

STRATEGIC PLAN

2021 - 2025

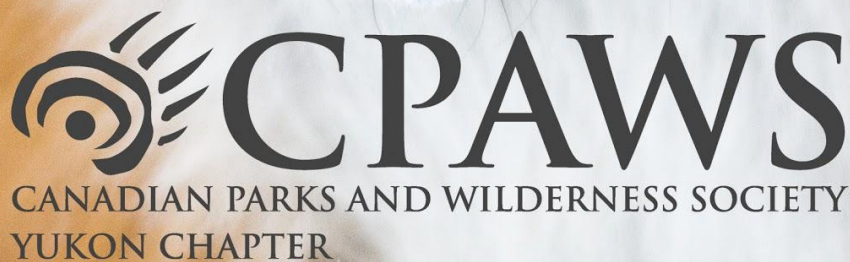




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BACKGROUND

When CPAWS Yukon last developed a Strategic Plan in 2017, the organization was transitioning from a period where we focused exclusively on the Peel Watershed, to working on a range of conservation issues across the Yukon.

In the years since, the organization has transformed and successfully transitioned to take on a range of new projects, in alignment with the 2017-2020 Strategic Plan. In that time, the organization has grown from 5 to 9 staff.

In preparation for this strategic planning process, a survey was completed by each member of staff and board. This allowed us to identify a range of themes and perspectives prior to gathering for the in person session.

On February 28th and 29th 2020, CPAWS staff and board gathered for a two-day strategic planning session, hosted by David Thomson of TREC. Almost immediately after the conclusion of the meetings, the COVID-19 pandemic escalated and put this planning process on hold. In the intervening months, we have taken on many lessons and changes. We have also had the addition of several new board members.

This 4-year strategic plan is an amalgamation of the output from the February meetings, and learnings that occurred during the months that followed. It will be used to guide our work and decision making, but it is a working document and can be updated as needed over the duration of the planning period.

KEY DEFINITIONS

Biodiversity: the variety of animal, plant, fungal and microbial life in any given area.

Land Use Planning: a process created by the Umbrella Final Agreement, designed to make collaborative decisions about conservation and development across landscapes.

IPCAs: places where Indigenous governments lead in protecting and conserving land and waters through Indigenous laws, governance and knowledge systems.



MISSION STATEMENT AND VALUES

MISSION

CPAWS Yukon aims to conserve the Yukon's ecologically and culturally important lands and waters for all. The world is rapidly losing its wilderness, and conservation must be a pillar in the Yukon so that our rich wildlife and diverse landscapes receive the protection they deserve.

VALUES

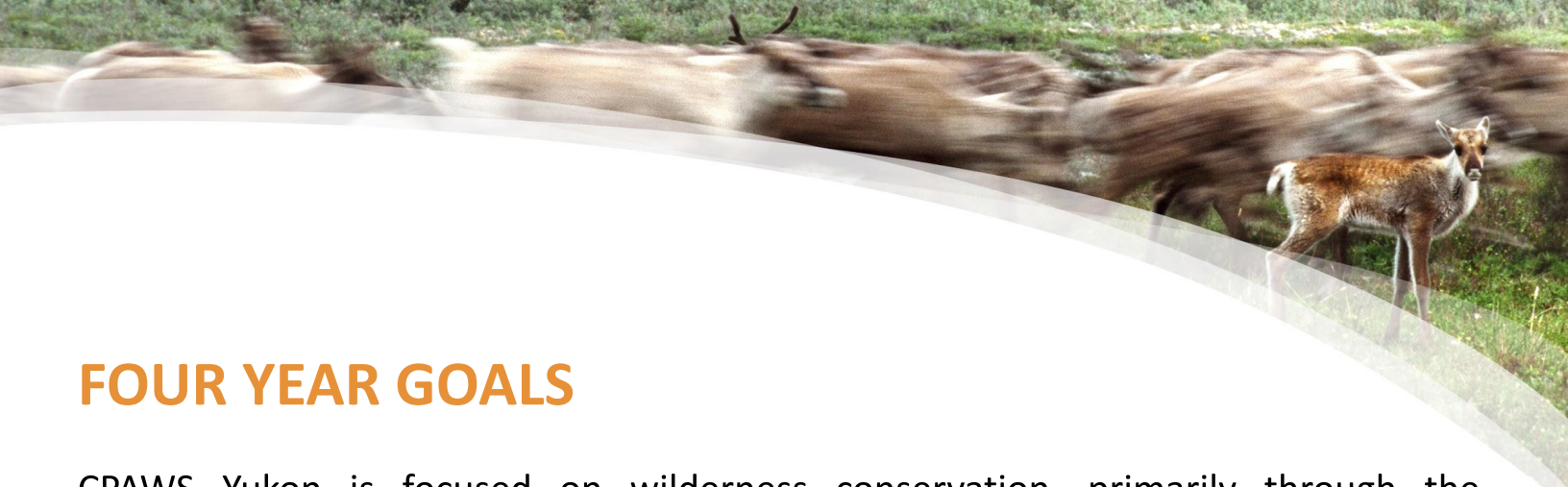
- We advocate for wilderness protection and believe that this can only be achieved through collaboration;
- We promote ecological integrity and a resilient, sustainable future for the Yukon;
- We respect First Nations and the Inuvialuit and their traditional territories across the Yukon. We recognize that if we are to be truly successful in our efforts to conserve wilderness, we must work collaboratively with First Nations & the Inuvialuit in the spirit of reconciliation;
- Our efforts are grounded in respect for both traditional knowledge and western science;
- We respect the Yukon First Nation Final Agreements, the Inuvialuit Final Agreement, and other Aboriginal rights and titles;
- Climate change is the greatest challenge of our era and CPAWS Yukon is committed to working with Yukon First Nations to face this challenge, and to our role in helping conserve intact boreal forests, wetlands, and biodiverse habitats in Canada's north;
- We are committed to Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion. We recognize that as an organization, we still have significant progress to make in this area.



