



GOAL II

To improve our understanding of ecosystems and increase our resource management capability.

Aboriginal and Local Involvement Initiatives

In the NWT, resource management capabilities – the methods we use to manage land use activities and to assess the impacts of human activities – have changed rapidly in the past few years, and continue to evolve.

Recent changes include the creation of new boards, committees, and processes. Some of these new tools differ between the Inuvialuit Settlement Region (ISR) and the rest of the NWT (often called the Mackenzie Valley). Together, they form the basis for developing effective processes for integrated adaptive ecological management in the entire NWT (see diagram in Box 4).

A summary of these tools is provided below.

See → *Appendix 3* for more on the goals and area of influence of each of the tools available for effective adaptive ecological management in the NWT.

The Co-management System

Ecological management responsibilities in some NWT regions are shared between federal/territorial governments and local Aboriginal people. Legislated *co-management boards* exist in the ISR, the Sahtu Settlement Area (SSA) and the Gwichin Settlement Area (GSA). New co-management boards will soon be instated in the Tlicho Lands. Most boards were created as a public body, with representation from the federal government, the GNWT, and Elders or beneficiaries of the settlement area.

Co-management boards that have direct responsibilities in matters of biodiversity use and management are usually called *Wildlife Co-management Boards* (WMBs). The powers and responsibilities of each WMB are detailed in their respective land claim agreement. Each agreement is enshrined in federal legislation and protected by the Canadian Constitution.

The *co-management system* sets the stage for many aspects of ecological management in the NWT.

See → *Goal I Sustainable Use of Wildlife* for more information on how each Agreement defines “wildlife”, on local and regional participation in ecological management, both within and outside land claim settlement areas and on non-legislated management boards related to some harvested species.

See → *Goal IV* for more information on land claim settlement legislation and agreements.

See → *Appendix 3* for a list of biodiversity-related co-management organizations set up under land claim agreements.

Ecological management

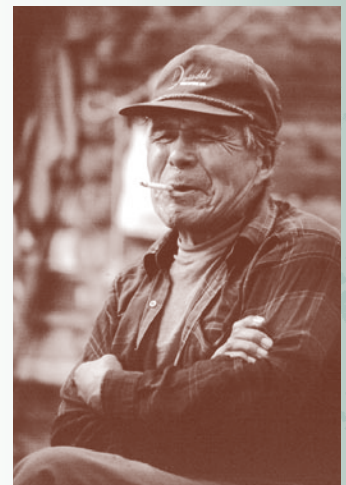
“Management of human activities so that ecosystem... processes continue at appropriate temporal and spatial scales.

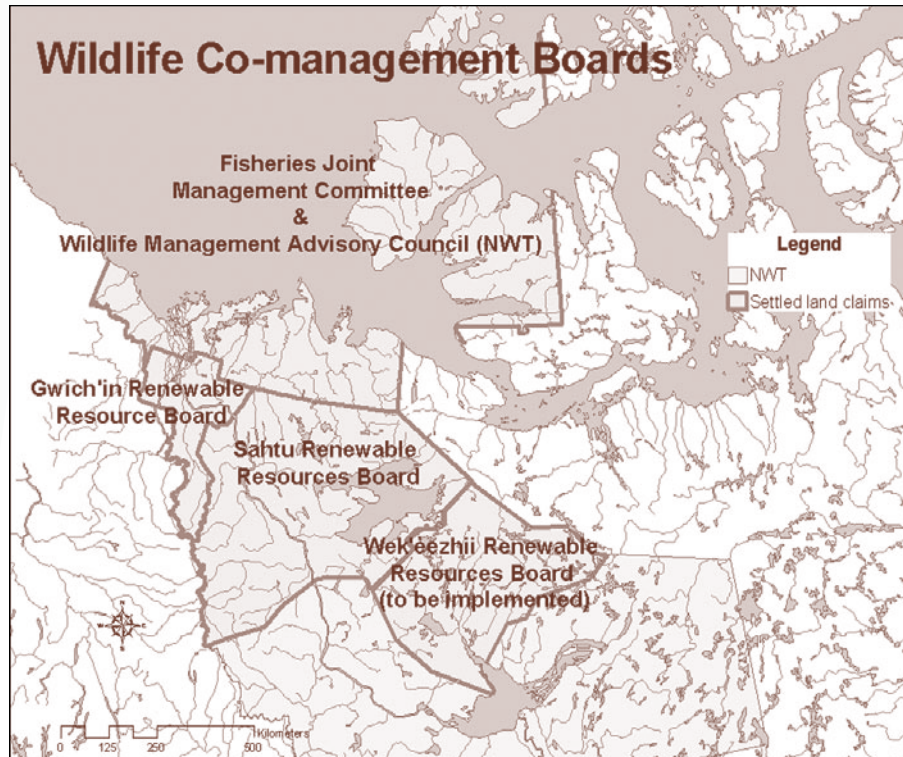
Ecological management is also referred to as ecosystem management.”

