



2020 Northwest Territories Environmental Audit

What is the NWT Environmental Audit?

The NWT Environmental Audit is an independent review to assess the effectiveness of the regulatory regime in the Mackenzie Valley, as well as the quality of environmental information and processes related to monitoring cumulative impacts. The Audit looks at how the NWT environmental regulatory system is working to see if improvements have been made since the last audit was done.

Since 2005, audits have been conducted every five years as required by legislation and land claim agreements.

Who conducted the Audit?

The Audit was conducted by a group of independent consultants with experience in the NWT under contract to 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 2020 Audit look at?

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

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 environmental information is collected and used by communities, governments, researchers and industry to manage the use of land and water.



Photo: R Kennedy

2020 Audit findings

The Audit was released in the fall of 2020. It found that, overall, the system for managing land and water use in the NWT is effectively protecting the environment. The Audit did not identify any major new issues since the last Audit in 2015.

Examples of improvement include:

- Since Devolution, the GNWT has worked with Indigenous governments and organizations to make new laws or improve existing laws related to land, water and resource management.
- The GNWT has made progress on climate change policy and action planning.
- GNWT Inspectors are making sure industry follows the rules set out in permits and licences.

The Audit found there are still improvements to be made in the areas of community well-being, land use planning, finalizing land claims and engaging communities. To address needed improvements, the Auditor made 40 recommendations to governments and the boards created by the *Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act*.

Taking action

The GNWT has 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:

- Hosting a forum to discuss socio-economic issues with the mining industry and Indigenous governments and organizations.
- Partnering with other organizations to expand water quality monitoring of lakes in the NWT.
- Developing and implementing a cumulative effects framework.
- Releasing water quality reporting guidelines for people being licensed through the Land and Water Boards of the Mackenzie Valley.

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.

For more information:

Read the full 2020 NWT Environmental Audit report or plain language summary on our website: www.enr.gov.nt.ca/nwt-environmental-audit.