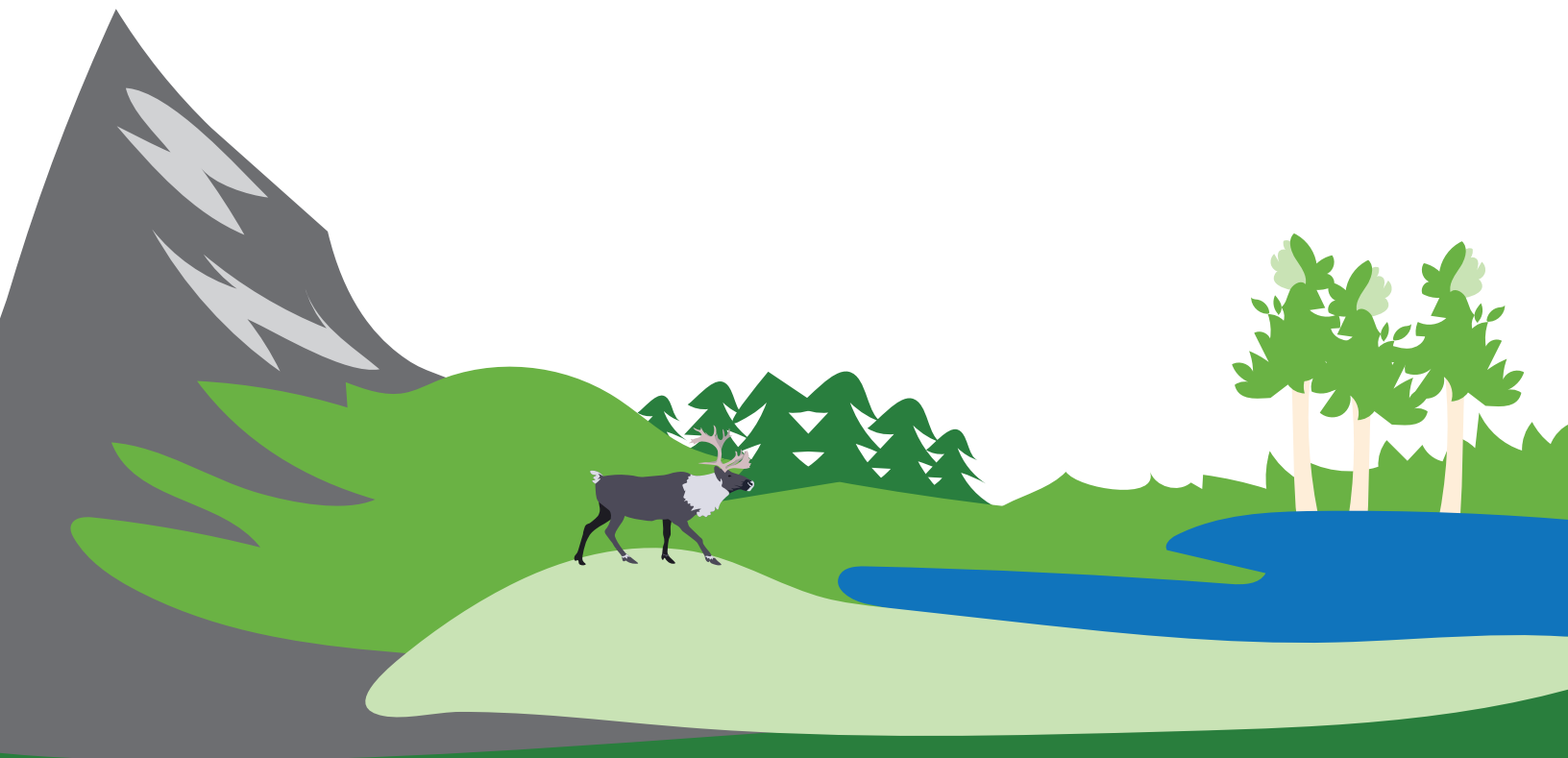


# STRATEGIC PLAN

## 2021-2025

Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, Northern Alberta  
Last updated November 19, 2021



# STRATEGIC PLAN 2021-2025

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Photo: Martin Prentice



# INTRODUCTION

The Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS) is Canada's only nation-wide charity dedicated solely to the protection of Canada's public land and water and ensuring our parks are managed to protect the nature within them. In the past 50+ years, CPAWS has played a lead role in protecting over half a million square kilometers – an area larger than the entire Yukon Territory! Nationally, CPAWS' vision is to protect at least half of our public land and water so that future generations can experience Canada's irreplaceable wilderness.

