

What We Heard Report: Community Consultations Sarvarjuaq a potential Marine Protected Area by Ministerial Order



Table of Contents

Acknowledgement	3
Our Team	3
Executive Summary	4
Purpose	4
Summary of meetings	4
What we heard overall	5
Meeting Summaries	6
Summary of Presentations	6
Community Meeting Summaries	7
Pond Inlet Meetings	7
What We Heard from Pond Inlet	7
Clyde River Meetings	8
What We Heard from Clyde River	8
Qikiqtarjuaq Meetings	9
What We Heard from Qikiqtarjuaq	9
Arctic Bay Meetings	10
What We Heard from Arctic Bay	10
Resolute Bay Meetings	11
What We Heard from Resolute Bay	11
Grise Fiord Meetings	12
What We Heard from Grise Fiord	12
Surveys	13
What We Heard Overall	15
General discussion on Sarvarjuaq MPA and process	15
Proposed Sarvarjuaq MPA Boundaries	16
Communication and Increased Community Involvement	16
Importance of the Sarvarjuaq area	16
Community Priorities	17
Other Points of Discussion	17
Next Steps	18
Appendix 1. Regulatory Intent for the Proposed Sarvarjuaq MPA	19
Appendix 2. Documented Activities Occurring in the Sarvarjuaq Area	24

Acknowledgement

The Qikiqtait and Sarvarjuaq Working Group would like to thank the communities of Arctic Bay, Resolute Bay, Grise Fiord, Qikiqtarjuaq, Pond Inlet and Clyde River for their time and hospitality during our community visits. We would especially like to thank the Hunters and Trappers Associations, Hamlet Council, and the general public for their participation and knowledge-sharing.

Our Team

The Qikiqtait and Sarvarjuaq Working Group consist of members from the Qikiqtani Inuit Association (QIA), Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO), Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC), Transport Canada and the Government of Nunavut. The working group has been supporting the required processes for Sarvarjuaq and Qikiqtait, to create the two potential Marine Protected Areas by Ministerial Order. Only DFO, QIA and the Government of Nunavut travelled to the communities as part of the consultations for Sarvarjuaq.

Working Group representatives who participated in the Sarvarjuaq consultations included Geneva Noble (QIA), Martha Nuyalia (QIA), Mark Pitseolak (QIA) and Joseph Pinguartuk (QIA), Bernie MacIsaac (Government of Nunavut), Laura Harris (Government of Nunavut), Justin Hack (Government of Nunavut) and Maryam Abdullahi (Government of Nunavut), Bethany Schroeder (DFO), Jesslene Jawanda (DFO), Lauren Candlish (DFO), Thomas Hoggarth (DFO), and Alasdair Beattie (DFO).

Executive Summary

Purpose

For the first round of consultations, representatives of the Qikiqtait and Sarvarjuaq Working Group, with members from Qikiqtani Inuit Association (QIA), Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO), and Government of Nunavut, conducted community meetings in Pond Inlet, Clyde River and Qikiqtarjuaq from October 24-27, 2023. The last community visits for the first round of consultations took place in Arctic Bay, Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay from January 16-18, 2024 with representatives from the same organizations and institutions in attendance. From May 13-15 2024 the second round of consultations took place in Pond Inlet, Clyde River and Qikiqtarjuaq. The final meetings took place in Arctic Bay, Resolute Bay and Grise Fiord from June 3-7 2024.

The purpose of these two rounds of consultations was to discuss the collective knowledge of the Sarvarjuaq area, the proposed approach to short-term marine conservation by Ministerial Order Marine Protected Area (MPA) under the *Oceans Act*, next steps, and also to discuss QIA's vision for an Inuit Protected and Conserved Area (IPCA). Community feedback was sought during the meetings and it was noted that support Letters of Support on the Sarvarjuaq Marine Protected Area proposal would be requested. An overarching goal was to hear what the communities think about the proposed Sarvarjuaq MPA proposal, and learn of the community's experiences, and uses, of the area.

The purpose of this report is to summarize the feedback provided by community members who attended the meetings, to provide transparency in the process, and to provide a record of the discussions and concerns shared by the community. To confirm accuracy of the information captured, this report was shared with the Hunters and Trappers and Hamlet Councils for review. After community organizations have had an opportunity to comment, these reports will be available to be shared with the public of Arctic Bay, Pond Inlet, Clyde River, Qikiqtarjuaq, Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay.

Summary of meetings

During the first round of consultations in October 2023 and January 2024, DFO conducted presentations on the proposed MPA by Ministerial Order to the Hamlet Councils and Hunters and Trappers Organizations in each community. DFO also recorded feedback, questions and concerns as well as distributed surveys to community members to gather input. The QIA presented information about their vision for an Inuit-led Protected and Conserved Areas as their proposed approach for long-term protection in Sarvarjuaq and how it can relate to the communities priorities.

From May to June 2024 DFO presented additional information regarding the proposed MPA by Ministerial Order including a review of the progress, an in-depth overview of the Ministerial Order as a protection tool and updated proposed boundaries. DFO also presented an overview of economic activities or potential activities for the area and what activities we have documented as occurring within the proposed Sarvarjuaq MPA. A summary of these activities is included in the appendices. The QIA presented more details about IPCAs as a proposed long-term protection tool.

