

“SEEING THE ARCTIC EXCLUSIVELY AS AN ECOSYSTEM IN NEED OF PRESERVATION— AND NOT AS A HOMELAND WHERE PEOPLE HAVE A RIGHT TO LIVE AND WORK— IMPOSES A HIDDEN THREAT TO THE LONG- TERM SUSTAINABILITY OF THE REGION.”

Chapter 7 Preview | Heather Exner-Pirot

Whose Arctic Is It?

Indigenous peoples and other northerners have the greatest stake in protecting the Arctic—but are their voices being heard?

The Arctic is a showcase for the effects of climate change, especially with the alarming decline in the extent of summer sea ice and its amplifying effects on warming. The region is an area of contention as well, as the expansion of open water entices Arctic nations with the prospect of easier

access to oil and other resources. But, as Heather Exner-Pirot explores, nearly unnoticed is the struggle of Arctic peoples to ensure that the fate of the region they call home is largely in their hands, not in those of southerners seeking to impose their own political agendas.

State of the World is available for purchase at www.worldwatch.org/bookstore/state-of-the-world



Heather Exner-Pirot is strategist for outreach and indigenous engagement in the College of Nursing at the University of Saskatchewan, Canada, and managing editor of *The Arctic Yearbook*.



Although most people see the Arctic through a lens of either climate change or economic opportunity, we should be careful about applying a standard of environmental protection in other regions that we would not accept in our own.