

Department of Environment  
Briefing Binder for Fall Legislative Sitting 2024  
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#### Recommended response:

- The Government of Yukon recognizes the seriousness of the heap leach failure that occurred at the Eagle Gold mine on June 24.
- The Department of Environment took immediate action and scientists from the Fish and Wildlife Branch and Water Resources were some of the first government officials onsite.
- Since the failure occurred, Department of Environment staff have been working closely with other Government of Yukon departments, the First Nation of Nacho Nyak Dun, the Government of Canada and other affected stakeholders to better understand and mitigate impacts to the surrounding environment and inform the overall response.
- Environment officials have been proactively communicating with the First Nation of Nacho Nyak Dun, all response partners and the public.
- As of October 15, experts in the department have participated in 9 technical briefings and contributed to 20 information bulletins, issued almost weekly, to share information with the public.
- Officials have also conducted briefings for the Opposition and Third Party, Yukon Salmon Subcommittee, Alaska Commissioner of Fish and Game, and Yukon First Nation Chiefs.
- For the most current information on environmental monitoring related to the Eagle Gold Mine heap leach failure, visit [yukon.ca/victoria-gold-updates](https://yukon.ca/victoria-gold-updates).



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#### Additional response (Water monitoring):

- The Department of Environment's Water Resources Branch has led the development of a Water Monitoring and Reporting Plan for the Eagle Gold Mine in collaboration with other Government of Yukon departments, the First Nation of Nacho Nyak Dun, Environment and Climate Change Canada and consultants.
- The Water Monitoring and Reporting Plan identifies locations and frequency for monitoring groundwater and surface water quality on-site and downstream of the Eagle Gold Mine.
- Energy Mines and Resources hired a consultant in July 2024 to undertake all water monitoring identified in the Plan.
- The Water Resources Branch continues to work closely with Energy, Mines and Resources and the consultant, and reports on water data collected on and off the site.
- As of October 1, over 240,000 data points have been collected to assess water quality.
- The mine's water quality objectives are based on British Columbia's guidelines for the protection of freshwater aquatic life from chronic effects of mercury, cyanide, and other contaminants. Recent tests in Haggart Creek by the mine site have found levels of mercury, cobalt and cyanide that exceed aquatic health guidelines.
- These results show that groundwater contaminated by the heap leach failure has reached Haggart Creek.
- Initial results on the methyl mercury sampling have found a low potential for bioaccumulation of mercury in aquatic organisms.



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- We are regularly updating our website with the most recent water monitoring results.
- These results have led to additional monitoring to better understand the pathways of contaminated water and the potential risks to fish and wildlife.
- This additional monitoring to investigate the changes in Haggart Creek includes:
  - further monitoring locations which have identified the location where contaminated groundwater is reaching Haggart Creek;
  - methyl mercury sampling to identify the form of mercury in the creek; and,
  - sublethal toxicity testing, which are specialized tests that examine reproduction, growth, and survival of aquatic micro-organisms and fish in a laboratory setting.
- Additionally, Environment continues to work collaboratively within technical working groups to better understand the source of mercury and how concentrations are expected to change going forward.
- Eighteen new groundwater wells have been installed on the mine site, 14 of which are further below the slide area to monitor impacts from the slide. The extent of groundwater contamination detected in these wells is being used to inform mitigation options.
- Intercepting contaminated groundwater to minimize its impact on the receiving environment is an important part of the remediation program.
- This information helps us assess the magnitude and spatial extent of contamination to understand the impact that this could have on fish and



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wildlife in the surrounding environment, and to inform further monitoring and mitigation efforts.

#### Third response (Fish Monitoring):

- The joint Government of Yukon and First Nation of Nacho Nyak Dun fisheries monitoring program has concluded its summer work.
- We collected tissue samples from approximately 178 fish from 47 locations to check for heavy metal concentrations and signs of tissue damage, while completing population counts and determining movement patterns to evaluate short and long-term impacts.
- Of the 178 fish there are 141 arctic grayling and 37 slimy sculpin.
- Analysis of fish tissue samples for contaminant levels has begun, with results expected by early 2025.
- With the summer work completed, the technical group is now focusing on the next phase of this long-term program. This includes assessing the conditions that fish experience during the winter months and determining how much winter habitat is available for fish in the Haggart Creek watershed.
- The Department of Environment is also working alongside the First Nation of Nacho Nyak Dun to collaborate with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) to provide recommendations to assist in aligning the goals of any regulatory order in respect of meeting the goals of our long-term fish monitoring program.
- In addition to monitoring fish, we worked with First Nation of Nacho Nyak Dun and consultants to develop and implement an aquatic life monitoring plan focused on sampling aquatic invertebrates to determine



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their abundance and level of exposure to contaminants in Haggart Creek. This work will help us assess the general health of the aquatic ecosystem in the short and long term.

- In September the department collected detailed imagery of the mine site and a portion of Haggart Creek downstream of the mine to inform future monitoring efforts.

#### **Third response (Mammal Monitoring):**

- The Chief Medical Officer of Health has confirmed that there are no indications that meat of harvested animals in the area is unsafe to consume.
- While cyanide released into water from the mine can cause sudden death in fish that are exposed, cyanide disappears rapidly and would not accumulate in moose or caribou that have short-term contact with cyanide in water.
- We are asking those who harvest moose or caribou in Game Management Subzones north of Mayo to collect samples of liver, kidney, and muscle for heavy metal testing.
- We also require the incisor bar (lower jaw) to get an accurate age of the animal because the metals we are concerned about are built up over the life of an animal, not within weeks or months.
- Sampling kits and instructions are available from the Mayo, Dawson City and Whitehorse district offices.
- To date, samples have been received from five animals, three caribou and two moose.



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- Testing will take place when there are sufficient samples. Given the relatively low number of animals harvested in this area, this is likely to be at the close of the hunting season and when subsistence harvest has drawn to a close.

#### **Fourth response (cost):**

- As of October 1, the Department of Environment has incurred \$637,955 in expenses related to the Eagle Gold Mine Site response.
- While I acknowledge the high cost of addressing this catastrophe, it is difficult to put a price cap on protecting the environment.
- Having clean air, water and land is vital to the health and wellbeing of our communities.
- Yukoners rely on Department of Environment experts to monitor, protect and report on the health of our territory's environment.
- This important work aligns with the values of Yukoners who want to live in a healthy and thriving environment.
- I am proud of the dedication and professionalism of Department of Environment experts as they have responded to this dynamic and ever-evolving situation.
- The Department of Environment remains committed to environmental stewardship and will continue to work with all parties involved in the Eagle Gold Mine heap leach failure response.

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#### **Context—this may be an issue because:**

- The Victoria Gold heap leach failure has received significant attention by both local and national media, Yukon First Nations, opposition parties and the public.



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**Background:**

- On July 5, the mine was put into temporary closure and the Government of Yukon ordered the company to develop several plans to mitigate the slide impact and damage to the surrounding environment.
- On August 2, Victoria Gold Corporation reported that personnel discovered dead fish in Haggart Creek. Upon finding the dead fish, the company stopped discharging water from the water treatment plant. 68 fish were collected in the receiving environment.
- Following this discharge event, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans ordered the company to implement several mitigation measures to mitigate the impact to other fish in the area. The Department of Environment is working closely with the federal department to ensure that these measures align with our fish monitoring program and are conducive to protecting the fish interests.
- Water samples are tested for cyanide, metals and other contaminants. Results are compared to water quality objectives in the mine's water licence, and to aquatic health guidelines including the Canadian Council of the Ministers of the Environment's Canadian Environmental Quality Guidelines and British Columbia's Approved Water Quality Guidelines.
- On August 16, the Attorney General and Minister of Justice Tracey-Anne McPhee announced the Government of Yukon's recent legal action to implement a court-appointed receiver.
- The Department of Environment has requested no additional funding but will continue tracking all costs related to the Eagle Gold Mine Site response and monitor whether a future funding request will be necessary.

**Approved by:****Dennis Berry****October 30, 2024**

Deputy Minister of Environment

Date approved



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Resources

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### Recommended response:

- We continue to treat the heap leach failure that occurred at the Eagle Gold Mine on June 24 as an urgent response.
- We are aware of the impact of this event on the First Nation of Na-cho Nyäk Dun and are working cooperatively with them on our actions.
- We are confident the receivership will improve the response to the situation on-site, as the receiver's focus will be on remediation work as directed by the government.

### Additional response:

- We are regularly inspecting the site and the area downstream of the site for impacts to the environment from this event. Yukoners can get the most recent information on our website at [yukon.ca](http://yukon.ca).
- We will be investigating the underlying causes of this failure to prevent this from happening at a mine site in the Yukon again.
- We are committed to ensuring local benefits to First Nation of Na-cho Nyäk Dun citizens, and Mayo and Yukon residents and businesses in the remediation work that is required.

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### Context — this may be an issue because:

- Victoria Gold's heap leach facility at the Eagle Gold Mine experienced a failure on June 24, 2024. This failure resulted in a release of contaminants into the environment.



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## Victoria Gold/Eagle Gold Mine

Fall 2024

Energy, Mines and Resources

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### Background:

- The Eagle Gold Mine is a large, conventional open pit and heap leach gold operation in north-central Yukon, in the First Nation of Na-cho Nyäk Dun's Traditional Territory.
- On June 24, the heap leach facility failed and released approximately four million tonnes of ore. It is estimated that two million tonnes of ore left containment, including the cyanide solution, and moved into the Dublin Gulch valley.
- In the weeks that followed, the Government of Yukon issued the company a series of Inspector's Directions requiring actions regarding water management, water treatment, physical stability and environmental monitoring.
- When the company did not fully comply with the directions, the Government of Yukon took steps to undertake critical actions but was unable to complete construction work due to health and safety requirements.
- On August 2, following the commissioning of the mine water treatment plant, the company identified 68 deceased fish in Haggart Creek downstream of the mine water effluent discharge. The fish were collected and preserved for analysis.

### Receivership:

- On August 14, 2024, PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) was appointed by the court as receiver over Victoria Gold Corp's assets, including the mine. The receiver's focus will be on remediation work as directed by the Government of Yukon.
- The Yukon government will continue to serve as the main regulator and enforcement body for the mine site.
- Parsons Inc. will serve as Lead Environmental Consultant to advise PwC in its role as receiver to support the required work. This includes implementing the directions previously issued by the Government of Yukon.
- As of August 26, the Government of Yukon has advanced \$15 million in funding to PwC for mitigation work.



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- The Government of Yukon will advance up to \$50 million to PwC to cover the anticipated work over the first 90 days of receivership. This money will be treated as a debt owed to the government to be recovered from Victoria Gold assets.
- Parsons Inc. has a strong track record in mine remediation. The company is undertaking work at the Faro Mine in the Yukon and the Giant Mine in the Northwest Territories.

### Finances and Procurement:

- We currently estimate the necessary remediation to cost between \$100 and \$150 million, with \$40 to 50 million required in the first 90 days of receivership.
- The receiver will first use the company's funds and assets to finance the remediation work.
- Parsons Inc. is responsible for the majority of procurement and the delivery of remediation work at the Eagle Gold mine site.
- The agreement between Government of Yukon and Parsons Inc. highlights the importance of providing local benefits to the First Nation of Na-cho Nyak Dun, its development corporation, and Mayo and Yukon residents and businesses.
- The Government of Yukon retained Yukon businesses to assist in the response efforts prior to the establishment of the receiver. Work by Yukon businesses included environmental monitoring and construction activities.

### Communications

- The Government of Yukon response team meets regularly with the First Nation of Na-cho Nyak Dun and their technical consultants to ensure transparency in our response efforts and to ensure our actions and objectives are aligned.
- The response team also meets regularly with the Government of Canada to provide updates and coordinate our responses.
- Communications and the coordinated response efforts continue under the receivership and will inform our decisions on remediation at the Eagle Gold mine.



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### Security

- The Government of Yukon holds \$103.7 million in financial security for reclamation and closure purposes for the Eagle Gold mine.
- The Yukon Water Board issued an order for an additional \$420,222 in financial security for the Eagle Gold Mine on July 23, 2024. The company failed to make this payment before the board resigned on August 15, 2024.
- Financial security has not been accessed to fund remediation or response costs incurred to date. It is not anticipated that security will be used for remediation of the heap leach failure as a decision has not been made to permanently close the site.

### Independent Review Board

- An Independent Review Board has been established under the Government of Yukon's Guidelines for Mine Waste Management Facilities.
- The Independent Review Board will provide an independent, expert review of the heap leach failure as well as the design, construction and operational management of the mine and the Government of Yukon's policies and procedures that were applied in this situation.
- The Independent Review Board Members are:
  - Dr. Jean-Marie Konrad, M.Sc., Ph.D., FCAE, FEIC
    - Dr. Konrad is a geotechnical expert specializing in artificial freezing, permafrost engineering, dam construction and safety assessment and was a member on several independent peer review boards in the mining industry.
  - Les Sawatsky, P.Eng., M.Sc.
    - Mr. Sawatsky is a Director of Teleo Engineering and serves as a senior civil engineer with over 40 years of experience in mine developments, mine closure planning, reclamation drainage, mine drainage, water supply and mine tailings management.
  - Mark E. Smith, P.E., P.Eng.



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- Mr. Smith is a professional engineer with 45 years of experience in gold heap leaching, including the last 12 years working on several cold climate projects, and is currently on the failure response team for SSR's Cöpler mine in Turkey.
- We have not made a decision as to whether an inquiry will also be established under the *Public Inquiries Act*.

### Approved by:

Lauren Haney

September 3, 2024

Deputy Minister  
Department of Energy, Mines and Resources

Date approved



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### Canada-Yukon Nature Agreement

Environment

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**Recommended response:**

- The Government of Yukon is now in year two of implementing the three-year Canada-Yukon Nature Agreement.
- The Canada-Yukon Nature Agreement provides funding to advance the Yukon's conservation priorities, including protecting our land and waters, supporting Indigenous-led conservation initiatives, and increasing our efforts on protecting species at risk.
- This important work is helping us be better prepared and informed for future planning processes, discussions on land and resource management issues, addressing Yukon's climate resiliency and managing and preserving biodiversity.
- Across 2023-24, we were able to make meaningful progress towards the outcomes of the Canada-Yukon Nature Agreement, including:
  - reporting an additional 2 per cent of lands and waters to the Canadian Protected and Conserved Areas Database to bring the Yukon's total to 21.1 per cent, which is currently the highest percentage of reported protected areas of any province or territory in Canada;
  - taking steps to advance Indigenous-led conservation initiatives by inviting Yukon First Nations and transboundary Indigenous governments and groups to apply for funding under the newly established Indigenous-led Conservation Capacity Fund;
  - co-hosting a workshop with Environment and Climate Change Canada to discuss challenges and opportunities for conservation with the Yukon government, Yukon First Nations and transboundary Indigenous governments and groups;



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### Canada-Yukon Nature Agreement

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- signing a Memorandum of Understanding with Kwanlin Dün First Nation, Ta'an Kwäch'än Council, the City of Whitehorse, and Parks Canada to protect Chasàn Chuà / McIntyre Creek area of Whitehorse; and
  - developing tools and advancing studies to support conservation and monitor species at risk.
- Protecting new areas and ensuring conservation in the territory is complex and challenging work, but it is more important than ever as we face challenges like population growth, industrial development, climate change impacts and loss of biodiversity.

#### **Additional response:**

- This year, the Government of Yukon will continue to work towards protecting areas in the Yukon that are of important ecological and cultural value. New areas for conservation will always be collaboratively identified with Indigenous governments and groups.
- Work is currently underway to advance protected area planning in:
  - the Peel Watershed, where we are exploring the feasibility of establishing a new national park with the Gwich'in Tribal Council, the First Nation of Nacho-Nyak Dun and Parks Canada;
  - the Pickhandle Lakes Habitat Protection Area with Kluane First Nation and White River First Nation; and,
  - the Chasàn Chuà/McIntyre Creek area with Kwanlin Dun First Nation, Ta'an Kwach'an Council, the City of Whitehorse and Parks Canada.
- We have also initiated pre-engagement work with Indigenous governments and groups on the co-development of an Ecological



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### Canada-Yukon Nature Agreement

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Cumulative Effects Framework and an approach to protecting species at risk in the Yukon.

- We look forward to continuing this work across 2024-25 together with Indigenous governments and groups in the territory and with the support of the Government of Canada.

#### **Third response:**

- The Government of Yukon has a responsibility and a commitment to work together with Indigenous partners to protect our lands, waters, and biodiversity for generations to come.
- Under the Nature Agreement, the Indigenous-led Conservation Capacity Fund was developed to support Indigenous partners to lead or participate in identifying areas of conservation interest in their traditional or asserted territories.
- So far, seven Indigenous governments and groups have applied to the Indigenous Conservation Capacity Fund.
- The projected allocations for these seven initiatives are over 1.2 million dollars, and we continue to look at opportunities to fund additional projects and First Nation governments.
- So far \$2.6 million, or approximately 13%, has been committed to Yukon First Nations, and Indigenous transboundary governments and groups.
- We have also established a two-year funding agreement with the Council of Yukon First Nations to support capacity towards an Indigenous lens on management approaches for protecting species at risk in the Yukon.
- We continue to work with Indigenous partners to disburse the Nature Agreement funds to support their conservation priorities.



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### Canada-Yukon Nature Agreement

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- We are aware that the Government of Canada has separate bilateral agreements with Yukon First Nations to support conservation related work. Addressing climate change and biodiversity loss requires a collective approach across all governments.
- We look forward to supporting and continuing to build on this important conservation work with our Indigenous partners.

#### **Final response:**

- The Nature Agreement funding provides the Government of Yukon the opportunity to accelerate conservation related initiatives. This work includes being better prepared for Regional Land Use Planning processes.
- The Nature Agreement and its objectives of increasing protected land while enabling Indigenous leadership in conservation are elevating discussions on Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas amongst some Yukon First Nations.
- We are creating certainty and clarity for Indigenous partners, municipalities, and industry by clearly identifying the areas we mean to protect and those with opportunities for resource development.
- We are pleased to collaborate with the Government of Canada on planning for the future and ensuring the responsible management and sustainable use of our lands and resources for future generations.

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#### **Context—this may be an issue because:**

- There may be questions about progress made on implementing the Canada-Yukon Nature Agreement and how the Government of Yukon is supporting Indigenous involvement in meeting the commitments.