What we heard overall

Throughout the consultation process in October 2023, January, May and June 2024, the community members in attendance were very engaged in the meetings – sharing their expertise of the area and their perspectives, voicing concerns, providing advice, and raising important questions.

There were general discussions on the proposed Sarvarjuaq MPA and its process, with community members from all six consulted communities indicating their support for the proposed approach of establishing a Marine Protected Area by Ministerial Order. There was also many comments and questions wanting to know more about the Inuit Impact Benefit Agreement and what benefits would be seen within each community. There was also interest in having more conservation or protected areas further south of the proposed Sarvarjuaq boundaries and closer to the communities.

There were many comments about how to have additional communication and increased community involvement regarding Sarvarjuaq. This included suggestions for Nunavut communities to meet and work together for the long-term management of Sarvarjuaq. There was also interest to meet with communities from Greenland to discuss the management of both the Canadian side and the Greenlandic side of the polynya. Additionally, there were also recommendations for how the Working group can share updates with communities outside of consultation meetings.

Many comments highlighted the importance of Sarvarjuaq and protecting the area. Community members detailed the abundance of wildlife observed in Sarvarjuaq, the importance of the area as a wintering and breeding habitat and the importance of Sarvarjuaq as a hunting area. Concerns were shared about the potential negative impacts of industrial activity, vessel traffic and increasing tourism on the health of the ecosystem in Sarvarjuaq. There were also comments on allowing for local economic opportunities.

In general there was a lot of support indicated for protecting Sarvarjuaq, and many requests for communities to be involved in the long-term management of the area.

Meeting Summaries

Summary of Presentations

Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada – Marine Planning and Conservation (Bethany Schroeder and Lauren Candlish)

DFO Marine Planning and Conservation presented the proposed approach for the proposed Sarvarjuaq MPA to the Hunters and Trappers Associations, Hamlet Council and the public of each of the consulted communities October 2023 and January 2024. The presentation began by introducing the proposed Sarvarjuaq MPA, as well as discussing short and long-term protection goals and their associated timelines. In October 2023, a major focal point of the presentation was introducing the MPA's draft Conservation Objectives for discussion and distributing community surveys.

In May and June 2024 the in-depth details regarding the regulations of marine protected areas by Ministerial Order were explained. There was also an overview of economic activities or potential activities for the area and what activities we have documented as occurring within the proposed Sarvarjuaq MPA. This information was presented to the Hamlet Council, Hunter and Trapper Association and the public of all consulted communities.

Throughout the consultation process the Working Group members met with the Hamlet and Hunter and Trapper Association during the afternoon for 2-3 hours and the general public in the evening for 2-3 hours. In some cases the Hamlet or Hunter and Trapper Associations requested to attend the public meeting instead due to scheduling conflicts. During the final meetings in each community, DFO thanked community members for their participation and told the community they would be sharing additional information with the Hamlet Council and Hunters and Trappers and seeking support through a Letter of Support in the early fall of 2024.

Qikiqtani Inuit Association (Geneva Noble, Martha Nuyalia, and Joseph Pinguartuk)

In all meetings, the QIA presented on the Qikiqtani Regional Conservation Model, discussing the pillars of the model, the proposed MPA, and their vision for long-term protection as an IPCA. Major foci of the presentation were on Inuit stewardship, Indigenous-led governance, infrastructure support and fisheries reconciliation. Programs for monitoring and regional governance such as the Nauttiqsuqtiit Program were also covered.

Community Meeting Summaries

A very short summary is provided for the meetings and discussions that occurred in each of the six communities. Following these summaries is the What We Heard Overall section where there are more details of the questions and topics that were discussed across all the meetings.

Pond Inlet Meetings

On October 24 2023, 39 members of the public and 7 members of the Hunter and Trapper Association and Hamlet Council met with the Working Group. On May 13 2024, 14 members of the public and 12 members of the Hamlet Council and Hunters and Trappers gathered to share knowledge and discuss aspects of short-term and long-term marine protection of the Sarvarjuaq area.



Members of the Hamlet Council and Hunter and Trapper Association meeting with Working Group Representatives during October 2023 consultations.

Representatives of the Working Group met with the community of Pond Inlet on October 24 2023 in the Community Hall of Pond Inlet. The Working Group met with public of Pond Inlet again in May of 2024 in the Community Hall and discussed the collective knowledge of Sarvarjuaq and the proposed approach to short-term marine conservation and next steps to advance the designation of Sarvarjuaq as a Ministerial Order MPA by 2025. A total of 39 adult community members were present in October and 14 adult community members were present in May 2024.

What We Heard from Pond Inlet

Pond Inlet community members were generally supportive for protecting of Sarvarjuaq by a Ministerial Order MPA. They were concerned that the summer habitat to local populations of narwhal and beluga was disturbed due to industrial activity and highlighted the importance of protecting their overwintering habitat in the Sarvarjuaq area. Community members communicated their interest in collaborating with Canadian and Greenlandic communities to work toward protection of the North Water polynya through meetings, increased engagement with research being conducted in the area and the interest to visit the area. There was interest in limiting cruise ship activity.

Clyde River Meetings

On October 25 2023, 56 adult members of the public and 7 members of the Hunter and Trapper Association and Hamlet Council met with the Working Group. On May 15 2024, 11 adult members of the public and 8 members of the Hamlet Council and Hunter and Trapper Association gathered to exchange knowledge and discuss aspects of short-term and long-term marine protection of the Sarvarjuaq area. Inuktitut interpretation was provided by Luu Paneak.

