



November 03, 2021

Mr. Joseph Judas, Chair
Wek'èezhì Renewable Resources Board
102A 4504 49th AVE
YELLOWKNIFE NT X1A 1A7
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Dear Mr. Judas:

Interim Wek'èezhì Boreal Caribou Range Plan as Management Proposal

Further to the Government of Northwest Territories (GNWT) letter of August 17, 2021, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (ENR) has engaged with co-management partners, including the Wek'èezhì Renewable Resources Board (WRRB), over the last 14 months to prepare an Interim Wek'èezhì Boreal Caribou Range Plan (interim range plan).

As part of the Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board's *Report of Environmental Assessment and Reasons for Decision for the Tẖcẖ All-Season Road (TASR)*, the GNWT was required to complete a Wek'èezhì boreal caribou range plan and submit it to the WRRB at least 90 days before the road opens for public use. Scheduled completion of the TASR is November 2021.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, plans to hold community meetings in 2020 to gather Indigenous knowledge about important areas for boreal caribou to inform the range plan were delayed. It was therefore agreed upon by co-management partners in September 2020 that preparing an "interim" Wek'èezhì boreal caribou range plan was the only feasible solution to meet this timeline.

ENR submitted the final draft of the interim range plan to WRRB on August 17, 2021. At that time, ENR also posted the interim range plan on ENR's "Have your say" website for a six-week public review with a closing date of October 01, 2021. Comments were submitted by seven different parties. Although minor edits to the interim range plan were made to address comments, no changes were made to the maps of important areas, maps of management class areas, management actions or implementation tools. We have included a table (Attachment A) summarizing the public comments and how they were addressed.

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The GNWT's had originally planned to hold in-person community information sessions on the interim plan between September and October 2021 with the North Slave Métis Alliance (NSMA), Yellowknife Dene First Nation (YKDFN) and Tłı̨chǫ communities. Due to the recent COVID-19 restrictions, ENR was unable to hold these information sessions, with the exception of a virtual session with NSMA on September 14, 2021.

In the absence of information sessions for Tłı̨chǫ and YKDFN communities, the GNWT has clarified that there will be future opportunities for communities to provide input into the full Wek'èezhì boreal caribou range plan, due to be completed in March 2023.

The GNWT also held a virtual information session with the Boreal Caribou Range Planning Advisory Working Group on September 15, 2021. Attendees included representatives from Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board, Université Laval, and the governments of Alberta, British Columbia, and Yukon.

At this time, the GNWT is formally re-submitting the interim range plan to the WRRB as a management proposal for review by the Board in accordance with Section 12.5.1 of the *Tłı̨chǫ Agreement* (Attachment B). As outlined above, there are no proposed major changes to the plan, but some minor edits have been made, based on the suggestions from the public review (Attachment A). Given the large size of the document, the interim range plan will be sent separately through our Secure File Transfer site.

We would like to thank the WRRB for their valuable feedback on the interim range plan through their participation on the Wek'èezhì Boreal Caribou Range Plan Working Group.

Once the WRRB has completed its review of the interim range plan, the working group will resume working on the full Wek'èezhì Boreal Caribou Range Plan.

If you have any questions or require additional information, please contact Dr. James Hodson at 867-767-9237, extension 53227 or by e-mail at james.hodson@gov.nt.ca.

Sincerely,



For Erin Kelly, Ph.D.
Deputy Minister
Environment and Natural Resources

Attachments

c. Honourable Caroline Cochrane
Premier

Minister Shane Thompson
Environment and Natural Resources

Ms. Shaleen Woodward
Principal Secretary

Mr. Martin Goldney
Secretary to Cabinet/Deputy Minister
Executive and Indigenous Affairs

Ms. Shawn McCann
Deputy Secretary, Indigenous and Intergovernmental Affairs
Executive and Indigenous Affairs

Dr. Brett Elkin
Assistant Deputy Minister, Operations
Environment and Natural Resources

Ms. Heather Sayine-Crawford
Director, Wildlife and Fish Division
Environment and Natural Resources

Mr. Bruno Croft
Superintendent, North Slave Region
Environment and Natural Resources

Dr. James Hodson
Wildlife Biologist, Wildlife
Environment and Natural Resources

Ms. Jody Pellissey
Executive Director
Wek'èezhì Renewable Resources Board

ATTACHMENT A - Written comments submitted during the 18 August – 01 October 2021 public review of the interim Wek'èezhìi Boreal Caribou Range Plan

