

December 22, 2025

Brett Wheler, Acting Director
Lands Regulation & Protection
Department of Culture and Lands Protection
Tłıchǫ Government
Email: brett.wheler@tlicheo.ca

Via Email
Brett.Wheler@tlicheo.ca

Re: Management Proposal for Diga (Wolf) Harvesting Program – Extension Request

Dear Mr. Wheler:

As per section 12.5.1 of the Tłıchǫ Agreement, the Wek'èezhìi Renewable Resources Board (WRRB) considers the above-mentioned proposal extension request, submitted by the Tłıchǫ Government (TG) on December 1, 2025, as an amendment to the wildlife management proposal submitted in January 2025.

The overall goal of the proposal extension is to continue efforts through winter 2025 in reducing diga numbers sufficiently to enable an increase in survival rates of both calf and adult Kòk'èetì and Sahti Ekwò (Bathurst and Bluenose-East barren-ground caribou) and in doing so promote stabilization and recovery of the herds. The proposal also seeks to continue facilitation of knowledge exchange between experienced and less experienced diga harvesters. Continuation of the diga harvesting program was recommended by Tłıchǫ elders and harvesters during the May 2025 Tłıchǫ Caribou Gathering. Elders and harvesters noted their concern that if harvesting is stopped, the numbers would increase as diga populations reproduce rapidly

Based on the WRRB's Rule for Management Proposals, the WRRB determined it should undertake a Level 1 review. The management proposal amendment request was posted to the WRRB's website on the Management Proposals page from December 1-12, 2025. The Board received comments from the North Slave Métis Alliance on December 11, 2025, noting their concern that the diga harvesting program is not an effective approach for recovery of ekwò and may be increasing pressure as diga from neighbouring areas take advantage of the program's disruptions to existing packs to encroach on their territory.

The WRRB understands that the Department of Environment & Climate Change, Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) and TG are currently conducting a comprehensive assessment of the 2019-2024 diga management program to determine whether the objectives have been met, not met, or partially met. Outcomes of the evaluation are expected to inform whether further predator management actions are needed and provide guidance on how to implement them.

The WRRB understands that TG and GNWT plan to submit Kòk'èetì and Sahti Ekwò joint management proposals in 2026. Further, the Board understands that prior to the submissions, TG plans to consult with the Tłıchǫ communities to identify priority objectives to help the recovery of the herds. TG will include in the Joint Management Proposals to continue their Community-Based Diga Harvest Program if Tłıchǫ elders and harvesters advise to do so.

While the WRRB waits for the comprehensive assessment of the five-year diga management program, the Board recognizes the benefits of an on the land experience with a transfer of knowledge and skills. Though it is understood that there may be few significant impacts to ekwò recovery with the diga harvesting program, the Board does recognize the concern that diga populations may rapidly increase if harvesting is stopped. Therefore, the Board approves the extension request for the Diga Harvesting Program from January 1, 2026 to June 1, 2026 (WRRB Motion #1009-17-12-2025).

The WRRB recommends the continued involvement of knowledgeable elders or harvesters to ensure Tɔ́chq cultural values towards diga are being incorporated – especially since diga are known to be very powerful animals. The Board recommends the continued collection of data during the diga harvest program ensuring the data is comparable to previously collected information. At the completion of the program, the Board requests that TG provide a report on the effectiveness of the diga harvesting program, i.e., did the program meet its core goal, as well as sharing the data collected.

Finally, as the diga harvesting program occurs both in and out of Wek'èezhì, the WRRB suggests that TG consider engaging with other Indigenous governments and organizations about the program.

The WRRB looks forward to continued collaboration with TG regarding diga management and monitoring actions. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call our office.

Sincerely,



Joseph Judas
Chair

Cc Stephanie Behrens, Manager, Lands Protection & Renewable Resources
 Culture and Lands Protection, Tɔ́chq Government