managed by the Paulatuk Visitor Centre Corporation. Having space in the Paulatuk Visitor Centre has been a value to Parks Canada and the community.

Climate change

As a relatively undisturbed northern environment, Tuktut Nogait offers research opportunities to study the impacts of climate change. The effects of climate change, such as potential changes to temperatures, precipitation, vegetation and caribou habitat, have been recognized as the top stressors to the ecological integrity of Tuktut Nogait since the development of the park’s first management plan (2007). Updated ecological monitoring will provide improved data on landscape-level changes to vegetation and forage conditions for caribou, as well as other factors affecting the integrity of the core calving grounds. Other issues under study include climate impacts on prey species and predator-prey relationships (for example, vulnerability of northern collared lemming), raptor occupancy, water quality, fish habitat, and biodiversity, including potential shifts in the ranges of species.

² The official, English spelling is used in this management plan. Spelling and pronunciation of this place name in Siglitun vary, such as Uyiquqsiviq and Uyaraksiviq. The meaning of Uyarsivik is “place of rocks or stones,” in reference to the caches.

Map 2: Site map



Building on the previous plan

This management plan replaces the 2007 management plan for Tukut Nogait, which was reviewed and re-approved in 2012. The previous plan provided direction for conservation of ecological and cultural resources, visitor use, and park facilities, among other topics, which generally remain relevant and are being updated in this plan. Since 2007, Parks Canada and its partners in cooperative management have:

- maintained consistent operation of the office in Paulatuk, creating an opportunity for local employment;
- hosted Board meetings and culture camps in the park at Ugarsivik Lake, increasing connections to the park;
- added facilities at Ugarsivik Lake to test the base camp model for visitor experiences (2013–2016);
- generated national media attention through news stories, magazine articles and videos with partners including *Canadian Geographic*, the *Globe and Mail*, and *Explore* magazine;
- carried out archaeological assessments, including at Ugarsivik Lake (2013) and Many Caches (2017);
- conducted numerous field studies and monitoring programs on cultural and natural resources, including adjusting the measures for ecological integrity (2014);
- worked with partners to support monitoring programs, such as those for weather, river conditions, raptors, muskox, caribou and permafrost;

- contributed to regional conservation initiatives such as the Advisory Committee for Cooperation on Wildlife Management, and the Polar Continental Shelf Program;
- completed a vegetation classification and climate change vulnerability assessment, including a report specific to Indigenous traditional knowledge (2017);
- upgraded basic facilities at Camp Jonah Nakimayak at Uyarsivik Lake (2021); and
- celebrated the 25th anniversary of the *Tuktut Nogait Agreement*, including a special edition of *Tusaayaksat* magazine which celebrates Inuvialuit culture (2021).

The 2020 *State of the Park Assessment* identified three main themes that need to be addressed during the implementation of this management plan: ongoing protection of the Bluenose-West caribou herd, continued integration of traditional knowledge, and better understanding the continuing impacts of climate change.

In addition to the above context, the following issues and trends were identified or expanded upon during the scoping phase of developing this management plan and will be considered during the implementation of this plan:

Collaboration and research — Maintaining and growing strong relationships with partners in cooperative management, community organizations, academic institutions, other government departments and other levels of government is an important opportunity for conducting and communicating research in the park.

Human history and cultural resources — Research supports the interests of the community of Paulatuk and others in furthering the understanding of the Indigenous peoples that used the area in and around the park before modern-day Inuvialuit.

Competition among species — Related to climate change, concerns about changes to species' ranges have been raised in relation to salmon and arctic char. Potential competition between caribou and geese, and the reported expansion of beaver and northern pike populations in the region have also been raised as concerns.

Visitation — Opportunities and decision-making related to promoting and managing visitation need to be communicated clearly with partner organizations and communities.

Community — While not located in the park, Paulatuk is a hub for park operations. Facilities and staff in Paulatuk play an important role in supporting connections to the land, capacity building, and monitoring cultural, social, and ecological connections.