Representatives of the Working Group met with the community of Clyde River on October 25 2023 in the Community Hall of Clyde River. The Working Group met with public of Clyde River again in May of 2024 in the Qujuaq School.



Clyde River public meeting October 2023

What We Heard from Clyde River

Meeting participants communicated support to protect Sarvarjuaq and in both October and May, they discussed the desire for the southern boundary of the proposed Sarvarjuaq MPA to extend further to be adjacent to Clyde River. There was a desire communicated for the communities in Nunavut to participate in a collaborative workshop with Greenland communities.

The Hunter and Trapper Association voiced their desire for employment opportunities arising from the development of the proposed Sarvarjuaq MPA and the QIA discussed their vision for the expansion of the Nauttiqsuqtiit program in the discussion for long-term management of the proposed Sarvarjuaq MPA. They also expressed interest in sending community representatives to the proposed Sarvarjuaq MPA by vessel in the future.

Qikiqtarjuaq Meetings

On October 26 2023, 11 members of the Hunter and Trapper Association and Hamlet Council met with the Working Group. On May 16 2024, 33 adult members of the public and 13 members of the Hamlet Council and Hunter and Trapper Association gathered to discuss long-term marine protection of the proposed Sarvarjuaq MPA. Inuktitut interpretation was provided by Rosemary Metuq.



Qikiqtarjuaq meeting May 2024.

What We Heard from Qikiqtarjuaq

Qikiqtarjuaq community members detailed how the wildlife in the Sarvarjuaq area travel by ice and breed in that area, therefore the ecosystem activities that take place in Sarvarjuaq impact their community.

There was concern voiced about vessel traffic and the potential for oil spills in the Sarvarjuaq area. When asked if consultations identified shipping routes, the response was that shipping will continue in the area. Future discussions on the long-term IPCA could address shipping and corridors.

Members of the Hunter and Trapper Association and the Hamlet voiced concern about materials and equipment washing ashore in Qikiqtarjuaq and expressed a desire for further information about research that is conducted adjacent to their community. Several members of the community, hamlet and Hunter and Trapper Association expressed support for the development of Sarvarjuaq as a Ministerial Order MPA and a request to be updated in regard to the progress of establishment.

Arctic Bay Meetings

Members of the public, the Hunter and Trapper Association and the Hamlet in Arctic Bay hosted Working Group members on January 17 and June 4 2024. In January, 14 members of the Hunter and Trapper Association and Hamlet were present and 41 members of the public attended the meetings. In June, 10 members of the Hunter and Trapper Association and Hamlet were present while 11 adult members of the public attended.

Inuktitut interpretation was conducted by Audrey Qamaniq and Geela Ejangiaq. The meetings were held in the Community Hall in January and the Inuujaq School in June.



Arctic Bay public meeting June 2024.

What We Heard from Arctic Bay

Community members in Arctic Bay requested information regarding the proposed regulations and potential benefits as well as the role of Arctic Bay as a result of developing the proposed Sarvarjuaq MPA. The QIA detailed their vision for a Regional Governance Model and expanding the Nauttisuqtiit Program and explained that the harvesting rights held by Beneficiaries of the *Nunavut Agreement* would not be impacted by the implementation of the proposed Sarvarjuaq MPA within the Nunavut Settlement Area. Comments highlighted that narwhal and bowhead whales travel to the proposed Sarvarjuaq MPA when the ice has formed elsewhere.

During the consultation meeting in June, Ikpiarjummiut voiced support for the protection of the proposed Sarvarjuaq MPA and shared concerns that if protection did not occur, some worried that mining in the area may be allowed in the future. Concerns were also raised about the level of vessel traffic in the area. Community members expressed interest in learning of future opportunities for community members to be hired in the research activities that occur in the proposed Sarvarjuaq MPA. Members of the public shared their preference for future meetings to occur in the late fall instead of the spring and summer.

Resolute Bay Meetings

The Working Group met with community members in Resolute Bay on January 14 and June 5 2024. In January, 14 members of the Hunter and Trapper Association and Hamlet attended the meeting with an additional 9 adult members of the public. In June, 9 members of the Hunter and Trapper Association and Hamlet joined the meeting with an additional 3 adult members of the public.

Inuktitut interpretation was conducted by Saroomie Manik and Susan Salluviniq. The meetings were held in the ATCO Conference Room in January and the Hamlet Gymnasium in June.



Sarvarjuaq Community Consultation presentation 2024

What We Heard from Resolute Bay

Resolute Bay community members expressed support for the protection of the proposed Sarvarjuaq MPA and pointed out additional areas outside of the proposed boundaries they desire to be protected in the future. Community members expressed interest in participating in discussions about the regulations of the area for the long-term. There was concern shared about unreported harmful activities in the area. Discussions included questions about some of the threats to Sarvarjuaq including how climate change is affecting the area. The meeting participants held a discussion about research and monitoring in the area, discussing gaps in research and how the long-term vision for an IPCA could address that. Presenters explained that there is currently a moratorium on oil and gas development in the area therefore it is not considered an ongoing activity and would not be allowed to occur in the area for up to 5 years if the Ministerial Order is established – community members expressed support for that restriction on industrial activities. During the public meeting a community member expressed a desire for long-term opportunities for vessel traffic in the area to address shipping and development needs. During the January meetings there were comments from community members expressing desire to restrict commercial fishing in the northern portion of the proposed Sarvarjuaq MPA to protect wildlife habitat. Participants also talked about the familial connections between Canada and Greenland in communities adjacent to the area and their use of the area for harvesting. There were concerns about increased ice melt in the area and how vessel traffic may negatively impact this area.

