

# **Cooperative Management in Auyuittuq National Park of Canada**

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## **Preamble**

In describing cooperative management related to a national park in Nunavut Territory, Canada, the authors feel it is important to describe the situation simply, in language easily understood and translated. This is a keystone to how we operate within our largely oral, cross-cultural environment; so we will try to give that flavour in this written work. Repetition, storytelling and simple language are all elements of the way we communicate within our context and these elements are deliberately reflected in this paper.

## **Introduction**

Cooperative park management is a wonderful ideal, but when you are told to manage cooperatively, how do you do it? We were given the goal of managing a national park cooperatively with the aboriginal people of the Eastern Canadian Arctic. We will focus specifically on Auyuittuq National Park of Canada, the oldest of the four national parks in the Territory of Nunavut in Canada's eastern Arctic.

In this paper we discuss the history of cooperative management within our field unit (an administrative unit of Parks Canada) and how we have managed the park since the creation of Nunavut as a new political territory in 1999. We will look at broad principles of operating in a cross-cultural environment and will outline what we have learned in working together with Inuit. We are still learning as we develop a new way of managing national parks.

## **Basic Principles Used in Cooperative Management**

We work in a cross-cultural environment. The majority of the population are Inuit, which means "the People" (formerly called Eskimos); the rest are largely Caucasian from a wide range of places within and outside Canada. At least two cultures, and often more, are trying to understand one another and manage huge national parks. Some very simple principles help to make this task easier:

- Show respect, particularly to Elders. As is the local custom, meetings usually start with a prayer or a thoughtful statement.
- Use simple language. We always use interpreters at meetings with park management committee members and unless the language spoken is simple, the translation may be very odd and the meaning may get lost.

- Make sure that key words are agreed on: When the idea of a national park was first being discussed with Inuit, negotiations did not go well. Finally, we realized that “national park” was being translated as “place where nobody can go,” a concept that Inuit did not support. We worked with elders and interpreters to create a new word, “minguisirvik,” which means, “ place where you go to re-create yourself.” This has a lovely sense and is understandable to Inuit.
- Seek commonalities. Look for concepts that are clear to both cultures. Later in this paper we discuss the parallels between essential Inuit values and those of the Parks Canada Agency.
- Make sure that materials are presented very clearly orally. Inuit are an oral people; only in the late 1880s was the Inuktitut language first written.
- Storytelling, including much repetition, is an important part of oral presentation. Repeat important messages and in responding to a question, go back to the beginning of the “story,” don’t start in the middle and assume people will follow you.
- Do not assume that everyone who speaks Inuktitut can read it. Sometimes Inuktitut speakers cannot read the language and also quite frequently, bilingual Inuit can only read English.
- Listen. This may be the most important principle. People who feel they are not heard will not share their views with you.
- Pass on the thoughts of others, not just your own. Many positive actions occur by passing on the thoughts of other people to a wider audience.
- Be patient. Decisions are often not made as quickly as you expect; but once made, everyone will back them.

## **Nunavut**

Nunavut, meaning “our land,” was created as Canada’s newest territory in April 1999. The territory is huge – over two million square kilometres – and is located in the far north and east of Canada, next to Greenland. The environment of Nunavut is arctic tundra; there are no trees.

The majority of the population (85%) is Inuit. The territorial government is elected democratically and the government attempts to operate with a consensus model of governance, which respects the traditional Inuit decision-making process. Voting in the legislative assembly occurs only if consensus cannot be achieved.

There are huge challenges in this remote territory. There is no road access from southern Canada to any of the 26 communities; air and sea are the only means of access and sea access is limited by ice during the long winters. The society is in the midst of great change; for example, there are people who are fifty years of age who were born in igloos (snow houses). Nunavut has the highest birthrate and the highest suicide rate in Canada – both are 9%.

## Auyuittuq National Park of Canada

Within Nunavut Territory are four large national parks: Auyuittuq, Quttinirpaaq, Sirmilik and Ukkusiksalik (Figure 1).

Auyuittuq, established in 1972, is the oldest national park in Nunavut and is about 22,600 square kilometres in size. It is located on Baffin Island, across Davis Strait from Greenland. The park was first established as a national park reserve and did not move to full national park status until the *Nunavut Land Claims Agreement* was completed and a subsequent Inuit Impact and Benefit Agreement was negotiated.



**Figure 1. Nanavut Territory**

National Park, have worked as park employees over the past 30 years and have gained valuable work experience. However, in the early 1970s, promises were made to the community that there would be 100 jobs in Pangnirtung, and this has become part of the oral tradition and expectation of the community. Auyuittuq National Park currently employs five people in year-round positions with four additional positions occupied on a seasonal basis.