FIVE YEAR STRATEGIC VISION

By 2026, CPAWS Yukon will have helped to ensure that the following statements are true:

- 55% of the Peel Watershed has been permanently protected, with completed management plans in place. The additional 28% of the region marked for interim protection remains intact.
- The Dawson land use planning process has been completed, with around 50% of the region protected.
- Planning is complete, or underway, in the Northern Tutchone planning region, and the Beaver River Watershed remains roadless.
- Ross River Dena Council have completed planning and are en route to establishing an Indigenous Protected and Conserved Area (IPCA).
- Threats to the Arctic Refuge have been averted, and the future of the Porcupine Caribou Herd is assured.
- There is a clear path to establishment of IPCAs in the traditional territories of the Inuvialuit and Yukon First Nations; both with and without Final Agreements.
- The Yukon public has embraced the idea of protecting a Yukon-wide network of large interconnected areas, with each of the territory's ecoregions adequately represented.
- Any resource extraction is done sustainably with an environment first lens that includes linkages to public health, with any new development being done with the minimal need for new roads.
- Effective legislative controls are in place to protect the Yukon's wildlife and natural ecosystems.



FOUR YEAR GOALS

CPAWS Yukon is focused on wilderness conservation, primarily through the development and maintenance of parks and protected areas. This means that we advocate for the protection of ecological integrity, biodiversity and the maintenance of existing protected areas. When considering any new opportunities, they should be considered through this lens.

Over the coming four years, we have identified the following goals for the organization. Priority Goals will be first to receive our attention; Secondary Goals, though still important, will receive attention where capacity is available. Operational Goals are those that contribute to the overall health of the organization, such as operations and administration, human resources and fundraising.

PRIORITY GOALS

Goal 1: Protecting the Porcupine Caribou Herd

Each year, the Porcupine Caribou Herd migrates from the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska to the Northwest Territories via the Yukon. They are the last great barren ground caribou herd in Canada and their survival is critical to the people of the Yukon and the NWT, particularly the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation in Old Crow and the Gwich'in in the NWT who rely on the herd to sustain their way of life.

Objective 1: The imminent threats of leasing and seismic testing in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge have been averted, and efforts to permanently protect the Arctic Refuge are underway.

Objective 2: Appropriate protection exists for the herd within the Yukon.

