

Torngat Mountains National Park of Canada

State of Park Report

November 2008





Recommendation / Approval



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I think the park will once again be home to Inuit and that our attachment to the area, felt by so many of us, will once again be real, something we will experience and pass on to our children.

Leroy Metcalfe
18 January 2008

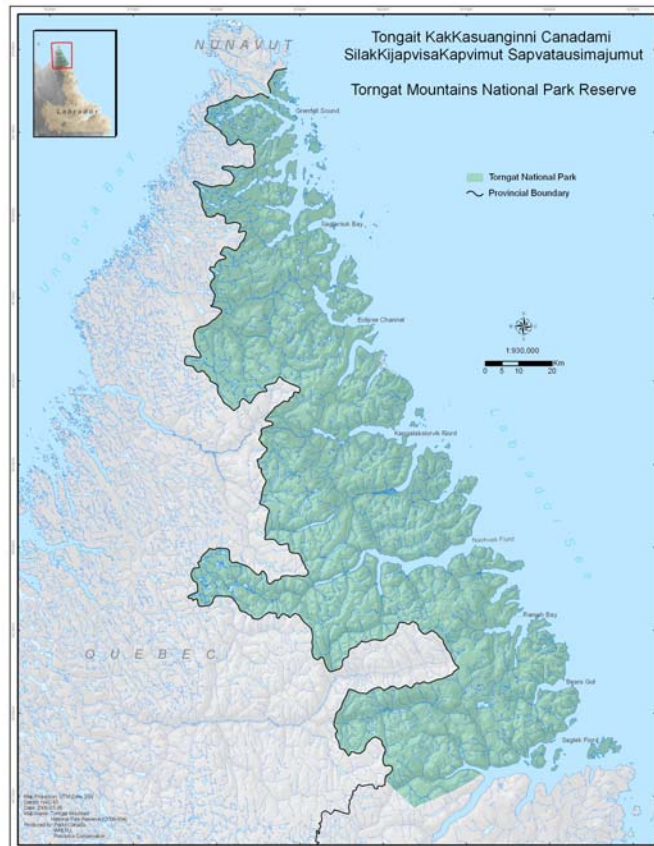
1. Executive Summary



1.1. Torngat Mountains National Park of Canada

The spectacular wilderness of this National Park comprises 9,700 km² of the Northern Labrador Mountains natural region. The park extends from Saglek Fiord in the south, including all islands and islets, to the very northern tip of Labrador; and from the provincial boundary with Quebec in the west, to the iceberg-choked waters of the Labrador Sea in the east. The mountain peaks along the border with Quebec are the highest in mainland Canada east of the Rockies and are dotted with remnant glaciers. Mt. Caubvik (Mont D'Iberville) rises to 1646 m. Rocks 3.9 billion years old, some of the planet's oldest geological formations, are found here. Polar bears hunt seals along the coast, and both the Torngat Mountains and George River caribou herds cross paths as they migrate to and from their calving grounds. Today, Inuit continue to use this area for hunting, fishing, and travelling throughout the year. More than a wilderness, this is an Inuit homeland.

Torngat Mountains National Park of Canada was officially established on December 1, 2005 when the *Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement* came into legal effect. This park was established with Inuit consent provided through the land claims agreement. The terms and conditions of the management of the park and how Inuit rights and interests are to be accommodated are set out in the *Labrador Inuit Impacts and Benefits Agreement for the Torngat Mountains National Park Reserve of Canada*. Full national park status was achieved once the *Nunavik Inuit Land Claims Agreement* came into legal effect. The Nunavik (Northern Quebec) Inuit also have rights and interests to the land and resources in this area and their consent to the establishment of a national park is provided through their land claims agreement to the offshore and the *Nunavik Inuit Park Impacts and Benefits Agreement for the Torngat Mountains National Park of Canada*. Inuit consent for the creation of this park is a cornerstone of the partnership between Inuit and Parks Canada.





1.2. What is a State of Park Report?

The State of the Park Report (SoPR) uses available information to provide a snapshot of the current condition of the Torngat Mountains National Park and assesses Parks Canada's performance in meeting management objectives. The SoPR is produced every five years and is meant to feed into the park management planning process. The SoPR identifies key issues and planning considerations, which are then incorporated into a scoping document for preparation of the five-year management plan.

The purpose of this SoPR is to:

- portray the current state of TMNPR regarding Inuit involvement, ecological integrity, protection of cultural resources, and connection to place;
- report on what we have done to maintain or improve that state. This includes the results of management actions in respect of resource protection of natural and cultural resources, visitor experience and public education;
- serve as a benchmark for future SoPRs and as a tool for informed decision-making;
- report back to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) for the Parks Canada Agency on the state of TMNPR every five years; and
- communicate the state of the park to a wide public audience.





1.3. Information Base Used in Preparation of this SoPR












As a new park, the scientific information base for Torngat Mountains National Park is relatively limited in quantity and in spatial and temporal extent. In preparation for the SoPR, Sikumiut Environmental Management produced *A Report on Background Research in Support of the State of Park Report for the Torngat Mountains National Park Reserve of Canada (2008)* that identifies existing published information about the park area. Most of the scientific information comes from historical studies and often represents baseline inventory as opposed to longer-term research and monitoring. More recent scientific work is ongoing in the park and is at the early stages of interpretation. As such, the scientific ratings in this SoPR represent best-estimates based on expert opinion on existing information.

Inuit knowledge contributes a high-quality long-term source of information against which modern changes can be evaluated. Park staff have spent many weeks living and travelling with Inuit, better understanding how they see the park and learning what the park means to them. Knowledgeable Elders, with living memory of the region as their home, have shared very detailed information of the area and changes they have observed in their lifetime. We are still very early in the process of documenting Inuit knowledge and, as such, Inuit knowledge reported here does not fully reflect the detailed and spiritual understanding that Inuit have of this land.



1.4. State of Park Summary

This SoPR reports on the status of a number of indicators grouped in four major areas of Parks Canada responsibility: Inuit land use, ecological integrity, cultural integrity, and connection to place. As a new national park, there is limited scientific information about the park and very little Inuit knowledge has been documented to date. Indicators are assigned grey/green/yellow/red ratings, symbolizing data-deficient/good/fair/poor condition respectively, based on a qualitative assessment of available information.

Inuit on the Land		
Inuit on the Land	 fair	Historical government resettlement of Inuit into southern communities removed Inuit from easy access to this landscape. Parks Canada is providing new opportunities for Inuit to access the area. No Inuit seasonal camps have yet been re-established.
Ecological Integrity		
Tundra	 good	Tundra appears healthy. Some local sites require clean-up. Changes in vegetation and wildlife species appear related to climate change.
Freshwater	 good	Freshwater systems appear healthy. Almost all watersheds are entirely within park boundary. Biological communities and processes are normal.
Coastal	 fair	Coastal environment undergoing changes – some positive and some negative. Primary issues are related to climate and sea-ice change, contaminants, and commercial harvesting. Recovery of some species from historical harvesting.
Glaciers / Ice Fields	 data deficient	Limited scientific or Inuit knowledge of current status. Opportunistic observation suggests that some glaciers are being lost, likely due to climate change.
Cultural Resources		
Cultural Resources Condition	 fair	Cultural landscape has high degree of integrity. Archaeological sites are, overall, in good condition but some sites have been disturbed. Collected archaeological objects are properly conserved.
Cultural Resources Management Practices	 data deficient	Partial inventory completed, primarily of coastal sites. Site evaluation, cultural resource management strategy and monitoring program yet to be developed.
Connection to Place		
Visitor Experience	 good	High quality experience in spectacular natural environment and healthy cultural landscape. Relatively few visitors to date but increasing each year since park establishment.
Public Education	 good	Still early in development. Considerable success working with partners to provide learning opportunities and to disseminate information about the park.



