

April 26, 2019

Michael Birlea, Manager
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Via Email
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Re: Undertaking #3 – 2019 Bluenose-East Caribou Public Hearing

Dear Mr. Birlea:

During the Wek'èezhì Renewable Resources Board's (WRRB) recent public hearing, Dr. Alice Legat requested the Tłchq Government provide a summary of the progress that has been made in relation to WRRB recommendations made in 2010 and 2016. This request was labeled as Undertaking #3 with a deadline for submission of April 30, 2019 and the understanding that a written list of the recommendations was to be provided to Tłchq Government after the public hearing.

Unfortunately, there has been a delay in providing the list of recommendations in a timely manner. As such, Tłchq Government has requested an extension to submit its response until May 17, 2019. The WRRB will be discussing the 2019 Bluenose-East Joint Management Proposal at its board meeting, scheduled for May 7-9, 2019. Therefore, the Board can extend the deadline for the Tłchq Government to provide its response for Undertaking #3 **until no later than 5:00 p.m. MDT on May 6, 2019.**

For clarification, please attached the list of recommendations from 2010 and 2016 that the Tłchq Government will provide a summary of progress for by May 6, 2019.

If there are any questions, please contact our office at (867) 873-5740 or jpellissey@wrrb.ca.

Sincerely,



Joseph Judas
Chair

Attachment

Cc Hon. Robert C. McLeod, Minister
Environment and Natural Resources, GNWT

Rita Mueller, Assistant Deputy Minister
Environment and Natural Resources, GNWT

Grand Chief George Mackenzie
Tłıchǫ Government

Tammy Steinwand- Deschambeault, Director
Culture and Lands Protection, Tłıchǫ Government

John Donihee, Counsel
Wek'èezhì Renewable Resources Board

In 2010, the Tłıchǫ government agreed with WRRB TK Recommendations 28 through 42, stating they are “committed to documenting and reporting on observations and trends observed by caribou harvesters and elders”.

- Recommendation 28 – TK – TG implement the *Special Project, Using Tłıchǫ Knowledge to Monitor Barren Ground Caribou* of the overall TK Research and Monitoring Program.

SPECIAL PROJECT: CARIBOU MONITORING AND HARVEST STUDY PROJECT

Section 12.5.5 of the Tłıchǫ Land Claim and Self-government Agreement (the Agreement) states that the Wek’èezhì Renewable Resources Board (WRRB) shall:

- (a) *Make a final determination, in accordance with 12.6 or 12.7, in relation to a proposal*
- Regarding a total allowable harvest level for Wek’èezhì, except for fish,*
 - Regarding the allocation of portions of any total allowable harvest levels for Wek’èezhì to groups of persons or for specified purposes, or*
 - Submitted under 12.11.1 for the management of the Bathurst caribou herd with respect to its application in Wek’èezhì;*

Tłıchǫ oral narratives tell of the annual cycles in which caribou and fish are key resources. For example, spring camp sites were and continue to be located along known caribou migration routes, good fishing locations and places known to have birch trees. Tłıchǫ waited for the caribou during spring migration back to the barrens but if caribou choose a different route, the people had fish while building canoes that were used to travel trails that led to the barrens making them ready to harvest caribou when they once again crossed paths. Even on the barren grounds Tłıchǫ camps continue to be located near good fishing locations that are known to be on caribou migration paths. Like traditional harvesting camps, current communities are located on or near fisheries and areas caribou are known to travel if they are in the area. Both resources continue to be important to the well-being of Tłıchǫ – psychologically as well as physically.

Tłıchǫ elders and harvesters who participated in the West Kitikmeot Slave Study (WKSS) research entitled, ‘*Caribou Migration and the State of their Habitat*’, (2001) and who originally participated in the design of the TK Monitoring Program in 1999-2000, think it is long past time to monitor barren ground caribou. The oldest Tłıchǫ elders know the WKSS researchers – Georgina Chocolate and Bobby Gon - focused on oral narratives from the past that provided baseline information.

They emphasize the importance of continuing to collect the most senior elders’ knowledge (baseline) given the hiatus of 10 years (2001-2010). In addition, they want the caribou monitoring program to:

1. Document current observations of the harvesters.
2. Research and data input and report writing to be done by adults that use both Tłıchǫ and English, and
3. Participation of young people through their school, during the summer and during other school or university breaks.

Elders, harvesters and other members of households – whether young or old – continue to want the Tłıchǫ people and their government to maintain their responsibility to watch and care for (monitor and manage) the land, water and resources they use, observe and enjoy. They want Tłıchǫ citizens to use traditional stewardship values to manage their resources.

1.1.1 ACTIVITIES SPECIFIC TO CARIBOU MONITORING AND CARIBOU HARVEST STUDY

Basically, the steps to monitoring and documenting information on caribou are as follows: Harvesters have been taught since the time they were young to observe all that is around them and to consider their observations in relation to what they are harvesting and in relation to all other aspects of their environment. It is these observations as well as information about the harvest that the researchers will document through digital recording and by entering key information into the data base.

As researchers listen to harvesting accounts of the harvester, they will have a guide that they will use to mentally check off information. If necessary, the researcher will ask the harvester for additional information, but only after they have shared their observations through a narration of their experience.

Through use of caribou harvested both male and female harvesters will note the behaviour of caribou in various situations and note texture, smell and taste of meat and characteristics of hides, bones, etc. Researchers are responsible for acquiring and documenting all information of caribou. Researchers will mark the location of their observations and harvest if the harvester did not have a GPS with them.

