

1. Identifying Special Features, based on inventories of the following types of factors:
 - rare elements (species, subspecies, populations & habitats)
 - biologically exceptional sites (important seasonal or migratory breeding, feeding, resting or wintering concentrations of animals; sites of high species richness; sites with endemic species; sites of species at the extremes of their ranges; highly productive habitats; micro-climate anomalies; and the biggest, best or smallest) [Yukon note: each one of these factors should not necessarily be enough in and of itself, as it is possible for certain activities to be regulated in such a way as to not significantly interfere with, for example, wintering concentrations of animals, as a result of the relative wilderness—low density--character of the Yukon overall. This net may be unnecessarily wide, especially if protected status means the elimination of most if not all economic activity.]
 - physically exceptional sites (unique landforms, physical features, hydrologic features, soils or geology);
 - paleontological resources (fossils); and
 - remnants (representative sites too small or fragmented to be captured within the representative protected areas)

Special Cultural Heritage Features:

- cultural landscapes (eg. a river modified for driving timber, a collection of mining shafts and associated structures, an abandoned village site or a historic site);
- structural features (eg, rock cairn, bridge, mortuary pole, fish weir);
- traditional use sites (eg, sacred site, berry ground, ritual bathing pool, resource gathering site, cemetery); and
- archeological sites (eg. shell midden, pictograph, burial site, kill site, shipwreck).

Special Recreation Features, identifying:

- provincially or regionally rare, scarce or unique recreation features (eg, large trees, high water falls, safe anchorages, hot springs, petroglyphs);
- areas with a variety or concentration of recreation features (eg, an area with a lake, waterfalls, rapids, an abundance of wildlife viewing opportunities);
- areas that meet the demand for natural environment recreation opportunities (eg, beaches, road accessible destinations, travel corridor sites, popular back country areas); and
- areas that have the ability to foster people's understanding and appreciation of protected areas.

2.- Evaluating Candidates for Special Features:

- rarity, scarcity and uniqueness
- viability, diversity, vulnerability, opportunity for public use and appreciation, and opportunity for scientific research
- cultural heritage significance
- ability to address public perceptions & demands

1. Issue The draft strategy does not identify the criteria which are to be used in the planning process. The draft strategy remains all too ambiguous and general to advance the discussion on goals, objectives and criteria for protected areas. These need to be identified at this stage to ensure the following:
 - public input to the criteria and implied objectives for the selection and evaluation process.
 - to ensure accountability, these need to be included in the draft strategy prior to going to public consultation.
 - to be a Yukon-wide strategy, these criteria should apply across the Yukon; hence, the development of criteria should be completed prior to the work of local or regional teams.

Response

For example see how BC has provided criteria to support each goal:

Representativeness:

Guiding Principle: The identification and evaluation of representative areas are based on BC's established ecoregion and biogeoclimatic classification systems. [In the Yukon, should this be based on the same classification system, or should it be based on ecoregions, or Yukon Park Landscapes (Parks System Plan, 1992)?]

1. Identifying Representativeness:

Representativeness: Within each ecosection (Traditional Territory???? Bearing in mind this is a political classification system and not an ecological one, raising problems of political foundations instead of ecological foundations for system design), protected areas should contain examples of the full range of ecosystems and their characteristic habitats, animals, plants, hydrology, landforms and cultural heritage and backcountry recreation values.

Naturalness: To protect natural, biological and backcountry values, protected areas should be located in areas that have experienced a minimal degree of development and disturbance. Where disturbance has occurred, the area must have the ability or potential to recover to a natural state. Evidence of past human activity or development with significant cultural heritage values will often be found in natural areas and, where present, will be protected.

2. Evaluating Candidates for Representativeness

- degree of representativeness
- degree of naturalness
- viability
- diversity
- vulnerability
- opportunity for public use and appreciation
- opportunity for scientific research

Special Features

[Special features are elements or groups of elements made special by their rarity, scarcity and uniqueness or significance in intrinsic or perceived worth.]

Questions that need to be answered:

- What classification systems is the Yukon adopting for developing the protected areas system?
- What inventories (existing and proposed) will be used to identify and evaluate features and criteria? Wildlife, recreation, habitat, mineral, forestry, energy, etc.