Grise Fiord Meetings

The Working Group members travelled to Grise Fiord on January 18 and June 6 2024. In January, 5 members of the Hunter and Trapper Association and Hamlet attended the meeting with an additional 12 adult members of the public. In June, 8 members of the Hunter and Trapper Association and Hamlet joined the meeting with an additional 8 adult members of the public.

Inuktitut interpretation was conducted by Jaypetee Akeeagok. The Hunter and Trapper Association and Hamlet meetings were held in the Hamlet Chambers while the public meetings were held in the Community Hall.



Grise Fiord, June 2024

What We Heard from Grise Fiord

The community raised concerns about the issue of community based capacity to participate in management structures for protected areas in general and there were a few questions regarding the management of Tallurutiup Imanga with Imaq. QIA provided some information on current governance models and the proposed Regional Governance Model. The community was interested to hear information about the collaborative activities between governments and researchers from Canada and Greenland.

Community members expressed worry for the risk of industrial accidents in the Sarvarjuaq area and the desire to benefit from economic activities occurring in the area. It was also noted that community members expressed support for protection of the proposed Sarvarjuaq MPA and want to see additional monitoring in the area however there was concern that the process was being rushed. QIA highlighted that for other protected areas, maritime situational training was offered to community members to help monitor the area.

Surveys

During the October 2023 and January 2024 first round of consultations to the 6 communities of Pond Inlet, Clyde River, Qikiqtarjuaq, Arctic Bay, Resolute Bay and Grise Fiord, surveys were handed out to community members present at the consultations, with 34 respondents in total. Unfortunately due to weather, the first public meeting in Qikiqtarjuaq was cancelled and thus surveys were not distributed in Qikiqtarjuaq. The survey consisted of three questions regarding the Conservation Objectives of the proposed Sarvarjuaq MPA by Ministerial Order.

For the first question, *‘Does this conservation objective describe a priority or a reason for you to support conservation in the area?’*, responses varied by community, but respondents generally shared comments that were supportive of the Conservation Objective. Pond Inlet residents said that they did not want shipping and other industrial activity occurring around their wildlife areas, that they supported protection because of the next generation and finding solutions, and also stated the Pond Inlet Hunter and Trapper Association needed a bigger freezer. Clyde River residents generally agreed with the Conservation Objectives, but also mentioned that they were seeing more activities such as cruise ships and yachts. Arctic Bay residents generally supported the Conservation Objectives, with people recognizing that the marine mammals they hunted overwintered in the proposed Sarvarjuaq MPA, and another being concerned that the area would become subject to increased marine traffic if not protected. Resolute Bay residents were also generally supportive, with respondents recognizing that the polynya’s open water helped the marine life they hunted, and describing conservation positively overall. Grise Fiord was also supportive of the Conservation Objectives, sharing that research helped them access and learn more about important areas, and another respondent saying that more protection was good.

For the second question, *‘Are there other words that could help you connect more to this conservation objective?’*, there were varied responses. Pond Inlet residents asked if there were websites to learn more, and said that the papers should ‘run’, wanting more information shared with the community. Clyde River respondents stated they wanted restriction or banning of cruise ships so people may connect more to the area. An Arctic Bay respondent said that they wanted to protect wildlife, sea birds, algae and fish. Community members in Resolute Bay said that areas need more study in order to have more support. A Grise Fiord respondent said ‘No. This Conservation Objective is good for us to have little to no knowledge of the area and land and ice we live in. It would be good to know what’s around us in.’

For the third question, *‘Is there anything else you would like to tell us?’* respondents had some suggestions. Pond Inlet respondents suggested that a round table be conducted in the future for engagement, and that they needed a store for equipment to sell country food. Clyde River respondents suggested that cruise ships should be banned or restricted from entering conservation areas, and asked if there was an inventory of marine mammals and ecosystems in the proposed MPA. Arctic Bay respondents stated they wanted rights maintained and not removed, and also mentioned that people use Admiralty Inlet year-round, including camping. Resolute Bay residents stated that the proposed Sarvarjuaq MPA was a wintering ground for animals and biodiversity needed to be more studied, and that icebergs go through that area, which residents use for drinking water. A Grise Fiord respondent said that, ‘With research, there is often Canadian Coast Guard vessel. The things from not only the emissions and noise contamination may keep away wildlife from their natural (untouched) habitats. The ice breakers may interfere with ice coverage, causing ocean to heat up and increase climate change effects.’

There were also eight questions that related to activities conducted either within the proposed Sarvarjuaq MPA boundaries and the Nunavut Settlement Area, or within the proposed Sarvarjuaq MPA boundaries but outside of the Nunavut Settlement Area.

