

Hıdó Gogha Dene Nënë
Yeendòo geenjit nikhwinàn
Yundaa Gogha Nahendéh
Nuwe Něn Yuneth Haʔa Xa
Nikanihk ohci nîyanân askiy
İdaà gogha goneè
Goneè İdaà gha
Niyanawnow itwayhoow
ekwa li tawn ki vyaen
Notre territoire pour l'avenir

Our Land for the Future Trust:

**2025-26 ANNUAL REPORT HIGHLIGHTS
FOR PARTNERS**



Message from the Chair

As Chair of the Our Land for the Future (OLF) Trust, I am honoured to reflect on this significant milestone year when the OLF Trust became fully operational and began supporting Indigenous-led conservation, stewardship, and community priorities across the Northwest Territories.

This achievement would not have been possible without the dedication and collaboration of all of our Partners, my fellow Directors, and the Secretariat team. Their commitment, expertise, and leadership have laid a strong foundation for the Trust and its long-term success.

I would also like to extend my sincere appreciation to the Indigenous Leadership Initiative and the Centre for Northern Conservation for their invaluable support during the Trust's inaugural phase. The interim support they provided was critical in helping establish the systems, governance, and relationships needed to bring the OLF Trust to life.

We are equally grateful to the Government of Canada and our private philanthropic partners for their vision and investments in Indigenous-led conservation. Their contributions have helped create a lasting mechanism to support stewardship, cultural continuity, and healthy lands and waters for generations to come. We also thank the Government of the Northwest Territories for its ongoing collaboration in this important effort.

As we look ahead, I am filled with optimism. Indigenous governments, organizations, and communities across the North have demonstrated remarkable leadership, innovation, and commitment to stewarding the lands and waters that sustain us all. I have every confidence that, through their efforts, the OLF Trust will continue to support meaningful and lasting benefits for communities, cultures, and future generations.

Mahsi cho.



Danny Yakeleya
Chair

“
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I am filled with
optimism ”





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379,000 km² of lands and waters over the next ten years

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2025–26 fiscal year marked a historic milestone for Indigenous-led conservation in the Northwest Territories. Following the signing of the Our Land for the Future (OLF) Agreement in November 2024, partners worked together to establish the governance, financial, and operational foundations necessary to launch one of the largest Indigenous-led conservation initiatives in Canada.

The OLF Trust was created to support Indigenous governments and organizations in advancing conservation, stewardship, Indigenous Guardians programs, and related initiatives that strengthen communities, cultures, and local economies while protecting lands and waters for future generations. Together these efforts will make a significant contribution to Canada's commitments to protect 30% of its lands and waters by 2030.

During its first year of operations, the Trust secured and invested initial contributions from Canada and philanthropic partners, established key governance and investment systems including critical policies and procedures, and completed its first funding cycle. In the first year, \$18.4 million was distributed to Indigenous partners to support conservation and stewardship activities across the Northwest Territories, with another \$3.5 million committed for 2026-27.

These accomplishments demonstrate the strength of Indigenous leadership, collaborative decision-making, and a shared commitment to long-term stewardship.



Who We Are

Our Land for the Future is a partnership among 21 Indigenous governments and organizations, the Government of the Northwest Territories, the Government of Canada, and philanthropic donors.

Our vision is to support Indigenous-led stewardship of lands and waters throughout the Northwest Territories while making a substantial contribution toward Canada's conservation commitments.



WE SEEK TO:

- Protect lands, waters, and biodiversity;
- Support thriving Indigenous cultures and languages;
- Strengthen community capacity and governance;
- Expand Indigenous Guardians programs;
- Create opportunities for sustainable local economic development; and
- Ensure conservation investments are supported over the long term.

Together, Indigenous partners have identified opportunities to support stewardship and conservation across approximately 379,000 km² of lands and waters over the next ten years.

The Our Land for the Future Trust (the Trust) was established through territorial legislation in 2024. The Trust is responsible for managing and distributing funds to help achieve the vision and objectives of the OLF Agreement.

