

Government of
Northwest Territories



Environment and Natural Resources Strategic Plan 2015 - 2020





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Cover Photo: GNWT/D. Downing, ENR. Caption: Slave Lowlands (Taiga Plains Ecoregion).
Photo: GNWT/T. Ellsworth, ENR. Caption: South Slave Region (Taiga Plains Ecoregion).



Minister Wally Schumann

I am pleased to present an update to the 2015-2020 Strategic Plan for the Department of the Environment and Natural Resources (ENR), which includes strategic priorities that are aligned with the priorities and mandate of the 18th Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories (NWT).

The environment is a critical priority for the people of the NWT. ENR recognizes the importance of the air, land, water, forests, and wildlife for traditional, cultural, economic, and spiritual purposes. Healthy ecosystems are essential for maintaining sustainable livelihoods in the NWT.

The goals and objectives as set out in the plan will help the Department to effectively achieve its vision and mission, which are complementary to the Government of the Northwest Territories' (GNWT) Sustainable Development Policy and the Land Use and Sustainability Framework. Departmental priorities as set out through this Strategic Plan are compatible with the mandate of ENR as established through the ENR Establishment Policy.

ENR continues to collaboratively manage wildlife and forest resources; advance transboundary water agreements; work with communities on source water protection and community-based water monitoring; improve waste reduction programs including additional recycling and waste reduction opportunities; advance conservation planning; lead the GNWT on climate change adaption and mitigation efforts; and protect species at risk and assess biodiversity. Additionally, ENR will expand traditional economy programming toward economic diversification while ensuring environmental stewardship.

This Strategic Plan outlines the approaches ENR will undertake to fulfill its mandate and improve program delivery. The plan will also allow ENR to meet the challenges of a changing world and achieve longer terms goals efficiently and effectively.



Deputy Minister, Ernie Campbell

I am pleased to present the 2015-2020 Strategic Plan for ENR. ENR is responsible for providing a large number of programs and services across the NWT, which is a vast land mass with important natural features.

ENR staff are dedicated and passionate about our environment, including the air, land, water, forests and wildlife. ENR has five regional offices and a number of local offices, in addition to its headquarters in Yellowknife.

The additional mandated responsibilities to ENR following Devolution have allowed for a broadening of our holistic approach to ecosystem-based management. This Strategic Plan has been developed to help focus the Department's direction post-Devolution, look towards our evolution and take the necessary steps to meet our increased mandate efficiently and effectively.

Consistent with ENR's collaborative approach to ecosystem-based management, staff were involved in the inclusive development process for this Strategic Plan. The vision, mission, values, and goals of the Strategic Plan represent ENR's future direction.

The goals outlined in this Strategic Plan position ENR to successfully deliver its programs and services. The goals are equal in importance and interrelated.

The departmental values will guide staff in their work and interactions with our many partners for the benefit of all residents of the NWT.

ENR is committed to continuing to work collaboratively and cooperatively with our partners toward the vision of this Strategic Plan, "healthy ecosystems and sustainable livelihoods thriving now and into the future."

What ENR does

Environmental Monitoring and Research

Input into Regulatory System Financial and Business Planning

Forest Stewardship and Management

Partnerships

Waste Reduction

Respecting Aboriginal Rights and Third Party Interests

Balancing Conservation and Economic Development

Training

Spill Management

Communication

Recycling

Traditional Knowledge

Analysis and Reporting

Traditional Economy

Manage and Remediate Contaminated Sites

Legislation

Wildlife Health and Habitat Research and Monitoring

Waste Prevention

Promote Awareness and Understanding

Scientific Information

Licenses and Permits

Compliance and Enforcement

Reporting on Status of all NWT Species

Community and Regional-level Programs

Conservation Area Establishment

Web Development and Design

Public Education

Policy Development

Strategic Planning

Field Operations

Habitat and Biodiversity

Media Relations

Environmental Protection

Leadership

Information to the Public

Forest Fire Management

Air Quality

Weather and Snow Monitoring

Address Data Gaps

Respond to Climate Change

Coordination

Transboundary Water Agreements

Technical Expertise and Advice

Assessment of Effects on Aquatic Ecosystems

Community Based Monitoring

Source Water Protection

GIS Services

Remote Sensing

Aquatic Ecosystem Indicators

Greening Government

Spatial Analysis

Data and Information Management

Environmental Assessments

Environmental Sample Analysis

Understanding Cumulative Impacts

Supporting Co-Management Partners

Mapping

Setting a Path for Future Research and Science Integration

Water Quality and Quantity

Environmental Health and Safety Issues

Support Informed Environmental and Resource Management Decisions



Vision

Healthy ecosystems and sustainable livelihoods thriving now and into the future.