1. *'Do you harvest or hunt for country food?'* 16 respondents said they did in Sarvarjuaq and the Nunavut Settlement Area, and 5 did in Sarvarjuaq but outside of the Nunavut Settlement Area.
2. *'Do you fish for your food?'*, 18 respondents said they did in Sarvarjuaq and inside the Nunavut Settlement Area, and 5 did within Sarvarjuaq but outside of the Nunavut Settlement Area.
3. *'Do you commercially fish?'*, 2 respondents said they did in Sarvarjuaq and in the Nunavut Settlement Area, and none did in Sarvarjuaq but outside the Nunavut Settlement Area.
4. *'Do you use the water for transportation, boating, canoeing or qajaq?'*, 20 respondents said they did in Sarvarjuaq and in the Nunavut Settlement Area, and 4 said they did in Sarvarjuaq but outside the Nunavut Settlement Area.
5. *'Do you use the ice for transportation, snowmobiling or dog sledding?'*, 21 respondents said they did in Sarvarjuaq and in the Nunavut Settlement Area, and 4 said they did in Sarvarjuaq but outside the Nunavut Settlement Area.
6. *'Do you use the area for recreation, camping, whale or bird watching?'*, 20 said they did in Sarvarjuaq and in the Nunavut Settlement Area, and 3 said they did in Sarvarjuaq but outside the Nunavut Settlement Area.
7. *'Do you bring tourist to the area for outfitting, guiding, or other types of tourism?'*, 6 respondents said they did in Sarvarjuaq and in the Nunavut Settlement Area, and 1 said they did in Sarvarjuaq but outside the Nunavut Settlement Area.
8. *'Do you use the area for other activities?'* some answers included, 'day trips'; 'film productions and scientific expeditions'; and several others said they don't go there because it is too far, too risky, too much open water, they don't have a machine, and it's too much fuel.

What We Heard Overall

Through the consultation meetings there was many similar questions and discussions. Below we summarized the topics that were discussed and the types of questions that were asked. Voice recordings were made during hamlet and Hunter and Trapper Association meetings with the permission of everyone present at the meetings. Members of the Working group also took notes during both the Hamlet/ Hunter and Trapper Association meetings and the public meetings. These notes and recordings helped develop this What We Heard Overall section, but not the information presented below is not word for word as it was presented in many different meetings and discussed by many different people.

General discussion on Sarvarjuaq MPA and process

- Question regarding timeline of Ministerial Order – is it guaranteed by 2025?
 - Response: Partners are working towards it, but recognize many steps must be completed first
- Question regarding upcoming federal election and how that may affect creation of MPA
 - Response: Commitments to Inuit within signed Inuit Impact and Benefit Agreements and Project Finance for Permanence will be upheld by the Government of Canada if they are finalized and implemented prior to the upcoming federal election. If these agreements are not finalized before the election, the elected government may choose not to advance these agreements and commitments promised may not be honoured by the new government. Similarly, if the Qikiqtaaluk and Sarvarjuaq study areas have not been designated by Ministerial Order regulations prior to the election, the elected government may choose not to pursue conservation measures for these areas.
- Community members' from all six communities expressed support for marine conservation in the proposed Sarvarjuaq MPA.
 - **Context:** *Formal support will be requested in the form of a letter from the Hunter and Trapper Associations and Hamlet Councils. Community members are encouraged to share their support and / or concerns with their Hunter and Trapper Association and / or Hamlet or contact DFO directly.*
- Comment on how elders in particular needs to be consulted accessibly in order for information to be shared in timely manner
- Discussions regarding protected rights secured under the Nunavut Agreement, including traditional harvesting rights
- Discussions regarding x negotiations status
- Question if enforcement will be in place once MPA is designated
 - Response: Interesting topic to discuss regarding options available for enforcement, based on community desire and jurisdictional ability.
- Question on when will the requests happen for support from Hunter and Trapper Associations and Hamlets?
 - Response: Once we finalize the What We Heard Reports, they will be distributed to all communities with time to review. During this time DFO will seek Letters of Support from Hunter and Trapper Associations and Hamlets.

Proposed Sarvarjuaq MPA Boundaries

- There were several questions regarding the boundaries of the proposed Sarvarjuaq MPA – how were they decided and if they can be extended further south?
 - Response: The QIA proposed the boundaries of the proposed Sarvarjuaq MPA as presented. There will be more discussions in the future to propose additional areas for marine protection.
- Discussions also occurred about the Devolution Agreement. Due to the Devolution Agreement small and enclosed bays are not included in the boundaries of the proposed Sarvarjuaq MPA.

Communication and Increased Community Involvement

All the suggested for increasing communication and increasing community involvement have been noted below. Certain suggestions have been implemented and others may be able to occur in the future.

- Recommendation to gather representatives from each of the consulted communities in Nunavut in person to discuss establishment and management.
- Request to send community representatives to the proposed Sarvarjuaq MPA by vessel in the future.
- Recommendation to gather consulted Nunavut communities with representatives from Greenland to discuss establishment, management and the future of Pikialasorsuaq.
- Recommendation to provide a regular newsletter to community members P.O. boxes, the Hamlets and the Hunter and Trapper Associations.
 - **Updated Response:** *A newsletter has been started with the first newsletter sent to P.O. Boxes in May 2024.*
- Request to have more updates with the results of ongoing research activity in the area.
 - **Updated Response:** *A DFO scientists visited communities in February and March 2024 to provide updates on the research occurring in Sarvarjuaq. DFO will continue to provide more information about ongoing research.*

Importance of the Sarvarjuaq area

- Many comments about wildlife using Sarvarjuaq as a breeding area and an overwintering area. The value of wildlife travelling from Sarvarjuaq closer to communities.
- Comments about community members travelling and harvesting within the proposed boundaries of Sarvarjuaq.
- There were concerns shared about the potential of oil and gas development in the area and how it would negatively impact the wildlife.
- There were many concerns shared about increased vessel activity in Sarvarjuaq and near to communities. Especially the increase in pleasure crafts and yachts as well as cruise ships.
 - **Context:** *the Ministerial Order MPA discussed at these consultations would not restrict activities as it is an ongoing activity. However, this is something a long-term MPA could look at.*
- Comments about the desire for future economic activities in the area.

