



Tlicho Government

Box 412, Rae-Edzo, NT X0E 0Y0 • Tel: (867) 392-6381 Fax: (867) 392-6389 www.tlicho.ca

March 16, 2010.

Grant Pryznyk, Interim Chair,
Weekeezhii Renewable Resources Board,
102A, 4504 49th Avenue,
Yellowknife, NT X1A 1A7

Dear Mr. Pryznyk,

I am writing to give the Board an overview of the presentation that the Tlicho Government will make during the hearing on the Joint Caribou Management Proposal that will be held in Behchoko from March 22-26.

The Tlicho Government's presentation will be given by the Grand Chief, the Chiefs of the four Tlicho communities, several Tlicho elders and other Tlicho leaders.

The Tlicho Government thinks that this hearing is very, very important. The Tlicho appreciate the important role that the Board has to play in the development and implementation of effective management plans for all wildlife, and especially for caribou.

The Tlicho Government intends to help ensure that the hearing is conducted in a respectful way, with all people working together to try to reach agreement on how to protect the caribou.

Tlicho Government will present the Tlicho **perspective**. We will do that so that everyone can understand Tlicho views and interests. We do not intend to present hard positions or conclusions. We are going to present the Tlicho perspective and also listen to others, so that good answers to the serious questions can be developed through the hearing process.

Tlicho leaders and elders will talk about the role that caribou have always played in the lives of the Tlicho, and how important the caribou are to the Tlicho way of life. That is why Tlicho Government believes we must work together to find out what needs to be done to protect the caribou, and to make sure that the herd is not put at risk by the actions of people or governments.

Tlicho leaders and elders will talk about past times when Tlicho changed or limited their harvesting of caribou and other fur-bearing wildlife, when populations were low. Tlicho have always respected and cared for the caribou and other wildlife, and have never



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wanted to harvest in ways that would endanger the health and future of the animals or the Tlicho. That is the Tlicho way.

That has not changed. We negotiated the Tlicho Agreement, which established this Board and sets out roles for Tlicho Government and the GNWT, for properly managing the caribou. Tlicho Government believes strongly that the systems and procedures in the Agreement must be respected and fully implemented. We rely on those systems and procedures to develop and implement management plans that will be effective to protect the caribou, and to ensure that the caribou will be healthy and also available to sustain the Tlicho and our way of life.

As the Board suggested, Tlicho Government worked hard to develop a joint management proposal with GNWT. That was a big challenge, for two reasons. There were many questions to answer, and some of those are not simple. Also, although we have had a history of being consulted by GNWT, we do not have a history of working together in a collaborative way. So we began this process, and were able to create the Joint Management Proposal that is being considered in the hearing. But the process really did not finish. The Joint Management Proposal includes disagreements on important questions. And it does not include all the issues that may be necessary for a complete and successful plan, as Anne Gunn has said in her report.

The collaborative efforts to develop the joint plan were undermined by the unilateral steps taken by the GNWT when they established a no hunting zone. That action was a mistake. It undermined the trust that the Tlicho were working towards, and that we needed to have, in order to work together in a collaborative way.

But the Tlicho do not view that as the end of the story. Protecting the caribou is too important to give up on trying to develop a collaborative plan because one of the parties did something the Tlicho disagree with. The Tlicho perspective is that the most important task for the Board's hearing is to salvage the collaborative process that was started but not finished.

At the end of the hearing, the Tlicho Government intends to ask the Board to briefly extend the time for developing the management plan, and to also find ways that the Board could support that process.

The Tlicho Government considers that this would be better than asking the Board to itself settle all the disagreements in the current proposal, or to add other measures that may be necessary for a sound management plan for the protection of the caribou. There are a number of important issues that have been raised by interveners, and Tlicho believe that



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some of those should be considered further for inclusion in the management plan. That could all be done in a brief period of time, if we create a good process.

The Tlicho Government supports the approach recommended by Anne Gunn, that a consensus plan should be developed for two reasons, because it will be a better and more complete plan, and because it will have a better chance of being effectively implemented.

In Tlicho Unity,

Eddie Erasmus,
Lands Director