



Environment and Natural Resources

Strategic Plan 2015 - 2020





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Minister J. Michael Miltenberger



I am pleased to present the 2015-2020 Strategic Plan for the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (ENR).

The environment is a critical priority for the people of the Northwest Territories (NWT). ENR recognizes the importance of air, land, water, forests and wildlife for traditional, cultural, economic and spiritual purposes. Healthy ecosystems are essential for maintaining sustainable livelihoods in the NWT.

The goals and objectives as set out in the plan will help the Department to effectively achieve its vision and mission, which are complementary to the Government of the Northwest Territories' Sustainable Development Policy and the Land Use and Sustainability Framework. Departmental priorities as set out through this Strategic Plan are compatible with the mandate of ENR as established through the ENR Establishment Policy.

Since Devolution, ENR has taken on a greater role in managing the resources of the NWT. The new responsibilities include water management and administering the *Waters Act*; management of the Traditional Economy Programs; the Cumulative Impact Monitoring Program; and administration of the *Territorial Parks Act*.

ENR continues to collaboratively manage wildlife and forest resources; advance transboundary water agreements; work with communities on source water protection and community-based water management; improve waste reduction programs including development of additional recycling and waste reduction opportunities; advance conservation planning; lead the GNWT on climate change adaptation and mitigation efforts; protect species at risk; and assess biodiversity.

This Strategic Plan outlines the approach ENR will take during the next five years to integrate these additional responsibilities into its mandate and improve program delivery.


It will also allow ENR to meet the challenges of a changing world and achieve long-term goals efficiently and effectively.

An Action Plan detailing ENR's strategic priorities and measurable targets will be released in early 2016.





Deputy Minister, Ernie Campbell



I am pleased to present the 2015-2020 Strategic Plan for ENR. ENR is responsible for providing a large number of programs and services across the NWT, which is a vast land mass with important natural features.

ENR staff are dedicated and passionate about our environment, including the air, land, water, forests and wildlife. ENR has five regional offices and a number of local offices, in addition to its headquarters in Yellowknife.

The additional mandated responsibilities to ENR following Devolution has allowed for a broadening of our holistic approach to ecosystem-based management. This Strategic Plan has been developed to help focus the Department's direction post-Devolution, look towards our evolution and take the necessary steps to meet our increased mandate efficiently and effectively.

Consistent with ENR's collaborative approach, staff were involved in the inclusive development process for this Strategic Plan. The vision, mission, values and goals of the Strategic Plan represent ENR's future direction.

The goals outlined in this Strategic Plan position ENR to successfully deliver its programs and services. The goals are equal in importance and interrelated.

The departmental values will guide staff in their work and interactions with our many partners for the benefit of all residents of the Northwest Territories.

ENR is committed to working collaboratively and cooperatively with our partners toward the vision of this Strategic Plan, "healthy ecosystems and sustainable livelihoods thriving now and into the future."

What ENR does

Environmental Monitoring and Research

Input into Regulatory System Financial and Business Planning

Forest Stewardship and Management

Partnerships

Waste Reduction

Respecting Aboriginal Rights and Third Party Interests

Balancing Conservation and Economic Development Training

Spill Management Communication Recycling

Traditional Knowledge

Analysis and Reporting

Traditional Economy Manage and Remediate Contaminated Sites

Legislation Wildlife Health and Habitat Research and Monitoring

Waste Prevention Promote Awareness and Understanding

Scientific Information

Licenses and Permits Compliance and Enforcement

Reporting on Status of all NWT Species

Community and Regional-level Programs

Conservation Area Establishment

Web Development and Design

Public Education



Policy Development
Strategic Planning

Field Operations

Habitat and Biodiversity

Media Relations

Environmental Protection

Leadership

Information to the Public

Forest Fire
Management

Air Quality

Weather and Snow Monitoring

Address Data Gaps Respond to Climate Change

Coordination

Technical Expertise and Advice

Transboundary Water Agreements

Assessment of Effects on Aquatic Ecosystems Community Based Monitoring Source Water Protection

GIS Services Remote Sensing Aquatic Ecosystem Indicators Greening Government

Spatial Analysis Data and Information Management Environmental Assessments

Environmental Sample Analysis Understanding Cumulative Impacts Supporting Co-Management Partners Mapping

Setting a Path for Future Research and Science Integration Water Quality and Quantity Environmental Health and Safety Issues

Support Informed Environmental and Resource Management Decisions





Vision

Healthy ecosystems and sustainable livelihoods thriving now and into the future.





Mission

ENR actively collaborates to protect, manage and restore ecosystem health, promote environmental stewardship and support the wise use of natural resources for the benefit of ecosystems, which include the people of the NWT.



Guiding Approaches

Two guiding approaches underpin the role of ENR within the GNWT.

- 1) Ecosystem-based management
- 2) Sustainable Development

Ecosystem-based management considers the complex interactions between humans and the living and non-living environment. The goal of ecosystem-based management is to sustainably conserve or restore habitat quality to maintain ecosystem services.