The Trust is registered with the Canada Revenue Agency as a qualified donee and recognized as a public body performing a function of government under s.149(1)(c) of the *Income Tax Act*.



Progress to Date: Governance and Operations

The first year focused on building the foundations necessary for long-term success.

KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS INCLUDED:

- Establishment of the OLF Trust Secretariat with critical interim support from the Indigenous Leadership Initiative, the Center for Northern Conservation and The Pew Charitable Trusts.
- Establishment of the Partners Table, Governance Committee, and Financial Committee, the three core oversight bodies anticipated under the Agreement.
- Execution of federal and philanthropic funding agreements to flow funds into the Trust.
- Development and approval of investment, financial management, and disbursement policies.
- Recruitment of Fund Managers for specialized financial and investment expertise.
- Initial development of a comprehensive Indigenous-led monitoring and evaluation framework.
- Hiring of the Trust CEO.

Directors and partners met regularly throughout the year to ensure the Trust was operational and ready to deliver funding efficiently and transparently.

FIRST FUNDING CYCLE

A major achievement during 2025–26 was the completion of the Trust's first disbursement cycle.

The Trust worked directly with every Indigenous partner through a Planning and Readiness process designed to ensure funding reflected local priorities and needs.

This relationship-based approach emphasized collaboration, flexibility, and reducing administrative burdens on Indigenous partners.

As a result:

- \$21.6 million was approved for partner initiatives over a 15-month period.
- \$18.4 million was disbursed during 2025–26.
- Funding agreements were completed with Indigenous partners across the territory.

Progress to Date:

Core Activities

INDIGENOUS-LED AREA-BASED CONSERVATION

Area-based conservation is one of the core pillars of the OLF Agreement.

During 2025–26, Trust funding supported a wide range of efforts to identify and establish new protected and conserved areas as well as to support ongoing management and stewardship of existing areas.

A recent decision by the Tłıchǵo Government marks a major milestone towards the area-based conservation efforts outlined in the OLF Agreement. In late 2025, the Tłıchǵo declared three new protected areas on Tłıchǵo private lands under Tłıchǵo law spanning 22,565 km²: Tłıchǵo Naowoo K’e Det’ahot’ıı Gowhaehdǫǫ Yek’e Aet’ıı K’e, and Tıts’aadiı Nadée K’e Wexoedıı. These designations constitute a major contribution to Canada’s target of protecting 30% of lands by 2030 and make substantial progress toward the short-term milestones outlined in the OLF Agreement.

IDENTIFICATION OF NEW PROTECTED AND CONSERVED AREAS

Nine initiatives received support to identify, study, and advance new Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas (IPCAs), protected areas, and other conservation designations across the Northwest Territories. These initiatives represent important early-stage conservation planning and feasibility work led by Indigenous governments and organizations.

SUPPORTED INITIATIVES INCLUDED:

- Pehdzeh Ki Ndeh IPCA (Pehdzeh Ki First Nation)
- Nahʔą Dehé Protected Area (Nahʔą Dehé Dene Band)
- Tthebatthie Denesų́liné Protected Area (Tthebatthie Denesų́liné Nation)
- Nqđıhatı (MacKay Lake) Protected Area (Yellowknives Dene First Nation)
- Hozıı Ekwǫ́ Conservation Area (Tłıchǵo Government)
- Todzi Protected Area (Tłıchǵo Government)
- Kelly/Willow/Lennie/Mahoney Lake IPCA (Nek’ets’edi Foundation on behalf of Tulit’a)
- Shutao’tine Nene IPCA (Nek’ets’edi Foundation on behalf of Tulit’a)
- Yeltea Lake, Manual Lake and Rory Lake IPCA (K’ahsho Got’ıne Foundation on behalf of Fort Good Hope)

Together, these initiatives support Indigenous-led planning, feasibility studies, ecological and cultural research, and community engagement processes that lay the foundation for future conservation designations.