1.5. Conclusions from this State of Park Report

Based on analysis of available information and feedback from Inuit and many partners and stakeholders, this SoPR documents that Torngat Mountains National Park is healthy and a strong visitor experience and public education program is emerging. Today, Parks Canada has a positive working relationship with Inuit based on a healthy sense of trust and mutual co-operation. The park is helping to fill a void in northern Labrador by providing opportunities for Inuit, scientists, tourist operators and visitors to better understand and share this unique part of Canada.

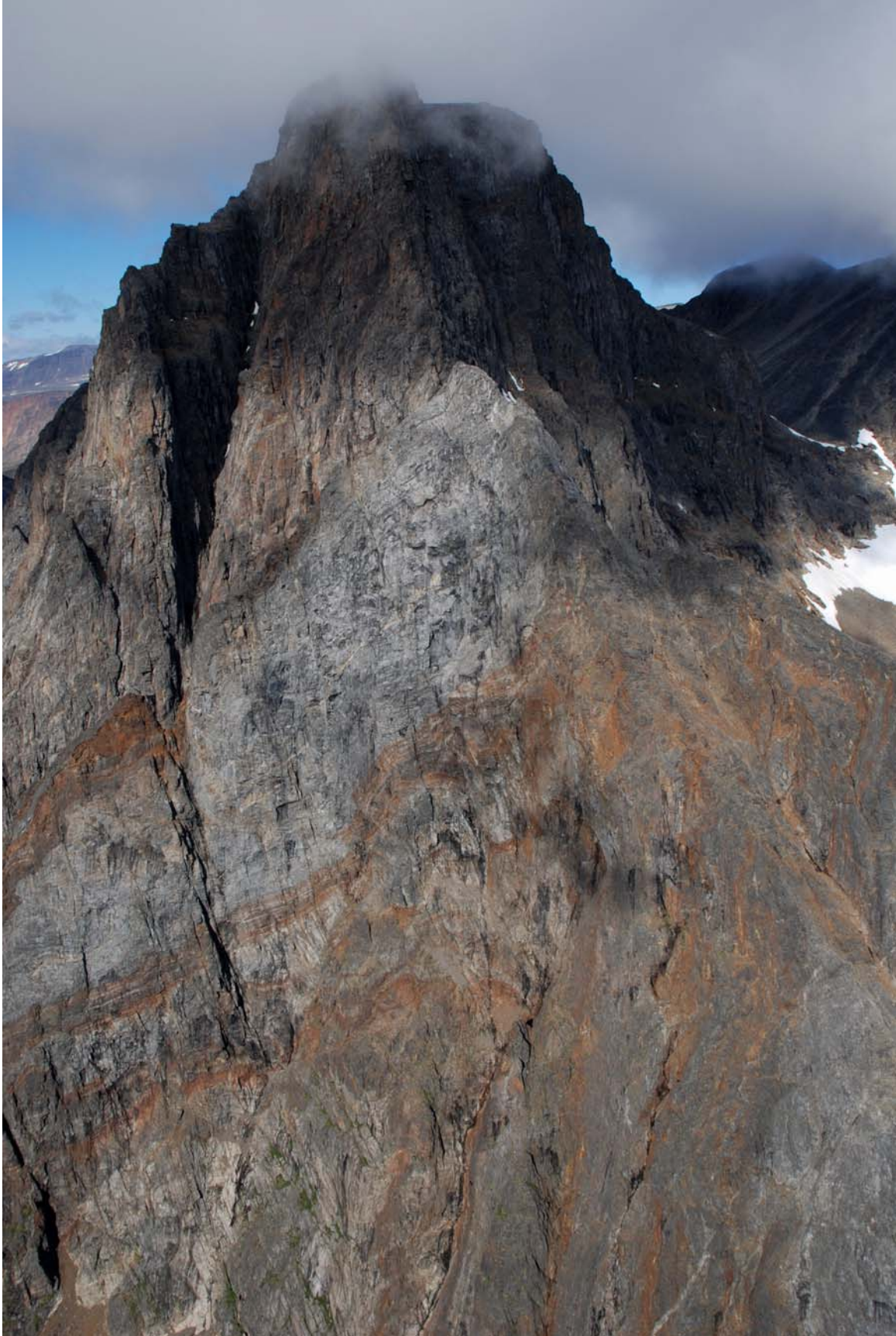
There still remains much to accomplish. The park has been in existence for less than three years and issues and challenges to achieving the park vision have been identified, many of them a function of the park's particular context. Overall, the park moves forward to its first Park Management Plan with a solid ecological and social foundation from which to engage Inuit, our partners and stakeholders and the broader Canadian public in the management of the Torngat Mountains National Park.



1.6. Summary of Key Issues and Challenges

This SoPR represents a comprehensive examination of all aspects of Parks Canada's mandate in Torngat Mountains National Park. In addition to many positive attributes and successes, our analysis has highlighted a number of issues and challenges for this new national park:

- 1) A partial loss of Inuit connection to the park
- 2) Environmental change, particularly in the coastal zone, that has been observed by Inuit Elders and scientists
- 3) Historical pollution, including debris and the possibility of contaminated sites
- 4) No program developed for the management of archaeological sites and objects
- 5) Underdeveloped visitor experience strategy and program
- 6) Lack of formal visitor safety program
- 7) Lack of formal education strategy and public education programs



2. Torngat Mountains National Park



2.1. Vision

Parks Canada and Inuit have a shared vision for the future of this park.

Inuit will use and occupy the Torngat Mountains into the future, reinforcing their connection to the ecological and spiritual elements of this park and establishing Inuit presence as a hallmark of the Torngat Mountains National Park. The park will be managed in a spirit of partnership and co-operation with Inuit of Nunatsiavut and Nunavik. It will protect, for all time, a dramatic part of the Northern Labrador Mountains natural region for the benefit, education and enjoyment of all Canadians so that visitors will experience an Inuit homeland of spectacular natural beauty.



2.2. The Inuit Story

The park will help us protect our land and our memories and our stories. I want to go back to my homeland. Maybe I can go back and help tell our stories to the visitors.

John Jararuse
Inuk from Saglek, Labrador

A Place of Spirit Vitality

The Inuit spirit entity Torngat has a strong connection with the mountainous region that bears its name. The written records show shifting forms of the name Torngat including (Torngak, tuurngaq, Torngarsoak, Toornaarsuk). The Torngat of today is likely very different from the Torngat of 1900 and even more so from the Torngat of 1770.

“All belief systems undergo change, sometimes nuanced, other times massive, but always in tandem with transformations that take place within and among individuals and communities. Labrador Inuit society sustained some of the longest-running contacts with other cultures in the north Atlantic region. Like other First Peoples societies, it experienced the full impacts of European arrival that included changes in material culture, in settlement, in population size, gene pool, and health, in social organisation, and, significantly, in belief systems. That elements of pre-Christian belief and ritual have survived at all is

remarkable; this has as much to do with Inuit cultural resilience as with the survival of recorded palimpsests from across the eastern Arctic region, including Greenland that, because of the interconnectedness of these Inuit regions, can contribute something to forming a picture of Labrador Inuit belief in general.” (Torngak, tuurngaq, Torngarsoak, toornaarsuk – the Name Shifts and Shape Shifts of Torngat. Prepared for Nunatsiavut Government; February 2007, page 1-2)



It is difficult to determine today how Inuit perceived Torngat and to what degree the Moravian missionaries who arrived on the north coast of Labrador in the 1700s have influenced this. What is clear is that Inuit have maintained an understanding of a spirit power from the earliest recorded period, throughout the time of conversion and practising Christianity and continues today. From the beginning, the Torngat Mountain region was associated with spirit power and with shamans. It was in its essence, a spiritual landscape which

Inuit perceived as filled with empowering spirit energy. Torngat’s name lives on in the Torngat Mountains and to this day Inuit and many non-Inuit feel a strong spiritual energy when they are in the Torngat Mountains.