Sustainable development is a key component of ENR's Establishment Policy and the GNWT Sustainable Development Policy. Sustainable Development is defined in both of these policies as:

Development of natural resources in a manner that ensures economic, social and cultural needs are met while maintaining ecosystem integrity and biological diversity and without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.

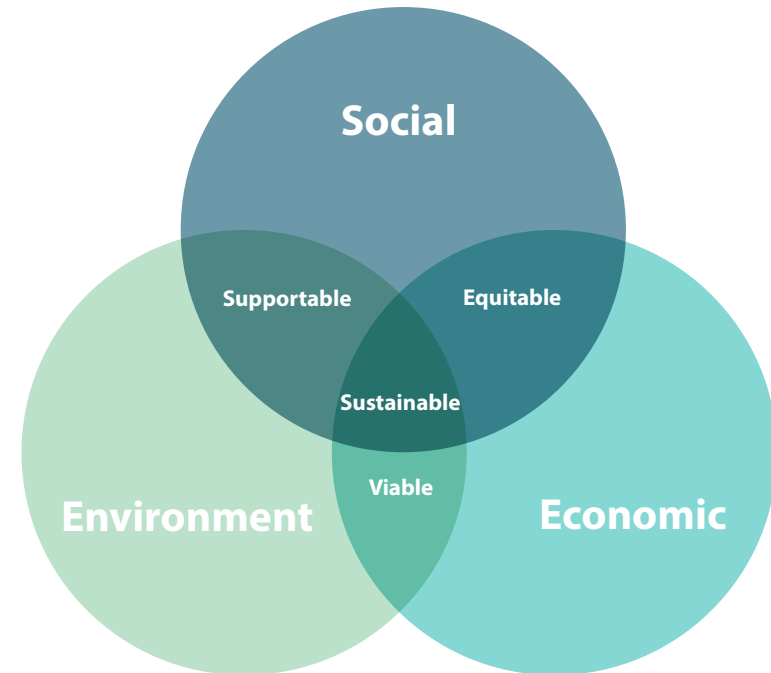
Note: The concepts of ecosystem services, ecosystem integrity and biological diversity are defined on page 38.





Guiding Approaches Continued

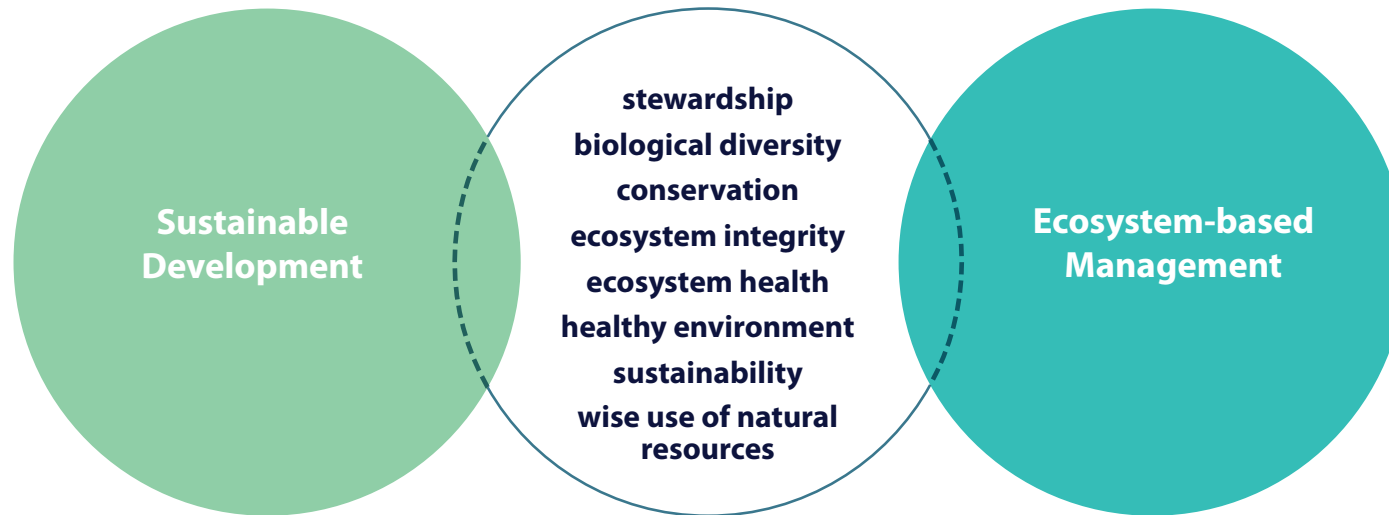
Sustainable development is represented as:





Guiding Approaches Continued

Visual representation of concepts related to sustainable development and ecosystem-based management:



ENR's mandate, as defined in ENR's Establishment Policy, and the mission in this Strategic Plan are ultimately about balance – this visual representation illustrates concepts and words related to our guiding approaches of sustainable development and ecosystem-based management. These guiding approaches are interrelated and form the foundation of ENR's mandate and mission.