CPAWS uses a collaborative approach with crown and Indigenous governments, communities, progressive companies, and other environmental organizations to achieve conservation solutions. The CPAWS Northern Alberta Chapter (CPAWS NAB) was one of the society's first designated regional chapters, formed in 1968. CPAWS NAB's focus is on the northern two-thirds of the province.

CPAWS NAB's Board of Directors and staff gathered on January 24 and 25, 2020 to engage in a working session focused on creating a five-year strategic plan to govern the chapter from 2021-2025. Following two other board and staff planning sessions, a draft was shared with external stakeholders in the spring of 2021. The plan was refined based on comments from external reviewers and additional input from Board and Staff, and finalized in October, 2021.

## VISION

We aspire to an Alberta that embraces conservation and is a leader in protecting a large network of parks and wilderness areas.

## MISSION

We achieve conservation of public lands and protection of parks and wilderness in Alberta through science, collaboration, and community engagement.

## CORE VALUES

We value:

- Wilderness, protected areas, conservation, and biodiversity
- Environmentally sustainable management of public lands
- Collaboration
- Community engagement
- Indigenous-led conservation
- Evidence-based decision making
- Connecting people with nature



*Photo: Anne Robinson*

# STRATEGIC GOALS AND STRATEGIES

The Strategic Plan is broken into two broad categories: external goals (conservation) and internal goals (operations). The goals are detailed in the following charts, and then further broken down into outcomes. Prioritization of goals and outcomes, and strategies to achieve them, will be laid out in our annual plans.

The conservation goals are all formulated to address the twin crises of biodiversity loss and climate change. There is now an understanding within the scientific community that at least 50% of the planet will need to be protected to halt the loss of biodiversity. The protection and restoration of 50% of the planet would also significantly decrease emissions and ultimately curb the negative impacts of climate change. This is a long-term conservation goal towards which the goals and outcomes in this strategic plan will contribute, if they are achieved.

## SUPPORTING INDIGENOUS-LED CONSERVATION

*Advancing Indigenous-led conservation goals together*

*encourages land and water stewardship by the original caretakers of the land*

*nourishes and maintains close collaborative relationships*

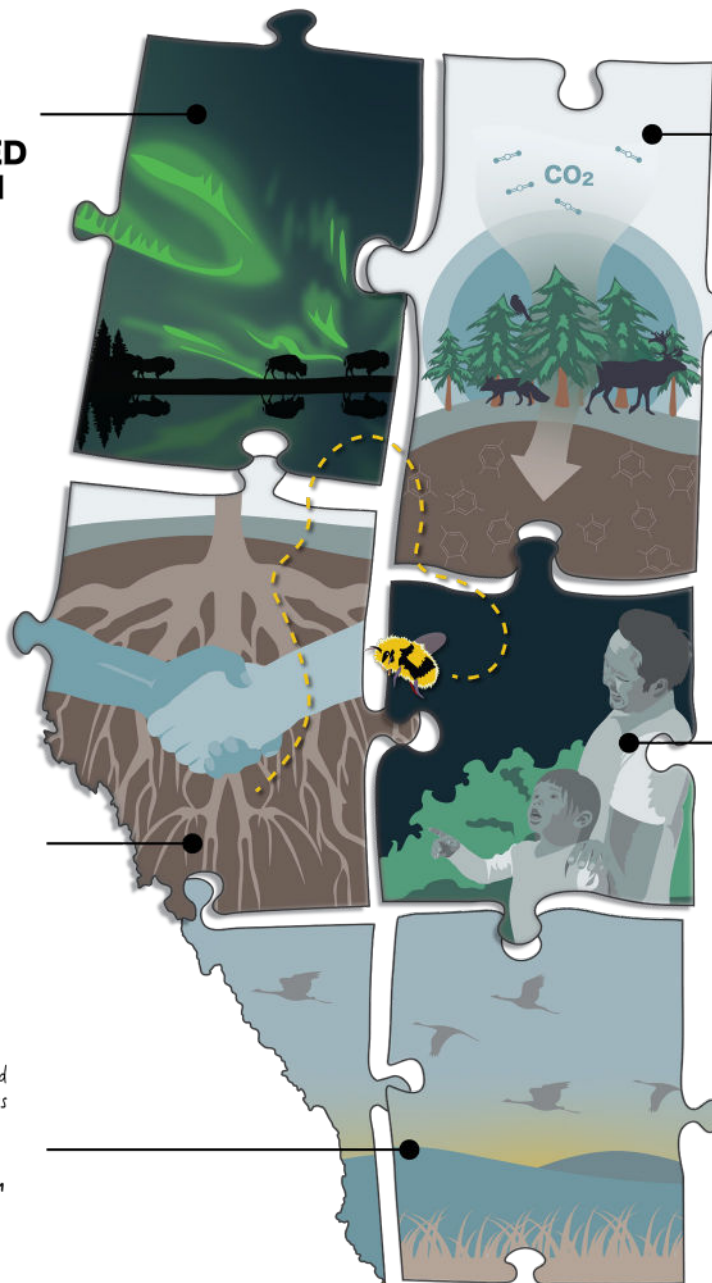
## STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

