



Sirmilik

National Park

Management Plan

2015





Foreword

Canada's national historic sites, national parks and national marine conservation areas are part of a century-strong Parks Canada network which provides Canadians and visitors from around the world with unique opportunities to experience and embrace our wonderful country.

From our smallest national park to our most visited national historic site to our largest national marine conservation area, each of Canada's treasured places offers many opportunities to enjoy Canada's historic and natural heritage. These places serve as sources of inspiration, relaxation, learning and discovery.

As we plan for the years to come, we can encourage lasting connections to our heritage and promote our protected places to be enjoyed in ways that leave them unimpaired for present and future generations.

Our Government's vision is to build a culture of heritage conservation in Canada by protecting these irreplaceable places and offering Canadians exceptional opportunities to build personal connections with our natural and cultural heritage.

These values form the foundation of the new management plan for Sirmilik National Park of Canada. I offer my appreciation to the many thoughtful Canadians who helped to develop this plan, particularly to our dedicated team from Parks Canada, and to all those local organizations and individuals who have demonstrated their good will, hard work, spirit of co-operation and extraordinary sense of stewardship.

In this same spirit of partnership and responsibility, I am pleased to approve the Sirmilik National Park of Canada Management Plan.

Leona Aglukkaq
Minister of the Environment and
Minister responsible for Parks Canada

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QIA PRESIDENT'S FOREWORD

(to be included when the Management Plan has been approved)

NWMB LETTER

(to be included when the Management Plan has been approved)

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Recommendations

Recommended by:

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Executive Summary

Sirmilik National Park is located on the north end of Baffin Island, between the communities of Pond Inlet (Mittimatalik) and Arctic Bay (Ikpiarjuk). At 22 200 km², it is among the largest national parks in Canada. It was established in 2001 and is cooperatively managed by Inuit and Parks Canada in accordance with the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement, the Inuit Impact and Benefit Agreement of Auyuittuq, Quttinirpaaq and Sirmilik National Parks and the Canada National Parks Act.

Three key strategies are proposed to guide the work of managing the Park for the foreseeable future. Working with local Inuit communities is central to both strategies. Each key strategy builds on existing relationships in ways that enable the Agency to better carry out its mandate and enables the communities of Pond Inlet and Arctic Bay to meet their expectations and goals.

KEY STRATEGY 1: CELEBRATING THE SPECIAL CONNECTION BETWEEN SIRMILIK NATIONAL PARK AND THE INUIT OF POND INLET AND ARCTIC BAY

This strategy builds on the history of Inuit connection to the land, which still seeps through every facet of arctic life. Parks Canada will continue to celebrate and encourage this connection and Inuit will have opportunities to benefit from the presence of the park. Parks Canada will continue to build relationships with the adjacent communities, encouraging local people to share their knowledge, expertise, and passion in the management of the park.

The strategy aims to achieve the following:

- Encourage and increase park use by Inuit
- Increase involvement of Inuit in park management decisions
- Increase Inuit benefits from economic opportunities

KEY STRATEGY 2: DEVELOPING SIRMILIK NATIONAL PARK'S VISITOR EXPERIENCE PROGRAM

The focus of this strategy is to develop new visitor experience opportunities in Sirmilik National Park by including the communities of Pond Inlet and Arctic Bay and the tourism industry.

The strategy aims to achieve the following:

- Increase visitation to the park
- Diversify visitor experience opportunities through interpretive products and programs
- Respect the wilderness experience sought by visitors
- Continue to promote visitor safety
- Respect Inuit harvesting and cultural activities
- Collaborate with other organizations to support tourism capacity development in Pond Inlet and Arctic Bay

KEY STRATEGY 3: INCREASING KNOWLEDGE OF AND AWARENESS ABOUT SIRMILIK NATIONAL PARK

This strategy targets the requirement to build the Inuit and scientific knowledge base of the park in order to protect its ecosystems and cultural resources and to forge the connection of Canadians to the park. The strategy relies on the relationship between Parks Canada and the communities of Pond Inlet and Arctic Bay, and on partnering or working closely with various organizations such as universities, the Canadian

Wildlife Service, the Qikiqtani Inuit Association, and the Inuit Heritage Trust. This will result in increased awareness of the park by partners, potential visitors, and the general public.

The strategy aims to achieve the following:

- Complete inventories, engage in research about and monitor ecosystems and cultural resources, and include the use of oral histories and Inuktitut place names
- Continuously collect and use Inuit knowledge
- Determine the heritage value and identify the cultural significance of specific cultural resources
- Enhance the relationship between Parks Canada and the communities of Pond Inlet and Arctic Bay, especially through in-park youth activities
- Help improve the relationship between researchers and the communities
- Develop outreach and education products and programs for Canadians, including targeted programs for residents of Pond Inlet and Arctic Bay, by using the Parks Canada website

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Table of Contents

Foreword	Erreur ! Signet non défini.
Recommendations	vi
Executive Summary	viii
1.0 Introduction	1
2.0 Significance of Sirmilik National Park	4
3.0 Planning Context	5
4.0 Planning Priorities	7
5.0 Vision	9
6.0 Key Strategies	10
7.0 Area Management	16
8.0 Zoning	19
9.0 Summary of Strategic Environmental Assessment	27
10.0 Acknowledgements	29
Maps	
Map 1: Regional Setting	2
Map 2: Sirmilik National Park	3
Map 3: Bylot Island, Sirmilik National Park	17
Map 3: Sirmilik National Park Zoning	22
Map 4: Southwest Corner of Bylot Island Zoning	23
Map 5: Areas of Special Importance to Inuit	25

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1.0 Introduction

Parks Canada manages one of the finest and most extensive systems of protected natural and historic places in the world. The Agency's mandate is to protect and present these places for the benefit and enjoyment of current and future generations. Future-oriented, strategic management of each national park, national marine conservation area, heritage canal and those national historic sites administered by Parks Canada supports the Agency's vision:

Canada's treasured natural and historic places will be a living legacy, connecting hearts and minds to a stronger, deeper understanding of the very essence of Canada.

The *Canada National Parks Act* and the *Parks Canada Agency Act* require Parks Canada to prepare a management plan for each national park. The *Sirmilik National Park Management Plan*, once approved by the Minister responsible for Parks Canada and tabled in Parliament, ensures Parks Canada's accountability to Canadians, outlining how park management will achieve measurable results in support of the Agency's mandate.

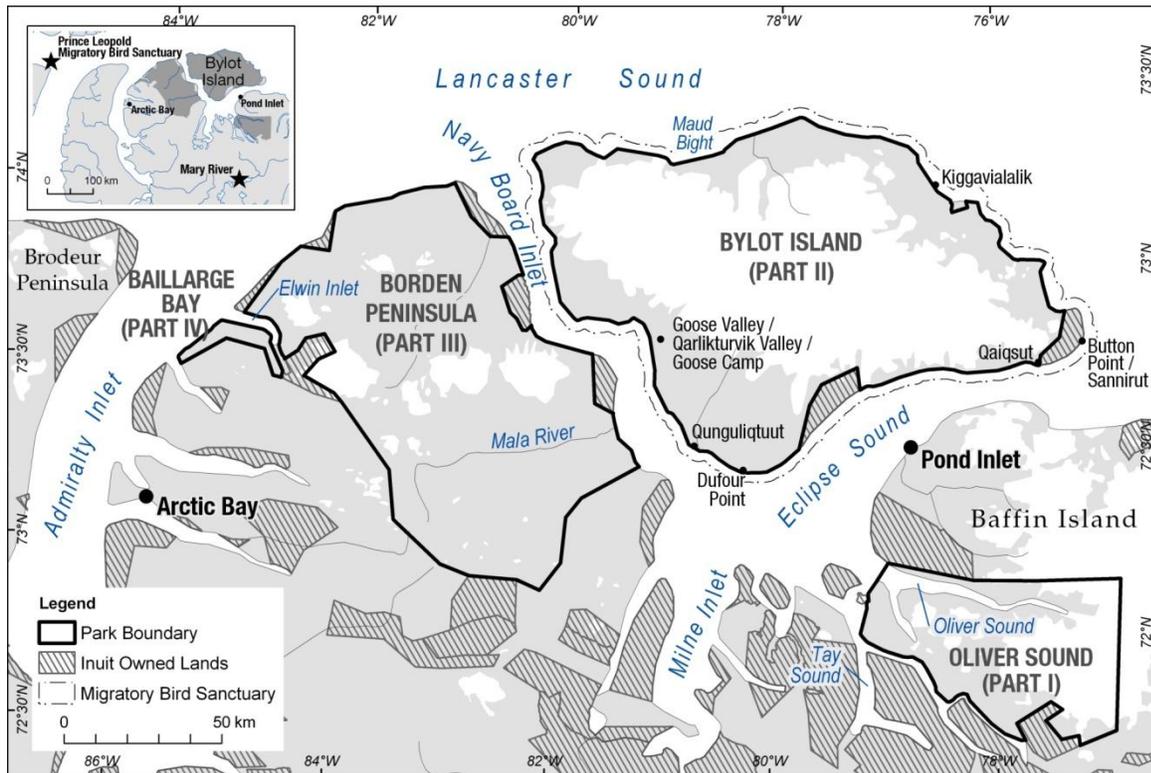
Inuit, partners, stakeholders, community members from Arctic Bay and Pond Inlet, and the public were involved in the preparation of the management plan, helping to shape the future direction of the national park. The plan sets clear, strategic direction for the management and operation of Sirmilik National Park by articulating a vision, key strategies and objectives. Parks Canada will report annually on progress toward achieving the plan objectives and will review the plan every ten years or sooner if required.

