

# Aulavik

National Park of Canada

## Management Plan





## What Aulavik National Park Means To Me

These drawings were submitted by students in grades K to 9 at Inual Thuyak School in Sachs Harbour. As part of the Parks Canada in Schools program, they were asked to share with other Canadians what Aulavik National Park means to them.

Students' names from the top, left to right; Agnes Amos, Cheyenne Gally, Christopher Haogak, Leigha Keogak, Meagan Kolola, Rosanne Lennie, Shelby Lucas and Jasmine Keogak.

For more information about Aulavik National Park of Canada or this management plan:

Aulavik National Park

c/o Parks Canada

PO Box 1840, Inuvik, NT, X0E 0T0

Phone: 867-777-8800

E-Mail: [aulavik.plan@pc.gc.ca](mailto:aulavik.plan@pc.gc.ca)

[www.pc.gc.ca](http://www.pc.gc.ca)

Photos on the front cover were provided by;

Main Image: Arctic Cottongrass

(Photo: Pinette Robinson/Parks Canada Agency (PCA))

Photo Ribbon (from left to right): Camping by the Thomsen River (Photo: Jean-François Basaillon/(PCA),

Lena Wolki and Jean Harry at Head Hill

(Photo: Lisa Hodgetts), On the Thomsen

(Photo: Gerry Kisoun/PCA)

Cette publication est aussi disponible en français.

**Aulavik National Park  
of Canada**

**MANAGEMENT PLAN**

**2012**

**Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication**

**Parks Canada**

**Aulavik National Park of Canada management plan, 2012.**

**Issued also in French under title: Parc national du Canada Aulavik,  
plan directeur, 2012.**

**Available also on the Internet.**

**ISBN 978-1-100-19898-9**

**Cat. no.: R61-75/2012E**

**1. Aulavik National Park (N.W.T.)--Management. 2. National parks and  
reserves--Northwest Territories--Management. 3. National parks and reserves  
--Canada--Management. I. Title.**

**FC4164 A95 P37 2012**

**333.78'3097193**

**C2012-980000-7**



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. They represent the very best that Canada has to offer, and it is through these special places that we are all deeply connected to what it means to be Canadian.

Having been entrusted with this important legacy for over a hundred years, we reflect upon the steady growth of the Parks Canada network of protected areas as we continue to expand it. 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.

We see a future in which these special places will further Canadians' appreciation, understanding and enjoyment of Canada, the economic well-being of communities, and the vitality of our society.

Our Government's vision is to build a culture of heritage conservation in Canada by 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 Aulavik 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 Aulavik National Park of Canada Management Plan.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peter Kent". The signature is stylized and written in a cursive script.

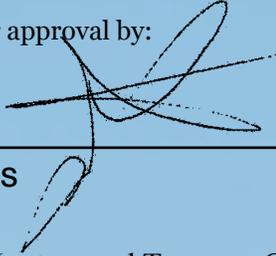
Peter Kent

Minister of the Environment and Minister  
responsible for Parks Canada

# Recommendation Statement

## AULAVIK NATIONAL PARK OF CANADA MANAGEMENT PLAN

Recommended for approval by:



**LAWRENCE AMOS**

President  
Sachs Harbour Hunters and Trappers Committee



**JOHN LUCAS**

Chairperson  
Sachs Harbour Community Corporation



**LARRY CARPENTER**

Chairperson  
Wildlife Management Advisory Council – NWT



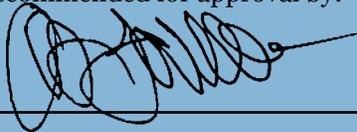
**VIC GILLMAN**

Chairperson  
Fisheries Joint Management Council

Muskox River from Near Head Hill.  
(Photo: Craig Brigley/PCA)

**AULAVIK NATIONAL PARK OF CANADA MANAGEMENT PLAN**

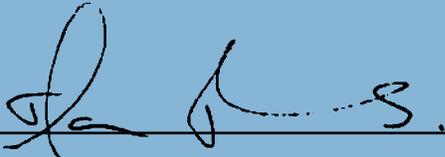
Recommended for approval by:



---

**ALAN LATOURELLE**

Chief Executive Officer  
Parks Canada



---

**IFAN THOMAS**

Field Unit Superintendent, Western Arctic  
Parks Canada



The 2011 management plan for Aulavik National Park of Canada provides strategic direction over the next 15 years for achieving Parks Canada's mandate to protect and present Canada's natural and cultural heritage, facilitate visitor experiences, and foster public understanding, appreciation and enjoyment for present and future generations. The plan was developed with partner, stakeholder and public involvement. It is the primary public accountability document for the park and provides Parks Canada staff and engaged partners and stakeholders with a framework for park management and decision making.

### THE MANAGEMENT PLAN INCLUDES:

- A vision for the future towards which the park will aspire over the next fifteen years;
- Strategic direction with identified objectives that provide concrete direction to address the major park issues and opportunities while focusing efforts and resources towards achieving the vision;
- Park zoning;
- A 5-year implementation strategy summarizing objectives, planned actions and targets for measuring the success of management actions;
- A summary of the park monitoring program; and
- The strategic environmental assessment of the management plan.

### PARK VISION

Aulavik National Park is unspoiled wilderness - an escape for paddlers and hikers, a sanctuary for wildlife, and a special place for Inuvialuit, in part through its protection of aspects of their culture and traditional ways. It is shared by Inuvialuit with all Canadians as a place to protect, understand, enjoy and value the environment, history and culture of the most westerly island of Canada's Arctic Archipelago.

### KEY STRATEGIES

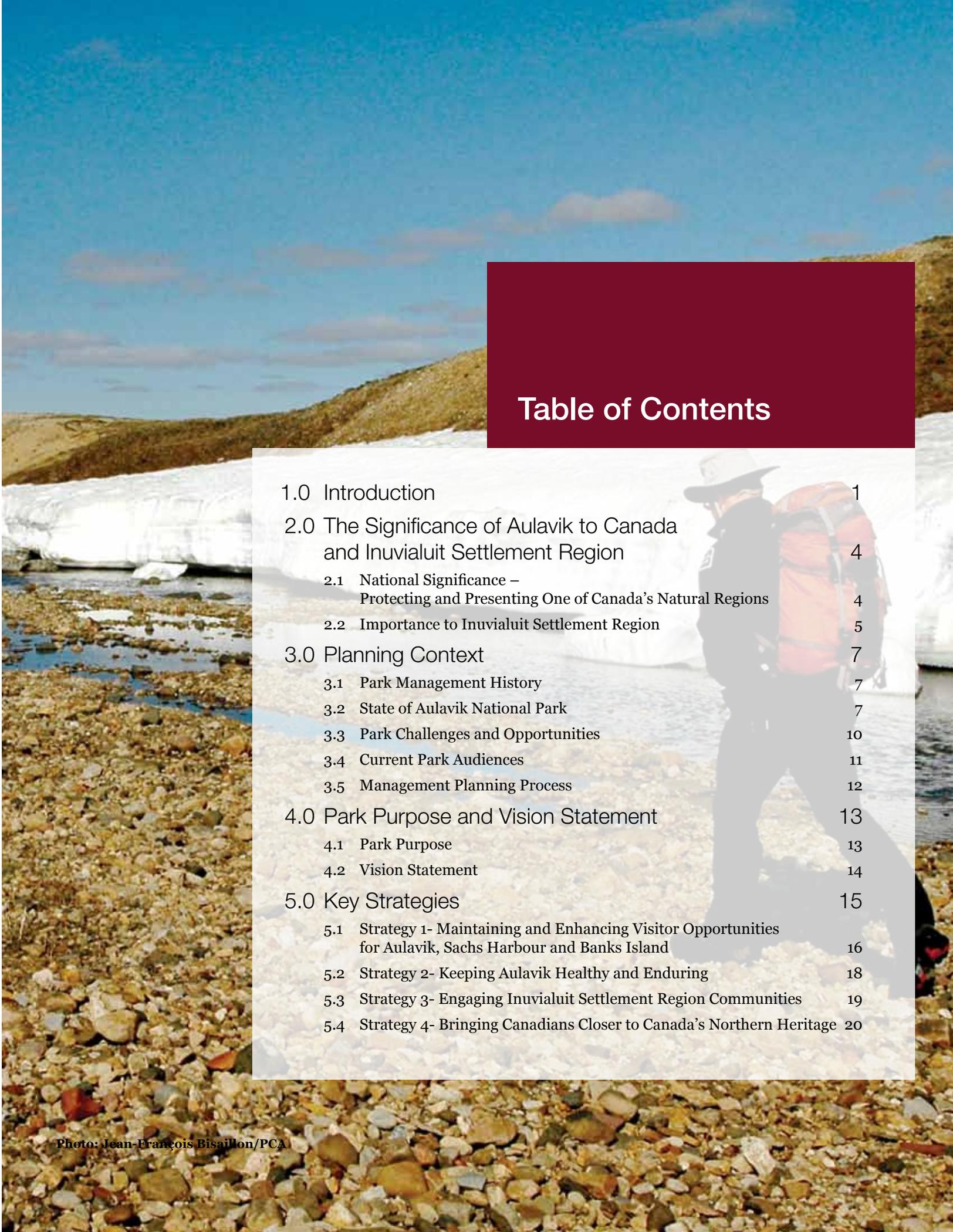
**Maintaining and Enhancing Visitor Opportunities for Aulavik, Sachs Harbour and Banks Island** - This strategy has two components: maintaining and, where possible, enhancing visitor opportunities in Aulavik; and exploring tourism-related opportunities for Sachs Harbour and Banks Island. Finding ways of reducing travel costs to experience Aulavik is a consideration of this strategy.

**Keeping Aulavik Healthy and Enduring** - This strategy focuses on maintaining a credible and affordable ecological integrity and cultural resource monitoring program, recognizing the logistical challenges and costs associated with undertaking this work in such a large and remote park.

**Engaging Inuvialuit Settlement Region Communities** - This strategy intensifies Parks Canada's work in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region to build Inuvialuit awareness and involvement in Aulavik given its ecological and cultural importance.

**Bringing Canadians Closer to Canada's Northern Heritage** - Because very few Canadians will visit Aulavik, Parks Canada aims to increase Canadian understanding, appreciation, and support for Aulavik by reaching Canadians at home, at school and in their communities through relevant and effective communication and public outreach education initiatives.

This plan will be reviewed in five years time of its approval to ensure that it remains relevant and effective for the management of the park.



# Table of Contents

1.0	Introduction	1
2.0	The Significance of Aulavik to Canada and Inuvialuit Settlement Region	4
2.1	National Significance – Protecting and Presenting One of Canada’s Natural Regions	4
2.2	Importance to Inuvialuit Settlement Region	5
3.0	Planning Context	7
3.1	Park Management History	7
3.2	State of Aulavik National Park	7
3.3	Park Challenges and Opportunities	10
3.4	Current Park Audiences	11
3.5	Management Planning Process	12
4.0	Park Purpose and Vision Statement	13
4.1	Park Purpose	13
4.2	Vision Statement	14
5.0	Key Strategies	15
5.1	Strategy 1- Maintaining and Enhancing Visitor Opportunities for Aulavik, Sachs Harbour and Banks Island	16
5.2	Strategy 2- Keeping Aulavik Healthy and Enduring	18
5.3	Strategy 3- Engaging Inuvialuit Settlement Region Communities	19
5.4	Strategy 4- Bringing Canadians Closer to Canada’s Northern Heritage	20

6.0 Administration and Operation	21
6.1 Banks Island Migratory Bird Sanctuary Number 2	21
6.2 Green Cabin	22
6.3 Polar Bear Cabin	22
6.4 Environmental Stewardship	22
7.0 Zoning and Other Land and Feature Classifications	23
7.1 Zoning System	23
7.2 Environmentally and Culturally Sensitive Sites	24
7.3 Designated Landing Areas	24
7.4 Declared Wilderness	25
8.0 Tracking Success: Monitoring and Reporting on the State of the Park	26
9.0 Management Plan Implementation with Targets and Actions	27
10.0 Strategic Environmental Assessment	37
11.0 References	40
Maps	
Figure 1. Aulavik National Park of Canada	3
Figure 2. Zoning, Aulavik National Park of Canada	23

A person stands in a vast, flat tundra landscape, silhouetted against a bright sun. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a strong glow and casting a long shadow of the person onto the ground. The sky is filled with soft, white clouds, and the overall atmosphere is serene and expansive. The person's arms are outstretched, embracing the wide expanse of the tundra.

## 1.0 Introduction

**Embracing the Tundra.**  
(Photo: James McCormick/PCA)



Camping by the Thomsen River,  
(Photo: Jean-François Bisaillon/PCA)

“The National Parks of Canada are hereby dedicated to the people of Canada for their benefit, education and enjoyment and shall be maintained and made use of so as to leave them unimpaired for future generations” (*Canada National Parks Act*).

Parks Canada is responsible to the people and Parliament of Canada for administering a world-renowned system of national parks, national historic sites and national marine conservation areas. Canada’s national parks are established to protect, for all time, special places representative of Canada’s natural regions, and to connect Canadians with the enduring natural and cultural legacy of these places. The *Parks Canada Agency Act* (1998), *Canada National Parks Act* (2000) and Parks Canada Guiding Principles and Operational Policies (1994) set the context for this responsibility.