Youth — A specific benefit to communities could be to achieve a deeper level of involvement with the park from younger generations. The existence of the park, and of Parks Canada's presence in Paulatuk, can facilitate valuable connections between Elders and youth, and youth and the land.

Outreach — As a remote park, Tuktut Nogait is not affordable for most Canadians. The park is also not accessed with frequency by many hunters or harvesters from Paulatuk or Délne. Outreach is important for sharing the stories of Tuktut Nogait with those who cannot visit the park.

4.0 Development of the management plan

The need to update the management plan was first raised by Parks Canada and the Board in late 2018. Planning was initiated in 2019, including an in-person meeting of the Board in December 2019 to complete the state of the park assessment, which was approved in March 2020. After that time, the ability to hold in-person meetings was limited by the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the Board succeeded in continuing this work virtually, and a scoping exercise was finalized in July 2021.

A preliminary outline for the management plan was presented to the Board in August 2022, and development of the draft plan by Parks Canada and the Board continued in the winter of 2022–2023. After review by the Board in July 2023, including an in-person review meeting with members of the Paulatuk Hunters and Trappers Committee and Paulatuk Community Corporation, the draft plan was approved for public consultation in September 2023.

Consultation on the management plan was concluded in March 2024. In January 2024 letters were sent directly to organizations with known interests in Tuktut Nogait. At the request of a collaborating partner, the original consultation period of January 17 to February 19 was extended to March 6, 2024. Responses were considered by Parks Canada and the Board, resulting in minor refinements for clarity.

5.0 Vision

Driven by local interest to protect the land for caribou, Tuktut Nogait has a unique establishment history. The vision for the park flows from the purposes set out in the *Tuktut Nogait Agreement* (1996) and *Impact and Benefit Plan for the Expansion of Tuktut National Park of Canada into the Sahtú Settlement Area* (2005). This direction has been continuously supported by the work of the Board, and validated through ongoing collaboration with cooperative management bodies and other partners, including through the development of this management plan.

The vision for Tuktut Nogait reflects that decision makers continue to move forward with the caribou in mind, seeing the park through the eyes of a caribou. The vision demonstrates care and concern for the well-being of arctic wildlife, respect for the land, and respect for Inuvialuit and Sahtúgot'ine communities and cultures.

A pristine place, relatively untouched and natural, Tuktut Nogait provides silence and calm, allowing connections to be maintained among people, rivers, wildlife and the spirit of the land.

In 15 years, Parks Canada, the Board and the communities envision that Tuktut Nogait will be renowned as:

- A model of cooperative management, where partners collaborate on research, share knowledge, and demonstrate cooperation and openness.
- A place where traditions thrive, respecting Indigenous rights for subsistence harvesting and supporting the Indigenous knowledge that continues to be passed from generation to generation, connecting Elders and youth.
- A place that maintains ecological integrity and protects incredible landscape features, including clean rivers, rolling tundra, deep canyons and powerful waterfalls.
- A peaceful, natural place for caribou and other wildlife, protecting important habitat.
- A significant cultural landscape, where cultural features crucial to the understanding of human history in the Western Arctic are treated with respect.
- An authentic, unique opportunity for visitors to experience the Western Arctic.
- A place that contributes to the strength of the community of Paulatuk and the Western Arctic region.
- An example of local communities contributing to conservation and education, making the values and stories of Tuktut Nogait available to the world.

6.0 Key strategies

As a long-term strategic plan following the Government of Canada’s approach for results-based planning, the management plan for Tuktut Nogait focuses on the results that Parks Canada, the Board and partners want to achieve. The purpose of the management plan is not to identify a decade worth of specific projects, but instead to provide decision makers, partners, stakeholders and the public with the priorities that will guide decision-making.

Where no specific timelines are given, all targets are meant to be achieved within the ten-year life of this plan. The directions identified in this section take into account available resources and existing capacity for Tuktut Nogait.