This plan is not an end in and of itself. Parks Canada will maintain an open dialogue on the implementation of the management plan, to ensure that it remains relevant and meaningful. The plan will serve as the focus for ongoing engagement on the management of Sirmilik National Park in years to come.

Map 1: Regional Setting



Map 2: Sirmilik National Park



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2.0 Significance of Sirmilik National Park

Sirmilik National Park was established under the *Canada National Parks Act* in 2001, following the negotiation and signature of the *Inuit Impact and Benefit Agreement of Auyuittuq, Quttinirpaaq and Sirmilik National Parks* (IIBA). The park is cooperatively managed by Inuit and Parks Canada in accordance with the *Nunavut Land Claims Agreement* (NLCA) and the IIBA. At 22 200 km², it is among the largest national parks in Canada.

The purpose of the Park is identified in the IIBA as follows:

- a) to protect for all time a representative natural area of Canadian significance in the Eastern Arctic Lowlands Natural Region;
- b) to respect the special relationship between Inuit and the area;
- c) to ensure the long-term protection of the migratory bird populations and their habitats in the Park; and
- d) to encourage public understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of the Park, including the special relationship of Inuit to this area, so as to leave the Park unimpaired for future generations.

Bylot Island, one of the 4 components of the park, is also a Migratory Bird Sanctuary. The *Inuit Impact and Benefit Agreement for National Wildlife Areas and Migratory Bird Sanctuaries in the Nunavut Settlement Area* defines a separate and additional cooperative management regime for the Bylot Island Migratory Bird Sanctuary.

The park has tundra, glacier, wetland, coastal, marine, and freshwater ecosystems. Tundra ecosystems make up approximately 60% of the park area. As indicated by its Inuktitut name “Sirmilik”, which means “the place of glaciers”, much of the park is covered by high mountain peaks and glaciers.

Sirmilik National Park is very important culturally. It is used extensively by Inuit today, for various cultural and harvesting activities, especially by Inuit from the communities of Pond Inlet (Mittimatalik) and Arctic Bay (Ikpiarjuk). The park and its surrounding region also have a rich legacy of cultural resources that tell the story of human occupation over the last two thousand years.

3.0 Planning Context

Planning for the future of Sirmilik National Park must take into consideration the legal and administrative context of the park, the broader trends that will affect the park in the years to come and the perspectives of the park's adjacent communities, Inuit, stakeholders, and other members of the public. The following are important considerations that informed the development of this management plan.

3.1 THE LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE CONTEXT OF THE PARK

The *Nunavut Land Claims Agreement* (NLCA) recognizes various Inuit rights and establishes cooperative management structures within the Nunavut Settlement Area. In particular, the NLCA recognizes the right of Inuit to harvest wildlife within national parks such as Sirmilik National Park, to enter these parks at no cost for that purpose, and to establish outpost camps in them unless their establishment is inconsistent with the park's management plan.

The NLCA and the *Inuit Impact and Benefit Agreement of Auyuittuq, Quttinirpaaq and Sirmilik National Parks* (IIBA) define the cooperative management arrangement of the park. The Sirmilik Joint Park Management Committee (JPMC) is the cooperative management body for the park. It consists of six members, three appointed by the Qikiqtani Inuit Association (QIA) and three appointed by the Minister responsible for Parks Canada. One of the Ministerial appointments must be based on advice from the Minister responsible for the Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS) due to Bylot Island's status as a Migratory Bird Sanctuary. The role of the Committee is to advise Parks Canada, the Minister responsible for national parks, the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board, and other agencies on all matters related to park management. The IIBA also requires that management plans be developed by a Park Planning Team (PPT). The Sirmilik PPT has four members, two of whom are appointed by QIA, one by Parks Canada, and one by the Canadian Wildlife Service.

There are several neighbouring and overlapping management authorities that are important to Sirmilik National Park; they provide opportunities for partnering and require consultations. Inuit Owned Lands (IOL) and the marine component of the Bylot Island Migratory Bird Sanctuary are adjacent to Sirmilik National Park. A feasibility study to establish a National Marine Conservation Area in Lancaster Sound, which would include waters around the park, is currently underway. Finally, an approved iron ore mining project and associated port is located on Inuit Owned Lands near Mary River, 160 km south of Pond Inlet and about 100km south of the Oliver Sound sector of Sirmilik National Park.

3.2 THE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PARK'S ADJACENT COMMUNITIES OF POND INLET AND ARCTIC BAY

Inuit maintain a strong historical relationship with the land and marine environments. Inuit who live in Pond Inlet and Arctic Bay continue to travel extensively in their environment to pursue their culture and way of life, including within Sirmilik National Park. Inuit knowledge is a vital component to understand the park's ecosystems and enhances the relationship of Parks Canada with Inuit of these two communities. Completing inventories and ongoing evaluation and monitoring of park cultural resources is also crucial. Delivering park outreach and education products and programs for youth in Pond Inlet and Arctic Bay is regularly raised as an important issue by members of these communities.

Pond Inlet and Arctic Bay have few tourism operators, which limits community capacity to develop tourism products and projects. Tourism development is key to expanding visitation to the park and to enhancing the relationship between Parks Canada and the Inuit of Arctic Bay and Pond Inlet.

3.3 CLIMATE AND VISITATION TRENDS THAT WILL AFFECT THE PARK IN THE FUTURE

The park provides some protection for species and ecosystems, but many arctic species such as caribou, polar bears, sea birds, and marine mammals range far beyond the boundaries of the park and are not isolated from global pressures. These pressures are changing the entire Arctic and are impacting the lives of the Inuit who live there. The ecosystem monitoring program is beginning to indicate a decline in the integrity of many components of the park's ecosystems.

Due to the park's remote location and the cost of accessing it, few non-Inuit visit Sirmilik National Park. Current park visitation consists of hikers, skiers, mountaineers, private sailors, and expedition cruise ship visitors. Cruise ship visitation to Nunavut has increased steadily since 2006 and research indicates it will continue to expand. Increasing high-end private sailboat, yacht, and luxury cruise ship visits indicate new niche market potential. Cruising and sailing can be an excellent way to explore the Arctic ecosystem and has the potential to greatly increase visitation to Sirmilik National Park, particularly because ships provide the tourism infrastructure currently unavailable in Nunavut (*e.g.* hotels and restaurants for that market) and because there are few tourism operators in the adjacent communities relative to the demand.

No visitor access to the park by aircraft has taken place, but it has the significant potential to expand visitation, especially for business travellers and visitors to the communities during the ice break-up period. Concerns have been raised by some community members about visitor aircraft access and ship traffic because it has the potential to disrupt both Inuit, during cultural and harvesting activities, and wildlife, including caribou and marine mammals.

4.0 Planning Priorities

The following priorities were identified in the August 2012 Sirmilik National Park State of the Park Report and include recommendations by the Park Planning Team and the Joint Park Management Committee, as well as comments from community members in Pond Inlet and Arctic Bay and from the Canadian Wildlife Service. This management plan flows from these identified priorities.