CBS 1995

Elder from Fort Providence, Fred Sabourin.

Photo: Courtesy of Leslie Leong





Update on Land Claim Agreements in the NWT as of 2003

- Inuvialuit Final Agreement signed in 1984.
- Gwich'in Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement signed in 1992.
- Sahtu Dene and Métis Comprehensive Claim Agreement signed in 1993.
- Dogrib Land Claim and Self-government Agreement-In-Principle signed in 2000.
- Deh Cho First Nations Interim Measure and Framework Agreements signed in 2001.
- Tlicho Agreement signed in 2003.

Find more:

☞ www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/pr/pub/indigen/partn_e.html and

☞ www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/pr/agr/index_e.html

Like all co-management boards, WMBs have a legislated mandate but work independently from governments. Mandates may differ amongst boards, but all relate to renewable resources and apply to each respective settlement area.

WMBs generally have the power to:

- establish policies and propose regulations on wildlife harvest;
- approve plans for the management of protection of wildlife populations and habitats;
- approve the designation of conservation areas and endangered species;
- approve regulations related to renewable resources;
- advise government on draft legislation and new protected areas, land use policies, provincial/territorial or international agreements, cooperative management and wildlife research; and
- advise on plans for training and public education related to renewable resources.

WMBs generally have a responsibility to:

- establish rules and procedures for consultation; and
- advise, participate or lead in harvesting studies and renewable resource research.

Boards have varying capacities; most include GIS abilities, research funding and an increasing expertise in conducting studies and storing traditional knowledge on renewable resources.

See → [Appendix 4](#) for more information on GIS capacity in the NWT.

WMBs were established and function as the primary tool of renewable resource management in areas where land claims have been settled. For at least a decade, the boards have been gaining valuable experience in elder-youth-community participation, public consultation, northern wildlife research based on community priorities, and the effective integration of traditional knowledge into ecological management.

Some land claim agreements also establish a co-management system for the management of National Parks within the settlement area. The roles and responsibilities of **National Park management committees** include providing advice on boundaries, management plans and guidelines, and fieldwork and research in the park. These committees also ensure that harvesting is managed in accordance with existing harvesting rights in the area.

See → Goal I *Protected Areas* for more information.

See → Appendix 3 for information on boards and committees related to ecological management in the NWT.

Matrix of Actions – The Co-Management System

CBD ¹	CBS ²	Actions in the NWT	Collaborators	Find More ³
8j	1.37 6.3 6.8 7.1 7.3	Continue cooperation with co-management boards and implementation of a co-management system in ecological management and the sustainable use of biological resources.	Many partners	🔗 W1 W2 W3
8j	1.37 6.3 6.8 7.1 7.3	Continue cooperation with National Park management committees .	PCA and many partners	

¹ Refers to appropriate Articles of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity.

² Refers to appropriate Strategic Directions in the Canadian Biodiversity Strategy.