Community Priorities

- Through discussions, comments and the survey responses community members indicated interest in the following support:
 - Increased employment opportunities.
 - Increased opportunities for training (i.e. monitoring training, research activities).
 - Opportunities to discuss with other communities in both Canada and Greenland about the future management of the region.
 - Opportunities to be more involved in research in Sarvarjuaq.
 - Being more involved in the discussions for long-term management of the area.

Other Points of Discussion

There were several questions and topics that would require additional conversations or were outside the scope of the protected areas conversations.

Topics that can be discussed during long-term planning for the area include:

- Benefits that the communities will receive as a result of the Inuit Impact and Benefit Agreement negotiation for the proposed Qikiqtait and Sarvarjuaq MPAs.
- The management plan and structure and how to ensure the community has capacity to navigate management of multiple protected areas.

Topics that were outside the scope of a Marine Protected Area:

- Discussions surrounding the method of narwhal aerial surveys.
- Hiring community members to join research activities in and around the Sarvarjuaq area.
- Protecting the land adjacent to the MPA.

Next Steps

The next steps to pursue establishment of a new Ministerial Order MPA will be to seek stakeholder input on the proposal, seek formal community support, complete assessments and approvals needed under the Nunavut Agreement such as conformity determination by the Nunavut Planning Commission and Nunavut Wildlife Management Board approval, and complete DFO's regulatory process. Formal letters of support will be sought from community hamlets and Hunter and Trapper Associations. Community members are encouraged to communicate their feedback on the proposal to these organizations to inform their decision. DFO will notify communities and stakeholders prior to the proposal being published online in the Canada Gazette for a 30-day public comment period, additional input can be provided at that time as well.

It is important to us that we have summarized your input on this report correctly. If you feel that we have missed any input provided during our meetings or captured information incorrectly, please reach out to DFO.ArcticMPC-ArctiquePCM.MPO@dfo-mpo.gc.ca for any required corrections.

The Qikiqtaik and Sarvarjuaq Working Group would like to thank all of the community members who attended these meetings - your feedback is vital and appreciated.

Thank you!

Appendix 1. Regulatory Intent for the Proposed Sarvarjuaq MPA

Regulatory Intent for the Proposed Sarvarjuaq Marine Protected Area by Ministerial Order

I. Background and Significance

Sarvarjuaq is the Qikiqtani Inuit name for the Canadian side of the North Water Polynya. It is an ecologically significant area located in Northern Baffin Bay between Greenland and Canada. In 2011, Sarvarjuaq was designated as an Ecologically and Biologically Significant Area (EBSA) by Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) (DFO 2011, 2015). In 2013, the Inuit Circumpolar Council Greenland and Oceans North hosted a cooperative workshop called 'Pikialasorsuaq: Bridging the Bay', with participation from Canadian and Greenlandic communities, as well as researchers from both countries. From this workshop, the Pikialasorsuaq Commission was established to provide an informed Inuit vision for the future of the North Water Polynya. Their 2017 final report 'The Future of the Pikialasorsuaq', the Commission recommended Inuit led-conservation and management aimed at ensuring the long-term health of this important ecosystem.

The North Water Polynya has also been evaluated through other international processes led by Greenland and Denmark, emphasizing its unique cultural and ecological value. For instance, the polynya achieved the highest score and highest priority on the basis of the International Maritime Organization's (IMO) criteria for identifying 'Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas' (PSSA) in a national assessment of important and vulnerable marine areas in Greenland (Christensen et al. 2012, 2017). In another strategic effort to enhance area-based protection of Greenlandic biodiversity, an overview of areas of ecological and biological significance in West and South-East Greenland was prepared and published in 2016 by using the EBSA and other international criteria, to identify important areas in Greenland. The report identified 23 areas, including three within the North Water (Christensen et al. 2016).

Ecological Significance

The area is ecologically significant due to several factors:

- **Biodiversity:** The polynya supports a rich diversity of marine life, including phytoplankton, zooplankton, fish, seabirds, and marine mammals. Its open waters and high productivity provide abundant food resources, making it an important feeding ground for various species.
- **Primary Production:** The polynya experiences seasonal ice melt, creating open water areas that promote high rates of primary production. Phytoplankton blooms occur in these nutrient-rich waters, which form the base of the marine food chain and support the growth of other organisms.
- **Migration and Breeding Grounds:** Many species of birds, such as thick-billed murres, dovekies, and fulmars, rely on the North Water Polynya as a crucial stopover site during their migration. Additionally, several marine mammals, including bowhead whales, narwhals, and seals, utilize the polynya as a breeding and calving ground.
- **Climate Regulation:** The North Water Polynya influences the exchange of heat, gases, and freshwater between the ocean and atmosphere, thereby playing a role in local and regional climate dynamics. It helps regulate the formation of sea ice and influences ocean circulation patterns.

