

Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas and Expressions of Indigenous-led Stewardship



Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas (IPCAs), including recommendations for Indigenous Peoples' role in stewardship and conservation in Canada, were presented in detail in a [2018 report](#) by the [Indigenous Circle of Experts](#) (ICE). An IPCA is a First Nation's vision and plan for lands and waters in their territory. IPCAs are defined by the First Nation and outline their stewardship approach, so each IPCA may look different and include different priorities.

Similar land stewardship initiatives exist globally and may be referred to as Indigenous and Community Conserved Areas (ICCAs), Indigenous-Led Area Based Conservation (ILABC), and Tribal Parks, among others. Common aspects are:

- They are Indigenous-led and are defined by the Indigenous community.
- They are recognized by B.C. as an expression of a First Nation's community land vision for stewardship and conservation for a specific area.

Does B.C. recognize IPCAs?

IPCAs represent First Nations' stewardship vision for area(s) within their territory and are an expression of their right to self-determination. The information provided through the development of a First Nation IPCA is a valuable foundation for government-to-government dialogue to develop shared goals for lands and waters.

Some aspects of IPCAs may need resolution through land use planning which involves new land use direction for conservation, the economy and reconciliation. Land use planning involves the governments working together and engaging with communities, interested parties and the public. In other cases, more local stewardship and management options can be considered to address identified issues.

The land use vision expressed by First Nations in an IPCA can help identify land use conflicts and set priorities where government-to-government land use planning can occur. The Province and the Nation may choose to enter a land use planning process where there is a shared interest in enacting the IPCA under both sets of laws and where such a partnership can meet both governments' needs.

How will IPCAs be recognized?

The declaration of an IPCA or other type of Indigenous-led stewardship initiative (e.g. Tribal Park, Indigenous Interest Area, land use plan, etc.), is the decision of the Indigenous government exercising their self-determination. The role of the B.C. government is to ensure the rights and interests of the Nation will be respected and upheld within a process that also upholds the rights and interests of the affected third parties and local communities.

Are IPCAs just First Nations Parks or Protected Areas?

No. Indigenous-led stewardship and IPCAs are diverse in content and scope. They often reflect Indigenous peoples' multi-generational, holistic perspective on resource stewardship, including economic, conservation and cultural interests. The vision expressed will often reflect First Nations community and Indigenous Knowledge, culture, laws, governance, and can adapt over time as community priorities change.

What if an IPCA is declared in an area I access?

The declaration of an IPCA does not immediately, or necessarily signal there will be, change to existing crown legal requirements or the Province's legal framework for the land within that area.

B.C. is working to address land management objectives expressed in IPCAs through land use planning because it is conducted in partnership with First Nations and includes engaging with industry, stakeholders, and local communities; and considers environmental, economic and reconciliation outcomes.

How will IPCAs affect my tenure and use of the land?

The declaration of an IPCA does not change the province's existing legal requirements or the province's legal framework for the land within that area. The expression of First Nation's stewardship intentions provides important information to assist in building a positive relationship with the Nation and inform future engagement with the Nation.

- These processes require public and stakeholder (i.e. tenure and industry interested parties) consultation, and it is through these established processes that any impact or changes to the use of the land could be contemplated and concerns or interests can be addressed.
- Once an agreement has been reached on the future management of objectives, the provincial government would request provincial legal designation, or a variety of designations, that best match the intent.

Contact Information:

For general inquiries about stewardship and conservation in B.C., please contact us at Stewardship.Strategies@gov.bc.ca