4.1 DEVELOPING OPPORTUNITIES FOR VISITOR EXPERIENCE

Sirmilik National Park provides a high arctic/arctic visitor experience, with a breathtaking and diverse landscape, a relatively high density of wildlife, and a rich Inuit culture and history. Inuit from the park's adjacent communities use the park extensively as part of their rights under the *Nunavut Land Claims Agreement*. Visitor numbers are low due, in part, to the cost of travelling to Nunavut and to the park. Most visitors have been coming to the park for spring skiing and floe edge tours and for hiking or as part of a cruise ship tour in summer. Visitor statistics do not reflect the extensive use of the park by Inuit of Pond Inlet and Arctic Bay because Parks Canada does not monitor Inuit use of the park. The highest visitor numbers to date have come from cruise ship visitation. The region has also recently seen an increase in private sailboat and yacht visitors. It is expected that this trend will continue as the ice-free season extends due to climate change, and a variety of vessels will likely be used by visitors travelling to the area. Hiking, skiing or other activity routes have yet to be identified or marketed, and the park has very few interpretive products/programs. There are no facilities within the park. As is true for many communities in Nunavut, tourism services in the adjacent communities of Pond Inlet and Arctic Bay are very limited.

Opportunities

- Attracting visitors to the park's breathtaking landscape, diverse wildlife, and rich Inuit culture and history, by developing the park's relationship with new markets (such as sailboats and yachts) and by developing visitor experience opportunities (e.g. identifying skiing and hiking routes and developing interpretive products and programs, while continuing to give attention to visitor safety along with visitor enjoyment and appreciation).
- Working with the Government of Nunavut and the Hamlet of Pond Inlet to assist with and benefit from Pond Inlet's Nattinnak Visitor Centre (as described in an early Memorandum of Understanding) and working with the community of Arctic Bay to develop visitor experience programs that would benefit the park and that community.

Challenges

- Increasing visitation to the park due to the cost to visitors of travelling there and the limited availability of local tourism services.
- Supporting the delivery of visitor experience, cultural resources, and ecological integrity programs without any existing facilities, and supporting visitor safety within the park as visitation increases.

4.2 PUBLIC OUTREACH

The park is still relatively new and the adjacent communities are just beginning to develop their role in supporting visitor activities in the park. The largely Inuit communities of Pond Inlet and Arctic Bay have a

special relationship identified in the park's IIBA as gateway communities to Sirmilik National Park. Parks Canada staff are located in Pond Inlet but not in Arctic Bay.

Opportunities

- Enhance the role of the community as a gateway to the park by developing outreach and educational products or programs in cooperation with others (about Inuit culture and history, including activities on the land and sea ice).
- Provide opportunities for community members, including employees, to better support visitor experience, outreach and education, ecological integrity, and cultural resources programs.

Challenges

- Build Parks Canada's relationship with the community of Arctic Bay despite the current absence of permanent, Arctic Bay-based Parks Canada staff and facilities.
- Address local and regional pressures identified by community members, including the already observed and future expected increase in marine traffic in Lancaster Sound. Some of these pressures originate from outside the park and others require additional monitoring.

4.3 MONITORING AND PROTECTION OF THE PARK'S ECOSYSTEMS AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

The effect of global climate change in the Arctic is well-documented. It impacts ecosystems, visitation patterns within the region, and Inuit, whose culture is closely linked to both the land and marine environments. Monitoring programs on the state of the park's ecological integrity, cultural resources, visitor experience, and public outreach and education have been initiated but there are major knowledge gaps for some indicators. Research and monitoring in Sirmilik National Park relies heavily on work by universities and other organizations. The Nunavut Field Unit has begun to use more Inuit knowledge collected from the communities of Pond Inlet and Arctic Bay. Traditional harvesting within the park continues as described in the *Nunavut Land Claims Agreement*.

Opportunities

- Support the development of outreach and education products and programs that contain Inuit knowledge, complete inventories, and continue monitoring work and research within Sirmilik National Park.
- Support visitor experience, outreach, cultural resources, and ecological integrity programs by maintaining the park's relationship with Inuit, universities, and other organizations that conduct park research and monitoring.

Challenges

- Increase Parks Canada's knowledge of Sirmilik National Park's ecosystems and cultural resources.
- Address the Elwin Inlet-area cabin safety requirements raised by the Arctic Bay Hunters and Trappers Organization so that hunter safety from extreme weather, sea ice conditions, and polar bears is jointly considered along with additional site opportunities.

5.0 Vision

In 15 to 20 years, northern Baffin Island's Sirmilik National Park continues to be a combination of land and sea with healthy ecosystems that support a diversity of wildlife including polar bears, whales, foxes, wolves, caribou, lemmings, arctic hare, fish, as well as migratory birds such as seabirds, rough legged hawks, snowy owls, and a large number of snow geese. Pristine glaciers spill into the cobalt blue seawater of the sounds and inlets that surround each of the 4 regions of the park. They crown the sheer grey and black mountain peaks that give way to broad valleys and wetlands dotted with geological surprises such as hoodoos, pingos, and brilliantly-coloured rock formations. The area was home to ancient peoples who lived off the region's wildlife as early as 2000 years ago.

Inuit continue to carry out their traditions, harvesting the bounty the land and sea provide. Within Sirmilik National Park, and in the surrounding communities of Arctic Bay and Pond Inlet, Elders share their knowledge with Inuit youth by practicing long-tested skills and by telling their stories. Inuit are deeply involved in all aspects of the management of the park by being employed at all levels of park operations, by being members of stakeholder groups and by being on committees associated with the park. Inuit staff continue to be role models and leaders in their communities, and the communities reap economic benefit from tourism activities in the area.

National and international visitation increases as visitors continue to be attracted to this area which offers incredible vistas, meaningful cultural experiences, and unrivalled opportunities for viewing Arctic flora and fauna. With a variety of safely-executed activities, programs, events and products, visitors experience both the park and the communities of Arctic Bay and Pond Inlet in ways that promote a connection to the land, the sea, and the people. For those who cannot get to this distant and remote location there is a wealth of information available in an array of media and through partnerships in outreach programs.

Monitoring and study increases knowledge and understanding of the complex systems that make up this park, the stories it tells about the past, and how environmental changes may shape its future. Sirmilik National Park remains a source of world-class research, and Inuit and scientific knowledge are used equally in the cooperative management of the park to benefit all who experience and enjoy it and to foster respect for this special place.

6.0 Key Strategies

The strategic direction for Sirmilik National Park takes the form of three key strategies, each with corresponding objectives and targets. The objectives under the three proposed key strategies are mutually supportive. They address the needs of a relatively new national park to become better known, valued, and enjoyed by Canadians and the need for Parks Canada to build its relationship with Inuit and other residents of Pond Inlet and Arctic Bay.

KEY STRATEGY 1: CELEBRATING THE SPECIAL CONNECTION BETWEEN SIRMILIK NATIONAL PARK AND THE INUIT OF POND INLET AND ARCTIC BAY

This strategy builds on the history of Inuit connection to the land, which still seeps through every facet of arctic life. While many may perceive the Arctic as a barren wilderness, Inuit have been surviving and thriving in this landscape for thousands of years. They are an integral part of a functioning arctic ecosystem and in order for Sirmilik National Park to remain healthy, Inuit must continue to be a part of it, from decision making, to actively pursuing traditional activities both inside and outside the park boundaries, to sharing their stories about this special place.

Parks Canada will continue to celebrate and encourage this connection and Inuit will have opportunities to benefit from the presence of the park. Parks Canada will build relationships with the adjacent communities, encouraging people to share their knowledge, expertise and passion in the management of the park. Parks Canada will strive to be a model of cooperative management, working with our partners to provide benefits and opportunities for Inuit and visitors alike to create personal connections to the park and Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit.

The strategy addresses the following priorities:

- Encourage and increase park use by Inuit
- Increase involvement of Inuit in park management decisions
- Increases Inuit benefits from economic opportunities

OBJECTIVE 1.1: INUIT ARE ENCOURAGED TO USE THE PARK WITH THEIR FAMILIES AND TO CONNECT WITH THE LAND THROUGH TRADITIONAL ACTIVITIES.

Target

- By 2016, at least one communications product will be produced in partnership with QIA to clearly convey the existence and purpose of national parks and to encourage and increase park use by Inuit.

OBJECTIVE 1.2: INUIT ARE EFFECTIVELY INVOLVED IN PARK MANAGEMENT DECISIONS.

Targets

- Two face-to-face meetings of the Joint Park Management Committee continue to be held annually to meet the obligations outlined in the IIBA.
- Inuit members continue to provide Parks Canada with feedback regarding their level of engagement in management decisions.

OBJECTIVE 1.3: INUIT PARTICIPATE IN AND BENEFIT FROM ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES ARISING FROM THE PRESENCE OF THE PARK.