Actions and reporting

Decisions on how to reach the objectives and targets identified in this plan are supported by ongoing work planning and are made cooperatively by Parks Canada and the Board, in consultation with partners, stakeholders, and the public as appropriate. Over the plan’s ten-year timeframe, this approach allows for flexibility to account for available resources, evolving priorities and emerging opportunities. Informing community members, partners, stakeholders and Canadians about how ongoing decisions, actions and projects fit with the strategies and objectives in this management plan is done through annual reporting and other communications. Figure 1 shows how the elements of results-based planning work together to support the long-term vision and to keep interested parties informed about park management.

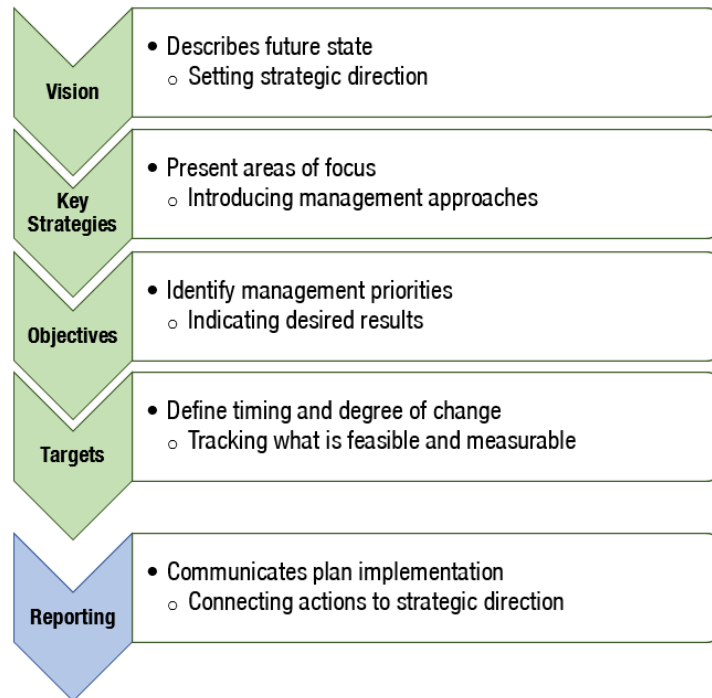


Figure 1: Elements of results-based planning.

High-level policies

In addition to the key strategies, objectives and targets identified in this management plan, decision-making for Tuktut Nogait is guided by Indigenous knowledge and values as well as federal and departmental policies, all of which provide direction on overarching issues. Momentum and direction for the implementation of this plan also come through the commitment of Parks Canada and the Board to keep the Board positions filled and to continue the schedule of regular meetings (typically three Board meetings annually, with follow-up calls as needed).

Across the national network of heritage places administered by Parks Canada, Parks Canada is committed to sustainability (for example, Greening Government, related to the *Federal Sustainable Development Strategy*), equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility (for example, meeting the requirements of the *Accessible Canada Act*). Ensuring that all national parks are well operated, and are welcoming places for all, is an ongoing consideration for Parks Canada throughout the implementation of this management plan.

Within the area of sustainable operations, climate change is expected to be a growing influence on the management of heritage places, including Tuktut Nogait. As identified in the early stages of planning, the effects of climate change are of significant interest to community members. Impacts of climate change will be considered and integrated in all aspects of park planning, management and reporting.

For the duration of this management plan, two key strategies have been developed to set management direction for Tuktut Nogait.

Key Strategy 1: Taking care of land, water and culture

The focus of this key strategy is maintaining the ecological and cultural integrity of the park for future generations. With the support of Inuvialuit of Paulatuk, Tuktut Nogait was created to protect caribou. As described in the vision for this management plan, the Board affirms that decision-making will be guided by thinking about the well-being of arctic wildlife and the cultural landscape of Tuktut Nogait.

