

The story so far ...

Work on establishing a new national park on Bathurst Island has been ongoing for almost 20 years.

1994 The proposal is first discussed with the Resolute Bay Hunters & Trappers Organization.

1995 The Inuit of Resolute Bay grant approval for a Mineral and Energy Resource Assessment to be conducted as part of the feasibility study required to develop the park proposal. A feasibility study for the park and a program of community consultations begins in 1995 and concludes in 2001.

A mineral energy and resources assessment (MERA) is completed in 1999 as part of the feasibility study. The MERA study shows high potential for mineral and hydrocarbons in the eastern part of the proposed park study area. This area is also shown to overlap with Peary caribou calving habitat (see map).

1996 Lands on Bathurst Island are first withdrawn by Canada for national park proposal development and consideration.

2002 The Government of Canada endorses a preferred park boundary option as its negotiation position.

2004 A five year extension to the land withdrawal is granted (2004-2009). The project is delayed for a number of years for reasons beyond Parks Canada's control.

2009 The Qikiqtani Inuit Association and Parks Canada resume work on the northern Bathurst Island national park proposal and IIBA negotiations.

A land withdrawal extension is granted for a five year period, from 2009 – 2014, to allow for negotiation of an IIBA and park boundary for northern Bathurst Island national park.

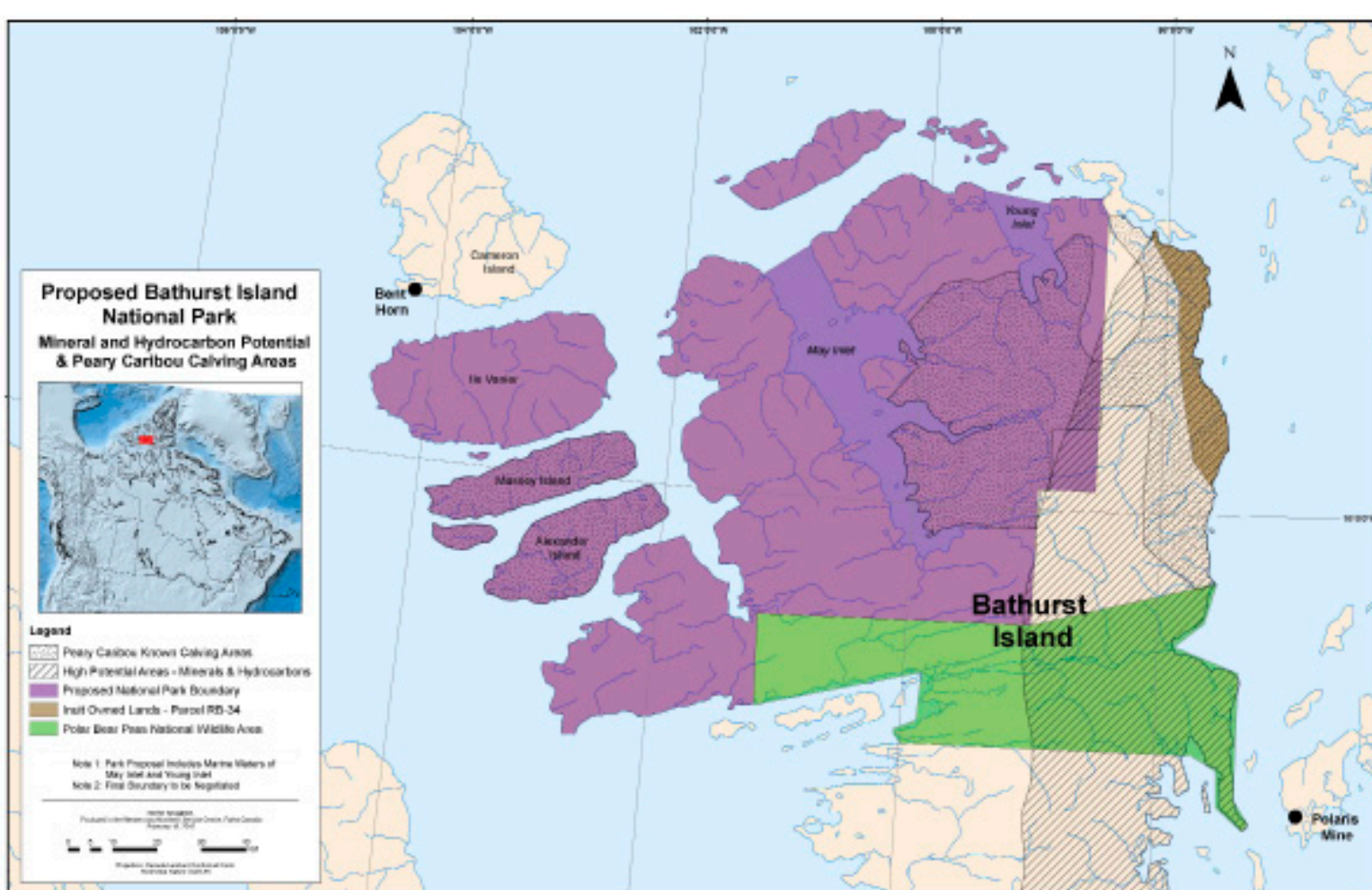
2010 The Government of Canada enters into a funding agreement with the Qikiqtani Inuit Association that provides this Designated Inuit Organization with the capacity to enter into IIBA negotiations.



