

WEK'EEZHII RENEWABLE RESOURCES BOARD RULES OF PROCEDURE

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INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

The Wek'èezhìi Renewable Resources Board (the Board) has made these Rules of Procedure for the conduct of proceedings before it. These Rules will help to ensure that proceedings meet the requirements of fairness and are efficient and focused.

DEFINITIONS

- Agreement** means the Tł'chò Land Claims and Self-Government Agreement;
- Applicant** means a person or organization that has filed a written application, representation or complaint with the Board under s.12.3.6 of the Tł'chò Agreement or that has submitted a proposal to the Board under s.12.5.1 of the Agreement;
- Application** includes a proposal submitted to the Board under s.12.5.1 and a written application, representation or complaint filed with the Board under s.12.3.6 of the Agreement;
- Board** means the Wek'èezhìi Renewable Resources Board established by s.12.1.2 of the Agreement;
- Consultation** is defined in s.1.1.1 of the Agreement, and means
- (a) the provision, to the person or group to be consulted, of notice of a matter to be decided in sufficient form and detail to allow that person or group to prepare its views on the matter;
 - (b) the provision of a reasonable period of time in which the person or group to be consulted may prepare its views on the matter, and provision of an opportunity to present such views to the person or group obliged to consult; and
 - (c) full and fair consideration by the person or group obliged to consult of any views presented
- and includes any meetings or process necessary to complete a consultation.
- Document** includes any record in printed form, including facsimiles, and any record in electronic form, including emails and their attachments, capable of being reduced to a printed format; and includes video or audio tapes;
- Elder** means any person recognized as an elder in accordance with local culture, customs and traditions;
- First Nation** means the Gwich'in First Nation, the Sahtu First Nation or bodies representing other Dene First Nation of the North Slave, South Slave or Dehcho region of the Northwest Territories;
- Hearing** includes a hearing on an application, the hearing of a motion, a written hearing or a public hearing;

Information Request	means a written request for information or particulars directed by the Board to a party in a proceeding;
Intervenor	means a person who has filed the information required by Rule 43 and who has been granted intervenor status by the board under Rule 45 of these Rules;
Motion	means a written request, including any supplementary materials supporting the request, made by a party to the Board, for a ruling or an order in a proceeding and includes a motion made by the Board;
Party	means the Tł'chò Government, the Government of the Northwest Territories, the Government of Canada, the applicant and an intervenor who are involved in a proceeding before the Board;
Proposal	means a proposal related to wildlife management submitted to the Board under s.12.5.1 which may relate to matters including: actions set out in a management plan, protection or enhancement of habitat, research, identification and reporting requirements, monitoring, total allowable harvest levels, limitations on methods of harvesting and other limitations on harvesting activities, allocations of any total allowable harvest levels, designation of species or stocks at risk and identification of lands where harvesting or access for harvesting is prohibited for safety purposes;
Proceeding	means a public meeting, consultation, or hearing in which the Board makes a determination on an application or any matter over which it has authority;
Public notice	means an announcement by newspaper, radio, community poster or other public means, made according to such reasonable terms as are set out by the Board;
Tł'chò First Nation	means the Aboriginal people comprised of all Tł'chò Citizens
Tł'chò Government	means the government of the Tł'chò First Nation established in accordance with chapter 7 of the Agreement;
Viewing	means when Board goes out to a particular location to view something as part of the evidence-gathering process of a proceeding;
Wek'èezhìi	means the area described in Part 2 of the Appendix to Chapter 1 of the Agreement.

PART ONE: GENERAL PROVISIONS

Authority

1. The Wek'èezhìi Renewable Resources Board has made these Rules pursuant to section 12.3.6 of the Tł'chò Land Claims and Self-Government Agreement.

Citation

2. These Rules may be cited as the Rules of Procedure for the Wek'èezhìi Renewable Resources Board.

Interpretation of the Rules

3. These Rules will be interpreted liberally to achieve the most fair and efficient determination of every matter before the Board.

Application of the Rules

4. These Rules apply to all Proceedings of the Board.
5. Where any matter of procedure is not provided for by these Rules, the Board may, at any time, issue a direction on procedure to deal with the matter.
6. The Board may, by its own motion, or an application by a party in any Proceeding, dispense with, vary or supplement these Rules.
7. Where there is a conflict between the Rules and a specific direction given by the Board on procedure, the direction on procedure prevails over the Rules.
8. To address the requirements of fairness, the Board may, upon notice to the parties to a Proceeding, shorten or extend the time fixed by these Rules for any action.