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### Canada-Yukon Nature Agreement

Environment

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**Background:**

- The Canada-Yukon Nature Agreement spans three fiscal years, starting in April 2023 until March 2026; Canada is providing \$20.6 million to the Yukon government over this period.
- Governments from around the world met at the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity COP15 conference in 2022 and agreed to the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. The framework includes four global goals and 23 global targets to be achieved by 2030 to halt and reverse biodiversity loss and put nature on a path to recovery by 2050.
- The framework's objectives align with commitments made under the Nature Agreement, including the conservation of 30 per cent of lands and oceans by 2030.
- Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas include lands and waters where Indigenous governments or organizations have a lead role in managing and conserving ecological and cultural values. They protect Indigenous rights and reflect Indigenous laws and traditions.
- Since the signing of the Canada-Yukon Nature Agreement, two other Nature Agreements have been signed; British Columbia's is a tripartite with BC's First Nations leadership Council, while Nova Scotia's is bilateral.

**Approved by:****Dennis Berry**

Deputy Minister of Environment

**November 6, 2024**

Date approved



## Session Briefing Note

### 2024 Hunting Changes - Sheep

Fall 2024  
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#### Recommended Response:

- This year, the Government of Yukon took action to address declining sheep populations in southwest Yukon.
- The Donjek Sheep Management Unit was particularly concerning, with a 63 per cent decline noted in a 2023 survey compared to a 2015 survey.
- On June 19, the Government of Yukon closed Game Management Subzone 5–17, which comprises the Donjek Sheep Management Unit, to licensed sheep hunting for three years, starting August 1, 2024, until October 31, 2026.
- The closure is intended to support sheep population recovery after population surveys in the southwest Yukon in 2022 and 2023 found concerning declines.
- We made the decision to issue a closure after consulting First Nations governments, Renewable Resources Councils, the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board, Parks Canada, and welcoming feedback from other impacted stakeholders.

#### Additional Response:

- Initial consultation and engagement focused on whether to amend the *Wildlife Regulation* to adaptively manage harvest levels for sheep populations in five Sheep Management Units in southwest Yukon, including Brooks Arm, Donjek, Nutzotin, Flat Top and Ruby Range.
- We issued the closure where sheep populations are most vulnerable. The non-lamb population in the Donjek Sheep Management Unit is significantly lower than in the surrounding Sheep Management Units.



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### 2024 Hunting Changes - Sheep

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- Still, we acknowledge there are declines in these other areas and remain keenly aware of our responsibility to protect and conserve these sheep populations long-term.
- Based on collaboration and the feedback we received during the consultation, we have issued this closure in the short-term and have signed a Memorandum of Understanding with co-management partners to work together on further management actions, including the development of a long-term sheep conservation and management plan for southwest Yukon.

#### Third Response:

##### Kluane Wildlife Sanctuary Sheep Permit

- The Kluane First Nation Final Agreement allows two sheep permits to be offered annually in the Wildlife Sanctuary at the discretion of the Minister of Environment and Kluane First Nation. One permit goes to a Yukon resident hunter through a unique permit hunt process, and another can be auctioned to a non-resident by the First Nation.
- Due to conservation concerns with sheep populations in their Traditional Territory, Kluane First Nation cancelled their auction of the Kluane Wildlife Sanctuary sheep permit for at least two years; the 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 hunting seasons.
- The Yukon government also cancelled the 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 lotteries for the single Permit Hunt Authorization to reduce disturbance to these vulnerable sheep populations.
- We are continuing to monitor the sheep populations in the area and work with Kluane First Nation to re-establish this once in a lifetime hunting opportunity.



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### 2024 Hunting Changes - Sheep

Fall 2024  
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#### Context—this may be an issue because:

- Yukoners may be interested in what changes have been made for the 2024-2025 hunting season.

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#### Background:

- Under Section 193 of the *Wildlife Act*, the Minister has the authority to adjust hunting season dates, determine permit numbers, and determine in which game management zones wildlife may be hunted once enabled by amendments to the *Wildlife Regulation*.
- We held workshops in March and April with wildlife co-management partners. As a result, we received written recommendations from White River First Nation, and both Kluane First Nation and the Dän Keyi Renewable Resources Council, to enact an emergency closure.
- The Government of Yukon consulted Kluane First Nation, White River First Nation, Champagne and Aishihik First Nations, the Alsek and Dän Keyi Renewable Resources Councils, the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board, and Parks Canada prior to imposing an emergency closure.
- We also welcomed and considered written feedback from the Yukon Fish and Game Association, the Yukon Wild Sheep Foundation, the Yukon Outfitters Association and the Yukon Conservation Society.
- Likely factors driving the recent decline in sheep numbers may be the increased duration and depth of spring snow.
- Sheep population declines have been documented in recent years across a broad geographic range that includes Alaska, Yukon, and northern British Columbia.

#### Approved by:

Briar Young  
A/Deputy Minister of Environment

September 6, 2024  
Date approved



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### 2024 Hunting Opportunities

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Environment

#### Recommended response:

- The Government of Yukon is committed to sustainably managing wildlife populations to preserve subsistence harvest while continuing to offer licensed hunting opportunities.
- Our approach follows the goal of conservation as defined in the First Nation Final Agreements - "Conservation" means the management of Fish and Wildlife populations and habitats and the regulation of users to ensure the quality, diversity and Long-Term Optimum Productivity of Fish and Wildlife populations, with the primary goal of ensuring a sustainable harvest and its proper utilization.
- Indigenous people in the Yukon with subsistence harvest rights depend on wildlife populations for sustenance and to preserve their long-standing and legally recognized cultural connection to the land.
- In turn, resident and non-resident licensed hunters value the hunting experience the Yukon offers.
- As the territory's population grows, there is an increasing demand for hunting opportunities and an increasing emphasis on the need for harvest-sharing conversations.
- The Department of Environment evaluates the sustainability of harvest on an annual basis and consults with First Nation governments to identify areas and species where increased licensed hunting opportunities would not result in conservation concerns or negative impacts to subsistence harvest rights.



## Session Briefing Note

Fall 2024

### 2024 Hunting Opportunities

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Environment

#### Additional response:

- Wildlife is a shared resource, and wildlife management and harvest decisions are not made unilaterally.
- As wildlife surveys are undertaken and results analyzed, the Department of Environment engages with co-management partners including the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board and affected Yukon First Nations and Renewable Resources Councils before proceeding with changes to hunting opportunities.
- Working with our co-management partners helps to ensure Indigenous participation in wildlife management and harvest management decisions are informed by local perspectives and traditional knowledge.
- Department efforts are also informed by feedback from non-governmental organizations, hunters, trappers, outfitters, and Yukoners out on the land.
- The valuable input from these groups, along with the data collected by the Department, is used to help identify joint wildlife management goals, set priorities for future survey and research efforts, and ultimately support evidence-based decision-making for harvest opportunities.
- Conversations about harvest sharing are ongoing with First Nation partners and workshops are underway to discuss moose management south of Whitehorse. (see BN #44 for moose).
- These conversations can be challenging, but by generating and sharing knowledge, we make informed and collaborative decisions that meet the needs of all Yukoners, while following the legal and ethical processes that guide our work.



## Session Briefing Note

Fall 2024

### 2024 Hunting Opportunities

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Environment

#### Additional Response (Hunting Statistics):

- Yukoners and non-residents alike travel throughout the Yukon to take part in the many hunting and fishing opportunities offered in our territory.
- A total of 16,515 fishing licences and 5,777 hunting licences – including big game and small game licences - were sold for the 2023-24 season.
- Of the hunting licences sold, 4,634 licences were sold to Yukon resident hunters, and 1,143 licences were sold to non-resident hunters.
- In 2023-24 there were 3,826 moose hunting seals sold, with 3,296 of these seals sold to Yukon residents. (see page 8 for additional hunting seals).

#### Third response:

- Existing hunting opportunities in the Yukon are numerous, with minimal restrictions in comparison to other Canadian jurisdictions, and our big game seals are the most affordable in the country.
- When looking at the harvest opportunities that are currently available, much of the territory remains open for hunting big game species.
- In areas where there is easier access, high historical harvest or where conservation is a concern, we have implemented harvest management tools such as permit hunts, threshold hunts, registration hunts or adaptive *Wildlife Act* permits.
- From our data, we can see that most harvest opportunities in the Yukon have been fully subscribed to in areas where harvest management tools have been implemented.



## Session Briefing Note

Fall 2024

### 2024 Hunting Opportunities

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Environment

- These tools allow for harvest opportunities to remain available while being carefully monitored and managed.

#### Final response:

- Hunting is a cherished practice and way of life for many Yukoners and sustainable harvest management helps preserve the Yukon hunting experience.
- Through feedback received in the Hunter Effort Surveys for various species, we know that hunting is about more than just the harvest, and residents do not want a congested hunting experience.
- Vast wilderness, naturally occurring wildlife, and seeing few other hunting parties are the main allures to hunting in the Yukon.
- Taking this into consideration, we aim to achieve a careful balance between offering hunting opportunities using the legislative tools available, staying within sustainable limits, and preserving the world-class Yukon hunting experience.

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#### Context—this may be an issue because:

- Minister Clarke's 2023 Mandate Letter gives direction to work with Yukon First Nations, the Fish and Wildlife Management Board and stakeholders to continue to ensure Yukoners are provided opportunities to sustainably harvest fish and game while looking for new opportunities for Yukon hunters.

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#### Background:

- The Yukon government has provided several new hunting opportunities over the past several years in areas where sustainable harvest was possible:
  - After 2019, the number of sheep permits made available in zones under permit (primarily in zone 7) increased from 115 to 134



## Session Briefing Note

**Fall 2024**

### 2024 Hunting Opportunities

Environment

- In 2020, as a result of 25 years of collaborative recovery efforts and the signing of the Fortymile caribou harvest management plan, we introduced a winter threshold hunt of 140 caribou and a summer registration hunt.
- In 2022, working with the Kluane First Nation and White River First Nation, we opened a new threshold hunt of 25 caribou for the Nelchina herd.
- In 2022, we also introduced a new adaptive hunt permitting process and made eight additional permits available for hunting elk in the Takhini Valley, increasing the total to 12 permits. We offered them in 2023, and they are available again this year.
- In 2023, we increased the number of permits available in the Sifton-Miners Range Moose Management Unit from 12 to 24.

**Approved by:**

Dennis Berry

October 17, 2024

\_\_\_\_\_  
Deputy Minister of Environment\_\_\_\_\_  
Date approved

### 2023-2024 hunting statistics

**Page 6:** Licensed big game harvest statistics**Page 7:** Fishing and hunting licence sales**Page 8:** Hunting seal sales













## Session Briefing Note

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2024 Hunting  
Opportunities

Environment

**2023-2024 licensed big game harvest statistics**

	Moose 	Caribou 	Woodbison 	Sheep 	Goat 	Deer 	Elk 	Grizzlybear 	Blackbear 	Wolf 
Zone	Number of animals taken by resident + non-resident hunters									
1	2+1	3+1	0+0	1+0	0+0	0+0	0+0	1+0	0+0	2+1
2	17+58	18+44	0+0	4+56	0+0	0+0	0+0	1+20	5+1	1+8
3	46+2	15+0	0+0	0+0	0+0	0+0	0+0	1+0	13+0	1+0
4	67+87	16+29	0+0	4+14	0+0	0+0	0+0	2+8	24+1	0+4
5	46+26	10+6	223+8	33+37	0+0	1+0	6+0	6+10	13+0	1+1
7	7+2	0+0	5+0	32+18	0+0	0+0	3+0	5+1	12+0	3+1
8	55+10	10+3	2+0	1+7	0+0	6+0	0+0	3+2	11+0	1+0
9	20+0	0+0	0+0	2+0	0+0	0+0	0+0	1+0	9+0	0+0
10	50+33	3+6	0+0	2+11	0+0	0+0	0+0	2+6	6+2	0+3
11	73+40	15+16	0+0	0+3	7+6	0+0	0+0	3+3	12+5	0+3
Sub-total	383+259	90+105	230+8	79+146	7+6	7+0	9+0	25+50	105+9	9+21
Total	642	195	238	225	13	7	9	75	114	30



## Session Briefing Note

**Fall 2024**

### 2024 Hunting Opportunities

Environment

#### Fishing and hunting licences

Type of licence	# sold in 2022-23 electronically	# sold in 2023-24 electronically
Resident fishing licence	7,029 + vendor*	7,661 + vendor*
Non-resident fishing licence	3,441 + vendor*	3,960 + vendor*
Resident hunting licence	4,546	4,634
Non-resident hunting licence	1,114	1,143

\*Note: An additional 4,925 paper fishing licences were sold through vendors in 2022-2023. An additional 4,894 paper fishing licences were sold through vendors in 2023-2024. The database used to track these vendor sales does not distinguish between residency type.

Total of fishing licences sold in 2023-2024 (paper and electronic): **16,515**

Total of hunting licences sold in 2023-2024 (paper and electronic, and both big game and small game): **5,777**



## Session Briefing Note

Fall 2024

2024 Hunting  
Opportunities

Environment

## Hunting Seal Sales

Species	# of seals sold in 2023-2024				
	Resident	Non-resident (outfitter guided)	Non-resident (special guided)	Non-resident total	Total
Moose	3296	451	79	530	3826
<i>Caribou 1st seal</i>	2310	421	52	473	2783
<i>Caribou 2nd seal</i>	628	37	7	44	672
Caribou total*	2938	458	59	517	3455
Wood bison	2079	9	17	26	2105
Sheep	1363	379	N/A	379	1742
Goat	404	14	N/A	14	418
Deer	12	N/A	N/A	N/A	12
Elk	854	N/A	N/A	N/A	854
Grizzly bear	1925	504	N/A	504	2429
<i>Black bear 1st seal</i>	2260	438	27	465	2725
<i>Black bear 2nd seal</i>	433	72	2	74	507
Black bear total*	2686	510	29	539	3225
Wolf	No seal required	No seal required	No seal required	No seal required	N/A

\*Hunters may harvest two caribou (only one of which may be a woodland caribou) and two black bears per hunting season.



**Session Briefing Note****Fall 2024****2024 Bear Season (Pine Lake)**

Environment

**Recommended response (Pine Lake bear):**

- Conservation officers responded to a report of a serious bear mauling on the Trans Canada Trail connecting Pine Lake to Haines Junction around 10:30 pm on Sunday, June 30.
- A Haines Junction resident jogging with their leashed dog encountered a group of grizzly bears on the trail. One of the bears attacked the individual and made contact multiple times, resulting in significant injuries requiring immediate medical attention.
- A conservation officer arrived onsite shortly thereafter and killed a bear which was present at the exact location of the attack.
- Four bears were believed to be involved in the attack. For public safety reasons, the nearby campground was closed, and three other bears matching the reported description were located in the area and two were killed.
- The fourth bear escaped and has not been located since despite officers' use of a variety of tools including helicopters and drones to search the area.
- Necropsies were completed on the bears. This information will help officers understand health and genetic factors including group dynamic between the bears and whether these may be factors that resulted in the attack.
- Upon completion of the investigation, we hope there will be learning opportunities for everyone to reduce future conflicts.

**Additional response (Pine Lake bear):**



**Session Briefing Note****Fall 2024****2024 Bear Season (Pine Lake)**

Environment

- The Department of Environment's human-bear conflict risk assessment protocol guides the department's response to human conflict with bears. The protocol considers factors such as bear behavior, history, health, sex, and age.
- We recognize public concern around killing bears for public protection generally and after any attack. When responding to an incident, critical decisions are made for public safety reasons in conjunction with established predator attack response protocols, and any other available information at the time.
- Officers take their responsibilities and the outcomes of their decisions seriously and solemnly. They dedicate their lives to the protection of wildlife and the environment, and killing an animal is never the outcome we want.

**Third response (Pine Lake bear):**

- Conservation officers were aware of bears reported in and around the community, but before this incident, no associated conflicts or complaints received would have justified removing them from the area.
- Conservation officers had been monitoring bear presence in Haines Junction and "bear in area" signs were posted to the Trans Canada Trail between Haines Junction and Pine Lake Campground in early June. Additional bear safety messaging was shared with event organizers ahead of the Kluane Chilkat International Bike Relay, as well as on posters around the community and through social media and radio ads.



## Session Briefing Note

Fall 2024

### 2024 Bear Season (Pine Lake)

Environment

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- After the incident, Yukon Parks reopened the Pine Lake campground, and work was completed to remove vegetation and improve visibility along sections of the trail.
  - For many conflict situations, education about reducing and managing attractants and practicing bear awareness is the first line of prevention.
  - Officers continue to advise Yukoners and visitors to keep bear spray accessible, know how to use it and to be bear aware.
  - Everywhere in the Yukon is bear country and conservation officers remind the public every year that encounters can happen anywhere, at any time.
  - We urge residents to call the 24-hour TIPP line at 1-800-661-0525 if they observe bears in residential areas or situations where people or bears could be at risk.
  - Information on how to stay safe in bear country, both for the benefit of the public and the bears, is available at [Yukon.ca/bears](https://Yukon.ca/bears).

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#### Context—this may be an issue because:

- The Pine Lake incident received international attention and made rounds on social media. There has been criticism about the death of three bears following the incident.
- The Department has received questions about bear management and what protocols are followed during bear conflicts and attacks.

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#### Background:

- As of the end of July 2024, there have been 31 bears killed by conservation officers.
- This is comparable to the previous two years (27 total in July 2022, and 28 total in July 2023).



**Session Briefing Note****Fall 2024****2024 Bear Season (Pine Lake)**

Environment

- DNA samples and teeth from the Pine Lake bears and forensic samples from the scene have been provided to a lab in Alberta to confirm the group genetics and relationships and individual age of each bear. We expect to receive the results this fall.
- The research shows that most serious bear encounters are the result of surprising a bear at a close distance, prompting a defensive attack.
- The most common bear attack situation that results in serious injury is a grizzly bear that is surprised at a close distance, which is under the category of a defensive attack. It is also important to note that while this situation has been documented, it is very uncommon.

**Approved by:****Dennis Berry****October 15, 2024**\_\_\_\_\_  
Deputy Minister of Environment\_\_\_\_\_  
Date approved



## Session Briefing Note

### Human-Wildlife Conflicts

Fall 2024  
Environment

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#### Recommended response (bears):

- Ensuring public safety is a priority for Conservation Officers. They have a range of knowledge and tools to help residents address wildlife concerns on their property to reduce human-wildlife conflicts.
- Managing garbage and other wildlife attractants is the most effective way of reducing human-wildlife conflict. Especially when it comes to bears.
- In some situations, bears can be captured and relocated to remote areas away from the conflict location. Relocating bears is not a solution to the conflict and has limited success as bears often return, cause conflict in a new location, or may perish because of being moved to another bear's territory.
- Killing wildlife, including bears, is the last resort and is only done after all other measures have failed or if the bear's behaviour and level of conflict poses a significant risk to public safety, leaving no other management option available.

