

together we're stronger.

CP2005-000010

CANADA, NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR, AND THE LABRADOR INUIT ASSOCIATION SIGN AGREEMENTS TO ESTABLISH TORNGAT MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK RESERVE

NAIN, NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR, January 21, 2005 – The Honourable Stéphane Dion, Minister of the Environment, Honourable Danny Williams, Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador, Honourable Tom Osborne, provincial Minister of Environment and Conservation, and William Andersen III, President of the Labrador Inuit Association (LIA), today signed two agreements that set the stage for Canada's 42nd national park – and the first ever in Labrador – to be officially established later this year.

Along with the Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement that was also signed in Nain today, the two agreements will ensure the long-term protection and conservation of a spectacular area representing northern Labrador's arctic wilderness in the Torngat Mountains National Park Reserve of Canada. They will also lead to new economic and employment opportunities for Inuit businesses and people in the region.

"With today's agreements, we are protecting a unique part of Canada that is home to polar bears, caribou and a unique population of tundra-dwelling black bears, along with breathtaking fjords and rugged mountains," said Minister Dion. "The establishment of the Torngat Mountains National Park Reserve of Canada will ensure that this spectacular area is preserved in its natural state for all Canadians to experience and enjoy. It offers visitors an exceptional opportunity to experience the Arctic landscape and environment."

"This park will create new economic opportunities for Labrador Inuit and Labrador Inuit businesses," said the Honourable R. John Efford, Minister of Natural Resources. "It is part of a broader agreement and partnership that will allow the sustainable development and use of the region's resources, while protecting its environment and providing economic returns to the Nunatsiavut Government, the Labrador Inuit and Labradorians."



Canada



The Memorandum of Agreement for a National Park Reserve in the Torngat Mountains, signed by Minister Dion on behalf of Canada and by Premier Williams and Minister Osborne on behalf of Newfoundland and Labrador, sets out the terms and conditions by which the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador has agreed to transfer the administration and control of the lands set aside to establish the national park reserve to Canada.

“The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador is extremely pleased to sign an agreement that will see the creation of the Torngat Mountains National Park Reserve, ensuring the protection and conservation of this region’s superb and untouched wilderness,” said Premier Williams. “The National Park Reserve will become one of the province’s prime destinations for eco-tourism opportunities and raise the profile of the area, nationally and internationally. The reserve will also bring economic benefits to the region and play an important role in improving the social and economic well being of the Labrador Inuit and the people of Labrador.”

“The gift of such an extraordinary area of arctic wilderness to the people of this province, to the people of Canada and the world, through the establishment of the Torngat Mountains National Park Reserve, is an event to be celebrated,” said Minister Osborne. “The province is committed to protecting representative portions of our distinctive natural heritage. This natural heritage is part of who we are – our past, our present and, indeed, essential to our future. We should all be proud of what has been accomplished today.”

The Labrador Inuit Park Impacts and Benefits Agreement, signed by Minister Dion on behalf of Canada and by President Anderssen on behalf of LIA, formalizes the ongoing relationship between Parks Canada and the Labrador Inuit. It ensures that the national park reserve will highlight the Inuit’s unique relationship with the land and its natural ecosystems, and includes provisions that will allow Inuit to continue traditional land and resource uses within the park reserve.

This agreement, which is required as part of the Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement process, also establishes a framework for the cooperative management of the park reserve by Parks Canada and the Inuit.

“Torngat Mountains National Park Reserve is a fitting symbol of the overlapping values that bind us all together as Canadians,” said LIA President Andersen. “We have created a lasting legacy for all Canadians, made possible through trust, mutual respect and a deep understanding of Labrador Inuit values and traditions. It is truly a gift to us all.”

Establishing the Torngat Mountains National Park Reserve of Canada is a key step in the completion of the Government of Canada's five-year Action Plan to Protect Canada's Natural Heritage. Under the plan, Parks Canada and the Government will establish ten new national parks of Canada and five new national marine conservation areas of Canada, as well as expand three existing national parks. Two of the new parks, the Gulf Islands National Park Reserve of Canada (in British Columbia) and Ukkusiksalik National Park of Canada (in Nunavut), were established in 2003.

It is anticipated that the Torngat Mountains National Park Reserve of Canada will be formally established when the federal legislation that gives effect to the Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement is enacted.

Information:

Emma Orawiec
Press Secretary
Office of the Minister
of the Environment
(819) 997-1441

Kevin McNamee
Director
Park Establishment Branch
Parks Canada
(819) 997-4908

Sonia B. Glover
Director of Communications
Department of Environment and
Conservation
Government of Newfoundland and
Labrador
(709) 729-2575

Jennifer Daly
Communications
Labrador Inuit Association
(709) 753-0794, ext. 27

(Also available on the Internet at www.pc.gc.ca under **What's new.**)