Researchers will listen to the digital recording of the account and enter relevant information into the data base. They will also note additional questions for future – if necessary, they will visit the harvester for clarification.

Researchers will search the data base for additional caribou information from that location, and begin developing a compilation of the information contained in the oral narratives.

Since very few harvesters will be hunting caribou over the next several years¹ the following activities are recommended:

1.1.1.1 Autumn Migration

- . Active male and female harvesters will travel to known water crossings in the fall.
- . T̄chq̄ citizens – elders, harvesters, researchers and youth – travel to Gotsak’at̄i to observe caribou.
- . Active male and female harvesters will travel to ʔek’at̄i (Lac de Gras) area and observe caribou after leaving the Diavik and BHP claim blocks, around ʔots’ik’è, ʔek’at̄itata.
 - If appropriate will compare their observations with those of YK Dene, Kugluktuk and Łutsel K’è who traditionally hunt in different locations

1.1.1.2 Wintering Areas

- . Elders will select places to observe caribou behaviour in those areas, and to note additional aspects of fitness if harvesting caribou.

1.1.1.3 Spring Migration

- . Active male and female harvesters will travel to places where caribou fences were located to observe the number of caribou (and gender and age) that travel through the area. In addition, the harvesters will note fitness level. If caribou are taken, contents of

¹ Caribou management plan has yet to be finalized.

- their stomach and vegetation in mouths and in stools will be noted, as well as texture and smell of meat and state of hides, bones, and hair.
- . Active male and female harvesters should also travel to Gotsk'atì, Dezaah̀tì to observe caribou at that stage of their migration.

1.1.1.4 Summer: Post Calving Area

- . Elders will advise on where active male and female harvesters should travel to observe bull, cows and calf behaviour in their summer habitat.

Throughout the year, harvesters also observe predators, insect levels, snow depth and other factors impacting caribou distribution, fitness and migration. This information is usually encompassed within the oral narrative that the T̀ch̀q researchers will document and ensure can be located through the database.

- Recommendation 29 – TK – In listening to the oral narratives of T̀ch̀q harvesters, the TK researchers should document the harvesters' observations of the number of calves, cows and bulls along migration routes where caribou fences were once located.
- Recommendation 30 – TK – In listening to the oral narratives of T̀ch̀q harvesters, the TK researchers should document the harvesters' visual appraisals of fitness on hoof and sensory appraisals during skinning, butchering, preparing of meat and hides.
- Recommendation 31 – TK – In listening to the oral narratives of T̀ch̀q harvesters, the TK researchers should document the harvesters' observations of calves, cows and bulls on the barrens in the summer (post-birthing rate).
- Recommendation 32 – TK – In listening to T̀ch̀q harvesters, the TK researchers should document the harvesters' observations of numbers and behaviour of bulls, cows and calves.
- Recommendation 33 - TK – In listening to T̀ch̀q harvesters, the TK researchers should document the harvesters' observations and their assessment of caribou abundance at key locations.
- Recommendation 34 --TK – In listening to the T̀ch̀q harvesters, the TK researchers should document the harvesters' observations and their assessment of wolf abundance associated with caribou.
- Recommendation 35 – TK – In listening to the T̀ch̀q harvesters, the TK researchers should document the harvesters' observations of the condition of wolves associated with caribou.
- Recommendation 36 – TK – T̀ch̀q researchers will manage the collection of T̀ch̀q harvest data.
- Recommendation 37 – TK – In listening to the T̀ch̀q harvesters, the TK researchers should document the harvesters' detailed observations of caribou habitat.
- Recommendation 38 – TK – In listening to the oral narratives of T̀ch̀q harvesters, the TK researchers should document the harvesters' visual appraisals of pregnancy and pregnancy of any cows harvested.

- Recommendation 40 – TK –Tł̨chq̨ harvesters should report their caribou harvest to the TK researchers who will manage the harvest data.
- Recommendation 42 – TG develop and implement a TK conservation education program to support the relationship and respect Tł̨chq̨ have for caribou. The program should be taught by elders and include:
 - Tł̨chq̨ rules and their holistic approach to monitoring and managing their relationship with caribou;
 - The idea of learning by travelling traditional trails so the „land“ can be observed and monitored; and
 - Information on alternate resources to be harvested when caribou is scarce.

In 2016, the Board made specific Tł̨chq̨ knowledge research and monitoring recommendations associated with enhancing the relations of Tł̨chq̨ people and saht̨ ekw̨. TG stated that they would combine recommendations 2B, 3B, 5B, 12B, 15B, and 16B *“into a comprehensive TK study”*.

- Recommendation 2B – TG conduct TK research to define, from the Tł̨chq̨ perspective [elders and harvesters], types of ʔekw̨, their behaviour, and their annual range, and their relationship with other ʔekw̨ and people by March 2017.
- Recommendation 3B – TG conduct TK research on sahcho (grizzly bear) predation on caribou and their relationship with caribou, other wildlife and people by June 2017.
- Recommendation 5B – TG conduct TK research about stress and impacts on caribou and people related to collars and aircraft over-flights by September 2017, which should [will] be considered in determining numbers of collars deployed in 2018 and beyond.
- Recommendation 12B – TG/ENR develop criteria to protect caribou water crossings from exploration and development activities in the NWT by 2018 to be included in the Tł̨chq̨ and Wek’èezhì Land Use Plans.
- Recommendation 15B – TG conduct a TK monitoring project with elders to document how climate conditions have affected preferred summer forage and impacted caribou fitness by September 2018.
- Recommendation 16B – TG conduct TK monitoring to assess the quantity and quality of winter forage by September 2018.