*A network of mutual support*

*helps us achieve conservation goals together*

*will grow our collaborations and strengthen existing partnerships*

*Collaborating with our CPAWS family in Southern Alberta and across Canada*



## CONSERVATION

*Protected areas, buffer zones and responsible use of public lands*

*promote recovery of species at risk*

*maintain biodiversity*

*provide climate change mitigation and adaptation*

## EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATION WITH THE PUBLIC

*Connecting Albertans to nature and each other*

*fosters appreciation for the value of wilderness and biodiversity*

*helps create a supportive community of environmental stewardship*

## EXTERNAL GOALS

Category	Goals
<b>Conservation</b>	<p><b>Goal 1:</b> Expand Northern Alberta’s protected areas network</p> <p><b>Goal 2:</b> Work with governments to ensure that legislative protections of Alberta’s protected areas are maintained or enhanced, and ecological integrity is maintained as a priority in the management of provincial and national parks</p> <p><b>Goal 3:</b> Promote and achieve conservation outside of parks and protected areas</p> <p><b>Goal 4:</b> Maintain biodiversity and promote recovery of species at risk</p> <p><b>Goal 5:</b> Promote healthy lands, biodiversity, and improved climate through increased use of nature-based climate solutions (NBCS)</p>
<b>Strategic Partnerships</b>	<p><b>Goal 1:</b> Grow our collaborative network and strengthen existing partnerships</p>
<b>Supporting Indigenous-led Conservation</b>	<p><b>Goal 1:</b> Establish and maintain relationships with Indigenous governments and communities to increase understanding of conservation priorities of Indigenous communities and support in the achievement of Indigenous-led conservation goals</p>
<b>Education and Communication with the Public</b>	<p><b>Goal 1:</b> Improve public understanding of the value of protected areas and conservation of wilderness and biodiversity through effective community engagement</p> <p><b>Goal 2:</b> Maintain a group of committed, reliable, and engaged volunteers that make a significant contribution to meeting the Chapter’s goals and outcomes</p>

## OPERATIONAL GOALS

Category	Goals
<b>Governance</b>	<p><b>Goal 1:</b> Employ good governance</p> <p><b>Goal 2:</b> Maintain high employee satisfaction and engagement</p>
<b>Financial Sustainability</b>	<p><b>Goal:</b> Achieve the financial means to support the goals and strategies identified to fulfill the organization’s vision and mission</p>
<b>Public Image</b>	<p><b>Goal:</b> Solidify the consolidated position of CPAWS (Northern and Southern Alberta chapters) as the most credible conservation organization in Alberta</p>



