

Conservation in the Peel Could ...

- Conserve a globally important mountain boreal ecosystem both for its inherent value and as a benchmark for more developed ecosystems elsewhere;
- Allow for appropriate new economic and community development compatible with a healthy ecosystem;
- Ensure continued robust populations of Woodland Caribou, Grizzly Bear, Wolverine, Wolf, Peregrine Falcon and a host of other species;
- Protect the pristine headwaters of the Peel, large intact tributary watersheds, aquatic ecosystems and critical wetlands of territorial importance;
- Protect one of Canada's finest arrays of wild mountain river watersheds, supporting existing tourism and service businesses, and attracting new investment;
- Protect a northern Canadian cultural landscape, and support continued traditional activities and harvesting throughout the Peel watershed;
- Help meet Yukon's commitment to complete a territorial network of protected areas, and meet its obligations under the international convention to conserve biodiversity.
- Establish an internationally-significant climate change sanctuary.

Three Rivers Celebrate a vast boreal mountain wilderness unknown to most.

The Three Rivers Project encompasses a national touring art exhibition, multi-media show, and a fine book, *Three Rivers: The Yukon's Great Boreal Wilderness* – all based on the 2003 Three Rivers Journey. Available at CPAWS-Yukon and Mac's Fireweed. For more on the Journey go to our website, www.cpawsyukon.org and follow the Three Rivers links.



High Water Silent © Ron Bolt 2005



Cool Water Yukon © Ron Bolt 2005



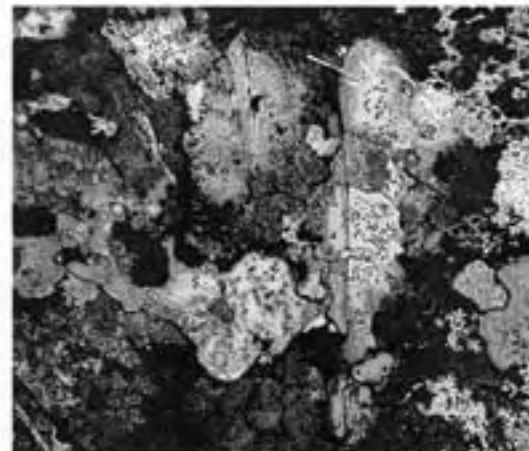
Nameless Hours © Ron Bolt 2005



Yukon Micro © Ron Bolt 2005



Riverdance © Ron Bolt 2005



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Three Rivers Suite

Stunning boxed set of six limited edition (only 30 produced) fine art prints by nationally-celebrated realist painter, Ron Bolt.

Enjoy the exquisite beauty of the Yukon's great Three Rivers wilderness in your home.

Ron was on the Three Rivers Journey, 2003. His works are on national tour in the "Three Rivers, wild waters, sacred places" exhibition. Ron donates half the sales to CPAWS-Yukon's conservation work in the Three Rivers area.

Six 13"x15" colour serigraphs pulled at Sir Wilfred Grenfell College, Newfoundland, exclusively for this project. Arrives in a royal blue cloth-bound box bearing the Yukon Territory crest. Includes statements by the artist and engaging essays on the Three Rivers by John Raulston Saul and Margaret Atwood.

Price: \$3000. GST not included.

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Allow 2 weeks for delivery.

Ron Bolt

PEEL Appeal



Juri Peepre



Fritz Mueller

For many Canadians, the North is part of the imagined body. It's an extension of the self, not the rational self but the self that feels. When the North is damaged and we hear about it, we hurt. The twenty-first century will tell us — once and for all, I suspect — how much of ourselves we're prepared to destroy. — Margaret Atwood

Where is the Peel Watershed?

The Wind, Snake, and Bonnet Plume (the Three Rivers), with their sister tributaries the Hart, Blackstone and Ogilvie, rise in the stunning Selwyn and Wernecke Mountains and flow through the vast Peel River basin on the Yukon's northeast border.

Perched at the apex of Canada's boreal forest and the north end of the Rocky Mountain chain, the Peel watershed also includes some of the unglaciated area known as Beringia. It is a varied land of clean rivers, boreal forests, subarctic plateaus, and shining mountains. Here, unbounded and colourful mountain ranges frame pristine forests and watersheds. Robust woodland and barren ground caribou, free-ranging wolverine and grizzly bear, the threatened Anatum Peregrine Falcon, unspoiled lakes and wetlands, and thousands upon



thousands of boreal songbirds and migratory waterfowl occupy an ancient and unfettered landscape that is the essence of wildness.

This is the traditional territory of the Nacho Nyak Dun and Tet'it Gwich'in First Nations; for generations they have been sustained by the plants, fish and wildlife of this region as they traversed its valleys and mountains on a network of travel and trade routes.

Today the wilderness of the Peel basin – an area that makes up 14% of the territory – is a vital benchmark of untamed nature; ancient and complex ecological processes continue to evolve freely, and the full complement of predators and prey ranges across the landscape. Fishing, hunting and trapping are still important to the way of life in the region, and Yukoners and visitors from around the world also value the watershed as a premiere destination for canoeing, backcountry travel, photography, education, cultural activities and scientific research.



www.cpawsyukon.org



The Bonnet Plume herd of woodland caribou – a species threatened in much of Canada – is one of the largest in the Yukon. Photo: P. Mather



Whitefish for dinner on the Snake River. From left to right: Elaine Alexie, Jill Pangman, Gladys Netro. Photo: C. Archbould



The Peel watershed is home to thousands of birds including the Boreal Owl. Photo: J.Schou



The Three Rivers – wilderness without beginning or end, big enough for a journey of discovery. Photo: F. Mueller



Gyrfalcon watches over its hunting territory in the Snake headwaters. Photo: J. Schou

Why is the Peel Watershed Important?