Organization	Section #	Section Title / Sub-title	Page #	First few words of caption on Figure or Table	Table #	Figure #	Comment	Recommendation	How did ENR address the comments?
WRRB Randi Jennings	5.4.1		50 (51)	The Tłıchǫ Government held a TK workshop on mapping boreal caribou (boreal caribou) habitat on December 8th and 9th 2020.			Is the first boreal caribou in this sentence supposed to be Tǫdzi?	Either remove or clarify the second boreal caribou form the sentence.	Addressed. Deleted first mention of boreal caribou in this sentence and added in Todzi.
Genevieve Degré-Timmons: Université de Laval	5	Habitat condition and disturbance levels					I'm unsure if using 40-year threshold for "undisturbed" areas, as presented by the ECCC recovery strategy for boreal caribou, is appropriate for the NT1 range. I understand that there are many factors involved in caribou habitat recovery, and availability and growth of winter forage is only a part. However, lichen recovery in the Wek'èezhìi region is greater and more variable than is currently implied by the federal recovery strategy for boreal caribou, varying from 75 to 79 years (See results of the NTpn [Northwest Territories Plains North] ecoprovince in Table 6 of Greuel and Degré-Timmons et al. 2021). Additionally, the RSF results also suggest that caribou use >60-year postfire habitats in the winter. Could this be indicative that winter habitat in the NWT becomes suitable for caribou later than the 40-year threshold implies? Could a more conservative threshold be applied for the NT1 range? Implementing a different threshold would be a	Reflect on using a more conservative threshold (e.g. > 40 yr postfire) for northern range of boreal caribou in Canada, especially given future climate scenarios and cumulative impacts from industrial development.	No edits to the range plan were made in response to this comment. The 40-yr threshold at which wildfires become undisturbed habitat again is based on the national demographic model relating likelihood of boreal caribou population self-sustainability to habitat disturbance levels, which was used to define Critical Habitat in the national recovery strategy. To change the threshold for fire age in northern ranges, the national demographic models would need to be re-run with different parameters, and could result in a different disturbance-risk relationship, which would in turn potentially alter the national definition of critical habitat. GNWT-ENR is not in a position to do such national-scale analyses, nor can it propose an alternate definition for Critical Habitat in the NT1 range at this time. ENR acknowledges that the RSF models indicate boreal caribou prefer unburned areas which are >60 yrs old, especially during the winter seasons. During snow-free seasons boreal caribou are also selecting for recent fires (<10 yrs old) and middle-aged fires 30-40, and 40-60 yrs old. The approach taken to delineating important areas and management classes for boreal caribou in the interim range plan does take into account the preference of older forests during winter seasons, because the Marxan models are using the 7 different seasonal RSFs, and Marxan tries to maximize the habitat value of areas chosen in its solutions. The Intensive and Enhanced management class areas do therefore capture large areas of fires >60 years old because of their importance to caribou during winter. This is in keeping with the second aspect of Critical Habitat, which is biophysical attributes required by boreal caribou (i.e. late-seral forest habitat which likely has higher abundances of forage lichen species).

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							very bold action, which is probably unrealistic. However, I think it's necessary to reflect on how we define "undisturbed" caribou habitat and when it's considered recovered, especially in the context of northern boreal caribou population management.		
Genevieve Degré-Timmons: Université de Laval	5	Habitat selection in the Northwest Territories	47	The habitat selection models (RSFs) considered land cover types broken down into different decadal post-fire age categories (<10 years up to >60 years), and proximity or density of human disturbances like roads, seismic lines, well pads, cut blocks and settlements.				Consider using different fire age categories (e.g. 40 to 60-year postfire and >60-year).	See response above.
Genevieve Degré-Timmons: Université de Laval	10	Forecasts of future habitat/ Projected Recovery of Fire Disturbance	143	is expected to transition back to undisturbed habitat			The statement about "expected to transition back to undisturbed habitat" assumes that the forest will exhibit a stable pattern of self-replacement following wildfires. However, natural disturbance can interrupt feedbacks that maintain stable environmental conditions for self-replacement of dominant canopy species, and create windows of opportunity for stand to shift to alternative state. The lost of resiliency of the boreal forest could have important consequence on caribou habitat (e.g. a shift from a black spruce dominated stand to a deciduous stand) by not offering the same favourable habitat services to caribou.	Include in the final range planning document a separation section on forecasting forest succession and climate change.	Agreed. This will be included in the full range plan rather than the interim range plan. ENR is collaborating with ECCC and NRCan on the Western Boreal Initiative (WBI) project which aims to project future landscape conditions for species like boreal caribou under climate change. The predictive models used in the WBI project consider different patterns of stand replacement following fire. The models may help to identify which areas will continue to provide good boreal caribou habitat into the future, and those that may transition to less suitable habitat.

