

To Daniele Heon

Daniele, as promised

900212

Yukon Geology Program office

— Jesse

PROTECTED AREAS STRATEGY

Key Points

PAS Steering Committee—March 11, 1998

1. At the previous SC meeting, a commitment was made by Ec Dev to provide wording to address the balance of values in the form of goal statements. Reiterate commitment to include the verbatim text in the draft going out for internal review.

The inclusion of the text will assist this department and participants in the public process to provide input and see their interests and earlier input reflected in the strategy. The current draft has hand-picked components, and the intent behind our submission has been lost. Important features, such as the emphasis on partnerships among levels of government, industry and communities has been lost. Other things that are lost are commitments to timeliness and measures that support accountability.

2. The new schedule proposed by RR:
March 10: distribute current draft for departmental review.
March 10-20: internal review
March 20: revisions
March 20-30: review by advisory committee
March 30: revisions
April 15: release to public for review

The draft strategy must go to Cabinet for review and approval, prior to circulation to any public, INCLUDING the advisory committee.

The current proposal from Renewable limits the ability of decision makers to have significant input on the Strategy.

3. The Strategy should be built on up front goals and explicit criteria. The earlier draft was better than the current draft from this perspective. Taking a goal & criteria-based approach reduces the dependence on advocacy of prescriptive actions as the foundation of the strategy. It also provides an evaluation framework against which, in the long-term, the effectiveness of the strategy can be measured. In other words, the

Strategy can focus on results instead of outcomes—ecological diversity protected, instead of # of km² subject to withdrawals.

The use of criteria such as those used in the B.C. process is a case in point of how to achieve this approach to a protected areas strategy. B.C. uses ‘representativeness’ and ‘special features’ which are characterised with explicit criteria. [see attached]

4. The timing of considering economic and resource values still needs to be addressed. These values should be considered from the outset in the process, including the regional planning stage.
5. The Strategy should set out the need for and steps required to undertake the necessary legislative review. It has been acknowledged that the toolbox for completing a protected areas system is inadequate, and that review, development and amendments to legislation such as the Parks Act and Wildlife Act are in order. The Strategy should set out a legislative inventory and needs assessment.
6. The Interim Protection topic raises several issues. Economic Development offers to provide some wording to address the economic concerns which should be included prior to the draft going to Cabinet.

Among these issues are the amount, duration and nature of interim protection.

7. The section on traditional knowledge is problematic. A specific description of traditional ecological knowledge should be provided, rather than providing a forum to repeat what the land claims agreements achieve.
8. There is a role for ongoing evaluation of the Strategy, in the long term. We propose that this be supported by a commitment similar to that of the BC PAS: Protected areas will be reviewed periodically for their continued contribution to the goals of the PAS. Where appropriate, existing areas may be deleted from the system and new areas—expected to contribute to the system goals more effectively—proposed.

Furthermore, we suggest that the Yukon Council on the Environment and Economy is the logical vehicle for ensuring public input in this long-term monitoring and evaluation process. This would avoid the need for long-term investment (and potential for duplication) of public/advisory bodies.

9. The current draft of the Strategy continues the emphasis on achieving ecosystem representation of the Yukon's 23 ecoregions by the year 2000. This is unnecessary and does not recognize the needs for supporting research, analysis, public participation, nor the level of resourcing this could impose on government, communities and First Nations. It also assumes a very early completion date for all outstanding land claims.

CPAWS has already recognized the timing constraints in the Yukon and has proposed that government "work towards the goal," and make "best efforts".

A rushed process will not serve any interest well.

10. The Strategy currently places different classes of economic activities on different footings. It makes too many assumptions in doing so. All economic activities should be placed on an equal footing to evaluate their impact and implications to ecological values which should remain the yardstick against which all activity is measured.

The risk in the proposed approach is that one type of activity will be favoured over others (eg. tourism) irrespective of ecological impacts.

What do we mean when we say the Strategy should include explicit criteria to characterize the goals of the PAS? The following example drawn from the BC PAS illustrates our point on the two goals outlined in the BC process, 'representativeness' and 'special features':

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 eco-section (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.]

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