- **Traditional Knowledge:** The North Water Polynya holds significant cultural and ecological value for Inuit communities. They have traditional knowledge and sustainable practices associated with the polynya, which contributes to the conservation and preservation of its ecological significance.

Overall, the North Water Polynya serves as a unique and vital ecosystem, supporting diverse marine life, playing a role in regional climate dynamics, and providing cultural importance to Inuit communities.

Proposed Approach

Establishment of a Ministerial Order Marine Protected Area (MPA) under the *Oceans Act* has been proposed as an interim protection measure in Sarvarjuaq as a first step toward establishing long-term marine protection. While interim protection is in place, the Government of Canada will explore the options for a long-term conservation measures in the area with the Qikiqtani Inuit Association (QIA) and the Government of Nunavut. The consideration of long-term conservation measures will include an Inuit Protected and Conserved Area (IPCA).

The Ministerial Order MPA will allow the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard to freeze the footprint of human activities in the area for up to five years. This will mean that no new activities will be allowed in the area following designation. Any activities that have occurred, or were authorized to occur, in the proposed Sarvarjuaq MPA during the 12 months prior to designation are considered ongoing activities and will be allowed to continue in the proposed MPA.

II. Proposed Objectives for Sarvarjuaq

Conservation objectives are broad statements that describe what species or features in the protected area should be conserved. For an MPA under the *Oceans Act* conservation objectives need to refer to protecting or conserving marine species, unique habitats, high biodiversity, and/or the ecosystem. These objectives guide the interim nature of this work and long-term objectives will be developed, in the future.

The following objectives have been proposed for Sarvarjuaq. The second statement reflects DFO's commitment to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act Action Plan and the recommendations from the Qikiqtani Truth Commission.

- (1) To support the conservation, protection, and understanding of Sarvarjuaq (the North Water Polynya) and its unique biologically productive ecosystem that is of immense value to Inuit and Inuit culture.
- (2) To support Inuit leadership in the conservation of Sarvarjuaq to ensure the continuity of Inuit culture, values, and practices, including accumulating and passing down Inuit knowledge, as well as Inuit stewardship and governance.

III. Map and Boundaries

The proposed boundaries for Qikiqtaaluk were put forward by QIA. These boundaries are shown in Figure 1. If established, Sarvarjuaq will be located inside and outside of the Nunavut Settlement Area, but within Canada's Exclusive Economic Zone. The boundaries exclude Small Enclosed Bays as described in Chapter 1, Definitions and Interpretation of the Nunavut Lands and Resources Devolution Agreement signed January 18, 2024 between the Government of Canada and the Government of Nunavut and Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated.



Figure 1. A map showing the boundaries of the proposed Sarvarjuaq MPA.

IV. Prohibitions and Allowed Activities

It is prohibited in the MPA to carry out any activity that disturbs, damages, destroys or removes from the MPA any unique geological or archeological features or any living marine organism or any part of its habitat, or is likely to do so.

However some activities would be allowed to occur. Activities listed below would be able to occur if Sarvarjuaq were to become an MPA by Ministerial Order:

- All rights provided for under the *Nunavut Agreement* are respected within the boundary of the Nunavut Settlement Area
- All ongoing activities (see list below) taking place one year prior to designation or activities that have otherwise been authorized to occur by applicable federal laws or by laws of a province/territory
- Research activities consistent with the conservation objectives of the MPA
- Safety, security and emergency activities
- Laying, maintenance and repair of cables and pipelines by a foreign state

Under the *Oceans Act*, DFO would implement an MPA by Ministerial Order by prohibiting any other activities from occurring during the period of the Order, up to five years.

V. List of Ongoing Activities

Ongoing activities can continue to occur if Sarvarjuaq becomes an MPA by Ministerial Order under the *Oceans Act*. The definition of an ongoing activity is any activity that has taken place one year prior to designation, or activities that have otherwise been authorized to occur by applicable federal laws or by laws of a province/territory.

Activities occurring within the proposed Sarvarjuaq MPA boundaries have been categorized into classes of ongoing activities which will be allowed in the MPA:

- Hunting and trapping activities
- Fishing activities
- Harvesting of marine plants
- Marine navigation activities
- National defence activities carried out by the Department of National Defence
- Canadian Coast Guard activities carried out by the Canadian Coast Guard
- Tourism activities
- Recreational activities
- Educational activities
- Travel over sea ice using motorized vehicles and non-motorized methods
- Traditional Knowledge and cultural research activities
- Scientific research activities
- Filming activities
- Activities provided for and carried out in a manner not inconsistent with the Nunavut Agreement

Please let us know if you are aware of another ongoing activity that is not captured in the list above.

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Appendix 2. Documented Activities Occurring in the Proposed Sarvarjuaq MPA

Activities We Heard From Communities and Stakeholders in the Proposed Sarvarjuaq MPA

Ongoing activities can continue to occur if Sarvarjuaq becomes an MPA by Ministerial Order under the *Oceans Act*. The definition of an ongoing activity is any activity that has taken place one year prior to designation, or activities that have otherwise been authorized to occur by applicable federal laws or by laws of a province/territory.