The story of the Torngat Mountains National Park is the story of Inuit and their predecessors, for whom the area has been home for thousands of years. Some of the story is told by the hundreds of archaeological sites in the park, dating back up to 7,000 years. The region provides a rich environment to support the Inuit way of life. Compared with much of the Arctic, the land is plentiful with game and plants and the sea

sustains abundant wildlife. Through their long history in the region, Inuit have developed a deep cultural and spiritual connection to the Torngat Mountains. Central to their culture is a profound relationship with the land and sea that exists to this day. The park is a living cultural landscape. Inuit traditionally believed that Torngat, the most important and powerful of Inuit spirits, dwells in these mountains.



2.3. Why a National Park?

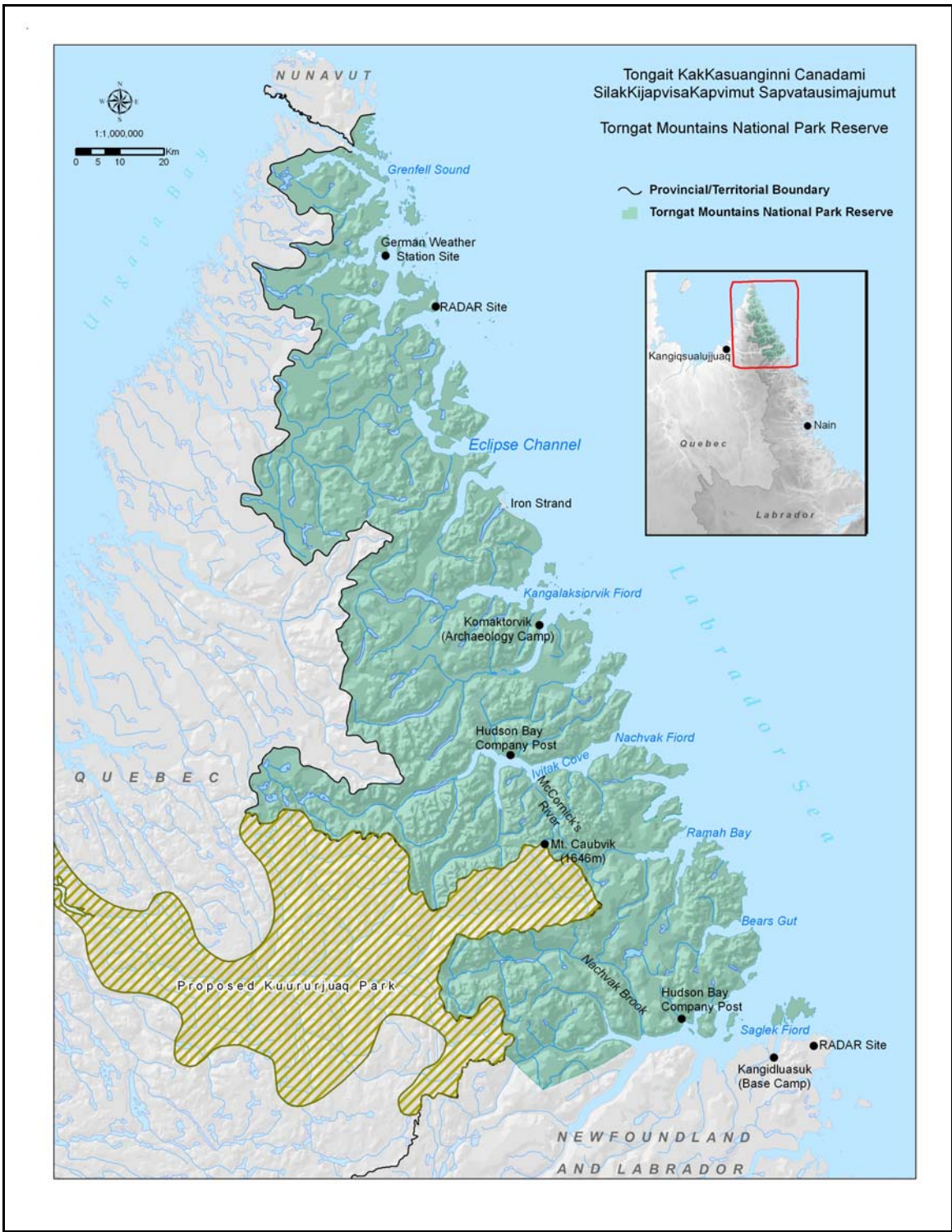
The Torngat Mountains National Park Reserve is the Inuit gift to the people of Canada.

Toby Andersen, Chief Negotiator, Labrador Inuit Association June 9, 2005.



The park was set aside to protect a representative example of the Northern Labrador Mountains Natural Region, one of 39 such regions across the country identified by Parks Canada's National Parks System Plan. This spectacular Arctic wilderness has been set aside because Inuit recognized an historic opportunity to protect this important portion of their ancestral homeland for all time. The long story of park establishment has highlighted the importance of developing respectful and honest relationships with Inuit as equal partners and recognizing their inherent connection to the land. Today, the idea of a national park, which was once a foreign and threatening concept to Inuit, is seen as an important tool to allow Inuit to protect, pass down and share their culture. It also provides an opportunity to recognize and honour Inuit Knowledge and the special

historical and cultural relationship between Inuit and the land as part of the living legacy of this park. Labrador Inuit, Nunavik Inuit and Parks Canada are ready to tell the fascinating story of the Torngat Mountains National Park and its people to the world.



Map showing locations discussed in this State of Park Report.



2.4. Ecological Context

The park represents the Northern Labrador Mountains natural region. The Torngat Mountains are among the highest, most rugged mountains in eastern North America and provide one of the world's most beautiful wild coastlines. Throughout history Inuit have been an integral part of the ecological balance of the land and continue to be a significant indicator of the health of this region.

The park climate is classified as 'moist low Arctic' and has continuous permafrost. It experiences cool, wet summers and cold winters with abundant snow. Within the park, topography, proximity to the ocean, and exposure to prevailing winds greatly influences local climate.

Northern and high-elevation areas are vegetated by Arctic tundra plants. In the southern end of the park, low-elevation and protected valley sites are characterized by richer plant growth. South-facing slopes and valley bottoms are even richer with taller and denser cover of willows, dwarf birch, and alders. There is no forest in the park.

The park is at the limits of distribution for many wildlife species. Boreal species from the south access the narrow bands of relatively lush vegetation along the southern coast and river valleys. Tundra species inhabit northern and highland sections of the park. The result is a unique mix of boreal and Arctic wildlife species. Black bears and polar bears share the park's coastline. Red foxes and Arctic foxes pursue lemmings, voles, and mice. The Torngat Mountains woodland caribou herd range throughout the park as do their primary predator, the wolf. The George River caribou herd, once the world's largest, has a portion of its range protected inside the park. Many





species of birds nest in the park's diverse habitats and its coastline is an important migration route for Arctic birds. The park's rivers and lakes are cold and unproductive. Few species of fish, primarily the Arctic char, are adapted to these waters. The marine environment by contrast is quite rich. Polar currents carry nutrient rich waters along the coast. Ice provides seasonal habitat for polar bears, seals, and foxes. Summer brings a seasonal bloom in productivity to coastal areas. Marine mammals and seabirds are common in the coastal zone during this productive time.

Information available to date indicates that the park is home to five regularly occurring species at risk as identified by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) and the Canadian Species at Risk Act (SARA).

