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SUBMISSION TO THE NWMB FOR

Information: X

Decision:

Issue: The proposed Action Plan for the Porsild's Bryum (*Haplodontium macrocarpa*) in Canada, pursuant to the *Species at Risk Act* (SARA)



Background:

Porsild's Bryum was listed as a Threatened species under the *Species at Risk Act* (Schedule 1, 2011). Porsild's Bryum is a small moss that grows in small bright green colonies and has a sparkly appearance. The stems of the plant grow tightly together to form a cushion-like appearance. It grows mainly in mountainous areas on wet calcareous cliffs where there is constant water seepage and winter desiccation. There are 17 known populations of Porsild's Bryum in Canada and they are broadly distributed; including sites in Alberta, British Columbia, Newfoundland and Nunavut (Figure 1). The total population size is at least 960 colonies in Canada. It is only found in Quttinirpaaq National Park of Canada in Nunavut. There have been three populations identified in the Tanquary Fiord area (Figure 2).

The main threats to Porsild's Bryum are poor climate conditions (i.e. drought, extreme temperatures), disturbance or harm due to recreational activities (i.e. damage to individual plants, changes in hydrology and water chemistry, dust from roads); and natural processes (i.e. wildfires, random events with harmful effects on small populations). The threats to Porsild's Bryum have primarily been documented for Alberta. No work has been completed to identify threats in Nunavut.

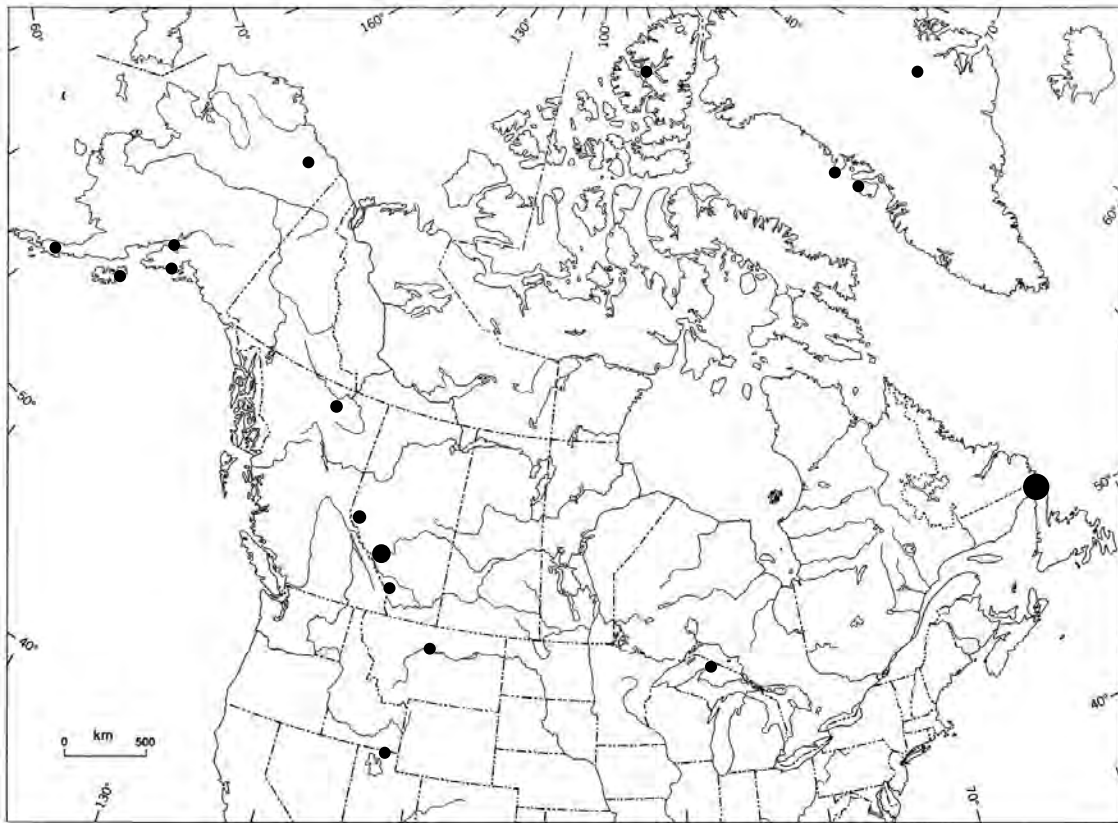


Figure 1. This figure shows the North American distribution of Porsild's Bryum. The three dots in Alberta cover 6 populations, the one dot in British Columbia covers 1 population, the Newfoundland and Labrador dot covers 7 populations and the Nunavut dot covers 3 populations.