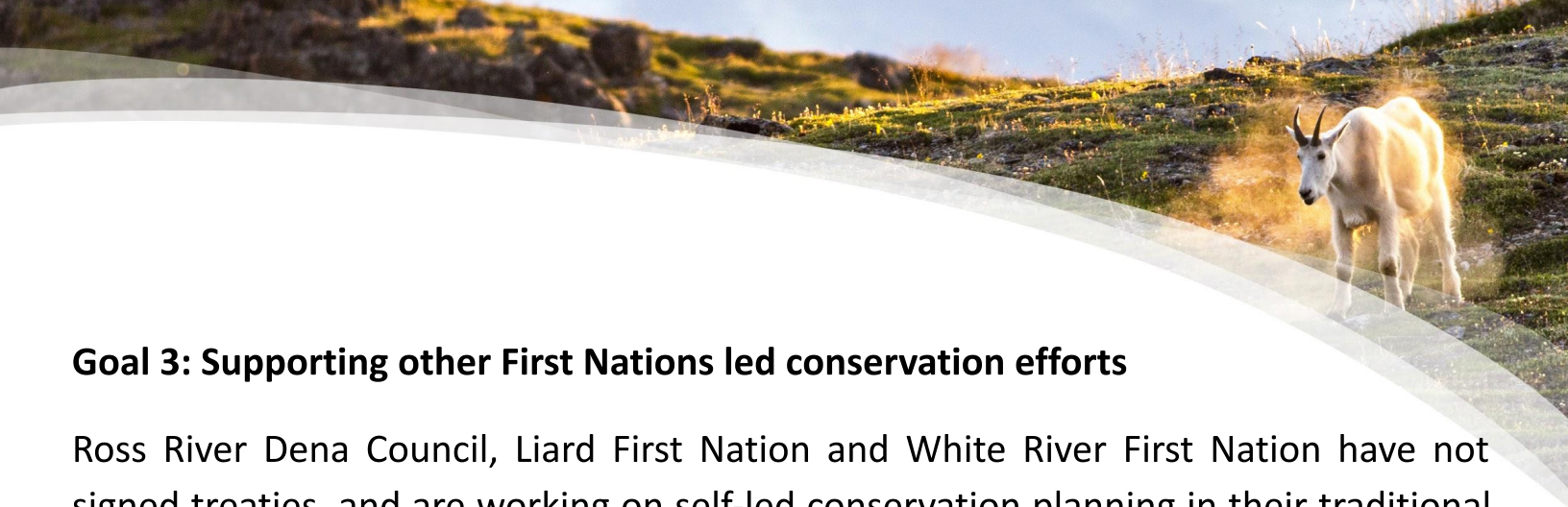


Goal 2: Supporting First Nations in Land Use Planning

In 2019, a new Dawson Land Use Planning Commission was formed, and since that time, they have been working to develop a land use plan for the region. Because the area is better known for gold than for its critical ecological and cultural values, there is the need for a campaign in support of the conservation goals identified by Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, as well as other critical ecological hotspots.

We are also expecting a new land use planning process to begin in 2021, in a different region of the Yukon. We believe it is important to support the First Nations who have traditional territory in this region, at the level that they feel is helpful.

- **Objective 1:** CPAWS Yukon is well positioned to provide support to any First Nation undertaking regional land use planning, with the skills and capacity to help them achieve their conservation goals.
- **Objective 2:** Yukoners understand and are more engaged with the values of the regions undergoing mining.
- **Objective 3:** Each completed regional land use plan includes protection for at least 50% of the region, ample connectivity and consideration for how climate change may change the landscape in the future (climate refugia).
- **Objective 4:** Any First Nation who decides to undertake sub-regional land use planning has the support they need to achieve their conservation goals.



Goal 3: Supporting other First Nations led conservation efforts

Ross River Dena Council, Liard First Nation and White River First Nation have not signed treaties, and are working on self-led conservation planning in their traditional territories. They have an opportunity to establish new protected areas that would forever conserve their cultural and ecological values.

- **Objective 1:** The three First Nations without Final Agreements have the support that they require in order to achieve significant conservation in their traditional territory through the creation of an IPCA, or networks of IPCAs.

Goal 4: Defending land from transformative development

Over recent years, large landscape scale development has threatened areas where land use planning has not been completed. Local YESAB offices lack the mandate and resources to fully consider the future impacts and cumulative effects of these projects. This includes the Beaver River Watershed, which is under threat from a 65 km road, despite its clear ecological and cultural values. In order to maintain these regions, or at least to ensure that the decisions are made at the appropriate level, it is critical to support First Nations who are defending against transformative developments in their lands.

- **Objective 1:** No transformative projects are completed in the absence of land use planning.
- **Objective 2:** The McIntyre Creek area is free from new development, and there is a path to the establishment of a new urban park or other long-term protection.
- **Objective 3:** Popular recreation areas, where formal protection may come in the future, are well managed to ensure they are not overly degraded.



Goal 5: Ensuring a strong framework for environmental protection

Yukon currently has a patchwork of legislation and regulations, some of which remain largely unchanged since the early 20th century. In order to ensure strong management of the land in areas where land use planning has not been completed and in areas marked for development, it is important that these are brought up to date and that strong rules are in place to protect land and wildlife.

