

NATURAL AREAS SYSTEM PLAN (NASP)

In 1980, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador passed the Wilderness and Ecological Reserves Act, designed to guide the creation of a system of protected areas, to conserve our special and unique ecosystems and species. Through this act, the Wilderness and Ecological Reserves Advisory Council (WERAC) was established to advise the Government on the establishment, implementation and management of protected areas.

Since 1995, the draft plan has not been publicly released for consultation. Over the past 25 years, the Province has remained in the process of finalizing this plan, but due to many stalls and seemingly no desire from the Government, it has never been released for public consultation. CPAWS-NL has continued to pressure the Government to release this plan. Recently, WERAC's co-chair Victoria Neville and its longest standing member Bill Montevecchi, both resigned, frustrated by the process and delays. These actions prompted the provincial government to finally speak publicly about the plan.

WERAC will release the latest plan for public input, which if a enough support is gathered, will then be brought forth to Cabinet for future consultations. Please show your support to have a formal plan in place when released. Stay tuned for more details about this process.

FEATURE ANIMAL: WOODLAND CARIBOU



The Woodland Caribou is one of the few species that is native to Newfoundland and Labrador.

Caribou prefer barren land during the warmer summer months and move into mixed forests during the winter. In Newfoundland and Labrador,

Caribou populations in Newfoundland and Labrador are in decline and some herds are at risk of extinction. Caribou are classified as a threatened species in our province.

Caribou eat vegetation and their main source of food is lichen. Both male and female Caribou have antlers, something that is unique in the deer family.

BENEFITS OF PROTECTED AREAS



Photo: Twitter @MarkGray3

Protected areas are established with the main objective of protecting the wildlife and ecosystems within them. However, there are benefits far beyond protection!

- Strengthening our resiliency to climate change – increasing Earth’s carbon storage, acting as a natural defense against flooding and erosion, mitigate extreme weather events
- Continuing the allowance and possibility of Traditional and Local cultural values and uses
- Protecting human needs - ensuring freshwater availability, healthy soils, wild foods, and the opportunity to explore and enjoy our natural spaces
- Economics – ecotourism is one of the largest economic sectors in the world!
- Baseline – protected untouched spaces, allows for the monitoring and understanding of the effects of climate change, pollution, invasive species, extraction, etc.

And many more!

BENEFITS OF NATURE TO MENTAL HEALTH

During these unprecedented times, it is important to focus on our mental health and to remain socially connected, while physically distant, with both loved ones and ourselves.

It's important to check on our health, including our mental health. Spending time in nature is proven to reduce stress, anxiety and depression, making it a great self-improvement tool in any situation!

When people are depressed or stressed, a region of the brain backfires, producing a continuous loop of negative thoughts. After being outside, the brain activity in this region lowers, lowering stress and depression levels, and increase in energy levels!

Take time to go outside, to enjoy nature - the sights, sounds, and smells. Let nature be your company, your relief, and a spark of freedom. Be safe, practice physical distancing, wash your hands, take your learning outside, and let nature soothe you.



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to protect Newfoundland and Labrador's wildspaces

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**DO YOU HAVE
SUGGESTIONS, COMMENTS
OR CONTRIBUTIONS?**

We are always looking for inspiring
stories, photos and ideas to help us
engage Canadians in nature
conservation. Do you have any great
stories about your experiences in
nature? Pitch your ideas and
content to us at
nlcoordinator@cpaws.org!

 **CPAWS**
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See you next month!