ESTABLISHMENT OF PROTECTED AND CONSERVED AREAS

In addition, nine initiatives received support to advance the formal establishment of Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas, protected areas, conservation areas, and other effective conservation measures that have already progressed beyond the initial planning stage.

SUPPORTED INITIATIVES INCLUDED:

- Ka’a’gee Tu Protected Area (Ka’a’gee Tu First Nation)
- Sambaa K’e Protected Area (Sambaa K’e First Nation)
- Łue Túé Sų́lái (Five Fish Lakes) Protected Area (Tthets’éhk’edélı First Nation)
- Ejıé Túé Ndáde (Buffalo Lakes and Trails) Protected Area (Katłodeeche First Nation)
- Sahtú K’aqwe IPCA (Délıne Got’ıne Government)
- Tsá Tué / Great Bear Lake OECM (Délıne Got’ıne Government)
- Dınàgà Wek’èhodı Protected Area (supported by the North Slave Métis Alliance, Northwest Territories Métis Nation, and Tłıchǵo Government)
- Nàııı Wek’èhodı (Whatı Falls) Cultural Heritage Area (Tłıchǵo Government)
- Slave River Delta and Taltson River Area IPCA (Fort Resolution Métis Government and Deninu Kų́é First Nation)

These initiatives are advancing Indigenous-led conservation through negotiations, designation processes, management planning, partnership development, and governance arrangements that will support long-term stewardship.

STEWARDSHIP OF EXISTING PROTECTED AND CONSERVED AREAS

OLF funding also supported the ongoing stewardship, management, and enhancement of existing protected and conserved areas that are already delivering conservation and cultural benefits across the Northwest Territories.

SUPPORTED AREAS INCLUDED:

- Gwich’in Conservation Zones and Heritage Sites and Zones
- Edézhı́e Protected Area (Dehcho First Nations and Tłıchǵo Government)
- Ts’udé Niljné Tuyeta Protected Area (K’ahsho Got’ıne Foundation on behalf of Fort Good Hope)
- Saoyú-ʔehdacho National Historic Site (Délıne Got’ıne Government)
- Thaidene Nèné Indigenous Protected Area (Łutsël K’é Dene First Nation and Northwest Territories Métis)
- Wenek’e Protection Zones (Tłıchǵo Government)

This funding supported management planning, stewardship activities, ecological monitoring, governance participation, cultural programming, and Indigenous leadership in the long-term care of these significant landscapes.

Indigenous Guardians and Stewardship

Indigenous Guardians programs are central to the vision of OLF. Guardians monitor ecological conditions, steward culturally significant places, support research, strengthen Indigenous knowledge systems, and maintain connections between communities and the land.

NEW INDIGENOUS GUARDIANS INITIATIVES

During 2025–26, eight new Guardians initiatives received support, helping communities establish locally led stewardship programs that create employment opportunities, strengthen Indigenous knowledge systems, and support conservation objectives.

NEW PROGRAMS INCLUDED:

- Gwich'in Guardians Program (Gwich'in Tribal Council)
- Tłtsets'ėhk'edélj Guardians Program (Tłtsets'ėhk'edélj First Nation)
- Pehdzeh Ki Ndeh Guardians Program (Pehdzeh Ki First Nation)
- Nek'ėts'edi Guardians Program (Nek'ėts'edi Foundation on behalf of Tulit'a)
- South Slave Métis Guardians Program (Northwest Territories Métis Nation)
- Fort Resolution Guardians Program (Fort Resolution Métis Government and Deninu Kųé First Nation)
- Tłhebatthie Denesųliné Guardians Program (Tłhebatthie Denesųliné Nation)
- Wenek'e Guardians Program (Tłłchų Government)

These initiatives are building long-term Indigenous stewardship capacity and strengthening community leadership on the land.

EXISTING INDIGENOUS GUARDIANS AND STEWARDSHIP PROGRAMS

Ten established Indigenous Guardians and stewardship programs also received support for ongoing operations, growth, and enhancement during 2025–26.