Photo: GNWT/D. Allaire, ENR. Caption: Dehcho Region (Boreal Cordillera Ecoregion).



Mission

ENR actively collaborates to protect, manage and restore ecosystem health, promote environmental stewardship and support the wise use of natural resources for the benefit of ecosystems, which include the people of the NWT.



Guiding Approaches

Two guiding approaches underpin the role of ENR within the GNWT.

- 1) Ecosystem-based management
- 2) Sustainable Development

Ecosystem-based management considers the complex interactions between humans and the living and non-living environment. The goal of ecosystem-based management is to sustainably conserve or restore habitat quality to maintain ecosystem services.

Sustainable development is a key component of ENR's Establishment Policy and the GNWT Sustainable Development Policy. Sustainable Development is defined in both of these policies as:

Development of natural resources in a manner that ensures economic, social and cultural needs are met while maintaining ecosystem integrity and biological diversity and without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.

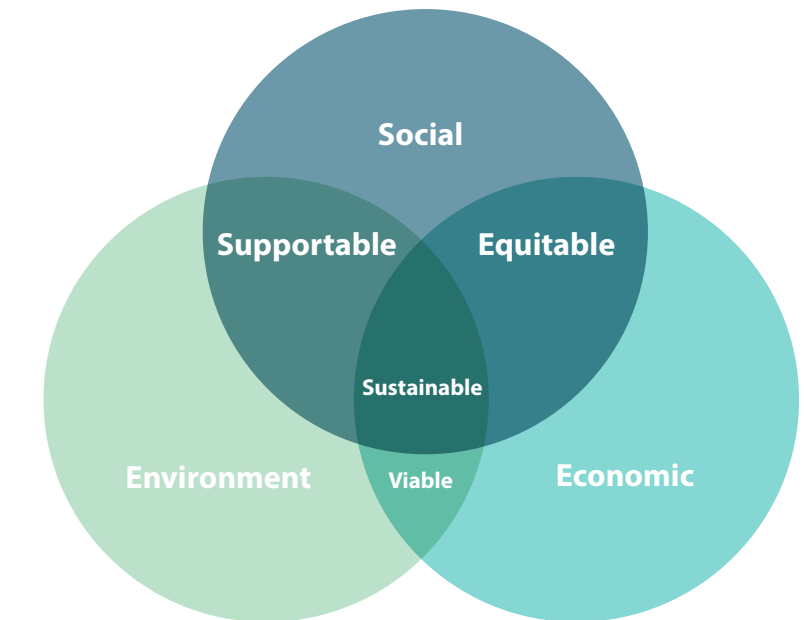
Note: The concepts of ecosystem services, ecosystem integrity and biological diversity are defined on page 45.



Photo: GNWT/D. Downing, ENR. Caption: Sahtu Region (Taiga Cordillera Ecoregion).

