A Consultation Summary for the Aulavik National Park of Canada Management Plan Update – Summer and Fall 2011

Consultations on the draft management plan for Aulavik National Park of Canada were completed over the summer and fall of 2011. Inuvialuit, stakeholders and interested Canadians were invited to share their views on the draft management plan for the park.

Input was gathered over a five week period in early summer 2011 (June 6- July 11, 2011), during Stage 2 of our management planning process, from public meetings with local leadership and residents held in 3 Inuvialuit Settlement Region communities, as well as through invitations to comment sent out to stakeholders and general public through mailings and public service announcements in local / regional newspapers. We heard from a variety of organizations and individuals including: community members from Inuvik, Sachs Harbour and Ulukhaktok; regional Inuvialuit and co-operative management land claim boards; other government departments; external researchers, staff, park visitors and other interested Canadians.

All comments received were gathered together, analyzed and summarized for the Parks Canada planning team and the Aulavik Management Planning Working Group. The Working Group met in late August 2011 to review comments received and provide guidance to Parks Canada on how to use that feedback to revise the draft park management plan.

In fall 2011 (September and October 2011), the revised draft park management plan was presented for final review and recommendation by local Inuvialuit organizations (Sachs Harbour Hunters & Trappers Committee, Sachs Harbour Community Corporation) as well as regional Inuvialuit and co-operative management land claim boards (Wildlife Management Advisory Council – Northwest Territories, Fisheries Joint Management Committee and , Inuvialuit Game Council).

What We Heard

Comments provided by Inuvialuit, Stakeholders and interested Canadians during consultations in Summer 2011 are summarized below. Input and views are organized by key management plan sections. Within each section, we report by issue on what we heard and what we did with that input to update of the Aulavik National Park Management Plan.

<u>Vision</u>	
What Was Heard	Comments about the vision were limited. A few respondents said they liked everything about the park vision, while some disliked that the park was too costly to visit and thereby limited to a specialized market.
Final Draft Response	While the plan has strategies to diversify the opportunities to experience Aulavik and to reduce the cost to visit, the park will continue to have visitation limited by cost and remoteness. Without changing the intent and scope, some changes were made to improve the wording of the vision.

Strategy 1 – Maintaining and Enhancing Visitor Opportunities	
What Was Heard	Expanded / improved visitor service offer. There was support from Sachs Harbour and Ulukhaktok for making improvements to or replacing the Green and Polar Bear cabins, in order to use them as base camps for supporting visitor activities, research and monitoring programs, and youth camps. Some people expressed concern that changes to the cabins and their use would not be in keeping Aulavik's wilderness character.
Final Draft Response	Improvements to the two cabins will be kept simple and practical to for use as base camps for park operations, third party research and youth camps, and as emergency shelters for Inuvialuit hunters and park visitors. In keeping with the wilderness character and zoning of Aulavik, improvements will address public safety and basic comfort needs. Green Cabin will continue to serve as the starting point in the park for most visitors.
What Was Heard	Make access to park more affordable. Some respondents commented that actions need to be taken to make air access into Aulavik more affordable.
Final Draft Response	While some supported the storage of canoes at Green Cabin as part of reducing costs to fly into the park, one respondent suggested that such storage could attract bears and impact the wilderness aesthetic.
	Parks Canada will explore and, where practical, implement ways for visitors to reduce their costs of travelling into and out of Aulavik, for example, by assisting visitors in finding cost-share opportunities for aircraft charters. This will entail working with outfitters, air charters and others.
	The storage of outfitter canoes at Green Cabin or other suitable locations, to allow space on aircraft for more passengers is a possible means to help reduce per-person trip costs. Canoe storage facilities would be designed and constructed to maintain Green Cabin as a base camp, with safety as a key consideration.

What Was	Approaches to increase awareness and visitation – Suggestions from the
Heard	communities and the public included working with the adventure cruise industry,
	building on the rich culture and stories of the region (including using the Smithsonian's
	MacFarlane Collection), working with other Inuvialuit groups to find funding for
	existing youth group programs in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region, and promoting the
	Thomsen as an Arctic wilderness paddle destination suitable for most ages and ability
Final Draft	levels.
Response	Parks Canada will explore new opportunities for park visits with emerging
	Northwest Passage cruise ship tours. If there is demand, guidelines will be developed with cruise ship operators to encourage connection to the park and ensure protection of natural, cultural and paleontological resources.
	The MacFarlane Collection is from the MacKenzie Delta area and not related to Banks
	Island. While outside the scope of the Aulavik management plan, the Western Arctic