- **Objective 1:** The Yukon has a strong and modern regulatory framework in place, including a Species at Risk Act, a Wetlands Policy, 21st century mining regulations, mining road regulations and off-road vehicle regulations.





SECONDARY GOALS

The following goals will be addressed where there is an opportunity and where they do not interfere with the primary goals.

Goal 6: Embracing Emerging Concepts

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the way we think about the world around us. While not new, holistic approaches like One Health that consider the linkages of human health, wildlife health, and land health are gaining new prominence. IPCAs and Indigenous land guardians are becoming key pillars of modern conservation around the world. In order for CPAWS Yukon to remain at the forefront of our sector, it is critical that we continue to embrace these and other emerging ideas, and that we incorporate them into our work in a meaningful way.

Goal 7: Addressing Climate Change

Climate change is the most urgent issue of our era and unless it's addressed, changes to the landscape and biodiversity mean that our conservation efforts could be undermined. We are starting to understand more about how undisturbed natural ecosystems have built in resilience enabling them to adapt to changes including climate change. Though we are not a climate change organization, this goal will be addressed wherever it aligns with our mandate. This includes considering climate mitigation in our conservation efforts, working towards nature based climate solutions and providing support to the Yukon's nascent youth climate activist movement.

Goal 8: National Parks in the Yukon

Parks Canada has long held an interest in creating a national park within Region 7, which straddles the Yukon and northern British Columbia. CPAWS Yukon will support First Nations in this region, and others, who wish to have a National Park established within their traditional territory.



OPERATIONAL GOALS

Goal 9: Commit to Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

CPAWS Yukon recognizes both the historical and current practices of colonialism and racism within the conservation sector. We also recognize that these issues remain within our own organization, and that we have work to do if we want to fully live our values. Through our work to get ready for reconciliation, deliberate recruitment practices and other internal processes, we will commit to ongoing learning and enacting change within the organization.

Goal 10: Diversified Funding

Since 2017, CPAWS Yukon has successfully diversified our funding beyond the Peel Watershed. At the same time, the organization has grown dramatically in order to meet new conservation opportunities, and a reliance on a small number of large funders, combined with the need for increased funding, makes our position more precarious. In order to ensure that we are able to achieve our ambitious conservation agenda, we will need to continue working to diversify our funding and attract new financial supporters.

Goal 11: Replacing the CPAWS office

CPAWS Yukon owns the building that we operate in, but in order for it to remain viable as a place of work, it would require an extremely costly overhaul. For this reason, over the next four years we will seek to either partner with a developer to build a new mixed commercial/residential building at the existing location or to purchase a new space and sell the existing building.



Goal 12: Expanding and Engaging our Membership

Conservation organizations like CPAWS Yukon are reliant on a strong and active membership base, who are willing to volunteer, take action and speak out on the issues that are important to us, as well as to donate. We also know that many people look to us for leadership on environmental issues in the Yukon. For these reasons, it is critical to expand our membership, while maintaining strong links to, and appreciation for our existing members.

ONGOING COMMITMENTS

Over the next four years, the following activities will remain priorities for the organization on a day-to-day basis. They are not strategic goals, but are captured here because they will require a significant allocation of resources:

- Maintain a positive and compelling communications style, with the goal of normalizing large-scale, representative conservation as something that simply makes sense in the Yukon.
- Participate in other conservation exercises by working with First Nations and federal or territorial governments. This may be through initiatives such as Pathway to Target 1 or other localised park planning processes.
- Engage in YESAB and other government-led planning and policy processes in order to minimize impacts on parks, protected areas, critical wildlife habitats or delicate ecosystems.
- Support the Yukon Conservation Society and other non-governmental organizations on mining and energy issues where they impact on parks, protected areas, critical wildlife habitats or delicate ecosystems.
- Participate, as appropriate, in campaigns led by CPAWS national and other chapters.



CPAWS ROLE IN ISSUES THAT INDIRECTLY AFFECT CONSERVATION

While it is tempting to get involved in any number of environmental issues across the territory, it is important to remain focused on our mandate. For this reason, CPAWS will look to other organizations to take leadership when it comes to work in these areas:

- Work on energy or mining issues, where it does not have a direct impact on a park, protected area, areas proposed for protection, critical wildlife habitat or a delicate ecosystem; and where it does not impose unwanted transformative development before land use planning can occur.
- Any other environmental issue that does not relate directly to parks, protected areas, critical wildlife habitat or delicate ecosystems.