Auyuittuq became a full national park in 1999.

The park has huge mountains, many glaciers, important archaeological sites and deep saltwater fiords. It attracts both Canadians and international visitors, including serious mountain climbers and ski mountaineers.

The majority of staff working for the park is of Inuit ancestry. There is preference for hiring Inuit for all jobs but it is often difficult to find qualified Inuit. Education levels amongst Inuit have been improving in the past ten years, but there is still a great deal of competition among government agencies and Inuit organizations for qualified Inuit candidates.

Community relations vary from time to time. Many people in the community of Pangnirtung, which is located adjacent to Auyuittuq

In 1976, a park advisory committee was formed for Auyuittuq National Park Reserve. Participants were local residents from the community of Pangnirtung. Until 2000, the committee met only once or twice a year for a couple of hours. At these meetings, committee members were generally given information about what Parks Canada was doing in terms of park management. The committee had no influence over the management practices of the park and was not consulted when difficult decisions were being made. The park superintendent managed the park from the top.

## **Nunavut Land Claims Agreement**

In Nunavut, the national parks operate in the context of the *Nunavut Land Claims Agreement (NLCA)* and the *Canada National Parks Act*. The NLCA is a comprehensive land claim agreement between Inuit and the Government of Canada and was signed and implemented through legislation in 1993.

There are specific clauses within the NLCA that relate to the management of national parks. The land claims agreement protects aboriginal wildlife harvesting rights, even when carried out within national parks. For their own use, Inuit can hunt, fish and trap as if there is no park. However, Inuit cannot serve as guides to non-Inuit who wish to hunt within the national park.

The NLCA also requires that an Inuit Impact and Benefit Agreement be negotiated before any national park can be established in Nunavut. The land claims agreement guarantees that Inuit will be involved in the cooperative management of the national parks and, specifically, in the development of management plans for the parks.

## **Inuit Impact and Benefit Agreement**

The Inuit Impact and Benefit Agreement (IIBA) for Auyuittuq, Quttinirpaaq and Sirmilik national parks (1999) is a contract between Parks Canada and the Qikiqtani Inuit Association, a regional Inuit organization. An important element of the IIBA is the description of the joint park management committee, particularly how it is to be set up and operated. Other important obligations in the agreement are: a complex, highly participatory process for park management planning; preference for hiring Inuit for park jobs; continued Inuit access to carving stone deposits within parks; money to be paid to Inuit if polar bears are killed in defence of tourists, employees or contractors; guarantees of money for community tourism strategies and for exhibits to explain the natural and cultural history of the park; and financial grants for economic development purposes and to create scholarships for Inuit students.

## **Canada National Parks Act**

The *Canada National Parks Act* is an Act of Parliament, passed by the Canadian House of Commons and the Senate. It is designed to ensure that the natural and cultural resources in the

national parks are protected forever. It also emphasizes that park resources are for people to learn about and enjoy forever. Where there is any conflict between the *Nunavut Land Claims Agreement (NLCA)* and the *Canada National Parks Act*, the *NLCA* takes precedence.

## **Working with a Park Management Committee**

In 2000, following the signing of the Inuit Impact and Benefit Agreement, three park management committees were created; one for each national park located in Nunavut Territory, including Auyuittuq National Park, which is the focus of this paper. Each committee has six members: three appointed by the regional Inuit organization and three by the Government of Canada. Members of the committee act impartially and in the public interest and do not serve as representatives of the organization appointing them.

Since the committees were created, we have had to figure out how to work with committee members who range from traditional Inuit elders to the past president of Nunavut Arctic College. In order to work with committee members, we needed to understand our agency, our own values and ourselves.

## **Parks Canada Guiding Principles**

Parks Canada became a special operating agency of the federal government in April 1999, the same date that the Nunavut Territory was formed. No longer is Parks Canada an integral part of another federal government department; it has considerably more autonomy than it formerly had. The agency reports to Parliament through the Minister of the Environment.

During the establishment phase of the new agency, Parks Canada staff and management developed a set of guiding principles that describes the agency's internal culture and how we wish to operate.

Some of the key Parks Canada principles follow:

### Ecological Integrity:

- People and the environment are inseparable.
- National Parks will be managed on an ecosystem-based model.

### Leadership and Stewardship

- Lead by example – demonstrate and advocate sound environmental ethics.

### Collaboration and Cooperation in Decision-making

- Collaborate to achieve difficult goals.

### Relationship and Responsibility

- Public involvement is essential in making sound decisions, in building support and in

giving Canadians a chance to contribute to knowledge of parks.

Knowledge

- Management decisions are based on the best possible knowledge, including traditional knowledge.

**Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit**

Also in 1999, with the new Nunavut Territory in place, the Nunavut government and other governments had to find a new way to relate to the people of Nunavut. Government of Nunavut officials from the Department of Sustainable Development got together with Inuit Elders to try to define the “past, present and future experience, knowledge and values of Inuit society.” The resulting body of knowledge is collectively called “Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit” or IQ.

Some IQ values follow:

Avatimik Kamattiarniq

- Inuit are part of the environment.
- What we put into the environment comes back to us.

Pijiitsirniq

- To serve is the foundation of being a leader.
- Use wisdom and knowledge to better serve your community.

Aajiiqitigiigniq

- Everyone should be involved in decisions. Decisions should be taken by consensus. Meaningful dialogue is essential for creative solutions.

Piliriqatigiingniq

- All members can contribute to the community.

Pilimmaksarniq

- Knowledge is gained through observation and experience.

**Common Ground**

Remarkably, when we looked at the principles of Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit and those of Parks Canada, we found wonderful commonalities in many of the principles. These allowed us to relate to one another’s cultures (both traditional and corporate) and to start working together.

<b>Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit</b>	<b>Parks Canada Values</b>
Avatimik Kamattiarniq - Inuit are part of the environment.	Ecological Integrity - People and the environment are inseparable.

- What we put into the environment comes back to us.	- Ecosystem-based management of parks.
Pijiitsirniq - To serve your community is the foundation of being a leader. - Use wisdom and knowledge to better serve your community.	Leadership and Stewardship - Lead by example. - Demonstrate and advocate environmental ethics.
Aajiiqatigigniq - Consensus decision-making. - Meaningful dialogue is essential to arriving at creative solutions.	Collaboration and Cooperation in Decision Making - Collaborate to achieve difficult goals.
Piliriqatigiingniq - All members can contribute to the community.	Relationship and Responsibility - Public involvement (consultation) is essential in making sound decisions.
Pilimmaksarniq - Knowledge is gained through observation and experience.	Knowledge - Management decisions are based on the best possible knowledge.

Once we knew how to show our partners/committees that we were not far apart in our approaches, we took one more step: we made sure that everything we did showed due respect to the people and their communities.

### **Cooperative Management**

Auyuittuq National Park of Canada is run cooperatively. This is a principle that is emphasized both within staff operations and between staff and the Auyuittuq Park Management Committee. Both staff and committee respect the obligations of the *Nunavut Land Claims Agreement* and the Inuit Impact and Benefit Agreement. Cooperative management is viewed as a tremendous opportunity to better manage the national parks. It is not viewed simply as an obligation of Parks Canada.

As mentioned earlier, respect is one of the keys to cooperative management. Simple actions can make a difference. As often as possible, meetings are held in person rather than by telephone. Seating arrangements are carefully laid out, generally in a circle, so no one person can dominate. Interpreters are always present and language is kept simple and clear so that interpretation is as accurate as possible. Interpreters are hired who are knowledgeable about local Inuit dialects.

### **A Word on Language**

During the park management planning process, we discovered that the interpreters were having difficulty translating concepts like “ecological integrity” into Inuktitut. We brought together a group of elders, park staff and professional interpreters to address this. Now we have developed new descriptive words in Inuktitut to address the concepts. In doing this, we have greatly

clarified our English descriptions as well.

The Auyuittuq Joint Park Management Committee provides advice to Parks Canada on all aspects of park planning and management. It consists of five Inuit and one non-Inuit person. Of the Inuit, three speak only Inuktitut.

The Superintendent is a non-voting member of the committee. Other park staff may be invited to attend meetings, to provide information as needed. One park staff person is dedicated to working closely with all the committees, as well as with the regional and territorial Inuit associations.

The park committee operates in Inuktitut. It meets two or three times a year and has conference calls to discuss specific issues. In contrast to the earlier park advisory committee, which had only minimal influence over park management and received information about the park but did not make management recommendations, the park management committee created through the Inuit Impact and Benefit Agreement has a clearly defined and significant role in advising the Minister responsible for national parks on a wide range of park management issues. The committee also participates actively in the planning process that defines the long range strategic direction for the park, and the park plan is based on the recommendations of the committee, while also taking into account the recommendations of other interested persons or bodies. Funding for operation of the committee and training opportunities for committee members are provided to enable the committee to carry out its role effectively. Committee members are directed to “operate in the public interest.” This means that members are required to take positions for the good of all and not defer to the party that appointed them.

## **Cooperative Management in Action – The Park Management Plan**

The management plan is the key document for the long-term (10 to 15 years) management of a national park. For Auyuittuq National Park, cooperative management involved both the joint park management committee and a park planning team, which is also required by the Inuit Impact and Benefit Agreement. The planning team consists of four members: two appointed by the regional Inuit organization and two appointed by Parks Canada. The Parks Canada appointees are staff - the park management planner and the park manager.

