

Appendix A: NunatuKavut Inuit Connection to Akami-Uapishk^U-KakKasuak-Mealy Mountains National Park Reserve

NunatuKavut Inuit have a long-standing connection to the lands, waters, and ice in and around the proposed National Park Reserve. Research undertaken in partnership with Parks Canada shows that Inuit have long relied on many species in the park region, including caribou, geese, ducks, partridge, snowshoe hare, porcupine, moose, beaver, muskrat, otter, mink, marten, fox, lynx, cod, salmon, brook trout, seals, shellfish, capelin, smelts, seabirds and their eggs, berries, plants, and wood sources. Some species, like seals and caribou, were used as both food and skins for clothing. Fur-bearing animals, salmon, and cod, were also valuable as trade products. Indigenous knowledge and land use studies show extensive hunting and trapping activities in and around the proposed National Park Reserve by NunatuKavut members.

There are also NunatuKavut Inuit that live in and around the Park Reserve and we have communities on the periphery of the Park.

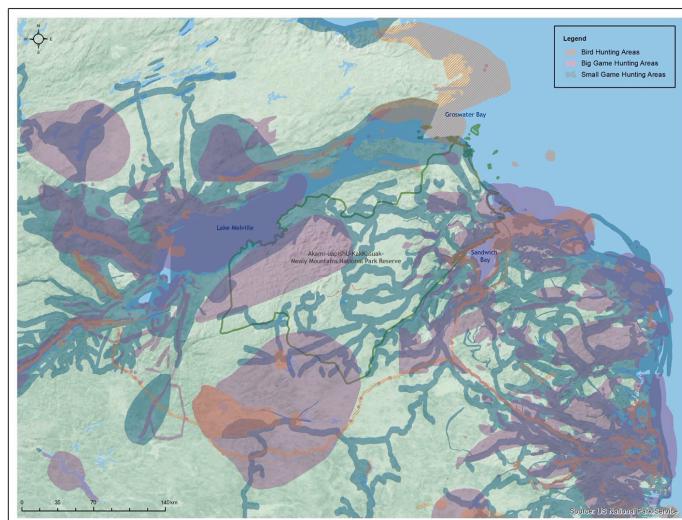


Figure 1: Subset of Inuit hunting areas for birds, big game, and small game within and adjacent to Mealy Mountains National Park. Image created by Tammy Lambourne from cumulative data sets (Mitchell 2013a, 2014). Please note that this map does not show the full-depth of our land use in and around the Park area.

Given our deep connection and rights in this area, NCC has played a central role in the park creation process. The idea of protecting this area as a National Park was first proposed by one of our Elders, Ches Lethbridge. As a result, in 2015, the NunatuKavut Community Council and Parks Canada agreed to a framework for consultation and cooperative management under a SUA, which is a precursor to a Parks Impact and Benefit Agreement. The SUA acknowledges that we assert Inuit rights in the park.

The Minister is responsible for upholding the United Nations Declaration on the rights of Indigenous Peoples Act. This is highlighted under Parks Canada's own Indigenous Stewardship Policy and provides a mandate to Parks Canada to support our continued governance over our traditional lands, waters and ice.

NCC has been working in good faith with Parks Canada to implement the terms of the SUA. This includes the creation of the NunatuKavut Consensus Board, a cooperative management body that allows NCC and Parks to work together on various shared management issues.

Unfortunately, our involvement in park implementation has been stalled by politics and internal wrangling within the Government of Canada. Although we continue to stand ready to continue the work provided for under the SUA, and which is necessary to move forward with park implementation, Parks Canada has taken the position that they will not provide us with the necessary capacity funding to do that work.