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Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC)	8. Sub-section 8.1	8. MANAGEMENT ACTIONS 8.1: Management Actions					Overall, DUC supports the general direction of this interim plan. The concept of adopting a mitigation sequence for making land use decisions is one that forms the basis of DUC's conservation approach for areas open for development. We strongly support this approach for this interim range plan as well as other policies and plans related to habitat management. Additionally, we also support the use of a no-net-loss approach, or in some instances a net-gain approach, as a means to balance the ecological impacts with the economic benefits incurred through development opportunities.		ENR appreciates DUC's support for the interim range plan.
Ducks Unlimited Canada	8.6	Balancing/Offsetting New Habitat Disturbance through Habitat Restoration					We agree with having offsets occur over a larger area than the new disturbance. Not only will this allow for a net-gain, but it also provides insurance that there will be no loss of habitat. Unfortunately, restoration techniques are not guaranteed to be successful, at least with respect to wetland restoration, so requiring offsetting to occur over a larger area will allow a precautionary approach to be taken. We also are aware of the limited opportunities and methodologies for conducting restoration and therefore support the option for some offsetting activities to be focused on other means.		Acknowledged.

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Ducks Unlimited	8.6	Balancing/ Offsetting New Habitat Disturbance through Habitat Restoration						We do suggest that more guidance be provided to determine the conditions of when non-restorative offsetting options can be considered, including what the appropriate amount of non-restorative activities is adequate. Providing this guidance upfront will alleviate any issues when and if non-restorative offsetting activities may be required.	ENR is in the process of developing offsetting guidelines, which will include consideration of non-restoration based offsetting actions and circumstances where their use may be appropriate. These guidelines will not be completed in time to inform changes to the interim range plan, but it may be possible to reflect them in the full range plan for the Wek'èezhìi region.
Ducks Unlimited		Introduction & throughout range plan					DUC is pleased to see the incorporation of both western scientific and traditional knowledge in determining the management direction of this plan. We fully support this approach and applaud all parties to this plan for undertaking an emerging methodology for collaborative decision making.		Acknowledged.

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Ducks Unlimited	13	MONITORING HABITAT DISTURBANCE					<p>It is common across northern Canada that there is a limited amount of data available to inform planning exercises such as this. We recommend this plan include a call for more data that would improve the scientific analysis that was undertaken. More and better data will provide a better understanding of caribou use of the land which will lead to management decisions made with increased confidence due to refined boundaries or more targeted guidelines. One example that could improve the analyses conducted for this range plan would be a wetland inventory. As stated above, the use of wetlands by caribou in this region is well established. However, EOSD mapping has limitations with respect to its accuracy for wetland identification as well as its spatial resolution. Improved wetland mapping can provide a better understanding of how development activities can impact hydrology which impacts the habitat of caribou. Undertaking of this level of mapping can also provide more detailed information of other vegetation types such as lichen distribution which would further aid in understanding caribou use of the region. Wetland mapping conducted by DUC in other regions has been used to aid boreal caribou management activities and we believe be a useful tool to support future drafts of this range plan.</p>		<p>ENR acknowledges and is aware of the work that Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC) has done in other regions, and in the NWT, to more accurately map and classify wetlands. ENR is in the process of updating its EOSD-based land cover classification to be current to 2020. As part of this update process, ENR will be increasing the number of wetland land cover classes to be more similar to DUC's wetland classifications and will use more field data/aerial survey-oblique photos to improve our accuracy of wetland classification. ENR is consulting the DUC field guide extensively in developing our classification guide which will be used in building our calibration/validation data, with the idea to make the EOSD product as compatible as possible with the DUC wetland inventory. Regarding the spatial resolution of data used in the range plan, the 30-m pixel resolution of ENR's EOSD-based land cover classification raster is at a higher resolution than is commonly used in many RSF models for boreal caribou. Using an even higher resolution dataset for such analyses at the scale of the NT1, would likely introduce computer processing challenges (seasonal RSF models using the current 30-m resolution land cover data already can take several days to run and cross-validate). Once the updated 2020 EOSD-based land cover classification for the NT1 range is available, ENR will re-run it's RSF models based on the new data, which hopefully will improve the predictive accuracy of the models. ENR would be happy to meet with DUC to discuss how to make sure the updated EOSD-based land cover classification can better align with DUC's wetland classification.</p>