The planning team is a working group that prepares all the materials – such as terms of reference, consultation plans and draft management plans – for review by the joint park management committee and senior Parks Canada staff.

The joint park management committee provides advice at all stages of the management planning process. The committee is particularly important in identifying the issues that are of concern to the local communities.

The committee assists in the development and review of the draft plan. It is directly involved in public consultation, including determining the dates for community consultations. The schedule of meetings is extremely important since many community residents depend on seasonal subsistence harvest of wildlife. Few people within the communities are available to attend meetings and discuss plan proposals or options during key wildlife harvesting times. Community meetings are not held in July, August or September. Schedules are difficult to set as harvest schedules vary considerably from community to community. At the consultation stage, regional Inuit organizations, the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board, the Inuit Heritage Trust and other interested bodies and individuals are consulted and changes are made to the draft plan.

Once the joint park management committee is satisfied with the plan, the committee recommends it to the Minister of the Environment for approval and tabling in Parliament. This process gives the committee considerable power since, if it does not agree with elements of the plan, the Minister must seriously consider objections raised by the committee and make a decision in the public interest.

## **Applying Inuit Qaujimaqatigiingit (IQ) and Parks Canada Principles to Park Management Planning**

In order for Parks Canada, the joint park management committee and the park planning team to work well together, we have tried very hard to draw on the principles of IQ and those adopted by Parks Canada as our guide:

### Piliriqatigiingit - Relationships and Responsibilities

- Both the committee and the team are made up of a wide range of people.
- All views are considered in whatever language people wish to express them.

### Pilimaksaarniq – Knowledge

- Traditional ecological knowledge and scientific knowledge are incorporated into the plan. Both are treated as having equivalent value.

### Avatimik Kamattiarniq - Ecological Integrity

- Inuit are part of the ecosystem. This has become one of the key elements of the park story.
- The protection of the park's natural and cultural resources is another essential element of the plan.

### Aajiqatigiingit - Consensus

- The Committee and the planning team reach decisions about all parts of the planning process by consensus. Sometimes this requires more information, more time and more discussion than originally expected.

### Pijitsirniq - Leadership

- Being part of the park management committee and the park planning team has become a

source of pride to the members. Committee members take the responsibility seriously and are constantly consulting with people in their home communities and providing feedback to park staff in ways not originally anticipated when these structures were established.

### **Disadvantages of Cooperative Management**

Managing protected areas cooperatively takes time. Working with parties outside the government structure is very time consuming, particularly at the start. Meetings take longer as everything needs to be interpreted. All written documents also must be translated, thereby increasing costs and lead-time needed to prepare for meetings.

Costs are high. Parks Canada pays honoraria to committee and team members involved in meetings and conference calls. The population of Nunavut is small and many people give up paid work time to attend meetings. Parks Canada also pays all transportation, accommodation and meal costs for committee members. This is a large cost in Nunavut due to the remote locations, weather problems and the fact that all travel is by air. When members are delayed due to bad weather, the cost goes up.

There is a considerable commitment of staff time to working with the committee and planning team. All park management activities are reviewed twice yearly with the committee, as are research permit requests, unusual policy requests, emergencies, etc., as they arise.

In some cases, park staff must learn new attitudes towards managing national parks in Nunavut. We operate on a collaborative model and those staff who come from a more traditional, directive environment must either change or seek a transfer to another national park. Non-acceptance of the collaborative approach or any questioning of Inuit rights as guaranteed by the *Nunavut Land Claims Agreement* is not acceptable.

### **Advantages of Cooperative Management**

Cooperative management actively respects the views of community members. People feel involved and there are no surprises when new park management actions need to be taken. Our approach to cooperative management uses both traditional ecological knowledge and scientific knowledge. This results in a more complete consideration of all available information and better decisions being made.

By establishing good communications with the communities, an early warning system has developed both on an environmental and social basis. Everyone is better informed about why decisions are being made and what the options are; therefore we receive fewer complaints based on incorrect information. There is increased trust in Parks Canada because of the transparency of the decision-making process.

There is an increased interest among local people in working for Parks Canada. As well, staff

generally stay longer in the organization and sometimes want to move into management positions.

## **A Last Word**

We recognize that the social, political and economic realities of Nunavut are unique. But we strongly believe that it is **how you work with people** that goes a very long way towards establishing a strong cooperative management model. This approach can be used anywhere, regardless of the political situation. Respect – finding commonalities and carrying through on all fronts – results in positive relationships and productive, cooperative park management.

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