The well-being of the land, water, and animals in Tuktut Nogait are interconnected, and are also connected to the identity and the well-being of people from Paulatuk and Délne who harvest in the area and are stewards of land. Habitat protection will be paramount in management decisions. While the condition ratings of the park's key indicators are assessed on a 10-year cycle, the Board references the time of park establishment as an important baseline: in the view of the Board, park operations should not introduce incremental impacts on this peaceful, natural place.

The uniqueness and significance of northern wilderness are also connected to the Canadian identity and well-being. People are strengthened, empowered and inspired by their experiences on the land, and by witnessing the rhythms of nature and wildlife. The continued human use of the lands and waters within Tuktut Nogait is taken into consideration for the implementation of this key strategy.

The objectives in this strategy are also supported by the implementation of plans and strategies under the *Species at Risk Act*, including the consideration of habitat changes based on climate change trends and projections. Implementation of the *Species at Risk Act* informs not only habitat protection and climate change research, but also the cooperation and consultation among governments, land users, and all interested parties.

Learning and working with partners

Tuktut Nogait is a park where people from different cultures come together to learn from each other, with decision makers receiving direction and advice from Elders and scientists. Recognizing that issues that affect ecological and cultural resources in Tuktut Nogait are not limited to within the park's borders, the objectives under this key strategy will be achieved through working in a culture of stewardship and collaboration within and beyond Tuktut Nogait.

The wide-ranging effects of climate change on permafrost conditions, snow and rain patterns, river levels, species migration, changes to caribou habitat (vegetation), erosion, and cultural sites are of particular interest to community members and researchers. Over the next ten years, cooperative management partners need to better understand these impacts through research programs, knowledge transfer among partners and communities, and vulnerability and risk assessments. This work is supported by sharing information with the Paulatuk Hunters and Trappers Committee, the Paulatuk Community Corporation, and the Sahtú Renewable Resources Board (ʔehdzo Got'ıne Gots'ę́ Nákedı), including committees such as the Paulatuk Char Working Group and Elders committees. Parks Canada and the Board will continue to work on assessments and monitoring with partners such as Environment and Climate Change Canada, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, the Government of Northwest Territories, the Fisheries Joint Management Committee, the Wildlife Management Advisory Council – Northwest Territories, Sahtú Renewable Resources Board (ʔehdzo Got'ıne Gots'ę́ Nákedı), and the Advisory Committee for Cooperation on Wildlife Management, among other organizations and program supporters.

The *Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment for Tuktut Nogait National Park* (2017) provides a good example of a collaborative approach that can improve the inclusion of Indigenous knowledge and develop consistency in pan-Arctic monitoring. The reports from that assessment continue to provide direction for park management and the monitoring program focused on ecological integrity.

Objective 1.1: Tuktut Nogait continues to be a place where the connections between caribou, their habitat, and harvesting by Indigenous peoples remain unbroken.

Targets

- During caribou calving and post-calving season, calving and post-calving habitat is undisturbed by park-based activities, such as visitor access and aircraft flying over sensitive areas.
- Decision-making about park activities and access continue to be informed by the ongoing collection of information about caribou populations.
- Parks Canada (in addition to the Board) continues to contribute to the Advisory Committee for Cooperation on Wildlife Management.

Objective 1.2: The ecological health of Tuktut Nogait is maintained.

Targets

- In the next state of the park assessment, the overall condition ratings for the tundra and freshwater ecosystems remain assessed as good.
- In the next state of the park assessment, raptor populations are assigned a condition rating.
- Through collaboration with partners, knowledge about caribou, geese, char and other species continues to be sought from hunters and harvesters as part of monitoring and assessments.
- With the exception of rudimentary facilities at Camp Jonah Nakimayak at Uyarsivik Lake, Tuktut Nogait remains free from permanent or semi-permanent infrastructure that facilitates visitor access or provides accommodations for visitors.
- Potential impacts of visitor use, such as management of garbage and human waste, are minimized through impact assessments, communications (for example, pre-trip orientation), and regulations, as necessary.

