# Frequently Asked Questions

# About the *Wildlife Conservation and Management Plan* and Proposed Indigenous Protected and Conserved Area

## Wildlife Management Advisory Council (North Slope)

## September 2019

### Wildlife Conservation and Management Plan (WCMP)

**Why is WMAC NS developing a Plan for the Yukon North Slope?** The Council has a responsibility under the Inuvialuit Final Agreement (IFA) to prepare a Wildlife Conservation and Management Plan for the entire Yukon North Slope and recommend it to the appropriate authorities. The IFA establishes a “special conservation regime” for the Yukon North Slope whose dominant purpose is the conservation of wildlife, habitat and traditional native use. The Plan identifies the conservation requirements needed to maintain this special conservation regime. These requirements are based on the evidence compiled from Inuvialuit knowledge and science-based research.

**I thought there was already a Plan for the Yukon North Slope?** This 2019 draft plan is the second version of the WCMP. The original plan was completed and recommended in 2003. The 2019 draft plan rebuilds the conservation requirements for the region in light of new information and provides new recommendations for the area based on those requirements.

**Who is this Plan for?** While WMAC NS has the responsibility to prepare a plan, it is directed at those with management rights, responsibilities, and interests on the Yukon North Slope. The Plan recognizes other management plans (e.g. Ivvavik National Park Management Plan), species plans (e.g. ISR Polar Bear Management Plan), and Inuvialuit and government policies and programs that apply in the region.

**How did you choose the ‘featured species’?** The Plan is built on many years of research compiling the best available Inuvialuit knowledge and science. Some of this work involved in-depth meetings with knowledge holders in Aklavik, during which, most of the ‘featured species’ were identified. While it is understood that all plants and animals on the Yukon North Slope are important, knowledge holders identified species that are of special importance. The habitat requirements for these species are also representative of the habitat needs for many other animals.

### Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas (IPCA)

### **What is an Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas (IPCA)?** Indigenous protected and conserved areas are lands and waters where Indigenous people have a leadership role in protecting and conserving cultures and ecosystems through Indigenous laws, governance, and knowledge systems.

**Why an IPCA conservation designation?** Foremost, an IPCA would require a negotiation among the parties to the IFA (Inuvialuit, Canada, and Yukon Government) if it is to be established. Any IPCA proposal must not infringe on the rights, responsibilities and interests established and protected in the IFA. Should all parties agree to an IPCA on the Eastern Yukon North Slope in whole or in part, the benefits could include: enhanced recognition of Inuvialuit use and rights on the Yukon North Slope, enhanced economic opportunities that meet the conservation requirements of the area, and the development of a trust fund to support Inuvialuit implementation of an IPCA and conservation-based programs and economic opportunities. The Inuvialuit would determine the purposes of such a fund.

**What is WMAC NS’ role in the IPCA discussion?** If the parties choose to proceed with IPCA discussions, the Council could help to facilitate the negotiation of an IPCA, providing logistical support, responding to information and other related needs. Through the Canada Nature Fund, the Council brings significant funding to support the meetings, Inuvialuit participation, travel, and legal work needed to develop an agreement.

**Why is this all happening now?** The Council is preparing the WCMP now that there is a significant new body of information that helps us better understand the conservation requirements for the entire Yukon North Slope. This evidence from Inuvialuit knowledge and science reinforces the importance of the Eastern Yukon North Slope for Inuvialuit use, as well as for caribou, moose, geese, and other wildlife.

The Council is proposing an IPCA at this time as a potential conservation designation in the WCMP for discussion and review. Federal funding was announced in 2019 for supporting discussions that could contribute to the establishment of IPCAs in Canada. The Council applied for and received funding from this initiative, which must be used over the next two years (2019-2021).

**The Eastern Yukon North Slope is all Yukon Public Lands – what does this mean for Inuvialuit?** For the negotiation of an IPCA, it means that Yukon Government will play an active role in deciding the future of the Eastern Yukon North Slope, alongside Inuvialuit and the Government of Canada.

When it comes to considering future development on the Eastern Yukon North Slope, the IFA establishes the environmental screening and review processes that apply. Following these processes, the Yukon Government is responsible for regulatory requirements that would apply to development that is consistent with the area’s conservation purposes and requirements.

**Does this initiative include the marine area?** The proposed IPCA does not include the marine area off the Yukon coast. It only includes the lands of the Eastern Yukon North Slope – the area between Ivvavik National Park and the Yukon-NWT border.

**Is the IPCA the only way to conserve important values on the Eastern Yukon North Slope?** There are different tools available that can provide for the conservation and management of wildlife, habitat and native use of the area. The IPCA was the best option as it fit well with the IFA-based conservation purposes and co-management framework for the area, emphasizes Indigenous leadership and provides funding in support of IPCA implementation and, potentially, sustainable funding for post-establishment conservation-based economic and cultural benefits.

**If there is a trust fund established, what strings will be attached when it comes to the donor organization?** A trust fund donation or contribution differs from partnering with a Non-Government Organization for a program. The organizations interested in contributing to an Inuvialuit trust fund are foundations interested in conserving special places and conserving Indigenous cultures globally. Any third-party contributions would be subject to the terms of an IPCA establishment agreement and the agreement of the Inuvialuit, Yukon, Canada and contributing foundations.

**Who would benefit from this fund?** How the trust fund would be managed and how the benefits would flow to Inuvialuit would need to be determined by the Inuvialuit.

### **How can my organization/community expect to be engaged?** Over the next few months, the Council will visit communities to discuss the WCMP and receive verbal and written comments until the end of October 2019. After we have received comments from all Parties, we will begin the process of proposing changes based on the comments, questions, and concerns shared with us. A revised version of the WCMP will be shared with HTCs, CCs, and the Parties, late in 2019 or early 2020. The revised plan will be shared more broadly for public comment in 2020. The current goal is to see the WCMP endorsed by the Inuvialuit, Canada, and Yukon in Spring 2021. If IPCA discussions proceed, the timelines and process would mirror those of the WCMP.

**How will you ensure appropriate Inuvialuit control over the process and the outcome?** The negotiation towards an IPCA does not guarantee a new conservation area as an outcome for all or part of the Eastern North Slope. Representatives from the Inuvialuit Regional Corporations and the Inuvialuit Game Council participate directly in the negotiation. The negotiation can be terminated if Inuvialuit representatives think that the process no longer serves Inuvialuit interests in the Eastern Yukon North Slope and the requirements of the IFA.