

Mr. Grant Pryznyk
Interim Chair

DEC 17 2009

Wek'èezhì Renewable Resources Board
Yellowknife Office
102A, 4504 - 49TH AVENUE
YELLOWKNIFE NT X1A 1A7

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DEC 17 2009

Dear Mr. Pryznyk:

Emergency Interim Measures

Thank you for your letter of December 3, 2009 regarding questions on the proposed Emergency Interim Measures proposed by Environment and Natural Resources (ENR). The measures are interim only and will be reviewed once recommendations from the Wek'èezhì Renewable Resources Board are received.

This letter responds to your questions as requested at our meeting with the Board on December 10, 2009.

1. The reasons for concluding there is an emergency – In October, workshops were held with communities and stakeholders to identify options for recovery of caribou herds. A population model used at these workshops predicts the Bathurst herd will not recover if harvest continues. Two aspects are critical for recovery to occur. The first is calf survival must remain high. The second is cow survival must increase. Winter is the prime cow harvest season. As well, adult bull : cow sex ratio in the Bathurst herd is the lowest of all Northwest Territories (NWT) herds. The model indicates that even a low bull harvest will result in a continued decline. Since the modelling workshop in October 2009, there has been little harvest as bulls were in rut and conditions on the land have prevented few people from harvesting. Since harvest is a critical factor in the recovery of the Bathurst herd, it is imperative to protect this herd now by eliminating all harvest.
2. What has occurred since the joint proposal was submitted that created an emergency situation – Since completing the surveys in June 2009, ENR has been working with the Tłı̨chǫ Government and the Board on timelines to implement management actions in the winter. After submitting the joint proposal, ENR reviewed the timelines for obtaining recommendations from the Board. As noted in the previous response, it became apparent that actions to reduce harvest to protect the barren-ground caribou herds in the North and South Slave regions were still required by January 2010.

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3. Why was this emergency situation not anticipated at the time the proposal was submitted – See above.
4. Status of discussions with Tł'chö Government on the issue – ENR has been consulting with the Tł'chö Government on the emergency measures and with other directly affected Aboriginal organizations. These consultations continue. A formal Record of Decision was passed by the Tł'chö government supporting these interim measures. ENR is committed to working with the Tł'chö Government and other Aboriginal organizations on accommodation measures and to undertake joint public education and compliance actions.

The Minister of ENR will be issuing a press release on December 17, 2009 that the Emergency Interim Measures will come into effect on January 1, 2010. The draft press release and map of closed zone is attached as per your request. Print and radio ads will also help to inform the public. As requested, the regulation changes are attached.

We look forward to participating in the public hearing process in February 2010 to review the joint proposal submitted by the Tł'chö Government and ENR. Best wishes to your members and staff for a safe holiday season.

Sincerely



Gary A. Bohnet
Deputy Minister

Attachments

- c. Grand Chief Joe Rabesca, Tł'chö Government
Mr. Eddie Erasmus, Director, Lands Department, Tł'chö Government

DRAFT

Interim Emergency Measures to Help Conserve Bathurst Caribou Herd

YELLOWKNIFE (December 17, 2009) – The Minister of Environment and Natural Resources (ENR) has put interim emergency measures in place to help conserve the Bathurst caribou herd.

"These interim emergency measures and resulting regulation changes are based on the use of the precautionary principle to conserve this natural resource for the use of current and future generations," said ENR Minister J. Michael Miltenberger. "Using the best information available, we have determined the most reasonable conservation method is to limit the harvest of caribou from the Bathurst herd."

Starting January 1st, barren-ground caribou commercial/meat tag, non-resident and resident harvesting will be closed in the North and South Slave Regions and all harvesting is closed in a new no-hunting conservation zone established north of Yellowknife where the Bathurst caribou herd winters. The new zone covers the area between the Tlicho Winter Road to Gameti east to the Hoarfrost River in the East Arm north to Nunavut. (See attached map).

"Our analyses of recent population surveys, trend and modeling analysis project that the Bathurst caribou herd could be lost or reduced to extremely low numbers if harvest continues at current levels," added Miltenberger. "When the herd numbered 300,000-400,000, the harvest was small relative to herd size, but at much lower numbers, the harvest has become a serious factor in the recent rapid decline. Regardless of the causes of the decline, the fundamental issue is preservation of wildlife. No one would benefit from further decline in this herd."

Additional regulations providing access to wood bison for General Hunting Licence holders are also being put in place to alleviate some of the hardship communities will face because of the restrictions to caribou harvest. Under the new regulations, two new bison zones have been created in the North Slave Region. Zone R/WB01 is available for tag only hunting. Tags will be provided to the Tlicho Government and Yellowknives Dene. Zone R/WB/02 is open to GHL holders only. Harvest in this zone is unrestricted and all harvest must be reported to ENR within 72 hours.