Objective 1.3: Research, monitoring and communications related to the effects of climate change are strengthened.

Targets

- Studies related to landscape-scale vegetation change and forage quality (including potential shifts in calving areas and migration) are continued.
- In the next state of the park assessment, permafrost soil temperatures are assigned a condition rating.
- The level of understanding about erosion events in the park (for example, riverbank erosion and permafrost slumping) is increased.

- To facilitate sharing with appropriate community organizations, updates on resource conservation provided to the Board are maintained, both to report on ongoing projects and to cooperatively plan new projects.

Objective 1.4: With direction and participation from Elders and additional knowledge holders, understanding about the human history of Tuktut Nogait is increased.

Targets

- The understanding that Parks Canada team members and other researchers have about Indigenous knowledge and protocols related to cultural resource management are increased.
- The volume of intangible cultural resources related to the park, including oral histories and traditional knowledge, is increased.
- Decision-making about park activities and access continue to be informed by the ongoing collection of information about cultural resources.
- Through the use of archaeological impact assessments and other tools, in the next state of the park assessment, the good condition and stable trend for archaeological sites are maintained.

Key Strategy 2: Making connections with people near and far

The focus of this key strategy is opportunities to learn about and experience Tuktut Nogait, including its history of human use and its cultural significance to Inuvialuit and Sahtúgot'ine. As places of learning, it is important that stories from national parks are accessible to Canadians. This includes people living in Paulatuk and other northern communities, hikers and paddlers who travel to Tuktut Nogait, and outreach opportunities for those who are not able to experience the park directly. Visitors who do come to the park can also be valuable “eyes on the ground,” providing photos, videos, wildlife sightings, environmental observations and condition reports for Parks Canada, the Board and community members.

In the same way that the protection of the land, water and animals are connected to the identity and well-being of Inuvialuit and Sahtúgot'ine, the sharing of stories also strengthens these connections. Through local and national awareness about Tuktut Nogait, people will gain a deeper understanding of the park, caribou, climate change and the Western Arctic landscape and lifestyle. Locally, this may increase interest in career opportunities related to conservation, knowledge sharing or park operations. Nationally, this may increase the level of appreciation for northern wilderness and support for conservation and research.

Objective 2.1: The strong connections between the land and the people from Paulatuk and Délıne are supported.

Targets

- Culture camps that bring together Elders and youth for cultural activities on the land are offered approximately every two years.
- Opportunities for community members to take part in field work and other activities in the park are increased.
- Contributions of local Elders, hunters, and harvesters are highlighted in communications about Tuktut Nogait, including references to traditional knowledge and use of Siglitun and the Sahtúgot'ine Kədə́ dialect.
- Opportunities to bring together community members from Paulatuk and Délıne are increased.

Objective 2.2: Community benefits from the presence of Parks Canada in Paulatuk are improved.

Targets

- The reporting of park activities (including visitor use, monitoring, research, cultural camps, and Board meetings) improves, with attention to using plain language.
- Parks Canada continues to have space in Paulatuk for operations support, visitor reception, community events, exhibits, housing, offices and meeting rooms.
- Community programming hosted or supported by Parks Canada is maintained.

- Efforts to build connections between Parks Canada and the school in Paulatuk are maintained.
- The visibility of the Siglitun language and the Sahtúgot'íne Kəᑭə́ dialect in Parks Canada's offices is increased.
- To support efforts for awarding contracts locally, coordination between Parks Canada and partners to provide training and other capacity building is increased.
- As a result of pursuing the above targets, in the next state of the park assessment the rating for support for Indigenous communities improves from fair to good.

Objective 2.3: Stories about Tuktut Nogait and life in the Western Arctic, including the impacts of climate change on land, animals and people, are shared in accessible and inclusive formats available to all.