Targets

- By 2024, the number of Inuit businesses providing services to the park and its visitors increases from 2014 levels.
- Parks Canada organizes, hosts, or facilitates at least one community training opportunity per year to build capacity for Inuit.
- Parks Canada organizes, hosts, or facilitates at least one meeting with regional and national partners per year to discuss external funding opportunities that can increase economic benefits to communities.

OBJECTIVE 1.4: THE STORIES AND KNOWLEDGE OF INUIT ARE SHARED WITH ALL PARK VISITORS.

Targets

- By 2024, all interpretive programs are infused with the stories and perspectives of Inuit.
- Inuit knowledge is collected and shared in at least one on-the-land gathering with Inuit elders or youth per year.
- The interpretive program that will be developed for Qaiqsut by 2019 (as detailed in the Area Management Approach for Bylot Island in this Management Plan; Section 7.1) will focus on the site's importance to Inuit.

KEY STRATEGY 2: DEVELOPING SIRMILIK NATIONAL PARK'S VISITOR EXPERIENCE PROGRAM

This strategy focuses on developing new visitor experience opportunities in Sirmilik National Park in conjunction with the communities of Pond Inlet and Arctic Bay and the tourism industry.

The strategy addresses the following priorities:

- Increase visitation and facilitate access for visitor to the park
- Diversify visitor experience opportunities through interpretive products and programs
- Respect the wilderness experience sought by visitors
- Promote visitor safety
- Respect Inuit harvesting and cultural activities
- Support tourism capacity development in Pond Inlet and Arctic Bay in collaboration with other organizations

SITES OF INTEREST

To achieve this strategy, four sites of interest were identified as appropriate locations to develop the Visitor Experience program, with the first two being of high priority:

1) Qaiqsut area (Bylot Island sector)

- Located near the floe edge area on the sea ice and easily accessible from Pond Inlet
- Excellent opportunity for interpretation of archeological sites
- Accessible to cruise ship passengers

2) Valley north of Qinniqtut (Bylot Island sector)

- Opportunity for short hike to hoodoo formation

3) Archaeological Site 210x32 (Oliver Sound sector)

- Accessible by boat in the summer
- Has potential for the establishment of a temporary base camp for young people and visitors.
- Opportunity for camping, fishing, hiking, observing wildlife, and viewing natural and cultural features.

4) Arnakadlak (Borden Peninsula sector)

- Potential for cruise ship passenger visitation and interpretation
- Archaeological site, hoodoo area, and natural scenic sites.

CRUISE SHIPS

Sirmilik National Park and the community of Pond Inlet offer all the elements that interest cruise ship passengers: exceptional wilderness experiences and scenic views, rich cultural sites, and diverse wildlife. There is a bevy of local artists and a variety of carvings, jewellery, paintings, and complex fabric art, as well as the opportunity to connect to Inuit and their culture as expressed in stories, performances, Inuit games, and presentations. Cruise ships have the potential to greatly increase visitation to the park. Some members of the communities of Pond Inlet and Arctic Bay have raised concerns about cruise ship visitation. Because of these concerns, locations and guidelines for cruise ship passenger access will be developed for Sites of Interest 1, 2 and 4 as listed above. Discussion about cruise ship passengers visiting the park will continue with both communities.

Cruise ship access to Bylot Island will require coordination with the Canadian Wildlife Service, as the island and surrounding marine environment (up to 2 miles offshore) is also a Migratory Bird Sanctuary.

CWS regulations and cooperative management arrangements with Inuit also need to be considered. More details are included in the Area Management approach section for Bylot Island (Section 7.1).

AIRCRAFT ACCESS

Sirmilik is relatively difficult to access for visitors. Air access to Sirmilik would greatly increase the opportunity for visitors to visit the park. Aircraft access to designated landing sites within Sirmilik will be permitted. In cooperation with CWS and the appropriate Inuit and local organizations, Parks Canada will work with the Joint Park Management Committee to identify landing sites. Selected sites will minimize potential impacts on natural and cultural resources, Inuit exercising harvesting rights, and other Park users, while allowing air access to areas of the park that will optimize visitor experience for day users and multi-day backcountry users. Visitor safety considerations will inform any decision. The intent is not to develop or maintain landing strips in the park, but to identify helicopter landing sites or places where fixed-wing aircraft have safely landed in the past. Landing sites located outside the park on Inuit Owned Land may also be considered, in discussion with Inuit organizations. Community members have already identified two locations that have potential as landing sites.

Aircraft access and flight elevation requirements will be based on the Environmental Impact Screening Committee flight elevation guidelines (Environmental Impact Screening Committee, 2004). Education and awareness efforts directed at visitors and airline charter companies are expected to be the primary tool for addressing these requirements.

OBJECTIVE 2.1: PARKS CANADA, THE TOURISM INDUSTRY, AND GOVERNMENT PARTNERS WILL IDENTIFY AND PROMOTE VISITOR EXPERIENCE OPPORTUNITIES INCLUDING AN ICONIC ARCTIC EXPERIENCE THAT WILL TAKE PLACE IN THE PARK.

Targets

- By 2019, visitor experiences for hikers, skiers, kayakers, campers, boaters, or other visitors and any facilities needed to fulfill those experiences are identified.
- 85% of overnight visitors who register with the park fill out the post-trip questionnaire that provides feedback on their experience in the park.
- Visitation will increase by 2% per year above an average of the previous 5 years to meet national Parks Canada targets.
- By 2020, locations and guidelines for cruise ship passenger access, as well as designated landing sites, will be developed for Sites of Interest 1, 2 and 4.
- By 2020, Parks Canada will work with the Joint Park Management Committee to identify aircraft and cruise ship landing sites, in cooperation with CWS and the appropriate Inuit and local organizations.

OBJECTIVE 2.2: TOURISM PARTNERS AND THE COMMUNITIES OF POND INLET AND ARCTIC BAY SUPPORT VISITOR EXPERIENCES WITHIN THE PARK, AND OFFER VISITOR EXPERIENCES IN THE COMMUNITIES THAT COMPLEMENT PARK EXCURSIONS.

Targets

- The number of Pond Inlet and Arctic Bay community members participating in tourism activities related to Sirmilik National Park increases over the next 10 years.

- Parks Canada is present in Arctic Bay at least once a year, for meetings or other community activities that focus on visitor experience matters.

OBJECTIVE 2.3: ALL PARK USERS ARE ABLE TO UNDERTAKE SAFE AND ENJOYABLE EXPERIENCES AS A RESULT OF EFFECTIVE VISITOR SAFETY PLANNING, PREVENTION, AND RESPONSE IN COOPERATION WITH PARTNERS.

Targets

- By 2025, no net increase of incidents per visitor over 2005 risk assessment numbers has occurred.
- By 2025, Sirmilik National Park has at least one annual education program focused on the safety of local community members.

KEY STRATEGY 3: INCREASING KNOWLEDGE AND AWARENESS OF SIRMILIK NATIONAL PARK

This strategy increases the knowledge about the park, protects its ecosystems and cultural resources, and builds the connection of Canadians to the park. The strategy relies on relationships. Parks Canada partners or works closely with the communities of Pond Inlet and Arctic Bay, universities, the Canadian Wildlife Service, the Qikiqtani Inuit Association, and the Inuit Heritage Trust among others. Increased awareness of the park by partners, potential visitors, and the general public will result.

The strategy addresses the following priorities:

- Complete inventories and continue research and monitoring of ecosystems and cultural resources such as oral histories and Inuktitut place names
- Continue to actively collect and use Inuit knowledge
- Identify and determine the heritage value of cultural resources
- Enhance Parks Canada's relationship with the communities of Pond Inlet and Arctic Bay through activities in the park for youth
- Assist with information sharing between researchers and the communities
- Develop outreach and education products and programs about the park for all Canadians, but especially for the residents of Pond Inlet and Arctic Bay, by using the Parks Canada website

OBJECTIVE 3.1: COMMUNITY OUTREACH IS ENHANCED TO IMPROVE COMMUNICATION ABOUT RESEARCH, MONITORING, AND TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE.

Target

- Over the next 10 years, Parks Canada and the communities of Pond Inlet and Arctic Bay will establish mechanisms for regular exchange about research, monitoring, and Inuit knowledge, in addition to the regular meetings of the Joint Park Management Committee

OBJECTIVE 3.2: KNOWLEDGE OF THE PARK'S ECOSYSTEMS, CULTURAL RESOURCES, AND INUIT HISTORY AND CULTURE IS INCREASED BY RESEARCH, MONITORING, AND THE BEST PRACTICE OF INCORPORATING INUIT KNOWLEDGE.

Targets

- The condition of ecologically sensitive areas and cultural sites shows no evidence of a decline due to increased infrastructure or activity in the park in the next "State of" Assessment (2022-23).