In the Peel region we can do what is becoming rare in the rest of Canada — live from the land, and make sure the environment remains whole. Some of the important features of the Peel watershed and Three Rivers wilderness are:

- wild mountain rivers with fresh clean waters; increasingly rare in world;
- pristine boreal forests and alpine tundra;
- Yukon's largest intact herd of woodland caribou, a species in serious decline in the South;
- 25% of Yukon's peregrine falcons breed here;
- large productive wetlands for waterfowl;
- habitat for large animals such as grizzly bears, wolves, wolverine, species that need wilderness to survive;
- intact large watersheds, the best opportunity for climate change sanctuaries.

We have inherited these wild and beautiful lands. They have great value now and for our children – providing life support systems that give us clean water and air; lasting community health and economic benefits; and traditional land uses and cultures. They can also lead to new conservation-oriented business and investment opportunities, creating long-term skilled jobs.

What are the Threats?

Far too often, the Yukon territorial government has overlooked what many people value most – clean water, plentiful wildlife and our wonderful big natural spaces. Before conservation areas are set aside, the Peel watershed is being promoted for long-shot industrial development — specifically: natural gas and coalbed methane extraction, coal mining, and both iron ore and uranium mining. What are the choices for a different kind of economic development?

Conservation and Economy

Conservation and protected areas are ways to develop local and regional economies. This happens through public investment; training, education and research; tourism and related services; transportation, facilities and infrastructure; conservation management; increased visitor spending and outside investment.

The value of abundant clean water and air, fish and wildlife, can be measured as ecosystem services of direct benefit to the community. The social and spiritual values of wilderness are well known, yet harder to estimate in economic terms.

Examples of Existing and Potential conservation-based economic activities in the Peel:

- Traditional harvesting, trapping and cultural activities;
- Wilderness guiding and outfitting for canoe, raft, hiking, and horseback travel;
- Guided hunting, fishing, lodge-based recreation, nature appreciation;
- Wilderness tourism services;
- Research, monitoring, education, rediscovery camps;
- Art, photography, craft, cultural activity;
- Resource and wildlife management programs;
- Enforcement, conservation stewardship, river guardians;
- Development of tourism and recreation infrastructure;
- Increased spending in the region.

Gateway Communities

Gateway communities are located near protected areas, wilderness or other attractions. They are entry points and service centres for people who visit the attractive places. Gateway communities can benefit not only from visitor spending but also from increased investment, jobs, and government spending for infrastructure and facilities.

Mayo and Ft. McPherson are gateway communities to the Three Rivers and the greater Peel watershed. Dawson City is the gateway to the Dempster Highway, Tombstone Park, and the western part of the Peel drainage. These communities already benefit from visitors to the Peel and they could play a greater role if areas such as the Three Rivers became protected destinations.

Biosphere Reserves

The greater Peel watershed is a good candidate for nomination as a Biosphere Reserve, to conserve landscapes, ecosystems, species and genetic diversity, while fostering economic and human development that is culturally and ecologically sustainable.

Biosphere Reserves promote solutions: landscape and biodiversity conservation areas; appropriate development; and support for research, monitoring, education and information exchange. They are modeled on land use plans that identify core protected areas, buffer zones where compatible development can take place, and a transition zone that may allow for a variety of economic activities.

Conservation Proposals

Many Peel protected areas have been proposed over the past 25 years by First Nations, territorial governments, renewable resource councils, and groups like the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, Yukon Chapter.

The Peel Watershed Land Use Planning Commission (www.peel.planyukon.ca) is looking at these ideas.

What do you think?

Climate Change Sanctuary

We also need conservation areas large enough to accommodate climate change.

Partly as benchmarks against which to measure the impacts of climate change on industrialized landscapes. Partly as sanctuaries – theatres large enough for the ecological drama to play out, where species react and interact as best they can without additional industrial impacts.

- Intact large watersheds – like the Three Rivers – are ideal conservation targets in mountain boreal landscapes undergoing climate change because watersheds are functional systems with the greatest likelihood of maintaining ecological health over the long term.



The Peel watershed provides lots of space for big boisterous animals, like Grizzlies. Photo: J. Peepre



Moose in rut. The Peel watershed has healthy populations of predators and prey. Photo: J. Schou



Taking pack horses into the Wind River. Wilderness guiding and outfitting contribute to the conservation economy. Photo: F. Mueller



Canoeists tackle the Snake River rapids. A premiere destination for canoeing and backcountry recreation. Photo: J. Peepre



We have a profound responsibility to conserve and protect wild nature for future generations and for the benefit of all. Forget-me-nots in the high country. Photo: J. Peepre

What do you think?

Visit www.cpawsyukon.org and follow the Three Rivers links to learn about our conservation proposal.

To get on the Three Rivers mailing list email info@cpawsyukon.org, phone 867-393-8080 ext 1, or visit us at 506 Steele St.

You can tell the Peel Planning Commission what you think about the Three Rivers watersheds. Email info@planyukon.ca. Or send a letter to: 201, 307 Jarvis St., Whitehorse, Y1A 2H3.

You can write a letter to the Yukon Premier or contact your MLA. YTG, Box 2703, Whitehorse, Y1A 2C6.

Snake River landscape: Fritz Mueller