



Proposed Protection of Tuvaijuittuq (the High Arctic Basin)



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Proposal to Establish a Protected Area in Tuvaijuittuq for up to 5 years

- Tuvaijuittuq
 - Request for Approval
 - Background
 - Ecological Importance
 - Socio-economic considerations
 - Protection Options
 - Consultation
 - Next Steps



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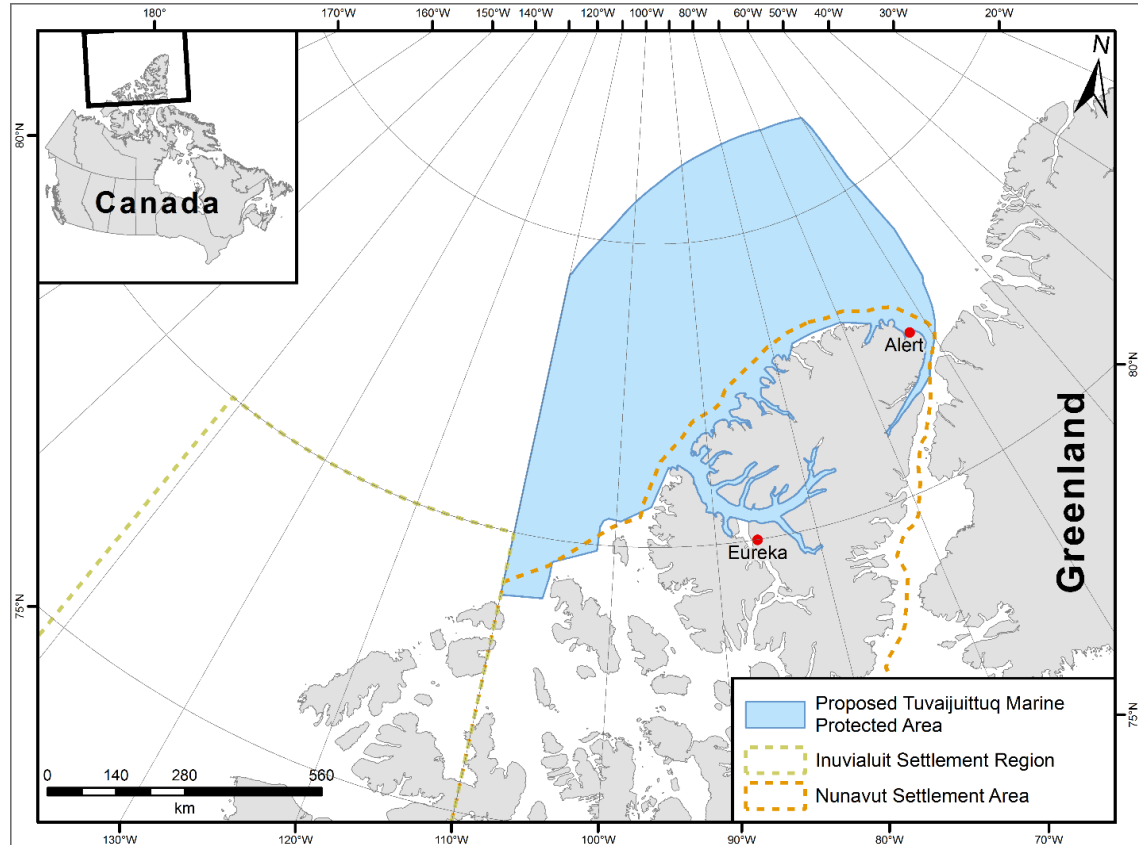