Guiding Approaches Continued

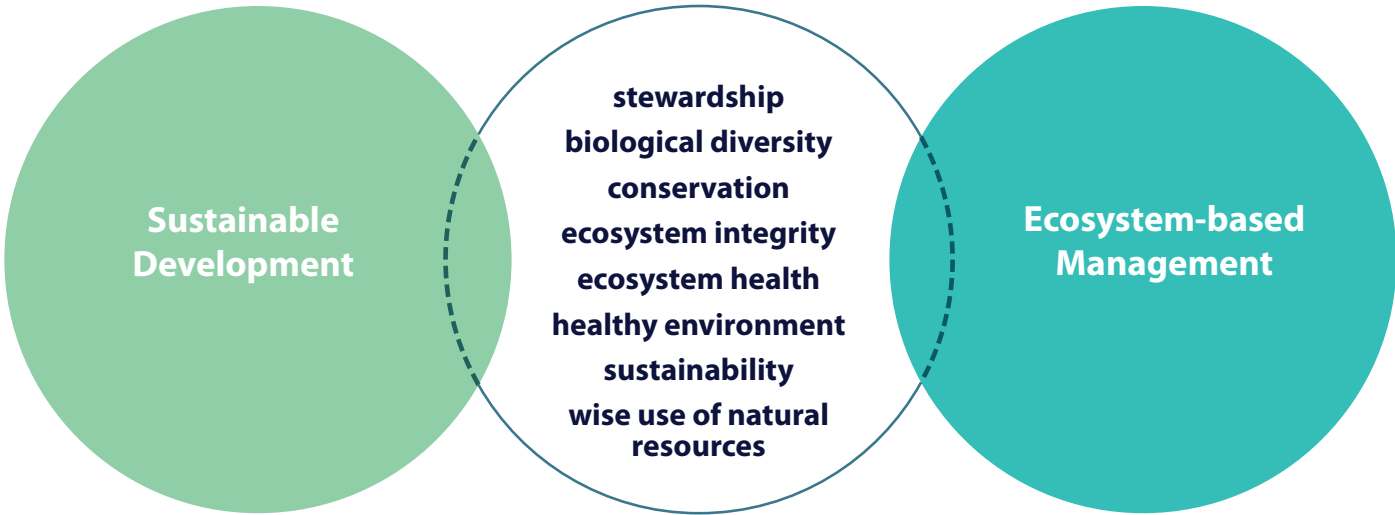
Sustainable development is represented as:





Guiding Approaches Continued

Visual representation of concepts related to sustainable development and ecosystem-based management:



ENR’s mandate, as defined in ENR’s Establishment Policy, and the mission in this Strategic Plan are ultimately about balance – this visual representation illustrates concepts and words related to our guiding approaches of sustainable development and ecosystem-based management. These guiding approaches are interrelated and form the foundation of ENR’s mandate and mission.



Guiding Policies

Three guiding policies have been considered in the development of this Strategic Plan.

These guiding policies are:

- ENR Establishment Policy
- Sustainable Development Policy
- Land Use and Sustainability Framework

ENR’s mission, values and goals are compatible with the principles and purposes of these policies.

These policies are available online.





Photo: GNWT/S. Yuill, ENR. Caption: South Slave Region (Taiga Plains Ecoregion).

Values

- We are role models for environmentally sustainable behaviour.
- We foster leadership within and outside our organization.
- We behave as professionals with accountability, integrity and transparency.
- We provide a safe and respectful work environment.
- We are a team committed to making a difference and celebrating successes.



Goals and Objectives

ENR has six goals to achieve the mission set out in this Strategic Plan. Many of the goals and objectives outlined on the following pages are interrelated and complementary; achieving one goal or objective may contribute to the achievement of another. Objectives may relate to multiple goal areas but have been placed under their most relevant goal area. Progress on the implementation of this Strategic Plan will be reported annually and available online.

- Ecosystem Health
- Public Service
- People
- Knowledge
- Partnerships
- Communications

Photo: GNWT/D. Downing, ENR. Caption: Inuvik Region (Northern Arctic Ecoregion).



Photo: G. Court.
Caption: Polar Bear.

Ecosystem Health

Conserve and protect healthy ecosystems and encourage the wise use of our natural resources.

Objectives:

- Proactively contribute to maintaining or improving NWT ecosystem integrity.
- Improve our understanding and management of cumulative effects.
- Improve our understanding and response to climate change.
- Promote and ensure compliance with ENR legislation and regulations.





Public Service

Demonstrate excellence in public service by collaboratively delivering effective and efficient policies, programs and legislation that are adaptable to change.

Objectives:

- Ensure effective and efficient delivery of ENR programs.
- Promote collaborative relationships with Aboriginal governments and provide a meaningful good governance approach to consultation.
- Promote a meaningful good governance approach to public engagement.
- Facilitate collaboration with other GNWT Departments.
- Support informed decision making in the regulatory and legislated processes in the NWT.



Photo: GNWT/ J. Chambers, ENR.
Caption: South Slave Regional Officers.

People

Cultivate dedicated, representative, innovative and knowledgeable staff that have opportunities to learn, grow and contribute.

Objectives:

- Promote employee satisfaction to retain dedicated and knowledgeable staff.
- Employees have access to, and support for, training that is relevant to their position.
- Continue implementing the GNWT Affirmative Action Policy in building a representative workforce.
- Employees are supported, able to meet their work objectives and recognized for exemplary work.