Guiding Policies

Three guiding policies have been considered in the development of this Strategic Plan.

These guiding policies are:

- ENR Establishment Policy
- Sustainable Development Policy
- Land Use and Sustainability Framework

These policies are available online.
ENR's mission, values and goals are compatible with the principles and purposes of these policies.







Values

- We are role models for environmentally sustainable behaviour.
- We foster leadership within and outside our organization.
- We behave as professionals with accountability, integrity and transparency.
- We provide a safe and respectful work environment.
- We are a team committed to making a difference and celebrating successes.



Goals and Objectives

ENR has six goals to achieve the mission set out in this Strategic Plan. Many of the goals and objectives outlined on the following pages are interrelated and complementary; achieving one goal or objective may contribute to the achievement of another. Objectives may relate to multiple goal areas but have been placed under their most relevant goal area. Progress on the implementation of this Strategic Plan will be reported annually and available online.

Ecosystem Health

Public Service

People

Knowledge

Partnerships

Communications



Ecosystem Health

Conserve and protect healthy ecosystems and encourage the wise use of our natural resources.

Objectives:

- Proactively contribute to maintaining or improving NWT ecosystem integrity.
- Improve our understanding and management of cumulative effects.
- Improve our understanding and response to climate change.
- Promote and ensure compliance with ENR legislation and regulations.





Public Service

Demonstrate excellence in public service by collaboratively delivering effective and efficient policies, programs and legislation that are adaptable to change.

Objectives:

- Ensure effective and efficient delivery of ENR programs.
- Promote collaborative relationships with Aboriginal governments and provide a meaningful good governance approach to consultation.
- Promote a meaningful good governance approach to public engagement.
- Facilitate collaboration with other GNWT Departments.
- Support informed decision making in the regulatory and legislated processes in the NWT.





People

Cultivate dedicated, representative, innovative and knowledgeable staff that have opportunities to learn, grow and contribute.

Objectives:

- Promote employee satisfaction to retain dedicated and knowledgeable staff.
- Employees have access to, and support for, training that is relevant to their position.
- Continue implementing the GNWT Affirmative Action Policy in building a representative workforce.
- Employees are supported, able to meet their work objectives and recognized for exemplary work.



Knowledge

Support the collection, use and maintenance of traditional and local knowledge and sound science for transparent evidence-based decision-making.

Objectives:

- Be a leader in decision-making that meaningfully considers traditional and local knowledge and sound scientific information.
- Traditional knowledge is effectively, respectfully and appropriately incorporated into programs and services.
- Support and promote the GNWT Science Agenda.
- Maintain, and make publicly available, sound information that is understandable and relevant to the residents of the NWT.





Partnerships

Develop, foster and promote effective partnerships.

Objectives:

- Establish and promote effective and diverse partnerships with clear mutual obligations that contribute to ENR's mission.
- Support programs that offer opportunities for Aboriginal and community capacity building.



Communications

Strive for meaningful, open and timely information exchange within and external to ENR.

Objectives:

- Support and maintain meaningful, open and timely *external* communications to build upon, and sustain, public support for ENR's vision and mission.
- Support and maintain meaningful, open and timely *internal* communications.

Photo: GNWT/ENR M. Swallow
Caption: ENR employees, left to right
Noni Paulette and Darin Bagshaw.

Glossary

Ecosystems: include all living and non-living things in a given area and their interactions with each other.

Biodiversity or biological diversity: includes the variety of all living species, including humans, and their relationships to each other. This includes the differences in genes, species and ecosystems.

Ecosystem integrity or ecological integrity: is when the components of an ecosystem are healthy, intact, resilient and able to persist into the future.

Ecosystem services can be arranged into four broad functions:

- Provisioning – such as the production of food, water and other renewable resources
- Regulating – such as the control of climate, weather and disease
- Supporting – such as the nutrient cycles whereby everything in nature is used, recycled and returned as useful products (e.g., soil formation and pollination)
- Cultural – such as spiritual and recreational benefits

Stewardship: is everyone taking responsibility for land, water and resources and working collaboratively to safeguard what is important, whether it is traditional values, environmental conditions or the prosperity of Northerners.



GNWT/ENR K. Trembath. Caption: ENR employees, left to right, Katherine Trembath and Laurel McDonald.



Photo: GNWT/ENR J. Chambers. Caption: NWT Wildland Fire Operations team receiving a 2015 Premier's Award.



Photo: GNWT/ENR J. McKay. Caption: North Slave Region (Taiga Shield Ecoregion).Caption: Strategic Plan Core Group: Left to right - Claudia Haas, Lubaki Zantoko, Lisa Dyer, Susan Craig, Erin Kelly, Tony Morris, Michelle Hannah and Meghan Beveridge.



Photo: Pat Kane. Caption: ENR employee, Marti Lys.