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Request for approval

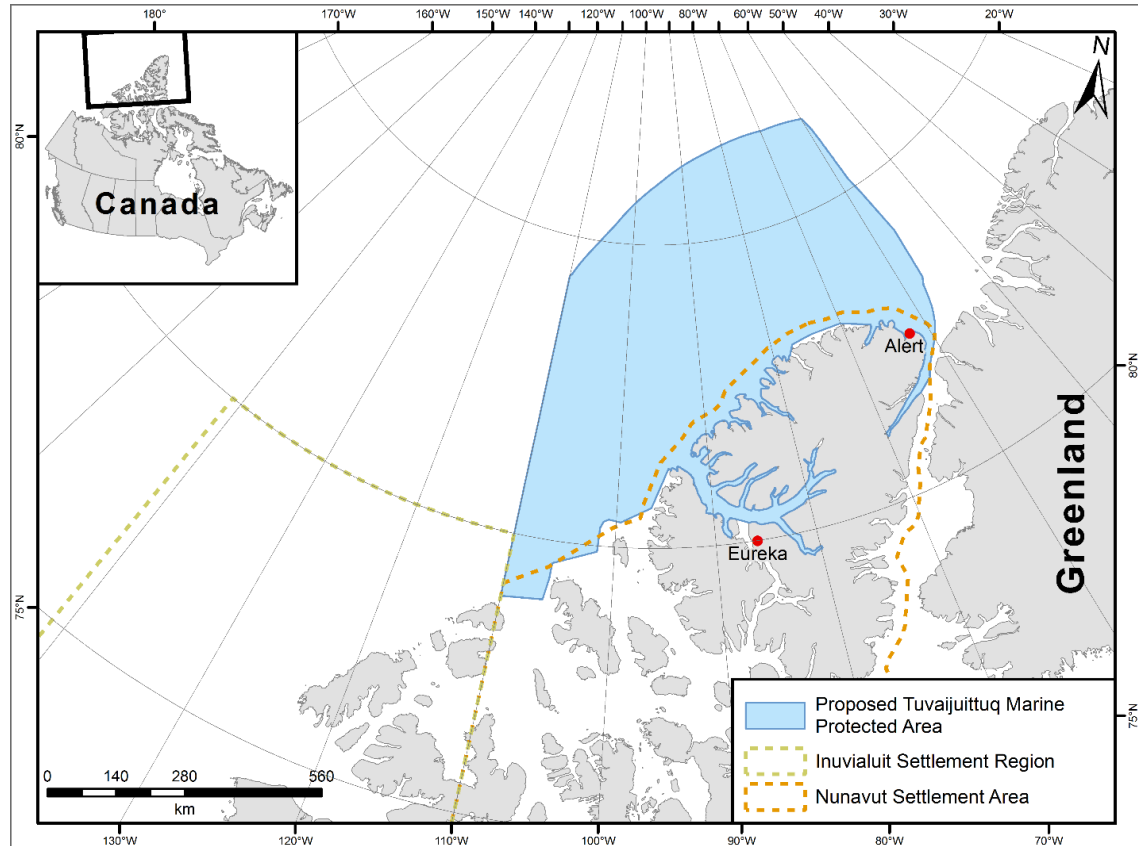
DFO is seeking NWMBs approval of the establishment of a conservation area for Tuvaijuittuq, through designation of a Marine Protected Area by Ministerial Order under the proposed *Oceans Act* amendment (Bill C-55). consistent with the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement s9.3.2





Tuvaijuittuq “the place where the ice never melts”

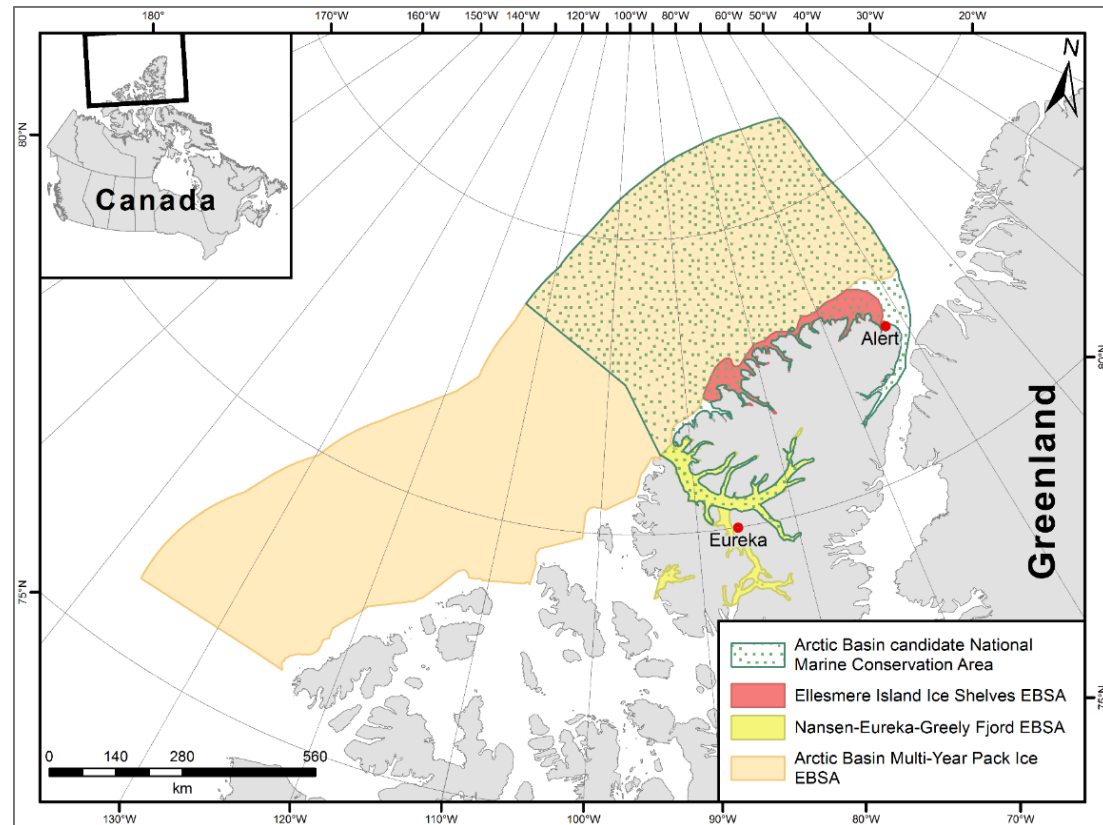
- Located west of Ellesmere Island and Canadian Arctic Archipelago
- Contains the oldest multi-year ice in the Arctic
- An area where summer sea ice is expected to remain the longest





