

January 18, 2016

Sjoerd van der Wielen, Manager
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Via Email

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Fred J. Mandeville, Superintendent
North Slave Region
Environment and Natural Resources
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Re: TG & ENR Management Proposal: Community-based Wolf Harvesting Project

Dear Mr. van der Wielen and Mr. Mandeville:

Per Sections 12.5.1 and 12.5.4 of the Tłìchq Agreement, the Wek'èezhìi Renewable Resources Board (WRRB) has reviewed the Community-based Wolf Harvesting Project management proposal, as submitted by the Department of Culture & Lands Protection, Tłìchq Government (TG) and the Department of Environment & Natural Resources (ENR), Government of the Northwest Territories on January 6, 2016 and presented by Sjoerd van der Wielen, TG on January 13, 2016. The Board understands the proposed management actions to be as follows:

- The Project is to train 6-10 participants from Wekweètì in effective field techniques to hunt, trap, skin and process wolves, ensuring that Tłìchq cultural practices are followed, during the winter of 2015/16. A Tłìchq wolf hunter/trapper, a taxidermy skinning expert and a Tłìchq elder will be utilized for their expertise during the Project;
- The Project will identify appropriate locations away from communities for skinning and processing wolf carcasses, with field camps established near large lakes within the Mobile Core Bathurst Caribou Management Zone;
- A minimum of 40 wolves will be harvested, but not more than 100. Wolf carcasses will be necropsied by ENR biologists in the field, when possible;
- Harvesters will receive payment by either delivering the entire unskinned wolf carcass to ENR or preparing the hide themselves. If preparing the hides, the harvester may submit to ENR either skinned traditionally or skinned/prepared by Genuine Mackenzie Valley Fur Program standards; and,
- If the Project is deemed successful in Wekweètì, the communities of Gamètì and Whatì may also have the Project offered in 2016/17.

The WRRB has a mandate for wildlife, plant and forest management in Wek'èezhìi and adheres to the principles and practices of conservation in fulfilling its duties. As such, given the information

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provided in the TG and ENR management proposal and presentation, the WRRB supports the establishment of the proposed Community-based Wolf Harvest Project as a pilot training program only and not as a management action to reduce any potential impacts to the Bathurst caribou herd given that no accurate population estimate is available for wolves in Wek'èezhìi or the broader NWT (Motion #461-14-01-2016). In addition, the Board recommends the following:

1. If the Project is to be expanded to other Tłìchq communities, a management proposal must be submitted to the WRRB for review and approval. If the Project is to be expanded in scope to include reduction in impacts to barren-ground caribou, prior to the submission of a management proposal to the WRRB, a population estimate for wolves must be available and research on habitat quality and quantity on the Bathurst caribou herd range must be conducted;
2. TG and ENR must inform the WRRB of the following prior to the start of the Project:
 - a. How aerial and/or ground-based disturbance to Bathurst caribou will be prevented or minimized? How will this potential disturbance be measured and assessed?;
 - b. How will unintentional or accidental harvest of Bathurst caribou be prevented or minimized? If a Bathurst caribou is harvested, how will TG and ENR report to the WRRB?; and,
 - c. How will the facilitation of wolf movements through the wolves' use of skidoo trails be prevented or minimized?;
3. TG and ENR must provide regular communications about the Project to Tłìchq communities and the WRRB. As well, TG and ENR must report on the Project, including numbers, age, sex and pregnancy rates of wolves harvested and location of wolf harvest, to the WRRB;
4. The Project must have the ability to curtail or stop immediately should negative impacts to the Bathurst caribou occur; and,
5. TG and ENR must have the ability to assess the success of the program, i.e. the effectiveness of training a core set of wolf harvesters, the acceptance of the Project by Tłìchq communities and continued program implementation.

The Board would like to stress the importance of educating Tłìchq communities on the Community-based Wolf Harvest Project. The WRRB recommends using radio/television and social media to distribute a clear, concise, and consistent message about the Project, including the weekly updates.

The WRRB wishes to continue working collaboratively with TG and ENR on this important file. If you have any questions, please contact our office at (867) 873-5740 or jpellissey@wrrb.ca.

Sincerely,



Jonas Lafferty
Interim Chair

Cc Hon. Wally Schumann, Minister, ENR
Ernie Campbell, Deputy Minister, ENR
Lynda Yonge, Director of Wildlife, ENR
Grand Chief Eddie Erasmus, TG
Laura Duncan, Tłìchq Executive Officer, TG