Regularly occurring species at risk in Torngat Mountains National Park

Common Name	COSEWIC Status	SARA	Ecosystem
Barrow's Goldeneye (Eastern pop)	Special Concern	Schedule 1	Coastal
Harlequin Duck (Eastern pop)	Special Concern	Schedule 1	Freshwater
Short-eared Owl	Special Concern	Schedule 3	Tundra
Peregrine Falcon <i>anatum</i> or Peregrine Falcon <i>tundrius</i>	Special Concern or Threatened?	N/A	Tundra / Coastal
Polar Bear	Special Concern	N/A	Coastal





2.5. Co-operative Management: Our Operating Philosophy

Co-operative management is a defining feature of the Torngat Mountains National Park and is the cornerstone of the relationship between Parks Canada and Inuit. Park Impact and Benefit Agreements (PIBAs), that recognize Inuit as partners with Parks Canada, have been negotiated with the Labrador Inuit and Nunavik Inuit (Makivik Corporation). A seven-member co-operative management board has been established and consists of two members appointed by Makivik Corporation, two members appointed by the Nunatsiavut Government and two members appointed by Parks Canada with an independent chair jointly appointed by the three parties (CMB). This board is comprised entirely of Inuit. Its mandate is to advise the federal Minister of Environment on all matters related to park management. The board has developed an excellent working relationship with Parks Canada staff and is providing specific guidance, particularly around issues of most concern to Inuit. Recognizing and honouring Inuit knowledge and the special historical and cultural relationship between Inuit and the land, is already a part of the living legacy of this national park and will guide park management into the future.



“I would like to take this opportunity to express my support for the approach taken by the Parks Canada Agency to create an all-Inuit board. It is a forward-looking step and signals great progress in the relationship between your Agency and the Inuit of the Region.”

Letter to Parks Canada from Pita Aatami
President Makivik Corporation
September 27, 2006



2.6. It's All About Relationships

Our relationship with Inuit is the central pillar to success in the Torngat Mountains National Park. A relationship of mutual respect and trust will be the context in which we discuss some of the complex and challenging issues that we will face as park managers and it will be the relationship, rather than agreements that will get us through any challenges. Developing the relationship takes time and Parks Canada believes that the right way to do this is to spend time in the park with Inuit families, including members of the Co-operative Management Board to understand and appreciate what this land means to them.



There are a number of other relationships that are key to achieving the Parks Canada mandate. Parks Canada is a new player on the northern Labrador landscape. Parks Canada is also a new entity in the economic and social fabric of Nain, where it has established its administration office and a visitor reception and orientation centre.

Parks Canada has also fostered new relationships with scientific and tourist organizations with interests in the region. Through high-profile partnerships with ArcticNet, Nunatsiavut Nuluak (a research network of 14 partners including Nunatsiavut Government, universities, government departments, and the private sector), and International Polar Year programming, the Torngat Mountains National Park has generated tremendous scientific activity in just two

years. The park also has been active with tourist organizations in developing strategies that will facilitate opportunities for visitors to experience the Torngat Mountains National Park.



2.7. kANGIDLUASUK - The Base Camp



The complex logistics and the associated high cost of getting to the Torngat Mountains National Park present a challenge not only to Parks Canada personnel in maintaining a meaningful presence in the area and conducting the fieldwork necessary to support the park management process, but also to Inuit who want to spend time on the land and to people who want to visit the park. Nain, which is almost 200 km from the southern boundary of the park, is the closest community in Labrador to the park.



Parks Canada began its first operating season in the summer of 2006 by establishing a base camp in the park as a pilot project to, among other things, explore new and better ways of increasing Inuit presence in the park and to support summer operational programs and research. In 2007 Parks Canada established a base camp at kANGIDLUASUK (St. John's Harbour), which is on Inuit Land at the southern boundary of the park. This base camp continued to operate as a pilot project with the additional objective of exploring the potential of a base camp to support visitor experiences.



The base camps were established in collaboration with the Nunatsiavut Government and managed by Inuit as a centre of

operations for the park which provided accommodations, meals and a staging area for day trips throughout the surrounding area. In 2007 Parks Canada used the base camp as an opportunity to host a “familiarization tour” for a number of invited tour operators, including the expedition cruise ship industry, and consultants in the travel trade industry to help provide advice and perspective on the sustainability and value of a base camp operation to support visitor experiences.

The base camp provides the opportunity to spend the time and develop our relationships with Inuit. A typical day sees Inuit Elders sharing their knowledge of the land with scientists, park managers, and Inuit youth; sees tourist outfitters visiting archaeological sites with Inuit guides and participating in traditional harvesting activities; sees the superintendent enjoying a cup of tea with young Inuit students; and sees Inuit staff



integrated into ongoing science and monitoring programs. The central operating philosophy revolves around the connection Inuit and their ancestors have with the Torngat Mountains region.

The base camp at KANGIDLUSUK also provides the opportunity for the CMB to spend a week together every year, moving through the park to special places that Inuit want to visit from earlier years when they grew up in the Torngat Mountains region. The Elders from Nunavik and Nunatsiavut continue to reinforce our central philosophy that park activities should reflect the close relationship that Inuit have with the landscape and should help pass on that connection to new generations. It’s all about relationships and partners who are reconciling different worldviews of a very special area.





2.8. About this State of Park Report

This first SoPR represents a foundation document that evaluates the park in a holistic way. It provides a more complete understanding of the park vision and brings forth recommendations as to key issues that should be addressed during the park's first management planning process. As a new and relatively remote and pristine national park we have the luxury of an intact ecosystem with no immediate ecological threats that require major intervention by Parks Canada. This SoPR provides a common baseline from which we can work toward agreed-upon goals with all of our partners and stakeholders.



Inuit view the park in a more holistic and interconnected way than the indicators we report here. The various indicators are designed to monitor specific aspects of the park that can be addressed with targeted management actions. For Inuit, marine ecosystems are not separate from terrestrial ones. Inuit eyes observe and note the state of the park as a whole and don't break it apart into indicators. Inuit use terms such as Katjânattuk (Nunavik) and Alianattuk (Nunatsiavut)

to express a sense of well-being in a place. In the park, these terms would capture the essence of a healthy and natural cultural and spiritual landscape that Inuit have known for many years. While sometimes difficult to reconcile with western science and reporting, such evaluation from Inuit offers us the bedrock upon which we will base management planning activities and achieve our shared vision. We want new generations of Inuit to say, when asked about the state of the park a hundred years from now, that they feel Katjânattuk or Alianattuk when they are in this place.





3. *State of the Park*



3.1. State of the Park: Inuit on the Land

Based upon their detailed knowledge of the northern Labrador environment and decades of living on and travelling through this region, Inuit Elders interviewed concluded that the park is healthy. They identified that, overall, the park is clean with abundant resources and that it is a good place for Inuit to come. They say Katjânattuk or Alianattuk.

Our dialogues with Inuit Elders are at a very preliminary stage and there has not been sufficient opportunity to engage in a thorough exploration of Inuit Knowledge of the land. However, we have spent three summers in the park travelling with Inuit Elders and seeing and hearing about the land through their eyes – and seeing the land in their eyes. Their close personal connections with the land are an integral component of the park vision.

Inuit presence on the land is recognized as a key indicator of park vitality. The park ecosystems and cultural landscape have evolved under the careful stewardship of generations of Inuit and their predecessors. Inuit presence also is something of great importance to visitors who seek to understand and connect with Torngat Mountains National Park as a living and dynamic landscape and Inuit homeland.



3.1.1. Inuit on the Land Indicator: Katjânattuk, Alianattuk?



Inuit on the Land Indicator: Katjânattuk, Alianattuk?

Inuit and their predecessors have been an integral part of the Torngat Mountains environment for thousands of years. Inuit use and occupation of the TMNP is a key part of the park's ecological functioning.

Since the arrival of whalers, traders, Moravian missionaries and eventually contemporary federal and provincial governments, they have steadily pulled Inuit from the Torngat Mountains south. Inuit links, including Inuit Knowledge, stories, and spirituality associated with the park, are being lost. Today there are no permanent settlements north of Nain in Labrador and the closest community in Nunavik to the park is Kangiqsualujjuaq. There are, however, hundreds of Aullâsimavet identified in the park. Aullâsimavet are settlements, camps or places in northern Labrador other than a community, occupied by Inuit families or groups of Inuit on a seasonal, semi-permanent or permanent basis for hunting, fishing, trapping or gathering and for the use and enjoyment of the lands, waters and ocean. Many of these sites have been identified on a map.