Under the *Canada National Parks Act*, management plans are required for national parks. A management plan is a strategic document that guides Parks Canada decisions and actions in protecting, managing and operating a particular national park. A plan is developed with the involvement of the Canadian public and is reviewed within five years to ensure it remains relevant and effective.

This is the second management plan for Aulavik National Park of Canada (hereafter Aulavik). Located on Banks Island, Northwest Territories, Aulavik was established in 1992 (Figure 1). The park is co-operatively managed by Parks Canada and Inuvialuit as per the *Inuvialuit Final Agreement* and *An Agreement for the Establishment of a National Park on Banks Island* (1992).

This plan builds on Aulavik’s 2002 management plan and aims to fulfill Parks Canada’s vision for all national parks, national historic sites and national marine conservation areas: “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” (Parks Canada 2011).

Developed in consultation with Inuvialuit, stakeholders, the Canadian public and park staff, this management plan provides clear management direction for Aulavik through a 15-year park vision, strategies and objectives to achieve the vision, and 5-year targets with actions. All three mandate elements of Parks Canada – conserving heritage resources, facilitating visitor experiences, and fostering public appreciation and understanding, are represented in this plan.

The focus of the management plan is to:

- Enhance visitor opportunities in Aulavik and link them to potential visitor opportunities on Banks Island, contributing to a broader tourism offer on the island to the benefit of Sachs Harbour and the Inuvialuit Settlement Region;
- Manage and monitor for the maintenance of ecological integrity of Aulavik and the care of its cultural and palaeontological resources; and
- Significantly enhance the connection of Inuvialuit and all Canadians to the natural and cultural heritage of Aulavik.



Figure 1: Aulavik National Park of Canada



## 2.0 The Significance of Aulavik to Canada and Inuvialuit Settlement Region

### 2.1 NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE - PROTECTING AND PRESENTING ONE OF CANADA'S NATURAL REGIONS

Canada has thirty-nine distinct National Park Natural Regions based on land characteristics and vegetation (Parks Canada National Park System Plan 2004). The main principle of the national park system plan is to protect a representative sample of each of Canada's landscapes. Aulavik was created to protect more than 12,000 km<sup>2</sup> of the Western Arctic Lowlands and to encourage public appreciation, understanding and enjoyment of the park, along with continued subsistence use by Inuvialuit.

In Inuvialuktun, Aulavik means "place where people travel". More than twice the size of Prince Edward Island, Aulavik includes fertile river valleys, deserts, buttes and badlands, rolling hills, and a high Arctic seacoast. Aulavik and Banks Island are home to the endangered Peary caribou and the world's largest population of muskoxen. Arctic hare, fox, wolf, and lemming are common. Coastal waters are habitat for polar bear, ringed and bearded seal, beluga and bowhead whales. Many species of waterfowl and other birds, such as peregrine falcons and sandhill cranes, nest within the park. The park also contains important moulting habitat for geese. More than 150 species of flowering plants grow here during the brief, but intense summers of twenty-four hour sunlight. The Thomsen River, the northernmost navigable river in the world, is also habitat to possibly the most northerly multi-species fresh water fish community. This land and wildlife have supported Aboriginal peoples for more than 3400 years, from Pre-Dorset times to Inuvialuit today. Archaeological sites are numerous and easily spotted on the open treeless landscape.

Aulavik Flora.  
(Photo: Barb Brittain/PCA)



Lena Wolki and Jean Harry at Head Hill  
(Photo: Lisa Hodgetts)

Well-preserved reefs of an ancient seacoast are found in the Mercy River area. These reefs are from 380 to 400 million years old. To geologists and palaeontologists with an interest in ancient reef ecosystems, mass extinctions and global climate change, these ancient reefs are well known.

Banks Island Bird Sanctuary #2 (Thomsen River) is located in Aulavik. It covers the Thomsen River from Castel Bay to a point sixty kilometres upstream. The sanctuary was established in 1961 under the administration of the Canadian Wildlife Service to protect the moulting grounds of Lesser Snow Geese. The Important Bird Area Program of Birdlife International categorizes the Thomsen River sanctuary as globally significant for its congregation of waterfowl species.

The Parks Canada Agency is required by legislation to meet specific requirements under the *Species at Risk Act* to protect and manage species at risk and their habitat found in national parks. Peary caribou, which have seasonal ranges through much of Banks Island, including Aulavik, were listed as endangered under the Act in 2011.

Aulavik offers exceptional opportunities for those who search for wilderness and an Arctic experience. Paddlers can take the long trip down the pristine, gentle flowing Thomsen River and explore the rolling terrain of the Thomsen valley, where hiking is possible almost anywhere and at almost any time during the twenty-four hours of summer sun. Opportunities to see wildlife are excellent.

Aulavik is a wilderness park. There are no facilities, campgrounds or trails. Chartering an aircraft from Inuvik is the most practical means of getting to and from the park. Because of the cost and physical

challenges to visit Aulavik, visitation is low. In the five summers from 2007 through 2011, less than 70 people visited Aulavik. Most came to paddle the Thomsen River. Visitors also hike, view wildlife, fish, and visit archaeological sites. Inuvialuit hunters and trappers, researchers, youth camps and park staff are not counted as visitors.

## 2.2 IMPORTANCE TO INUVIALUIT SETTLEMENT REGION

Aulavik is in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region, which was established in 1984 through the *Inuvialuit Final Agreement*. The region spans 906,430 km<sup>2</sup> and takes in several sub-regions, one of which is the western Canadian Arctic Islands that includes Banks Island and Aulavik.

As Aulavik is co-operatively managed with Inuvialuit, Parks Canada works closely with the community of Sachs Harbour and the broader Inuvialuit community in the management of the park. Sachs Harbour is located on the southwestern shore of Banks Island, and is the only community on the island. As part of the co-operative management agreement, Inuvialuit retain the right to subsistence harvest within Aulavik. Travel to the north end of Banks Island is not frequent and this part of the island, including Aulavik, has been long regarded as a reservoir for sustaining the greater island's wildlife populations.

Aulavik is within an area that the Sachs Harbour Community Conservation Plan (2008) has categorized as "lands and water where cultural or renewable resources are of extreme significance and sensitivity. There shall be no development on these areas. These lands and waters shall be managed to eliminate, to the greatest extent possible, potential damage and disruption".

## 2.0 The Significance of Aulavik



“My great great grandparents lived there so I have lots of stories. Aulavik is a place of stories ... rivers, lakes, the coast, animals and birds ... everything you need to live.”

Jean Harry, Inuvialuit Elder,  
Sachs Harbour

Photo: John Lucas/PCA

According to the conservation plan, this area is of importance to the community of Sachs Harbour for:

- Peary caribou in their seasonal range;
- Concentration of muskoxen year-round;
- Spawning, nursing and overwintering habitat of the Thomsen and Muskox rivers for char and cisco;
- Subsistence fishing of trout, char and cisco in the summer and fall;
- Denning of arctic wolf;
- Numerous archaeological and cultural sites along the Thomsen River;
- Moulting area for Lesser Snow Geese; and
- Tourism on the Thomsen River.



Cottongrass and wetlands.  
(Photo: Pinette Robinsons/PCA)

## 3.0 Planning Context

### 3.1 PARK MANAGEMENT HISTORY

Following the completion of *An Agreement for the Establishment of a National Park on Banks Island* (1992) between Inuvialuit, the Government of the Northwest Territories and the Government of Canada, land for Aulavik was formally withdrawn in 1994. Initial management of Aulavik was directed by management guidelines prepared in 1995 (Parks Canada 1995). The first park management plan, approved in 2002, replaced these guidelines (Parks Canada 2002). The 2002 plan set out a strategy for the care and management of Aulavik as a wild, unspoiled Arctic wilderness with outstanding natural and cultural values. The plan also recognized Inuvialuit subsistence harvesting rights within the park.

### 3.2 STATE OF AULAVIK NATIONAL PARK

The 2010 state of the park report for Aulavik (Parks Canada 2010) describes the condition of the park's ecological integrity, cultural resources and park visitor experiences, and reports on the completion of actions from the 2002 management plan. The 2010 report is a benchmark for evaluating the state of Aulavik in five years time. A copy of the 2010 state of the park report for Aulavik is available on the Parks Canada website at: [www.pc.gc.ca/aulavik](http://www.pc.gc.ca/aulavik). Summarized below are key points from the 2010 report.

#### **Ecological Integrity**

The *Canada National Parks Act* defines ecological integrity with respect to a national park as a condition that is determined to be characteristic of its natural region and likely to persist, including abiotic components, the composition and abundance of native species and biological communities, rates of change,





Musk Ox in Aulavik National Park.  
(Photo: Jean-François Bisaillon/PCA)

and processes. Ecological integrity is assessed using indicators and measures that include information from monitoring, and traditional and local knowledge.

Ecological monitoring in Aulavik has focused on tundra and freshwater. The tundra ecosystem encompasses the majority of Aulavik and supports many species, including muskoxen and Peary caribou, which are important for subsistence harvesting. The freshwater ecosystem is a significant ecological indicator to monitor because changes in climate condition, mineral exploration and other development adjacent to the park, and the atmospheric transport of contaminants can have a range of effects on this component of the environment. The Thomsen watershed is home to six freshwater species of fish. The Thomsen River is noted as important spawning and nursery habitat for arctic char. Arctic char are also found in several of the larger lakes, such as Nangmagvik.

Due to insufficient data to define thresholds for their respective measures, the condition of the tundra and freshwater ecosystems was not rated in the report. Nonetheless, Parks Canada and Inuvialuit partners have concluded that Aulavik's overall ecological condition is healthy given its remoteness, the absence of development and the very low levels of activity in and adjacent to the park.

### Species at Risk

In February 2011, Peary caribou was added as an endangered species to Schedule 1 of the Species at Risk Act (2002). Endangered species face imminent extirpation or extinction. The Peary caribou population on Banks Island, including within Aulavik, declined

sharply between 1981 and 1991, but appears to have stabilized, at a low population level, between 1991 and 2010, based on surveys by Parks Canada and partners.

### Cultural Resources

Cultural resources are human works or places that show human activity, or have spiritual or cultural meaning, and have historic value.

The state of the park report for Aulavik determined the condition of cultural resources within the park to be Good. A cultural resource inventory includes more than 300 archaeological sites and cultural features in the park. These cultural resources are in stable condition. A monitoring program is in place to track the condition of three large archaeological sites. Parks Canada curates collected artifacts according to a memorandum of understanding between the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation and Parks Canada. Cooperative management partners are involved in cultural resource management decisions.

### Visitor Experience

Visitor experience refers to a visitor's personal interaction with a park and the sense of connection he or she develops with the place.

The state of the park report for Aulavik determined the condition of the visitor experience in the park as Good. Given that a visit to the park usually averages ten days, the stunning views, remoteness and solitude that visitors experience when in the park, and the personal sense of challenge and discovery that a trip to Aulavik entails, such an adventure can make for a transformative experience. Based on surveys and



508X-E, Tent Ring.  
(Photo: Lisa Hodgetts)



Sachs Harbour  
Community Consultations.  
(Photo: John Lucas/PCA)

comments provided to Parks Canada, a majority of visitors to Aulavik were highly satisfied with their experience and expressed a strong sense of personal connection to the park.

### Public Appreciation and Understanding

Public appreciation and understanding is about reaching Canadians at home, at school and in their communities through effective and relevant learning opportunities. These learning opportunities are designed to increase understanding and appreciation of the natural and cultural heritage of national parks and historic sites, and about encouraging people to support and be engaged in their protection and presentation.

The state of public awareness and understanding for Aulavik is not rated, as no analysis has been done on this aspect of the park mandate. The Parks Canada Agency is working on how to measure public awareness and understanding for individual parks and sites.

### Inuvialuit Connection to Aulavik

Aulavik is co-operatively managed with Inuvialuit through the Wildlife Management Advisory Council (Northwest Territories), the Fisheries Joint Management Committee, the environmental assessment process of the Environmental Impact Screening Committee and the Environmental Impact Review Board, and the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation. Parks Canada also works closely with the Inuvialuit Game Council and the community of Sachs Harbour in the planning and management of the park.

Beyond affirming Inuvialuit subsistence rights as established in the *Inuvialuit Final Agreement*, and

setting out the broad parameters for the co-operative management of Aulavik, the park establishment agreement also identifies specific economic goals for Inuvialuit. Since the establishment of Aulavik, Parks Canada has annually employed three to five staff based in Sachs Harbour. Third-party researchers working in Aulavik are encouraged to buy supplies locally, and hire local people as assistants and wildlife monitors. Parks Canada contributes millions of dollars to the Inuvialuit Settlement Region through salaries and the purchase of goods and services from Inuvialuit-owned businesses. However, low visitation limits the potential for tourism as a strong economic activity on the island. Community expectations for significant tourism-related economic benefits associated with the establishment of Aulavik have not been realized.

The Aulavik Visitor Centre in Sachs Harbour is a link between the community and the park. Community members use the centre for meetings and activities. Its exhibits, photographic displays and maps, tell the stories of the park and the people of Banks Island, and were chosen and developed in consultation with the community.