SUPPORTED PROGRAMS INCLUDED:

- Edėzhłie Guardians (Dehcho First Nations and Tłłchų Government)
- Dehcho K'ėhodi Guardians and Stewardship Program (Dehcho First Nations)
- Nahendeh Kehotsendi Guardians (Katłodeeche First Nation)
- Acho Dene Guardians (Acho Dene Koe First Nation)
- Sahtų K'aųwe Indigenous Guardians (Dėlųnė Got'ųnė Government)
- K'áhshó Got'ųnė Guardians (K'ahsho Got'ine Foundation on behalf of Fort Good Hope)
- North Slave Métis Alliance Guardians Program (North Slave Métis Alliance)
- Ni Hat'ni Dene Guardians (Łutsėl K'ė Dene First Nation)
- Yellowknives Dene Stewardship and Guardians Program (Yellowknives Dene First Nation)
- Ekwų Nàxoėhdee K'ė Guardians Program (Tłłchų Government)

These programs conduct stewardship, ecological monitoring, wildlife management, cultural site protection, Indigenous knowledge documentation, and community outreach activities throughout the Northwest Territories.

The continued growth of Indigenous Guardians programs represents one of the most significant investments under OLF and demonstrates the central role Indigenous stewardship plays in achieving long-term conservation outcomes.

Disbursements to Indigenous Partners

A cornerstone of the OLF Trust is ensuring Indigenous governments and organizations have the resources needed to advance their own conservation and stewardship priorities.

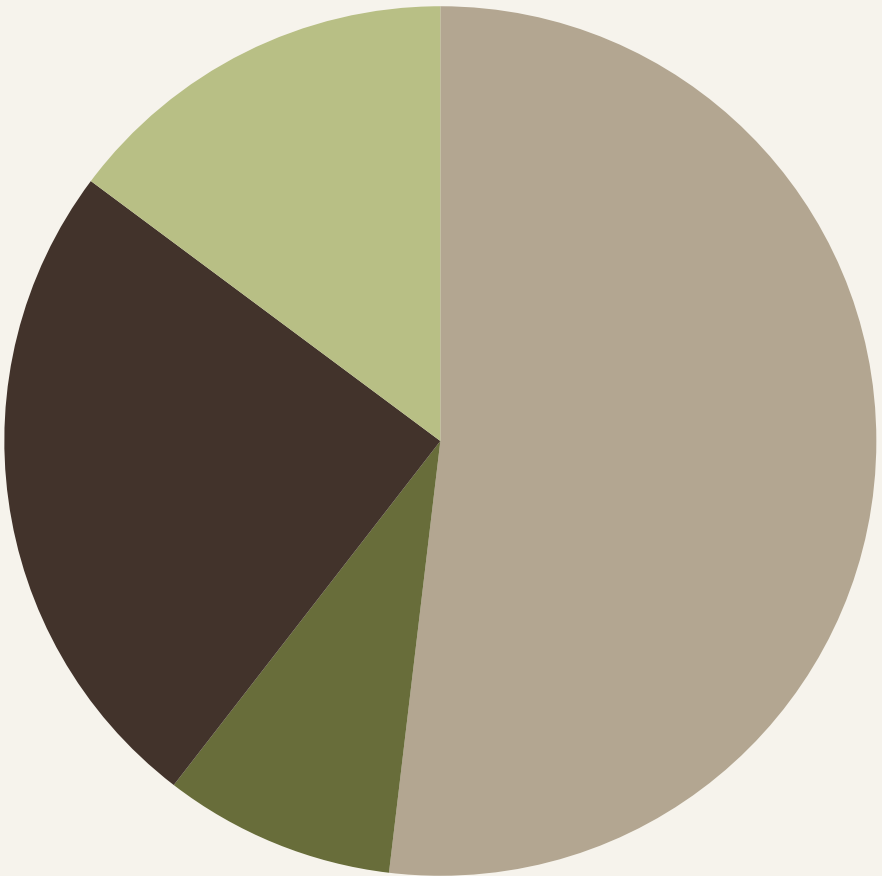
During 2025–26, the Trust disbursed \$18,395,700 to Indigenous partners to support the establishment and management of protected and conserved areas, Indigenous Guardians programs, stewardship initiatives, monitoring activities, governance participation, and community capacity building.