Despite the distance to the Torngat Mountains from Inuit communities, and despite the challenges of weather and seas and the expense and equipment necessary to make the journey, Inuit today continue to make the trip to the Torngat Mountains region to hunt, fish, and travel throughout the year. Both land claims agreements confirm that Inuit have the right to continue to use and occupy traditional areas in the park including Aullâsimavet. Inuit will likely spend more time practising their traditional activities and cultural activities if there are more opportunities for them to access the park and if the environment continues to be healthy. Maintaining or improving ecological integrity, or ecological health, of the park also is an important part of Parks Canada's mandate.

kANGIDLUASUK (Torngat Mountains Base Camp) has provided the opportunity for a number of Inuit to re-connect with the park. Park operations also have facilitated the presence of Inuit on the landscape as contractors or as part of scientific teams conducting research and monitoring. In 2006 and 2007, 50 and more than 70 Inuit, respectively, were involved with Parks Canada in the park. While in the park, Inuit engaged in traditional activities including hunting, fishing, and collecting plants and berries.



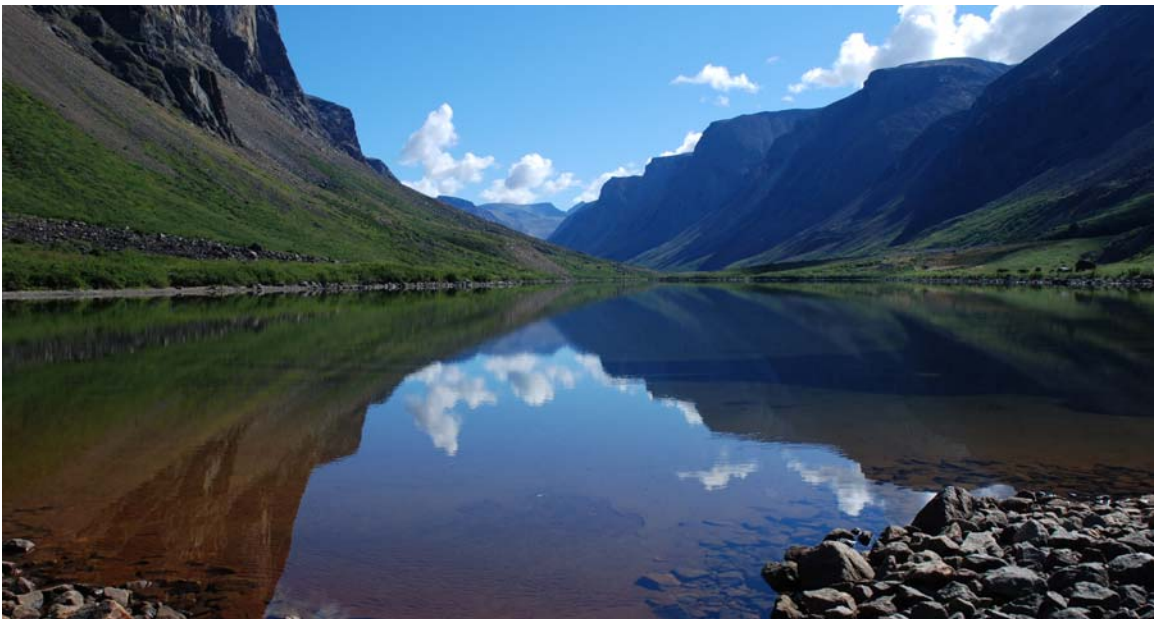


3.2. State of the Park: Ecological Integrity

Inuit and the limited science available tell us that park ecosystems are healthy and no immediate threats to ecological health are known. Torngat Mountains National Park is a large, remote and seldom-visited region with few local stressors on the environment. Two North Warning RADAR stations operate adjacent to the park, requiring delivery of fuel and supplies. The RADAR site at Saglek Bay was the location of historic PCB contamination. Subsequent clean up of the site has decreased PCB contamination significantly and the area appears to be recovering. A small area at the Iron Strand is excluded from the park and is Labrador Inuit land which has a significant source of garnets in the beach sand. Otherwise the park has no major industry or development in or adjacent to it. It is likely that any major impacts on park ecological integrity will result from regional or global influences.

Inuit Elders identified a number of changes to the environment, some changes suggesting improvement to the ecological integrity of the park and some indicating abnormal variations that may have a negative impact on the Inuit way of life. Climate change is perhaps the most significant challenge affecting Inuit in Northern Labrador. Winters are shorter with less snow and thinner ice. Weather is difficult to predict. Once-safe travel routes are no longer reliable.

Recent scientific information of the park ecosystems is limited. Overall, scientists' observations are similar to the Elders'. Park ecosystems are intact, principal ecological process are functioning normally, and all major species are present. Changes are being observed, however. There are few localized stressors, primarily localized pollution and contaminants issues. Climate change appears to be the most likely driver of larger changes to the environment.



3.2.1. Ecological Integrity Indicator: Tundra



Ecological Integrity Indicator: Tundra



Inuit Elders had a number of observations related to ecological health of the tundra. Overall, they believe the tundra to be healthy although they have observed changes in vegetation and species associated with climate change. Elders also indicated that Inuit are concerned about the possibility of contaminants at the two RADAR sites adjacent to the park and they wish more information on this issue.

Caribou – Prior to the 1960s, caribou were not present in the park area. The first caribou were caught around 1964-65. There were many caribou in the late 1960s and 1970s. Numbers appear to be declining today. Caribou trails are beginning to disappear. The Elders were uncertain whether this might be part of a natural cycle or a result of some change in the environment. They know stories that say that caribou have previously disappeared for many years. Hunters have noticed that the marrow of caribou bones is more liquid today and that the fat, which was once very hard, is now soft.

Vegetation – The landscape is becoming greener. Plants are growing larger. There are more woody shrubs such as willow and they are growing much larger than before.

New Species – The Elders discussed a number of southern species that are moving northward into the park region. Boreal forest mammals such as porcupine, black bear, and moose are spreading north above the tree line. Moose have been spotted as far north as Hebron. Southern birds such as juncos and osprey, for which there are no names in Inuktitut, are being seen in the communities and are spreading northward.



Contaminants – The Elders identified Inuit concerns about the potential for contaminants at the two RADAR sites adjacent to the park. They did not have sufficient information to know whether there is an issue of contaminants in caribou near the Saglek RADAR site.

Scientific information about the tundra is more limited. Other than the two RADAR sites adjacent to the park and some local areas of historic garbage and debris, including plane wrecks and abandoned fuel drums, there are no local stressors to the tundra ecosystem.



Parks Canada staff, contractors, researchers, and visitors are recording incidental wildlife observations. There currently is a baseline of over 200 observations in the wildlife cards database but it is too early

to interpret any patterns. All of the expected species are present, except for eastern Wolverine, listed as “Endangered” by the federal Species at Risk Act. Wolverines were never very common and since the mid 1950s there has not been any physical evidence of the wolverine in Labrador, although there have been occasional reports of wolverine being sighted south of the park.



The Peregrine Falcon, listed under the federal Species at Risk Act, nests in the park. There are at least six known nest sites and several other locations where adults and/or juveniles have been sighted.

Baseline data are being collected on tundra vegetation and an automatic climate station (established as part of an International Polar Year research project) is now operational. Species composition (plants, lichens and mosses) and species diversity are being identified along an elevation gradient in a major river valley (Nachvak Brook) and vegetation is being sampled opportunistically to develop a species list for the park. In addition, experiments are being conducted to investigate the potential impacts of warming climate on vegetation communities. To date, no scientific evaluation of tundra vegetation health is possible.