#### Additional response (bears):

- As of August 2024, the Department of Environment responded to approximately 139 bear related calls. Black bears accounted for 113 calls while 22 calls were related to grizzly bears. Four other bears were reported but not identified by species.
- Conservation officers have relocated 2 black bears (no grizzly bears) and killed 31 bears total, 24 black bears and 7 grizzly bears.
- Five bears, all black bears, have been killed by the public in defense of life or property.
- So far this year, unsecured garbage and birdseed accounted for 52% of attractants involved in bear conflicts.



## Session Briefing Note

### Human-Wildlife Conflicts

Fall 2024  
Environment

- The Department of Environment provides educational opportunities to reduce human-bear conflicts including:
  - Offering bear safety courses which review bear awareness and how to use bear-spray.
  - School education programs for all grades.
  - A community bear fair every spring to engage and educate Yukoners.
  - Bear awareness and bear safety training through the Hunter Education and Ethics Development course for new hunters.
  - Bear safety reminder posts on social media, as well as sharing “bear in area” posts to alert the public of bears reported in residential areas and popular recreation areas.
  - The “How you can stay safe in bear country” booklet that is updated as knowledge around reducing bear conflict grows. This is available in hard copy at the Department of Environment and in PDF format on Yukon.ca
  - In addition to these education initiatives, activities and resources, conservation officers regularly engage with First Nation partners, local organizations, and municipalities to reduce bear conflicts across the territory.
- Yukoners dealing with aggressive wildlife or those who witness someone feeding wildlife should call the TIPP line at 1-800-661-0525.

#### **Additional response (foxes):**

- Whitehorse is the ‘Wilderness City,’ and foxes have become a prominent feature of our urban landscape.



## Session Briefing Note

**Fall 2024**

### Human-Wildlife Conflicts

Environment

- In 2021, the Yukon government launched the Urban Fox Monitoring Project to help us better understand fox populations in the city, their health and potential public safety risks.
- The concentration of foxes is directly related to the number of residences in the area, as more people usually means increased attractants.
- Conservation Officers manage foxes when necessary and use similar management tools and principles used for bears in addressing problematic fox interactions with the public.
- In 2024, there were 27 foxes relocated in Whitehorse. No other Yukon communities reported relocations.
- I encourage Yukoners to reduce their interactions with foxes in our communities by not feeding foxes, securing attractants, and keeping pets safe.

#### **Third response (wolves):**

- Wolf conflicts can range from relatively benign sightings without additional incidents, to more serious occurrences where wolves have attacked pets and livestock.
- Conservation Officers use many tools and techniques to address wildlife that are involved in conflict. This can include attractant management, hazing, trapping and as a last resort, killing an animal. We make these decisions on a case-by-case basis, depending on the incident and public safety risk.
- In areas where wolves are known or have been seen, we encourage Yukoners to always keep their pets close and under control.

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#### **Context — this may be an issue because:**

- Yukoners often have concerns about human-wildlife conflict; the issue is frequently raised in the media or the Legislature.



# Session Briefing Note

## Human-Wildlife Conflicts

Fall 2024  
Environment

### Background:

- The Department of Environment continues to raise awareness with media, social media, campaigns, and communication initiatives to help minimize conflicts between people and wildlife.
- As of the end of July 2024, there have been 31 bears killed by conservation officers. This is comparable to the previous two years (27 total in July 2022, and 28 total in July 2023).
- The Departments of Environment and Highways and Public Works work together to develop and implement adaptive strategies to decrease the rate of wildlife-vehicle collisions on Yukon roads, such as signage and brush clearing to improve visibility.

[See BN 91 - Vehicle-Wildlife Collisions]

### Approved by

Briar Young

September 5, 2024

\_\_\_\_\_  
A/Deputy Minister of Environment

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date approved



## Session Briefing Note

Fall 2024

### Fish and Wildlife Regulation Change Process

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Environment

#### Recommended response:

- The Government of Yukon and the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board work collaboratively to manage and conserve fish and wildlife to ensure populations remain healthy and resilient, now and for future generations.
- One way we collaborate is through the public engagement process for the amendment of fish and wildlife regulations, to ensure Yukon's regulatory framework for the conservation and management of fish and wildlife remains current and relevant.
- The Government of Yukon and the Board agree on the importance of ensuring an effective process for fish and wildlife regulation changes that is cost-effective, timely, and avoids duplicating our efforts.
- Department of Environment officials have worked collaboratively with Board members and staff to revise and reestablish the process for amending fish and wildlife regulations.

#### Additional Response:

- The revised regulation change process places a greater emphasis on meeting our consultation obligations with Yukon First Nations and transboundary Indigenous governments and groups.
- It also recognizes the interests and authorities of non-Umbrella Final Agreement co-management partners.
- The new process is better aligned with the Yukon's land claim agreements, clarifies roles and responsibilities, improves transparency and streamlines the regulation change process.



## Session Briefing Note

Fall 2024

### Fish and Wildlife Regulation Change Process

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Environment

- This new process will provide greater certainty to Yukoners of when and how regulation changes are identified and put forward for review and consideration.
- Key improvements to this process include:
  - The establishment of a joint Review Committee with members from Yukon government and the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board.
  - Proposals will now be accepted throughout the year using a rolling intake process, where previously they were only accepted every two years. Public call outs will be made twice a year, and public engagement will occur every two years, similar to the previous process.
  - The Review Committee will establish clear evaluation criteria for regulation change proposals to increase transparency and clarity around why a proposal moves forward in the process or is returned to the applicant.
  - The Review Committee will provide feedback to proponents if their regulation change proposal does not proceed to public engagement.
  - Public engagement on proposed regulation changes will be standardized. Online surveys will be managed by Yukon's Bureau of Statistics and community meetings will be facilitated by an independent contractor.



## Session Briefing Note

Fall 2024

### Fish and Wildlife Regulation Change Process

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Environment

- The Review Committee will compile a What We Heard document to inform recommendations provided by the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board.
- To support more meaningful consultation, Yukon First Nations and transboundary Indigenous governments and groups will be notified earlier in the regulation change proposal process of any proposed changes on their traditional territory.
- The Review Committee is expected to be established this fall with the first call-out for regulation change proposals coming shortly after.

#### Third Response:

- With the new regulation change process complete, the Yukon government and the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board are working together to communicate the new approach to Yukon First Nations, Inuvialuit, transboundary Indigenous governments and groups, Renewable Resources Councils, the Wildlife Management Advisory Council (North Slope) and fish and wildlife management stakeholders.
- The Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board will continue to play a key role in facilitating public feedback and providing input on any proposed new or amended regulations.
- We look forward to beginning the implementation of this new process this fall and providing updates as we look to resume the intake process for regulation change proposals.

#### Final response:

- The last fish and wildlife regulation change intake occurred in 2019.
- Our government has implemented 14 of the proposals from that intake and remains committed to implementing the final six. These are:



## Session Briefing Note

Fall 2024

### Fish and Wildlife Regulation Change Process

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Environment

- Mandatory furbearer harvest reporting
  - Allowing trappers to sell non-edible products (e.g. skulls, bones, claws) from fur-bearing animals, wolves and coyotes.
  - Administrative changes to First Nations community group traplines (as requested by First Nations).
  - Allowing issuance of Fur Trading License to corporations
  - Shifting Generic Yukon seal and online registration of seal to an e-license
  - Remove hunter education requirement for trapping concession holders born after April 1, 1987.
- We are committed to ensuring public participation in decisions when it comes to fish and wildlife matters.
  - We encourage all Yukoners to voice their opinions and make their concerns heard during the public engagement on any new or amended fish and wildlife regulations.
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#### Context:

- On August 23, 2024, the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board and the Department of Environment signed “A Collaborative Process to Amend the *Wildlife Act* Regulations and *Yukon Territory Fisheries Regulations*” which outlines an updated regulation change process.
  - Co-management partners, stakeholder groups and members of the hunting community may be interested in when the next intake will occur.
  - The opposition asked about the *Wildlife Act* regulation change process during the Spring 2024 sitting.
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## Session Briefing Note

**Fall 2024**

### **Fish and Wildlife Regulation Change Process**

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Environment

**Background:**

- Typically, every two years, the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board has an intake of proposals for regulation changes to the *Wildlife Regulations*, *Trapping Regulations* and *Yukon Territorial Fishery Regulations*.
- The COVID-19 pandemic interrupted the previously established regulation change cycle.
- The Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board was created under Chapter 16 of the Umbrella Final Agreement. The Board acts in the interest of the public and makes recommendations to the Minister of Environment on all matters related to fish and wildlife management, legislation, research, policies and programs.

**Approved by:**

Dennis Berry

October 11, 2024

\_\_\_\_\_  
Deputy Minister of Environment\_\_\_\_\_  
Date approved



**Session Briefing Note****Fall 2024****Little Atlin Lake Regulation Changes**

Environment

**Recommended response:**

- The Department of Environment is proposing a Variation Order to the *Yukon Territory Fishery Regulations* to protect the population of lake trout in Little Atlin Lake.
- The proposed fishing regulations would address the concerns of a declining population, lowered catch rates, and insufficient protection for recruiting and spawning fish.
- These concerns are shared between Department staff, Carcross/Tagish and Taku River Tlingit First Nations and the Carcross/Tagish Renewable Resources Council.
- The proposed fishing regulation change would:
  - Implement a harvest slot size (allowable fish size) between 585 mm to 650 mm,
  - Implement a seasonal timing window, allowing harvest between December 1 and June 30, and
  - Require the use of single-point barbless hooks for all fishing on Little Atlin Lake.

**Additional response:**

- The amendments will ensure greater protection for the vulnerable lake trout population, while maintaining fishing opportunities on this popular lake.
- This population is small and particularly vulnerable to harvesting pressure because the lake is, on average, relatively shallow, with limited cold-water habitat available for this species.



## Session Briefing Note

**Fall 2024**

### Little Atlin Lake Regulation Changes

Environment

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- Without protections for this population, a closure of lake trout fishing in Little Atlin Lake could become necessary.

**Third response:**

- We work with the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board, and other partners, to responsibly manage fish in the territory.
- We will conduct a joint public engagement with the Board on the proposed change this fall.
- To learn more about the proposed change and participate in the engagement, Yukoners can visit [Yukon.ca/engagement](https://Yukon.ca/engagement).

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**Context—this may be an issue because:**

- The initial step in changing regulations for fishing through a Variation Order is public engagement, which will be occurring during the Fall Session, for implementation in the 2025 fishing season.
- Restrictions on recreational fishing can be controversial or unpopular.

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**Background:**

- Little Atlin Lake experiences high recreational fishing pressure, primarily for pike, but also for lake trout.
- The Little Atlin lake trout population is small, as the lake is on average only 10.6 metres deep, providing relatively little suitable habitat for lake trout which prefer colder and deeper waters.
- In 2021, Carcross/Tagish Renewable Resources Council relayed their concerns around the current level of fishing pressure on Little Atlin Lake to the Department of Environment which analyzed results from the past 20 years of surveys and found that the population of lake trout in the lake has declined.



**Session Briefing Note****Fall 2024****Little Atlin Lake Regulation Changes**

Environment

- Section 6.4 of the *Fishery (General) Regulations* of the federal *Fisheries Act* allows the Director of the Fish and Wildlife Branch of the Department of Environment to vary, by order, the close time, fishing quota, limit on the size or weight of fish or fishing gear or equipment. These Variation Orders may only apply in non-tidal waters and to fish other than salmon.

**Approved by:**

Briar Young

September 6, 2024

A/Deputy Minister of Environment

Date Approved



## Session Briefing Note

Fall 2024

### Campground Reservation System and Visitor Service Operator Pilot

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Environment

#### Recommended response:

- Our Yukon campgrounds are highly popular with both Yukoners and visitors to the territory.
- Following our engagement with Yukoners on the 2020 Yukon Parks Strategy, we heard that the majority of survey respondents (58%) were in favour of testing out a reservation service at territorial campgrounds and we listened to that feedback.
- This year, the Department of Environment met its commitment in the Yukon Parks strategy to launch an online campground reservation service pilot project.
- The service was available at four of the territory's most popular campgrounds this past summer to help improve fair access to these campsites and allow campers to better plan their camping trips.

#### Additional response:

- This new reservation service for frontcountry campgrounds was available at Wolf Creek, Marsh Lake, Pine Lake and Tombstone Mountain campgrounds and will remain available in the 2025 camping season at these locations.
- 50 per cent of campsites at each front country campground were dedicated for reservations. The remainder continued to operate on a first-come, first-served basis.
- This accounts for 103 of approximately 1,100 frontcountry campsites across the territory being available for reservation this past summer.



## Session Briefing Note

Fall 2024

### Campground Reservation System and Visitor Service Operator Pilot

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Environment

- In 2024, we saw 5,819 reservations made, accounting for 7,948 nights of camping at the four campgrounds in the pilot project.
- Backcountry campsite reservations for Tombstone Territorial Park have been available online for 12 years, and in 2024 were moved to this modernized reservation service.
- Yukon resident seniors aged 65 years and older continue to receive a 50 per cent discount on all campground permits, including permits purchased through the campground reservation service.
- Reservations can be made by visiting [yukon.goingtocamp.com](http://yukon.goingtocamp.com) or by calling the toll-free call centre at 1-888-352-0532 or 1-867-322-0222 if you are calling from outside of Canada.
- The call centre is open seven days a week from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. YST during the camping season.

#### Third response (Visitor Service Operators):

- To support Yukon campers and visitors with this new reservation service, Visitor Service Operators were onsite at Wolf Creek, Marsh Lake, and Pine Lake campgrounds this past season to assist visitors with checking in, providing information and education on campground rules and monitoring campground use.
- Visitor Service Operators also helped campers ensure that they were properly registered for their reservable site.
- In addition, Yukon Parks has noticed that the reservation service pilot project may be contributing to a decrease in site-saving behaviour.



## Session Briefing Note

Fall 2024

### Campground Reservation System and Visitor Service Operator Pilot

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Environment

- An objective of the Reservations Service is to reduce user conflicts. The Parks Strategy aims to improve fair access to campsites by decreasing site saving.
- In the 2023 camping season, 15 campsite evictions were issued by Park Rangers due to site saving or unoccupied site violations.
- This camping season, when four of the Yukon's most popular campgrounds had a reservation service in place, only 3 evictions were issued due to site saving.
- The campground reservation service is a pilot project. We are now determining how to incorporate the feedback collected throughout this first season into the second year of the pilot project.
- Following completion of the pilot in 2025, we will make decisions about the viability of an online reservation service beyond the pilot project.
- We look forward to welcoming our visitors in 2025 and providing a new way to ensure a positive camping experience.

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#### Context – this may be an issue because:

- The Yukon Parks Strategy commits to testing online reservations to improve fair access to some of the busier campgrounds. The public will be interested in the new system when it launches for the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of the pilot on March 6, 2025.

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#### Background:

- All of Yukon's 42 road-accessible campgrounds are available on a first-come-first-serve basis.



## Session Briefing Note

**Fall 2024**

### **Campground Reservation System and Visitor Service Operator Pilot**

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Environment

- During engagement on the Yukon Parks Strategy, most survey respondents (58%) said that they are in favour of testing out a reservation service at territorial campgrounds.

**Approved by:****Dennis Berry****October 30, 2024**

Deputy Minister of Environment

Date approved



## Session Briefing Note

**Fall 2024**

### Campground Reservation System and Visitor Service Operator Pilot

Environment

#### Revenue from campground permit sales

Frontcountry (road-accessible) campgrounds only

Permit type	2023 camping season		2024 camping season	
	# permits sold	Revenue collected	# permits sold	Revenue collected
Annual permit	1,206	\$241,200	1,146	\$229,200
Annual permit – 65+	459	\$45,900	585	\$58,500
Online daily permit	4,566	\$82,188	3,849	\$69,282
Online daily permit – 65+	101	\$909	52	\$468
Reservation service bookings	Not applicable		Not applicable	Not yet available
FCFS permit envelope	Not applicable	\$697,183.33	Not yet available	Not yet available



# Session Briefing Note

## Dawson Regional Land Use Planning

**EMR # 4 / ENV #10**  
**Fall 2024**

Energy, Mines and Resources  
and Environment

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### Recommended response:

- The Government of Yukon appreciates that the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Government has submitted their proposed modifications to the Recommended Dawson Regional Land Use Plan.
- The Government of Yukon recognizes how important it is for both Parties to complete the current stage of this significant land planning process in the Dawson region and are investing the time needed to complete a thorough review of the Recommended Plan, including consideration of all pertinent views and information.
- We anticipate submitting our response to accept, reject or modify the Recommended Dawson Regional Land Use Plan with written reasons to the Dawson Regional Planning Commission this fall.

### Additional response:

- The Government of Yukon and the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Government concluded consultation on the Recommended Dawson Regional Land Use Plan in April 2024.
- Upon the conclusion of consultation with the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Government, the Government of Yukon completed consultation with White River First Nation through the summer of 2024, due to overlapping asserted Traditional Territory in the planning region.
- We remain committed to working with the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Government and the Commission to achieve a plan that balances diverse land uses in this region, ensuring Yukon First Nation and public priorities are appropriately reflected to best serve the area and all Yukoners.



**Session Briefing Note**  
**Dawson Regional Land**  
**Use Planning**

Energy, Mines and Resources  
and Environment

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- If the Parties reject or request modifications to the Recommended Plan, the Commission will prepare a Final Recommended Plan. We anticipate they could provide a Final Recommended Plan in 2025, at which point there will be another round of public engagement and First Nations consultation.

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**Context — this may be an issue because:**

- The Dawson Regional Land Use Plan, the Government of Yukon's response to the Recommended Plan, and the future of the interim withdrawals are of high interest to Yukoners.
- Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation has expressed frustration that the Government of Yukon has been slow to respond to the recommended plan.

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**Background:**

- The Government of Yukon and the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Government formed the Dawson Regional Planning Commission in December 2018, following a pause from 2012-2018 due to the Peel Watershed court case.
- The *Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Final Agreement* Chapter 11 process provides the Commission with the autonomy to develop and recommend a plan to the Parties for their consideration.
- The Commission conducted a public consultation on the Draft Plan from June 15 to November 1, 2021.
- The Government of Yukon's response to the Draft Plan in November 2021 focused on six key topics: designations and Land Management Unit boundaries, cumulative effects, wetlands, culture and heritage, missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls and two-spirited people, and implementation.
- Subsequent comments submitted to the Commission by the Government of Yukon pertained to critical minerals, access, rivers and watercourses, cumulative





**Session Briefing Note**  
**Dawson Regional Land**  
**Use Planning**

**EMR # 4 / ENV #10**  
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effects and working within the Draft Plan prohibition of entry order (interim and permanent).