The new regulations come into effect on January 1, 2010. They will remain in effect until recommendations on barren-ground caribou management by the Wek'eezhii Renewable Resources Board are implemented.

For more information, contact:

Andrew Matthews
Communications Officer
Office of the Premier and Executive Council
Government of the Northwest Territories
(867) 669-2302

Attachments: No-Hunting Conservation Zone Map

Caribou No Hunting Zone

R/BC/02
Conservation
No Hunting Zone

Wekweèt

Gameti

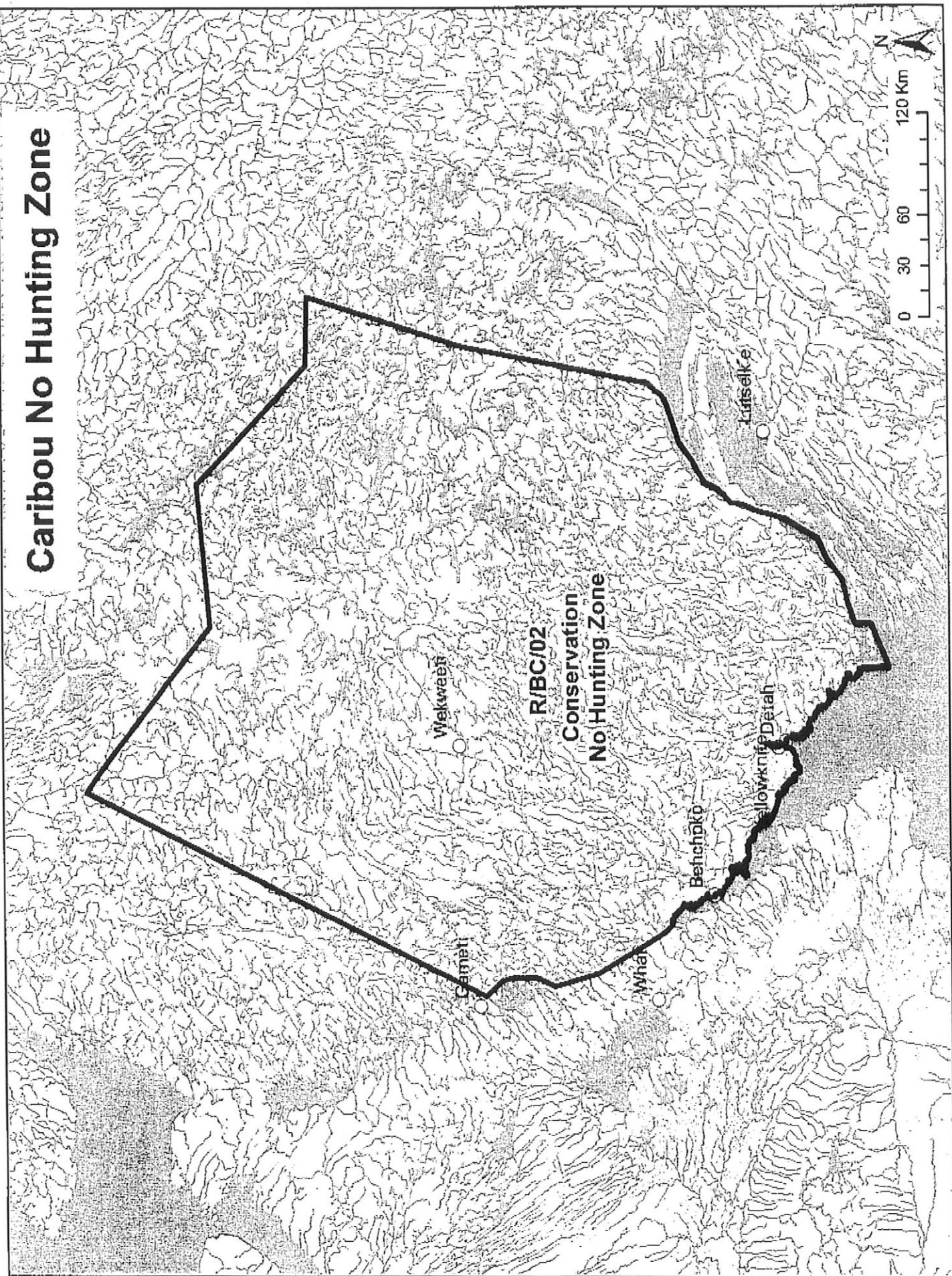
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**ENVIRONMENT AND
NATURAL RESOURCES**

Fax

Date: Dec. 17

To: Grant Pryznyk
WRRB

Fax: 813-5743

This fax contains 5 page(s), including the cover sheet.

From: Ernie Campbell
A/Dm

Comments:

Original to: Follow in the Mail ✓
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