3.2.2. Ecological Integrity Indicator: Freshwater



Ecological Integrity Indicator: Freshwater



Freshwater systems appear to be healthy. Almost the entire park boundary follows the watershed divide between Quebec and Labrador so most watersheds are totally protected within the park. There are no known sources of local pollution in fresh water. Fish populations appear to be healthy. Stressors that might potentially impact park watersheds likely are limited to regional and global changes such as long-range air pollutants and climate change.

Our discussions with Elders did not reveal any concerns about the freshwater environment. Elders believe the water is clean. Char populations are increasing and are healthy. They appear to be recovering from an historic commercial char fishery that operated along the coast but that is no longer active in the park area.

Scientific information is consistent with these observations. Water quality measures from streams flowing into Saglek and Nachvak Fiords indicate that the waters have very low productivity, few dissolved nutrients, and with dissolved oxygen concentrations near saturation. The streams have low biodiversity of benthic (bottom-dwelling) invertebrates. These conditions are typical of healthy Arctic streams.



A sample taken below the PCB contaminated site at the Saglek RADAR base was not significantly different than unimpacted sites. Juvenile char have been sampled in a number of rivers and they appear to be abundant and healthy. A 2007 Harlequin Duck (COSEWIC “special concern”) survey of rivers in the southern half of the park found a total of 56 adults and 16 broods suggesting a healthy and growing population. Harlequins nest and raise broods only on pristine, fast-flowing rivers.

3.2.3. Ecological Integrity Indicator: Coastal



Ecological Integrity Indicator: Coastal

Inuit are a coastal people and their culture is closely tied to the sea and ice. Elders noted a number of changes in the coastal ecosystem. Positive change includes some fish populations that are recovering from historic commercial fishing. Other changes, particularly those related to climate change, are of great concern to Inuit and have direct impacts on their way of life. The potential effects of future offshore oil exploration and increases in shipping associated with the opening of the Northwest Passage are unknown.

Sea Ice – All of the Elders noted that sea ice is changing. It forms later in the fall and melts earlier in the spring. The sea ice is no longer predictable and travel routes that were once safe are now uncertain. This is changing the Inuit way of life.

Polar Bears – Historically it was rare to find polar bears in the park. As children, the Elders almost never heard of polar bears, maybe one bear would be seen in a summer. Today there are many polar bears everywhere along the coast, even further south than Nain. The same is true along the Ungava Peninsula to George River. This has become a danger to Inuit and park visitors. The Elders suggest this abundance of polar bears might be a result of changing sea ice conditions.



Seals – Ringed seals, an important part of the Inuit diet, are less common than historically. Inuit are concerned about the decline in ringed seal numbers that they are noticing in fiords throughout Nunatsiavut.

Capelin – Populations were very low as a result of commercial harvesting but seem to be rebounding.

Cod – In the 1960s, schooners from Newfoundland would fish cod all along the coast. There are very few cod now.

Eider Ducks – Common eiders were once very common on the offshore islands in the northern parts of the park. They are less common today with few there this year. No King Eiders have been seen for a long time.

Contaminants – The Elders identified concerns about the historic PCB spill in Saglek Bay and the potential for contamination of char and seals. Inuit desire more consultation on these concerns.

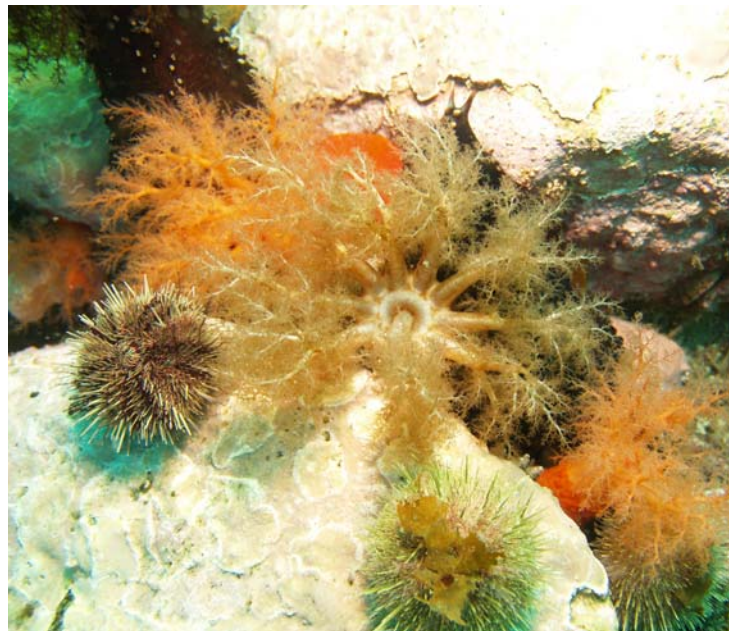
Localized Pollution – The Elders discussed the many sites in the park with old (pre-park) garbage, barrels, and fuel caches. The majority of these are in the coastal environment. There was particular concern about rapid rusting of old drums of fuel. They indicated that cleanup of this historic waste should be a priority for the park. They also stressed that modern fuel caches must be carefully managed and monitored to prevent pollution.

Scientific information is more limited but provides a similar picture to Inuit Knowledge. A 2007 survey Barrow's Goldeneye ducks found this SARA species of "special concern" molting at a number of locations along the coast, highlighting the importance of the park's coastal ecosystem to wildlife.



A three-year mark-recapture survey of the Davis Strait Polar Bear population conducted by the Nunavut Wildlife Department documented 40, 132, and 147 bears in the park over 2005, 2006, and 2007 respectively. This represents a dramatic increase from the occasional polar bear sighted by Inuit decades ago. The Davis Strait population as a whole appears to have experienced a more modest increase from approximately 1,650 animals in 2004 to 2,200 in 2007. It seems probable that the dramatic increase in polar bear numbers in the park reflects a change in polar-bear distribution, possibly related to climate-change induced variation in sea-ice conditions. While signaling a possible increase in the bear population, this survey also highlights the likelihood of large-scale environmental change in the region.

There is no evidence of contamination or severe pollution along the coast, aside from the historic PCB spill at Saglek Bay where PCBs have contaminated the land and the nearshore marine environment adjacent to the park's southern boundary. Parks Canada is a part of the Nunatsiavut Nuluak partnership that is investigating the recovery of the ecosystem following a clean up of the site. Relative to historical data, sediment samples from Saglek Bay show a decrease in the extent of PCB contamination and a rapid decrease in PCB concentrations. PCB contaminated marine sediment is confined to an area outside the park in the basin immediately adjacent to the historic RADAR site.



Marine biota in the vicinity of the historic PCB spill, including Shorthorn Sculpin (a non-migratory bottom-feeder), Arctic Char (an open water fish), ringed seals, and black guillemot chicks also were analysed for contaminants. Relative to reference populations, elevated PCB levels were found in Sculpin, guillemot chicks, and some Ringed seals but not in Arctic Char. Compared to 1998 data, PCB levels in Sculpin and guillemots showed a significant decrease in 2006/2007, indicating that the marine ecosystem within Saglek Bay is recovering now that the major PCB clean up has been completed. Guillemots on the park islands showed PCB levels only slightly elevated against background reference conditions. Two of 14 ringed seals in Saglek Bay were found to have high PCB levels.

Nachvak Fiord, by contrast, is still in a relatively pristine condition. Analyses of PCB and metal contamination in sediments, Shorthorn Sculpin and Arctic char showed levels that were almost undetectable. Unless contaminated from some other location, food harvested from anywhere in Nachvak Fiord should be safe for human consumption. It is believed that the pristine condition of Nachvak Fiord is representative of the vast majority of the park, including most of Saglek Bay beyond the point source PCB pollution.