- The Commission delivered the Recommended Plan to the Parties (the Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in Government and the Government of Yukon) on June 10, 2022.
- The Government of Yukon and the Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in Government conducted a public consultation on the Commission’s Recommended Plan from September 20 to December 20, 2022.
- Interim withdrawal of land proposed by the Commission was approved by Order-In-Council on June 15, 2021. This Order was amended on September 7, 2022, to reflect the Recommended Plan. The interim withdrawal is in effect until December 1, 2024 and [is anticipated](#) to be extended to allow time to complete a final plan for the region.
- The Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in Government concluded party-to-party discussions to achieve consensus on response to the Recommended Plan and submitted their proposed modifications to the Recommended Plan pursuant to 11.6.4 of the *Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in Final Agreement* on April 30, 2024, to the Commission.
- The Government of Yukon commenced consultation with White River First Nation, pursuant to bilateral Consultation Agreement and legal duty to consult, in May 2024. On August 21, 2024, White River First Nation submitted a written consultation response to the [Government of Yukon](#).

**Approved by:**

**Paul Moore**

**November 21, 2024**

Deputy Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources

Date approved

**Dennis Berry**

**November 21, 2024**

Deputy Minister of Environment

Date approved



## Session Briefing Note

Fall 2024

### ***Wildlife Act*** **Amendments**

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Environment

#### **Recommended response:**

- In support of a Yukon Forum priority, the Government of Yukon is in the process of establishing a Technical Working Group to advance discussions on amendments to the *Wildlife Act* to ensure consistency with the First Nations Final Agreements and Indigenous rights.
- The focus of the Technical Working Group will be to build off previous efforts undertaken to amend the *Wildlife Act* by identifying outstanding policy issues and recommending solutions to address them.
- The Government of Yukon is interested in developing strong relationships with Yukon First Nations and transboundary Indigenous governments and groups to advance this review.

#### **Additional response:**

- Other than administrative or technical revisions made over the years, the *Wildlife Act* has not been significantly changed since 2001 when it was amended following review and consultation to include a new part incorporating wildlife and harvest provisions reflecting the *Inuvialuit Final Agreement*.
- There are sections of the *Wildlife Act* that are inconsistent with land claim provisions, contributing to confusion in the Act's implementation.
- Amendments to the *Wildlife Act* are needed to provide operational clarity and to adequately recognize the roles, responsibilities and authorities described within the land claim agreements.



## Session Briefing Note

Fall 2024

### ***Wildlife Act*** **Amendments**

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Environment

- We intend to focus on making strategic amendments to the *Wildlife Act* to address the areas of most pressing concern. The notable areas requiring further discussion that have been identified in past reviews include:
  - consistency with subsistence harvest rights,
  - enabling Total Allowable Harvest provisions,
  - fulfilling the specific obligations under Chapter 16 to give effect to Renewable Resources Councils bylaws, and
  - trapline administration.

#### **Third response:**

- On April 23, 2024, the Government of Yukon sent letters to all Yukon First Nations and transboundary Indigenous governments and groups inviting their participation on a Technical Working Group.
- We received positive responses indicating an interest in participating in the Technical Working Group, and department officials continue to contact those who have not responded to ensure we build an inclusive process.

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#### **Context—this may be an issue because:**

- This review is focused on creating consistency between the Umbrella Final Agreement and the *Wildlife Act* and provisions that are inconsistent with Indigenous rights. Other user groups may be frustrated that further amendments are not being considered now.

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#### **Background:**

- The Council of Yukon First Nations passed a resolution in March 2022 requesting the Minister of Environment establish a joint technical working group to make



## Session Briefing Note

**Fall 2024**

### ***Wildlife Act*** **Amendments**

Environment

recommendations, in consultation with the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board, for proposed amendments of the *Wildlife Act* and its regulations to ensure conformity with the Final Agreements.

- February 16, 2024, Yukon Forum Action Item: *To reinvigorate the joint working group on Fish and Wildlife and establish a technical working group as part of the process to amending the Wildlife Act to ensure consistency with the First Nations Final Agreements.*
- First Nations Chiefs spoke about this issue at the February 16, 2024, Yukon Forum.
- In 2012, the department initiated a process to amend the *Wildlife Act* for conformity with the First Nation Final Agreements, subsequently hosting numerous workshops with First Nations, Renewable Resources Councils, and the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board to identify policy issues and potential solutions. The process was paused in 2013, by then-Minister Dixon, following concerns raised by First Nations.
- Linked to including species at risk, a previous attempt was made in 2006-2007 to revise the *Wildlife Act* but work at that time was also paused.

**Approved by:**

Briar Young

September 6, 2024

\_\_\_\_\_  
A/Deputy Minister of Environment\_\_\_\_\_  
Date approved



## Session Briefing Note

**Fall 2024**

### Yukon River Salmon

Environment

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**Recommended response:**

- Salmon are culturally important and a subsistence resource to Yukon First Nations, as well as a keystone species for our ecosystems.
- Although the Government of Yukon does not play a formal role in salmon management, we are committed to ensuring that wild pacific salmon are conserved and protected for future generations.
- We know that the current numbers of salmon need to increase, and we are working with our partners to support their success, including the health of their freshwater habitats and ecosystems.

**Agreement Regarding the Recovery of Yukon River Salmon:**

- In May 2024, the Government of Yukon welcomed an agreement signed by Fisheries and Oceans Canada and the Alaskan State government that commits the parties to several actions for the recovery of Chinook salmon in the Yukon River Drainage.
- This agreement commits the parties to recover Chinook salmon numbers with the goal of at least 71,000 Canadian-origin Chinook salmon entering the Yukon from Alaska over the next seven years.
- This agreement commits parties to the suspension of commercial, sport, domestic and personal use of Chinook salmon fisheries in the mainstream Yukon River and Canadian tributaries for seven years.
- This also includes the suspension of subsistence fishing for Chinook salmon in the Yukon River until the goal of 71,000 Canadian-origin fish crossing the border is reached.
- The agreement allows for limited harvest for ceremonial use and cultural knowledge, recognizing the importance of Chinook salmon to Yukon First Nations.



## Session Briefing Note

**Fall 2024**

### Yukon River Salmon

Environment

- In addition, the agreement calls for Alaska to minimize incidental harvest of Chinook salmon in all other mainstream Yukon River fisheries over this seven-year period.
- The Government of Yukon is pleased to see this agreement direct the Yukon River Panel to develop a recovery plan to guide a path forward in recovery, while placing a priority on traditional and local knowledge to better understand the causes of low Chinook salmon counts.

#### **Yukon salmon report from the federal Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans:**

- The Government of Yukon is aware of the report from the federal Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans regarding the challenges to the sustainability of Yukon River salmon stocks.
- The report highlights a significant decline in wild Pacific salmon populations in the Yukon, particularly Chinook and Chum salmon, with concerning statistics and trends over recent years.
- It emphasizes that the decline in salmon populations severely impacts Yukon First Nations, affecting food security, cultural practices, and community health. For example, traditional fish camps and ceremonies are disrupted, leading to a loss of cultural heritage and increased social issues.
- Multiple factors contribute to the decline, including climate change, competition with hatchery salmon, predation by seals, Alaskan commercial fisheries, habitat loss, changing river conditions, and mining projects.
- The report echoes the priorities we've identified in discussions with salmon recovery partners through Yukon River Panel and Joint Salmon Rebuilding Committee.



## Session Briefing Note

**Fall 2024**

### Yukon River Salmon

Environment

- We welcome the recommendations for the federal government to:
  - strengthen its collaboration with other levels of government and across jurisdictions, particularly Alaska and the United States, and
  - increase its support of locally-led salmon recovery efforts informed by traditional and local knowledge.
- With recognition of the tremendous impact the Yukon River salmon decline has had on Yukon First Nations subsistence harvest, culture, food security and traditional practices, we will continue to thoroughly assess the recommendations and identify any potential actions in due course.
- I would like to thank the Committee and the organizations and individuals who participated as witnesses, drafted and submitted briefs or otherwise contributed to this report's drafting and publication.
- The Yukon government remains committed to working with Yukon First Nations and the Government of Canada to rebuild salmon stocks in the territory.

#### **Additional response:**

- As in previous years, Chinook and Chum salmon returns to the Yukon in 2024 were low.
- Just over 24,000 Yukon River Chinook entered Canada, meeting the pre-season forecast of 19,000 – 28,000. However, this remains below the goal of 71,000 Canadian-origin Chinook reaching the international border.
- Of these, only 355 Chinook reached the Whitehorse Fish Ladder by September 7th.



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### Yukon River Salmon

Environment

- In 2023, only 154 Chinook salmon reached the Whitehorse Fish Ladder at the season end in mid-September.
- Twenty years earlier, in 2003, over 1,400 Chinook salmon were counted at the Whitehorse Fish Ladder.
- Yukon River Chum salmon saw similar low returns. Only 14,074 entered Canada, well below the escapement goal of 70,000 – 104,000.
- The Chum salmon returns to the Fishing Branch River fell significantly short of the annual goal of 22,000 to 49,000, with only 5,765 fish recorded.
- Currently, all public and commercial fishing for Chum Salmon continues to be closed in the Yukon.
- The Government of Yukon will continue to support the Yukon River Panel's efforts to advocate for international cooperation on salmon recovery.
- An option currently under discussion with Alaska and our First Nation partners is the value of establishing a conservation hatchery in the territory as one of several possible ways to improve salmon escapement levels.
- This conversation is on-going, with a joint First Nation and Government working group still discussing recovery options.
- I look forward to continuing to advance discussions with our partners to pursue opportunities to secure the future of this important species.

#### Third response:

- In 2022, Fisheries and Oceans Canada announced the Pacific Salmon Strategy Initiative, a long-term strategy to reverse the decline of Pacific salmon stocks in the Yukon and British Columbia.



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### Yukon River Salmon

Environment

- The strategy aims to restore and protect critical salmon habitat, modernize Pacific salmon fisheries, explore conservation hatcheries, and continue collaborating with First Nation governments, territorial and provincial governments and the public to conserve and rebuild vulnerable salmon stocks.
- To support the recovery of salmon, food security and traditional practices, we are also exploring opportunities to strengthen protection of freshwater fish subsistence harvesting opportunities.
- We recognize that freshwater fish harvest practices may change in response to the moratorium on salmon harvest.
- The Department of Environment supports Fisheries and Oceans Canada and Yukon First Nations in exploring the establishment of a Yukon-based conservation hatchery.
- Department of Environment staff, Yukon First Nations and staff from Fisheries and Oceans Canada are working together to form a long-term plan for the recovery of Chinook salmon. Workshops will be occurring again this fall to discuss the challenges to these fish, and what we can do to mitigate them and support the recovery of Chinook salmon.
- We will continue to work with Yukon First Nations towards conserving and rebuilding salmon stocks in the Yukon and we look forward to the next steps.

#### Victoria Gold Heap Leach Failure:

- The implications of the Victoria Gold Heap Leach failure on salmon rearing habitats are uncertain. However, monitoring work done in the area suggests very few salmon are currently using Haggart creek and the upper reaches of the Haggart creek watershed.



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**Fall 2024**

### Yukon River Salmon

Environment

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- Work is underway by Fisheries and Oceans Canada and the Department of Environment to determine the amount of suitable habitat for overwintering freshwater fish and salmon, so that we can gain a better understanding of the potential influences.
  - Fisheries and Oceans Canada remains the responsible authority for salmon management in the Yukon. The Department of Environment remains committed to ensuring that salmon are protected and conserved for future generations.
- 

#### **Context—this may be an issue because:**

- The 2023 Confidence and Supply Agreement and Minister Clarke's 2023 Mandate letter include a commitment to take immediate action to protect salmon and restore population levels.
  - There is concern about the overharvesting of Canadian-born salmon populations in Alaskan waters.
  - Recently, the Victoria Gold Heap Leach failure resulted in concerns regarding salmon health in the Haggart Creek watershed, the South McQuesten River and the Yukon River.
- 

#### **Background:**

- Yukon First Nations have voluntarily restricted salmon harvest for many years. This voluntary prohibition remained in place during the 2024 run.
- The Chinook salmon spawning escapement goal of 42,500 to 55,000 has not been met since 2018.
- The Department of Environment has met with Fisheries and Oceans Regional Director General and the US Consul General and raised the need for international collaboration on recovery and limiting harvest.
- Staff also met with Yukon First Nations and Fisheries and Ocean Canada to discuss Yukon River salmon stock rehabilitation.



# Session Briefing Note

**Fall 2024**

## Yukon River Salmon

Environment

- On January 8 and 9, 2024, department staff attended a two-day workshop related to the Whitehorse Generating Station relicensing project, which is directly related to fish passage and hatchery operations to support Chinook Salmon.
- On October 24, 2024, the federal Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans released a report entitled “Challenges to the Sustainability of the Yukon Salmon Stocks” examining the decline of the Yukon River salmon.

**Approved by:****Dennis Berry**

Deputy Minister of Environment

**November 4, 2024**

Date approved



## Session Briefing Note

**Fall 2024**

### Lodgepole Lane

Environment

**Recommended response:**

- The Government of Yukon is aware of issues reported at 2 Lodgepole Lane regarding public health, safety, and potential environmental concerns.
- Some reports received by the Department of Environment about 2 Lodgepole Lane date as far back as 2008.
- I can confirm that the Department of Environment has worked diligently with appropriate agencies to address the concerns received regarding this property.
- The Lodgepole Lane property is an example of a complex site with a wide range of reported concerns involving multiple agencies. Over the years, this has included Health and Social Services, Fire and Protective Services, the City of Whitehorse and RCMP.
- Currently, as this situation stands, the lead for addressing issues at this property remains with the City of Whitehorse.
- We understand that the City of Whitehorse laid bylaw charges against the owner of the property.
- The City of Whitehorse issued an Order to Comply requesting the property owner to clean up the property by December 31, 2024 and continues to direct clean-up efforts at the property, including surface debris removal, sorting materials into organized piles, and dealing with the condemned residential property.
- Longer-term clean-up efforts may also involve soil remediation. However, based on testing the Department completed several years ago with the City of Whitehorse, there does not appear to be significant hydrocarbon contamination on this private property.



## Session Briefing Note

Fall 2024

### Lodgepole Lane

Environment

- The Government of Yukon is not currently pursuing legal action, and we continue to support the City of Whitehorse with technical expertise and assistance on this file.

#### **Additional response:**

- The Department of Environment continues to operate within its legislative authority, namely the *Environment Act*, *Waters Act*, *Wildlife Act* and associated regulations.
- Although contaminated soil was found at 2 Lodgepole Lane, it is not present at a level that warrants direct Department of Environment intervention either in a compliance or remediation capacity.
- Testing results from numerous sampling events over the years showed that there does not appear to be significant hydrocarbon contamination on this private property.
- Spills on private properties are common, and living near a site with contamination does not necessarily present an inherent risk to public health.
- 2 Lodgepole Lane was added to the Contaminated Sites Information Map, which is a public inventory of properties for which the department holds evidence of some level of contamination at one point in time.
- In recent developments, a bear was reported to be feeding on unidentified material on site.
- Conservation Officer Services attended the site and installed a bear trap. Unfortunately, the bear avoided the trap and was killed for public protection by a conservation officer when it continued to return to the site even after all identified attractants were removed. The investigation has now concluded and the conflict has been resolved.



# Session Briefing Note

Fall 2024

## Lodgepole Lane

Environment

### Third response:

- I would like to reiterate again that we are committed to supporting City of Whitehorse officials with technical expertise and assistance in navigating applicable regulatory requirements.
- The Department of Environment will continue to be an active and collaborative partner and will continue to support the City of Whitehorse however possible.
- The public is encouraged to report all spills, on or off private property, to the Yukon Spill Line at 867-667-7244. Proper management of spills is key to ensuring long-term contamination is prevented.

### Context—this may be an issue because:

- Neighbours of number 2 Lodgepole Lane have been vocal about several issues with the property, including soil contamination.

### Background:

- Complaints regarding 2 Lodgepole Lane are numerous and cover a wide range of issues, many of which are the mandate of other agencies (e.g., management of human waste, dealing with a building that has been deemed hazardous by the City's Fire Chief, dealing with suspected criminal activity at the site, etc.).
- Without strong evidence of a clear responsible party or significant adverse effects, the department has no ability to order or direct the current property owners to remediate.

### Approved by:

**Dennis Berry****November 7, 2024**

Deputy Minister of Environment

Date approved



**Session Briefing Note**  
**Our Clean Future**  
**Implementation**

Environment and Energy,  
Mines and Resources

**Recommended response:**

- We recognize the urgency of the climate emergency and launched Our Clean Future in September 2020 to map our route forward.
- The Government of Yukon continues to make significant progress on implementing Our Clean Future.
- In 2023, we announced the addition of 42 new actions to help us reach our climate goals, which brings the total number of climate actions to 178.
- These new actions are a product of the important work of the Yukon Climate Leadership Council, the Yukon Youth Panel on Climate Change, Navius Research and the findings in the Climate Risk Assessment report.
- We continue to track our progress on goals, targets and actions. Information on our progress was most recently published in [November in the 2023](#) Our Clean Future Annual Report and on the Our Clean Future website.
- Since releasing Our Clean Future in 2020, the Government of Yukon has completed [68](#) Our Clean Future actions, [105](#) are in progress or ongoing and [5](#) have not yet been started.

**Additional response:**

- As we continue to address climate change, it is important for us to look back on our progress as we diligently work towards our objectives.
- Under Our Clean Future, the government is focused on ensuring the Yukon is highly resilient to climate change impacts by 2030. (See ENV BN #21)



**Session Briefing Note**  
**Our Clean Future**  
**Implementation**

Environment and Energy,  
Mines and Resources

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- This year, we:
  - Completed flood maps for the Southern Lakes region, [Teslin](#) and Carmacks. Flood hazard mapping for Old Crow and the City of Dawson and the Klondike Valley are expected to be completed in 2025. [A flood hazard mapping study for Mayo is also underway and will be completed in 2026.](#)
  - Worked with municipalities and First Nations governments to finalize the Community Wildfire Protection Plans in Faro, Haines Junction, Teslin, the [City of Dawson and Whitehorse](#). [Plans for Beaver Creek, Mayo, Old Crow, Watson Lake, Destruction Bay and Burwash Landing are underway.](#)
  - Advanced climate change preparedness by initiating development of a permafrost monitoring system for key public buildings, and guidelines to address climate hazards in major infrastructure projects.
  - Established a geohazard mapping program to understand risks from climate change to the Yukon's transportation corridors.
  - Completed flood risk mapping for all transportation corridors in the Yukon.
- We are committed to efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and we support Yukoners in the transition to cleaner transportation options and energy efficient homes and buildings.
- This year, we:
  - Began providing rebates for medium-duty electric vehicles.
  - Passed an electric vehicle charging station regulation under the *Public Utilities Act* to allow First Nation governments, private



**Session Briefing Note**  
**Our Clean Future**  
**Implementation**

Environment and Energy,  
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businesses and municipalities to sell electricity through electric vehicle charging stations.

