





Studies carried out during the past 10 years in the area around Clyde River have identified a large area of the fiords of the central part of the east coast of Baffin Island as having great potential for a territorial park. The area is under consideration for nomination by UNESCO as part of a World Biosphere Reserve, and research continues into the feasibility of establishing a Nunavut Territorial Park in the area.

This area includes a significant amount of coastal marine habitat. It is quite different from Auyuittuq National Park, located between Cumberland Sound and the east coast of Baffin Island at Qikiqtarjuaq, and offers a variety of land-based activities. A park near Clyde River would focus on the deep fiords with glaciers flowing down to salt water and on land-based opportunities in the valleys of the fiords, on boating and camping opportunities in the summer and on sea ice-based experiences during the time the ice is reliable for travel.

Coupled with Ninginganiq, the proposed bowhead whale sanctuary southeast of Clyde River, this park will offer premier attractions to the Clyde River area. Clyde River is a

small and traditional Inuit community on the eastern side of Baffin Island. Access to the area is by aircraft and possibly cruise ship, and to the fiords, by boat, snowmobile or dogsled.

### ONE OF A KIND WONDERS

Everywhere, the scenery is world-class, with each fiord having its own unique character, and offering different experiences. Eglinton Fiord is a short, winding fiord leading to wonderful hiking in the U-shaped glacial valley of Reservoir Pass. Massive rock walls tower over your boat at the junction of Sam Ford Fiord and Walker Arm, and jumbled walls of ice descend steep slopes to the sea. The vertical cliffs of the China Wall would dwarf the Great Wall of China for which it is named. Sail Peak soars above the glacial-sculpted Stewart Valley, and the huge vertical cliffs in Scott Inlet offer some of the best mountain climbing in the world. Clouds of guillemots and glaucous gulls swirl in an aerial ballet around nesting cliffs on the sheer cliffs along Scott Inlet and on Scott Island. The valleys leading down to the fiords offer good hiking, and opportunities to see wildlife – perhaps a caribou, arctic fox, soaring gyrfalcon, or peregrine defending its rocky eyrie. Hikers are seldom far from the sound of glacial meltwater rushing down the slopes to collect in valley lakes and then flowing through jumbled rockfalls to the sea. At Avituyuq, a huge rock shaped like a bowhead whale rises from the waters, and distinctive peaks at Walker Arm resemble an old man, old woman, and a dogsled (*qamutik*). The place seems at times infused with mystery, especially places near the end of Gibbs Fiord where stones are moved by spirits from the past.

The long days of the arctic spring bring seals out on the ice to bear their young in *aigluit* beneath the snow, and later to bask in the sun and moult their last year's coats. At this time of year, travel by snowmobile or dogteam is easy, and the people travel into the fiords to hunt caribou and seals.

In summer, wildflowers carpet the ground, and lichens create a tapestry on the rocks. Polar bears roam the green valleys and can be seen along the steep shorelines of the fiords or swimming across the narrow inlets. Autumn follows quickly on the heels of summer, bringing crisp days, night skies filled with the aurora, migrating geese, and brilliant colours on the tundra.

With the coming of winter, ice covers all the sea, and jumbles up where the tides lift and drop the platform of ice. Snow blankets the land, and all is quiet under the writhing aurora and the winter moon. Hunters travel inland by snowmobile, and polar bears patrol the dark fiords.

At any time of year, this is a special, mystical world, as the long avenues of stone are alive with legends from the past. The traveler on the land may see ancient tent rings or come upon the remains of an old winter house (*qammat*), with whale rib antlers scattered all about, or stone storage caches where people have in the past stored dried meat against hard times. Elders tell the stories of the past, serving as a connection between a time when people lived entirely off the land and a time when they have learned to use the technology of today to help them live and travel on the land.



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## A PARK IN THE WORKS

The process of creating a new territorial park is undertaken in keeping with the Umbrella Inuit Impact and Benefit Agreement (IIBA) negotiated for Territorial Parks and the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement. The process also requires the eventual transfer of lands from Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) for the purposes of a territorial park, and the development of a Park Master Plan and management plans. Nunavut Parks is continuing to work with residents of Clyde River in developing

further studies, resource inventories, and consultations in support of the idea of the creation of a territorial park to the north of Clyde River.

Further information on plans for a park in this part of Nunavut is available on the Nunavut Parks website at [www.nunavutparks.com](http://www.nunavutparks.com). Call Nunavut Tourism at 1-866-NUNAVUT to request the Nunavut Travel Planner, which lists all licensed tourism operators and accommodations and services in Clyde River. ■

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