

# What is Healthy Country Planning



Healthy Country Planning (HCP) is a participatory process being used by Indigenous communities for land and water planning and management. Adapted from the “Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation” methodology, HCP was created to support Indigenous-led planning efforts by ensuring that Indigenous knowledge, and people are central to the process.<sup>1</sup>

When people involved in a planning process feel empowered and invested in the output, that plan is more likely to succeed. HCP encourages strong community

engagement by tailoring language, facilitation and tools to the community’s needs. It also provides an approach to connect community values, Indigenous knowledge and western science, helping parties understand each other and giving a platform to implement appropriate solutions.

Since being developed with Indigenous communities in Australia, HCP has increasingly been used worldwide for developing and implementing land use plans, wildlife management plans and protected area plans, including in Canada’s Northwest Territories.

HCP was developed in collaboration with many communities, and it does not belong to any one organization or person. It is licensed under the Creative Commons. Find more information at [ccntglobal.com](http://ccntglobal.com).

## Elements of Healthy Country Planning

Healthy Country Planning was developed for an inclusive community approach to ensure cultural, environmental and social values are considered equally. The process creates well thought-out pathways to improve the health

of lands, waters and the people who care for them. HCP follows a cycle of simple steps to build and use a plan in the right way, with the right people, including: **define, plan, work and monitor, adapt, share.**



# Why Healthy Country Planning?

**INCLUSIVE:** Supports community members and others to build a vision for taking care of their lands and waters. Community values and issues are central to looking after the lands and waters.

**PLACE-BASED:** Planning happens on the land—instead of the office—so that people are connected to the places they are planning for.

**INDIGENOUS-LED:** led by Indigenous peoples, creating roadmaps for how their territories should be managed—rather than reacting to plans developed by others.

**INFORMED:** Relies on Indigenous knowledge about values, threats, and strategies to protect lands and waters, while also incorporating western science understandings of values and issues.

**ACCESSIBLE:** Uses language that is clear and relevant. The process and resulting plan provide an easy way to understand complex issues. The planning products are often visually appealing to the community, which helps foster ownership and pride.

**ACTION-ORIENTED:** Provides a clear connection between vision, values, concerns, and on-the-ground actions. Translates into clear work plans, monitoring and evaluation plans. Forms a clear basis for funding, job descriptions, and operations.



## Working Together: Nature United and Healthy Country Planning

Nature United is a conservation organization, affiliated with The Nature Conservancy, which supports Indigenous peoples' authority to manage and steward their lands and waters through strengthening governance, enhancing on-the-ground stewardship capacity, building and sustaining leadership, and catalyzing local economies.

Related to all these

areas, Nature United recognizes the importance of Indigenous Nations developing Indigenous-led plans to direct the management and stewardship of lands and waters. Indigenous communities can benefit from having access to appropriate planning tools and processes that align and reflect Indigenous values and approaches to create effective and implementable plans. Nature United has experience with the Healthy Country Planning process and provides facilitation support and other tools to support Indigenous-led planning processes with interested community partners.



Nature United 

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