What is Tuvaijuittuq?

- Portions of this area have been identified by DFO as Ecologically and Biologically Significant Areas (EBSAs)
- PCA has identified a portion of Tuvaijuittuq as a candidate National Marine Conservation Area (NMCA)
- Non-Government Organizations and academia have been studying the 'Last Ice Area' and identified the need for marine protection





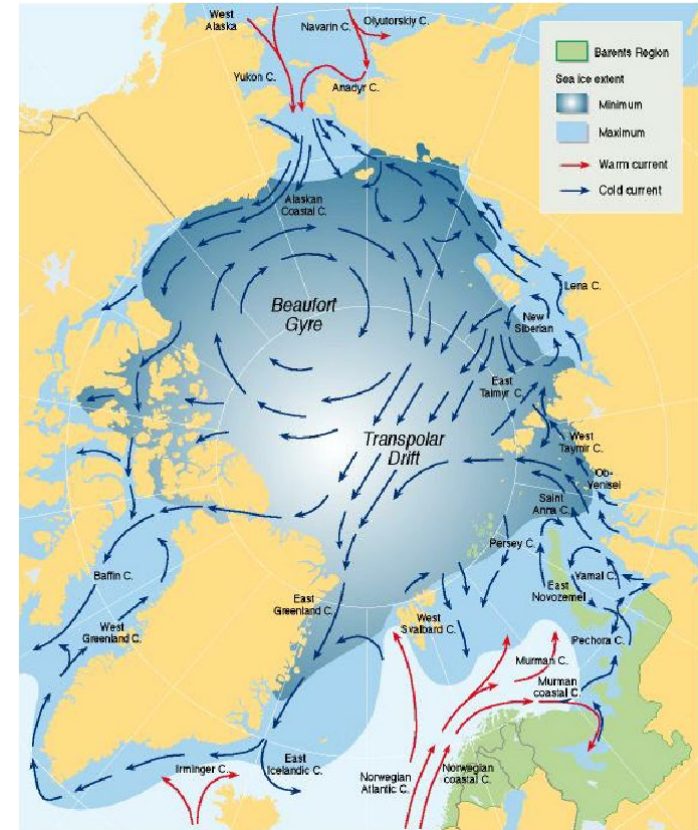
Why is Tuvaijuittuq Important?

- Multi-year ice
 - Provides important habitat to ice-associated species
 - such as Arctic cod, polar bears, seals, walruses
 - Supports and provides protection to under-ice communities
 - Form the basis of local and regional food webs that support higher trophic level species with distributions throughout the Arctic.
 - Expected to provide critical refuge to ice-associated and under-ice communities in the future as sea ice declines

Why Is Tuvaijuittuq Important?

