



News Release

IQALUIT, Nunavut (July 30, 2001) – After two days of helicopter and ground searches by wildlife officials and the Kimmirut Hunters and Trappers Organization (HTO), no evidence of the polar bear that injured two canoeists in Katannilik Territorial Park Reserve last Friday has been found in the park, which was closed after the incident.

On Wednesday August 1, the Department of Sustainable Development will re-open Katannilik Park. As part of the registration system in Iqaluit or Kimmirut, all park visitors will be issued a travel advisory regarding the bear attack and bear safety measures.

The Soper Falls campsite area, which was the focus of ground search efforts, will remain closed for camping until further notice. For the next week department officials will be monitoring this area several times a day.

Sustainable Development Minister Olayuk Akesuk announced that, as the result of this incident, he has directed department officials to organize an independent review on the issue of bear safety in territorial parks and conservation areas.

“We want visitors to continue to come to Nunavut to experience our pristine wilderness through our parks,” Minister Akesuk said. “This review will ensure that we have the best information to enable them to have a safe and high quality experience. I want to stress that this is the first polar bear attack in Katannilik or any other of our territorial parks and we’re taking it very seriously.”

The independent review is expected to take three months.

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