Non-Compliance with the Rules

9. Where a party to a Proceeding has not complied with these Rules or a direction on procedure or an order issued by the Board, the Board may:
 - a) adjourn the Proceeding until satisfied that the requirement has been complied with; or,
 - b) take such action as it considers just and reasonable.
10. In case of a conflict between these Rules and a provision of the Tł'chò Land Claims and Self-Government Agreement, the Tł'chò Agreement shall be binding to the extent of the conflict.

Forms

11. The Board may specify that any document must be submitted to the Board in a particular form and such forms may from time to time be appended to these Rules of Procedure and amended as required by the Board.

Technical Objections

12. No Board Proceeding is invalid because of an objection based only on a technical irregularity or a defect in form.

Communication

13. Except during a public hearing, communication related to all Board proceedings must be addressed to the Executive Director or to the person designated by the Executive Director.
14. When documents, excluding video tapes, are filed in a Proceeding, at least one original printed version of the document must be sent to the Board.
15. Unless the Board has directed otherwise, any matter to be dealt with during a Proceeding shall be dealt with in writing.
16. Electronic mail is considered a document and will form part of the record of a Proceeding unless specifically stated otherwise by the Board.

Evidence

17. The Board is not bound by the technical rules of evidence. In conducting its proceedings, the Board may accept information that would not normally be admissible under the strict rules of evidence.
18. Pursuant to section 12.3.7 of the Agreement, the Board has the powers, rights and privileges of a Superior Court with respect to the attendance and examination of witnesses and the production and inspection of documents.
19. A witness summoned by the Board may have their travel and accommodations expenses paid by the Board for the duration of their summons.
20. Any witness who will give opinion evidence in a Proceeding may be required by the Board to file a statement of their qualifications on the public record before their evidence is heard.
21. In cases in which the Board accepts evidence, any party offering such evidence shall have the burden of introducing appropriate evidence to support its position.
22. Where there is conflicting evidence, the Board will decide which evidence to accept and will generally act on a balancing of the evidence.

Interlocutory Motions and Decisions Made During Board Proceedings

23. The Board may make any procedural decisions required during a Proceeding.

24. Any issue that arises in the course of a Proceeding that requires a decision or ruling shall be brought to the Board's attention by way of a written motion. The motion shall include a clear, concise statement of the relevant facts, an indication of the decision or ruling being sought and the reasons why the decision or ruling should be granted.
25. All motions shall be filed with the Executive Director. The Executive Director shall ensure that a copy of the motion is provided to the parties to a Proceeding.
26. The Board may, in its discretion, vary any time period prescribed for the filing and hearing of a motion or a response. When such a matter arises during the course of a hearing, the Board may deal with it in any way that is consistent with the requirements of fairness.
27. A motion may be heard by the Board with some Board members or parties participating via teleconference, where in the Board's opinion it is warranted.

Service of Documents on Parties

28. A party intending to rely on a document or evidence in a Proceeding, including a public hearing, shall file the document within the time specified by the Board and circulate the document to the other parties unless the Board makes other arrangements.
29. Failure to disclose a document in accordance with these Rules may result in the Board ruling that it is inadmissible in the Proceeding
30. Upon request, a party may have to provide written proof to the Board that documents were served on the other parties to a Proceeding same as above.

Public Registry

31. In accordance with s.12.3.11 of the Tł'ichò Agreement, the Board shall establish and maintain, a public registry of all documents filed in a Proceeding and used by the Board in its determinations and recommendations. These documents will constitute the public record of the Proceeding.
32. Any material provided to the Board on a confidential basis shall not be made public without the consent of the originator.

Testimony

33. The Board may accept and enter into the public record the testimony of a witness made by an affidavit, a statutory declaration or by a verified audio or video tape recording.
34. A witness whose testimony is presented by a sworn written statement or verified recording shall be available for questioning as may be required.
35. Testimony in Proceedings can also be presented by using audio visual or video format or by teleconference.

36. The Board will encourage the provision of, and will consider, traditional knowledge, including oral history, submitted during its Proceedings.
37. Testimony may be in the form of 1) traditional knowledge from First Nations and Métis; and 2) knowledge of other persons which is related to the matter of the Proceeding. All such information provided to the Board will be considered by the Board in making its decision.

PART TWO: CONDUCT OF PROCEEDINGS

Commencement of Proceedings

38. A Proceeding commences once the Board receives an application and deems that it is complete or when a Proceeding is initiated by the Board.
39. The Board may request additional information from an applicant before or after it deems an application to be complete.

