

August 26, 2016

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Via Email

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North Slave Region
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Re: Clarifications on Response to Reasons for Decision related to Joint Proposal for the Management of the Bathurst ʔekwò (Barren-ground caribou) Herd

Dear Mr. van der Wielen and Mr. Croft:

On December 15, 2015, the Tłıchq Government (TG) and Department of Environment & Natural Resources (ENR), Government of Northwest Territories submitted the “*Joint Proposal on Caribou Management Actions for the Bathurst Herd: 2016-2019*” to the Wek'èezhì Renewable Resources Board (WRRB) outlining proposed management actions for the Bathurst Caribou Herd in Wek'èezhì. The Board opened the 2016 Bathurst Caribou Herd Proceeding on January 18, 2016 and held a public hearing on February 23-24, 2016 in Yellowknife, NT. Subsequently, the Board provided its Reasons for Decision Final Report, Part A, entitled “*Report on a Public Hearing Held by the Wek'èezhì Renewable Resources Board 23-24 February 2016, Yellowknife, NT & Reasons for Decisions Related to a Joint Proposal for the Management of the Bathurst ʔekwò (Barren-ground caribou) Herd, Part A*” to TG and ENR on June 13, 2016.

A joint response from TG and ENR to the WRRB's Reasons for Decision Final Report, Part A was received on July 15, 2016. At its recent August 2016 meeting, the Board reviewed the responses provided and request clarification on the following items:

1. As per Recommendation #1-2016, the WRRB understands that the Mobile Core Bathurst Caribou Management Zone (MCBCMZ) is the preferred approach for the 2016/17 harvest season as it is challenging to create and implement a system of fixed subzones on a short-term time frame. TG and ENR have noted that, in order to implement a system of subzones, a consensus on the appropriate features on the natural landscape area to allow smaller zones to be properly mapped and incorporated into legal descriptions is necessary. As such, the Board requests the following clarifications:

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- a. Is the subzone approach the most effective way to manage the caribou harvest? If yes, what progress has been made to date in developing the subzone approach? What is the timeline for implementation?
 - b. If the subzone approach is not the most effective way to manage the caribou harvest, will TG and ENR continue to use the MCBCMZ approach indefinitely?
2. As per Recommendation #2-2016, the WRRB recognizes that ENR is currently in a period of fiscal and budgetary restraints. While ENR is unable to commit to weekly aerial monitoring of the MCBCMZ, regular monitoring by air and by ground patrols will occur, as done in winters 2014/15 and 2015/16. As such, the Board requests the following clarifications:
 - a. What aerial and ground-based monitoring was conducted in 2014/15 and 2015/16?
 - b. When were the aerial and ground-based patrols done, i.e. how is 'regular' defined?

The WRRB appreciates TG and ENR agreeing to provide weekly updates to the Board with any new monitoring information. However, the Board requests that weekly updates should be given even if no patrols are conducted, i.e. the update would indicate that no new monitoring information is available as no patrols were conducted.

3. As per Recommendation #4-2016, the WRRB understands that the Community-based Diga (Wolf) Harvesting Project will be implemented in the winter of 2016/17. TG and ENR have agreed to establish criteria to evaluate the success of the Pilot Project. As such, the Board request the following clarification:
 - a. What is the status of development of the criteria to evaluate success of the Pilot Project?

The WRRB is aware that TG and ENR have identified that regular communications about the Pilot Project will be conducted through the Barren-ground Caribou Technical Working Group. However, in addition, the Board would like an in-person update during its regularly scheduled meetings in November 2016 and May 2017 to discuss the start-up and follow-up of the Pilot Project, respectively.

Please note that this correspondence will be posted to the public registry: <http://wrrb.ca/public-information/public-registry>. If you have any questions, please contact our office at (867) 873-5740 or jpellissey@wrrb.ca.

Sincerely,



J. Grant Pryznyk
Chair

Cc Hon. Wally Schumann, Minister, ENR
Erin Kelly, A/Deputy Minister, ENR
Lynda Yonge, Director of Wildlife, ENR
Grand Chief Eddie Erasmus, TG
Laura Duncan, Tłı̨chǫ Executive Officer, TG