- Installed electric vehicle chargers in every road-accessible community in the Yukon, enabling zero-emissions travel throughout the territory. 19 fast charging stations are now operational throughout the territory, [and one new Level 2 charger in Swift River](#). (See EMR BN #30)
- Since 2020, we have provided rebates for 518 energy efficient new homes, exceeding our 2030 target of 500.

**Third response:**

- Existing actions put us on track to reduce the Yukon's emissions by 30 per cent by 2030. However, there is still significant work required to meet our target reduction of 45 per cent by 2030.
- [One of the major drivers of emissions is population – more people means more cars on the road and more homes to heat.](#)
- [However, as the population of the Yukon continues to grow, we aren't seeing the rate of emissions increase that we would expect.](#)
- [We are seeing lower emissions per Yukoner than we saw in 2010.](#)
- [This is a promising sign that the emissions intensity of everyday life for Yukoners may be starting to decrease.](#)
- We [passed](#) legislation to set a target of a 45 per cent reduction in mining sector emissions per unit of production by 2035.
- We will continue to build on Our Clean Future as we learn more and implement new actions. This will be reflected in future annual reports.



## ENV #20 / EMR #34

Fall 2024

### Session Briefing Note Our Clean Future Implementation

Environment and Energy,  
Mines and Resources

- We will continue to find opportunities to reach our targets as we work with experts, stakeholders and partner governments across the territory and beyond.

#### Context — this may be an issue because:

- Climate change and the government's progress in delivering on Our Clean Future commitments is of interest to Yukoners.

#### Background:

- Our Clean Future was released on September 14, 2020, and now has 178 actions, of which 136 are original actions and 42 are new actions. These actions seek to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and support the Yukon to be highly resilient to the impacts of climate change by 2030.
- The Government of Yukon reports annually on progress for the implementation of Our Clean Future. Four Annual Reports have been published to date, with the latest report released on [November 12, 2024](#) (capturing [2023](#) data).
- The Our Clean Future website was launched in December 2023, which shows the government's commitments and successes towards fighting climate change.

#### Approved by:

Dennis Berry

November 19, 2024

Deputy Minister, Environment

Date approved

Paul Moore

November 13, 2024

Deputy Minister, Energy, Mines and Resources

Date approved





## Appendix A: Department of Environment Our Clean Future Actions Status

The Department of Environment is leading 33 actions set out in the Our Clean Future Report. Of these actions, 12 have been successfully completed and 18 are still in progress.

Of the 18 actions in progress, 7 were announced in December 2023, and 3 are ongoing projects which require yearly reports or continued operation of a program.

### COMPLETED:

**H11: Action:** Assess options to provide financial support for actions to improve the climate resiliency of homes and buildings by 2023.

**Response:** A research paper was completed internally. Next steps on feasibility and implementation are being explored.

**H25: Action:** Analyze and compare the climate benefits of different types of biomass harvesting and use in Yukon by 2021 in order to identify recommended forest management practices to guide sustainable and low-carbon biomass use.

**Response:** With this work now complete, the Yukon government is using the findings to help inform procedures to support the use of local biomass with the lowest carbon intensities.

**I13: Action:** Develop legislation that will enable the Government of Yukon to restrict or prohibit the production, supply or distribution of appropriate single use bags by 2021.

**Response:** This regulation banned the distribution and sale of plastic single use bags in 2021, and single use paper bags in 2022.


**L2: Action:** Incorporate a climate change lens into the decision-making process for major Government of Yukon policies, programs and projects by 2021. COMPLETE

**Response:** All proposals seeking Cabinet approval must now provide an analysis of climate change considerations.

**L3: Action:** Incorporate climate change risks into Government of Yukon departmental planning processes by 2022.

**Response:** All departments with Our Clean Future commitments incorporated climate change into their department strategic plans.





**L5: Action:** Launch a suite of climate change training to offer to Government of Yukon employees, including decision makers, by 2025.

**Response:** We worked with Yukon University to develop two introductory climate change training courses, which are now available online to all Yukoners, including Government of Yukon staff.

**L12: Action:** Create easy access to technical information and lessons learned about climate change, energy and green economy for governments and stakeholders by 2021.

**Response:** the Our Clean Future website (<https://our-clean-future.service.yukon.ca/>) was launched in December 2023 to support progress tracking.

**P1: Action:** Establish a standardized method to determine the health status of wetland ecosystems and complete a pilot study to measure the baseline conditions of various reference wetlands by 2022 to better understand future changes.

**Response:** The study was completed this year, and we are now considering the implications of the study

**P7: Action:** Work with Yukon First Nations to develop a tailored hunter education program by 2023 that can be adapted and delivered by Yukon First Nations for First Nations citizens.

**Response:** We now have a two First Nations Hunting, Ethics, and Education Program instructors.

**P11: Action:** Expand monitoring of concentrations of particulate matter in the air from biomass burning and forest fires to all Yukon communities by 2023. COMPLETE

**Response:** Purple Air monitors have been installed in all communities across the Yukon. These monitors offer real-time data on particulate concentration, and the information is made accessible to the public at [cyclone.unbc.ca/aqmap](https://cyclone.unbc.ca/aqmap).

**T27: Action:** Analyze flood risk along critical transportation corridors at risk of flooding by 2023.

**Response:** Flood frequency estimates have been developed for transportation corridors. This report is complete and on Yukon.ca.





## IN PROGRESS:

**C2:** **Action:** Develop flood probability maps for all Yukon communities at risk of flooding by 2023 that incorporate climate change projections.

**Response:** Collection of data and information to support development of five flood maps is underway.

**C3:** **Action:** Develop detailed guidelines by 2025 that can be used by the Government of Yukon and partners to develop walkable, bike-friendly and transit-oriented communities.

**Response:** contract has been completed to assist in drafting essential guidelines for developing walkable, bike-friendly and transit-oriented communities.

**C8:** **Action:** Expand monitoring networks and improve modelling tools to generate reliable daily flood forecasts and relevant warnings for all at-risk Yukon communities by 2024.

**Response:** A project is currently underway to implement a Flood Early Warning System for data management, designed for flood forecasters.

**E19:** **Action:** In collaboration with Yukon Energy Corporation, by 2027, undertake a study to improve understanding of groundwater in the Upper Yukon River Basin to inform decision-making related to hydro-electric generation.

**Response:** This action was announced in December 2023. Work is underway to confirm project details for this action.


**H24:** **Action:** Amend the Air Emissions Regulations by 2025 in order to regulate air emissions from commercial and institutional biomass burning systems to minimize the release of harmful air pollutants.

**Response:** the process to amend the Air Emissions Regulations is currently in progress.

**I14:** **Action:** Design and implement a system for Extended Producer Responsibility by 2025 that will make producers responsible for managing materials through the lifecycle of a product.

**Response:** We anticipate having an Extended Producer Responsibility regulation in place by this winter.





**L7: Action:** Provide mentorship and engagement opportunities for Yukon youth, including participating in territorial and major international climate change and energy events with Government of Yukon staff beginning in 2023.

**Response:** Opportunities for mentorship opportunities for Yukon youth to participate international climate change and energy events with the Government of Yukon staff are being explored to start in 2024.

**L9: Action:** Assess climate hazards and vulnerabilities to those hazards across Yukon every three to four years between 2020 and 2030 to prioritize climate change adaptation actions.

**Response:** The report "Assessing Climate Change Risk and Resilience in the Yukon," was in fall 2022, and identifies areas that need improvement in climate change resilience.

**L10: Action:** Support the Government of Canada's work to develop a pan-territorial climate hub by 2030 that will support access to climate data and projections for the north.

**Response:** Environmental and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) has chosen not to establish a northern climate hub but is instead funding a position within the Climate Change secretariat to improve access to northern data.

**L13: Action:** Launch a Yukon-wide information or social marketing campaign in 2021 that will educate Yukoners on greenhouse gas emissions, renewable energy, climate change adaptation, and other topics and highlight what Yukoners can do to support climate change initiatives.

**Response:** To ensure Yukoners can make evidence-based decisions, a social media and awareness campaign was initiated in fall 2021.

**L17: Action:** By 2030, finalize a net-zero and just transition plan in collaboration with Indigenous and municipal and industry partners.

**Response:** This is action was announced in December 2023. Work is underway to confirm project details for this action.

**L21: Action:** Complete an assessment of wetland soil carbon reserves within priority watersheds by 2027.





**Response:** This is action was announced in December 2023. Work is underway to confirm project details for this action.

- L23: Action:** By 2024, work with various levels of Government to develop guidance on greenhouse gas emissions accounting practices that support consistent, simple and transparent reporting of emission reductions.

**Response:** This is action was announced in December 2023. Work is underway to confirm project details for this action.

- P2: Action:** Adapt existing surface and groundwater monitoring networks by 2026 to be able to track long-term trends in water quality and quantity in a changing climate.

**Response:** Surface and groundwater monitoring networks are being evaluated to optimize data collection to track climate change. All data has been assessed for length of time-series, data quality, data gaps, and anthropogenic impact and upgrades are underway to improve the data networks.

- P3: Action:** Continue to lead and participate in projects that improve our understanding of how climate change is affecting ecosystems, wild species and their habitats.

**Response:** We are continuing our efforts to address the impact of climate change on wild species and their habitats through focused research projects.


- P4: Action:** Report annually on monitoring of key species that will provide an indication of the impacts of climate change on Yukon ecosystems and expand monitoring to more taxonomic groups.

**Response:** This is an ongoing annual report.

- P5: Action:** Establish a network of protected and managed areas that is ecologically representative and well connected using landscapes conservation science and Indigenous knowledge in order to allow native species, assemblages and ecosystems, to move adapt and survive in the face of climate change.

**Response:** Efforts to respond to the impacts of climate change on wild species and their habitats are ongoing.





**P6:** **Action:** Conduct a climate vulnerability assessment to inform an invasive species management strategy for the Yukon and develop a centralized data repository to track new and invasive species to Yukon by 2027.

**Response:** We are developing an invasive species program to address the growing number of invasive species in Yukon through monitoring and protective actions for native species.

**P16:** **Action:** By 2026, work with First Nations and communities to address a gap in lake-monitoring to capture changes in water in order to support fish habitat protection and community safety.

**Response:** This is action was announced in December 2023. Work is underway to confirm project details for this action.

**P17:** **Action:** Starting 2024, deliver a series of safety on the land and hunter safety course in communities on an annual basis.

**Response:** This is action was announced in December 2023. Work is underway to confirm project details for this action.

**P18:** **Action:** Undertake geohazard and/or flood risk hazard assessments for Yukon campgrounds and other key public infrastructure in territorial parks by 2030.

**Response:** This is action was announced in December 2023. Work is underway to confirm project details for this action.

**T24:** **Action:** Continue to operate the Yukon Rideshare program to make carpooling and other shared travel easier.

**Response:** This program is available however under used; investigations are underway to ensure that the intent of this action is met



## Session Briefing Note

Fall 2024

### Climate Change and Emergency Preparedness

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Environment

#### Recommended response:

- Yukoners have experienced climate-related emergencies over the last several years, including large-scale flooding and severe wildfire events.
- This past summer, Canada witnessed another devastating wildfire season, causing our neighbours in Alberta and British Columbia to suffer severe losses in communities.
- Here at home in the Yukon, we are impacted by climate hazards such as wildfire, permafrost thaw, flooding, and extreme weather that threaten our homes, infrastructure, and communities.
- Strengthening our emergency management and preparedness is critical in our work to keep Yukoners safe and reduce impacts that climate change is having on our communities.
- We continue to build and prioritize our climate preparedness commitments in Our Clean Future while working with partners, experts, and knowledge holders to make the Yukon more resilient to climate change.

#### Additional response:

- In December 2023, the Government of Yukon announced new actions, including adaptation actions to address the recommendations and priorities outlined in the 2022 *Climate Risk and Resilience Assessment* report.
- The Government of Yukon has over 65 adaptation actions in Our Clean Future that support climate resilience, 18 of which were announced in 2023.
- These new actions include increasing our fire, flood and weather forecasting capacity by hiring a meteorologist and data scientist to



## Session Briefing Note

Fall 2024

### Climate Change and Emergency Preparedness

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Environment

improve available systems, additional digital tools and reporting structures for emergency preparedness.

- Other new actions include planting 300,000 deciduous seedlings in high-priority forest fuel management areas throughout the Yukon to help reduce wildfire hazards.
- We are also undertaking a climate adaptation study to understand the risks imposed on the Yukon's aviation infrastructure, operations, and maintenance due to climate change.
- The Government of Yukon continues to inform the public of how they can be prepared for emergencies and support household resilience to climate-related hazards and impacts including flooding, fires, landslides, and power outages.
- This includes working to produce flood hazard maps for 14 flood prone communities, a critical tool for land use planning, flood preparedness, emergency management and public awareness of flood risk.
- The first flood hazard maps for the Southern Lakes communities, Carmacks and Teslin are now available on the Government of Yukon's Flood Atlas. There are four additional maps in progress for Mayo, Old Crow, Dawson City, and the Klondike Valley.
- The Flood Atlas shares timely and vital information regarding flooding in the territory and can be found at [flood-atlas.service.yukon.ca](https://flood-atlas.service.yukon.ca).

#### Third response:

- Progress has been made on several actions that were designed to better prepare us for emergencies, including:
  - delivering emergency management training and updating emergency management plans in communities,



## Session Briefing Note

Fall 2024

### Climate Change and Emergency Preparedness

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Environment

- working with First Nations and municipalities to conduct Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment workshops,
    - continuing geohazard mapping projects in communities across the Yukon, and,
    - completing Community Wildfire Protection Plans.
  - In addition, we are protecting the health of communities and first responders by establishing clean air spaces in communities and by purchasing a mobile incident command station that will double as a clean-air shelter for first responders working in wildfire areas.
  - The Government of Yukon will continue implementing actions outlined in Our Clean Future and work towards increasing resilience to climate change while protecting the health and safety of all Yukoners.
- 

#### Context—this may be an issue because:

- Climate change and emergency preparedness is a topic of high public interest following the continued impact climate change is having on communities across the country.
  - Questions may arise about how actions in Our Clean Future will support communities to adapt and prepare for climate-related emergencies (e.g., floods and fires).
- 

#### Background:

- Adapting to the impacts of climate change is one of the four goals of Our Clean Future. This includes the target for the Yukon to be “highly resilient to the impacts of climate change by 2030.”
- We have started measuring progress on climate resiliency through five thematic areas: disaster resilience, infrastructure, environment, health and well-being, and economy. As set out in Our Clean Future, our resilience target is that the Yukon will be highly resilient to climate change by 2030.



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**Fall 2024**

### Climate Change and Emergency Preparedness

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Environment

- On September 12, 2022, the Government of Yukon released the report titled *Assessing Climate Change Risk and Resilience in the Yukon*.
- This report supports the fulfillment of a key action in Our Clean Future: to assess climate hazards and vulnerabilities every three to four years between now and 2030.

**Approved by:****Dennis Berry****November 8, 2024**\_\_\_\_\_  
Deputy Minister of Environment\_\_\_\_\_  
Date approved



## Session Briefing Note

### Mining Intensity Target

Energy, Mines and  
Resources

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#### Recommended response:

- The Government of Yukon has established a target of a 45 per cent reduction in the mining sector's greenhouse gas emissions intensity by 2035.
- During this session we are introducing amendments to the Clean Energy Act that will set an intensity-based target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the mining sector, completing action I9 in Our Clean Future. (See BN # 33)
- An intensity-based target allows for trends to be tracked regardless of how many mines are operational at any one time. It will show our progress in reducing mining-related greenhouse gas emissions and encourage mine operators to adopt low carbon practices.

#### Additional response:

- The mining intensity approach recognizes the differences between separate quartz and placer operations throughout their mining lifecycles, including post-production.
- Including post-production and abandoned mines in the target means that emissions from projects like the Faro Mine remediation will also be captured in annual reporting on progress.
- Since 2022, quartz mines have been required to estimate their greenhouse gas emissions, identify reduction measures, and report on greenhouse gas emissions.
- The proposed Mining Intensity Target approach will be the first of its kind in Canada.



## Session Briefing Note

### Mining Intensity Target

Energy, Mines and  
Resources

- Implementation of the approach will include comprehensive engagement with industry to ensure it is designed to work within the Yukon's unique context.

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#### Context — this may be an issue because:

- Keno Hill is currently the only quartz mine in operation since Victoria Gold experienced a failure of its heap leach facility in June 2024.
- The Government of Canada is seeking regulatory approval to begin remediation of the Faro mine. It is anticipated that GHG emissions from this remediation will be significant.

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#### Background:

- The Clean Energy Act currently includes mining emissions in the net-zero, 2050 legislated target.
- Energy, Mines and Resources conducted public engagement on the overall mining intensity target in fall 2022. A What We Heard report from that engagement is available on Yukon.ca.
- The percentage of emissions from mining is variable year-to-year. From 2009-2020, it contributed 8 to 15 per cent of the Yukon's total greenhouse gas emissions. An intensity-based target allows for trends to be tracked regardless of how many mines are operational at any one time.
- A target of an overall mining emissions intensity reduction of 45 per cent below 2023 levels for 2035 and subsequent years was announced during the spring 2023 legislative session.
- Energy, Mines and Resources worked with a consultant to inform the development of baselines and benchmarks to measure progress towards the target.
- During spring 2024, the consultant and Energy, Mines and Resources presented the results and proposed baseline methodology to industry at a series of in-person and virtual meetings.



## Session Briefing Note Mining Intensity Target

- Using data provided through the quartz mine licensing process and from fuel tax data, the Government of Yukon will track the sector's progress toward achieving greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets.
- Canada's approach to pricing carbon pollution for emissions-intensive trade-exposed industries, such as mining, includes an Output-Based Pricing System. Depending on their size, quartz mines in the Yukon may be subject to this system.
- The Department of Finance is leading the development of a separate regulation that will return carbon levies collected from larger mines under the Output-Based Pricing System. Energy, Mines and Resources is assisting with this work. (See BN #28)

### Approved by:

**Paul Moore**

**October 17, 2024**

Deputy Minister  
Department of Energy, Mines and Resources

Date approved



## Session Briefing Note

Fall 2024

### Carbon Pricing (Corporate Note)

Environment & Finance

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#### Recommended response:

- Since its introduction in 2019, the Government of Yukon has been supportive of carbon pricing as a policy to help us reduce emissions and move toward our ambitious climate targets.
- We take a balanced approach to carbon pricing in the territory, one which considers the need to reduce emissions as well as the fair return of carbon pricing revenues to Yukoners.
- The Yukon's carbon rebate is revenue neutral. We are committed to both reducing carbon emissions in the territory and to returning all the federal government's revenues to Yukoners.
- Returning proceeds to individuals, municipal governments, Yukon First Nations, businesses, and mining operations is a critical part of our approach to carbon pricing in the Yukon.
- We are returning 100 per cent of the federal carbon levy to these five rebate groups who receive more, on average, than they pay in carbon pricing levies.