### 2002 Management Plan Implementation

The 2002 Aulavik National Park of Canada Management Plan has been implemented. Since 2002, Parks Canada has:

- Informed and engaged Inuvialuit co-operative management and community partners in the protection of the park's natural and cultural resources through establishment of an Aulavik advisory board, newsletters, and research and monitoring reports;

## 3.0 Planning Context



Left: Aulavik Youth Camp. (Photo: Melinda Gillis/PCA)  
Right: Arctic Willow. (Photo: Christian Bucher/PCA)



- Advanced long-term understanding of ecosystems and cultural resources in the park through partnerships with the Government of the Northwest Territories, Canadian Centre for Remote Sensing, Environment Canada, Inuvialuit Cultural Resource Centre, Aurora Research Institute and University of Western Ontario. Examples of research, monitoring and traditional knowledge inventory programs include: work on Peary caribou and muskoxen populations; plant productivity; water quality; Inuvialuit ethno-botany, and numerous archaeological studies;
- Promoted and encouraged education, training and development of Inuvialuit youth through:
  - an annual environmental stewardship course for grade four students in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region;
  - the development of other school curriculum-related materials for the Inuvialuit Settlement Region;
  - in-park camps for Sachs Harbour youth; and
  - employment opportunities targeted at youth.

### 3.3 PARK CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

#### Renewal within Parks Canada

Parks Canada is undergoing agency renewal to better serve the needs of Canadians today and into the future. There are many factors currently influencing Parks Canada: shifts in the cultural makeup of cities; an aging population; Canadians' changing connection to their environment; increasing threats to natural and cultural heritage; and changes in how Canadians spend their

leisure time. For Parks Canada programs to continue to be relevant, the Agency is seeking ways to better connect Canadians to national parks such as Aulavik. This is a significant challenge, particularly since few Canadians will ever get the chance to visit this highly remote national park.

#### Challenges

The main park challenges identified by Parks Canada and Inuvialuit co-operative management partners are described in the 2010 state of the park report.

They include:

- Low numbers of Peary caribou on Banks Island;
- The high expectations of significant tourism-economic benefits for Inuvialuit and the community of Sachs Harbour resulting from the park have not been realized;
- The challenges of establishing a credible and affordable ecological integrity monitoring program in such a remote part of the world; and
- The low levels of awareness and understanding about Aulavik amongst residents of the Inuvialuit Settlement Region and Canadians at large, and the low levels of visitation to this remote Arctic national park. This challenge is not easily overcome. Increasing visitor numbers will be modest at best, and only over the long term. Connecting Aulavik to Canadians at large has a much greater potential for success in the short term.



Paddling the Thomsen.  
(Photo: Barb Brittain/PCA)

### Opportunities

Parks Canada has a number of opportunities to improve the protection, presentation and management of Aulavik. These include:

- Increasing the Canadian and international profile of Aulavik by building on the publicity around the discovery of HMS *Investigator*, a Royal Navy vessel abandoned in Mercy Bay in 1854;
- Ensuring successful partnerships in ecological and archaeological research and monitoring with other government and non-government agencies;
- Involving local residents more in supporting park-related research and park visits; and
- Employing Parks Canada's new capacity in visitor experience and external relations to develop park products, services and communications to better profile the park for potential visitors, and increase Canadians' awareness and appreciation of the park.

### 3.4 CURRENT PARK AUDIENCES

Current park audiences include visitors, Sachs Harbour residents, researchers, and virtual visitors.

#### Park Visitors

Visitors to Aulavik come mostly to canoe the Thomsen River. This is a place for explorers desiring an experience of open high Arctic landscapes with abundant wildlife viewing opportunities. Travel across this landscape is not physically demanding. Visits average about ten days and groups are no more than about eight people based on aircraft capacity

and amount of gear. The visiting season is short (from mid-June to mid-August). Visitor levels are low; annual visitation has ranged from six to seventeen in the past five years, including 2011. Visitors must be self-sufficient and able to handle medical or weather-related emergencies on their own and in a wilderness environment. Encountering other people during a trip in the park is rare.

The few cruise ships that travel near the north coast of Banks Island may land passengers in or near to Aulavik, such as at Providence Point on Mercy Bay. These types of visits have been rare, short (only a couple of hours), and limited to the coast.

#### Sachs Harbour Residents

Inuvialuit audiences include local residents who use, visit and work in the park. Subsistence hunting and trapping in Aulavik is minimal. Visits are sometimes part of youth camps hosted in the park by Parks Canada. Local residents occasionally work on park research and monitoring programs.

#### Researchers

Each year, a number of research and monitoring programs are conducted in Aulavik by Parks Canada, or by other government or non-government agencies. Researchers are an important park audience as they can be in the park for relatively long periods, lend their knowledge and expertise to the protection and presentation of Aulavik, and can be ambassadors for promoting the park and its vision to others.

## 3.0 Planning Context



### Virtual Visitors

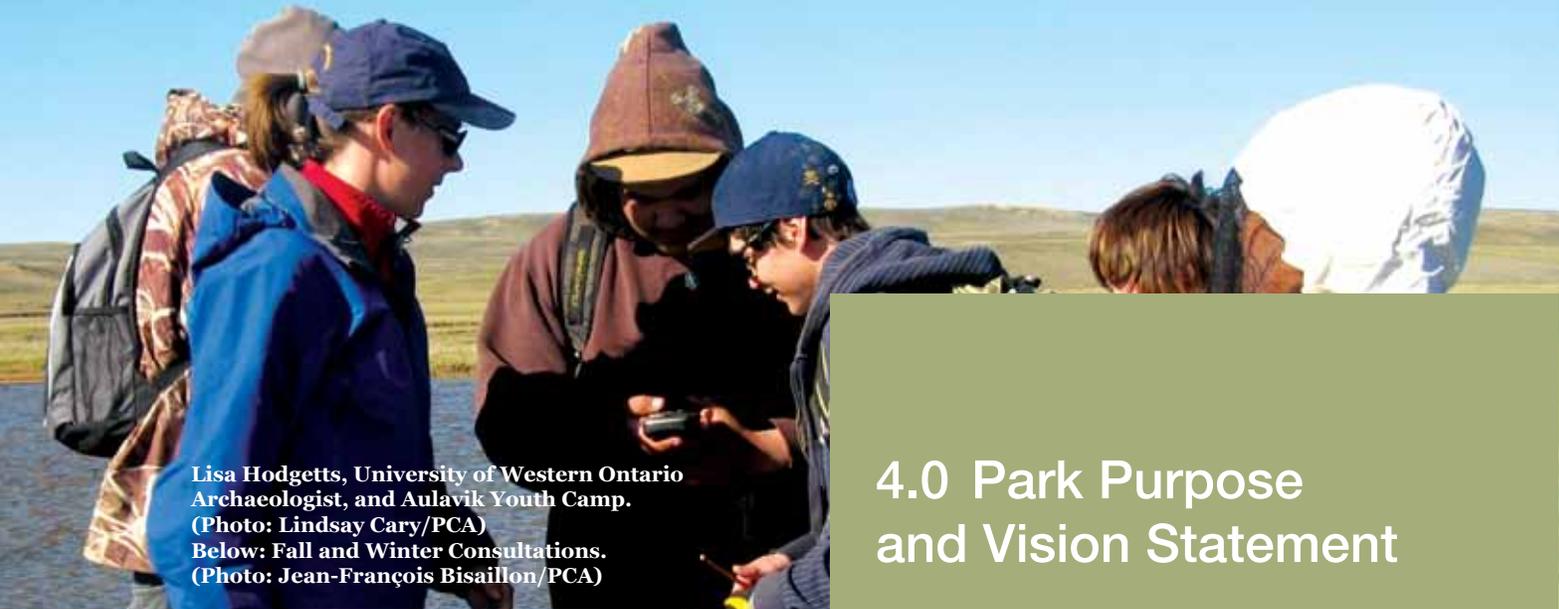
Virtual visitors are those individuals who discover and learn about Aulavik through print, radio, television and other media, such as the Parks Canada website.

### 3.5 MANAGEMENT PLANNING PROCESS

With the condition of Aulavik assessed in the 2010 state of the park report and key planning needs identified, the 2011 Aulavik management plan was developed in three stages:

- Stage 1 (fall 2010/winter 2011) introduced the management planning process and invited Inuvialuit, stakeholder and public input on the draft elements for the new plan (for example, the park vision, challenges and opportunities, and the strategies to address them);
- Stage 2 (spring/summer 2011) involved development of a draft management plan based on the input gathered in Stage 1 and then invited comment on the draft plan from Inuvialuit, stakeholders and the public;
- Stage 3 (summer/fall 2011) used input from Stage 2 to finalize the management plan. The plan was then submitted for recommendation by Inuvialuit co-operative management partners and Parks Canada's Chief Executive Officer, followed by approval by the Minister of Environment and Minister responsible for Parks Canada and its tabling in Parliament.

Parks Canada staff and the Aulavik Management Planning Working Group developed the management plan. The Aulavik Management Planning Working Group was an informal body established by Parks Canada to give the community of Sachs Harbour (Hunters and Trappers Committee, Community Corporation), Inuvialuit & co-operative management boards (Inuvialuit Game Council, Wildlife Management Advisory Council-NWT, Fisheries Joint Management Committee) and other federal and territorial government departments (Canadian Wildlife Service; Investment, Tourism and Trade; Environment and Natural Resources), the opportunity to work together and play a more direct role in the Aulavik management planning process.



Lisa Hodgetts, University of Western Ontario  
Archaeologist, and Aulavik Youth Camp.  
(Photo: Lindsay Cary/PCA)  
Below: Fall and Winter Consultations.  
(Photo: Jean-François Bisailon/PCA)

## 4.0 Park Purpose and Vision Statement

The park purpose and vision statement provide a focus for park management, helping guide decisions and actions, whether strategic or operational. The vision statement articulates the special character of Aulavik, and paints a picture of its desired future. While achievement of the vision statement will be challenging, it helps foster common understanding and cooperation among those who use, care for, work in and live near to the park. It also conveys a sense of place to Canadians who may never be able to visit Aulavik.

The park vision for Aulavik complements and contributes to the Parks Canada Agency's vision for all its national historic sites, national parks and national marine conservation areas, that "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" (Parks Canada 2011).

### 4.1 PARK PURPOSE

The purpose of Aulavik "...is to protect for all time a representative natural area of Canadian significance in the Western Arctic Lowlands Natural Region, and to encourage public understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of the area so as to leave it unimpaired for future generations while permitting subsistence usage and trapping by Inuvialuit" (*An Agreement for the Establishment of a National Park on Banks Island, 1992*).



## 4.0 Park Purpose and Vision Statement



Arctic Cinquefoil.  
(Photo: Molly Kirk/PCA)



Wolf tracks.  
(Photo: Gerry Kisoun/PCA)

### 4.2 VISION STATEMENT

#### Vision

Aulavik National Park is unspoiled wilderness - an escape for paddlers and hikers, a sanctuary for wildlife, and a special place for Inuvialuit, in part through its protection of aspects of their culture and traditional ways. It is shared by Inuvialuit with all Canadians as a place to protect, understand, enjoy and value the environment, history and culture of the most westerly island of Canada's Arctic Archipelago.

#### What Aulavik Looks Like in 2021

Aulavik helps protect wildlife, fish and lands on which Inuvialuit depend, helps preserve Inuvialuit cultural identity and values in a changing northern society, and enables Inuvialuit to benefit from its management. These goals are possible through continued effective co-operative management.

Through coordinated research, monitoring, and the application of traditional and local knowledge, the ecological integrity and cultural heritage of Aulavik is well understood. This strength of information and knowledge attracts other research and monitoring interests to this part of Canada's Arctic, which further contributes to understanding and maintaining the park's environment and human history in the face of a changing world.

Aulavik in Inuvialuktun means "*place where people travel*". The park is a highly prized destination for experienced wilderness adventurers eager to discover Canada's far north. The Thomsen River threads through this magnificent, ancient landscape. Travel down the Thomsen provides visitors a gentle, yet

exhilarating canoe trip through an Arctic paradise during the stunning twenty-four hours of daylight of the Arctic summer. Whether with a professional guide or self-guided, travel along this river corridor offers rich opportunities to experience and learn about the fascinating history of Canada's Arctic and the rich variety of animals, plants and landscapes unique to Aulavik and Banks Island.

Aulavik is a beacon for Sachs Harbour and Banks Island that draws travellers eager for an authentic Arctic experience. Sachs Harbour serves as an excellent place to experience and learn more about the breathtaking landscapes and rich diversity of wildlife of the island, the extraordinary archaeological sites that document the remarkable endurance and ingenuity of Banks Island's inhabitants, and to hear stories about life on the island shared by elders.

Aulavik inspires youth from the Inuvialuit Settlement Region and the rest of Canada to be stewards of Canada's Arctic through youth camps, web sites, documentaries, and innovative school programs.

Aulavik instils a sense of pride in Canadians because of the wisdom and generosity of those people who worked cooperatively towards its establishment and continue to work together for its ongoing protection and presentation.



Canada Geese at Castel Bay. (Photo: Molly Kirk/PCA)  
Below: Musk Ox Skull. (Photo: Molly Kirk/PCA)

## 5.0 Key Strategies

Key strategies are made up of objectives, targets and actions to achieve the park vision. Each key strategy integrates the delivery of one or more of Parks Canada's three mandate elements:

- Protecting heritage resources, which includes all those activities related to the protection of natural and cultural resources and natural processes;
- Facilitating opportunities for visitor experiences, which includes products, services and facilities to heighten a visitor's sense of connection to a park; and
- Providing public education that includes a wide range of activities from in-park interpretation to outreach education initiatives reaching Canadians at home, at leisure, at school, and in their communities.