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Ducks Unlimited	Overall						Conserving wetlands and caribou habitats across our great land mass is a challenge. DUC believes this interim plan provides a forward-thinking, balanced, made-in-the-NWT approach that will not only benefit boreal caribou but other wildlife, such as waterfowl, and natural infrastructure that intact habitats provide.		ENR appreciates DUC's support for the interim range plan.
Tom Hoefler: Chamber of Mines	Overall						We are concerned about the coarseness of the Marxan-unit-derived management zones that result in falsely identifying many areas within mineral leases and claims as suitable caribou habitat. We do take the point that collar data shows some use within some mineral claims and leases, but we understand BWC habitat use to be quite specific and granular. The 5 km x 5 km block size is too large to be meaningful when considering the complexity of northern habitat, and will lead to management that is too coarse – non-caribou habitat will be treated as though it was caribou habitat and vice versa.		ENR is of the view that the size of the planning units (5 km ² hexagons, not 5 x 5 km blocks as indicated by Chamber of Mines) provided an appropriate balance between capturing spatial variation in boreal caribou habitat suitability and the computational demands of running the Marxan analyses at the scale of the NT1 range (44M ha area). It was necessary to run Marxan analyses at this scale to maintain connectivity of patches of preferred boreal caribou habitat across administrative range planning region boundaries. ENR is also of the view that the scale (based on the 5km ² planning units) at which the management classes were mapped is more appropriate for managing land use activities than if we had based them on the original resolution of the predictive resource selection function (RSF) maps (30 X 30 m raster pixels), which would likely have resulted in thousands of very small patches. The large management class areas are also more consistent with the space use requirements of boreal caribou, which have annual home ranges on average >2000 km ² in size; and with the overall goal of the range plans which is to maintain an adequate supply of large patches of suitable undisturbed habitat for boreal caribou. The management actions described in Section 8 of the interim range plan include the use of finer resolution seasonal RSF maps to help developers avoid and minimize habitat disturbance to preferred boreal caribou habitat within different management class areas. It is important to note that one of the Intensive management class areas that overlaps with mineral leases/claims along the North Arm and White Beach Point area was based both on Traditional and local knowledge and collar data which indicated use of islands off the shoreline in this area for calving; it was not based on the outcome of the Marxan analyses.

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Tom Hoefer: Chamber of Mines	Overall						We believe the economic impact of the plan is not properly considered due to the lack of involvement from industry until very late in the game. It is all too easy to fall into thinking that the plan is the first priority. The plan considers the impact of humans on the caribou...who will consider the impact of the plan on humans?		<p>To produce the regional range plans, regional working groups (WGs) were created. These WGs served as the primary forum for developing the range plans and were made up of various stakeholders (and included GNWT's department of Industry, Tourism and Investment (ITI)). The Working Group for the Wek'èezhì boreal caribou Range Plan was created in the fall 2019. The working group served as the foundation to develop and write the Wek'èezhì range plan. The Chamber of Mines was invited to participate in the Wek'èezhì WG at the start of the range planning process (Sept 19, 2019 e-mail), but chose to be part of the advisory group instead (Oct 1, 2019 e-mail). The Chamber of Mines can still become a member of the Wek'èezhì Range Plan Working Group which would provide the opportunity to play a more active role in continuing work on the full Wek'èezhì range plan.</p> <p>The interim plan was developed considering the many points of view held by different stakeholders, including Indigenous governments, WRRB, and departments of GNWT including Industry, Tourism and Investment (ITI). From the outset of the range planning process, ITI provided significant feedback focused on industry and development opportunities located in the Wek'èezhì boreal caribou range. The range plan was reviewed and supported by all working group members before being submitted to WRRB and circulated for public review. Development is typically allowed to continue according to current regulatory requirements (ie. status quo) and with best practices encouraged (but not required) in Basic Management areas. Development is not prohibited in Enhanced and Intensive Management class areas, but rather will be possible subject to more stringent management actions that follow a standard mitigation hierarchy. Section 8 of the range plan describes this hierarchy in more detail: (a) avoid new disturbance, then (b) minimize necessary new disturbance as much as possible, and lastly (c) restore and/or offset any residual disturbance. The final delineation of management class areas in the interim range plan excluded some areas of higher resource potential from the Intensive and Enhanced areas, particularly along the all-season road network. There were also several areas of higher mineral resource potential that coincided with areas of lower boreal caribou habitat importance, and these areas were kept in the Basic management class.</p>