Targets

- Contribution of messages and stories for Parks Canada's urban outreach teams is maintained.
- Contribution of messages and stories that can be presented in schools is increased.
- The level of activity on social media and other digital outreach is maintained.
- To facilitate sharing with appropriate community organizations, updates on external relations and visitor experience provided to the Board are increased, to report on ongoing projects and to plan new projects.

Objective 2.4: While maintaining the park's wilderness character and supporting harvesting rights, Tuktut Nogait continues to provide safe and inspiring experiences for those who visit.

Targets

- In-park facilities at Camp Jonah Nakimayak are maintained in good condition to provide visitors with appropriate shelter.
- The level of understanding among Parks Canada, the Board and community organizations about permit approvals and visitors' interests is increased, including related to present and future economic opportunities for community members.
- To mitigate safety and conservation risks, pre-trip registration, permits, orientation, deregistration and evaluations with all visitors are continued.
- Materials to support pre-trip planning, such as guides for hiking and paddling, are updated.

7.0 Zoning for visitor activities

Parks Canada's zoning framework for national parks classifies land and water to protect sensitive natural and cultural features and provide opportunities for the use and enjoyment of park visitors. Visitors are people who are coming to the park for recreational purposes. Inuvialuit and Sahtúgot'íne accessing the park to exercise their rights for subsistence harvesting are not considered visitors. Zoning designations in Tuktut Nogait do not apply to activities that relate the exercise of Indigenous rights.

Zoning designations provide Parks Canada and the public with an understanding of the level of visitor activity and infrastructure that can be expected in different areas of the park. The zoning framework has five categories:

- Zone I — Special Preservation,
- Zone II — Wilderness,
- Zone III — Natural Environment,
- Zone IV — Outdoor Recreation, and
- Zone V — Park Services.

In the previous management plan for Tuktut Nogait (2007), zoning designations were deferred until the management team, the Board and community-based partners in cooperative management could develop a more complete understanding of the park and the opportunities for visitation. This plan includes the first zoning designation for Tuktut Nogait.

For Tuktut Nogait, the terms of the park's establishment agreement make it clear that the park is to be managed as a peaceful place for caribou and other wildlife. Therefore, Zones III, IV and V, which include higher levels of use, and facilities beyond rudimentary trail improvements and shelters, are not relevant for Tuktut Nogait. It is unlikely that visitor facilities within Tuktut Nogait would warrant a more "frontcountry" designation of a Zone III area (Natural Environment).

Over time, Parks Canada, the Board and partners may wish to revisit the potential use of Zone I (Special Preservation), to clearly identify specific areas or times where Parks Canada should not support any visitor use, or develop any facilities, however rudimentary. While a seasonal application of Zone I could be considered for areas used by caribou during calving and post-calving seasons, the objectives of a Zone II designation (minimal human interference), in combination with the operational context of Tuktut Nogait (cooperative management, low visitation, visitor access by permit), provide appropriate direction.

In this management plan, the full area of Tuktut Nogait is designated as Wilderness, or Zone II (Map 3). The rudimentary facilities at Camp Jonah Nakimayak at Uyarsivik Lake are consistent with Zone II; however, Parks Canada and the Board do not anticipate the need for a similar level of facilities elsewhere in the park.

Map 3: Zoning



Zone II – Wilderness

“Wilderness” is the term used as part of Park Canada’s zoning framework. It is not a word that is used locally to differentiate the park from other lands: community members going out on the land in and around Tuktut Nogait would not say “I am going to the wilderness,” they would say, “I am going out on the land” or “I am going to my camp” or “I am going out hunting and fishing.” The word wilderness can mean different things to different people. In the context of Tuktut Nogait, wilderness includes this human history and human use, and recognizes that wilderness can include places that are special for spiritual connection and other cultural reasons.

Parks Canada’s Wilderness zoning is meant to protect representative natural landscapes where visitors can experience nature with minimal human interference. The visitor experience in these areas is focused on self-propelled activities. No motorized activities by visitors are permitted (with the exception of designated landing areas). Though rudimentary facilities can be supported in Zone II where appropriate, the priority is to maintain the natural condition of the land.