³ Find more information in documents (📖), in web pages (🔗) or follow up on another Goal in this report (→).

Aboriginal Local-to-Regional Approach in Community Consultation

Many programs on ecological management in the NWT follow a local-to-regional approach.

See → Goal I *Sustainable Use of Wildlife* for more information on the local-to-regional approach.

In land claim settlement areas, **Hunters and Trappers Committees** (Inuvialuit) and **Renewable Resource Councils** (Gwich'in and Sahtu) from each community forward their members' concerns, issues, and findings to a **Regional Committee** (Gwich'in and Sahtu) or **Game Council** (Inuvialuit). These regional groups and the WMBs bring all input and make recommendations from these findings to other organizations in and outside the region. This approach greatly facilitates local input and consultation on any biodiversity-related issues.

Outside of areas with settled land claims, regional integration of environmental decisions is greatly facilitated by Aboriginal groups, organizations and governments. Aboriginal governments have established departments responsible for leadership, management and consultation

Elder at Old Cazon Homestead, Trout River.

Photo: Courtesy of Leslie Leong



on land use, environmental and wildlife-related issues in their traditional territories. These departments include:

- Denendeh (Dene traditional territories):
Dene Nation – Environment and Lands Division
- Akaitcho Territory:
Akaitcho Territory Government – Lands and Environment
- Deh Cho:
Deh Cho First Nations
- Tlicho Lands:
Tlicho Government (formerly known as Dogrib Treaty 11 Council) –
Land Administration

Outside areas with settled land claims, several *resource committees* facilitate communication between local organizations and local groups on issues related to the environment and wildlife. These committees include:

- Aboriginal Wildlife Harvesters Committee (Fort Resolution);
- Wildlife, Land and Environment Committee (Lutsel K'e);
- Denendeh Resource Committee (Fort Simpson);
- Fort Providence Resource Management Board; and
- Dogrib Renewable Resource Committee (soon to be replaced by Wek'èezhii Renewable Resources Board, according to the Tlicho Agreement).

See → [Goal I Sustainable Use of Wildlife](#) for more information on the co-management approach.

The *Denendeh Environmental Working Group (DEWG)*, chaired by the Environment and Lands Division of the Dene Nation, organizes a series of ongoing workshops to gather and share information on ecological-social issues of particular interest to all Dene. DEWG's most recent workshops have focused on the impacts of climate change with respect to forests, water, fish, and invasive species in the NWT. Each workshop is community-driven and held in a different NWT region. The workshops are proving to be an effective way for people from all regions to share and exchange ideas and traditional knowledge on complex ecological issues.

See → [Goal I Climate Change](#) for more information on climate change initiatives.

Aboriginal Elders

Photo: Courtesy of Leslie Leong



Matrix of Actions – Aboriginal Local-to-Regional Approach in Community Consultation