No one key strategy takes precedence over another. The objectives, targets and actions establish park management priorities for the next five to ten years. There are four key strategies to this management plan:

- Maintaining and Enhancing Visitor Opportunities for Aulavik, Sachs Harbour and Banks Island;
- Keeping Aulavik Healthy and Enduring;
- Engaging Inuvialuit Settlement Region Communities; and,
- Bringing Canadians Closer to Canada's Northern Heritage.



## 5.0 Key Strategies



Merrey Bay Base Camp. (Photo: John Lucas/PCA)

### 5.1 STRATEGY 1- MAINTAINING AND ENHANCING VISITOR OPPORTUNITIES FOR AULAVIK, SACHS HARBOUR AND BANKS ISLAND

This strategy has two components:

- Maintaining and, where possible, enhancing visitor opportunities in Aulavik; and
- Exploring tourism-related opportunities for Sachs Harbour and Banks Island.

Finding ways of reducing travel costs to experience Aulavik is a consideration of this strategy.

Aulavik is extremely remote. It is one of the most expensive national parks in Canada to visit. To date, one outfitter is licensed to operate in the park, and offers at least one guided paddling trip down the Thomsen River each summer. Because of the high cost of travel to the park, Aulavik will not see substantial increases in the number of visitors in the coming years. This low visitation limits the potential for tourism as a strong economic activity on Banks Island.

Visitors to Aulavik receive comprehensive pre-trip planning information, in-person orientation, a detailed visitor information package, and guidance from expert staff and others. Park-specific messages on protection of natural and cultural resources and visitor safety are the focus of the visitor orientation.

Visitor centres and park administration for Aulavik are located in Sachs Harbour and Inuvik. Both centres provide interpretive and visitor orientation services. There are no visitor facilities in Aulavik; visitors are expected to be self-sufficient. The only buildings in the park are Green and Polar Bear cabins, neither of which

are owned by Parks Canada, but are used to support park research and monitoring, and youth camps. They can serve as emergency shelters. Visitors are usually dropped off at the landing area at Green Cabin. There are no designated campsites. Camping can be done anywhere in the park except at archaeological sites.

Paddling the most northerly navigable river in the world is the main draw for travelling to Aulavik. Ensuring the continued sense of remoteness and wilderness as part of the paddling experience remains a major goal of this management plan. Any potential increase in visitor use will not deter from this goal. The Thomsen River is rated Class 1; there are no rapids or obstructions. It can be paddled easily by canoe or kayak, although occasional low water and high winds can create difficult paddling conditions. It is a paddling destination for those eager for a wilderness adventure, whatever their paddling skills.

Aulavik also has hiking opportunities. The gentle, varied landscape and long summer days make for good travelling by foot. Hiking can be done as part of a paddling expedition or on its own. There are no designated routes or trails. Hiking opportunities to particular archaeological, geological and wildlife-viewing sites are identified for visitors.

Cruise ship tourism in the western Arctic is virtually non-existent at the north end of Banks Island. It may grow with the possibility of increased ice-free access through the Northwest Passage and growth in interest for this form of tourism. Of the few cruise ships that have gone through M'Clure Strait in the last twenty years, only a couple have landed passengers at or near Aulavik. Parks Canada is pursuing opportunities to



Viewing the Muskox. (Photo: PCA)  
Right: Arctic Cottongrass. (Photo: Pinette Robinson/PCA)



work with cruise ship operators to include park-specific programming for their passengers when possible and appropriate.

With a focus on research (See Strategy 2—Keeping Aulavik Healthy and Enduring), Aulavik also has potential for engaging the citizen scientist, building on the growing interest in volunteer tourism. Citizen science involves professional researchers and volunteers working together on activities such as biological and archaeological inventories, monitoring, and scientific research. The goals of citizen science projects are to contribute to scientific understanding about various facets of the park. That understanding is then applied to park management. One of the most important components of citizen science or volunteer tourism is building a base of public support and stewardship for Aulavik. It allows people the chance to gain both an in-depth knowledge about the park, and through their involvement and the time spent in the park, a deep connection to the place.

Addressing the low visitation to Aulavik and Banks Island requires a broader perspective that recognises the potential for Sachs Harbour and Banks Island to be tourism draws in their own right. Eventually, this approach could not only benefit the community and the region, but also increase opportunities to connect Canadians to Aulavik, and possibly generate modest increases in park visits.

In this strategy, the community of Sachs Harbour is an alternative ‘Aulavik’ destination for travellers who cannot make it into the park because of the cost and challenges of this type of Arctic wilderness experience. Such an offer would provide visitors the opportunity

to connect to the landscape that Aulavik is part of, and the fascinating history and culture that Aulavik presents, while also potentially providing direct economic opportunities for Sachs Harbour residents. Through the Aulavik Visitor Centre in Sachs Harbour, Parks Canada can connect visitors to the park, even if they should not visit the park itself. Beyond this, the development of a local viable and sustainable tourism offer in Sachs Harbour may ultimately contribute to a viable community-based, year-round licensed outfitter(s) providing services in Aulavik.

The Maintaining and Enhancing Visitor Opportunities for Aulavik, Sachs Harbour and Banks Island strategy has four objectives. The targets and actions for these objectives are detailed in Chapter 9.

**Objective 1:** Aulavik is a first-rate Arctic paddling destination. Canoeing the Thomsen River is considered a “must do” trip for canoeists and kayakers from around the world.

**Objective 2:** Visitor opportunities beyond paddling appeal to new park audiences of hikers, citizen scientists and cruise ship passengers.

**Objective 3:** Sachs Harbour benefits from Aulavik as a draw for visitors to Canada’s western Arctic.

**Objective 4:** Sachs Harbour is a destination for a Banks Island experience that includes ‘discovering’ Aulavik.



Surveying in Aulavik. (Photo: Barb Brittain/PCA)  
Right: Fishing for a meal. (Photo: Lindsay Cary/PCA)

### 5.2 STRATEGY 2– KEEPING AULAVIK HEALTHY AND ENDURING

“Maintenance or restoration of ecological integrity, through the protection of natural resources and natural processes, shall be the first priority of the Minister when considering all aspects of the management of parks” (*Canada National Parks Act*).

This strategy focuses on maintaining a credible and affordable ecological integrity and cultural resource monitoring program, recognizing the logistical challenges and costs associated with undertaking this work in such a large and remote park. Keeping Aulavik healthy and enduring would seem simple given its Arctic wilderness setting. Yet Aulavik is a fragile landscape susceptible to activities originating from both within and beyond the park’s boundaries that can affect ecological integrity. Monitoring the ecological health and cultural resources of Aulavik is therefore a much needed part of park management and decision-making.

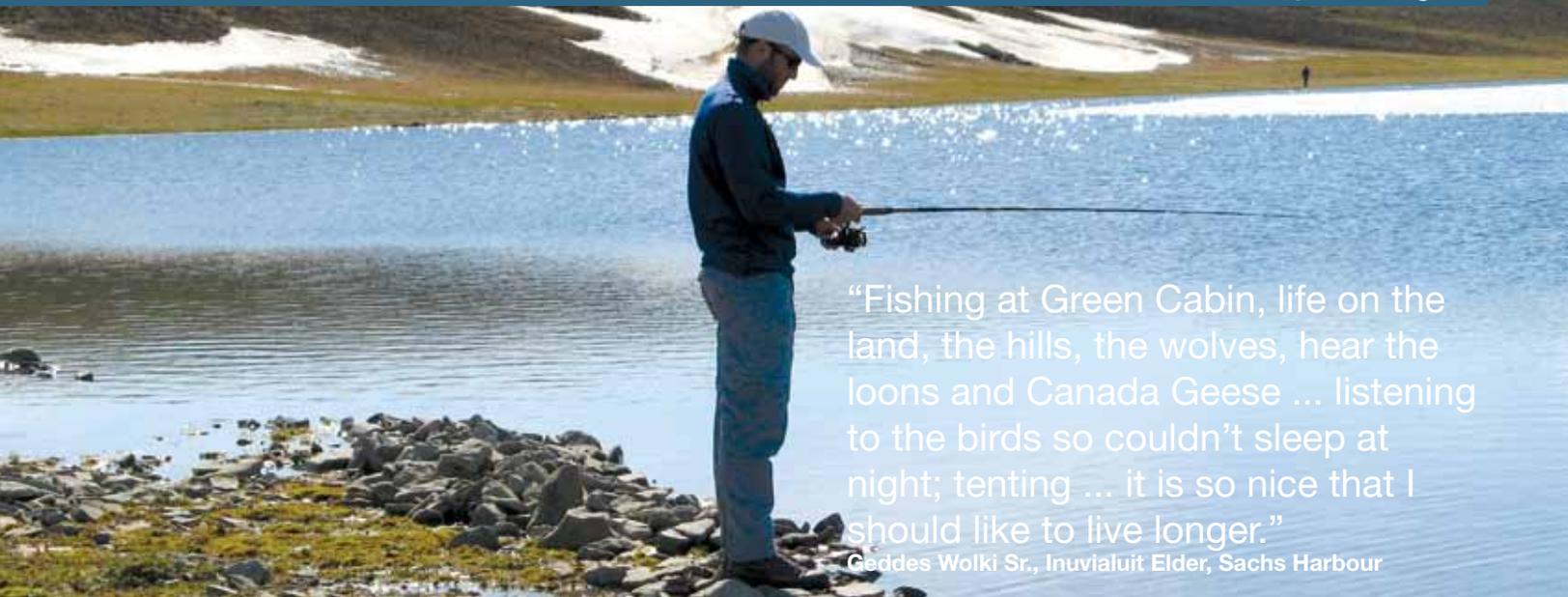
A credible and affordable monitoring program involves Inuvialuit traditional and local knowledge used in conjunction with research done by Parks Canada and third party partners, including other federal, territorial and Inuvialuit agencies. Partnering allows organizations with similar monitoring and research objectives to share the high costs and logistical challenges of working in the Arctic. This pooling of resources means more can be done. The parties benefit both in terms of the quality of the data and the access that partnering provides to specialist understanding and knowledge within communities and other agencies.

### THE APPROACH TO SCIENCE IN AULAVIK

- Design robust monitoring programs.
- Build partnerships with universities, other agencies and Inuvialuit partners.
- Integrate science, with Aboriginal traditional and local knowledge for co-operative management.

Active management to ensure the survival of specific habitats and /or particular species is presently not a component of Aulavik’s management as the park’s ecosystems are essentially self-sustaining. Nonetheless, there are specific national park regulatory requirements by which Parks Canada manages Aulavik to ensure sustainable populations of wildlife.

Documenting and managing Aulavik as a cultural landscape is also an element of this strategy. The cultural heritage of Aulavik is comprised of archaeological sites and features, and also the contemporary Inuvialuit use of the park. Presenting



“Fishing at Green Cabin, life on the land, the hills, the wolves, hear the loons and Canada Geese ... listening to the birds so couldn’t sleep at night; tenting ... it is so nice that I should like to live longer.”

Geddes Wolki Sr., Inuvialuit Elder, Sachs Harbour

Aulavik as a cultural landscape is key to advancing public appreciation and understanding of the park, and to protecting continued Inuvialuit cultural values associated with the park.

HMS *Investigator* is located outside the park boundary and not under Parks Canada jurisdiction. Authority for the protection of HMS *Investigator* lies with the Government of the Northwest Territories. Parks Canada will work with those in authority to help protect the shipwreck site and present its story. The land site component of the shipwreck is part of Aulavik and will be protected following the park’s cultural resource management strategy.

The Keeping Aulavik Healthy and Enduring strategy has four objectives. The targets and actions for these objectives are detailed in Chapter 9.

**Objective 1:** The health and endurance of Aulavik is based on information from credible and affordable ecological monitoring, and traditional and local knowledge.

**Objective 2:** The Aulavik ecological integrity monitoring program establishes a benchmark recognized by Arctic researchers and other federal and territorial government departments, drawing them to Aulavik and Banks Island as a place to do their research and monitoring, resulting in a richer scientific foundation for understanding the park’s ecological condition.

**Objective 3:** Wild animal and fish populations are protected through park management.

**Objective 4:** Aulavik is valued for its cultural and natural heritage.

### 5.3 STRATEGY 3—ENGAGING INUVIALUIT SETTLEMENT REGION COMMUNITIES

A significant number of people in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region are not aware of Aulavik, its national significance and the role it plays toward achieving the goals of the *Inuvialuit Final Agreement*:

- To preserve Inuvialuit cultural identity and values within a changing northern society;
- To protect and preserve the Arctic wildlife, environment and biological diversity; and
- To enable Inuvialuit to be equal and meaningful participants in the northern and national economy and society.

This strategy intensifies Parks Canada’s work in building awareness in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region of Aulavik as a place of importance to Inuvialuit. Opportunities will be sought to increase visits to the park for youth throughout the region, further engage youth in programs in their schools and communities, increase involvement of Inuvialuit in park management activities and research, and increase overall awareness and support for the park in the region.

The Engaging Inuvialuit Settlement Region Communities strategy has three objectives. The targets and actions for these objectives are detailed in Chapter 9.

