

1. Statement of Policy

The Government of the Northwest Territories will establish a department called the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, under the direction of a Minister.

Mandate

The mandate of the Minister and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources is to promote and support the sustainable use and development of natural resources and to protect, conserve and enhance the Northwest Territories environment for the social and economic benefit of all Northwest Territories residents.

2. Principles

In directing the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to carry out its mandate, the Minister will adhere to the following principles:

- (1) A healthy environment should be recognized as necessary to maintain human health, prosperity and well-being.
- (2) Diverse and healthy ecosystems should be protected in a manner that maintains the integrity of ecosystems and biological diversity and contributes to long-term ecological, economic and social stability.
- (3) Natural resources should be managed and developed in a manner that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.
- (4) Effective management of Northwest Territories natural resources should support import replacement and export development.
- (5) Decisions relating to the management and development of natural resources and the territorial economy should be directed towards enhancing territorial and community self-sufficiency and should incorporate public input, scientific knowledge, and traditional knowledge.
- (6) Programs and services should be delivered in an effective and accountable manner and as close as practical to the people being served.



- (7) The design and delivery of programs and services should be based on a clear demonstration of need, benefit, sustainability and shared risk.
- (8) This policy should not prejudice any present or future treaty, land claim or treaty land entitlement based rights.

3. Scope

This Policy applies to all employees of the Government of the Northwest Territories.

4. Definitions

The following terms apply to this Policy:

Environment

Means the components of the Earth, including:

- (a) Air, land and water,
- (b) All layers of the atmosphere,
- (c) All organic matter and living organisms, and
- (d) The interacting natural systems that include components referred to in paragraphs (a) to (c).

Integrated Resource Management

A coordinated process in which all components and disciplines of resource management (policy development, environment and natural resource use planning, environmental assessment and protection, legislative and regulatory mechanisms) are formally linked and complementary. The process is characterized by the sharing of values, information and advice among various interests.

Natural Resources

Naturally occurring components of the environment that can be used for human purposes, consisting of flora and fauna and their habitat, including wildlife, forests and agricultural products and resources that cannot be replaced or renewed following extraction, including all minerals, aggregates and petroleum resources.

Sustainable Development

Development of natural resources in a manner that ensures economic, social and cultural needs are met while maintaining ecosystem integrity and biological diversity and without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.

Traditional Knowledge

Knowledge and values, which have been acquired through experience, observation, from the land or from spiritual teachings, or handed down from one generation to another.

5. Authority and Accountability

(1) General

This Policy is issued under the authority of the Executive Council. The authority to make exceptions and approve revisions to this Policy rests with the Executive Council. Authority and accountability is further defined as follows:

(a) Minister

The Minister of Environment and Natural Resources (the Minister) is accountable to the Executive Council for the implementation of this Policy.

(b) Deputy Minister

The Deputy Minister of Environment and Natural Resources (the Deputy Minister) is accountable to the Minister and responsible to the Minister for the administration of this Policy.

(2) Specific

(a) Executive Council

The Executive Council may approve a change to the mandate of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

(b) Minister

The Minister is:

- (i) Responsible for carrying out the mandate of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and shall preside over the operation of the Department; and
- (ii) Authorized to carry out the duties described in this Policy in a manner the Minister deems appropriate for the efficient and economical fulfilment of the Department's mandate.

(c) Deputy Minister

The Deputy Minister is:

- (i) Responsible for the management of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources including the planning, administration and other functions necessary to further the Department's mandate; and
- (ii) Accountable to the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources for the proper conduct of the business of the Department.

6. Provisions

(1) Mandate Establishment

Pursuant to the Government Organization Policy, the mandate, including the authority, responsibilities and functions, of the Minister and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, is established in this Policy.

(2) Duties of the Minister

The Minister shall develop and carry out programs and services in the Department as may be appropriate to fulfil the mandate of the Minister and the Department.



The Minister shall have charge of and be responsible for:

- (a) Developing, recommending and enforcing legislation, policies and agreements to maintain the integrity and biological diversity of natural ecosystems and thereby protect the condition and quality of the environment.
- (b) Representing the Government of the Northwest Territories and coordinating the Government's involvement in territorial, national and international matters related to conservation and protection of the natural environment, climate change and the sustainable use of wildlife, habitat and forest resources.
- (c) Maintaining, conserving and protecting the condition, quality, diversity and abundance of the environment, including water, air, wildlife, habitat and forest resources in the Northwest Territories through comprehensive assessment and evaluation, monitoring and compliance measures.
- (d) Managing the clean-up of abandoned contaminated sites for which the GNWT is responsible and assessing and monitoring the clean-up of other contaminated sites throughout the NWT.
- (e) Promoting and supporting the use of scientific research, traditional knowledge and public education to support decision-making and increase understanding of ecosystem integrity and biological diversity, climate change, integrated resource management and sustainable development in the Northwest Territories.
- (f) Providing timely, relevant and accessible information to support natural resource management and sustainable development in the Northwest Territories.
- (g) Negotiating and recommending agreements with the federal, provincial and other governments concerning the environment and the sustainable use of water, air, wildlife, habitat and forest resources.
- (h) Providing financial and administrative support to other government agencies or secretariats when required.



(3) Administration

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources shall be administered in such a manner as to ensure that government requirements as expressed in statutes, agreements, regulations, policies and directives are satisfied.

7. **Prerogative of the Executive Council**

Nothing in this Policy shall in any way be construed to limit the prerogative of the Executive Council to make decisions or take action respecting the Department of Environment and Natural Resources outside the provisions of this Policy.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Robert R. McLeod".

Premier and Chairman of the
Executive Council