- By the next “State of” Assessment (2022-23), Inuit knowledge contributes to the assessment of ecological integrity for at least one ecosystem indicator.
- By the next “State of” Assessment (2022-23), the park will assess two ecosystem indicators that will each include a minimum of one measure based on information gathered by Parks Canada staff in the park and one measure based on remote sensing.
- By the next “State of” the Assessment (2022-23), at least 50% of all research projects have Inuit involvement.
- Annual monitoring of cultural resources will be conducted at Qaiqsut. Monitoring of additional sites will be considered to ensure that the heritage value of the cultural resources is maintained or improved.

OBJECTIVE 3.3: PARK ECOSYSTEMS, CULTURAL RESOURCES, AND INUIT CULTURE AND HISTORY OUTREACH AND EDUCATION PRODUCTS AND PROGRAMS ARE DEVELOPED, DELIVERED, AND PROMOTED IN COOPERATION WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS.

Targets

- By 2019, Sirmilik National Park is featured in outreach and education programs or products targeted at audiences in Montreal, Vancouver, and Toronto.
- By 2019, Parks Canada will increase its park outreach and education initiatives to Iqaluit residents, who represent a large pool of potential visitors and who can also reach out to larger urban centres within Canada.
- By 2019, 60% of grade 10 students in Pond Inlet and Arctic Bay have an awareness and understanding of Sirmilik National Park.

7.0 Area Management

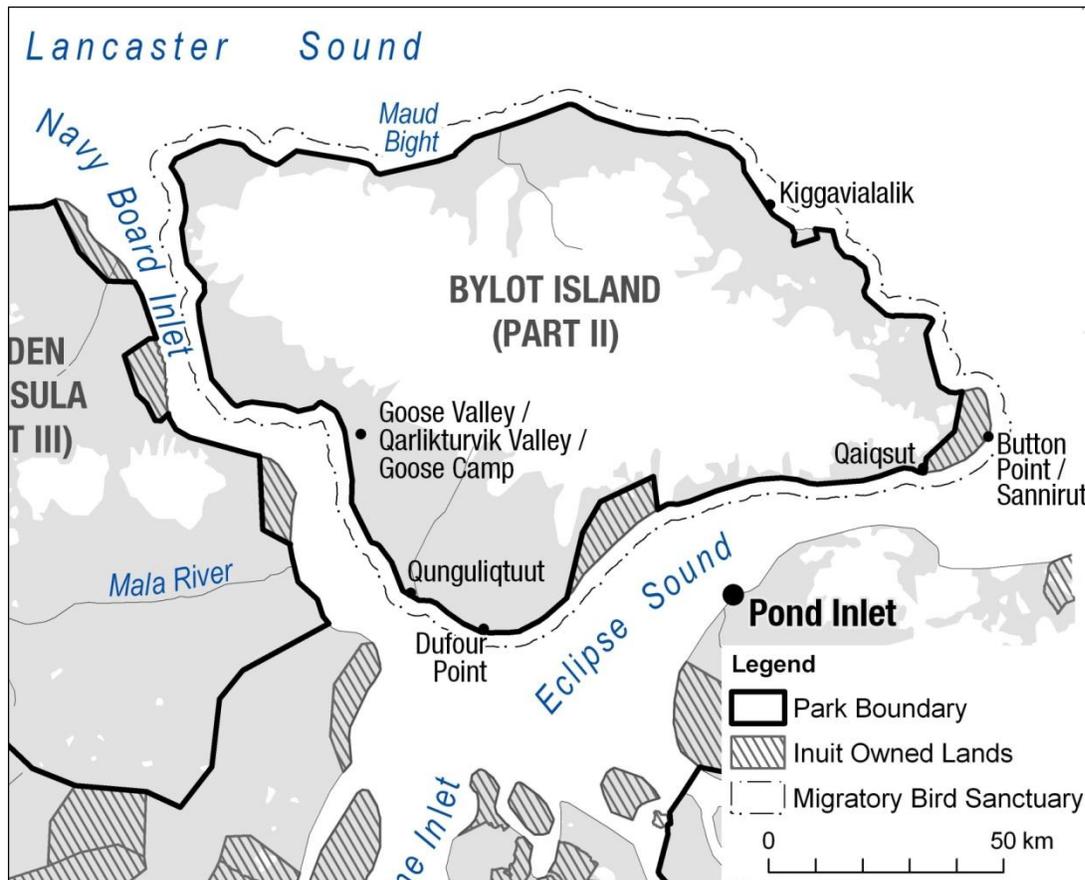
7.1 BYLOT ISLAND

Covered with mountains, icefields, steep cliffs, snowfields, and glaciers, Bylot Island provides nesting habitat for large numbers of seabirds including thick-billed murre and black-legged kittiwakes. The marine waters off the island supply rich foraging for these seabirds. The southwest corner of Bylot Island consists of moist lowland tundra that is ideal nesting habitat for songbirds, shorebirds, and waterfowl. Bylot Island has the largest breeding colony of greater snow geese in the Canadian High Arctic. A total of 74 species of arctic birds thrive on this island.

An area management approach has been used for Bylot Island for the following reasons:

- It is a Migratory Bird Sanctuary (MBS);
- There is a Memorandum of Understanding between Parks Canada and the Canadian Wildlife Service about the area;
- There is an Inuit Impact and Benefit Agreement that covers the MBS in addition to the IIBA that covers the whole park;
- A cooperative management committee is required to be set up under that IIBA, in addition to the Sirmilik National Park Joint Park Management Committee;
- It has a large number of cultural sites;
- It has significant research infrastructure and is the site of a relatively large number of long-term research projects; and
- It is a location of interest to cruise ships and other visitors and has the potential for relatively high visitation due to its proximity to Pond Inlet.

Map 3: Bylot Island, Sirmilik National Park



The focus of the area management approach for Bylot Island is to cooperate with the Canadian Wildlife Service of Environment Canada and the Qikiqtani Inuit Association, to implement both Parks Canada and the Canadian Wildlife Service's legislation, policies, and programs and to respect commitments made in the Inuit Impact and Benefit Agreement for Auyuittuq, Quttinirpaaq and Sirmilik National Parks and the Inuit Impact and Benefit Agreement for National Wildlife Areas and Migratory Bird Sanctuaries in the Nunavut Settlement Area and the guidance in the existing Memorandum of Understanding.

OBJECTIVE 7.1: PARKS CANADA, THE CANADIAN WILDLIFE SERVICE, AND THE QIKIQTANI INUIT ASSOCIATION COOPERATE AND COORDINATE THEIR MANAGEMENT OF BYLOT ISLAND AND SIMPLIFY PERMITTING AND MANAGEMENT.

Target

- By 2020, work with partners to develop a well-defined permitting process for various Bylot Island user groups, considering both Inuit Impact and Benefit Agreements and the existing Memorandum of Understanding.

OBJECTIVE 7.2: FACILITATE VISITOR ACCESS AND INCREASE THE VISITOR EXPERIENCE PROGRAM AND COMMUNICATION PRODUCTS RELATED TO INUIT ACTIVITIES, CULTURAL RESOURCES AND THE RICH ENVIRONMENT ON BYLOT ISLAND.

Target

- By 2019, at least one visitor experience program will be implemented at Qaiqsut specifically for cruise ship passengers, in a way that maintains or improves the site's heritage value.

OBJECTIVE 7.3: SUPPORT THE CONTINUED OPERATION OF THE GOOSE CAMP RESEARCH FACILITY, WHILE PROMOTING THE SAFETY OF PEOPLE USING THE FACILITY AND ENSURING MINIMAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS RESULTING FROM THE CAMP'S OPERATIONS.

Target

- By 2017, complete a Licence of Occupation and an accompanying operation and management agreement for Goose Camp.

DRAFT

8.0 Zoning

8.1 ZONING SYSTEM

Parks Canada's zoning system is an integrated approach to the classification of land and water areas in a national park. This system classifies areas of the park according to their ecosystem and cultural resource protection requirements and directs visitor activities to appropriate and compatible areas. The zoning system has five categories:

- Zone I - Special Preservation;
- Zone II - Wilderness;
- Zone III – Natural Environment;
- Zone IV - Outdoor Recreation; and
- Zone V - Parks Services.

Sirmilik National Park contains only Zone I, II, and III areas.

The Nunavut Land Claims Agreement requires that national parks in the Nunavut Settlement Area predominantly consist of Zone I and II areas. The zoning system does not prevent resource harvesting activities and subsistence use by Inuit carried out in accordance with the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement.

