

February 21, 2020

Robert Mulders, Wildlife Biologist, Carnivores/Furbearers
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Government of the Northwest Territories
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Via Email
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RE: Wildlife Research Permit Application – Wolf Collaring on the Central Barrens

Dear Mr. Mulders:

The Wek'èezhì Renewable Resources Board (WRRB) has reviewed your above entitled Wildlife Research Permit (WRP) Application and understands that the objectives are to 1) provide data useful for understanding how *Dìga* (wolves) travel among caribou on their winter ranges, 2) provide insight into patterns of movement of individual *dìga* between *ᑭᑖᑕᑦᑲᑦᑲᑦ* (barren-ground caribou) herds, 3) serve to identify active den sites and document fidelity to dens, and, 4) improve understanding about *dìga* and support management actions through the collar data collected. The wolf collaring locations will be on the *ᑭᑖᑕᑦᑲᑦᑲᑦ ᑲᑦᑲᑦᑲᑦ* (Bathurst caribou) and *ᑭᑖᑕᑦᑲᑦᑲᑦ ᑲᑦᑲᑦᑲᑦ* (Bluenose-East caribou) herd winter ranges as well as the Beverly/Ahiak *ᑲᑦᑲᑦᑲᑦ* herd winter range when distributed in the North Slave Region.

The proposed research, scheduled between February 15, 2020 and February 15, 2025, involves the following:

- Deploy up to 30 Telonics satellite collars, between February 15 and April 30, 2020, on *dìga* (10 collars each associated with the *ᑭᑖᑕᑦᑲᑦᑲᑦ*, *ᑭᑖᑕᑦᑲᑦᑲᑦ*, and Beverly/Ahiak *ᑲᑦᑲᑦᑲᑦ* herds on their winter ranges);
- Collaring will be conducted by a helicopter capture crew using a net gun, with handling time to be between 15-21 minutes per *dìga*, as per the Wildlife Care Committee Wolf Standard Operating Procedures;
- Confirmation of sex and age as well as body and health condition sampling will be conducted during the collaring process; and,
- New or refurbished collars will be deployed each year, between January 1 and April 30, in cases where collars are lost to *dìga* mortality or collar failure, in order to maintain a full contingent of 30 collars to support long-term monitoring.

The WRRB understands that the WRP Application is tied closely to the “*Joint Proposal on Management Actions for Wolves (dìga) on the Bathurst and Bluenose-East Barren-ground Caribou (ᑲᑦᑲᑦᑲᑦ) Herd Winter Ranges: 2020 – 2025*” that the Board received January 31, 2020. However, it is noted that there is a lack of consistency with respect to the objectives. For example, the *Dìga* Joint Management Proposal states that collared *dìga* will be used to find packs for aerial shooting, but there is no mention of this in the WRP Application. Further, the Board is concerned that the WRP Application lacks much of the detail that would allow an assessment of the effectiveness of collaring

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relative to ḏiga management. It is possible that improvements will be needed for the collaring work to be appropriately integrated into the monitoring portion of the Ḏiga Joint Management Proposal, and that efficiencies will be required to improve the ability of the collaring program to meet the objectives of ḏiga management more generally. These possible improvements and efficiencies, along with additional scientific and Ṯicẖ Knowledge information, will be considered as part of the Board's public process to review the Ḏiga Joint Management Proposal.

As such, until the Board is able to undertake the process of reviewing and providing recommendations on the Ḏiga Joint Management Proposal, the WRRB does not support the WRP Application to collar ḏiga on the central barrens (Motion #694-13-02-2020). The Board recommends submitting a revised Wildlife Research Permit Application following the completion of the WRRB's review period. If there are any questions about the Board's position, please contact our office at (867) 873-5740 or jpellissey@wrrb.ca.

Sincerely,



Joseph Judas
Chair

Cc Erin Kelly, Deputy Minister
Environment & Natural Resources, GNWT

Brett Elkin, A/Assistant Deputy Minister
Environment & Natural Resources GNWT

Rob Gau, A/Director
Wildlife Division, Environment & Natural Resources, GNWT

Tammy Steinwand-Deschambeault, Director
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