- Unique Ecosystem

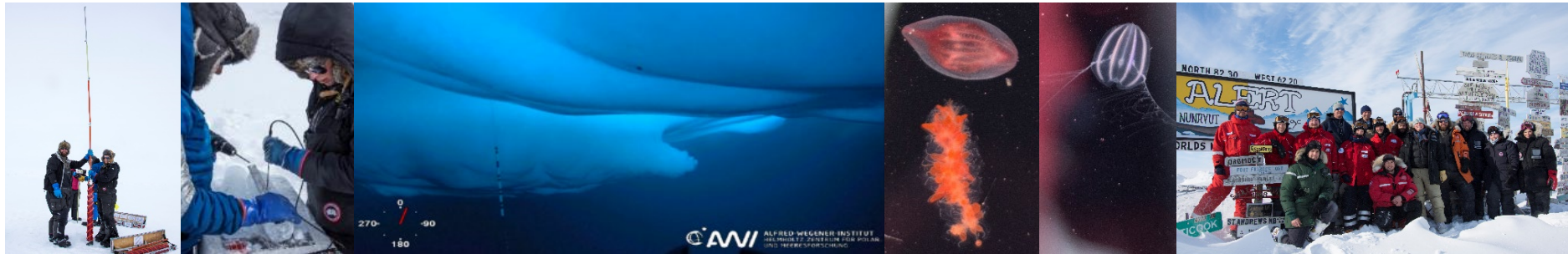
- The Beaufort Gyre, an Arctic Ocean current that contains a globally significant accumulation of fresh water from North American and Eurasian Arctic rivers
- The Gyre is a major source of multi-year ice to the Arctic via the Canadian Arctic Archipelago
- This ecosystem is relatively poorly understood and requires further study to define and assess its ecological properties





Ongoing Scientific Research

- Multidisciplinary Arctic Program (MAP) began in 2018; ongoing to 2022
 - Use of ROVs/AUVs and acoustic profilers to characterize under-ice and benthic invertebrate and fish communities
 - Ice cores, collected for productivity and physical environment (ice) analyses
 - CTD, buoys and moorings deployed to collect oceanographic data
 - Aerial surveys in Archer Fiord





Socio-economic considerations

- Currently there are very few marine activities in the area because of its remoteness and inaccessibility (assessment of last 12 months)
 - No active commercial and recreational fisheries and aquaculture
 - An initial assessment indicates likely limited (if any) subsistence harvesting
 - No current mining activity and no oil and gas licences
 - No vessel traffic (according to an analysis of AIS data) between March 2017 to November 2018
 - No known tourist or recreational activities
- Climate change impacts in the arctic will result in the continued loss of sea ice (multi-year pack ice).
 - May result in an extended shipping season and routes
 - May increase the feasibility of activities such as mining and, oil and gas exploration, commercial fishing, research and tourism



Protecting Tuvaijuittuq

Given...

- The uniqueness and importance of multi-year ice in Tuvaijuittuq
- The potential for short-term changes due to climate change
- The rapidly growing interest of international shipping and tourism in the High Arctic (potential to exacerbate climate change impacts to the area); and
- The presence of ecologically important species in the area (ice-associated, pelagic, and benthic)

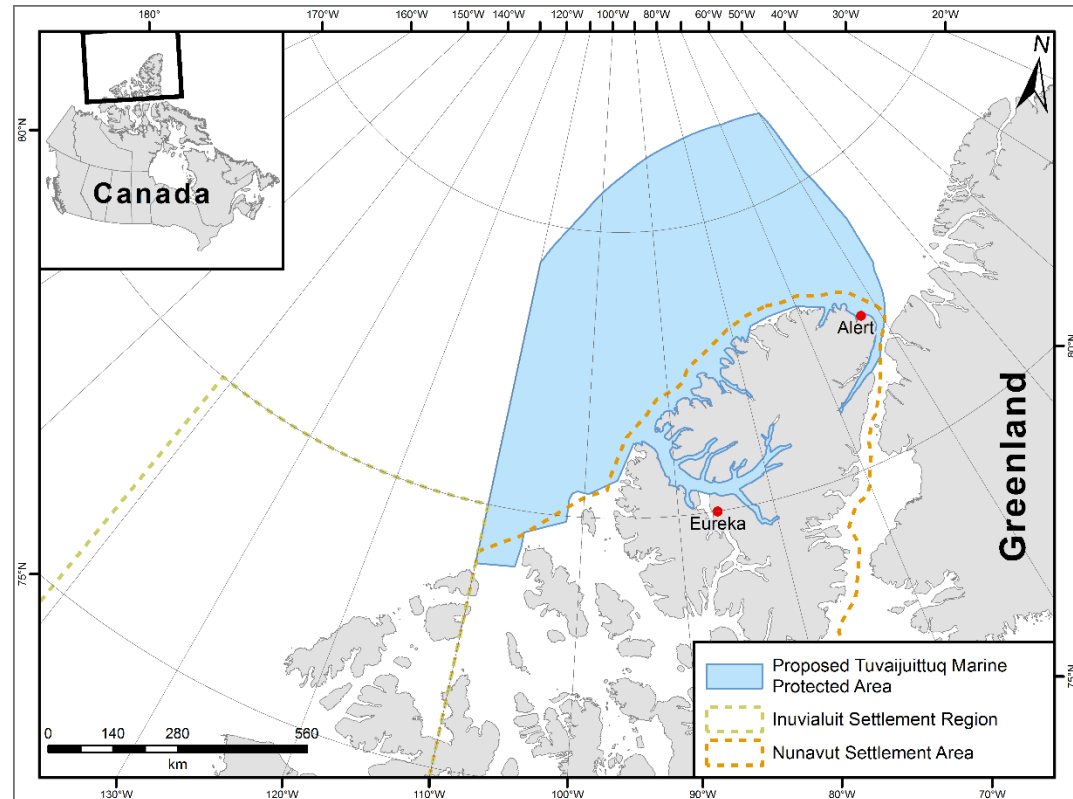
Protection would...

