

June 4, 2021

Terry Armstrong
Bison Ecologist, Wildlife and Fish Division
Department of Environment and Natural Resources
Government of the Northwest Territories
Box 900, Fort Smith, NT
X0E 0P0

VIA email: Terry_Armstrong@gov.nt.ca

Wildlife Research Permit Application – Mackenzie Bison Population Monitoring

Dear Mr. Armstrong:

As per section 12.5.1 of the Tłı̄chq̄ Agreement, the Wek'èezhì Renewable Resources Board (WRRB) considers the above-mentioned Wildlife Research Permit application as a management proposal. The Board understands that the objectives of the population monitoring program are to fulfil a key action of the *Mackenzie Bison Management Plan* by estimating abundance and monitoring herd composition, as well as monitoring for anthrax-related deaths and for brucellosis and tuberculosis in the population. Additionally, the Board understands that objectives of the use of drones are to determine if *Ejje* (bison) classification work can be conducted to obtain better data with less disturbance to the animals.

The proposed collaring deployment, scheduled from June 1, 2021 to December 31, 2025, occurring within the Mackenzie Bison Range, involves the following:

- A helicopter survey to find bison groups;
- Observers on the ground will use binoculars to classify *ejje* by age and sex;
- A DJI Mavic or Phantom 4 Pro drone (unmanned aerial system) may be used to take photos and video as well as determine whether classification for *ejje* can be done;
- A drone will only be used if *ejje* are found in a location away from buildings, people, and traffic that can be approached without disturbing them;
- Biweekly fixed-wing flights to look for *ejje* carcasses (suspected anthrax) from late June to mid-August annually;
- Monitoring for tuberculosis and brucellosis will be done opportunistically when cases are observed or reported to ENR; and
- Tissue samples may be collected from harvested *ejje*, *ejje* killed by motor vehicles or other dead *ejje* as opportunity presents.

The WRRB has taken a Level 1 review, as outlined in the Board's Rule for Management Proposals. The WRRB has no concerns with the project as presented in your application and looks forward to receiving results from the upcoming field season. If drones are used, the Board requests that detailed field notes are taken to inform future use of the technology on *ejje*.

The Board asks to be contacted if there is any opportunity for Board or staff involvement in your work. The WRRB requests that upon completion of each monitoring action an update will be provided to the Board.

Please feel free to give us a call with any questions you might have.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jody Pellissey". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping tail on the final letter.

Jody Pellissey
Executive Director

Cc Karin Clark, Manager
Wildlife Division, Environment & Natural Resources, GNWT

Michael Birlea, Manager
Culture and Lands Protection, Tłıchǫ Government