

TWEET

.@ParksCanada & Nunatsiavut Government sign Memorandum of Understanding to assess feasibility of establishing an #IndigenousProtectedArea near Torngat Mountains in Labrador as part of @Imappivut #Imappivut #ProtectNature #ProtectedArea

News Release

For Immediate Release

The Governments of Canada and Nunatsiavut sign Memorandum of Understanding to assess feasibility of establishing a new protected area along northern Labrador coast

Memorandum of Understanding confirms commitment to determine the feasibility of establishing an Indigenous protected area under the *Canada National Marine Conservation Areas Act* adjacent to Torngat Mountains National Park

February 23, 2022

Nain, Newfoundland and Labrador

Parks Canada Agency

Protected areas play a vital role in conserving natural and cultural marine heritage, fighting climate change and biodiversity loss, and providing Canadians with opportunities to learn more about iconic cultural and natural settings. Canada is committed to its goals of conserving 25 per cent of its lands and waters by 2025, and 30 per cent of each by 2030, and working to halt and reverse nature loss in Canada by 2030.

Today, the Honourable Steven Guilbeault, Minister of Environment and Climate Change and Minister responsible for Parks Canada, and Johannes Lampe, President of Nunatsiavut, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to determine the feasibility of establishing an Indigenous protected area in northern Labrador under the *Canada National Marine Conservation Areas Act*. The signing of this MOU follows the 2017 signing of the Statement of Intent to advance the Imappivut Marine Planning Initiative of the Nunatsiavut Government.

The study area is 14,906 square kilometres – or three times larger than Prince Edward Island – and is located in the coastal waters adjacent to Torngat Mountains National Park. An Indigenous protected area will conserve a portion of the Labrador Shelf Marine Region, which will increase connectivity and protect the fjords that extend into Torngat Mountains National Park. These areas are critical to the many species that thrive in this region, including beluga whales, seals, breeding and migrating seabirds and waterfowl, and a variety of fish. The MOU confirms the proposed study area boundary as well as the topics to be assessed and the consultations to be undertaken during the feasibility assessment.

In addition to conserving biodiversity, protecting these ecosystems in northern Labrador will contribute to the vitality of Inuit culture and traditions and the well-being of Labrador Inuit, who have been stewards of this region since time immemorial. Labrador Inuit have extensive knowledge of the land, water and sea ice in this area and are sustained, to this day, by its wildlife. Inuit knowledge, coupled with science, will be used as the foundation for the feasibility assessment of the Indigenous protected area.

The MOU underlines the Government of Canada's commitment to reconciliation through a renewed nation-to-nation and government-to-government relationship with Indigenous Peoples, and the shared interest of Parks Canada and the Nunatsiavut Government to protect the ecological and cultural integrity of the terrestrial and marine ecosystems of northern Labrador.

Quotes

"Labrador Inuit culture, knowledge, livelihood and health is directly connected to the ocean. The signing of this Memorandum of Understanding with the Government of Canada is another important step in managing the



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waters off our coast. We look forward to continued progress towards establishing an Indigenous protected area, and in safeguarding Labrador Inuit culture and identity, as well as the fish and animals that we rely on for food.”

Johannes Lampe

President of Nunatsiavut

“Biodiversity loss and the changing climate are threatening ecosystems across Canada and demand urgent action from governments. The beautiful yet fragile ocean ecosystems of the northern Labrador coast are no exception. Today’s agreement is an important step forward in the creation of a new Indigenous protected area three times the size of Prince Edward Island. This milestone demonstrates how much we can achieve to protect nature when we work together, advancing the goals of reconciliation, for the benefit of Labrador Inuit communities and all Canadians.”

The Honourable Steven Guilbeault

Minister of Environment and Climate Change and Minister responsible for Parks Canada

“Our oceans are so important to Canadians – especially to coastal and Indigenous communities whose cultures and livelihoods are tightly interwoven with marine ecosystems and species. That’s why we’re taking such significant steps to protect our oceans and coasts and ensure their health and abundance for future generations.”

The Honourable Joyce Murray

Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard

“The Nunatsiavut area of northern Labrador is a great source of pride for Newfoundlanders, Labradorians and all Canadians. The Labrador Shelf Marine Region adjacent to Torngat Mountains National Park represent rich marine ecosystems full of species and wildlife that have sustained the Labrador Inuit for centuries and continue to provide the region with economic opportunities. I am thrilled that the Government of Canada and the Nunatsiavut Government are committed to advancing toward the protection of this remarkable area, together, by signing this Memorandum of Understanding.”

Yvonne Jones

Member of Parliament, Labrador, Newfoundland and Labrador

Quick Facts

- The feasibility assessment and associated process will contribute directly to the Nunatsiavut Government’s Imappivut Marine Planning Initiative and work toward achieving the goals outlined in the Statement of Intent for Imappivut.
- Engagement sessions and consultations with Indigenous and local communities and stakeholders, along with careful consideration of the social, environmental and economic benefits and impacts of establishing an Indigenous protected area under the *Canada National Marine Conservation Areas Act*, will play an important part in the feasibility assessment. Should an Indigenous protected area be deemed feasible, an Impacts and Benefits Agreement would be negotiated, in accordance with the provisions of the Labrador Inuit and Nunavik Inuit land claims agreements.
- Northern Labrador is home to the cold offshore Labrador Current, which is famous for carrying a steady stream of icebergs to lower latitudes and mixing with the Gulf Current off the Grand Banks of Newfoundland.

Related Links

- [Proposed Indigenous Protected Area in Northern Labrador Coast](#)
- [Government of Canada and Nunatsiavut Government working together to protect Northern Labrador Coast – September 2019 Announcement](#)
- [Sea to Sea to Sea - National Marine Conservation Areas System](#)
- [Canada National Marine Conservation Areas Act](#)
- [Imappivut – Nunatsiavut Marine Plan](#)
- [Imappivut Statement of Intent](#)

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Contacts

Kaitlin Power
Press Secretary
Office of the Minister of Environment and Climate Change
819-230-1557
kaitlin.power@ec.gc.ca

Media Relations
Parks Canada Agency
855-862-1812
pc.media@pc.gc.ca

Media Relations
Fisheries and Oceans Canada
613-990-7537
media.xncr@dfo-mpo.gc.ca

Bert Pomeroy
Director of Communications
Nunatsiavut Government
709-896-8582
bert.pomeroy@nunatsiavut.com

*High demand in translation due to COVID-19 has delayed the rendition of this document in Inuttitut Roman Orthography. The translated version will be made available as quickly as possible.



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