#### Additional response:

- The departments of Environment and Finance work together to coordinate with our federal counterparts to assess the implications of carbon pricing in the territory and to ensure the needs of the territory are recognized in national policy.
- This includes retaining control over how revenues are distributed back to Yukon individuals, municipal governments, Yukon First Nations and businesses.



## Session Briefing Note

Fall 2024

### Carbon Pricing (Corporate Note)

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Environment & Finance

- It also includes excluding the carbon price from electricity generation and aviation, in recognition of the unique constraints of our northern jurisdiction.

#### Third response:

- Carbon pricing is just one tool in our toolkit to address the climate emergency.
- We continue to implement Our Clean Future to reduce the Yukon's greenhouse gas emissions and, more broadly, to reduce the impact of the carbon levy on Yukoners.
- In December of last year, we announced 42 new actions under Our Clean Future as part of the third Our Clean Future annual report outlining the progress we have made on the strategy.
- Although we have made progress on many of our commitments, there is still significant work required to meet our target of reducing our emissions by 45 per cent by 2030.
- Ensuring that we utilize every policy lever at our disposal, including carbon pricing, is essential to meet our goals.
- Together, we are finding solutions to reduce our emissions while strengthening our economy and supporting our industry partners.

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#### Context—this may be an issue because:

- Carbon pricing remains a highly sensitive topic across the country with many provinces and territories voicing their own perspective on how they would like to see this pricing mechanism handled moving forward.



## Session Briefing Note

Fall 2024

### Carbon Pricing (Corporate Note)

Environment & Finance

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- In October 2023, the federal government announced a temporary 3-year exemption for home-heating oil from the federal carbon price, with the intention of helping Atlantic Canada in particular.
  - While Atlantic Canada welcomed this change, the exemption has received considerable backlash. Most provincial governments (except for British Columbia) have called for extending the carbon price exemption to all home-heating fuels (including natural gas).
  - Critics also argued that the exemption undermines the credibility of the carbon tax and may weaken the incentives to switch to lower carbon heating options.
- 

#### Background:

- The federal Draft Regulations Amending the Fuel Charge Regulations stipulate that all heating oil will be exempt from the fuel charge starting November 8, 2023, until April 2027.
- This means that light fuel oil consumption in all buildings, including residential, commercial, and institutional, will be exempt from the fuel charge.
- Nearly half (49.2% in 2022) of Yukon homes use oil-based heating.
- In Yukon, individuals, businesses, placer/quartz mining operations, Yukon First Nations governments and municipal governments are all eligible for a rebate for carbon pricing.
- Individuals who live outside of Whitehorse receive a remote supplement, which was recently increased from 10 to 20% (and is now in line with the federal remote supplement for backstop jurisdictions including Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario, and Saskatchewan).
- On September 12, 2024, British Columbia's Premier David Eby announced that if the federal government were to remove the carbon pricing backstop, then British Columbia would end the carbon levy in the province.
- British Columbia has had its own carbon pricing system in place since 2008.



**Session Briefing Note****Carbon Pricing  
(Corporate Note)**

Environment &amp; Finance

- British Columbia and the Yukon were the remaining supporters of carbon pricing as a climate change policy, with all other provinces publicly opposing the federal system. In late 2023, the newly elected Premier of the Northwest Territories also called for an exemption from the federal carbon levy for the territory.
- To date, Canada has been firm on granting no exception to the backstop.

**Approved by:**

Dennis Berry

October 2, 2024

A/Deputy Minister of Environment

Date approved

Jessica Schultz

October 1, 2024

Deputy Minister of Finance

Date approved



## Session Briefing Note

**Fall 2024**

### Reducing Government of Yukon Emissions

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Environment / HPW

**Recommended response:**

- The Government of Yukon continues to work towards reducing the territory's greenhouse gas emissions and building a more climate resilient Yukon now and for generations to come.
- We know that this work needs to happen in partnership with Yukoners but that it also requires a shift in Government of Yukon operations to address our impact to the Yukon's environment.
- The Government of Yukon tracks greenhouse gas emissions from our internal operations and evaluates how climate change may be impacting government-owned infrastructure.
- In 2022, the government generated 48.7 kilotonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (Appendix A).
- Of this total, the Government of Yukon's departments emitted about three quarters of this, at about 33.3 kilotonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent, with government corporations and Yukon University making up the other portion.

**Additional response:**

- The Government of Yukon's emissions are largely the result of heating and powering buildings, operating road maintenance equipment and fleet vehicle use.
- Given this, the Department of Highways and Public Works represents the largest share of emissions, due to the significant role they play in maintaining our buildings, roads, airports, and fleet vehicles.
- The Department of Highways and Public Works is also the Department who is leading a one-government approach to reduce



## Session Briefing Note

**Fall 2024**

### Reducing Government of Yukon Emissions

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Environment / HPW

emissions from Government of Yukon buildings by improving energy efficiency and installing renewable energy systems.

- Building improvements are not tied to any one department and are prioritized where they will make the most impact in reducing emissions.
- The Government of Yukon also provides homes, healthcare, and electricity for Yukoners. These areas also represent a high portion of the Government of Yukon's emissions.

#### **Third response (actions):**

- Many actions in Our Clean Future empower Yukoners in taking climate action, while other actions support the Government of Yukon in reducing our own emissions and building climate resilience.
- To reduce emissions from our operations, we have:
  - Installed a new biomass heating system at Elijah Smith Elementary School;
  - Installed solar panels and battery energy storage systems at two highway maintenance camps;
  - Completed 31 retrofits to Government of Yukon buildings to improve efficiency and reduce emissions; and
  - Completed 81 certified energy assessments on our high-emission Government of Yukon buildings and will complete assessments for the remaining 36 high-emitting sites this year.
- To support emissions reductions in other Government of Yukon operations, we have actions that are designed to track emissions from health and social services, reduce travel emissions related to



## Session Briefing Note

**Fall 2024**

### Reducing Government of Yukon Emissions

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Environment / HPW

healthcare through provision of virtual health care services and retrofitting community housing buildings.

- To ensure that our operations are resilient to the impacts of climate change, we have:
    - Collaborated with Yukon University to identify the type and severity of climate hazards that public buildings face;
    - Developed a monitoring program for public buildings impacted by permafrost; and
    - Begun developing guidelines on incorporating climate risks into public infrastructure projects.
- 

#### Context—this may be an issue because:

- Emissions from the Government of Yukon have increased since 2010 as the Yukon's population grows.
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#### Background:

- Every year, the Department of Environment publishes a report on the Government of Yukon's greenhouse gas emissions alongside the Our Clean Future annual report and the Greenhouse Gas Emissions in the Yukon report.

#### Approved by:

**Dennis Berry****November 8, 2024**\_\_\_\_\_  
Deputy Minister of Environment\_\_\_\_\_  
Date approved



# Session Briefing Note

## Reducing Government of Yukon Emissions

Fall 2024

Environment / HPW

**Appendix A: Total Government of Yukon emissions**

Organization type	2022 emissions (ktCO <sub>2</sub> e)
Departments	33.3
Corporations	13.0
Yukon University	2.5

**Appendix B: 2022 emissions by department\*.**

Department**	Building emissions (ktCO <sub>2</sub> e)***	Government Fleet, waste and refrigerants (ktCO <sub>2</sub> e)	Total (ktCO <sub>2</sub> e)
Community Services	0.8	1.9	2.7
Economic Development	0	<0.1	<0.1
Education	7.3	0.1	7.4
Energy, Mines and Resources	0.1	0.2	0.3
Environment	0.1	0.7	0.8
Health and Social Services	4.1	0.4	4.5
Highways and Public Works	6.8	8.8	15.6
Justice	0.9	<0.1	0.9



**Session Briefing Note****Fall 2024****Reducing Government of  
Yukon Emissions**

Environment / HPW

Tourism and Culture	0.1	<0.1	0.1
Unknown**	0.5	0.3	0.8
		DEPARTMENT TOTAL	33.3

\* The total emissions listed in the Government of Yukon greenhouse gas emissions report do not include leased buildings, as the Government of Yukon does not have access to that data. Therefore, not all departments listed in this table will have emissions linked to their operations.

\*\* Departments are focused on providing programming out of their assigned government buildings and thus have limited control over reducing building emissions.

\*\*\*The Department of Highways & Public Works is leading the greenhouse gas reduction initiatives for all Government of Yukon buildings by delivering building energy retrofit and renewable energy projects.



## Session Briefing Note

Fall 2024

### Predator Control and Principles of Wildlife Population Management

Environment

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#### Recommended response:

- The Government of Yukon is responsible for making decisions about wildlife management to conserve all wildlife while respecting Indigenous rights and the diverse needs of Yukoners.
- The Department of Environment strives to ensure wildlife management decisions are responsible, sustainable, and informed by scientific, local, and traditional knowledge.
- We base our management decisions on species-specific guidelines, management plans, harvest and mortality data, information gathered from hunters, Indigenous harvesters, community and co-management partners, and survey results.
- The primary goals among co-management partners are conservation and responsible, sustainable harvest regimes.
- The Government of Yukon remains committed to ensuring licensed harvest is done sustainably while respecting the primary importance of wildlife conservation and Indigenous subsistence harvest rights.

#### Additional response:

- Ungulates, including moose, caribou, sheep, goat, bison, elk, and deer are highly sought after by Yukon hunters, and many of these species are culturally significant to Yukon First Nations.
- The Department of Environment does not use large-scale predator control programs for predators, including wolves or bears, as a method to increase ungulate populations.



## Session Briefing Note

Fall 2024

### Predator Control and Principles of Wildlife Population Management

Environment

- Predators play an important role in our northern ecosystem. Wolves and bears are considered a keystone species, meaning their presence helps maintain the health, structure and balance of their ecosystems.
- We also know many Yukoners are strongly opposed to large-scale predator control. Predator control programs are costly and have been shown to have only short-term impacts.
- Instead, we manage licensed harvest, human activity, and the use of habitats to conserve and maintain wildlife populations.
- Licenced hunters in the Yukon can hunt coyotes and wolves without the need for a seal. However, the pelt of every harvested wolf must be sealed with a metal furbearer seal after the hunt.
- In 2022, the Government of Yukon updated the Wildlife Regulations to allow bison hunters to recover harvested wolves and coyotes while bison hunting in game management zone 5, north of Kluane National Park.
- The Government of Yukon does recognize that environmental factors contribute to wildlife's well-being and success, and not all population declines can be attributed to harvest.
- Along with our co-management partners, we are exploring additional management strategies to address conservation concerns not attributed to harvest.

#### Third response:

- The Department of Environment continues to work with our partners to develop and revise area-specific and species-specific management plans for the territory.



## Session Briefing Note

Fall 2024

### Predator Control and Principles of Wildlife Population Management

Environment

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- Along with the area-specific and species-specific management plans, we are working with communities to develop community-based fish and wildlife work plans.
  - These plans are designed to address community concerns, which can include measures around predators (e.g. ways to deliver trapping programs). Through traditional, local and scientific knowledge, we look to find ways to work together to address information gaps and identify appropriate solutions.

#### Final response:

- The Government of Yukon is committed to protecting wildlife and their habitat to ensure populations remain healthy and support sustainable harvest opportunities for Yukoners into the future.
- A sustainable approach to harvest management supports conservation goals and allows new opportunities to be offered in areas where wildlife populations have recovered.
- In addition to responsibly managing licensed harvest, the Department of Environment remains committed to species management planning at the regional, traditional territory, and/or territory-wide scale.
- Species management plans are co-drafted with our co-management partners and consider habitat availability, subsistence needs and overall management objectives for species populations.

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#### Context — this may be an issue because:

- During past sittings, the Opposition asked about predator control to increase moose populations in the territory; similar questions about wildlife management tools have come up in the context of sheep population declines in southwest Yukon.



## Session Briefing Note

**Fall 2024**

### **Predator Control and Principles of Wildlife Population Management**

Environment

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**Background:**

- In addition to the harvest data collected each year, targeted wildlife surveys are also conducted to estimate population sizes.
- Co-management partners include:
  - Yukon First Nations
  - Inuvialuit and the Wildlife Management Advisory Council (North Slope)
  - Transboundary First Nations and Indigenous Groups
  - The Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board
  - Renewable Resources Councils
- Existing management plans that guide predator management in Yukon include the 2012 Wolf Conservation and Management Plan and the 2019 Conservation Plan for Grizzly Bears in Yukon.

**Approved by:**

Dennis Berry

October 17, 2024

\_\_\_\_\_  
Deputy Minister of Environment\_\_\_\_\_  
Date approved



## Session Briefing Note

Fall 2024

### Wildlife Survey and Data Use

Environment

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#### Recommended response:

- The Department of Environment works to understand wildlife populations through collecting and analyzing population data and evaluating harvest sustainability.
- This is done through collecting and analyzing wildlife survey data, data submitted by licensed harvesters, and shared data and concerns from our co-management partners.
- Our partnerships with Yukoners, First Nations, and Inuvialuit help us evaluate harvest sustainability and fill the gaps between survey years.
- With this information we make informed decisions about harvest opportunities for resident and non-resident hunters and anglers.

#### Additional response:

- Collecting and analyzing wildlife data requires significant resources and is work the Department undertakes to ensure that we make evidence-based decisions about wildlife in the Yukon.
- We prioritize surveys based upon species, population concerns, community concerns, land use planning needs, species recovery needs, and risks to populations from impacts such as industrial activity and climate change.
- This work involves close collaboration with partners to analyze and report on population levels, harvest trends, and risks. Through this work, we aim to ensure fish and wildlife populations remain sustainable for future Yukoners.

#### Third response:

- Surveys are ongoing throughout each year. In 2024, we continue to focus on surveying populations of caribou, sheep, bison, deer, lake trout, Arctic grayling, pikas, and bats.



## Session Briefing Note

**Fall 2024**

### **Wildlife Survey and Data Use**

Environment

- Survey results are first shared with wildlife co-management partners, including Indigenous governments, Renewable Resources Councils, the Wildlife Management and Advisory Council for the North Slope, and the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board, and then with interest groups, such as the Yukon Fish and Game Association and the Yukon Conservation Society.
- We continue to share our work, research, and monitoring activities with the public through information we post on Yukon.ca.

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#### **Context — this may be an issue because:**

- The Opposition has raised questions regarding how the government makes informed decisions regarding harvesting opportunities in the Yukon. Yukoners want to know wildlife conservation decisions are being made with the best available data.

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#### **Background:**

- Yukon's growing population, pressure from industrial and recreational land use, advances in fishing and hunting and climate change have placed significant pressures on our fish and wildlife resources. As a result, the need for monitoring has increased.
- Increased pressures on wildlife populations have been raised by numerous First Nations, highlighting the need for the Government of Yukon to ensure equitable sharing of the sustainable harvest amongst user groups.
- In 2024, the Department of Environment allocated approximately \$35,000 for one moose-related project (Late-Winter Moose Distribution Manual for major project proponents) and approximately \$258,000 for elk and deer-related projects, including a drone contract to census both elk and deer, and seven collar deployments for deer.
- Also in 2024, approximately \$900,000 was spent on projects related to the Northern Mountain population of woodland caribou, including one population survey (Klaza herd), three collar deployments, and 12 fall composition surveys. Approximately \$500,000 was allocated to projects related to migratory caribou (Fortymile and Porcupine herds), and \$120,000 towards a habitat inventory project focused on lichen recovery.
- In 2024, the Department of Environment allocated \$43,000 to obtaining a population estimate for thimhorn sheep herds in the Arkell and Pilot Sheep Management Units. An



## Session Briefing Note

**Fall 2024**

### **Wildlife Survey and Data Use**

**Environment**

additional \$12,000 was allocated to obtaining lamb recruitment estimates in various regions, however, these funds were ultimately reallocated towards other projects outside of the Sheep and Goat Program on needs basis.

- In 2024, the Department of Environment allocated \$49,000 to work in partnership with academic researchers to continue long-term monitoring of boreal food webs, including berries, voles, hares, and lynx.
- In 2024, the Department of Environment received \$370,000 from the Government of Canada to inventory and monitor bison populations. These efforts included collaring and counting two bison populations in Yukon.
- A further \$403,000 was also received from the Government of Canada to monitor populations of species at risk, including pika, bats, caribou, and wolverine.

