

CLOSING COMMENTS

Tłıchq Government

Public Hearings

April 11, 2019

Co-Chairs and members of the Board, Elders, staff and presenters, and members of the Tłıchq public here in attendance, on behalf of the Tłıchq Government's Chiefs Executive Council and Tłıchq Assembly, I am pleased to provide some closing remarks to this public hearing of the Wekeezhii Renewable Resources Board about the Joint Management Proposal for the Bluenose East herd.

Over the past three days, there has been a lot said about the Bluenose East Caribou herd. There has been information shared about the continuing decline of this herd. It is not easy news to take in. You have also heard about the impact of this decline on our people. In our Tłıchq Agreement, it is stressed that wildlife management decisions have to recognize the importance of wildlife and its habitat to the Tłıchq First Nation well being, way of life and land based economy. We have shared with you the impacts on us and our ideas about caribou and habitat management. And so have others and we thank everyone for their contributions.

It is now time for the Board to start assessing the information it has and it will consider the determination of a total allowable harvest and as well make recommendations to the parties. This public hearing and the decisions will mark not an end to the process, but really a beginning of a new phase in addressing the serious issues before us all. Meeting these challenges is going to take all our efforts, working together, to try to stabilize this herd and look for a recovery.

Indeed, our Tłıchq Agreement calls for this working together. Each of Tłıchq Government, the GNWT and the Board are to use the powers at their disposal to make management decisions that recognize the interconnection of wildlife with the physical environment around us.

The answers will not be found working alone. A unified effort to make difficult decisions while watching the animals and the land will maximize the chance that there might be a recovery. You have all heard our stories about the impacts this decline has had on us. Only by working together can we face this crisis and make good decisions. It will take continuing talking, engagement and trust between us all. That said, this Board has an important job to do – to take all the information it now has and make decisions and recommendations to us and to GNWT on harvesting levels and on management actions to benefit this Bluenose East herd.

Tłıchǵ Government pledges its support to both the Board and to its co-management proposal partner, the GNWT in meeting the challenges ahead.

You have heard from us this week. You have heard that Tłıchǵ have been part of the caribou. That this decline has separated us from the caribou. That we want to be part of the caribou again.

I want to thank the Board for holding these hearings and for giving the people the chance to share their comments with you. I wish you all the best as you work towards your decisions.