

Wek'èezhì Renewable Resources Board (WRRB)

Work Plan for Sahtì Ekwò (Bluenose-East Barren-ground caribou)

Joint Management Proposal

Dated: September 26, 2024

Purpose of the Work Plan

To outline the processes and timelines to be followed for the Sahtì Ekwò joint management proposal.

Background

The 2023 population estimate for the Sahtì Ekwò herd is showing a stabilization and an increasing trend. The short-term goal of the proposed management actions is to promote conditions that will allow for continued growth of the herd. Over the longer-term, the goal is to enable sustainable caribou harvesting that meets the needs of all Indigenous communities across the herd's range. Within Wek'èezhì, the goal is to accommodate Tłıchq rights to harvest caribou throughout Mqwhì Gogha Dè Njıttèè.

On August 1, 2024, Environment & Climate Change (ECC), Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) and Tłıchq Government (TG) submitted a joint management proposal, entitled "Joint Proposal on Management Actions for the Bluenose-East Barren-ground caribou (Sahtì ekwò) Herd 2024-2026" ("the Proposal") to the WRRB, outlining proposed management actions for Sahtì Ekwò in Wek'èezhì. Following an initial assessment of the Proposal, the WRRB has determined that a **modified Level 1 review** is appropriate, as per its Rule for Management Proposals. Therefore, on August 19, 2024, the Board established the 2024 Sahtì Ekwò Management Proceeding and an online public registry.

Scope of the Proceeding

Based on the WRRB's Rule for Management Proposals, the Board deems a modified Level 1 Proceeding to be sufficient to serve the public interest. The primary objective of this Proceeding is to recommend management actions for Sahtì Ekwò management in Wek'èezhì for 2024 to 2026.

Guiding Principles

The following principles will guide the Work Plan throughout this Proceeding:

- The Board will act in the public interest (Sections 12.1.2, Tłıchq Agreement), including subsistence, resident, non-resident and commercial harvesters;
- The management proposal process shall have regard for the principles and practices of conservation and the importance of wildlife and its habitat to the Tłıchq First Nation well-being, way of life and land-based economy (Sections 12.1.5.a and 12.1.1, Tłıchq Agreement);
- The management proposal process shall take steps to acquire and use traditional knowledge as well as other types of scientific information and expert opinion (Section 12.1.6, Tłıchq Agreement);
- The management proposal process shall be carried out in a timely manner;
- The Board will review the Proposal and consider potential management actions based on evidence and rationale submitted by GNWT, TG or any other Party; and,

- The Board will review the Proposal and consider potential management actions in order to meet the Board’s mandate (mission) and applicable policies.

Work Plan Objectives

The Work Plan is to achieve the following objectives:

- Compile a broad range of focused input through the Proceeding;
- Ensure adequate information is gathered to complete the management proposal process;
- Facilitate a thorough, inclusive and timely management proposal process; and,
- Determine and/or recommend management actions to promote conditions that will allow for continued growth of the Sahtì Ekwò herd and enable sustainable caribou harvesting that meets the needs of all Indigenous communities across the herd’s range.

Opportunities for Community Engagement

- The Board required GNWT and TG to inform and engage with communities and Indigenous organizations regarding the Proposal submission;
- The Board will include a notification(s) regarding the management proposal process in the newspaper, community radio (CBC, CKLB, CJCD, Taiga), Board website, including public registry and social media (Facebook); and,
- The Board will hold any other consultation or engagement activity that the Board considers appropriate.

Materials Circulated for Comment by Parties

During the course of this Proceeding, the Board, with Staff assistance, will review all evidence filed by the Parties and the public. These efforts are intended to identify issues or concerns which must be addressed in the Proposal and to resolve them, if possible, before the close of the Proceeding. This process allows Parties and the public to address the proposed management actions for Sahtì Ekwò in their written submissions to the Board and to prepare arguments setting out their positions with respect to these provisions at the close of the Proceeding.

The Board will make its decision at the close of the Proceeding on the basis of all evidence and arguments filed by all Parties.

ALL identified dates are subject to change.

Task	Responsible Party	Due Date (Date Completed)
Management Proposal Submitted	GNWT & TG	(August 1, 2024)
Management Proposal posted to Management Proposal page for initial public review	WRRB	(August 12, 2024)
Management Proposal deemed complete (Mod Level 1)	WRRB	(August 13, 2024)
Proceeding (Mod Level 1) called	WRRB	(August 19, 2024)
Notice of Proceeding (Mod Level 1)	WRRB	(August 19, 2024)

Public Written Submissions (Mod Level 1)	Public	(August 19 to September 20, 2024)
Request for Participant Identification (Mod Level 1)	All Distribution List	August 30, 2024 (September 5, 2024)
Information Requests (Participants/Others/Board) (if required) (Mod Level 1)	All Parties	(September 9, 2024)
Deadline to respond to Information Requests (if required) (Mod Level 1)	GNWT & TG	September 23, 2024 October 7, 2024
Close Record (Mod Level 1)	WRRB	September 25, 2024 October 9, 2024
Deadline for Participant Final Written Arguments (Mod Level 1)	All Participants	October 2, 2024 October 16, 2024
Deadline for ECC & TG Final Written Arguments (Mod Level 1)	GNWT & TG	October 11, 2024 October 18, 2024
Review evidence and determine/recommend management actions (Mod Level 1)	WRRB	November 12, 2024
Prepare final Reasons for Decision (Mod Level 1)	WRRB	December 13, 2024
Final Board review of Reasons for Decision (Mod Level 1)	WRRB	December 17-18, 2024
Submit final determination/recommendations along with Reasons for Decision to ECC and TG (Mod Level 1)	WRRB	January 15, 2025
Final Decision (Mod Level 1) from ECC Minister	ECC Minister	Up to 90 days