**Approved by:**

Shehnaz Ali

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A/Deputy Minister of Environment

September 9, 2024

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Date approved



**Session Briefing Note****Fall 2024****Wildlife Survey and Data Use**

Environment

**Appendix: 2024-25 Fish and Wildlife Surveys**

Region	Location	Species	Management tool	Survey completed	Analysis Completed
Southern Lakes	Pelly	Northern Mountain Caribou	Open	Collar deployment; Nov 2024	No
	Laberge	Northern Mountain Caribou	Open in some GMSs	Fall rut composition survey; Fall 2024	No
	Carcross	Northern Mountain Caribou	Closed	Fall rut composition survey; Fall 2024	No
	Ibex	Northern Mountain Caribou	Closed	Fall rut composition survey; Fall 2024	No
	Wolf Lake	Northern Mountain Caribou	Open	Fall rut composition survey; Fall 2024	No
	Caribou Mountain	Sheep	Not Open	Summer 2023	Yes
	TelsinLake	Lake Trout, Pike	Catch/Possession Limits, Harvest slot size, gear restrictions	Angler Survey Summer 2024	No
	Lake Laberge	Lake Trout	Catch/Possession Limits, Harvest slot size, gear restrictions	Population Assessment 2024	No



# Session Briefing Note

Fall 2024

## Wildlife Survey and Data Use

Environment

	Marsh Lake	Lake Trout	Catch/Possession Limits, Harvest slot size, gear restrictions	Population Assessment 2024	No
	Ibex and Carcross Herds	Northern Mountain Caribou	Stewardship through education and outreach	Research on recreation impacts	Partially
	Various	Little Brown Bats	Stewardship through education and outreach	Population monitoring	Yes
	Kusawa Lake	Collared Pika	Stewardship through education and outreach	Population monitoring	No
	Whitehorse	Voies, Hares, Lynx	n/a	Population monitoring	Yes



**Session Briefing Note****Fall 2024****Wildlife Survey and Data Use**

Environment

Region	Location	Species	Management tool	Survey completed	Analysis Completed
Liard	Hyland	Moose	Open Permit	Early-winter abundance and composition; Nov 2024	No
	Coal River	Northern Mountain Caribou	Open	Fall rut composition survey; Oct 2024	No
	Finlayson	Northern Mountain Caribou	Closed	Fall rut composition survey; Oct 2024	No
	Liard River	Bison	NA	Mark-Resight September-October Fall 2023	No
	Hyland River	Bull Trout	Federal Management Plan	Occupancy Survey	No
	Watson Lake	Voies, Hares, Lynx	N/A	Population monitoring	Yes



## Session Briefing Note

Fall 2024

## Wildlife Survey and Data Use

Environment

Region	Location	Species	Management tool	Survey completed	Analysis Completed
Northern Tutchone	Ethel Lake	Northern Mountain Caribou	Open (voluntary closure)	Fall rut composition survey; Oct 2024	No
	Tatchun	Northern Mountain Caribou	Open	Fall rut composition survey; Oct 2024	No
	Clear Creek	Northern Mountain Caribou	Open	Fall rut composition survey; Oct 2024  Collar deployment: Nov 2024 and March 2025	No
	Clear Creek	Caribou Moose Bear		Game Camera Study: Cumulative effects	No
	Klaza	Northern Mountain Caribou	PHA	Fall mark-resight population and composition survey; Oct 2024	No
	Bonnet Plume	Northern Mountain Caribou	Open	Collar deployment: March 2025	No



## Session Briefing Note

Fall 2024

## Wildlife Survey and Data Use

Environment

	Mayo	Caribou Moose Bear	Varies	Game Camera Study: Cumulative effects	No
	Ddhaw Ghro HPA	Sheep	HPA, closed	Fall recruitment survey; Sept 2023	No
	Minto Bluff	Sheep	HPA, closed	Fall recruitment survey; Sept 2023	No
	Granite Creek	Arctic Grayling	Catch/ Possession Limits, Harvest slot size, gear restrictions	PIT Tag / Movement study	No
	Haggart Watershed (Victoria Gold)	Arctic Grayling	Area of Special Consideration, Catch/Possession Limits	Population Assessment, Habitat Assessment, PIT Tag / Movement Study, Tissue Analysis	No
	Mayo	Voles, hares, Lynx	N/A	Population monitoring	Yes



## Session Briefing Note

Fall 2024

## Wildlife Survey and Data Use

Environment

Region	Location	Species	Management tool	Survey completed	Analysis Completed
Kluane	Chisana	Northern Mountain Caribou	Closed	Fall rut composition survey; Oct 2024	No
	Aishihik	Northern Mountain Caribou	PHA	Fall rut composition survey; Oct 2024	No
	Ruby Range	Sheep	Open	Minimum count Summer 2023	Yes
	Brooks Arm	Sheep	Open	Minimum count Summer 2023	Yes
	Flat Top	Sheep	Open	Minimum count Summer 2023	Yes
	Donjek	Sheep	Closed	Minimum count Summer 2023	Yes
	Aishihik Lake	Bison	Open permit	Collar deployment/Mark-Resight; Fall 2023 and 2024	Yes
	Kluane Lake area	Lynx, wolverine, marten, moose, fox and assorted small mammals	N/A	Game Camera Study (8 years of data)	Yes
	Kluane Lake area	Voles, hares, Lynx	N/A	Population monitoring	Yes
	Pine Lake	Lake Trout	Catch limits	Population Monitoring	No



# Session Briefing Note

# Fall 2024

## Wildlife Survey and Data Use

## Environment

Region	Location	Species	Management tool	Survey completed	Analysis Completed
North Yukon	Hart River	Northern Mountain Caribou	Open	Spring calving parturition survey; May 2024  Fall rut composition survey; Sept 2024	No
	Fortymile	Migratory Caribou	Summer registration hunt and winter threshold hunt	Calving, calf mortality, fall rut composition, survival monitoring, photo census population estimate	No
	Goldfields	Moose	Open	Early winter population and composition survey; Nov 2023	No
	Coffee Creek	Caribou Moose Bear		Game Camera Study: Cumulative effects	No
	Tombstone Park	Sheep	Open	Summer recruitment survey; July 2022	Yes
	Ogilvie Mountains	Black bear and grizzly bear		Population survey and camera study; June 2022	No
	Dawson Goldfields	Wolverine, lynx, marten	n/a	Camera study	No



# Session Briefing Note

# Fall 2024

## Wildlife Survey and Data Use

## Environment

Region	Location	Species	Management tool	Survey completed	Analysis Completed
North Slope	Richardson Mountains and Yukon North Slope	Moose	Open	Productivity and survival monitoring	Yes
	Porcupine	Barren-ground Caribou	Open	Calving and post-calving, survival monitoring, community-based condition monitoring	No
	North Richardson	Sheep	Open permit	Summer population survey; June 2022	Yes
	Ivvavik	Sheep	N/A	Summer population survey; July 2022	Yes
	North Slope & Richardson Mountains	Muskox	Closed	Summer composition July 2022; late winter population estimate March 2022	Yes
	South and North Beaufort Sea	Polar Bear	NA	Multi-year mark-recapture (year 3 of 4); March-April 2022	No (require all 4 years of data)



**Session Briefing Note****Fall 2024****First Nations Hunting Bans and Permits**

Environment

**Recommended response:**

- We understand the concerns that Yukon First Nations have raised about harvest pressures, and we appreciate their commitment to caring for wildlife in their traditional territories.
- We share their priority of conserving wildlife by managing hunting, trapping, and fishing in a sustainable manner, and by protecting wildlife habitat.
- The Department of Environment continues to work with Yukon First Nation governments to ensure a respectful approach to harvest in their traditional territories.

**Additional response:**

- These matters are complex, and we remain committed to ongoing conversations with First Nations and Inuvialuit governments on wildlife conservation and hunting issues in their traditional territories and settlement areas.
- As in previous years, conservation officers continue to monitor these areas as part of their regular operations.
- We continue to encourage all licensed hunters to be mindful of the wishes of the Yukon First Nations whose traditional territory they are hunting on, be respectful and always follow responsible hunting practices.

**Third response:**



## Session Briefing Note

Fall 2024

### First Nations Hunting Bans and Permits

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Environment

- In the Yukon, the public has a right to access public land for recreational purposes, including hunting and fishing.
- Licensed hunters should be aware that all areas where we hunt are in First Nations traditional territory or the Inuvialuit and Indigenous Groups Settlement Areas.
- The *Wildlife Act* and regulations guide licensed hunters, and the rules of general application apply to all First Nations and Inuvialuit traditional territories. Licensed hunters do not require permission to hunt on non-Settlement Land in any traditional territory.
- Licensed hunters require written permission from First Nations before hunting any species on all Category A Settlement Lands and before hunting wood bison or elk on Category A and B Settlement Lands.

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#### Context—this may be an issue because:

- During the 2023-2024 hunting season Champagne and Aishihik First Nations notified the department that they would not be granting permission to hunt bison on their Settlement Lands.
- In 2023, the RRDC posted signs in their asserted traditional territory at Dragon Lake and Finlayson Lake asking for resource users to respect the area and acquire a permit from RRDC to hunt or fish in those areas.

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#### Background:

- Ross River Dena Council's permit system has been in place for several years, with minimal negative interactions impacting licensed hunters and anglers.
- In early 2023, the Yukon government renewed a 2018 Environment Minister commitment to continue working with Ross River Dena Council on matters of joint fish and wildlife interest.



**Session Briefing Note****Fall 2024****First Nations Hunting Bans and Permits**

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Environment

- In summer 2023, the Ross River Dena Council published a statement requesting that, effective August 1, any non-Kaska hunter wishing to hunt in their asserted traditional territory must obtain a hunting permit by RDCC.
- In addition, RRDC noted they would not issue caribou permits in 2023 and would close moose hunting in their traditional territory on September 30.
- When hunting on Settlement Lands, licensed hunters must comply with any laws enacted by the First Nation for managing the land and resources.

**Approved by:**

Briar Young

September 6, 2024

\_\_\_\_\_  
A/Deputy Minister of Environment\_\_\_\_\_  
Date approved



## Session Briefing Note

**Fall 2024**

### Yukon Species at Risk

Environment

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**Recommended response:**

- All species play an important role in the success of our environment and when threatened, may require additional protection to ensure they continue to thrive as part of our unique ecosystem.
- The Government of Yukon and its wildlife management partners such as First Nations, Inuvialuit, Gwich'in and boards and councils, have a long history of carefully managing and safeguarding the future of nationally listed species at risk in the territory, and the majority of Yukon's 10,000+ plants and animals are considered to be secure.
- The Government of Yukon continues to work on species at risk conservation with wildlife management partners, including Yukon First Nations, the Inuvialuit, transboundary Indigenous governments and groups, the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board, Renewable Resources Councils, the Wildlife Management Advisory Council (North Slope), interest groups and other government organizations.
- Most jurisdictions in Canada have specific legislative tools to protect species at risk and their habitats and currently, this is a gap in the Yukon.
- The Canada-Yukon Nature Agreement is increasing the Yukon's capacity to work collaboratively with parties on a variety of species at risk matters, including the potential to develop species at risk legislation in the Yukon. (see [BN #2 Canada-Yukon Nature Agreement](#))
- Work is currently underway with our partners to explore an approach to protecting species at risk in the Yukon.



## Session Briefing Note

**Fall 2024**

### Yukon Species at Risk

Environment

- Regarding timelines, we are working collaboratively with our First Nation and Indigenous partners. This is an important initiative given the global context of biodiversity loss, and we must do this work together. Co-development of policy and legislative initiatives takes time, and we are ensuring that this work is done well.

**Additional response:**

- The Government of Yukon works with Environment and Climate Change Canada on technical reviews, recovery strategies and management plans for national species at risk in the Yukon.
- The Department of Environment continues to look for opportunities to benefit from lessons learned across Canada and the world to better prevent the endangerment of species in the territory.
- Under the Canada-Yukon Nature Agreement, funding will support surveying and monitoring of species at risk in the Yukon such as Northern Mountain caribou and collared pika.
- In addition, the Canada-Yukon Nature Agreement will help the Yukon support protection of sensitive habitats in the territory.
- The Yukon currently has the highest percentage of reported protected areas of any province or territory in Canada.

**Third response:**

- The Government of Yukon takes its responsibility to safeguard biodiversity, species at risk and their habitats in the territory seriously.
- Legislation is one of several tools used by governments to affect wildlife management and conservation goals.



## Session Briefing Note

**Fall 2024**

### Yukon Species at Risk

Environment

- One way we are doing this work is through the Yukon Conservation Data Centre which gathers, manages, analyzes and shares information on Yukon animals, plants, fungi and ecosystems.
- This central resource helps manage important data and provides scientific information about species in the Yukon, as well as location-specific information for species that are a conservation concern.
- In addition to supporting the work of the Yukon Conservation Data Centre, the Department currently monitors vulnerable populations of species and ensures that they are safeguarded through existing management tools while the Government of Yukon explores legislative approaches to species at risk in the Yukon.
- The Yukon's work to ensure that species such as wood bison, and grizzly bear continue to thrive is guided by management plans co-developed with Yukon First Nations, the Inuvialuit, the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board and the Wildlife Management Advisory Council (North Slope).
- We will continue to work with our management partners, including Yukon First Nations and transboundary Indigenous governments and groups, to ensure that we identify, protect and conserve species at risk in the territory.

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#### **Context — this may be an issue because:**

- There may be questions about what the government is doing about species at risk, including the implementation of the commitments outlined in the Canada-Yukon Nature Agreement and Minister Clarke's 2023 Mandate letter.
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# Session Briefing Note

**Fall 2024**

## Yukon Species at Risk

Environment

**Background:**

- The Canada-Yukon Nature Agreement commits the Government of Yukon to increase surveying and monitoring of species at risk and to engage with Yukon First Nations and transboundary Indigenous governments and groups on approaches to managing species at risk.
- Currently, the Yukon has 43 species listed as being at risk under the federal *Species at Risk Act*. Ten additional species in the Yukon have been recommended by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada to the federal government for listing.

**Approved by:****Dennis Berry**

Deputy Minister of Environment

**November 19, 2024**

Date approved



## Session Briefing Note

Fall 2024

### Biodiversity Monitoring

Environment

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#### Recommended response:

- The Yukon is home to many rare, unique, or at-risk species found only in this region.
- This includes plants such as Yukon Draba and Yukon Goldenweed that are found nowhere else in the world other than here in our backyard.
- Our territory is also home to a wide range of species that are more abundant here than elsewhere, such as wolverine, bison, caribou and grizzly bears.
- The diversity and abundance of species is one of the things that makes the Yukon such a special place to visit and live in.
- The Government of Yukon continues to work to conserve the Yukon's biodiversity, habitat, and species at risk, while contributing to Canada's goal of increasing protected areas across the country.

#### Additional response:

- This work includes regional land use planning, implementation Agreements under the Yukon's climate change strategy, working with First Nations to fulfill commitments under the Canada-Yukon Nature Agreement, and continuing to carry out the wetland stewardship policy.
- Through study of biodiversity in the territory, we know that there is an incredible richness of species, which we are just beginning to understand.
- We have conducted "bio-blitz's" in various areas of the territory since 2015 to document the Yukon's biodiversity.



## Session Briefing Note

Fall 2024

### Biodiversity Monitoring

Environment

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- A 2022 Government of Yukon led inventory of biodiversity in the Beaver Creek area, supported by various technical experts in Canada, identified 1,852 species, of which only 27 were not native to the region.
- This bio-blitz is believed to have identified the most species ever detected during any bio-blitz in North America and shows that this area continues to have very few invasive species.

#### Third response:

- We continue to work collaboratively with our partners including First Nations, the Inuvialuit, Indigenous groups, wildlife co-management boards and councils, interest groups and other governments on the protection of biodiversity and species at risk conservation.
- We continue to work with partners to develop area-specific management plans for wildlife and habitat to guide how the Yukon's northern ecosystem is managed.
- In 2019, we completed the Yukon's first conservation plan for grizzly bears in collaboration with the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board and are in the process of completing our fourth conservation plan for bison, in cooperation with affected First Nations and renewable resources councils. (See [BN #41 Bison Management](#))
- We are in the process of implementing the wetland stewardship policy which aims to improve our knowledge of wetlands, manage, and minimize our impacts on wetlands, and protect the most important wetlands, all while promoting paths towards responsible and sustainable resource development and land use activities. (See [BN #35 Yukon Wetlands Policy Implementation](#))



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**Fall 2024**

### Biodiversity Monitoring

Environment

- In addition, in 2022 we signed the Canada-Yukon Nature Agreement, which supports our efforts to protect and conserve new areas in the Yukon, support Indigenous leadership in conservation, monitor and protect species at risk and biodiversity, and support the protection and conservation of lands and waters.
- These initiatives will help inform protected area planning, identify species that require additional monitoring or support and overall improves our efforts to conserve the Yukon's biodiversity.

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**Context—this may be an issue because:**

- Species in the Yukon and across the world are facing increasing pressures from things like climate change and development.
- The Yukon Biodiversity Forum is supported by the Department of Environment.

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**Background:**

- The Yukon government began reporting on the Yukon's rich biodiversity in our annual state of the environment report, beginning in 2023.
- One of the greatest reasons for worldwide biodiversity loss is the lack of knowledge about the needs of most species and their habitats and the need to provide more information for land use planning.
- The Yukon is addressing these needs through our recent Canada-Yukon Nature Agreement commitments to protect biodiversity in the Territory, and to inventory our rich biodiversity through programs such as the annual bio-blitz.
- In 2024 we organized a bio-blitz in southwest Yukon and will share the results when they become available.

**Approved by:**

Briar Young  
A/Deputy Minister of Environment

September 6, 2024  
Date approved



## Session Briefing Note

### Yukon Wetland Policy and Status

Environment and  
Energy, Mines and Resources

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#### Recommended response:

- I am pleased to share that we are making progress on several initiatives to implement the wetland stewardship policy.
- All projects undergoing environmental assessment by the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board (YESAB) are reviewed for potential impacts to wetlands.
- We are working to improve guidance for operators and project proponents to identify and mitigate potential impacts to wetlands during the environmental assessment stage.
- We are in year two of a four-year project to complete territory-wide wetland mapping. So far, we have established a partnership with Environment and Climate Change Canada, evaluated our existing data and methodologies, and completed extensive field data collection.
- Through this partnership we have developed a draft wetland map. This is a working product that is intended to inform future work as we continue to develop a full territory-wide wetland map.
- Guided by this draft map, we've further advanced territory wide mapping with an extensive wetland data collection in central Yukon.
- The territory-wide wetland map will be made available online to the public once it has been completed.
- We have developed a draft guidance document for the nomination and evaluation of Wetlands of Special Importance. Once the guidance



## Session Briefing Note

### Yukon Wetland Policy and Status

Environment and  
Energy, Mines and Resources

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document is finalized, we will be able to accept the first intake of nominations for Wetlands of Special Importance.

- We have also drafted Yukon-specific wetland classification standards. These standards will establish a common foundation for all future work relating to wetlands in the territory. We intend to engage with First Nations and other interested parties on both documents in late 2024.
- We are working toward the first intake of Wetlands of Special Importance nominations, pending the outcome of this engagement.

#### Additional response:

- During the summer of 2023 and 2024, we collected aerial imagery to support local-scale wetland mapping and vegetation mapping in the Klondike goldfields region. This information is needed to support more detailed local-scale wetland mapping.
- We also supported Ducks Unlimited Canada to develop an accessible and user-friendly field guide to identify wetlands. This document is now available through Ducks Unlimited Canada.
- We are supporting a new research effort led by the Wildlife Conservation Society Canada that looks at how carbon is stored and released in Yukon wetlands and how it may be impacted by industrial activities.
- You can now find information about Yukon wetlands, how the policy is being implemented, and guidance for industry on Yukon.ca. We are



## Session Briefing Note

### Yukon Wetland Policy and Status

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also developing a new public-facing information hub for wetlands maps and related spatial information.

#### Third response:

- We acknowledge the importance of responding to new information as we continue to improve our understanding of the Yukon's wetlands through scientific, traditional and local knowledge.
- We will continue to engage with other governments, departments, agencies, regulatory bodies, and external partners to discuss specific aspects of wetland stewardship policy implementation.
- We remain committed to addressing wetland stewardship and protection within land use planning discussions and project reviews.

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#### Context — this may be an issue because:

- Implementation of the Wetlands Policy and the ongoing management of wetlands is of significant interest to Yukoners.

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#### Background:

- On January 10, 2023 we released A Policy for the Stewardship of Yukon's Wetlands. The goal of the policy is to ensure the benefits of Yukon's wetlands are sustained.
- The Government of Yukon committed \$1.68 million over two fiscal years (2023-24 to 2024-25) for the departments of Environment and Energy, Mines and Resources to begin jointly implementing the wetland stewardship policy.
- In January 2023, the Government of Yukon formed an internal working group to advance and coordinate the implementation of the wetland stewardship policy.
- The working group is composed of members of Environment, Energy, Mines and Resources, Executive Council Office, and Highways and Public Works.