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Tom Hoefer: Chamber of Mines	Overall						The plan also fails to consider new and emerging technologies that can allow industries to operate in a way that preserves BWC habitat. We would very much like to have supplied a more complete commentary, but we simply do not have the resources to respond to a 248 page document that took a team of people funded by government two years to assemble with images and maps that are at too small a scale to be reviewed with sufficient granularity in the time provided.		ENR encourages the Chamber of Mines to provide some specific examples of emerging technologies that would allow mineral exploration and mining to proceed, while avoiding or minimizing new habitat disturbance. This information could be considered in the full Wek'èezhìi Boreal Caribou Range Plan. As noted in our previous response, the Chamber of Mines can still become a member of the Wek'èezhìi Range Plan Working Group which would provide the opportunity to play a more active role in continuing work on the full Wek'èezhìi range plan. ENR is always available to meet with Chamber of Mines to review the maps in the interim Wek'èezhìi range plan in greater detail.
Land & Water Boards of Mackenzie Valley	Executive Summary	Why was an interim Boreal Caribou Range Plan needed?	7	Boreal caribou were listed as threatened under the federal Species at Risk Act (SARA) in 2003 and in the Northwest Territories (NWT) under the Species at Risk (NWT) Act in 2014			Second sentence in paragraph has repeated text at end of sentence "...leading to its decline."	delete repeated text	Accepted. Repeated text was deleted.
Land & Water Boards of Mackenzie Valley	Executive Summary	Maps of Important Areas for Boreal Caribou and Management Classes	8	The Tłı̨chǫ Government and the North Slave Métis Alliance conducted community meetings and interviews with elders and harvesters to gather IK about boreal caribou and their habitat.			This sentence is the first time "IK" is used and should be presented in full		"IK" is first used on page 7 in the fourth paragraph, where it is spelled out.

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Land & Water Boards of Mackenzie Valley	Executive Summary	Implementation Tools	10	Section 93 of the Wildlife Act focuses on protection of habitat for the conservation of specified wildlife species.			Spacing needs to be corrected.		Accepted. Spacing was corrected.
Land & Water Boards of Mackenzie Valley	Executive Summary	Implementation Tools	10	There is a very small parcel of federally-administered land in the Wek'èzhì boreal caribou range planning region where an active mineral lease exists			This sentence needs a period at the end		Accepted.
Land & Water Boards of Mackenzie Valley	Introduction	None	21	This interim range plan has been developed based on the best Traditional Knowledge ¹ and western science available at the time.			The second last sentence on this page "... before the road opens for public use in November 2021" needs a period at the end		Accepted.
Land & Water Boards of Mackenzie Valley	Habitat Information 5.4.2	5.4.2. Important Areas based on Western Science	56	Because the predictive seasonal RSF maps are very fine-grained (30 m pixel resolution), Marxan software, a spatial optimization program commonly used to support conservation planning (Ball et al. 2009)			the reference "Ball et al. requires a bracket at the beginning		Accepted.
Land & Water Boards of Mackenzie Valley	EXISTING LAND PROTECTIONS AND DEVELOPMENT INTERESTS	6.4.2	75	The plant would be located 11 km northwest of Gamètì, and would comprise of 800 m of land between the Rae and Taka Lakes			the sentence is not grammatically correct or clear		Addressed. Changed the sentence to: "The plant would be located 11 km northwest of Gamètì, and would be comprised of 800 m of land between the Rae and Taka Lakes."