Regulatory tools

Tools that are available to provide necessary protections can be applied the same way in any zone. Examples of the available management tools include: landing permits, area closures through Superintendent’s orders, and conditions specified in a visitor’s permit, including potential requirements for visitors to travel with a qualified guide to experience certain areas of the park.

Nonconforming use

An exception for the use of motorized vehicles in Zone II is the provision of the *Tuktut Nogait Agreement* (1996) that allows for Inuvialuit guides to transport visitors through the park for the purpose of guiding a commercial sport hunt (for example, if travel routes closer to the coast are impassable or risky). At the time of developing this management plan, over 25 years of park operations, this provision has not needed to be exercised, but is included in the management plan for clarity, to ensure consistency with the *Inuvialuit Final Agreement* (1984) and *Tuktut Nogait Agreement* (1996).

Sensitive areas

Tools other than zoning designations can also be applied to provide supplementary direction on appropriate visitor activities at specific areas within the park. This includes the identification of culturally or environmentally sensitive sites or areas. Sensitive areas can be used to indicate management intentions similar to a Zone I designation (Special Preservation) and may be used where there is a desire to distinguish certain features from their background zoning. Sensitive sites or areas could also be used where the locations should not be included in a public document as part of the planning and zoning framework.

Considering the operational context of Tuktut Nogait (cooperative management, low visitation, and mandatory orientation for visitors) no additional classifications were put in place at the time of preparing this management plan. However, should it become a useful aid to decision-making or communications during the implementation of this management plan, Parks Canada, the Board and partners may consider classifying caribou calving and post-calving habitat as environmentally sensitive areas, and may consider classifying Many Caches as a culturally sensitive area. Similarly, if other locations within the park are identified as protecting sensitive natural or cultural resources, those areas could also be considered for designation as sensitive sites or areas.

8.0 Summary of strategic environmental assessment

All national park management plans are assessed through a strategic environmental assessment (SEA) to understand the potential for cumulative effects. This understanding contributes to evidence-based decision-making that supports ecological integrity being maintained or restored over the life of the plan. The SEA of the management plan for Tuktut Nogait considered the potential impacts of climate change, local and regional activities around the park, expected visitation and proposals within the management plan. The SEA assessed the potential impacts on the park's freshwater and tundra ecosystems.

The management plan will result in positive impacts on the environment including maintenance and improvement of ecological integrity. Ecological valued components were found to not be significantly at risk from cumulative effects, as the primary stressor to the park's natural environment is climate change. The management plan includes strategies to understand changes to ecological valued components including:

- Continuing to implement the ecological integrity monitoring program, including working with Indigenous partners to include Indigenous ways of knowing, and increasing understanding about the impacts of climate change on the ecosystem.
- Working collaboratively with partners to conserve the population of the Bluenose-West barren-ground caribou herd.
- Working with partners and communities to conduct research, share knowledge and assess risks at the local and landscape level.

Indigenous partners, stakeholders and the public were provided with opportunities to provide comments on the draft plan, and a draft of this summary of the draft SEA. Comments were incorporated into the SEA and management plan as appropriate.

The SEA was conducted in accordance with the *Cabinet Directive on the Environmental Assessment of Policy, Plan and Program Proposals* and facilitated an evaluation of how the management plan contributed to the *Federal Sustainable Development Strategy*. Individual projects undertaken to implement management plan objectives at the site will be evaluated to determine if an impact assessment is required according to the *Inuvialuit Final Agreement* or the *Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act*. The management plan supports the *Federal Sustainable Development Strategy* goals of advancing reconciliation with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities (Goal 10); green spaces, cultural and natural heritage (Goal 11); and species protection and recovery (Goal 15).

Positive environmental effects are expected, and there are no important negative environmental effects anticipated from implementation of the management plan for Tuktut Nogait.