



Seal River Watershed

Indigenous Protected
Area Initiative

October 6, 2021

Nunavunmi Parnaiyiit
Nunavut Planning Commission
PO Box 1791
Iqaluit NU X0A0H0

Via Email: submissions@nunavut.ca

Re: Written Submission concerning the 2021 Draft Nunavut Land Use Plan

To whom it may concern:

The Seal River Watershed Alliance (SRWA) was established by the Sayisi Dene First Nation, Barren Lands First Nation, Northlands Dene First Nation and the O-pipon-na-piwin Cree Nation to advance protection of the Seal River Watershed as an Indigenous Protected and Conserved Area.

We congratulate the Commission in reaching this important milestone in your work. The Draft Nunavut Land Use Plan (DNLUP) reflects a great deal of work on the part of the Commission. We wish to assist the Commission in finalizing the DNLUP, and make the following written submissions for consideration:

Ecological and Cultural Importance of the Seal River Watershed

The Seal River Watershed is the wintering ground of the Beverley and Qamanirjuak Caribou herd, and home to at least 22 known species at risk. It is also a territory of great cultural importance for Inuit, Cree and Denesuline people. Many of these values are identified in Table 4 "Community Priorities and Values for Water Management Areas" of the 2021 DNLUP.

However, the DNLUP does not identify any of the values of the Watershed outside of Nunavut as Transboundary Considerations or contemplate further actions under Chapter 2 (Protecting and Sustaining the Environment) or Chapter 3 (Encouraging Conservation Planning).

Recommendation 1: The SRWA submits that the Commission should identify the Seal River Watershed with as a Transboundary Consideration under 2.8 of the DNLUP.

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The DNLUP Should Identify Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas as Community Areas of Interest

The Seal River is one of the last intact watersheds in Northern Manitoba, covering 50,000 km². A small portion of the Seal River Watershed is also situated in Nunavut within the area covered by the DNLUP.

Our goal is to protect this area so that its outstanding ecological and cultural values can be maintained and managed under joint Indigenous leadership. We are also working to encourage sustainable economic development that is consistent with the overall protection of the Watershed and the promotion of Indigenous ways of life, and we have established positive relationships with both the Arviat Hunters and Trappers Organization and the Kivalliq Inuit Association to discuss how these goals can be achieved.

We note that none of the protection or management measures we envision would affect the exercise of s. 35 rights or community economic activities that are consistent with the overall protection of the Watershed and the promotion of Indigenous ways of life. Hunting, trapping, gathering, ecological and cultural tourism, or other activities necessary for well-being of local communities would be permitted and promoted within the IPCA.

We note that our goals align well with the Goals of the NPC Broad Land Use Planning Policies, Objectives and Goals. However, we note that there is no express recognition of proposed Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas within the DNLUP. While IPCAs may be established as part of a joint protected area designation with a federal, provincial or territorial authority, they may also be established as an Indigenous designation using our own inherent authorities to manage traditional lands. The identification and management of an IPCA can advance effective protection and management of important ecological, cultural and economic values for Indigenous people.

The SRWA and the participating Indigenous governments have not yet determined whether the Seal River IPCA would be a jointly designated protected area or established under exclusively Indigenous authority. We continue to explore the potential for a jointly designated protected area in Manitoba with the Governments of Manitoba and Canada.

At this time, we have not made any specific proposals for legislative protection in Nunavut. However, we do consider the portion of the Seal River Watershed in Nunavut (including the Wolverine River, through Baralzon Lake and Little Duck Lake) to be a community area of



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interest for the Ghotelnene K'odtineh Dene. In the absence of any proposed legislative designation, we note that the Commission supports the identification and management of community areas of interest through land use planning.

Recommendation 2: The SRWA submits that the Commission should identify the Seal River Watershed within Nunavut as a Community Area of Interest, and include it within Map A of the NLUP under a "Limited Use" designation that prohibits incompatible uses, with the exception of lands currently withdrawn from disposition under a 2019 Order-in-Council (P.C. 2019-576). All lands subject to the OIC should be designated "Mixed Use" to facilitate the conclusion of the *Samuel/Thorassie* litigation.

A map showing the extent of the Seal River watershed in Nunavut, together with the lands subject to the 2019 Order-in-Council, is attached to this submission.

Conclusion

We trust that the Commission will consider the input and recommendations of the SRWA, and we look forward to the opportunity to participate in the upcoming hearings.