Notification of Proceedings

40. Public notice of a Proceeding shall be provided by the Board in an approved form and it shall specify the deadline for notices of intention to intervene.
41. Once a Proceeding has commenced, the Board will arrange to make the application and other relevant information available to appropriate federal and territorial departments and agencies, land owners, communities, first nations, organizations or individuals affected by the application or the Proceeding.

Intervention in Board Proceedings

42. A person, organization, department, agency, affected land owner, community or first nation wanting to intervene in a Proceeding must file a notice of intention to intervene, in the appropriate form, on or before the deadline specified in the public notice.
43. The information provided by a potential intervenor must include, where applicable:
 - a) a description or summary of the intervenor's interest or concern;
 - b) a clear statement of the intervenor's position listing the issues that they intend to address;
 - c) an indication of whether the intervenor intends to appear at a hearing (if any) and make representations, or rely on written submissions only;
 - d) the intervenor's name, address, telephone, fax numbers and e-mail address (if applicable); and
 - e) confirmation that a copy of the intervention form has been provided to the Applicant.
44. The Board will make a decision on an application to grant intervenor status.

45. The Board may grant intervenor status, may request additional information or clarification from anyone seeking intervenor status and may direct intervenors with similar interests to present a joint intervention.
46. Intervenors must provide a copy of any documents filed with the Board to the other parties to a Proceeding unless the Board makes other arrangements.

Information Requests

47. The Board may issue an information request to any party at any stage of any Proceeding.
48. The Board may, in its discretion, allow a party to a Proceeding to issue an information request to another party, subject to directions on timing and procedure from the Board. The party's information request must first be submitted to the Board for review and the Board will then send the request to the party.
49. A party that receives an information request during a Proceeding shall respond within the time specified by the Board
50. A party's response to an information request shall be submitted to the Board and circulated to the other parties in the Proceeding.
51. The Board shall decide on the appropriateness of an information request

Submissions

52. Once the Information Request stage of a Proceeding is complete (or at the time specified by the Board if no information requests are authorized), the parties to the Proceeding may make written submissions about the application or matter before the Board.
53. A party to a Proceeding must provide a copy of its submissions, and any other information specified by the Board, to each of the other parties to the Proceeding.

Written Response to Parties' Submissions

54. An Applicant may, submit a written response to any submissions, in accordance with the directions of the Board.
55. The applicant's reply must be provided to the Board and the other parties to the Proceeding within the time specified and with the number of copies determined by the Board.

Modification of an Application

56. An Applicant may modify the application with leave of or under the direction of the Board.
57. The Board may, in its sole discretion, determine that a proposed modification represents a significant change to the application and, in such instances, may require that a new application be filed.

58. Where no public hearing has been scheduled and the Applicant makes a minor modification to the application, the revised application must be submitted at least 14 days before the Board meeting at which the application is scheduled to be discussed.
59. A modified application submitted under Rule 59 in writing will be circulated by the Applicant to the parties for their comments. The parties' comments must be received at least 7 calendar days before the Board meeting at which the application is scheduled to be considered.
60. Where a public hearing has been scheduled, the applicant may make a minor change to the application no later than 30 calendar days before the public hearing date.
61. A modified application under Rule 60 will be circulated to the parties by the Applicant for their comments. The comments must be received by the Board no later than 21 calendar days before the hearing date.
62. The applicant must submit any reply to the parties' comments no later than 14 calendar days before the hearing date.

Responses to Modified Applications

63. Where an applicant is allowed to modify its application, the Board may also allow the other parties to change all or part of their written submissions under conditions set by the Board.

The Public Record and Privacy Matters

64. The record in a Proceeding is opened when the first information associated with an application or matter before the Board is received and the proceeding commences. The record is closed at a time set by the Board (in a direction on procedure) or when the Board's decision is rendered.
65. Information will not be accepted for consideration in a Proceeding after the record has been closed, unless a motion to reopen the record has been made and approved by the Board.
66. The Board may seek clarification of any evidence on the public record from any party to a Proceeding without causing the record to be re-opened. Copies of information provided in response to this request for clarification shall be circulated to the parties and posted on the Public Registry.
67. All relevant information received from the time the record is open until the closing of the record will be considered in the Board's decision.
68. Unless a motion to protect the confidentiality of information is filed with and approved by the Board, all information will be placed on the public record.
69. The Board will notify parties to a proceeding of any motion for the filing of confidential information and will deal with any issues that arise as a result.

Viewing

70. The Board may schedule a viewing at any time during a Proceeding and shall give notice to the parties in the Proceeding of any proposed viewing.
71. The Board will set the parameters of a viewing and will control how the viewing proceeds.