The existence of historic and modern debris and fuel caches along the coast and in the interior is of particular concern to Inuit, particularly the risk of local contamination from fuel leaking out of rusted drums. A final inventory of historic debris, including contaminants assessment, has yet to be completed but to date, 38 garbage sites have been identified throughout the park, primarily along the coastal regions. The sites include rusty fuel drums, modern fuel caches, fish weir debris, an abandoned structure, and snowmobile and aircraft wrecks. An opportunistic cleanup of old drums has begun at locations where contractors and Parks Canada staff have been able to remove them during normal operations. Parks Canada has not yet completed a full strategy for the management of modern fuel caches in the park.



3.2.4. Ecological Integrity Indicator: Glaciers / Ice Fields



Ecological Integrity Indicator: Glaciers / Ice Fields



The Torngat Mountains retain the only glaciers in mainland Canada east of the Rocky Mountains. They are of particular interest, as they exist at the southernmost limit of glaciers in the eastern Arctic. During opportunistic observations in 2006 and 2007, 42 glaciers have been documented. Parks Canada and Memorial University have secured funding from ArcticNet to replicate the 1980s research on glacier mass-balance for selected glaciers. This research may lead to a long-term monitoring program so that we can better understand what changes are occurring to these unique alpine glaciers and what role they play in the larger ecosystem.

We have not yet explored Inuit knowledge of glaciers.







3.3. State of the Park: Cultural Resources

Tornгат Mountains National Park provides an intact ecological environment with few intrusions of modern development. The dramatic landscape that fuelled Inuit spirituality still awes with its power. Inuit have begun to re-connect with the park after a long absence from the land but logistics make it difficult for them to travel to the park unless they can take advantage of ongoing park operations. Inuit Knowledge, oral histories, stories, and spirituality associated with the park are at risk of being lost. Archaeological sites are, overall, in good condition although some are in need of intervention. Artefacts currently are housed in appropriate collections and are in good condition.



Cultural resource inventory is ongoing but many aspects of Parks Canada's cultural resources management program, including site evaluations, a cultural resource management strategy, and monitoring program, have yet to be developed and implemented. As such, our Cultural Resources Management Practices indicator is ranked as data deficient.



3.3.1. Cultural Resources Indicator: Resource Condition



Cultural Resources Indicator: Resource Condition



Cultural Landscape

As an Inuit homeland for countless generations, the Torngat Mountains is a powerful cultural and spiritual landscape with a rich Inuit history. Elders still maintain a direct link to the park as their childhood home. Personal histories, stories and spiritual connections to the park area endure. Today, the landscape remains in a natural condition with minimal modern development providing a rich backdrop to the Inuit story of the park.

As part of an effort to strengthen present-day links to the Torngat Mountains landscape, Parks Canada has facilitated opportunities for many Inuit from Nunatsiavut and Nunavik to participate in the Base Camp experience at kANGIDLUASUK.

kANGIDLUASUK brings together Inuit Elders, hunters and youth for high-quality experiences on the land. Elders have had the opportunity to visit their childhood homelands, engage in traditional activities, and share their knowledge of the park region with park staff, scientists, and Inuit youth. The many Inuit staff employed to operate the camp share similar experiences. They also participate in science and monitoring activities. There is a special effort made to include Inuit youth in all of these activities and many young Inuit from Nunatsiavut have participated with base camp; opportunities have not yet been developed for Nunavik youth. kANGIDLUASUK represents a positive first step for Inuit to re-connect with the Torngat Mountains landscape and to re-engage with the cultural and spiritual heritage of the region.



Ultimately, the landscape should support Inuit lifestyle, traditions, and beliefs such that Inuit come to the park for their own cultural purposes. Part of enhancing the cultural / spiritual landscape will include documenting personal histories and stories situated in the landscape, and the importance of spiritual connections so that they are remembered, honoured, valued and shared.



Archaeological Sites

Much of the human history in the park is revealed by hundreds of archaeological sites dating back as much as 7,000 years. There is evidence of occupation by Maritime Archaic and Paleoeskimo cultures and the Thule culture that merged into modern day Inuit. These sites, which include tent rings, stone caribou fences, food caches, burial sites and the Ramah chert quarry, tell the story of the people and cultures that have made this special part of Canada their home over the millennia. These sites are everywhere you travel in the park and are, overall, in good condition, although some are in need of intervention. Erosion, animals, and past human activities have disturbed to some extent approximately 30% of known sites.



Most of the archaeological sites that have been inventoried are along the coast because that is the most accessible landscape for archaeologists. There is many more sites inland that have not yet been documented or inventoried. A Collections Specialist has been hired to transfer the inventory of archaeological sites from the province's system to the Parks Canada system.

The richness of cultural resources in the park provides an exceptional opportunity to tell the Inuit story and to illustrate the importance of the area as a cultural landscape in which Inuit 'footprints are everywhere'.





Archaeological Objects

The rich human history of Torngat Mountains National Park also is told through the archaeological artefacts found throughout the park. Management of these artefacts is of particular concern to Inuit, who historically have seen many of their cultural materials removed to collections in the south. According to the land claims agreements, Nunatsiavut and Nunavik Inuit along with Parks Canada jointly own and manage archaeological material found in the park. Together, we can interpret and share the rich human history of the north Labrador coast. An important next step is to set out the terms and guidelines for joint ownership and management of archaeological material.

Archaeological objects are considered to be in good condition. Artefacts were collected during two seasons of archaeological fieldwork in the park, in Nachvak Fiord (Whitridge) in 2006 and at Komaktorvik (Whitridge and Woollett) in 2007. The artefact collection consists of pieces representing a wide variety of materials fashioned from stone, ceramic, metal, bone and wood, including samples of faunal remains. These artefacts have been assessed and properly conserved.



Buildings and Structures

The park contains evidence of more recent European history, including the remains of a Moravian Mission site on Ramah Bay, the sites of Hudson Bay Company trading posts, and the remains of a World War II German military remote-control weather station on Hutton Peninsula, put in place by submarine. These sites have not yet been assessed.







3.4. State of the Park: Connection to Place

Torngat Mountains National Park protects an awe-inspiring landscape of great spiritual importance to Inuit. A visitor to the park is struck by the rugged coastline, deep fiords, and steep mountain ranges. Wildlife abounds. Archaeological sites silently convey stories of the past. Northern lights blaze in the night sky. The park imparts an elemental experience to any visitor.



Part of that experience results from the park being remote and difficult to access. The nearest communities are Nain, 200 km to the south in Nunatsiavut, and Kangiqsualujuaq, 100 km to the west in Nunavik. Access is expensive, generally by charter aircraft or boat. Two cruise ships visited the park in 2006, four in 2007 and six in 2008. Once in the park, there are considerable logistical issues including harsh weather, limited communications, and polar bears that further

complicate travel. At present there are no facilities inside the park itself. These difficulties travelling to and within the park limits the number of people that can experience the park in person.



Many visitors have travelled to the park as part of KANGIDLUSUK (Torngat Mountains Base Camp) or as part of scientific teams conducting research and monitoring. These two activities have been the central focus of the park's Connection to Place program. KANGIDLUSUK has been the principal means by which Inuit, park staff, scientists, students, tourism industry representatives, and visitors have interacted and been welcomed and accommodated in the park area.

The central operating philosophy of the camp revolves around the connection Inuit and their ancestors have with the Torngat Mountains region.

Base camp provides a particularly special opportunity for researchers to take advantage of the challenging and expensive logistics of research in the north and, at the same time, have a context within which to connect to Inuit and to their land as they see it. It is an opportunity for sharing science and Inuit Knowledge as they work and live with Inuit. This is a unique and rich opportunity for northern researchers who often have limited opportunity to make close connections to the land or people. In 2008 we are supporting ten International Polar Year research activities – more than any other national park. Evenings at the base camp offer opportunities for researchers to share their knowledge and work with the rest of the base camp residents, Inuit and non-Inuit and is a chance to blur the boundaries that often separate the two worlds.