*Photo: Martin Prentice*

# EXTERNAL GOALS

## OVERARCHING CHAPTER PRINCIPLES AND STRATEGIES:

- All work and work products are evidence-based and adopt sound scientific principles
- The long-term need for protection of at least 50% of land and inland waters is understood by governments and the public
- Climate change and nature-based climate solutions are considered in all work products including reports, proposals, and communications media
- Watersheds, water quality, and water conservation are considered in all work products
- Indigenous-led conservation initiatives are supported, as appropriate based on conversations with the Indigenous communities leading these initiatives, and Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas (IPCAs) are used as a tool to achieve conservation goals
- All work includes collaboration with other organizations, Indigenous communities, concerned citizens, community groups, or progressive industry partners
- Public communication to increase awareness of conservation issues, our priorities, our campaigns, and actions the public can take to help is a focal point of our work and is properly resourced

# CONSERVATION GOALS



## Goal 1: Expand Northern Alberta's protected areas network

### OUTCOMES:

- Alberta's protected areas network is expanded to include new protected areas that are representative of Alberta's natural subregions, improve landscape connectivity and achieves the goal of protecting at least 25% (16.6 M ha) of terrestrial and inland waters landscapes by 2025 and 30%

## Goal 2: Work with governments to ensure that legislative protections of Alberta's protected areas are maintained or enhanced, and ecological integrity is a priority in the management of provincial and national

### OUTCOMES:

- Any changes to legislation or government policy increase or maintain protections for parks
- National and Provincial Park Legislation and Management Plans reflect ecological integrity as the number one priority for park management
- Governments provide necessary funding and resources to ensure protected areas can be managed with ecological integrity as the number one priority

## Goal 3: Promote and achieve conservation outside of protected areas

### OUTCOMES:

- Alberta's public lands are managed in a manner that improves habitat integrity, ecological connectivity,– water quality, incorporates NBCS, and considers cumulative impacts
- No new coal mines are approved in the eastern slopes
- Robust, science-based range plans for woodland caribou are implemented that meet federal recovery strategy objectives and will ensure naturally self-sustaining caribou herds
- The Government of Alberta recognizes Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas (IPCAs) as an important tool for conservation with Indigenous governments as co-managers of the land within IPCAs
- Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures (OECMs) in Alberta are implemented in a way that meet international standards and do not dilute or diminish the conservation value of existing and future protected areas; rather, OECMs act as incentive for permanence of measures that are valuable for conservation

## Goal 4: Maintain biodiversity and promote recovery of species at risk

### OUTCOMES:

- Habitat conservation is prioritized as the main tool to conserve and maintain biodiversity
- Government, industry, community, and individual action is increased to improve conservation of biodiversity
- The Alberta Wildlife Act and federal Species At Risk Act provide suitable protections to ensure long-term survival of species by listing species that require recovery actions, and re-assessing species that require additional recovery efforts
- All wood bison are listed as Wildlife on Alberta's Wildlife Act and provided protections across their historical range



*Garth Lenz*

## Goal 5: Promote healthy lands, biodiversity, and improved climate through increased application of nature-based climate solutions (NBCS)

### OUTCOMES:

- Greenhouse gas benefits from nature-based climate solutions are integrated into all goals and research, with the best available science included in all work
- Park and Land use management plans include measures and targets to enhance NBCS and communicate their value to stakeholders
- Retain high value areas or increase functionality of areas as NBCS rather than prioritizing built infrastructure solutions



# STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

## Goal 1: Grow our collaborative network and strengthen

### OUTCOMES:

- Recognition of NAB as a resource for reliable information and recommendations by other environmental organizations, governments, industry, and the public is increased across Northern Alberta
- We strengthen or foster new relationships with:
  - \* all levels of government
  - \* Indigenous communities
  - \* progressive industry partners
  - \* CPAWS Southern Alberta, CPAWS National, and other CPAWS chapters
  - \* Non-traditional allies
  - \* Other environmental NGOs
  - \* members of Northern Alberta's academic community
- We work with these partners and allies to collectively advance conservation in Northern Alberta



# SUPPORTING INDIGENOUS-LED CONSERVATION

## Goal 1: Establish and maintain relationships with Indigenous governments and communities to increase understanding of conservation priorities of Indigenous

CPAWS NAB acknowledges that we are all Treaty people and believes that reconciliation is a responsibility of all Canadians. Assisting or supporting in Indigenous-led conservation efforts, where appropriate and of interest to the community, is one way that CPAWS NAB can contribute to reconciliation.