	Field Unit is looking at ways to work with the collection at a regional level. A main objective of the plan is to make the Thomsen a first-rate Arctic paddling destination.
What Was Heard Final Draft	Effects of visitor use - The need for careful consideration and management of human impacts was noted by the Canadian Wildlife Service, local community members, a former park researcher, and the public. Concerns raised included increased human presence and air traffic affecting migratory birds and their habitat; increased fishing affecting stocks, and cruise ship landings. Community members from Sachs Harbour were concerned about the protection of archaeological sites, such as <i>HMS Investigator</i> , from impacts.
Response	Ensuring the continued sense of remoteness and wilderness characteristics as part of the visitor experience remains a major goal of this management plan. Any potential increase in visitor use will not detract from this goal. Impact assessments of camping and landing areas will be done as part of the Thomsen River monitoring to assess potential impacts on ecological integrity, the migratory bird sanctuary, cultural resources and other visitors' experiences.
	Recommendations from the Canadian Wildlife Service have been added to the plan. These include: monitoring for impacts in the bird sanctuary area; and working with air charter companies to ensure air travel in and out of the park are to standards consistent with the national park setting, the presence of the migratory bird sanctuary and Inuvialuit recommendations for flight altitude.
	The National Parks of Canada Fishing Regulations have specific catch and possession limits identified for Aulavik.
	See Approaches to increase and visitation re cruise ship tourism and Aulavik.
	HMS <i>Investigator</i> is located outside the park boundary and therefore not under Parks Canada jurisdiction. Authority for the protection of HMS <i>Investigator</i> is with the Government of the Northwest Territories. Parks Canada will work with partners to protect the shipwreck site and present its story. The land component of the shipwreck site is in Aulavik and will be protected in keeping with the park's cultural resource management strategy.
What Was Heard	Support / Involvement of the local Sachs economy. A few respondents were divided on approaches to encourage increased visitation to Sachs Harbour. One suggested exploring opportunities to encourage visitors stopping in Sachs enroute to the park, while a few suggested positioning Sachs Harbour as the destination for those not able to go into the park.
Final Draft Response	Parks Canada will explore both approaches to including Sachs Harbour as part of the Aulavik experience.

Strategy 2 - Keeping Aulavik Healthy and Enduring	
What Was Heard	Monitoring / maintaining park health. The Canadian Wildlife Service identified the need to include specific objectives and actions for species at risk.
Final Draft Response	The possibility of park boundary expansion and/or creation of buffer zones to keep Aulavik healthy and protect the park's watershed were raised at the Sachs Harbour meeting.
	A new objective and action has been added for managing species at risk in the park. Parks Canada will work closely with cooperative management partners in assisting Environment Canada with the Peary caribou recovery strategy.
	Expanding the park boundary is not being considered by Parks Canada. Most of the main watersheds of Aulavik, including the Thomsen, Muskox, Woon and Mercy rivers, are within the park boundaries.
What Was Heard	Mention of research during this stage of consultation to support this strategy was limited. A community member from Ulukhaktok suggested research was needed in the park for looking at contamination in migratory bird feeding areas.
	A geologist suggested that the Banks Island Mercy reef tract is world famous and world class and as such deserves mention in this plan due to scientists' interest in understanding ancient reef ecosystems, mass extinctions and global climate change.
Final Draft Response	No contaminated sites are in the migratory bird sanctuary area. The significance of the fossil reefs is now noted in the management plan.

Strategy 3 - Engaging Inuvialuit Settlement Region (ISR) Communities	
What Was Heard Final Draft	Engaging youth from the Inuvialuit Settlement Region (ISR) was mentioned by community members. Suggested approaches for engagement included youth camps, building on existing Inuvialuit programs, in-school programs delivered by Parks Canada, incorporating museum collections into youth program delivery and exploring organized trips to southern museums. Engaging ISR youth through camps, in school programs (such as the existing
	Environmental Stewardship Program) and working with school curricula, will continue to be an important part of Aulavik programs. Organizing youth trips to southern museums is outside Parks Canada's responsibility to lead. Parks Canada will work with funded Inuvialuit groups to support their visits into the park.
What Was Heard	Wildlife Management Advisory Council-NWT and a few community members from Sachs Harbour commented on how to better connect the community to the park through cooperative management approaches such as establishing a park management board . Two concerns were raised regarding formation of a park management board: the need to have the community at the core of any board approach and concerns about representatives on boards not reporting back to the community.

Final Draft
Response

In agreement with Inuvialuit cooperative management bodies and Sachs Harbour community organizations, a park specific co-operative management process will be considered, and if determined desirable, established within the five-year period of the plan. A board would not replace Parks Canada's requirement to work with WMACNWT.

Strategy 4 – Bringing Canadians Closer to Canada's Northern Heritage	
What Was	Input received on ways to connect and bring Canadians closer to Aulavik was received
Heard	from various stakeholders (community members, external researchers, and Parks
	Canada staff) and included approaches based on both traditional and new media.
Final Draft	Parks Canada will consider technologies and media that are practical to implement.
Response	

Administration and Operation What Was Heard Comments regarding the Green Cabin, Polar Bear Cabin and Banks Island Migratory Bird Sanctuary #2 are discussed in Strategies 1 and 2.

Zoning	
What was Heard	One respondent raised concerns about possible impacts on visitor experience and wildlife from guided snowmobile based touring.
Final Draft Response	Snowmobiling as an activity in the park is not being planned or promoted. The plan gives only the process and conditions for considering commercially guided over-snow vehicle tours by Inuvialuit beneficiaries, should there be interest and demand.