The Inuit Impact and Benefit Agreement for Auyuittuq, Quttinirpaaq and Sirmilik National Parks (IIBA) requires that at least two areas within Sirmilik National Park be identified as Areas of Special Importance to Inuit with restrictions on visitor access, and it indicates that the management plan may identify areas where visitor access is either restricted or prohibited for reasons of visitor safety.

The communities of Arctic Bay and Pond Inlet are very concerned about activities that may affect their harvesting and cultural activities in the park. It is important that visitors avoid any area where Inuit are engaging in harvesting and cultural activities. Some of these areas are identified in the zoning plan.

Polar bear denning sites are very sensitive areas. They may require special management measures, including during the season when polar bears and their cubs come out of their dens.

ZONE I: SPECIAL PRESERVATION

Zone I lands deserve special protection because they contain or support unique, threatened or endangered natural or cultural heritage features, or are among the best examples of the features of the natural region represented by the park. Motorized access is not permitted, except for strictly controlled motorized access for research and park operation activities authorized by Parks Canada.

The following areas are identified as Zone I:

1) Cultural Resources

Each Zone I area covers a 1km radius from the site's centre. Specific information about these sites, their importance, and how to respect the sites will be provided to park users (including outfitters, researchers,

and film groups) who plan to travel to these sites or in their vicinity. When visiting Zone I sites, park visitors are required to have Park staff or trained guides accompany them. The 1km radius does not extend into the water beyond the high tide mark, allowing boats and snowmobiles to access the sites from the marine side, while remaining below the high tide line.

The 14 sites that are proposed as Zone I are as follows:

- Umiarjuavinirtalik, “the place where an old ship is found” (site 210X3)
- Qinniqtut, “black (plural)”
- Kiggavialalik, “the place where there are small falcons” (site 210X10)
- Qaiqsut, “Bedrock” (sites 210X47 and 210X48)
- Kaparuqtalik, “the place where Kaparuq is buried” (site 201X13)
- Sikudjivik, “the place where whales or narwhals were caught in the ice in the fall” (Site 210X12)
- Titiralik, “place where there is an inscription” (site 210X17)
- Arnakadlak (site 210X22)
- Camp with 20-30 Inuksuit in the Oliver Sound area (site 210X32)
- Multi-component site on Bylot Island (site 210X43)
- Sinaasiurvik, “Where the floe edge starts” (site 210X59)
- Qammarjuit Point, within the park boundary
- Shipwreck on Borden Peninsula (in the vicinity of site 210X57). Further research is needed to confirm the location of this cultural resource. Parks Canada records currently do not indicate a shipwreck in this area.
- Graves inland of Elwin Inlet

Visitor access to Umiarjuavinirtalik and Qinniqtut will be restricted from July 1 to September 30, when members of the community of Pond Inlet are likely to travel to the sites by boat. These two sites are also identified as Areas of Special Importance to Inuit, as required by the IIBA.

2) Bird Habitat

- a) Seabird colonies, on Cape Hay on the northwest coast of Bylot Island and on Baillarge Bay, near Elwin Inlet
 - Zone I designation covers a 2km width to ensure that any possible disturbance, such as development, camping, or other activities, are unlikely to impact the seabirds.
 - During the ice-free season, visitors will only be permitted to experience the seabird colonies by boat, and must respect any regulations or recommendation from CWS, including authorization from CWS to engage in activities within the Bylot Island Migratory Bird Sanctuary.
 - No land-based activities, including camping, will be permitted within the Zone I seabird colonies.
 - Canadian Wildlife Service guidelines on seabird viewing must be respected within Sirmilik National Park.
- b) Goose habitat on the southwest plain of Bylot Island - Seasonal
 - In order to protect egg-laying geese, this Zone I designation (Map 7) is in effect from the time geese arrive to nest until they leave (May 1 to August 31). The dates may change if ongoing research indicates arrival and egg laying dates are changing.
 - To provide for unfettered scientific research, visitors and their guides are required to avoid the area during the summer field season, between May 1 and August 31.

3) Wetland habitat and cultural sites in the southern part of the Borden Peninsula sector

- This is an important area for both geese and for cultural sites.

4) Hoodoos

- There are two striking hoodoo sites within Sirmilik National Park, one in the Borden Peninsula sector and one in the Bylot Island sector.

5) Fossil forest near Qinniqtut

- There is a fossil forest located near Qinniqtut, on Bylot Island.

ZONE II – WILDERNESS

Zone II contains extensive areas that are good representations of a natural region and are conserved in a wilderness state. The perpetuation of ecosystems with minimal human interference is the key consideration. Zone II areas offer opportunities for visitors to experience firsthand the park's ecosystems and require few, if any, rudimentary services and facilities. In much of Zone II, visitors have the opportunity to experience remoteness and solitude. Motorized access is not permitted except strictly controlled motorized access for research, park operations and outreach and education activities relating to the park that are authorized by Parks Canada and are consistent with Parks Canada regulations and policy.

The Zone II areas of the park contain all areas of the park not otherwise identified as a Zone I or Zone III.

Residents of the communities of Arctic Bay and Pond Inlet have recommended that visitors be accompanied by a guide to visit the park, in order to promote their safety and to assist in respecting Inuit harvesting and cultural activities. At the time of the development of this Management Plan, there were not enough outfitters providing such services from the communities of Arctic Bay and Pond Inlet to make this a requirement for all visitors. Visitors will be encouraged to use the services of a guide.

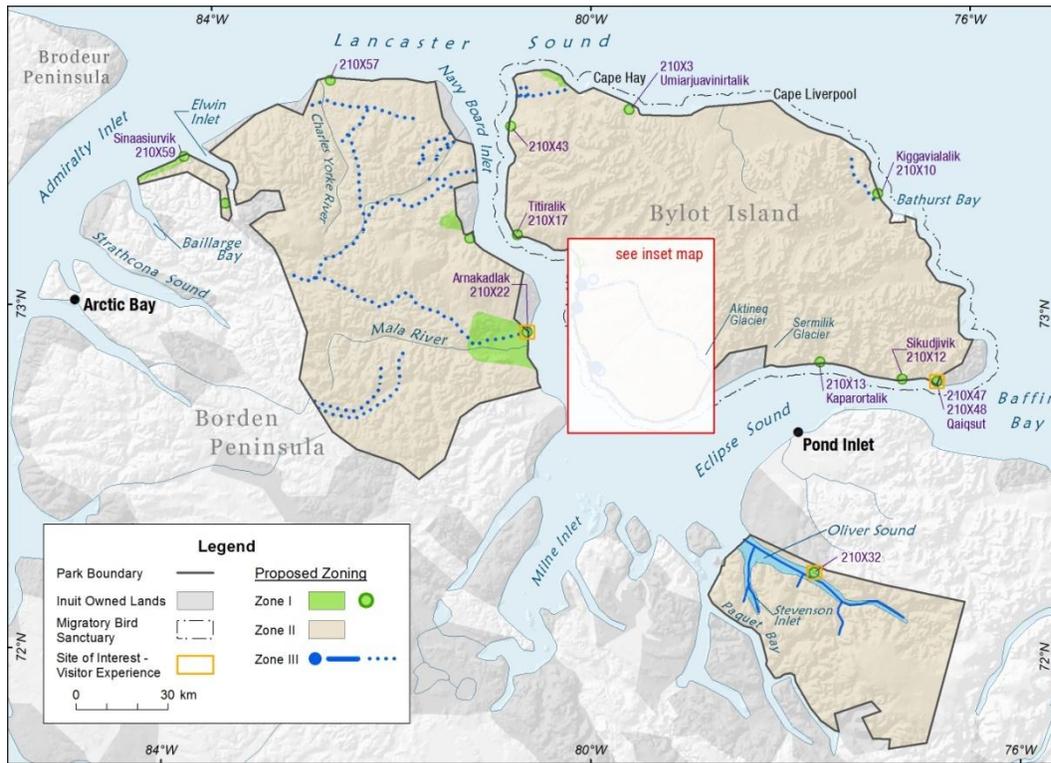
ZONE III – NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

In Zone III areas, visitors can discover the park's natural and cultural heritage through recreational activities that require a few rustic services and facilities. Controlled access only, will be permitted by motorized vehicle.