Indigenous Partner	Funding (2025–26)	Key Activities Supported
Gwich'in Tribal Council	\$952,850	Development of the Gwich'in Guardians Program and stewardship of Gwich'in Conservation Zones and Heritage Sites.
Dehcho First Nations	\$2,193,000	Edézhzhíe Protected Area management, Edézhzhíe Guardians, and Dehcho K'ehodi stewardship and monitoring programs.
Ka'a'gee Tu First Nation	\$449,650	Advancement of the Ka'a'gee Tu Candidate Protected Area and community stewardship capacity.
Sambaa K'e First Nation	\$600,950	Establishment efforts for the Sambaa K'e Protected Area and participation in OLF governance.
Tthets'éhk'edélj First Nation	\$431,800	Advancement of Łue Túé Sųlái (Five Fish Lakes) Protected Area and development of a local Guardians program.
Pehdzeh Ki First Nation	\$398,030	Development of the Pehdzeh Ki Ndeh IPCA and establishment of a new Guardians program.
Nahʔą Dehé Dene Band	\$158,950	Early-stage planning and feasibility work for a proposed protected area.
Katłodeeche First Nation	\$692,750	Advancement of Ejré Túé Ndáde (Buffalo Lakes and Trails) Protected Area and Nahendeh Kehotsendi Guardians operations.
Acho Dene Koe First Nation	\$204,850	Expansion of the Acho Dene Guardians Program and stewardship activities.
Délįnę Got'įnę Government	\$2,487,100	Sahtú K'aqwe IPCA, Tsá Tué / Great Bear Lake conservation initiatives, Saoyú-ʔehdacho management, and Guardians programming.

K'ahsho Got'ine Foundation (Fort Good Hope)	\$2,518,550	Ts'udé Niljné Tuyeta Protected Area management, new IPCA planning, and K'áhshó Got'įnę Guardians operations.
Nek'ets'edi Foundation (Tulit'a)	\$677,450	Feasibility studies and planning for proposed IPCAs and development of the Nek'ets'edi Guardians Program.
North Slave Métis Alliance	\$284,750	Dinàgà Wek'èhodì Protected Area advancement and Guardians program expansion.
Northwest Territories Métis Nation	\$629,000	Dinàgà Wek'èhodì Protected Area participation and development of a regional Métis Guardians program.
Fort Resolution Métis Government	\$283,900	Slave River Delta and Taltson River Area conservation planning and joint Guardians program development.
Deninu Kųę́ First Nation	\$283,900	Slave River Delta and Taltson River Area conservation planning and joint Guardians program development.
Tthebatthie Denesųliné Nation	\$306,000	Proposed protected area planning and expansion of community-based monitoring into a Guardians program.
Łútsěl K'é Dene First Nation	\$1,634,550	Ongoing operations and expansion of the Ni Hat'ni Dene Guardians Program, including stewardship of Thaidene Nënë.
Yellowknives Dene First Nation	\$531,250	Advancement of the Nųdıhatı (MacKay Lake) Protected Area and expansion of stewardship and Guardians programming.
Tłıchų Government	\$2,675,800	Multiple conservation initiatives, including Hozìi Ekwò, Todzi, Dinàgà Wek'èhodì, Wenek'e Protection Zones, and expansion of Guardians programs.

Total Funding Distributed to Indigenous Partners (2025–26) **\$18,395,700**

Year 1 Disbursements by Activity



-  GUARDIANS
52%
-  ESTABLISHMENT OF PROTECTED AREAS
25%
-  MANAGEMENT OF ESTABLISHED AREAS
15%
-  IDENTIFICATION OF PROPOSED AREAS
8%

\$18,395,700

Was disbursed to Indigenous partners in 2025-26





Lessons Learned

The Trust's first year highlighted several important lessons.