- Signify the areas importance and foster partner collaboration to support the continued assessment of the area
- Increase the profile and awareness of the area by nationally and internationally interested parties
- Allow baseline information collection which will inform future protection measures in the area over the long term



Protecting Tuvaijuittuq

- The proposed approach first establishes an interim protection measure through an *Oceans Act* Marine Protected Area by way of Ministerial Order (this is contingent on Royal Assent of Bill C-55)
- While under interim protection the QIA, GN and Canada will work together with partners and stakeholders to undertake a feasibility assessment which will collect and compile additional information including IQ to produce recommendation for long term protection of the area.





Oceans Act Ministerial Order

- A Ministerial Order MPA under the *Oceans Act** will:
 - Freeze the footprint of activities in the area for up to 5 years, during which time all activities that occurred in the area over the last 12 months prior to designation (or that have been authorized to occur) would be allowed to continue
 - Within the 5-year period, other longer term protection tools may replace the Ministerial Order. If no permanent protection measures are established, the Ministerial Order MPA shall be repealed
 - Any and all protection measures will be in accordance with the Nunavut Agreement
 - Ongoing activities include:
 - Science
 - DND activities
 - The Ministerial Order will allow:
 - Emergency, public safety, national defense, national security or law enforcement
 - Scientific research
 - Certain activities carried out by a foreign national, entity, ship or state

*Contingent on Royal Assent of Bill C-55.



Inuit Impact Benefit Agreement

- s9.4.1 of the Nunavut Agreement stipulates that Government agencies responsible for conservation areas and DIOs will negotiate an Inuit Impact and Benefits Agreement (IIBA)
- Canada and the Qikiqtani Inuit Association are negotiating the IIBA for Tallurutiup Imanga National Marine Conservation Area (TINMCA)
- It has been agreed that this IIBA will also address potential marine protected area designations within Tuvaijuittuq
- The parties are working toward completing the negotiations for an IIBA for TINMCA by June 2019



Consultation for Tuvaijuittuq

- Initial engagement with communities and key partners in 2018 on the concept of interim measure to protect Tuvaijuittuq
- Further engagement with HTOs/communities (Resolute Bay, Grise Fiord, Arctic Bay) in February 2019
- Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed by Government of Canada, Government of Nunavut and the Qikiqtani Inuit Association in March 2019 to establish a process for assessing the desirability and feasibility of protecting Tuvaijuittuq
- The Tuvaijuittuq Steering Committee (April 2019) established under the MoU will oversee the assessment process including:
 - Conducting additional consultation with co-management partners and stakeholders;
 - Making recommendations interim and long-term protection measures



Next Steps for Interim Protection

- *Oceans Act* amendments required
- Requirements under the Nunavut Agreement
 - Conformity Determination through the Nunavut Planning Commission (NPC)
 - Nunavut Impact Review Board (NIRB) review if conformity is determined
 - Nunavut Wildlife Management Board (NWMB) approvals
- Completion of an IIBA for TINMCA/Tuvaijuittuq
- Canada Gazette 1



Questions?