

## NWT Protected Areas Strategy Steering Committee Reelects Chairperson

The Northwest Territories Protected Areas Strategy (PAS) Steering Committee is pleased to announce the reelection of Chairperson, Chris Heron. Mr. Heron was initially appointed as Chair by the PAS Steering Committee on December 1, 2005 and was reelected for a one year term at an April 30-May 1, 2007 meeting in Hay River.

“I am pleased to continue in this leadership role. Protected areas are important now, and for the future”, said Mr. Heron, who has represented the Northwest Territory Métis Nation on the PAS Steering Committee since 2003. “Aboriginal Governments, and all residents of the Northwest Territories, will benefit from Protected Areas Strategy initiatives. It is these with types of initiatives, the North will be a better place for all residents, and preserve the beauty of this North that we call home.”

The Protected Areas Strategy was approved in 1999. Areas are being protected to help maintain a healthy ecosystem and healthy cultures by establishing special natural and cultural areas and core representative natural areas in the Northwest Territories. There are currently 17 areas at various stages of the PAS process, and many other sites have been identified through the Mackenzie Valley 5-Year Action Plan. The Action Plan was developed by the PAS Steering Committee to identify and establish a network of protected areas along the Mackenzie Valley.

Mr. Heron will chair a Steering Committee made up of representatives of Aboriginal organizations, the federal and territorial governments, the World Wildlife Fund and Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society. The PAS is a partnership among communities, government, environmental non-governmental organizations and industry, and is driven by community participation and decision-making.

Funding to implement the PAS is provided by the Government of Canada, Government of the Northwest Territories, World Wildlife Fund, Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, and Ducks Unlimited Canada.

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