**Objective 1:** People from across the Inuvialuit Settlement Region have a meaningful connection with Aulavik.

**Objective 2:** Inuvialuit are equal and meaningful participants in the management of Aulavik and in the protection and preservation of its wildlife, environment and biological productivity.

## 5.0 Key Strategies



Archeologists at Mercy Bay. (Photo: John Lucas/PCA)  
Right: "Sledge Party leaving HMS *Investigator*  
at Mercy Bay", S. Gurney Cresswell,  
courtesy of Toronto Public Library.



**Objective 3:** Aulavik plays an important role in preserving Inuvialuit cultural identity and values within a changing northern society.

### 5.4 STRATEGY 4—BRINGING CANADIANS CLOSER TO CANADA'S NORTHERN HERITAGE

Parks Canada aims to increase Canadian understanding, appreciation, support and engagement with respect to the natural and cultural heritage of national parks. Reaching Canadians at home, at school and in their communities through relevant and effective communication and public outreach education initiatives accomplishes this. Because very few Canadians have the means and opportunity to visit Aulavik, this aim of Parks Canada is also a major facet of the park vision and this management plan.

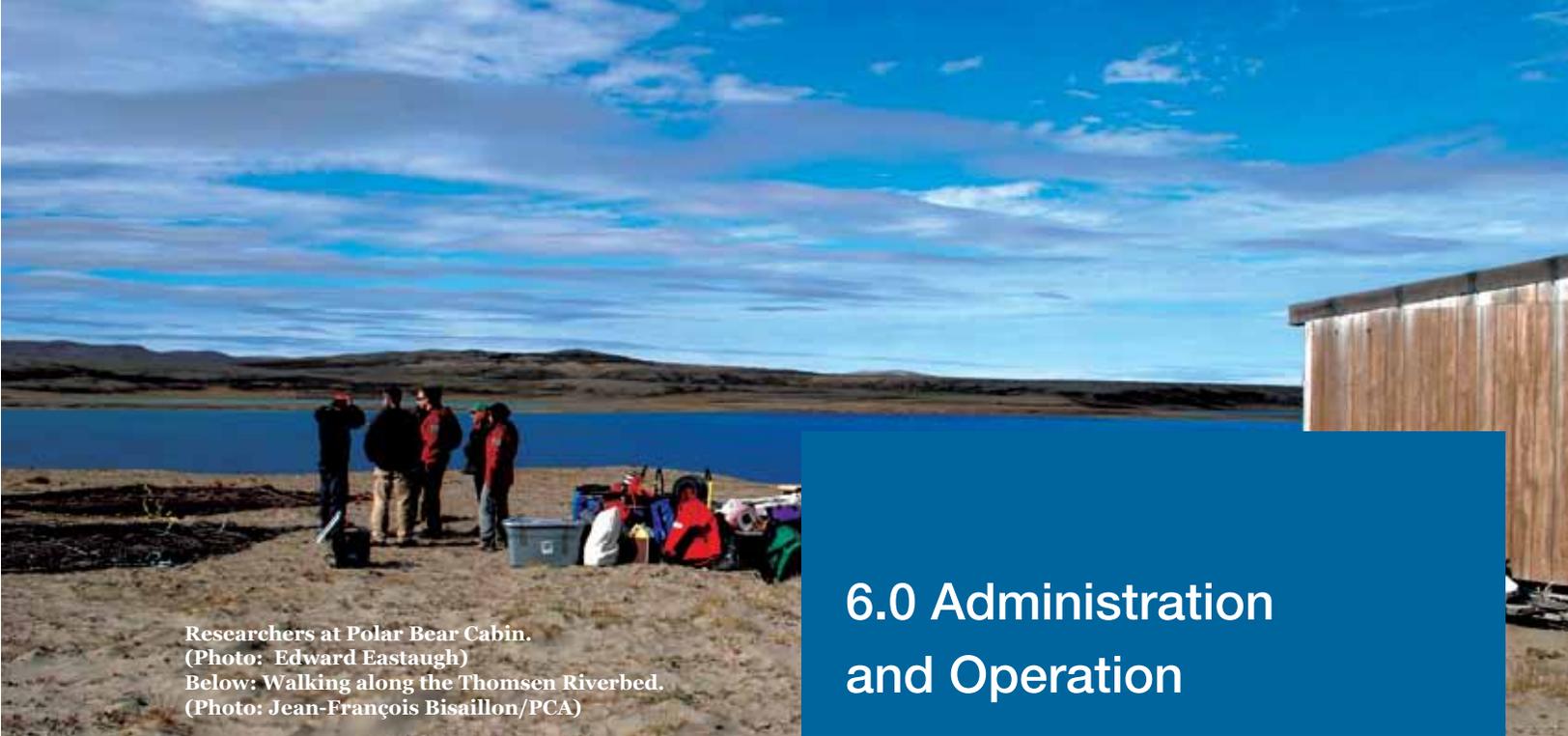
Media and public interest in the discovery of HMS *Investigator*, the ongoing fascination with the North, interest and concern about climate change and the Arctic environment, and Canadians' perceptions of themselves as a northern nation, all contribute to a high potential to significantly increase public awareness and understanding of Aulavik. The focus of this strategy is to build on this potential.

Implementation of this strategy supports the park establishment agreement to promote public awareness, appreciation and understanding of all aspects of the land within and adjacent to Aulavik, its past and present use, and in particular Inuvialuit cultural heritage.

The Bringing Canadians Closer to Canada's Northern Heritage strategy has two objectives. The targets and actions for these objectives are detailed in Chapter 9.

**Objective 1:** Canadians at home, at school and visiting southern Canadian attractions are aware of, understand, and appreciate the natural and cultural heritage of Aulavik and the unique co-operative management relationship between Parks Canada and Inuvialuit.

**Objective 2:** Through information about Aulavik, Canadians are more aware of the expanse and diversity of Canada's Arctic and Parks Canada's involvement in the Arctic.



Researchers at Polar Bear Cabin.  
(Photo: Edward Eastaugh)  
Below: Walking along the Thomsen Riverbed.  
(Photo: Jean-François Bisaillon/PCA)

## 6.0 Administration and Operation

### 6.1 BANKS ISLAND MIGRATORY BIRD SANCTUARY NUMBER 2

Banks Island Migratory Bird Sanctuary Number 2 comprises the Thomsen River valley north of latitude 73° 36' North and all of Castel Bay south of the northerly extremity of Mahogany Point (Environment Canada 1992). It was established to protect the moulting habitat of Lesser Snow Geese, and provides habitat for other waterfowl and migratory birds. With the establishment of Aulavik in 1992, this sanctuary became part of the national park. Both Parks Canada and the Canadian Wildlife Service have responsibilities for the sanctuary under the *Canada National Parks Act*, the *Migratory Birds Convention Act (1994)* and their respective regulations.

The vision, strategies and objectives of this management plan complement the purpose and management objectives of the bird sanctuary, which are:

- To manage and conserve migratory bird populations and their natural habitats in a manner consistent with the *Migratory Birds Convention Act* and the *Migratory Bird Sanctuary Regulations*;
- To manage the sanctuary according to sound ecological principles; and
- To encourage public awareness of and appreciation for the natural environment of the sanctuary (Environment Canada 1992).

Some responsibilities of Parks Canada and the Canadian Wildlife Service relating to the sanctuary require coordination including, for example, reviewing and granting permits for research and aircraft access in



## 6.0 Administration and Operation



Left: Sachs Harbour elder, Lena Wolki at Green Cabin. (Photo: Lindsay Cary/PCA)  
Right: Green Cabin in July. (Photo: Pierre Marchand/PCA)

the sanctuary area, and permitting and monitoring recreational activities for potential impacts on bird habitat. Actions to synchronize coordination of activities under the two regulated mandates are in Chapter 9.

### 6.2 GREEN CABIN

The Geological Survey of Canada built Green Cabin in the 1950s. Ownership of the cabin was transferred to the Sachs Harbour Hunters and Trappers Committee in 1981. A fuel cache and landing area are nearby. The cabin is used by Inuvialuit hunters and trappers as an emergency shelter, and by Parks Canada and researchers as a base camp for operational activities in the south end of the park. Elsewhere in the plan, it is proposed that Parks Canada, in consultation with and the support of the Sachs Harbour Hunters and Trappers Committee, improve Green Cabin to continue its use as a base camp for park operations, third party research and youth camps; an emergency shelter; and possibly for the storage of canoes/kayaks. Any improvements to Green Cabin will be kept simple and practical to meet these identified uses. Tents will continue to be used as sleeping accommodation. Chapter 9 provides additional actions regarding management, operation and use of this cabin.

### 6.3 POLAR BEAR CABIN

The Government of the Northwest Territories built Polar Bear Cabin, at Nangmagvik Lake, in 1987 as a base camp for wildlife research. A landing area and weather station are nearby. Polar Bear Cabin serves similar purposes as Green Cabin, but for the north end of the park. Chapter 9 includes actions for the management, operation and use of this cabin.

### 6.4 ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

This section identifies the measures Parks Canada is taking to meet federal environmental laws, regulations and policies, and to adopt sound environmental practices for Aulavik. While Parks Canada provides leadership in environmental stewardship for Aulavik, effective action requires support from stakeholders, partners and visitors. Chapter 9 identifies Parks Canada actions that support environmental stewardship in Aulavik.





Left: Woolly Lousewort and Muskox Vertebrae. (Photo: Barb Brittain/PCA)

Zone I is used for specific areas or features that contain or support unique, threatened or endangered natural or cultural features, or are among the best examples of the features that represent a natural region. Preservation is the key consideration. Motorized access and circulation are not permitted. No Zone I areas are proposed for Aulavik on the basis that adequate protection and management of natural and cultural resources are in place through Zone II designation of the park, and because of the park's remoteness and limited visitation.

The 2002 management plan introduced Zone III (Natural Environment) as a possible consideration for Aulavik. Zone III areas are managed as natural environments and provide opportunities for visitors to experience a park's natural and cultural heritage values through outdoor recreation activities requiring minimal services and facilities of a rustic nature. Motorized access, where allowed, is controlled. Zone III could be used in Aulavik in designated areas for commercially guided over-snow vehicle tours. To date, there has been no expression of interest to provide such tours in the park. Parks Canada has agreed Zone III could be used to designate areas for commercially guided over-snow vehicle tours provided by Inuvialuit beneficiaries. Any rezoning would involve an amendment to the management plan, an environmental assessment, public notice and consultation. Such an amendment must be approved by the Minister and tabled in Parliament.

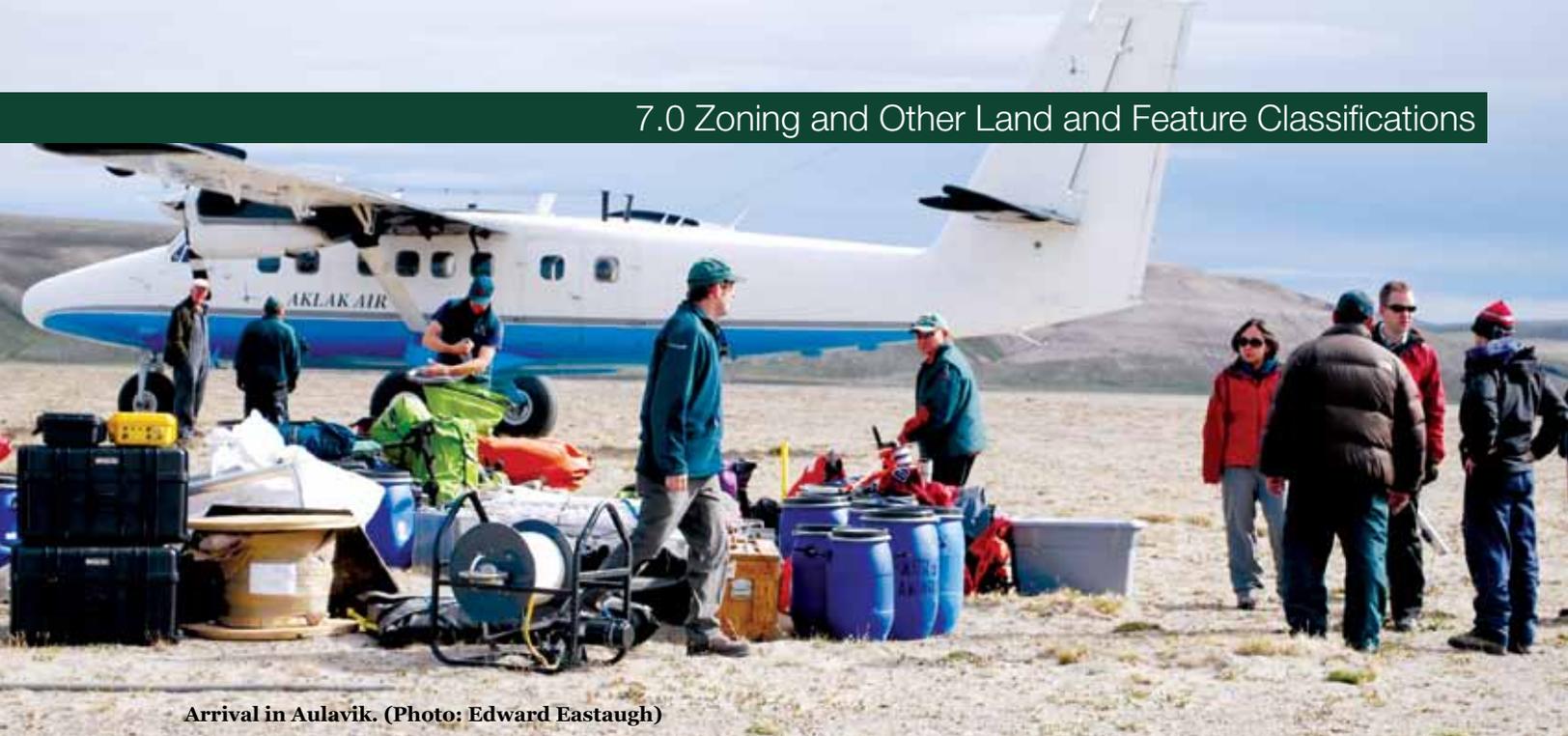
### 7.2 ENVIRONMENTALLY AND CULTURALLY SENSITIVE SITES

Parks Canada's policy provides for the designation of environmentally and culturally sensitive sites to complement the zoning system. This designation applies to small areas that contain significant and sensitive resources that require special protection or management without completely restricting other park uses in the vicinity.

