

# A New Approach to wilderness and ecological reserves



**WERAC**  
Wilderness and Ecological  
Reserves Advisory Council

Following the 2020 public engagement on the Protected Areas Plan for the Island of Newfoundland, the Wilderness and Ecological Reserves Advisory Council (WERAC) recommended a new approach to establishing and managing protected natural areas. This approach is based on increasing opportunities for community input and prioritizing traditional uses.

## **Objective**

To create ecological reserves in a way that preserves people's connection to the land while protecting wild spaces.

## **Benefits**

This new approach is aimed at conserving lands where people can continue their cherished outdoor pursuits, while ensuring the long-term protection of these areas from large scale industrial development. Creating a reserve with community engagement gives people more of a say over management of the area. If a reserve is established, nothing can be changed in the future without community involvement.

## **Activities**

Activities like hunting, fishing, trapping, snowmobiling, campfires, and berry picking have deep cultural and personal significance for local communities across Newfoundland and Labrador. Traditional, recreational and subsistence activities would continue within the proposed reserves.

People would have access to their cabins within the reserve boundaries, and could continue to use, maintain, renovate, hand down, buy, or sell their properties as they see fit. This ensures that residents can still enjoy their cabins and the surrounding wilderness.

Major developments like commercial forestry, mineral development, agriculture, or power infrastructure would not be allowed within the reserve. The landscape would remain much as it is today.

## **Public input**

The input of residents is crucial. It's WERAC's role to engage and listen to local residents, Indigenous organizations and governments, and other interested parties to guide the management approach for each proposed reserve. Your participation ensures that local interests and traditions are respected, informing decisions about reserve boundaries and what people would like to see for the area in the future.

## **Contact WERAC**

All questions, comments and input are welcomed! Reach out to 709-636-4836 or [werac@gov.nl.ca](mailto:werac@gov.nl.ca). Local engagements run by WERAC are announced on [www.engagenl.ca](http://www.engagenl.ca), where you can also sign-up to be on WERAC's mailing list.