Photo credit: D. Harvey



Photo credit: Parks Canada



The proposed boundary for Bathurst Island National Park, featuring important Peary caribou habitat and areas of high mineral & hydrocarbon resource potential.

(Note: this proposed boundary represents Parks Canada's current position. Negotiations still need to be completed with the Inuit, Indian & Northern Affairs and the Government of Nunavut)

How are new national parks created in Nunavut?

The land claim process and the IIBA -

Section 8 of the Nunavut Land Claim Agreement lays out the process for creating new national parks in Nunavut. A national park cannot be established in Nunavut until an Inuit Impact & Benefit Agreement (IIBA) has been negotiated. The QIA is the Designated Inuit Organization for the purpose of negotiating an IIBA and a park boundary on behalf of the Inuit of the Qikiqtaaluk Region. The Agreement deals with anything that could either impact or benefit Inuit including, among other things: cooperative management, continuation of Inuit harvesting rights, establishment of outpost camps, and Inuit employment and economic benefits.

Land withdrawal -

In October 2009, the Government of Canada with the support of the QIA, extended the temporary land withdrawal on northern Bathurst Island for an additional five years to give Parks Canada and the QIA time to negotiate an IIBA. This means that no staking, no exploration and no development can take place in the area and that no new permits, licences or leases can be issued for the area during this period.

Feasibility study -

To provide the information needed to help develop this park proposal and boundary, a feasibility study was conducted between 1995-2001 that looked at the land, wildlife, cultural resources, traditional ecological knowledge, and mineral & energy resource potential in the area.

The Mineral and Energy Resource Assessment process -

The Mineral and Energy Resource Assessment (MERA) process is the primary means by which various government agencies cooperate in the establishment of new national parks in Nunavut. This process is led by the Senior Mineral and Energy Resource Assessment Committee — a committee composed of senior officials from various Government of Canada departments and the Government of Nunavut. It ensures that the mineral and energy resource potential of an area is considered and balanced with wildlife and conservation values before any decision is made to create a national park. A MERA that looks at this potential must be completed prior to creating a new national park. The MERA for the northern Bathurst Island proposal was completed in 1999 as part of the larger park feasibility study.



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Next steps ...



Photo credit: Parks Canada

There is still lots to do before we can create this new national park.

- Inuit Impact and Benefit Agreement negotiations
- Community information sessions.
- Negotiation and development of park boundary options.
- Consultation with various Federal Government departments and with the Government of Nunavut.
- Public consultation on the park proposal and park boundary.
- Endorsement of a park boundary by Senior Mineral and Energy Resources Assessment Committee.
- Final park boundary recommendation to the Minister.
- Finalizing of the Inuit Impact and Benefit Agreement and ratification by the Parties.

Parks Canada cannot create new national park on its own. It must work very closely with Qikiqtani Inuit, various Federal Government departments and the Government of Nunavut before establishing a new national park in the Baffin Region. Completing all these things will take time and depends on reaching agreements with the Inuit and governments who have an interest or responsibility for this region.

How can I get involved?

At this stage in the process we are just informing community residents about this new national park proposal.

Formal consultations on this national park proposal will take place once an agreement has been reached between Parks Canada and QIA on a boundary recommendation and that this recommendation has been considered along with other factors under the MERA process. At that time Parks Canada will be seeking the views and opinions of the community of Resolute, Nunavummiut, stakeholder groups (including mining interests, outfitters, and environmental non-governmental organizations), and the Canadian public. The government of Canada will consider what people and organizations say during this formal consultation process to inform its deliberations on a final boundary recommendation for the proposed national park on northern Bathurst Island.

In the meantime, if you have any questions or concerns, please contact:

Christian Bucher
Chief Negotiator

Parks Canada - Northern Park Establishment Branch
Box 1166, Yellowknife, NT, X1A 2NB
TELEPHONE: 867.766.8462
EMAIL: christian.bucher@pc.gc.ca