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Land & Water Boards of Mackenzie Valley	MANAGEMENT ACTIONS	8.7.1	131	In order to identify high priority boreal caribou habitat patches to designate as VAR for consideration in fire management decisions, the late winter predictive RSF model was used (see Appendix C, Figure C-6) was used.			duplicate words at end of sentence		Accepted. Duplicate words deleted.
Land & Water Boards of Mackenzie Valley	9, IMPLEMENTATION INSTRUMENTS	9.2 Implementation Instruments on Territorially-administered Lands					Noting that implementation of the draft Plan relies largely on Sec.95 of the Wildlife Act and the use of the Wildlife Monitoring and Management Plan (WMMP), at least until regulations under Sec.93 are developed, the Boards will continue to work with ENR to facilitate your review of WMMPs through the use of the Boards' Online Review System.	The Boards recommend that, whenever possible, an early determination by the Minister for the requirement of a WMMP for a project will assist in helping the Boards determine what conditions are required. The Boards further recommend that ENR ensure that the WMMP guidance for proponents is updated to reflect that a WMMP will be required by default for any project proposed in an Enhanced or Intensive management area.	ENR acknowledges that making the Minister's determination of the requirement for a WMMP earlier in the regulatory review process, and earlier notification to the proponent and boards, would help the boards determine what conditions are required. ENR will initiate the process to update the WMMP guidance for proponents to reflect that a WMMP will be required by default for any project proposed in Enhanced or Intensive management areas.
Land & Water Boards of Mackenzie Valley							The draft Plan proposes the use of the Boards' application review process to ascertain whether or not a project application adheres to the Plan's management actions and will require additional information in applications to the Boards. This may require updates to Board guidance in what is required in an application as well as determinations of an application's completeness.	The LWBs strongly encourage GNWT staff to engage with Board staff on these proposed new application requirements as soon as possible.	ENR will follow up with the LWBs on this topic as soon as possible.

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NSMA			25	The range plan(s) will be developed collaboratively with.....			change the word "Aboriginal" with "Indigenous"		The italicized paragraphs are directly quoting Measure 6-1, Part 1, in the Report of Environmental Assessment and Reasons for Decision for the TASR project. This was carried out by the Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board in 2018. Since these paragraphs are a direct quote from the Report, the exact wording from the Report must be used (which included the term "Aboriginal" when it was written).
NSMA			25	The GNWT will work collaboratively...			change the word "Aboriginal" with "Indigenous"	also on page 26 and 100	When referring to "Aboriginal and/or treaty rights", this phrase is used in relation to section 35 of the Constitution Act (1982). The range plan is using terminology directly from section 35, which uses the term "Aboriginal", rather than Indigenous. Therefore, we have to remain consistent with the language used in the legislation.
NSMA			32			3	Are bars indicating uncertainty or statistical confidence applicable to the trends in the graph?		The trends in Figure 3 do not currently include 95% Confidence Intervals around each of the annual population trend estimates (lambda) or around the estimated proportional change in population size from the first to last year of monitoring. ENR will endeavor to calculate and add the confidence intervals to this graph to include in the full range plan.
NSMA			50	The NSMA have trapped and harvested wildlife in boreal caribou range since at least the early 1800s (NSMA 2018) and their work on documenting TK about boreal caribou is ongoing. The results of their most recent community mapping workshops are presented in Section 5.4.1, Important Areas based on Traditional Knowledge.			Can you make a note clarifying that this is only a portion of NSMA knowledge, their respective TK collected during these meetings have been included in this range plan	for example: The NSMA have trapped and harvested wildlife in boreal caribou range since at least the early 1800s (NSMA 2018) and their work on documenting TK about boreal caribou remains ongoing. The results of their most recent community mapping workshops are presented in Section 5.4.1, Important Areas based on Traditional Knowledge. The results presented here are intended as a starting-point and are only a portion of NSMA knowledge of boreal caribou. Their respective TK collected during	Accepted. Sentence added to paragraph.