CBD ¹	CBS ²	Actions in the NWT	Collaborators	Find More ³
8j	1.37 2.3 6.3 6.8 7.1	Continue facilitation and work with Hunters and Trappers Committees and the Game Council using a local-to-regional approach to the co-management system in the ISR.	WMAC-NWT, FJMC, HTC, IGC	🔗 W3 ➔ Goal I
8j	1.37 2.3 6.3 6.8 7.1	Continue facilitation and work with Renewable Resources Councils and regional committees using a local-to-regional approach to the co-management system in the SSA.	SRRB, RRCs	🔗 W1 ➔ Goal I
8j	1.37 2.3 6.3 6.8 7.1	Continue facilitation and work with Renewable Resources Councils and regional committees using a local-to-regional approach to the co-management system in the GSA.	GRRB, RRCs	🔗 W2 ➔ Goal I
8j	1.37 2.3 6.3 6.8 7.1	Continue working with Hunters and Trappers Associations, Harvesters Committees, Renewable Resource Committees and other local wildlife harvester organizations using a local-to-regional approach in the NWT.	Many partners including: GNWT, EC, DFO, Dene Nation	➔ Goal I
8j	1.37 2.3 6.3 6.8 7.1	Continue working with Dene Nation – Environment and Lands Division using a co-management approach to wildlife programs occurring in the Dene traditional territories.	Many partners including: GNWT, EC, DFO	🔗 W4 ➔ Goal I
8j	1.37 2.3 6.3 6.8 7.1	Continue working with the Akaiitcho Territory Government – Lands and Environment using a co-management approach to wildlife programs occurring in the Akaiitcho Territory.	Many partners including: GNWT, EC, DFO, Dene Nation	🔗 W5 ➔ Goal I
8j	1.37 2.3 6.3 6.8 7.1	Continue working with the Deh Cho First Nations using a co-management approach to wildlife programs occurring in the Deh Cho.	Many partners including: GNWT, EC, DFO, Dene Nation	🔗 W6 ➔ Goal I
8j	1.37 2.3 6.3 6.8 7.1	Continue working with the Tlicho Government – Land Administration using a co-management approach to wildlife programs occurring in the Dogrib Territory.	Many partners including: GNWT, EC, DFO, Dene Nation	🔗 W7 ➔ Goal I
8j 17.1 17.2	1.37 1.85 1.87 2.3 3.1a 6.3 6.8 7.1	Continue to promote and support the Denendeh Environmental Working Group and community workshops on ecological-social issues of importance to the Dene.	Dene Nation, Elders and Youth from communities around the NWT	🔗 W4 ➔ Goal I

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"...The Aboriginal peoples of the Northwest Territories have acquired a vast store of traditional knowledge through their experience of centuries of living in close harmony with the land.

Aboriginal traditional knowledge is a valid and essential source of information about the natural environment and its resources, the use of natural resources, and the relationship of people to the land and to each other, and (the Government of the Northwest Territories) will incorporate traditional knowledge into government decisions and actions where appropriate."

GNWT Traditional Knowledge Policy

Traditional and Local Knowledge

Aboriginal traditional knowledge (TK) and local knowledge are an integral part of monitoring and research programs in the NWT.

In 1997, the GNWT adopted a government-wide *Traditional Knowledge Policy*. The Policy describes how GNWT will incorporate TK into planning and resource use decisions and actions using the following principles:

- The primary responsibility for the preservation and promotion of traditional knowledge lies with Aboriginal people;
- Government programs and services should be administered in a manner consistent with the beliefs, customs, knowledge, values and languages of the people being served;
- Traditional knowledge should be considered in the design and delivery of government programs and services;
- The primary focus of traditional knowledge research should be the Aboriginal community;
- Traditional knowledge is best preserved through continued use and practical application; and
- Oral tradition is a reliable source of information about traditional knowledge.

Many studies are designed specifically to gather information from a TK perspective. These studies use specialized techniques to gather and share information that is essential to our understanding of northern ecosystems.

Inventories of works and stories help in the sharing and transfer of TK and local knowledge by transferring oral concepts to the printed form or the interactive internet form. For example, in 1997 the GRRB published *Nành' Kak Geenjit Gwich'in Ginjik* (Gwich'in words about the land) and in 2001, *Gwindò Nành' Kak Geenjit Gwich'in Ginjik* (More Gwich'in words about the land) using this technique.

The Dene and Inuvialuit have named many landmarks based on the habitat they provide or on ecological characteristics. *Works on place names* in the NWT is providing rich and useful information on ecosystems, species and on people's traditional interactions with these places. For example, see *Lessons from the Land – Idaa Trail* on traditional Dogrib trails and places, and the Inuvialuit Place names virtual exhibit.

Interview techniques are one of the most efficient and accepted ways to *study TK and local knowledge* on very specific issues, questions or subjects. Interviews have provided valuable information on changes in wildlife and their habitat, and on how these changes are reflected in social life and in people's activities on the land.