PART THREE: CONDUCT OF HEARINGS

Hearings

72. The Board may hold a hearing, including a public hearing, in relation to a matter within its jurisdiction, under s. 12.3.10 of the Tł'chò Agreement, where the Board is “satisfied that such a hearing is desirable.”
73. Under section 12.3.10 of the Tł'chò Agreement, the Board shall hold a public hearing when it intends to recommend or determine a total allowable harvest level in respect of a population or stock of wildlife which has not been subject to a total allowable harvest level within the previous two years.
74. A public hearing may be held at such place or places in Môwhì Gogha Dè Nîitâèè (NWT) as the Board may designate.

Conduct of a Hearing

75. The Chairperson of a Public Hearing shall be the Chair of the Board or any other member of the Board.
76. Subject to the Tł'chò Agreement, these Rules and the requirements of fairness, the Chairperson will direct and control the conduct of every hearing.
77. To the extent consistent with its duty of procedural fairness, the Board will emphasize flexibility and informality in its proceedings.

Public Notice of a Hearing

78. Public notice of a hearing will be given, in an approved form in accordance with these Rules, at least 30 days before the hearing date.
79. All parties to a proceeding who intend to participate in a hearing shall notify the Executive Director of their intentions within the time period specified in the public notice.
80. The Board may also use other methods to notify the public of a hearing, having regard to the nature and significance of the matter under consideration and the affected communities, land owners, first nations and resource users.

Pre-hearing Conferences

81. In any Proceeding involving a public hearing, the Board may direct that its staff and the parties participate in a pre-hearing conference for the following purposes:
 - a) to clarify and, where possible, narrow the issues;
 - b) to explore possible admission of facts, the proof of facts or the use of any public documents;
 - c) to review the procedure to be followed at the hearing; and,
 - d) to identify the need for additional information and to determine responsibilities for the production of this information;
 - e) set timelines for the parties to submit their hearing presentations to the Board.
82. After a pre-hearing conference, the Board may provide any additional direction necessary to achieve a fair and efficient hearing.

Formulation of Issues

83. The Board may decide which issues it will consider at a hearing and will notify the parties of such a decision.

Order of Events at a Public Hearing

84. The order of events at a public hearing, unless the Chairperson directs otherwise, will be as follows:
 - a) opening prayer at the start of the hearing
 - b) opening remarks by the Chairperson
 - c) introduction of Board Members, Board staff and technical consultants
 - d) introduction of persons representing the applicant and other parties
 - e) preliminary and procedural matters (if any)
 - f) opening statements by the parties (applicant goes first)
 - g) applicant's presentation
 - h) questions of applicant by parties in the hearing
 - i) presentations by each of the parties (order determined by the Chairperson)
 - j) questions of each party
 - k) presentations or comments from the public (pursuant to Rule 82)
 - l) reply by the applicant
 - m) closing statements
 - n) parties (order determined by the Chairperson)
 - o) applicant (last)
 - p) closing remarks by the Chairperson
 - q) adjournment of the Hearing
 - r) closing prayer at end of hearing

Participation in a Hearing by the Public

85. Any person or organization not registered as a party to a hearing but who wishes to make their views known may:

- a) Provide their views, in writing, to the Board and the applicant in advance of the hearing; or
- b) Make an oral presentation during that portion of the hearing that has been set aside to hear the views of the public.

Time Limits and Questioning

86. All parties and members of the public making presentations at a public hearing are subject to questioning by the other parties and the Board.
87. The Board may set time limits for oral submissions and questions by any or all parties and the public at a public hearing.

Hearing Language and Interpretation

88. Every public hearing will be conducted in English.
89. The Board will arrange for any interpretation services in any language(s) which it deems necessary.

Transcript

90. The transcript of a public hearing shall be prepared by the Board and will be placed on the public record after the hearing.
91. The public record and final report shall be in English.

Adjournments

92. Any party may apply for an adjournment of a hearing. Such an application shall be made by way of motion and if made in advance of the hearing, it shall be filed and served in accordance with these Rules.
93. The Board may adjourn a Proceeding
 - a) where it requests further information, particulars or documents and these cannot be obtained in time for a meeting or for a public hearing;
 - b) where an application is modified and the Board determines that the modification would likely cause a significant change to the positions of the parties to the Proceeding; or
 - c) where for any reason the Board deems it necessary.

Hearings Commenced by the Board Without a Proposal

94. If the Board wishes to make a recommendation or determination respecting a total allowable harvest under s.12.3.10 without waiting for a proposal it must hold a public hearing if the population or stock of wildlife has not been subject to a total allowable harvest level within the previous two years.