

Wek'èezhì Renewable Resources Board (WRRB)

Work Plan for Wolf Management Proposal

Dated: September 4, 2020

Purpose of the Work Plan

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

Background

The current population estimates for the Bathurst and Bluenose-East herds are the lowest estimates on record. To promote recovery of these two herds, the goal is to increase survival rates of caribou and overall population growth through harvest management and wolf removal by focusing on reducing the negative effects of wolf predation on the survival rates of the Bathurst and Bluenose-East herds.

On January 31, 2020, Environment & Natural Resources (ENR), Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) and Tłıchq Government (TG) submitted a joint management proposal, entitled *"Joint Proposal on Management Actions for Wolves (diga) on the Bathurst and Bluenose-East Barren-ground Caribou (ᑭekwə) Herd Winter Ranges: 2020 – 2025"* ("the Proposal"). Following an initial assessment of the Proposal, the WRRB determined that a Level 2 review was appropriate. Therefore, on March 2, 2020, the Board established a proceeding and an online public registry.

On March 9, 2020, after hearing from the GNWT and TG, the WRRB held an emergency meeting and revised the procedure to be used to review the Proposal. The WRRB decided to amend its procedure for the review of the 2020 diga management actions as proposed in the diga joint management proposal to a Level 1 review. The Board decided to treat the 2020 diga management actions as a pilot project only, and, as such, approved the proposed 2020 diga management actions in the Proposal.

The Board requested that the GNWT and TG resubmit the diga management actions proposed for 2021-2025 in the Proposal for a Level 2 review with the inclusion of lessons learned from the implementation of the 2020 management actions. On August 25, 2020, GNWT and TG submitted a revised joint management proposal, entitled *"Revised Joint Proposal on Management Actions for Wolves (diga) on the Bathurst and Bluenose-East Barren-ground Caribou (ᑭekwə) Herd Winter Ranges: 2021 – 2024"* ("the Revised Proposal").

Scope of the Proceeding

Based on the WRRB's Rule for Management Proposals, the Board deems a Level 2 Proceeding to be sufficient to serve the public interest. The primary objective of this Proceeding is to recommend management actions for diga management in Wek'èezhì for 2021 to 2024. The WRRB will review this work plan, following the completion of both the technical sessions, and make a determination as to whether a public hearing will be required to ensure sufficient consultation by no later than October 16, 2020.

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 reduce the negative effects of wolf predation on the survival rates of the Bathurst and Bluenose-East caribou herds.

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);
- The Board will coordinate a science and Traditional Knowledge technical session(s), if required, to address specific issues that require more focused review and discussion; 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 wolves 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 without warning due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.

Task	Responsible Party	Due Date (Date Completed)
Management Proposal Submitted	GNWT & TG	(January 31, 2020)
Management Proposal deemed complete (Level 2)	WRRB	(February 13, 2020)
Proceeding (Level 2) called	WRRB	(March 2, 2020)
Notice of Proceeding (Level 2)	WRRB	(March 2, 2020)
Round #1 Information Requests (Board only) (Level 2)	WRRB	(March 2, 2020)
Amendment to Level 2 Proceeding	WRRB	(March 9, 2020)
Decision for 2020 Wolf Management Actions only (Level 1)	WRRB	(March 9, 2020)
Submit final Reasons for Decision to ENR and TG (Level 1)	WRRB	(March 13, 2020)
Deadline to respond to Round #1 Information Requests (Level 2)	GNWT & TG	(March 13, 2020)
Submission of 2021-2025 Wolf Management Proposal with 2020 Technical and Plain-language Summary (Level 2)	GNWT & TG	August 21, 2020 (August 25, 2020)
Public Written Submissions (Level 2)	Public	September 4 to October 23, 2020
Request for Participant Identification (Level 2)	All Distribution List	September 11, 2020
Submission of Wildlife Pathologist's Final Report on the Necropsy of Wolves Taken by Aerial Removal	GNWT	October 1, 2020
Science Technical Session (Level 2)	All Parties	October 5, 2020
TK Technical Session (Level 2)	All Parties	October 13, 2020
Round #2 Information Requests (Participants/Others/Board) (if required) (Level 2)	All Parties	October 15, 2020
Deadline to respond to Round #2 Information Requests (if required) (Level 2)	GNWT & TG	October 22, 2020
Close Record (Level 2)	WRRB	October 23, 2020
Deadline for Participant Final Written Arguments (Level 2)	All Participants	October 28, 2020

Deadline for ENR & TG Final Written Arguments (Level 2)	GNWT & TG	October 30, 2020
Review evidence and determine/recommend management actions (Level 2)	WRRB	November 3-4, 2020
Prepare final Reasons for Decision (Level 2)	WRRB	November 30, 2020
Final Board review of Reasons for Decision (Level 2)	WRRB	December 2-3, 2020
Submit final determination/recommendations along with Reasons for Decision to ENR and TG (Level 2)	WRRB	January 8, 2021
Final Decision (Level 2) from ENR Minister	ENR Minister	Up to 90 days