An example of TK studies based on interview techniques includes:

- The Dogrib's *Whahedoo Naowoo* program, which focused on caribou, the ecological significance of place names, and ecosystems in the Tlicho area. The Dogrib continue to gather TK and record findings in searchable databases.

Interview techniques are often used to design *monitoring programs* that incorporate TK and community observations and concerns into to the process for detecting changes in northern ecosystems and societies. Monitoring programs that have been designed with a TK approach include:

- The *Traditional Ecological Knowledge Research in the Kache Tui Study Region*, which focused on TK to help develop an environmental monitoring program; and
- *Arctic Borderland Ecological Knowledge Co-op* has designed a program to record species and ecosystem changes and human adaptations to them.

Many *studies on harvest and land use* collect TK to form a more complete picture of the traditional link between people and the land. This information is used to help determine sustainable harvest levels and in land use planning. For example, the Deh Cho First Nation has been collecting TK on traditional hunting, fishing, and trapping areas and on species in their territory. The information is classified and summarized in a searchable database and in GIS.

GIS is increasingly used to record TK and local knowledge related to traditional land use, wildlife behaviour and habitat, and on gathering, hunting, and trapping activities. Searchable databases of TK and local knowledge provide a permanent repository of information and data that can be further researched and compared with other findings.

Many Aboriginal governments and organizations are increasing their ability to collect and study TK by investing in *GIS and database capacity*. Partnerships are formed to rapidly increase capacity. For example, the Sahtu GIS Project has developed as a successful partnership between SRRB, SLUPB, SLWB, and RWED, organizations with responsibility for resource management in the SSA, to share GIS expertise, equipment and data.

See → [Appendix 4](#) for more information on GIS capacity in the NWT.

See → [Goal III](#) for more information on the educational aspects of TK and local knowledge initiatives.

Traditional Knowledge

Knowledge and values, which have been acquired through experience, observation, from the land or from spiritual teachings, and handed down from one generation to another.

Traditional Knowledge Policy – GNWT 56.02

Local Ecological Knowledge

Knowledge of a specific area, and its ecosystems, that has been accumulated and tested over a lifetime.

GOAL II - ABORIGINAL AND LOCAL INVOLVEMENT

Dogrib Elder Helen Tobie teaches TK on the land at High School Camp 2002.

Photo: Courtesy of Stephen Cumming



Matrix of Actions – Traditional and Local Knowledge

CBD ¹	CBS ²	Actions in the NWT	Collaborators	Find More ³
8j 10c	2.3	Continue to support and apply the <i>Traditional Knowledge Policy</i> for the NWT.	GNWT	📖 W8
8j	1.63 2.3 2.4 7.3	Continue to conduct <i>inventories of works and stories</i> to help in the sharing and transfer of TK and local knowledge between and within generations.	Many partners	📖 W9
8j	1.63 2.3 2.4 7.3	Continue to conduct <i>works on place names</i> to expand knowledge about humans, ecosystems and species, and the traditional interactions between them.	Many partners	📖 W10
8j	1.63 2.3 2.4 7.3	Continue to conduct <i>studies of TK and local knowledge</i> in order to expand recorded ecological knowledge.	Many partners	📖 W11
8j	1.63 2.3 2.4 7.3	Continue to integrate TK and local knowledge in the design and implementation of <i>monitoring programs</i>	Many partners	📖 W11
8j	1.59 1.63 2.3 2.4 7.3	Continue to integrate TK and local knowledge in the design and implementation of <i>studies on harvest and land use</i> such as work done by the Deh Cho Land Use Planning Committee and other land use planning initiatives.	Many partners	📖 W12
8j	7.1 7.2 7.3	Continue to invest in <i>GIS and database capacity initiatives</i> , such as the Sahtu GIS Project, to facilitate the collection, study, and appropriate storing of geo-referenced information from TK and local knowledge.	Many partners	📖 W13

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Drying fish

Photo: Courtesy of Leslie Leong



References

Web Pages Cited in Matrices

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