The 2002 management plan did not identify environmentally sensitive sites in Aulavik. The 2002 management plan did identify three culturally sensitive sites: Head Hill, Nasogaluak and HMS *Investigator* land sites. These archaeological sites are not at risk. They are managed and monitored like other sites in the park. Over the next five to ten years, a cultural resource management strategy, that will consider all known sites and their management needs, will be developed for Aulavik (see Objective 2.3, Action 2). It is through this process that Parks Canada and Inuvialuit partners will determine whether specific sites should be designated as culturally sensitive.

### 7.3 DESIGNATED LANDING AREAS

A designated landing area is a location where, under a valid permit issued by the park superintendent, an aircraft (fixed or rotary wing) may land in the park. Aircraft access into and out of Aulavik is regulated by the *National Parks of Canada Aircraft Access Regulations*. The regulations designate six landing and take-off areas for Aulavik: Nangmagvik Lake, Thomsen River, Thomsen River at Castel Bay, near the confluence of the Thomsen and Muskox rivers,



Arrival in Aulavik. (Photo: Edward Eastaugh)

Thomsen River 10 kilometres south of Castel Bay, and Thomsen River near the park's south boundary. These landing areas provide air access for park operations, research projects, visitor access, and emergency responses. In the case of fixed-wing aircraft, a designated landing area allows access for short take-off and landing aircraft equipped with "tundra" tires.

To date, no major improvements have been made to landing areas. Tire rutting from landing and take offs has occurred at a few of the sites. With aircraft being the primary and most practical means of getting into and out of Aulavik, landing areas will be managed to ensure this type of access continues.

Floatplane access will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. The designation of a permanent floatplane-landing site will be assessed if needed, based on, but not limited to, level of demand, and impacts to: aquatic and fishery health; the natural and cultural resources of the park; the safety, health and enjoyment of visitors; Inuvialuit subsistence use, and the Migratory Bird Sanctuary #2.

Fuel storage is permitted at designated fuel cache sites at Green and Polar Bear cabins to support park management programs, and Parks Canada and partner field operations. Temporary fuel storage at non-designated fuel cache sites will be considered by the Field Unit Superintendent on a case-by-case basis. All fuel caching in Aulavik is subject to the Fuel Caching Protocol for National Parks in the Western Arctic (2008).

All flights over the park should adhere to Transport Canada requirements and guidelines of the Environmental Impact Screening Committee.

### 7.4 DECLARED WILDERNESS

The *Canada National Parks Act* provides for the designation, by regulation, of wilderness areas of a national park. Such a designation means that development and uses inconsistent with the wilderness character of a park will not occur. Boundaries of a declared wilderness area are defined in regulation and can be changed only through amending regulation by Order in Council. It is intended that the declared wilderness area boundaries will be consistent with Zone II boundaries.

Because a condition of Aulavik's establishment stipulates that the park shall contain a predominant proportion of Zone I – Special Preservation and Zone II – Wilderness, legislating declared wilderness in Aulavik is not necessary (Parks Canada 2000).



## 8.0 Tracking Success: Monitoring and Reporting on the State of the Park

Investigators at Gyr Falcon Bluff. (Photo: John Lucas/PCA)  
Purple Saxifrage. (Photo: Craig Brigley/PCA)



Every five years, Parks Canada completes an assessment of each national park, called a “state of the park report”. Aulavik’s first state of the park report was completed in 2010. The report provides a point in time rating of the park’s condition in terms of its ecological integrity and cultural resources protection, people’s connection to the park, and Canadians’ awareness of its purpose and significance. It also documents the state of park management and the issues and challenges to be considered for the next management plan review.

The information in a state of the park report is the best available description of the current state and trends of various aspects and activities of the park. The information comes primarily from monitoring and research undertaken by Parks Canada, other government agencies, partner organizations and universities.

Many of the measures to evaluate the state of Aulavik are in the early stages of implementation. Consequently, some ratings for ecological health and connection to place could not be made in 2010. The ecological integrity monitoring plan for Aulavik will have measures and thresholds for Aulavik’s next state of the park report, including monitoring and measuring requirements developed through this management planning process.



Sachs Harbour Management Plan Consultation, June 2011. (Photo: John Lucas/PCA)  
Below: Paddling in Aulavik. (Photo: Gerry Kisoun/PCA)

## 9.0 Management Plan Implementation with Targets and Actions

The management plan provides long-term strategic direction and more immediate actions for Parks Canada managers and cooperative management partners. It is a framework for more detailed planning and decision-making, and a strategic reference for capital expenditure forecasts and future management and operations.

Implementation of the management plan is the responsibility of the Western Arctic Field Unit Superintendent. Implementation will be through the Western Arctic Field Unit business plan. While the majority of the targets (and their corresponding actions) are for the first five-year period of this fifteen year management plan, not all actions will necessarily be undertaken or completed within the first five-years period as they are subject to factors such as the involvement of partners, availability of expertise, weather conditions during the operational season, amongst others. Any changes to the five-year plan implementation will be captured by the annual review and updating of the business plan. Implementation of the strategies and actions may be reconsidered in response to new circumstances or information, or changing national priorities and decisions.

Communication on management plan implementation will be through annual reporting and the next Aulavik state of the park report. The management plan will be subject to review at least every five years and can be amended to reflect changing circumstances. The public will be consulted about proposed major changes.

The targets and actions for the key strategies and objectives of this management plan follow.

### KEY STRATEGY 1: MAINTAINING AND ENHANCING VISITOR OPPORTUNITIES FOR AULAVIK, SACHS HARBOUR AND BANKS ISLAND

**Objective 1.1: Aulavik is a first-rate Arctic paddling destination. Canoeing the Thomsen River is considered a “must do” trip for canoeists and kayakers from around the world.**

**Targets/Measures:**

- Travel media coverage of Aulavik as a paddling destination increases within five years.
- The average number and size of paddling trip parties or paddling trip participants within the next five years increases over the average of the previous five years.

**Actions:**

1. Complete the Thomsen River visitors' guide.
2. Market Aulavik as a premier Arctic destination for canoeing and kayaking through a variety of channels (for example, widely distribute the Thomsen River guide to outfitters working in the region and to targeted audiences such as Paddle Canada; co-promote with other northern national parks that offer paddling experiences).
3. Identify and market the best periods to paddle the Thomsen River, based on water levels, and optimum times for viewing wildlife and flowering plants. Use these best windows to help coordinate the cost-share of paddlers' trips in and out of Aulavik.
4. Explore and, where practical, implement ways for visitors to reduce their costs of travelling into and out of Aulavik (for example, through assisting visitors in finding cost-share opportunities for aircraft charters).
5. Accommodate storage of licensed outfitters' canoes at Green Cabin or other suitable location, to allow space on aircrafts for more passengers (including larger size canoe groups) than currently possible and help reduce per person trip costs.
6. Add visitor impact assessments to main camping locations and landing areas as part of the Thomsen River monitoring that assesses visitor impacts on ecological integrity, the migratory bird sanctuary, cultural resources and other visitors' experiences.
7. Should annual visitation increase significantly during the five-year plan implementation, determine and implement protocol for the number and separation of paddlers on the Thomsen River, taking into consideration the maintenance of ecological integrity, the migratory bird sanctuary, and park qualities of remoteness and wilderness that park visitors expect.

**Objective 1.2: Visitor opportunities beyond paddling appeal to new park audiences of hikers, citizen scientists and cruise ship passengers.**

**Targets/Measures:**

- Pursuit of other activities besides paddling increases during the five-year period of the plan.
- Cruise ship passengers respond positively to on-board interpretive products.

**Actions:**

1. Market Aulavik as a premier Arctic destination for hiking through a variety of channels. This would include identifying and interpreting best places for bird watching, wildlife viewing, visiting archaeological, palaeontological and geological sites, and the unique landscapes that are within and beyond the Thomsen River valley.
2. In consultation with the Sachs Harbour Hunters and Trappers Committee, explore the need for emergency shelters and landing areas along the Thomsen River corridor.
3. Pursue new opportunities for park visits through an emerging Northwest Passage cruise ship tour industry.
4. Facilitate 3rd party interpretation of Aulavik on board cruise ships in the western Arctic, including, developing interpretive products for use on cruise ships. Interpretation can include the national commemorations of Sir William Parry and Parry's Rock Wintering Site on Melville Island, and the story of HMS *Investigator*.
5. Develop guidelines with cruise ship operators that intend to land passengers in Aulavik to address protection of the park's natural, cultural and paleontological resources, visitor safety, and provide messages about the park's significance.
6. Facilitate "citizen science" or "volunteer tourism" opportunities for monitoring and research projects in Aulavik led by Parks Canada and third parties, including mechanisms for logistical and financial support of these programs by foundations and academic institutions.

## 9.0 Management Plan Implementation

### KEY STRATEGY 1: MAINTAINING AND ENHANCING VISITOR OPPORTUNITIES FOR AULAVIK, SACHS HARBOUR AND BANKS ISLAND

#### Objective 1.3: Sachs Harbour benefits from Aulavik as a visitor draw to Canada's western Arctic.

##### Targets/Measures:

- More Aulavik visitors purchase or use products and services provided by Sachs Harbour residents.

##### Actions:

1. Promote tourism-related opportunities available in Sachs Harbour to prospective visitors planning their trip into and out of the park.
2. Include traditional arts and crafts from Sachs Harbour in displays at Inuvik's Parks Canada office and at the Sachs Harbour Visitor Centre, and direct interested buyers to Inuvialuit Development Corporation or other local galleries for purchases.
3. Work with cooperative management partners, the territorial government, and other federal agencies to maximize opportunities to develop skills and certifications of Sachs Harbour residents in the offering of services to park visitors.
4. As per the park establishment agreement, encourage the use of Inuvialuit guides licensed to operate within the park. If licensed guides are available in Sachs Harbour, Parks Canada will inform visitors of their availability as part of visitor trip planning.
5. Explore with air charters, outfitters and the community, possible means of reducing costs of a stay-over in Sachs Harbour.

#### Objective 1.4: Sachs Harbour is a destination for Banks Island experiences that include 'discovering' Aulavik.

##### Targets/Measures:

- In surveys, visitors of the region consider Sachs Harbour a destination.
- Visits to the Sachs Harbour Visitor Centre by non-residents increases over the plan's five-year period.

##### Actions:

1. Work with the community, the territorial government and private sector operators to profile and market Aulavik in combination with other tourism opportunities on Banks Island and at Sachs Harbour, including quality tourism services and products that are heritage-based, non-consumptive and based out of Sachs Harbour.
2. Make the Sachs Harbour Visitor Centre a must stop location for "discovering" Aulavik and other opportunities to experience and learn about Banks Island (including, for example, the recent discovery and story of HMS *Investigator*).
3. With partners, develop an Aulavik interpretive display at the Sachs Harbour airport for passengers on the way to the park or elsewhere in the region.

**KEY STRATEGY 2: KEEPING AULAVIK HEALTHY AND ENDURING****Objective 2.1: The health and endurance of Aulavik is based on information from credible and affordable ecological monitoring, and traditional knowledge.****Targets/Measures:**

- By 2016, a monitoring program is fully implemented for the park ecological indicators of tundra and freshwater, and their corresponding measures. Preliminary condition assessments for all indicators are reported in the next state of the park report.
- By 2016, ecological integrity reporting for Aulavik incorporates traditional and local knowledge from the Sachs Harbour community and cooperative management bodies.

**Actions:**

1. Continue field testing, implementing, and developing protocols for ecological integrity indicators for tundra and freshwater measures, including developing thresholds for ecological integrity in collaboration with the community and co-operative management partners.
2. Build on existing partnerships with other federal, territorial and Inuvialuit agencies that contribute to ecological monitoring for Aulavik. For example, continue to work with the Government of the Northwest Territories and others in the monitoring of Peary caribou and muskox, and with the Canadian Wildlife Service on bird surveys.
3. Support third party monitoring or research that advances the park's ecological integrity monitoring program and park management objectives.
4. Work with the community of Sachs Harbour and relevant co-operative management bodies to ensure that traditional and local knowledge is integrated fully into the ecological integrity monitoring program providing information that benefits both the park and the community.

