

Questions, Concerns, and Answers about Northern Values

Will Northern Values limit the amount of development on Traditional Lands? Will Northern Values open up Traditional Lands to development?

Northern Values does not open any Traditional Land for development, nor does it close any Traditional Land to development.

The document states that it is a common value amongst people in the north that there be a balance of conservation and development, and that development take place within a context of ensuring the long-term health of the land, water, and wildlife. It makes clear that all decisions about what land is protected and what land is developed must be decided through community and regional land-use planning with respect for the Aboriginal and Treaty rights of First Nations.

Does Northern Values call for or mandate the protection of 50% of the Boreal?

No. The document states that “any targets set for conservation or development should be viewed only as aspirational, with actual decisions on land allocation to be determined through regional and community based land-use planning.” While some of the groups involved in discussions about the declaration have pointed to scientific studies which state that at least fifty percent of the landscape needs to be protected to ensure the long-term health of the ecosystem, this target does not appear in the document.

Does Northern Values abrogate or derogate any Aboriginal or Treaty rights or other existing or future agreements?

No – in fact, according to the document, the affirmation of those rights is a core value for all the signatories. The document states:

It is critical that all planning processes respect, and thus recognize, the rights of Indigenous Peoples, including, but not limited to, Treaty rights, and the right to consultation and accommodation, as well as the various levels of Indigenous government, cultures and peoples. Indigenous Peoples and communities shall be involved in planning, as leaders and partners. This process will serve to complement and facilitate existing land-use and resource management plans.

It is our hope that this process helps to advance relevant recommendations set forth by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, the Manitoba Aboriginal Justice Implementation Commission, and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

In addition, there is a non-abrogation clause at the end of the document which states:

This document is a legally non-binding expression of the mutual intentions and goodwill of the Parties and is not intended to create, recognize, affect, or deny any rights, claims, positions, or obligations of any of the Parties. This document is without prejudice to any negotiations, consultations, or any current or future process in which any Party is involved.

Is traditional knowledge, or only “science,” included in the Northern Values document?

The document supports traditional knowledge and states that Indigenous Peoples and communities need to be leaders and partners in land use planning.

Specifically, Northern Values recognizes, “that knowledge is more than information and requires a synthesis that incorporates understanding, life-long learning, cultural exchange and mutual respect.” It further states that *“We must apply, science, traditional knowledge, influence and leadership to the protection of our environment to ensure its sustainability for our children and our grandchildren.”*

Who wrote the Northern Values document?

The content of Northern Values was initially inspired by discussions and presentation at the Boreal Summit, held by the Province on February 17, 2015, in Opaskwayak Cree Nation.

Following the meeting, several attendees, including representatives from industry, commerce, conservation, Indigenous communities and local governments, in coordination with Community Futures North Central Development, met in an effort to put into writing the themes repeatedly expressed at that meeting in the form of a statement of “Common Values.”

Particular emphasis was placed on ensuring that the document accurately captured the “7 points” that were the focus of Chief Ron Evans’ keynote address at the February 17 meeting.

The authors of that document then held several meetings by phone and in person, and shared the document by email so that others from the north might review and revise the document to ensure that it accurately reflected the common values expressed at the meeting, and the peoples of Northern Manitoba in general.

Who supports Northern Values?

Northern Values has been affirmed by municipalities, First Nations, conservation organizations, businesses, and industries from throughout the north. Visit www.northernvalues.ca/who-we-are/ for a full and up-to-date list of Signatories and Supporters.

What is the difference between a Signatory to Northern Values and a Supporter of Northern Values?

There are two ways that rights- and stake-holders can express their support for Northern Values:

A **Signatory** is a First Nation, community, organization or business located north of the 53rd parallel that has passed a resolution or written submission to be a full decision-making partner in supporting the Northern Values document and initiative.

A **Supporter** is a First Nation, community, organization or business located in northern Manitoba or elsewhere that fully supports of the work of the signatories and the contents of the document. Supporters do not have a decision-making role in Northern Values but are kept fully informed of Northern Values activities.

We have already signed agreements with the Government for these things, why join this?

While First Nations have already signed many agreements with the Government regarding many of these issues, this is the first time that these values, and these rights, have been fully endorsed by municipalities, industry, and conservation organizations. That means that First Nations will no longer be alone or isolated in demanding that these agreements be honored and implemented.