Knowledge

Support the collection, use and maintenance of traditional and local knowledge and sound science for transparent evidence-based decision-making.

Objectives:

- Be a leader in decision-making that meaningfully considers traditional and local knowledge and sound scientific information.
- Traditional knowledge is effectively, respectfully and appropriately incorporated into programs and services.
- Support and promote the GNWT Science Agenda.
- Maintain, and make publicly available, sound information that is understandable and relevant to the residents of the NWT.

Photo: GNWT/S. Matthews, ENR.
Caption: North Slave Region (Southern Arctic Ecoregion).



Partnerships

Develop, foster and promote effective partnerships.

Objectives:

- Establish and promote effective and diverse partnerships with clear mutual obligations that contribute to ENR's mission.
- Support programs that offer opportunities for Aboriginal and community capacity building.

Photo: GNWT/R. Antoine, ENR. Caption: Dehcho Annual General Meeting, Jean Marie River.



Photo: GNWT/M. Swallow, ENR
Caption: ENR employees, left to right
Noni Paulette and Darin Bagshaw.

Communications

Strive for meaningful, open and timely information exchange within and external to ENR.

Objectives:

- Support and maintain meaningful, open and timely *external* communications to build upon, and sustain, public support for ENR’s vision and mission.
- Support and maintain meaningful, open and timely *internal* communications.



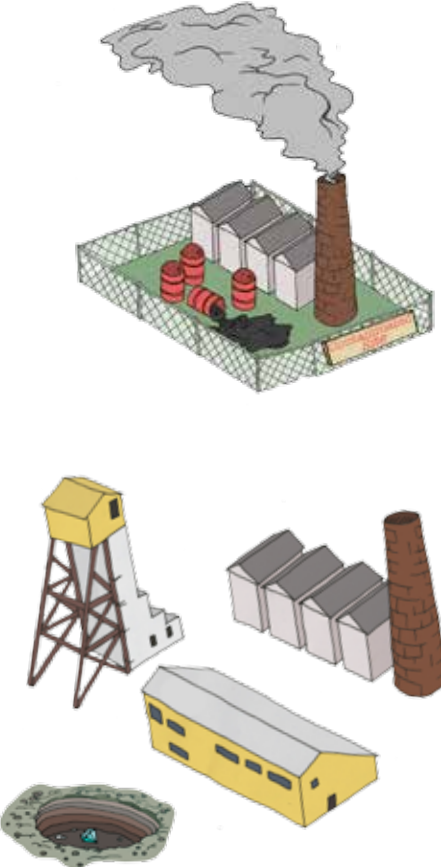
Strategic Priorities


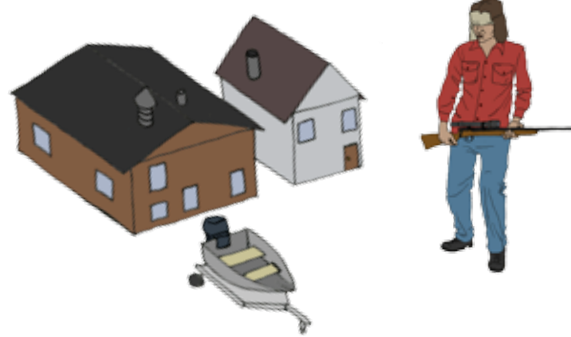

The identified Strategic Priorities include the program specific initiatives that the Department will undertake for the duration of this Strategic Plan. These Strategic Priorities represent new initiatives, the renewal of existing initiatives and modernization of many of ENR’s pieces of legislation, regulations and policies. These Strategic Priorities are aligned with the Priorities of the 18th Legislative Assembly. For more information on ENR’s broader programs and legislative responsibilities, please visit our website at www.enr.gov.nt.ca.





Strategic Priority	Deliverable
<p>In order to advance the territorial vision of land and resource management in accordance with the Land Use and Sustainability Framework, we will evolve our legislative, regulatory and policy systems by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing and proposing amendments to the <i>Waters Act</i> • Developing and proposing amendments to the <i>Environmental Protection Act</i> (including the development of air quality regulations) • Developing and proposing amendments to the <i>Forest Management Act</i> • Propose new legislation for the establishment of Conservation and Protected Areas • Propose amendments to the <i>Environmental Rights Act</i> 	<p>Modernized legislation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Waters Act</i> • <i>Environmental Protection Act</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Including air quality regulations • <i>Forest Management Act</i> • Conservation and Protected Areas legislation • <i>Environmental Rights Act</i>
Implement 5-year NWT Cumulative Impact Monitoring Program (CIMP) Action Plan	Report on progress of implementation
Coordinate responses to the recommendations in the NWT Environmental Audit for improved environmental management	Environmental Audit includes responses from applicable parties
Finalize and implement the Conservation Network Plan, using the Land Use and Sustainability Framework, to finalize existing candidate protected areas	Implement the Conservation Network Plan