### OUTCOMES:

- Our Chapter has strong relationships with Indigenous communities that allow us to support the advancement of Indigenous-led conservation initiatives
- We will incorporate Traditional Knowledge and Two-eyed Seeing into our work, when appropriate and shared with us by the community.



# EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATION WITH PUB-

## Goal 1: Improve public understanding of the value of protected areas and conservation of wilderness and biodiversity through effective community engagement



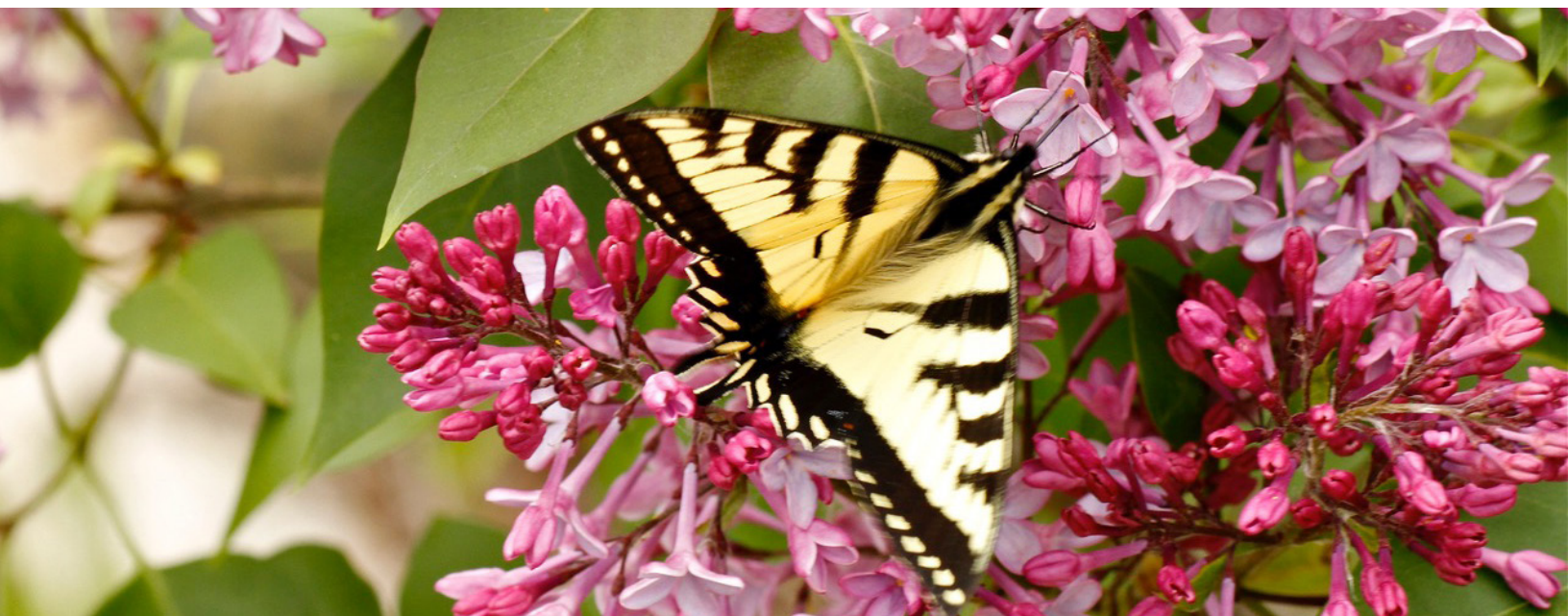
### OUTCOMES:

- Our Chapter effectively communicates its mandate to the public and followers and newsletter subscribers increase
- The public better understands the importance of protected areas for conservation of biodiversity and how they act as nature-based climate solutions
- Public involvement in and support for Chapter initiatives increases (number of actions taken, website visits, member numbers)

## Goal 2: Maintain a group of committed, reliable and engaged volunteers that make a significant contribution to meeting the chapter's goals and outcomes

### OUTCOMES:

- Our Chapter maintains a volunteer pool of committed, reliable, and engaged volunteers that support current initiatives
- Volunteers will be engaged in rewarding and meaningful work that furthers the goals and outcomes of CPAWS NAB