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								these meetings have been included in this range plan.	
NSMA			55	"Locations where NSMA knowledge-holders..."		15		change to: Locations where NSMA members have observed or expect to observe caribou	Accepted. Edits made to caption.
NSMA			56			16	The legend symbol does not match the caribou sightings symbol on the map		In Figure 16 and Figure 4, the symbology in the maps and map legends did not convert properly when the document was converted from Word to PDF. These two figures have been corrected.
NSMA			186	North Slave Metis alliance (NSMA). 2018 ...	B-2		Two bullet points but there is no information in these boxes.		The bullets were an oversight and should have been removed from Table B-2. Since that particular NSMA report focusses on traditional use of land, rather than habitat preferences of boreal caribou, it was felt that there was no relevant information to include under the 2 columns: "Requirements for food sources" and "Requirements for protection". It was intended that they be left blank. Therefore, the bullet points have been deleted.

CPAWS-NWT: Comments specific to the TASR:

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CPAWS-NWT	7.2	Map of Management Classes (Basic, Enhanced and Intensive)					The TASR will induce an unknown amount of industrial and recreational land-use pressure in areas adjacent to the road. We support that a “Caribou Centric” Map of Management Class Areas for the Interim Wek’èezhii Boreal Caribou Range Plan (Figure 37) was selected by working group members. Taking a precautionary approach to managing habitat in response to the TASR is necessary and sets a good example for habitat management where other points of access maybe planned for off of the TASR or where a new road or access is being considered anywhere in the NWT.		Acknowledged.
CPAWS-NWT	8.6.4	Offset Ratios and Types of Offsets Considered					We are encouraged that the plan calls for investment in research and implementation of pilot studies that explore the effectiveness of rehabilitating habitat to off-set boreal caribou habitat that has been disturbed or destroyed. However, we emphasize that a research and development fund shouldn't credit to the accounting of no net habitat loss until some outcomes are proven. We are not aware of any examples where habitat has successfully been recovered for broad ranging species in Canada’s boreal forest, let alone for boreal caribou in the NWT. Habitat that has been disturbed or destroyed for the TASR should be accounted as a net loss until a successful habitat rehabilitation project has been proven.	We emphasize that a research and development fund shouldn't credit to the accounting of no net habitat loss until some outcomes are proven. Habitat that has been disturbed or destroyed for the TASR should be accounted as a net loss until a successful habitat rehabilitation project has been proven.	ENR agrees that offset measures involving habitat restoration should not be counted towards reducing net habitat loss until those restored areas have met the interim criteria for restoration described in Section 8.6.2, page 123, of the range plan. The proposed footprint of the TASR, including borrow sources, is accounted for in the current estimates of disturbed habitat for the Wek’èezhii region, as outlined in Section 5.1 of the range plan. Other existing disturbed areas that may receive restoration treatments as part of the offset plan for the TASR project would not be removed from the regional disturbance footprint map and statistics until those areas have met the interim restoration criteria outlined in the range plan.
CPAWS-NWT: Comments regarding development of the Final Range Plan:									

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CPAWS-NWT	7.2	Map of Management Classes (Basic, Enhanced and Intensive)	Pages: 57 92				The importance of the range plan for ensuring habitat connectivity is understated in the interim document. From the presentation we are aware that the map of management classes was developed with habitat connectivity included as value in the analysis. However, a written section that explicitly speaks to the importance of habitat connectivity within the planning area and connected with neighbouring regional range plans would be beneficial to maintaining healthy populations across the entire NWT range. This could be stated in a similar way in the other regional range plans as they are being developed.		Further text was added to the Introduction (page 20: Bulleted list of principles identified in the range planning Framework); Section 5.4.2 (Important Areas based on Western Science); and Section 7.2 (Map of Management Classes (Basic, Enhanced and Intensive), to clarify how habitat connectivity both among range planning regions, and between management class areas within the Wek'èezhìi region, was considered and incorporated into the range plan.
CPAWS-NWT		Overall					The range plan can be a useful tool for Informing land use planning, designing Indigenous Protected and Conserved Area's (IPCA's), understanding habitat shifts related to climate change and tracking cumulative impacts from development and natural disturbances such as fire. The range plan can also support other ecosystem-based land and water management approaches including for species at risk. We would like to see synergies between these opportunities and the range plan being considered as the next draft is developed.		Acknowledged.
GNWT-ENR	Appendix D		213	To address this issue, a new layer was created that represented a collar data density index...			The description of how the collar data density index was derived was incomplete.		Edited paragraph in Appendix D - page 213 to more accurately describe how the collar data density index that was used in the Marxan analyses was calculated.

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GNWT-ENR		Overall					Very minor edits (e.g., grammar, punctuation or sentence structure) were made in the plan for clarification.		