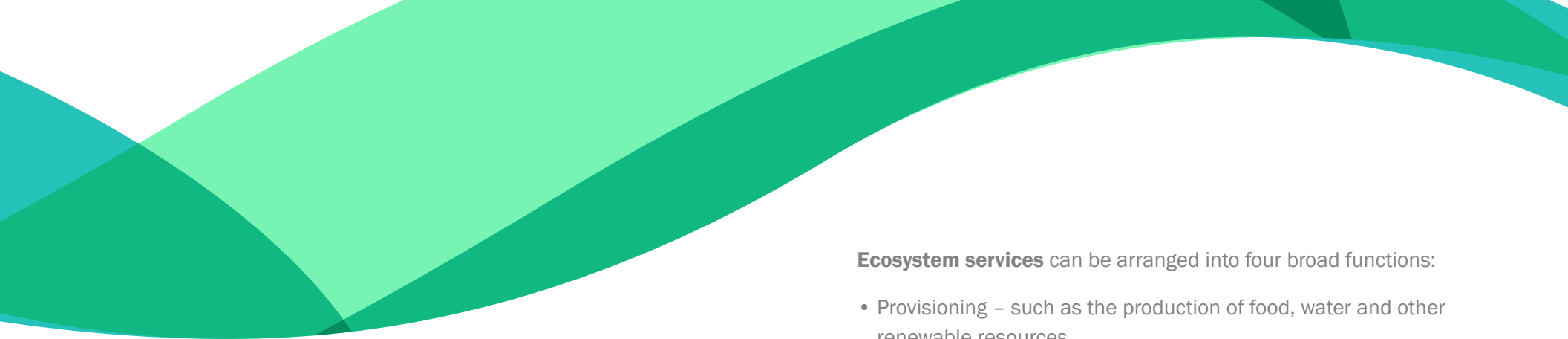
	Strategic Priority	Deliverable
	Establish Thaidene Nene Park	Thaidene Nene park
	Develop a Regional Studies Policy	Regional Studies Policy in preparation for <i>Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act</i> part 5.1 delegation
	Develop an integrated comprehensive approach to the management of contaminated sites including prioritizing and sharing of responsibility using the Land Use and Sustainability Framework	Contaminated Sites Procedures Manual and accurate list of contaminated sites with associated GNWT liabilities
	Develop Climate Change Strategic Framework	Climate Change Strategic Framework
	Renew the GNWT Science Agenda	Implement a renewed GNWT Science Agenda
	Update Environmental Protection Guidelines	Revised guidelines (currently 16 different environmental protection guidelines)
	Implement phase one of the Electronics Recycling Program and develop and implement phase two of this program	Territory-wide Electronics Recycling Program in two phases of electronics materials
	Develop a Greening Government Strategy for the GNWT	GNWT Greening Government Strategy and Action Plan

	Strategic Priority	Deliverable
  	Develop a Waste Resource Management Strategy that will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore ways to improve NWT waste disposal systems Consider which waste reduction and diversion program to implement, and Demonstrate how waste diversion programs will contribute to a sustainable economy in the NWT 	Waste Resource Management Strategy and Action Plan including proposed legislative changes and new waste diversion programs
	In conjunction with Aboriginal governments, co-management partners and traditional user groups, develop a culturally appropriate, made in the north, hunter education program for delivery in all communities of the NWT	Implement the Hunter Education Program
	Develop a Traditional Economy Strategy that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Helps to establish and/or expand self-sufficient businesses that sell products from renewable resource harvesting 	Traditional Economy Strategy
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Builds partnerships to expand resources available for community based traditional economy programs Develops country food programming to promote the consumption of foods such as fish, wildlife, berries and mushrooms Enhance existing programming and build new partnership initiatives to support healthy and sustainable traditional lifestyles 	Country Food Strategy