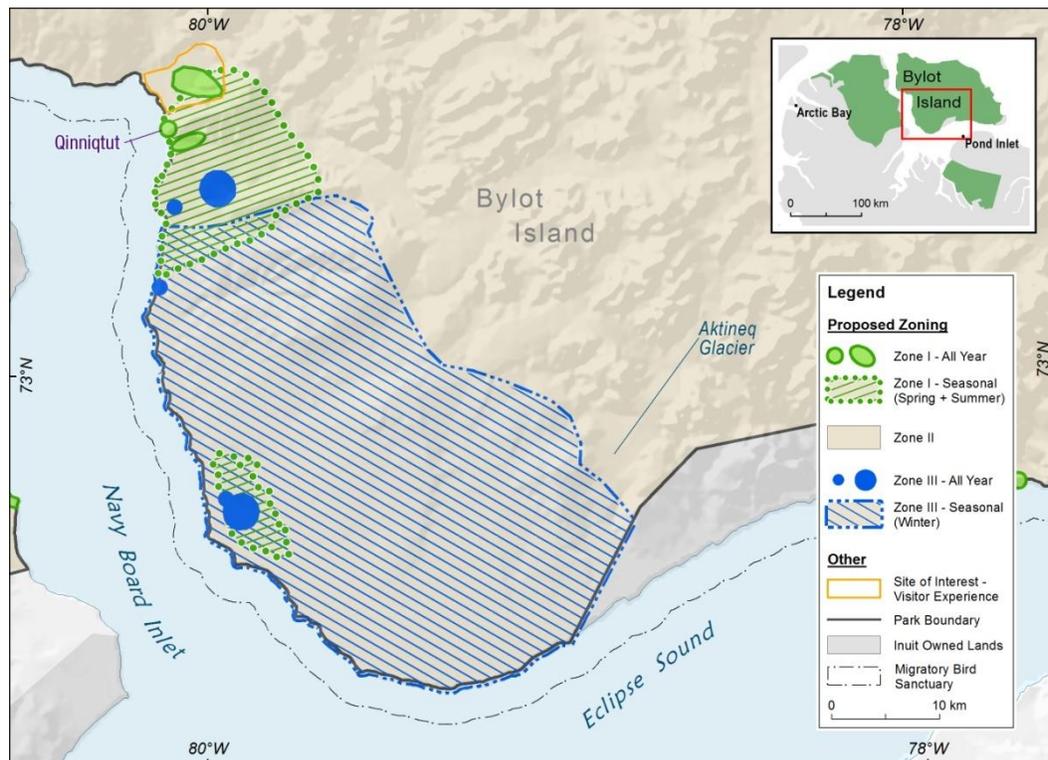
The following is a list of areas identified as Zone III.

- 1) South-West of Bylot Island: Route for outfitters taking visitors from Pond Inlet to Navy Board Inlet by snowmobile - Seasonal**
This is a seasonal Zone III area to provide for snowmobile access in the winter. This zoning will be in effect from when there is enough snow to travel until geese arrive in the area to nest (at which point portions of this area become Zone I to protect goose nesting habitat).
- 2) Southwest area of Bylot Island: Goose Camps I and II**
Any motorized access by visitors, media, or other groups require approval by the appropriate Goose Camp authority and Parks Canada to ensure that research and monitoring work at the site and ecological integrity continue to be respected.
- 3) Route from Arctic Bay to Pond Inlet parallel to Mala River, Borden Peninsula**
This route has been identified as a possible route for guided snowmobile visits to the park.
- 4) Other identified routes on Borden Peninsula**
Visitors will be allowed to travel on these routes, including guided snowmobile visits, but are required to avoid areas where Inuit are engaging in harvesting and cultural activities. Visitor experience opportunities in this part of the park are guided by the Areas of Special Importance to Inuit description (below). Travel by ATV is prohibited for visitors in national parks.

Map 3: Sirmilik National Park Zoning



Map 4: Southwest Corner of Bylot Island Zoning



8.2 AREAS OF SPECIAL IMPORTANCE TO INUIT

The *Inuit Impact and benefit Agreement for Auyuittuq, Quttinirpaq and Sirmilik National Parks (IIBA)* requires that this management plan for Sirmilik National Park include specific measures to ensure that visitor access to Areas of Special Importance to Inuit is prohibited or restricted, either on a temporary or permanent basis. Qinniqtut and the shipwreck in Maud Bight (Umiarjuavirtalik) are required by the IIBA to be included in the management plan as Areas of Special Importance to Inuit. Other Areas of Special Importance to Inuit may also be included in this management plan.

- 1) **Umiarjuavirtalik - Shipwreck at Maud Bight**
This area is also identified as Zone I. Details on its management are found in the Zone I description.
- 2) **Qinniqtut**
This area is also identified as Zone I. Details on its management are found in the Zone I description.
- 3) **Bylot Island – Goose nesting habitat along the southwest coast of Bylot Island**
This area will be closed to visitors for two weeks in June when egg harvesting takes place. The exact dates will depend upon when eggs are available. Climate change is causing shifts in when birds lay eggs. Parks Canada will work with the Mittimatalik Hunters and Trappers Organization every spring to ensure that Parks Canada is informed of when eggs are available for harvesting.
- 4) **Coastal area southwest of Elwin Inlet**
The area is important to Inuit for wildlife harvesting at the floe edge in late spring. The coastal area within the park that is adjacent to Admiralty Inlet southwest of Elwin Inlet will be closed to visitation from June 16 to July 31.

5) Borden Peninsula - Area in the middle of the Borden Peninsula sector

This area of the Borden Peninsula is important for caribou calving and harvesting and will be closed to visitors from June 1 to August 31. During the rest of the year, visitors to the area are encouraged to hire a local guide and should avoid interfering with Inuit harvesting and cultural activities. Access by snowmobile is allowed with a local guide. The area may be subject to closures in other seasons if visitor activities appear to be impacting calving or hunting.

6) Mala River Valley

Between June 1 and August 31, the Mala River Valley will remain open but visitors will be restricted to travelling by non-motorized means. Visitors to the Mala River Valley are encouraged to hire a local guide and should not interfere with Inuit harvesting and cultural activities. The area may be subject to a closure if visitor activities appear to be affecting calving or hunting.

7) Oliver Sound

This area is important for berry picking and caribou harvesting. Visitors will be allowed to travel to this area by boat, but speed limitations will be adopted to avoid disturbing marine wildlife.

8) Further proposed Areas of Special Importance to Inuit

Other proposed Areas of Special importance to Inuit were raised during consultation meetings.

- Borden Peninsula: important fishing area near cultural site 210X 50
- Borden Peninsula: important caribou harvesting area south of Cape Joy
- Bylot Island: important caribou harvesting area near Cape Walter Bathurst
- Bylot Island: important caribou harvesting area near Cape Byan Martin and Bathurst Bay
- Bylot Island: important caribou harvesting area near Canada
- Bylot Island: important coastal polar bear harvesting areas near Kaparoqtalik and Narsarsuk Glaciers.

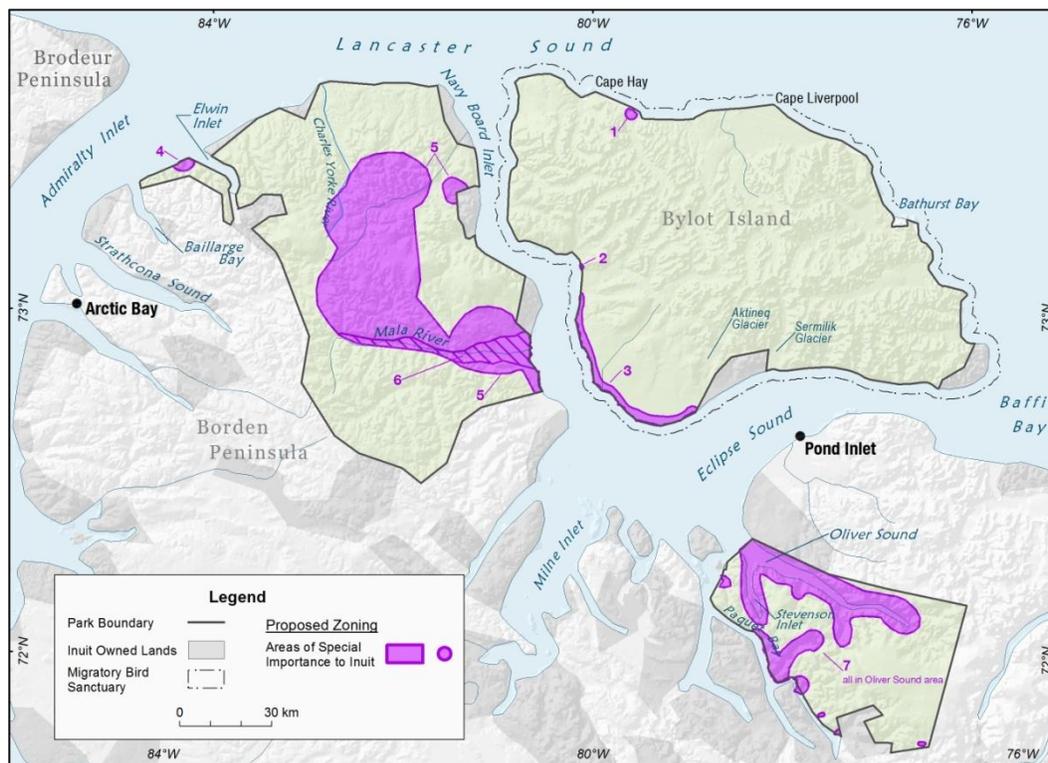
Parks Canada will continue to work with the communities of Pond Inlet and Arctic Bay to better understand how Inuit would like these areas managed.