Respectfully,

Chief Evan Yassie
Chief – Sayisi Dene First Nation
Chairperson, Seal River Watershed Alliance

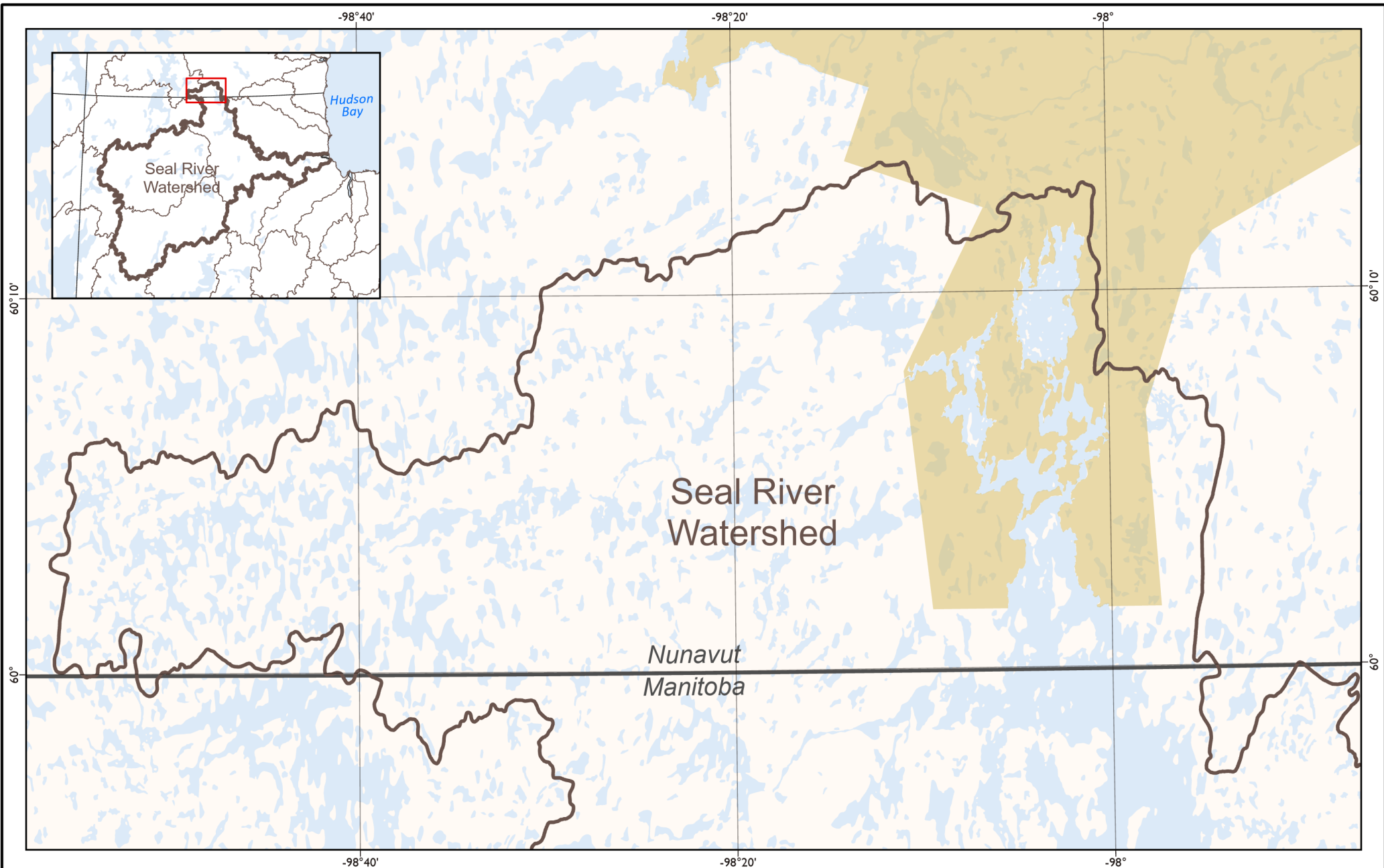
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GHOTELNENE K'ODTINEH DENE
**NORTH OF 60
LAND CLAIM**



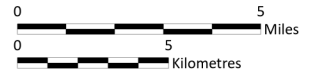
Seal River Watershed in Nunavut



Lands Subject to "Withdrawal from Disposal of Certain Tracts of Territorial Lands in Nunavut (Kivalliq area) Order"



Scale: 1:250,000
Projection: NAD83 UTM Zone 14N
Topographic data: Atlas of Canada



CWIC
Chris Werner Consulting Inc
Date Map Produced: 2021-09-22