	Strategic Priority	Deliverable
	Review and update the Public Education Plan	Public Education Plan
	Integrate the provisions of the <i>Forest Protection Act</i> into the modernized <i>Forest Management Act</i> , modernize the <i>Forest Management Regulations</i> , and update the Forest Management Policy	Modernized Act, regulations and policy that include regulations related to the incidental use of timber and a revised schedule of fees and charges
	Revise Community Wildland Fire Risk Management Plans, while encouraging communities, Values at Risk owners and other branches of government to reduce the risk from wildland fire	Community Wildfire Prevention Plans (CWPP) and encourage their implementation
	Improve understanding of wildland fire behaviour, risk mitigation, and its role in the ecosystem	Continue to improve the collection and dissemination of information on wildland fires, risk mitigation, prediction, modeling and mapping
	Broaden understanding of forest dynamics, ecology, sustainability and industry opportunities	Products and information that improve knowledge of forest dynamics, sustainability, health and management
	Support development of a sustainable forest industry	Forest Management Agreements that support sustainable development
	Develop a water classification system for the NWT and an associated technical guidance document with respect to the determination of water quality objectives	Water classification system and associated water quality objectives document produced

	Strategic Priority	Deliverable
	Finalize and implement the Water Stewardship Action Plan and continue to implement initiatives related to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transboundary Water Agreements (Negotiate with Yukon, Nunavut, and Saskatchewan) • Source Water Protection Planning • Community-based Water Monitoring • Aquatic Ecosystem Indicators 	A renewed Water Stewardship Action Plan
	Collect water quality and quantity data and climatic information to identify management priorities, support the regulation of existing developments and assessment of new developments	Status and trends reports every five years
	Consult with Aboriginal governments to complete the next phase of regulation making under the <i>Wildlife Act</i>	Phase two of the wildlife regulations
	Develop guidelines for industry and development under the <i>Wildlife Act</i>	Industry and development guidelines under the <i>Wildlife Act</i>
	Complete required recovery strategies and management plans for species on the NWT List of Species at Risk	Recovery strategies and management plans for species on the NWT List of Species at Risk

	Strategic Priority	Deliverable
	Release Biodiversity General Status Report	NWT Species 2016-2020 report is released
	Develop and implement a renewed multi-year management strategy for barren-ground caribou in the NWT	Implement a renewed Barren-ground Caribou Management Strategy
	Develop a NWT Boreal Caribou Range Plan and monitoring program	Implement a Boreal Caribou Range Plan and supporting monitoring program
	Develop a Bathurst Caribou Range Plan	Implement a Bathurst Caribou Range Plan
	Develop management plans for wood bison, muskox and moose	Herd-specific management plans for wood bison and species-specific plans for muskox and moose
	Develop a NWT Wildlife Health Strategy	Implement a 2015-2020 Wildlife Health Strategy and related Action Plan



Glossary

Ecosystems: include all living and non-living things in a given area and their interactions with each other.

Biodiversity or biological diversity: includes the variety of all living species, including humans, and their relationships to each other. This includes the differences in genes, species and ecosystems.

Ecosystem integrity or ecological integrity: is when the components of an ecosystem are healthy, intact, resilient and able to persist into the future.

Ecosystem services can be arranged into four broad functions:

- Provisioning – such as the production of food, water and other renewable resources
- Regulating – such as the control of climate, weather and disease
- Supporting – such as the nutrient cycles whereby everything in nature is used, recycled and returned as useful products (e.g., soil formation and pollination)
- Cultural – such as spiritual and recreational benefits

Stewardship: is everyone taking responsibility for land, water and resources and working collaboratively to safeguard what is important, whether it is traditional values, environmental conditions or the prosperity of Northerners.



GNWT/ K. Trembath, ENR. Caption: ENR employees, left to right, Katherine Trembath and Laurel McDonald.



Photo: GNWT/ J. Chambers, ENR. Caption: NWT Wildland Fire Operations team receiving a 2015 Premier's Award.



Photo: GNWT/J. McKay, ENR. Caption: North Slave Region (Taiga Shield Ecoregion).Caption: Strategic Plan Core Group: Left to right - Claudia Haas, Lubaki Zantoko, Lisa Dyer, Susan Craig, Erin Kelly, Tony Morris, Michelle Hannah and Meghan Beveridge.



Photo: Pat Kane. Caption: ENR employee, Marti Lys.