Any measures to restrict or prohibit proposed visitor access to these Areas of Special Importance to Inuit will be identified through consultation with the Joint Park Management Committee.

9) Areas around outpost camps and cabins

Visitors will be prohibited within 1 km of outpost camps and cabins. These areas will be closed by an annually-updated Superintendent's Order.

Map 5: Areas of Special Importance to Inuit



8.3 VISITOR SAFETY RESTRICTIONS OR CLOSURES

The *Inuit Impact and Benefit Agreement for Auyuittuq, Quttinirpaaq, and Sirmilik National Parks* indicates that visitor access may be either restricted or prohibited in one or more areas of a park or during one or more times of the year for reasons of visitor safety. It requires that such restrictions be identified as such in the Park Management Plan, and if not, that QIA and JPMC advice is sought prior to the implementation of restrictions.

1) Oliver Sound

Due to the narrowness and complexity of the seabed in Oliver Sound, large ships such as cruise ships will not be allowed to travel in Oliver Sound.

2) Bylot Island glaciers

Travel on glaciers by snowmobile is inherently hazardous. For this reason, visitors will be prohibited from travelling on glaciers by snowmobile, even with the presence of a guide.

3) Polar bear density

There are high-density polar bear areas on the northern coasts of Bylot Island and the Borden Peninsula. Visitor access to these areas will be restricted during the summer.

8.4 RECREATIONAL FISHING BY VISITORS

Fishing by non-beneficiaries for recreational purposes may be authorized under a Parks Canada fishing permit. Maximum limits may be set on the number of fish that can be caught per person/per day. In

Auyuittuq National Park, for example, the limit is set at 4 fish per day. Specific lakes, rivers or fiords, and seasons that are more suitable for fishing can be identified to encourage this activity. Geographical or seasonal limitations can also be identified to protect fish populations.

Currently, Parks Canada does not have information on which fish populations in Sirmilik National Park could sustain recreational fishing by visitors, or on areas that have small fish populations or land-locked char that could not.

The lake near Goose Camp 1 is close to one of the most-used areas of the park (for research). Information is not yet available on that fish population and whether it can sustain recreational fishing. Areas that have been identified as potentially suitable for recreational fishing for visitors include a lake in the Cape Joy area of the park and ocean waters surrounding the park.

Recreational Fishing Management

- Catch and possession limits of 4 fish per day per person.
- The freshwater lakes, rivers, and streams within 10km of Goose Camp 1 will be closed to fishing by researchers and visitors until information is available on are fish populations and whether it can sustain recreational fishing.
- Parks Canada will encourage visitors to use “catch and retain” instead of “catch and release” fishing practices, to be consistent with Inuit values on respecting wildlife by minimizing handling.

9.0 Summary of Strategic Environmental Assessment

In accordance with *The Cabinet Directive on the Environmental Assessment of Policy, Plan and Program Proposals, 2004*, a strategic environmental assessment was conducted on the “Sirmilik National Park of Canada Draft Management Plan” (the draft plan). Strategic environmental assessments (SEAs) of management plans provide an opportunity to identify the broad and unintended impacts of proposed management actions, and to assess the cumulative effects of multiple activities on the environment.

The SEA evaluated the potential for effects on natural resources, cultural resources, visitor experience, public education and awareness and relationships with communities and Inuit partners. This evaluation considered the zoning plan as well as all the targets outlined in the plan to determine if they might have adverse or positive environmental effects. Many targets are not expected to cause adverse environmental effects. The Plan identifies numerous positive environmental effects and ways of enhancing them; these include:

- greater knowledge of the ecosystems and cultural resources through research and monitoring;
- greater communication of knowledge gathered about the park from community members to inform park management initiatives;
- continuing cooperation with Inuit, management agencies and other parties to facilitate effective management;
- greater connections between Canadians and the park to encourage public awareness, understanding and support for park management; and,
- enhancing valuable partnerships with communities.

The zoning plan for the park conforms with the *Canada National Parks Act* and recognizes areas that require special protection, wilderness areas and areas where controlled access by motorized vehicles is permitted. The zoning plan will not result in negative environmental effects; rather, it will ensure the need for protection in certain areas and allow visitor activities in others.

The draft plan identifies a focus on developing visitor experience opportunities with a priority of increasing visitation. This increase in visitation could potentially have an effect on both natural and cultural resources as well as Inuit traditional activities, primarily from disturbance. In addition to the protections provided by the zoning plan, the draft plan has outlined a number of specific mitigations to ensure that there are no residual impacts from increased visitation, for example:

- Communication will be provided to visitors regarding the importance and restrictions around specific natural and cultural resource Zone I areas
- Specific sites will have restricted access or seasonal restrictions on access
- The visitor experience program will be focused at specific sites of interest that were identified as appropriate locations
- Locations and guidelines for cruise ship passenger access will be developed for specific sites of interest
- Sites selected for air access will minimize potential impacts on natural and cultural resources, Inuit exercising harvesting rights, and other Park users, while allowing air access to areas of the park that will optimize visitor experience for day users and multi-day backcountry users
- Visitors will be encouraged to be accompanied by a guide to visit the park to promote their safety and to assist in respecting Inuit harvesting and cultural activities

The extent of the adverse residual effects will depend in part on the number of visitors to the park. For the current number of visitors, adverse residual environmental effects are expected to be negligible because they are small in a large geographic area and of low frequency and magnitude. The number of visitors may rise slowly over the life of the plan. Visitors arriving by cruise ship may increase more quickly because each new cruise ship stop increases the number of visitors by 40-100. The potential increase in visitation is not expected to cause important negative environmental effects. However, the SEA outlines that the park may consider developing a monitoring program which would inform decision-makers about the extent of cumulative effects from any increase in the number of visitors.

Global cumulative effects such as climate change are identified in the draft plan as impacting the whole park, including the park ecosystems, visitation patterns in the region and the lives of Inuit. The draft plan identifies monitoring and protection of the park's ecosystems and cultural resources as a planning priority. Programs to monitor the state of the park's ecological integrity including the effects of climate change have been established in the park but there are gaps in some indicators. In support of the monitoring program, the plan outlines an opportunity to maintain the park's relationship with Inuit, universities and other organizations that conduct park research and monitoring. The plan also outlines an objective to increase knowledge of the park's ecosystems, cultural resources and Inuit history and culture through research, monitoring and best practices of incorporating traditional Inuit knowledge. This research and monitoring over the course of the plan will provide information to decision-makers about the extent of global cumulative effects on the park.

Some of the initiatives described in the Plan are conceptual in nature and will require further assessment under the *Nunavut Land Claim Agreement* or related legislation when the specific proposals have been developed. The required mitigation, surveillance and follow-up will be developed when the proposals progress from the conceptual phase to the design and implementation phase.

The draft plan was developed by Parks Canada and the Sirmilik Park Planning Team and reviewed by the Joint Park Management Committee. The Park Planning Team and the Joint Park Management Committee both have an equal number of members appointed by the Qikiqtani Inuit Association and the Federal Government. The Public consultations began in early 2014. Any public concerns raised were incorporated into the draft plan as appropriate.

The Strategic Environmental Assessment concluded that the "Sirmilik National Park of Canada Draft Management Plan" would have several positive effects and is not likely to cause any important negative effects. The plan will contribute to the objectives of "*Planning for a Sustainable Future: Federal Sustainable Development Strategy for Canada*" (2010) by protecting nature.

10.0 Acknowledgements

The preparation of this Management Plan involved many people. The input of this diverse group of individuals will result in a plan that will guide the management of the park for many years. The following individuals have made special contributions to the draft plan and deserve mention:

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