The park is still in the early stages of developing a visitor experience and education strategy. One of the key considerations has been the long-term sustainability of KANGIDLUSUK. The process to date has involved discussions with Nunatsiavut, Nunavik (Makivik Corporation), the provinces of Newfoundland and Labrador and Quebec, and tourism industry representatives. Given the relatively complex logistics involved in a visit to the park, all parties are working together to help develop the infrastructure, tour operator education, and personnel training and licensing required to offer a quality experience in the Torngat Mountains National Park. Parks Canada has benefited from many voices telling the stories of the Torngat Mountains National Park and educating Canadians about this special place.



3.4.1. Connection to Place Indicator: Visitor Experience



Connection To Place Indicator: Visitor Experience

Although low in number, there have been recreational visitors who have made their way to the Torngat Mountains before the area became a national park and these numbers are steadily increasing now that it is a national park. Private recreational visitors numbered just 12 in 2006, 49 in 2007 and 27 in 2008. Recreational trips centred around skiing, sea kayaking, canoeing, hiking, sailing, and sightseeing. Commercial visits include cruise ships and float plane / helicopter travel.



2006	2 Cruise Ships - 150 people	1 Sailboat - 4 people	Total: 154 people
2007	4 Cruise Ships - 275 people	1 Sailboat - 4 people	Total: 279 people
2008	6 Cruise Ships - 364 people	5 Sailboats - 21 people	Total: 385 people

The number of visits to the park by sea going vessels has been steadily increasing. The Torngat Mountains National Park is no longer a “sail by” coastline. To date, however, a comprehensive strategy has not been developed for cruise ships and cruise ship landings.





Recreational visitor feedback is consistently positive about the experience available in the Torngat Mountains National Park. Visitors are amazed by the spectacular scenery, the abundant wildlife, and the archaeological history of the park. Those who travel with Inuit guides report that their experience travelling with Inuit was very positive and that the Inuit perspective added a great deal to their appreciation of the park.

Other visitors to the park have been affiliated with KANGIDLUASUK and scientific research and monitoring programs. The majority of these park users have a professional association with the park. They enjoy a more in-depth experience that includes interaction with a variety of people working and living at the base camp.

The base camp supports increasing numbers of Inuit and visitors who spend time in the park. In 2006 there were 272 people; in 2007 there were 484 and in 2008 there were 565.

Through informal surveys of visitors to KANGIDLUASUK, Parks Canada staff have received universally enthusiastic and positive comments from visitors. For many, their trip to the Torngat ranks among the memorable experiences of their lifetime. They are appreciative of the time they are able to spend with Inuit at camp and on the land. Most visitors from the south find that their experience is greatly enriched by the opportunity to live with, and learn from, Inuit in a relaxed setting. The chance to chat with an Inuit camp worker, to help prepare a traditional meal of char or seal, or to hear old stories brings the landscape to life. A modest study with visitors to the Base Camp was conducted in the summer of 2007 where visitors were asked to use cameras that were provided to them to record photos and log memorable moments. The results of this study are found in the report *Torngat Mountains National Park Reserve of Canada - Participant Employed Photography* – prepared by the Atlantic Service Centre with Parks Canada.

Visitor safety in this remote park is of particular concern. Perhaps the most significant safety issue affecting visitors is the presence and number of polar bears. We have conducted a preliminary risk assessment that ranks this hazard very high and we are working with Inuit and other northern parks as well as other partners to determine how best to ensure safe visitor experiences. Inuit want to share with visitors their knowledge of safe travel in the region but no mechanism currently exists to facilitate this exchange. To date, no formal safety guidelines have been established.

A comprehensive Visitor Information package has been prepared to provide the visitor with as much information as possible in advance of coming to the park. A web site is also up and running and this information has been uploaded onto the site. A professional photographer was

hired in 2006 to develop images for use by the Nunatsiavut Government and to contribute to the Parks Canada image bank. Many of these images were used to develop a DVD that highlights the best the park has to offer.



In January 2008 Parks Canada along with its partners, Makivik Corporation and the Nunatsiavut Government all participated in Northern Lights 2008 – a trade fair that showcased businesses and Inuit culture in Nunatsiavut, Nunavik and Baffin Island. It was an opportunity to bring the park and Inuit to a southern audience and raise the awareness of what we have to offer.

At this early stage of program development, other than base camp feedback, no formal measures of connection to place have been established. Evaluations within this section reflect the comments received by park staff from visitors to the park. Because visitation is relatively small, park staff is able to solicit feedback from almost all people who enter the park. A more comprehensive and long-term Visitor Research Program that will rely heavily on the Internet will be initiated in the summer of 2008.



3.4.2. Connection to Place Indicator: Public Education



Connection To Place Indicator: Public Education



At this early stage of park development, Torngat Mountains National Park has been involved with considerable public education activities. While no formal public education strategy has been developed yet, our operating philosophy is based on relationship building and partnership. High profile partnerships with Arctic Net, Nunatsiavut Nuluak, and ten International Polar Year programs have provided regional, national and international platforms for informing audiences about the Torngat Mountains. Partnerships have facilitated in-park learning opportunities of nine Inuit student interns and 13 students involved in the ArcticNet Schools on Board program. Inuit of the region have expressed the desire for more such opportunities to better connect with local communities and involve Inuit youth. They also have stressed the importance of having Inuit Knowledge incorporated into public education programming. Park staff and partners have delivered numerous school visits, public information sessions, and scientific

presentations onboard the CCGS Amundsen, in local schools and at several national conferences. Additional information is available online, including an informative park website and visitor information package. High-profile partnerships also have generated a number of media stories about the park including pieces on CBC's *The National*, and in national magazines and newspapers.





4. *Key Issues and Planning Considerations*



Based on analysis of available information and feedback from Inuit and many partners and stakeholders, this SoPR documents that Torngat Mountains National Park is healthy and a strong visitor experience and public education program is emerging. The park is establishing a solid foundation from which to achieve its vision. As a new park, there is still much to be accomplished and a number of key issues have emerged for consideration while developing the first park management plan.

Inuit Connection to the Park

- Loss of Inuit Knowledge of the park area
- Loss of Inuit stories, oral histories, and spirituality associated with the park
- Limited opportunities for Inuit to travel to the park

Environmental Change

- Changes to sea ice and the implications for Inuit use of the park
- Declines in ringed seal numbers
- Changes to polar bear population size and/or distribution
- Changes to Torngat Mountains caribou herd
- Ecological Integrity monitoring program not fully developed

Debris, Pollution and Contaminated Sites

- Existing sites with debris and garbage
- Historical fuel caches
- Monitoring and management of current fuel caches
- Inuit request for additional information about RADAR sites and possible contamination

Management of Archaeological Sites and Objects

- Archaeological sites at risk from human and natural disturbance
- Lack of clear guidelines for joint ownership and management of archaeological resources
- Incomplete inventory of cultural resources
- Limited evaluation of cultural resources

- Lack of a joint management strategy for archaeological resources
- Cultural Resource monitoring program not developed

Visitor Experience

- Lack of Visitor Experience strategy and integration with Nunatsiavut tourism strategy
- Logistical problems for visitors to access the park
- Sustainability of the base camp
- Plans for training and licensing of Inuit guides and outfitters not yet developed
- No strategy for cruise ships and cruise ship landings
- No research on visitor needs and expectations

Visitor Safety

- Lack of formal guidelines to ensure safe visitor experience
- Visitors do not have the opportunity to avail of Inuit knowledge about safe travel
- Polar bears

Public Education

- Lack of education strategy
- Limited opportunities for involvement of Inuit youth
- Inuit request for better connections with regional communities to share information
- Inuit desire for more Inuit knowledge to be included in public education







Tungus National Park and Preserve of Canada 2007-2008



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