**Objective 2.2: The Aulavik ecological integrity monitoring program establishes a benchmark recognized by Arctic researchers and other federal and territorial government departments, drawing them to Aulavik and Banks Island as a place to do their research and monitoring, resulting in a richer scientific foundation for understanding the park's ecological condition.****Targets/Measures:**

- The number of third party research projects and/or scientific reports that contribute to an understanding of the park increases in the five-year period of the plan.

**Actions:**

1. Work with other federal and territorial government departments (for example, Aurora Research Institute, Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Canadian Wildlife Service and GNWT Environment and Natural Resources) to create a catalogue for all ecological integrity monitoring reports and data in Aulavik. This will facilitate information sharing, enhancing the park's ecological integrity monitoring program and third party research opportunities.
2. Explore opportunities to promote research in and public learning about the park through speaker series, magazines and newspapers that profile Aulavik's ecological integrity monitoring work.
3. Explore opportunities to link archaeological information in the park to better understand the ecology of the park (for example, interpretation of historical caribou and muskox harvests and population cycles).

### KEY STRATEGY 2: KEEPING AULAVIK HEALTHY AND ENDURING

#### Objective 2.3: Wild animal and fish populations are protected through park management.

##### Targets/Measures:

- A recovery strategy for Peary caribou is completed as required under the *Species at Risk Act*.

##### Actions:

1. Work closely with co-operative management partners in assisting Environment Canada with the Peary caribou recovery strategy. Environment Canada will take lead in the developing a recovery strategy as per the *Species Risk Act*.
2. Continue to work with cooperative management partners and land administration bodies to ensure wildlife populations, including fish, and their habitat are healthy and secure.

#### Objective 2.4: Aulavik is valued for its cultural and natural heritage.

##### Targets/Measures:

- Within the five-year period of the plan, priority-archaeological site condition assessments are completed and mitigation plans developed, as required.

##### Actions:

1. Carry out site condition assessments for priority and threatened archaeological sites (for example, frequently visited sites along the Thomsen River Valley, areas of permafrost degradation, north coast erosion).
2. Develop and implement a cultural resource management strategy for the park. Any culturally sensitive sites will be identified as part of the strategy, if specific management requirements are needed for these sites.
3. Develop and carry out a monitoring program for sites that may be vulnerable.
4. Fully involve community members and co-operative management partners in cultural resource management decisions.
5. Involve community members in recording present-day Inuvialuit use of the park as part of the cultural resource inventory of the park.
6. Pursue opportunities to continue profiling the research related to HMS *Investigator*, including the land-based archaeological sites in Aulavik, the link between the shipwreck and Inuvialuit, and the national historic site at Parry's Rock on Melville Island.

**KEY STRATEGY 3: ENGAGING INUVIALUIT SETTLEMENT REGION COMMUNITIES****Objective 3.1: People from across the Inuvialuit Settlement Region have a meaningful connection with Aulavik.****Targets/Measures:**

- All available places on youth camps will be filled within the five years of the plan.
- Public attendance at Aulavik-related events held in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region will increase over the five-year period of the plan.

**Actions:**

1. Plan and implement school exchange youth camp programs to give students from across the Inuvialuit Settlement Region a chance to experience Aulavik personally.
2. Produce educational media for Inuvialuit Settlement Region residents, in order to improve awareness and understanding of Aulavik and its connections to Banks and Victoria islands.
3. Explore with partners how to make Aulavik a part of local community events (for example, jamborees, National Aboriginal Day).
4. Explore with the Sachs Harbour Hunters and Trappers Committee ways and means to reconfigure Green Cabin facilities for youth camps.
5. Work to hold a camp every other year based out of Green Cabin that includes youth from Sachs Harbour and other communities of the Inuvialuit Settlement Region.
6. Pursue partnering with Sachs Harbour to share summer youth camps near the community with other communities every other year.
7. Develop with the guidance and involvement of Elders from Sachs Harbour and Ulukhaktok, edu-kits for schools and youth camps that include ecological integrity monitoring and cultural resource management work.
8. Continue to offer the environmental stewardship course for grade four students in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region.
9. Provide information on Aulavik to the Inuvik public library.

**Objective 3.2: Inuvialuit are equal and meaningful participants in the management of Aulavik and in the protection and preservation of its wildlife, environment and biological productivity.****Targets/Measures:**

- In agreement with Inuvialuit cooperative management bodies and Sachs Harbour community organizations, a park specific co-operative management process is considered, and if determined desirable, established within the five-year period of the plan.
- Parks Canada employment opportunities for students and youth within the Inuvialuit Settlement Region increase through programs associated with Aulavik.

**Actions:**

In addition to actions listed elsewhere in the plan regarding Inuvialuit participation in park management (for example, Objective 2.1, Action 4; Objective 2.3, Action 4):

1. Explore with the community and co-operative management bodies means to strengthen the cooperative management approach for Aulavik.
2. Continue to regularly inform communities and Inuvialuit agencies in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region about management of Aulavik.
3. Mentor/ train Inuvialuit youth and involve them in park programs.
4. Consult the Sachs Harbour Hunters and Trappers Committee and the Sachs Harbour Community Corporation on information concerning Inuvialuit history or culture on Banks Island prepared by Parks Canada for public distribution and obtain consent of the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation.

### KEY STRATEGY 3: ENGAGING INUVIALUIT SETTLEMENT REGION COMMUNITIES

#### **Objective 3.3: Aulavik plays an important role in preserving Inuvialuit cultural identity and values within a changing northern society.**

##### **Targets/Measures:**

- to be developed.

##### **Actions:**

1. Continue to support and promote the passing of traditional knowledge between generations by providing Parks Canada facilities and staff time for classes and demonstrations.
2. Maximize opportunities for community involvement in cultural resource management work.
3. Build on the success of previous youth camps linking young people to Aulavik and their heritage with the involvement of Elders as a core component for such camps.
4. Continue to protect, research, and present culturally significant sites and resources within Aulavik, with a stronger effort to communicate work to the Inuvialuit Settlement Region.
5. Use Inuvialuktun place names and Inuvialuit cultural history in developing visitor experience products (for example, guidebooks) and in public outreach education media (for example, website).
6. Explore with the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation (Inuvialuit Cultural Resource Centre) the possibility of developing oral history records from the park establishment for a public audience.
7. Work with territorial curriculum to incorporate Aulavik into school programs.

**KEY STRATEGY 4: BRINGING CANADIANS CLOSER TO CANADA'S NORTHERN HERITAGE**

**Objective 4.1: Canadians at home, at school and at southern Canadian attractions are aware of, understand, and appreciate the natural and cultural heritage of Aulavik and the unique co-operative management relationship between Parks Canada and Inuvialuit.**

**Targets/Measures:**

- Inquiries regarding Aulavik, the 'Parks Canada in the Schools Program,' the island's natural environment and Inuvialuit cultural history to the field unit increase.
- The number of visitors to the Aulavik website increases.
- The number of southern Canadian venues where Aulavik is profiled increases.

**Actions:**

1. Develop and introduce an interpretation strategy (thematic framework) for Aulavik to be used for site interpretation and public education outreach.
2. Develop products about the natural, cultural and palaeontological heritage of Aulavik, and about its co-operative management for the broader Canadian audience.
3. Enhance the Aulavik website to be a dynamic medium through which the park's sense of place and its natural and cultural heritage are communicated to Canadians.
4. Pursue web links with other on-line sources and partners.
5. Pro-actively pursue opportunities with relevant media and other communication venues to profile the park's heritage sites and history, and how they can be experienced.
6. Work with museums, aquariums, and science centres on presentations (for example, speaker's series) and exhibits relating to Aulavik.
7. Work with Government of the Northwest Territories and land claim bodies to profile Aulavik and other northern national parks and national historic sites in airports across the territory.
8. Explore opportunities to highlight Aulavik at other national parks and national historic sites.
9. Explore opportunities to have schools and students use park research and monitoring in their programs and studies, thereby learning about and contributing to the park's natural and cultural heritage and their management.

**Objective 4.2: Through information about Aulavik, Canadians are more aware of the expanse and diversity of Canada's Arctic and Parks Canada's involvement in the Arctic.**

**Targets/Measures:**

- Canadians' awareness about Parks Canada's involvement in Canada's Arctic increases over the five-year period of the plan.

**Actions:**

1. Interpret Aulavik in its larger Canadian Arctic, circumpolar, and national sovereignty context.
2. Communicate Aulavik's role in broader government objectives of contributing to Canada's northern strategy.
3. Communicate information on Aulavik in the broader context of Parks Canada initiatives in the North.

## 9.0 Management Plan Implementation

### ADMINISTRATION AND OPERATION

#### Actions:

##### **Migratory Bird Sanctuary #2**

1. Establish a new memorandum of understanding between Parks Canada and Canadian Wildlife Service, to replace the 1992 memorandum regarding the Banks Island Migratory Bird Sanctuary Number 2. The new memorandum will outline in specific terms the parameters that will guide co-operative management of the bird sanctuary.
2. Assist the Canadian Wildlife Service in its preparation of a management plan for the migratory bird sanctuary.

##### **Green Cabin**

3. Explore with Sachs Harbour Hunters and Trappers Committee opportunities to enhance facilities at Green Cabin to support the park's ecological integrity monitoring work, third party research, secondary school and university-level science camps, 'citizen science' projects, and visitor experience objectives.
4. Work with the Sachs Harbour Hunters and Trappers Committee on establishing guidelines for the use and management of Green Cabin as part of the site's reconfiguration.
5. Work with the community of Sachs Harbour to provide Green Cabin a new, Inuvialuit place name.

##### **Landing and Take-Off Areas**

6. Continue to work with air charter companies to ensure air travel into and from the park reflects the high standards of care consistent with the national park setting, the migratory bird sanctuary, and Inuvialuit recommendations regarding flight altitude.
7. Anticipate implications related to wear and tear and changing climate conditions at identified landing and take-off areas to ensure that air access to the park continues.

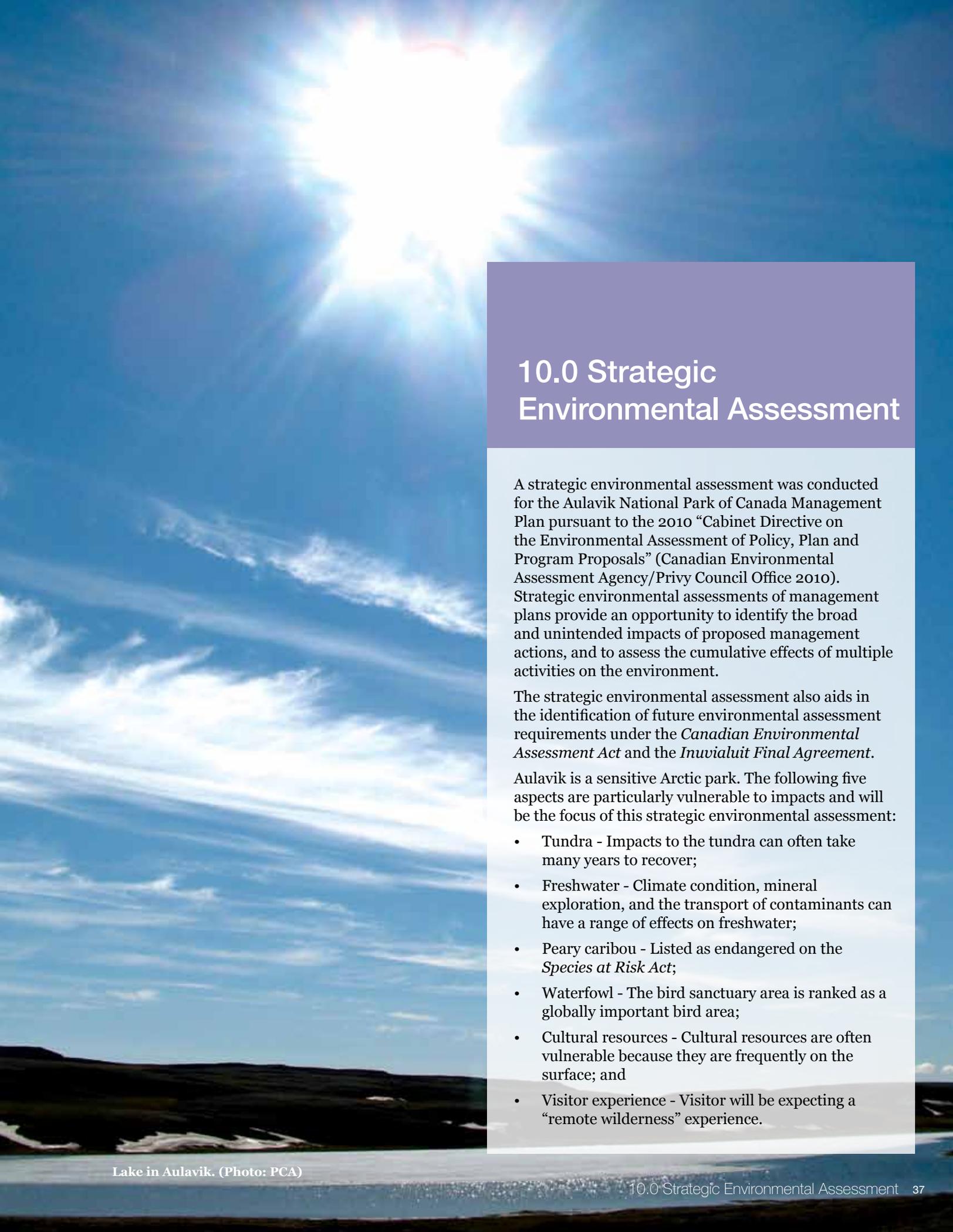
##### **Polar Bear Cabin**

8. Work with the Government of the Northwest Territories to develop guidelines for the use and management of Polar Bear Cabin.

### ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

#### Actions:

1. Implement an environmental management system for Aulavik.
2. Continue assessments of sites for potential contaminants as part of the Federal Contaminated Sites Action Plan Program.
3. Continue working with partners to ensure the complete application of the approved fuel cache protocol for Aulavik.
4. Update and implement the human waste and garbage management protocol as part of the "leave no trace" park use program.



## 10.0 Strategic Environmental Assessment

A strategic environmental assessment was conducted for the Aulavik National Park of Canada Management Plan pursuant to the 2010 “Cabinet Directive on the Environmental Assessment of Policy, Plan and Program Proposals” (Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency/Privy Council Office 2010). Strategic environmental assessments 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 strategic environmental assessment also aids in the identification of future environmental assessment requirements under the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act* and the *Inuvialuit Final Agreement*.

Aulavik is a sensitive Arctic park. The following five aspects are particularly vulnerable to impacts and will be the focus of this strategic environmental assessment:

- Tundra - Impacts to the tundra can often take many years to recover;
- Freshwater - Climate condition, mineral exploration, and the transport of contaminants can have a range of effects on freshwater;
- Peary caribou - Listed as endangered on the *Species at Risk Act*;
- Waterfowl - The bird sanctuary area is ranked as a globally important bird area;
- Cultural resources - Cultural resources are often vulnerable because they are frequently on the surface; and
- Visitor experience - Visitor will be expecting a “remote wilderness” experience.



Ice on Mercy Bay.  
(Photo: John Lucas/PCA)

While other aspects of the ecosystems and park are sensitive, the evaluation of cumulative effects will focus on tundra, freshwater, Peary caribou, waterfowl, cultural resources and visitor experience.

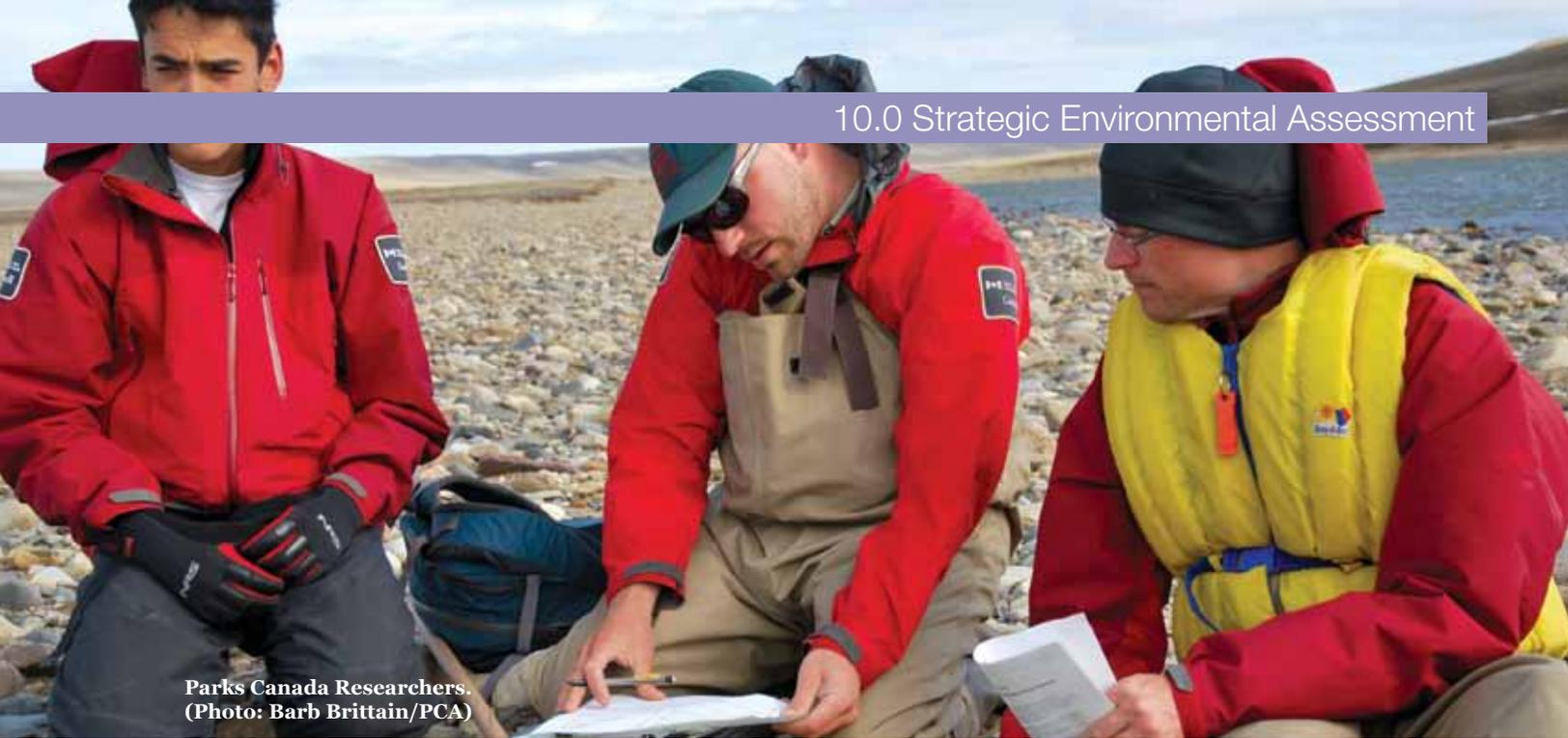
Each of the actions in the plan was evaluated to determine if it might have adverse or positive environmental effects. Many actions are not expected to cause adverse environmental effects. Other actions are expected to have positive environmental effects including: greater knowledge of ecosystems through monitoring and research activities; expanded visitor opportunities; increased co-operative management with the Inuvialuit; implementation of the environmental management system; continued contaminated site assessment and fuel protocol implementation, and greater connections with local communities and the broader Canadian public.

The plan outlines two types of actions that could cause impacts on tundra, freshwater, Peary caribou, waterfowl, cultural resources and visitor experience. First, increased number of people visiting the park (researchers, visitors, youth, etc.) could impact the vegetation and cultural resources on the ground and wildlife or birds as a result of increased aircraft traffic. Increased visitation could also diminish the wilderness experience of visitors. Second, potential improvements in some facilities could impact tundra and cultural resources. Around the park, mineral exploration is ongoing which could add to disturbance to wildlife and birds from land or air and impact the freshwater ecosystem.

Due to the small number of people in the park now, cumulative effects are not likely to result from increasing the number of people in the next five years. Similarly, proposed improvements in facilities are

modest and not likely to result in cumulative effects. Impacts from aircraft overflights can be mitigated by following the Environmental Impact Screening Committee guidelines and choosing appropriate flight lines. Regular collaboration with aircraft companies will help to ensure these mitigations are implemented. Precautions have been put in place to ensure potential cumulative effects are identified early and that action can be taken to prevent them.

- Tundra: A monitoring program will be implemented to assess visitor impacts at main sites along the Thomsen River. Project specific environmental assessments will be used to minimize any potential impacts to tundra from facility improvements.
- Freshwater: One of the chosen indicators for long-term ecological monitoring. Project specific environmental assessments will be used to minimize any potential impacts to freshwater from mineral exploration.
- Peary caribou: Parks Canada will work collaboratively with other organizations to monitor and manage Peary caribou, including the development and implementation of a recovery strategy.
- Waterfowl: Monitoring of waterfowl occurs collaboratively with Environment Canada.
- Cultural resources: Cultural resource condition monitoring will occur along the Thomsen River. Project specific environmental assessments will be used to minimize any potential impacts to cultural resources from facility improvements.
- Visitor experience: Visitation levels, schedules and experience will be monitored.



Parks Canada Researchers.  
(Photo: Barb Brittain/PCA)

If monitoring programs identify issues, the plan identifies that a protocol can be developed to provide appropriate timing and spacing of visitors. These monitoring programs and options for action constitute an appropriate follow-up approach for this plan.

#### **PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT**

The Aulavik Management Planning Working Group was established to give a number of Aboriginal groups and co-operative management organizations an opportunity to be actively involved in the development of the plan. In addition, provision of information and consultation with the public occurred at two times during the planning process using a variety of methods. Public concerns that were raised have been incorporated into the plan as appropriate.

#### **CONCLUSION**

As a result of the actions in the plan, it is expected that increased knowledge will enhance the understanding of the indicators of ecological and cultural integrity of Aulavik, while effectively integrating an appropriate scale of meaningful visitor experiences into the operation of the park. The plan will contribute to the objectives of “Planning for a Sustainable Future: Federal Sustainable Development Strategy for Canada” (2010) by maintaining water quality and protecting nature. With additional assessment of management strategies as they are developed, and project-specific environmental assessment mitigation, negative cumulative effects are not expected to be important.



Paddlers on the Thomsen River.  
(Photo: Craig Brigley/PCA)

## 11.0 References

### CANADIAN ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AGENCY/PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE

- 2010 Cabinet Directive on the Environmental Assessment of Policy, Plan and Program Proposals.

### COMMUNITY OF SACHS HARBOUR, WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COUNCIL (NWT) AND JOINT SECRETARIAT

- 2008 Sachs Harbour Community Conservation Plan (July 2008).

### ENVIRONMENT CANADA

- 1992 Management of Migratory Bird Sanctuaries in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region. (selected portions cited in the 2002 Aulavik National Park of Canada Management Plan).

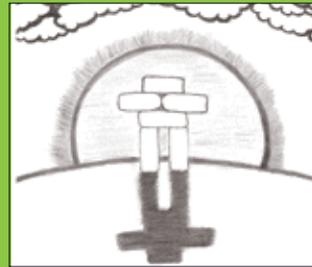
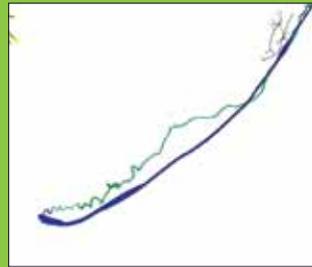
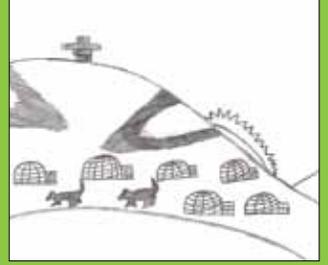
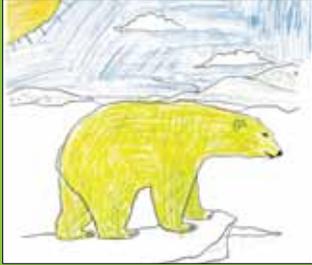
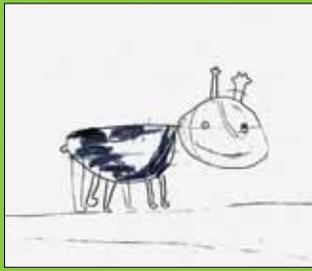
### GOVERNMENT OF CANADA

- 1984 *The Western Arctic Claim: Inuvialuit Final Agreement.*
- 1984 *Western Arctic (Inuvialuit) Claim Settlement Act.*
- 1992 *An Agreement for the Establishment of a National Park on Banks Island.*
- 1992 *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act.*
- 1994 *Migratory Birds Convention Act.*
- 1998 *Parks Canada Agency Act.*

- 2000 *Canada National Parks Act.*
- 2002 *Species at Risk Act.*
- 2010 *Planning for a Sustainable Future: Federal Sustainable Development Strategy for Canada.*

### PARKS CANADA

- 1994 Parks Canada Guiding Principles and Operational Policies.
- 1995 Aulavik National Park Interim Management Guidelines.
- 1997 *National Parks of Canada Aircraft Access Regulations (SOR/97-150).*
- 2000 Action Plan for the Declaration of Wilderness Areas in National Parks.
- 2002 Aulavik National Park of Canada Management Plan.
- 2003 *National Parks of Canada Fishing Regulations.*
- 2004 National Park System Plan (3rd edition).
- 2008 Parks Canada Guide to Management Planning.
- 2008 Fuel Caching Protocol for National Parks in the Western Arctic.
- 2010 Aulavik National Park of Canada State of the Park Report.
- 2011 Parks Canada Agency Corporate Plan 2011-12 / 2015-16.



## What Aulavik National Park Means To Me

These drawings were submitted by students in grades K to 12 at Helen Kalvak Elihakvik School in Uluhaktok. As part of the Parks Canada in Schools program, they were asked to share with other Canadians what Aulavik National Park means to them.

Students' names from top, left to right; Devon Notaina, Mitchell Inuktalik, Lukas Okheena, Naomi Klengenberg, Jayden Clarke-Oloakyok, Ian Kataoyak, Keaton Kuptana, Simon Kudlak, Nicole Clarke, Natalja Westwood, Sydona Okheena and Tyson Klengenberg.