*Photo: Martin Prentice*

# OPERATIONAL GOALS

## GOVERNANCE

### Goal 1: CPAWS Northern Alberta Employs Good Governance

#### OUTCOMES:

- CPAWS Northern Alberta remains true to its vision and mission
- Policies and bylaws remain relevant and adequate for CPAWS Northern Alberta's needs
- Staffing is reflective of financial capacity and workload
- The Board of Directors has a targeted, ongoing recruitment policy for specific skill-sets and positions
- Board members are retained for at least one full term (3 years)



*Gillian Chow-Fraser*

### Goal 2: CPAWS Northern Alberta maintains high employee satisfaction and engagement

#### OUTCOMES:

- A positive organizational culture
- Staff report high levels of job satisfaction
- Job security is increased and prioritized
- Staff are productive and efficient
- Employees have a healthy and safe work environment
- Staff enjoy a healthy balance of work and home life
- Attrition of staff is low

# FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

**Goal 1: CPAWS Northern Alberta will have the financial means to support the goals and strategies identified to fulfill the organization's vision and mission.**

## OUTCOMES:

- CPAWS Northern Alberta will generate enough revenue to sustain the following full-time positions (and associated operating expenses):
  - \* Executive Director
  - \* Program Director
  - \* Boreal Program Manager
  - \* Conservation Analyst (GIS Specialist)
  - \* Conservation Analyst (Parks and Public Lands specialist)
  - \* Communications Coordinator
  - \* Outreach Coordinator
  - \* Fund Development Manager
  - \* Summer Student (4-month position)
- CPAWS Northern Alberta maintains internally restricted funds to maintain core operations for at least six months in the event of a critical shortfall in anticipated funding.
- CPAWS Northern Alberta maintains financial transparency.



*Photo: Sarah Nason*

# PUBLIC IMAGE

**Goal 1: Solidify the consolidated position of CPAWS (both Northern and Southern Alberta chapters) as the most credible conservation organization in Alberta**

## OUTCOMES:

- CPAWS is the conservation organization most often quoted or referenced in media stories on public lands conservation
- CPAWS maintains its high-quality public image by communicating its values on an ongoing basis through its campaigns, traditional, and non-traditional media

# GLOSSARY

**Ecological integrity:** An ecosystem has integrity when it is deemed characteristic for its natural region, including the composition and abundance of native species and biological communities, rates of change and supporting processes (Canada National Parks Act).

**FYE:** Fiscal year end (March 31).

**Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas (IPCAs):** Lands and waters where Indigenous governments have the primary role in protecting and conserving ecosystems through Indigenous laws, governance and knowledge systems. Culture and language are the heart and soul of an IPCA. IPCAs across Canada will vary in terms of governance and management objectives however they generally all include three essential elements: they are Indigenous-led; they represent a long-term commitment to conservation; and they elevate Indigenous rights and responsibilities (We Rise Together, Indigenous Circle of Experts Report and Recommendations, 2018).

**Northern Alberta:** CPAWS Northern Alberta addresses conservation issues and advocates for increased protection in Alberta from Red Deer to the Northwest Territories border.

**Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measure (OECM):** A geographically defined area other than a Protected Area, which is governed and managed in ways that achieve positive and sustained long-term outcomes for the *in situ* conservation of biodiversity, with associated ecosystem functions and services and where applicable, cultural, spiritual, socio-economic, and other locally relevant values (IUCN, 2018).

**Park:** See “protected area.”

**Protected area:** A clearly defined geographical space, recognised, dedicated and managed, through legal or other effective means, to achieve the long term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values (IUCN, 2008).

**Wilderness:** A place that is mostly biologically intact, but is not necessarily a place that is biologically “pristine”: evidence of minor human impact, or indications of historical human activity does not disqualify an area from being considered wilderness. Nor must a wilderness area be free of human habitation: many Indigenous populations live in wild areas around the world, often playing a key role in keeping wilderness intact. The essence of a wilderness area is that it is a place where humans can maintain a relationship with wild nature. Whether that relationship is characterized by recreational use or traditional, Indigenous use does not matter, so long as the relationship is predicated on a fundamental respect for – and appreciation of – wild nature (excerpted from The WILD Foundation).



Illustration by Sarah Nason: [wapitistudios.ca](http://wapitistudios.ca)