RELATIONSHIPS MATTER

The success of the inaugural funding cycle was rooted in strong relationships between the Trust and Indigenous partners.

Building trust, understanding community priorities, and maintaining open communication will remain central to future success.

PLANNING TAKES TIME

Relationship-based funding requires sufficient time for discussion, refinement, and shared understanding.

Future planning cycles will begin earlier to support stronger engagement and decision-making.

STRONG GOVERNANCE EXPERTISE IS CRUCIAL

The expertise and commitment of Directors played an important role in establishing effective governance systems and ensuring responsible stewardship of Trust resources.



Looking Ahead

The foundations for long-term success are now in place.

In 2026–27, the Trust will focus on:

- Supporting Indigenous Partners in their conservation and stewardship projects;
- Collaborating on technical refinements to the financial model;
- Expanding organizational capacity and establishing an operational presence for the Trust in Yellowknife
- Finalizing and launching implementation of the Evaluation and Monitoring Framework;
- Exploring long-term funding opportunities to support sustainability;
- Responding to expressions of interest from prospective new partners.
- Supporting other partner-identified priorities through ongoing relationship-building, capacity support, and shared learning;

The first year of OLF demonstrates what is possible when Indigenous governments, public governments, and philanthropic partners work together toward a shared vision.

The progress achieved in a short period provides a strong foundation for lasting conservation, stewardship, and community benefits across the Northwest Territories.



Financial Summary

HIGHLIGHTS

The 2025–2026 fiscal year represents the inaugural operating year of the Our Land for the Future (OLF) Trust and marks a significant milestone in establishing one of Canada’s largest Indigenous-led conservation and stewardship funding mechanisms.

During the year, the OLF Trust received its full federal contribution of \$300 million to the Contribution Account following execution of the grant agreement between the Trust and the Minister of Environment and Climate Change Canada in July 2025. This one-time contribution established the foundational capital required to support the Trust’s long-term purpose and vision flowing from the *NWT: Our Land for the Future Agreement*.

The Trust also received \$53.8 million to the Contribution Account in private contributions between September and December 2025 pursuant to contribution agreements with The Pew Charitable Trusts, the Metcalf Foundation, the McLean Foundation, and the Sitka Foundation. An additional \$20.2 million of committed private contributions remain to be received in future years in accordance with the terms of the respective contribution agreements. These contributions will be recognized in the financial statements in the years(s) received.

In addition, a grant totalling \$984,500 was provided by The Pew Charitable Trusts to the Centre for Northern Conservation to support early implementation of the OLF Agreement and the initial set up of the Trust. This advance grant was anticipated in the Agreement and will be subtracted from philanthropic contributions to the Trust over the remaining life of the Agreement. These funds were accounted for separately.

During its first year of operations, the Trust distributed \$18.4 million received as contributions as disbursements through grants to Indigenous Partners to advance protected and conserved areas, Indigenous Guardians programs, stewardship initiatives, and community capacity development across the Northwest Territories.

As of March 31, 2026, \$331.7 million received as contributions to the Trust have been transferred to the long-term investment accounts managed by Leith Wheeler Investment Counsel. \$6.8 million of contributions received were held in cash in anticipation of approval by partners for Trust operations in the 2026-2027 operating budget.

Expenditures

Category	Budget	Actual
Grant Disbursements	\$18,500,000	\$18,395,700
Salaries and Benefits	\$391,000	\$157,972
General and Administrative	\$634,000	\$162,440
Total	\$19,525,000	\$18,716,112

Grant funding to Indigenous Partners represented the Trust’s largest expenditure category.

There are significant variances in the budgeted vs actual expenditures in all other categories. This reflects CNC support for operations, general and administrative expenditures during the Trust’s transition period. Unexpended funds remain in the Disbursement Account and are available for allocation for future operational expenditures.