Activities documented as occurring within the proposed Sarvarjuaq MPA boundaries have been categorized and are listed below with some examples. These were informed through community consultations and stakeholder and industry engagement.

Hunting and Trapping Activities

- Hunting is of high importance to all communities near the proposed Sarvarjuaq MPA, and Inuit from these communities hunt marine mammal and bird species for subsistence, traditional, and commercial purposes. Hunting also occurs by non-Inuit who live near the proposed Sarvarjuaq MPA. Some examples include:
 - Narwhal are hunted from the floe edge and other open water;
 - Beluga are hunted by residents of Grise Fiord during summer and fall months.
- Hunting also occurs for tourism, recreation and sport hunting. This includes guided expeditions of non-Inuit hunters for species such as polar bear, wolves, and Atlantic walrus.
- Hunting is also a part of research, monitoring and stewardship programs. Examples include:
 - The Nauttisuqtiit program shares their harvests with Elders and the community to help Inuit access country food.

Fishing Activities

- Fishing occurs for subsistence, traditional and commercial use for fish and invertebrate species. It also occurs by non-Inuit who live near the proposed Sarvarjuaq MPA.
 - Arctic Fishery Alliance works with Arctic Bay, Grise Fiord, Resolute Bay and Qikiqtarjuaq to support access and travel to harvest country foods for community food security.
 - Baffin Fisheries' Inuit commercial fishing vessels Inuksuk I and Sivulliq harvest Greenland Halibut in Baffin Bay
- Commercial fishing licenses overlap between the North Atlantic Fishing Organization (NAFO) fishing division OA and the proposed Sarvarjuaq MPA. These licenses are for Greenland Halibut (*Reinhardtius hippoglossoides*).
- Commercial shrimp fishing is authorized in the Shrimp Fishing Area, SFA0, which overlaps with the proposed Sarvarjuaq MPA boundaries.
- Fishing occurs for tourism and recreational use, including guided expeditions of non-Inuit fishers.
- Fishing is also conducted for the purposes of scientific research, with an example being:
 - Research to determine commercial fisheries potential through Arctic Fishery Alliance, in partnership with Memorial University Marine Institute, Nunavut Fisheries Association, GN and the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency.

Marine Plant Harvesting Activities

- Harvesting occurs for marine plant species for traditional and subsistence use. An example is residents of Grise Fiord harvesting kelp for consumption.

Marine Navigation Activities

- There is local vessel traffic for subsistence, traditional and/or community use, such as:
 - Boats and small motorized vessels;
 - Canoeing/qajaq or other non-motorized vessels.
- There is vessel traffic and associated activities for tourism and recreational use such as:
 - Outfitting;
 - Guided or self-guided sight-seeing expeditions;
 - Wildlife viewing;
 - Pleasure crafts, yachts and cruise ships.
- There is vessel traffic for commercial use such as:
 - Sealift/goods transportation.
- There is vessel traffic for research or monitoring, including but not limited to vessels such as:
 - CCGS Amundsen;
 - Vagabond research sailboat.
- There is also vessel traffic for National Defence, and Canadian Coast Guard activities.

Safety, Security, and Emergency Activities

- Safety, security, and emergency activities occur in the area for public safety, national defence, national security, or law enforcement. Examples include:
 - Emergency search and rescue;
 - Response to shipping or aircraft accidents;
 - National security requirements;
 - Activities carried out by the Department of National Defence;
 - Activities carried out by the Canadian Coast Guard.

Travel Over Sea Ice

- Inuit and non-Inuit use the sea ice as a method of travel in the proposed Sarvarjuaq MPA, for example:
 - Travel routes for hunting by snowmobile and motorized vehicles, including snowmobiles towing boats to floe edges to facilitate the hunts;
 - Non-motorized methods of travel such as dog-sledding, walking, snowshoeing, skiing etc.;
 - Travel routes to visit nearby communities, islands and important ecological features such as:
 - Into Baffin Bay to the floe edge for hunting purposes;
 - To some of the seven *aukkarniit* (polynyas) in the Canadian waters of Northern Baffin Bay and Davis Strait; and

Tourism and Recreational Activities

- Inuit and non-Inuit use the area for tourism and recreational activities such as:
 - Arts and culture;
 - Wildlife viewing;
 - Birdwatching;
 - Eco-tourism, cruise tourism and associated activities;
 - Dog-sledding;
 - Sport hunting;
 - Sport fishing;
 - Camping on sea ice or traveling to camp sites or cabins; and
 - Other outfitting or guided excursions.

Educational Activities

- Educational activities occur in the marine environment and over sea ice, such as outreach programs or experience based learning programs.

Research and Monitoring Activities

- Research and monitoring programs occur in the proposed Sarvarjuaq MPA from research vessels, or smaller vessels such motorized boats, sailboats or Zodiacs, as well as research programs based on sea ice. Types of research and examples include:
 - Community-led monitoring programs such as those supported by SmartICE;
 - Nauttiqsuqtiit monitoring programs;
 - Academic research projects and programs supported by universities, colleges; and
 - Traditional knowledge research.

Filming Activities

- Other activities that have occurred within the proposed Sarvarjuaq MPA include filming and media content development. Activities may include:
 - Documentary film making;
 - Films by non-governmental organizations such as the World Wildlife Fund; and
 - Social media or social networking filming.