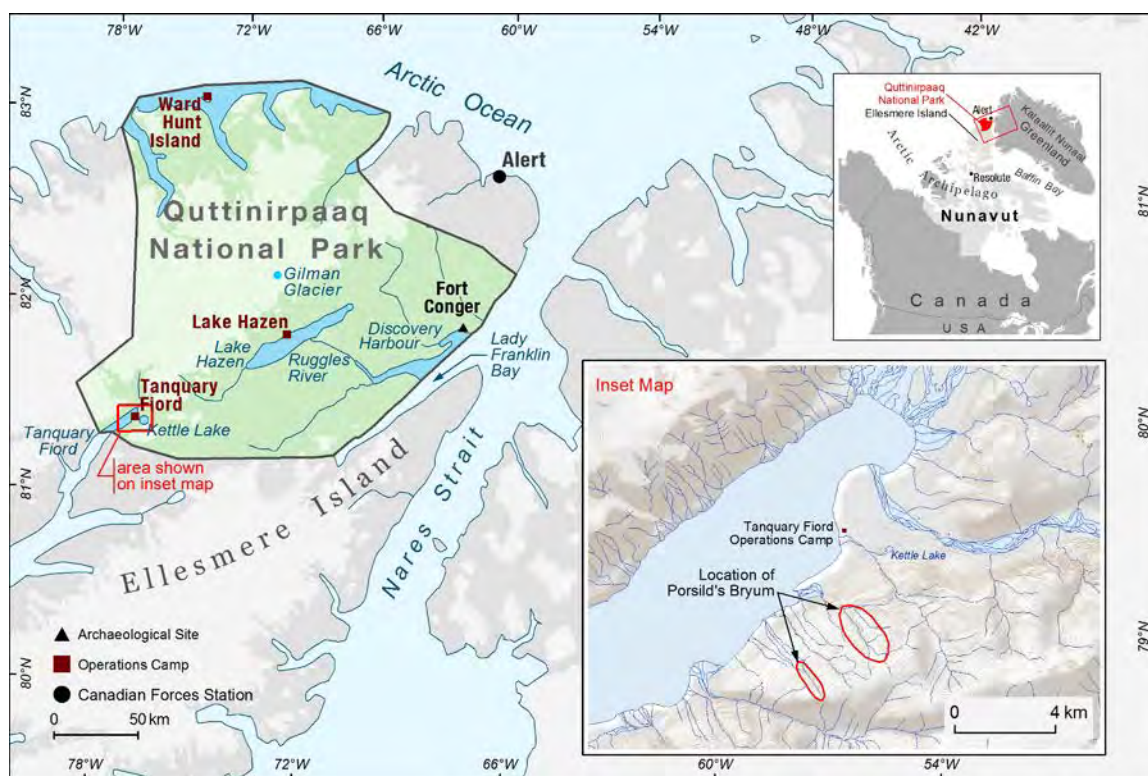


Figure 2. This figure shows the locations of Porsild's Bryum in Quttinirpaaq National Park of Canada.

Recovery Planning

Under SARA, if a species is listed as Threatened, a recovery plan must be prepared. The recovery plan is made up of two documents: a recovery strategy and an action plan. The recovery strategy for Porsild's Bryum will be posted on the Species at Risk Public Registry as final in the near future. In the meantime, a draft action plan has been developed for Porsild's Bryum. While the recovery strategy addresses broad recovery goals and objectives, the action plan addresses the specific recovery actions for the species.

The recovery strategy identifies the following population and distribution objective for Porsild's Bryum:

"To maintain or increase the number of colonies, and sub-populations for all known extant populations of Porsild's Bryum, while also maintaining or increasing the distribution of colonies and sub-populations within each population, and, where feasible, to re-establish the species to locations where it has been extirpated and previously known to exist."

This action plan should be considered along with the recovery strategy. The recovery strategy provides more details on the strategic direction and approaches for recovery of Porsild's Bryum, critical habitat information, and

background information on the species and its threats. Recovery measures in this action plan address 5 broad strategies: (1) inventory and monitoring, (2) research, (3) outreach/stewardship, (4) habitat management, and (5) reintroduction and/or population re-establishment.

Under the SARA, habitat that must be protected in order for a species to survive and recover is called 'critical habitat.' Once an area is identified as critical habitat (in a recovery strategy or an action plan), the federal government is legally responsible to make sure that the habitat is properly protected.

Critical habitat was partially identified for Porsild's Bryum in the recovery strategy. The recovery strategy also contains details about the identified critical habitat, its extent, habitat characteristics, and activities that are likely to destroy critical habitat. No additional critical habitat can be identified in this action plan because it is not possible at this time given the best available information. Critical habitat will likely be updated in an updated recovery strategy or later action plan.

The direct costs and social costs of implementing these recovery measures (and thus this action plan) are anticipated to be low over the short term (5 years) and the long term.

Community Consultation:

Since the locations of Porsild's Bryum are strictly within the Quttinirpaaq National Park, Parks Canada Agency conducted the consultation for the recovery strategy for this species in two communities: Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay. On December 12, 2013, the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board resolved to approve this recovery strategy. Consultation will begin this spring on the action plan. At the time this briefing note was prepared, it was not yet known whether it would be Parks Canada or Environment Canada would be conducting these consultations. Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay will both be consulted on the action plan.

Next Steps:

Once consultation is completed nation-wide, the action plan will be finalized and posted on the Species at Risk Public Registry for an additional 60-day comment period. After that period, comments will be taken into consideration and the action plan will be finalized. At this time we will come to the NWMB to ask for your approval of the document.

Prepared by:
Lisa Pirie
Canadian Wildlife Service, Iqaluit

30 January 2015