



16 December, 2016

Climate Change Unit

Department of Environment and Natural Resources

Government of the Northwest Territories

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To Whom It May Concern,

As a leader in territorial conservation, CPAWS-NWT is committed to working toward solutions that protect the land, water, and wildlife of the Northwest Territories. We are pleased to submit this letter as our feedback and recommendations to the NWT Climate Change Strategic Framework, as we urge you to recognize within the framework ***the important role of Canada's northern terrestrial and marine ecosystems in reducing emissions, and helping all species, including humans, adapt to a changing climate.***

The Paris Agreement on climate change specifically states that parties should act to conserve and enhance, as appropriate, sinks and reservoirs of greenhouse gases as referred to in Article 4, paragraph 1(d), of the Convention, which refers to forests and oceans as well as other terrestrial, coastal and marine ecosystems. As the NWT Framework is intrinsically linked to the Pan-Canadian Framework, which is steered by the Paris Agreement, they must all be aligned in principle.

Recognizing the important role of Canada's northern ecosystems in mitigating climate change within the Pan-Canadian and NWT Frameworks would provide significant opportunities for our territorial government to use cost-effective nature conservation and restoration strategies to protect and enhance our carbon sinks and stores, and contribute to both our international commitments on climate change and Aichi targets on conserving biodiversity. Working to protect land in partnership with Indigenous peoples in ways that respects their rights and interests could also contribute to reconciliation efforts in Canada.

Here in the NWT we have a tremendous opportunity to truly make a difference in one of the three key pillars of the NWT Framework: Resilience & Adaptation. Conservation measures like expanding protected areas systems, restoring and conserving habitat and protecting species at risk would contribute to climate change mitigation by sequestering and/or avoiding the loss of carbon stored in ecosystems. An ecosystem focused component of the climate plan would complement the necessary deep reductions in fossil fuel emissions required to avoid catastrophic impacts of climate change.

Conversely, we are concerned that by overlooking northern ecosystems as an important part of the solution, the Frameworks will fall short of achieving their intended climate outcomes.

We recommend that the NWT Framework be fully developed in accordance with the Paris Agreement to support our federal commitments, and affirm both Framework's commitments to ecosystems' conservation and enhancement as an important part of Canada's developing climate mitigation and adaptation strategy.

Thank you for supporting the important role of Canada's northern ecosystems in mitigating the impacts of climate change. We very much look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Kris Brekke
Executive Director
CPAWS-NWT



Shannon Moore
Conservation Outreach Coordinator
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