

Key Biodiversity Indicator for NWT Ecozones – A Workshop
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Introduction: In the past decade, efforts have been made to develop indicators and report on the state of some Northwest Territories (NWT) ecosystems, or on some component of NWT ecosystems. These efforts, in addition to recent review publications are providing insights on the state of our knowledge on ecosystems in the NWT.

All efforts so far have noted gaps and shortcomings in our information availability and monitoring efforts. In particular, the seminal *Northwest Territories Environmental Audit 2005– Supplementary State of the Environment Report*, used indicators to examine the status and trends of pre-selected Valued Components in NWT ecosystems and determined that drawing conclusions from many biodiversity indicators was difficult due to the lack of available information. In many cases, the necessary data and information has been collected, but is in a form or state not readily usable for indicator work.

Environment Canada (EC) and the Government of the Northwest Territories organized a multi-jurisdictional workshop on November 6-8, 2007 to:

- 1- Review sets of proposed indicators for determining the status and trends of biodiversity in three NWT ecozones: Taiga Plains, Taiga Shield, and Northern/Southern Arctic (as one merged ecozone).
- 2- Select biodiversity indicators using criteria shared by all and relevant to the NWT.
- 3- Pull together the information necessary to address each selected indicator. Develop data-sharing agreements, and adapt protocols as necessary.

The Workshop covered one ecozone per day and include key participants (see Appendix 1) from agencies and groups involved in research, monitoring, and management of biodiversity in the NWT, as well as from Nunavut, Labrador, and Yukon.

The objective of this proposal is to secure funding to help Wildlife Management Boards and Communities participate in this key workshop.

This workshop links to two current indicator projects:

- Canada's Ecosystem Status and Trends Report (ESTR Report)– background in appendix 2
- ENR 's State of the Environment report – under development
- The results of this workshop will also help populate biodiversity indicators for other reporting mechanisms described in the “Benefits” section.

Methods:

- Environment and Natural Resources (ENR) and EC co-organized the workshop – suggested venue is the Yellowknife Ski Club on Nov. 6-8, 2007.
- Environment Canada – Biodiversity Convention Office and the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) provided facilitation services.
- Suggested invited NWT participants included all wildlife management boards (WMB), federal agencies, territorial agencies, key non-governmental organizations involved in monitoring of biodiversity, community participants as suggested by WMBs, and others from outside the NWT.
- *Representatives from the SRRB and the GRRB participated. The only board requesting travel help was the GRRB.*

Results:

- A set of standard, internationally used, biodiversity indicators, and associated data and information for three NWT ecozones. (See tables in Appendix 2).
- Analysis, Metadata and Database protocols for compiling information on each biodiversity indicator (See background, and outline of ESTR in Appendix 2)
- Workshop presentations (Appendix 2)

Discussion / Conclusions:

Developing indicators to track cumulative effects in the NWT can gain by sharing ideas with other jurisdictions. This systemic sharing method helps us to compare impacts within NWT to other regions, track pressures and threats that may be coming our way, and help us adapt already developed indicators to fit our needs. The ESTR report is building a large set of indicators for each ecozone in Canada. The NWT shares ecozones with Alberta, Yukon, Nunavut, Quebec, Labrador, Saskatchewan, and British Columbia. The Yellowknife workshop was the first in a series of workshops across Canada to help pull together indicators for 3 ecozones: Arctic, Taiga Shield and Taiga Plains for the ESTR report. The information gathered at the YK workshop and at others

across Canada will be very useful for future NWT Environmental Audit, and for complementing ENR's State of the Environment report.

The results of all workshops will be communicated to the communities and other groups using:

- Canada's Ecosystem Status and Trends report – due in 2010
- ENR's State of the Environment Report – First version due in Winter 2008-09. Annual updates are proposed.

Both reports will have a website.

Budget:

Although two wildlife management board representatives travelled to the workshop (SRRB and GRRB), only GRRB requested help for travel and honoraria.

Appendix 1

Participant list

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Appendix 2

1- Background on Ecosystem Status and Trend Report

Documents providing background information on ESTR can be obtained through Suzanne Carrière, Ecosystem Management Biologist, GNWT-ENR.

2-Workshop presentations.

Discussions at the Yellowknife workshops were initiated using one presentation per ecozone. These presentations and agenda can be obtained through Suzanne Carrière, Ecosystem Management Biologist, GNWT-ENR.

3 -Indicator tables for Taiga Plains, Arctic, and Taiga Shield

These tables were constructed at the Yellowknife workshop, transcribed overnight and sent by e-mail to two other workshops occurring in the same ecozones. The Tables attached are the result of all workshops on each ecozone. They were formatted to fit the original outline of the Ecosystem Status and Trend Report. Contact Suzanne Carrière, Ecosystem Management Biologist, GNWT-ENR for the tables.