## Session Briefing Note Yukon Wetland Policy and Status

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- The group meets monthly to advance various aspects of policy implementation and ensure a whole-of-government approach to policy implementation.
- See [Appendix A](#) for updates on implementation status.

**Approved by:****Dennis Berry****November 21, 2024**\_\_\_\_\_  
Deputy Minister, Environment\_\_\_\_\_  
Date approved**Lauren Haney****November 21, 2024**\_\_\_\_\_  
Deputy Minister, Energy, Mines and Resource\_\_\_\_\_  
Date approved



# Session Briefing Note

## Yukon Wetland Policy and Status

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Energy, Mines and Resources

### Appendix A: Actions within the wetland stewardship policy

Policy Actions (bold = near-term priorities)	Timeline * priority adjusted	Lead	Status update
			Not Started Initiated Underway Near_Complete
1. Develop guidance for the evaluation of wetland benefits in the Yukon	Long-term	ENV	We have completed some initial work comparing processes in other jurisdictions.
2. Update and finalize a Yukon wetland classification system	Near-term	ENV	A draft Yukon Wetlands Classification Standards document will be shared with management partners and stakeholders when it is ready.
3. Develop an accessible and easy to use guide to identifying Yukon's wetlands for proponents and the public	Mid-term	External	We supported Ducks Unlimited Canada in developing an accessible field guide for public use, aligned with our classification system (action 2). Ducks Unlimited Canada released this field guide in July 2024.
4. Develop wetland mapping standards for regional, local, and project specific mapping applications	Near-term	ENV	We are continuing to develop a draft wetland mapping standards document. Following internal government review, we will circulate the draft to management partners and interested stakeholders for review.
5. Create a broad scale territory-wide wetland inventory	Near-term	ENV	In 2023/24 (Year 1 of this work), we evaluated our predictive wetland mapping methodology and compiled existing wetland field information. We are collaborating with Environment and Climate Change Canada to advance this territory-wide wetland mapping. The draft wetland map (level 1: wetland / not wetland) is complete. In 2024/25 we completed an extensive field data collection campaign which will be used to produce a wetland map for the Northern Tutchone region. Future mapping work will expand into other regions.

Prepared for Minister Clarke and Streicker,  
Environment and Energy, Mines and Resources

Date prepared: August 22, 2024  
Last Updated: November 6, 2024



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## Yukon Wetland Policy and Status

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6. Support local scale wetland mapping, where needed	Near-term*	ENV	We have partnered with EMR's Forest Management Branch, to collect stereo (3D) aerial imagery for the Yukon Plateau region.
7. Promote northern wetland research	Near-term*	EMR/ENV	Environment is supporting a three-year research project that began in summer 2024, led by the Wildlife Conservation Society, with funding support from Environment and Climate Change Canada.
8. Promote public awareness of wetlands	Long-term	ENV	We anticipate that the release of the Wetlands of Special Importance Guide and the Yukon Wetland Classification Standards will provide some awareness, as will the future launch of the wetlands information hub at Yukon.ca and the first designations of wetlands of Special Importance. Longer-term public information actions are not yet planned.
9. Develop guidance for the application and use of the mitigation hierarchy	Near-term	EMR/ENV	EMR is leading the development of guidance for the application and use of the mitigation hierarchy.  ENV is continuing to work with regulatory agencies, particularly related to mining activity, to address wetland impacts during project assessment and regulatory approvals.
10. Update or develop proponent guidance to be used when submitting wetland impact mitigation information	Near-term	EMR	Plans are in place to develop proponent guidance on how to communicate impact mitigation plans.
11. Update or develop Standard Operating Procedures / Preferred Management Practices for	Long-term	EMR	EMR has developed standard terms and conditions for Class 1 mining activities. These are now being applied at the regulatory stage. EMR will review the effectiveness of these standard terms and revise as necessary. EMR



# Session Briefing Note

## Yukon Wetland Policy and Status

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different activities impacting wetlands			has also developed draft standard terms and conditions for higher impact mining activities that will be applied at the regulatory stage once finalized.
12. Update or develop general wetland reclamation guidelines, and, where required, sector specific guidelines	Near-term*	EMR	EMR continues to apply the Ruby Creek reclamation plan guidelines for placer activities in the Indian River area. During the initial policy implementation phase, reclamation plans are not currently required outside of this area.
13. Develop guidance for offsetting wetland impacts	Long-term	ENV/EMR	A long-term objective that will be explored after near-term and midterm priorities have been advanced.
14. Develop specific and measurable guidance for the interpretation and application of Wetland of Special Importance nomination criteria	Near-term	ENV	We have completed a draft implementation document: <i>Wetlands of Special Importance: Nomination and Evaluation</i> . We intend to share this document with our management partners, for review.
15. Establish a process for legal designation of Wetlands of Special Importance (e.g., through existing legislation such as application of Wilderness Management Areas under the <i>Environment Act</i> ).	Mid-term*	ENV	The Department of Environment is evaluating how existing legislative and policy tools can be applied to Wetlands of Special Importance.
16. Create a publicly accessible catalogue of Wetlands of Special Importance.	Mid-term	ENV	In advance of the first call for Wetlands of Special Importance (WSI), we are developing the tools and systems to support a public catalogue. This will be available on the wetland hub at Yukon.ca, once complete.



## Session Briefing Note

Fall 2024

### Outfitter and Resident Harvest Sharing Framework

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Environment

#### Recommended response:

- The Government of Yukon recognizes the Yukon's unique and valued wildlife hunting opportunities.
- We are committed to ensuring licensed harvest is done sustainably while respecting wildlife conservation and Indigenous subsistence harvest rights.
- Managing human activity, particularly hunting, is our primary tool to conserve wildlife and support the continued availability of licensed hunting opportunities in the future.
- The Department of Environment is considering developing a harvest sharing framework to support increased transparency, fairness and public understanding of harvest sharing decisions in the Yukon.
- A harvest sharing framework is an important step to clarify and improve how hunting is managed in the Yukon.

#### Additional response:

- We are continuing to meet with stakeholders to listen and consider their needs and interests prior to initiating a process to develop a harvest sharing framework.
- Understanding the unique contexts for each stakeholder group requires time and consideration of the issues at hand to enter this process in a fair and balanced way.
- We feel that by focusing on conversations up front, we will ultimately support a more thoughtful and effective process.



## Session Briefing Note

Fall 2024

### Outfitter and Resident Harvest Sharing Framework

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Environment

- Discussions are ongoing with Yukon First Nation governments, the Inuvialuit, Renewable Resources Councils, the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board, and the Wildlife Management Advisory Council (North Slope).
- Yukon hunters, the Yukon public, the Yukon Outfitters Association, the Yukon Fish and Game Association, the Yukon Conservation Society, and other interest groups are also key partners in the conversation.

#### Third response:

- Department of Environment officials work hard to ensure that licensed hunting opportunities and the division between resident and non-resident hunters aligns with Yukoners' values, reflects the best available data and respects First Nations' subsistence harvest rights.
- A modern wildlife harvest sharing framework must reflect the evolution of hunting and conservation in the territory.
- We recognize there are concerns with outfitter quotas when we need to apply harvest limits. With this in mind, we are also working diligently with our partners to have important conversations exploring a modernized process for establishing outfitter quotas.

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#### Context—this may be an issue because:

- Questions around harvest limits and outfitter quotas were raised in both the Spring and Fall Sitzings of the Yukon Legislative Assembly in 2022.

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#### Background:

- The Department of Environment is responsible for making decisions about wildlife management to conserve all wildlife, including their interrelationships with each



## Session Briefing Note

**Fall 2024**

### **Outfitter and Resident Harvest Sharing Framework**

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Environment

other and their environment, while respecting Indigenous and treaty rights and the diverse needs of Yukoners.

- Recent efforts to adjust permit numbers (e.g. Pilot Mountain sheep, Southern Lakes moose) have raised questions about how wildlife harvest should be shared amongst user groups, and guidance provided by Final Agreements and existing legislation is insufficient.
- The only existing harvest sharing guidance is provided by the 1996 *Guidelines to Establish Outfitter Quotas*, which describes the suggested sharing arrangement between resident and non-resident hunters for moose and caribou in areas of conservation concern. The Guidelines are silent on the sharing arrangement between licensed and subsistence hunters.

**Approved by:**

Shehnaz Ali

September 12, 2024

\_\_\_\_\_  
A/Deputy Minister of Environment\_\_\_\_\_  
Date approved



## Session Briefing Note

Fall 2024

### Fish and Wildlife Branch Mandate Review

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Environment

#### Recommended response:

- In March 2024, the Department of Environment retained ERM Consultants Canada (formerly Stratos) to document how the Department's mandate is defined through formal and informal requirements and expectations, and to gather input on mandate implementation.
- Interviews with key organizations and individuals were conducted from April to June.
- The final report summarizing the findings of the review and providing recommendations is available on yukon.ca.

#### Additional response:

- ERM's review focused on the strengths of the Department of Environment's Fish and Wildlife Branch in fulfilling its mandate, activities, and objectives, and identifies opportunities for improvement.
- This is part of a cycle of continuous improvement being undertaken by the Branch to ensure they continue to provide relevant services to Yukoners.
- The final report identified five areas of focus to support the Fish and Wildlife Branch in more effectively meeting its mandate:
  - Clarify and create consistency in the Branch's mandate
  - Take a strategic approach to mandate delivery
  - Develop an approach to support collective fish and wildlife management prioritization, collaboration among actors with responsibilities in the Yukon's fish and wildlife structure, and branch-level prioritization



## Session Briefing Note

Fall 2024

### Fish and Wildlife Branch Mandate Review

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Environment

- Make technical information and analysis available to support transparency and decision-making.
- Enhance approaches to collaborate with Indigenous governments as partners in the fish and wildlife structure.
- 10 recommendations were provided to address the five areas of focus. These recommendations are publicly available on yukon.ca.

#### Third response:

- The ERM review looks at how the Fish and Wildlife Branch mandate is defined in various agreements and legislation, and how it is being implemented alongside our partners.
- The review examined, and was informed by, the branch mandate, activities, and objectives - as established in Canadian and Yukon legislation and agreements, Indigenous agreements, Ministerial mandate letters and departmental Strategic Plans.
- Part of the mandate review required reviewing a set of 18 documents that summarize or inform the Branch mandate, priorities, and activities.
- The Branch focused engagement efforts on boards and councils that are mandated to work with Yukon government on the co-management of fish and wildlife in Yukon.
- The invitations for engagement were sent to current and former Fish and Wildlife staff, and members of the organizations that the Branch regularly engages with on matters pertaining to the conservation and management of wildlife and their habitat, including:
  - The Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board



## Session Briefing Note

Fall 2024

### Fish and Wildlife Branch Mandate Review

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Environment

- Renewable Resources Councils
- First Nation Land and Resources Directors
- Wildlife Management Advisory Council – North Slope
- Yukon Conservation Society
- Yukon Fish and Game Association

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#### Context—this may be an issue because:

- The opposition asked Minister Clarke about the internal review during the 2024 spring sitting.

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#### Background:

- At the December 2018 Yukon Forum meeting, the Government of Yukon and First Nations decided to review the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board “to evaluate the success and effectiveness of this important Chapter 16 entity.”
- ERM Consultants (previously Stratos) completed a review of the Fish and Wildlife Management Board in 2019 under contract with the Council of Yukon First Nations. The review of the Board resulted in 27 recommendations directed towards the 'actors' implicated by the Umbrella Final Agreement: the Government of Canada, the Government of Yukon, the Board, Renewable Resources Councils, and First Nations.
- One recommendation from the 2019 Stratos report is directed at all actors to clarify, achieve consensus and document the fish and wildlife structure and various roles within it, based on the current context/legal landscape, areas of overlap or duplication, and identified strengths and weaknesses. A review of the Fish and Wildlife Branch mandate contributes to fulfilling that recommendation.
- The cost of this contract is \$49,905 and this consultant was chosen for the Fish and Wildlife Branch mandate review because of their previous review of the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board and their familiarity with the Yukon's fish and wildlife management structure.



## Session Briefing Note

**Fall 2024**

### Fish and Wildlife Branch Mandate Review

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Environment

- The Yukon Outfitters Association was not invited to participate in this review. The Department of Environment meets regularly with the Yukon Outfitters Association and Yukon Outfitters, through the Yukon Outfitter Liaison Committee (YOLC).
- We appreciate the relationships we have with our stakeholders and regularly engage with the Yukon Fish and Game Association, Yukon Wild Sheep Foundation, Yukon Outfitters Association, Yukon Trappers Association, Yukon Conservation Society, Friends of McIntyre Creek, Ducks Unlimited, Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society – Yukon Chapter, etc.
- Topics may vary with each group depending on the interests they represent.

**Approved by:****Dennis Berry****November 7, 2024**\_\_\_\_\_  
Deputy Minister of Environment\_\_\_\_\_  
Date approved



## Session Briefing Note Outfitting in the Yukon

Fall 2024  
Environment

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### Recommended response:

- Our government continues to work with the Yukon Outfitters Association to support the industry while ensuring the sustainability of Yukon wildlife.
- Despite the COVID-19-related setbacks, the Yukon's outfitting industry has flourished in recent years. The seven highest annual number of licenses sold to non-residents occurred over the past 10 years.
- Annual harvest by non-residents has been increasing since the 2020-21 hunting season. Non-resident annual harvest numbers in the Yukon are now at a level seen prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The Department of Environment reports the annual harvest of big game species by resident and non-resident hunters in the Yukon Hunting regulations summary. Sheep, moose and caribou remain the most popular big game species harvested by non-residents.
- When making decisions on the allocation of hunting opportunities, we prioritize subsistence harvest per the First Nation Final Agreements, then resident hunters, and then non-resident hunters including outfitter clients.
- The principles of sustainability and conservation guide the department's management of all wildlife species. For public transparency, our core principles are posted on yukon.ca.
- We recognize that there continue to be several outstanding issues of concern, and we are committed to resolving them collaboratively with the outfitting industry.



## Session Briefing Note Outfitting in the Yukon

Fall 2024  
Environment

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- Our wildlife harvest program staff meet frequently with Yukon outfitters and the Yukon Outfitter Association to answer questions, address specific issues of concern, and identify potential solutions.
- This includes questions about the quota process, individual quotas and other conditions of annual operating certificates, appeal processes, harvest information, general information to new outfitters, and the status of wildlife populations.

### **Additional Response (Review of the Outfitter Quota Guidelines):**

- Last year, the Department of Environment received a recommendation from the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board to modernize the *Guidelines to Establish Outfitter Quotas*.
- We agree that modernization of these guidelines is necessary for various reasons, including ensuring they conform with the Yukon *Wildlife Act*, addressing the Yukon's legal obligations to consult First Nations, and ensuring better alignment with how wildlife management is conducted in the Yukon.
- The Government of Yukon invited the Board to initiate the review and engagement on the guidelines, given its mandate to make recommendations on all matters related to Yukon fish and wildlife management, legislation, research, policies, and programs.
- We are supporting the Board with their development of a work plan and budget for a potential review and engagement on the guidelines, which will enable the Board to evaluate their capacity and resource needs, and to determine if it is practicable to undertake this effort at this time.



## Session Briefing Note Outfitting in the Yukon

Fall 2024  
Environment

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### Third Response: (Multi-Year Quotas):

- We recognize the certainty and flexibility that multi-year quotas provide to Yukon outfitters. However, the issuance of multi-year quotas does not comply with the Wildlife Act.
- The Department of Environment has implemented an interim solution to provide outfitters with certainty, flexibility, and predictability.
- This interim process states that unless a legal, environmental, or socio-economic factor necessitates a change in the non-resident harvest allocation, quotas will remain unchanged until we establish a new quota process.
- The interim process also allows outfitters who had quota agreements before 2022 to access unused moose and caribou quotas from the previous four years, up to a maximum value, as per their most recent agreement.
- We remain committed to working with the outfitting industry, Renewable Resources Councils, Yukon First Nations, the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board and licensed hunters to ensure that a fair, transparent, and sustainable approach to harvest is applied.

### Fourth Response (Outfitter Quota Appeals):

- In 2021, the Department of Environment was made aware that issuing multi-year quotas and roll-over provisions does not comply with the Wildlife Act. As a result, the Department worked with outfitters to place them on annual quotas. Since 2022, the Department has been issuing annual quotas.



## Session Briefing Note Outfitting in the Yukon

Fall 2024  
Environment

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- Given the changes made to the quota process and the fact that some outfitters were assigned quotas for the first time, the Outfitter Quota Appeal Committee and the Concession and Compensation Review Board received an unprecedented number of appeals in 2022 and 2023.
- Our government responded to all timelines and information requests from the Secretariat coordinating the scheduling of appeal hearings, but the number of appeals created significant delays in the scheduling of hearings.
- The Department of Environment is aware of one outfitter who has filed a quota appeal in 2024.
- The Government of Yukon recognizes and supports outfitters' right to appeal.
- At present, the Government of Yukon remains committed to supporting quota appeals and decisions under the Outfitter Quota Appeal Committee and the Concession and Compensation Review Board processes.
- However, the Government of Yukon will not be attending Outfitter Quota Appeal Committee hearings when the same matter has previously been addressed through the legislated Concession and Compensation Review Board process and a decision has been made and communicated to the outfitter.

### Fifth Response (Hunting in the Peel):

- There are no outfitting concessions in the two Land Management Units included in the Peel Watershed feasibility assessment for the proposed national park; this would be the areas including Turner Lake Wetlands, Caribou River, and Peel River.



## Session Briefing Note Outfitting in the Yukon

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Environment

- The area is remote and therefore has limited licensed hunting opportunities.
- Parts of the territory that have Special Management Area designations, such as the Peel region, are designed to be compatible with recreational and economic activities including wilderness eco-tourism, big game outfitting and trapping.
- Any future designation recommendations made in the Special Management Areas would respect the objectives of the protected area and the intentions of the Peel Watershed Regional Land Use Plan.

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### Context—this may be an issue because:

- Ongoing questions have been raised in the Legislative Assembly and in the media regarding outfitter guidelines, outfitter harvest quotas, and the quota appeal processes.
- In April 2024, the department received a request from the Secretariat to meet regarding the government's participation, or lack thereof, in the appeal process.

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### Background:

- The Department of Environment meets frequently with the Yukon Outfitter Association and Yukon outfitters.
  - In 2023, the Yukon Outfitter Liaison Committee, comprised of representatives from Department of Environment and Yukon Outfitters Association, met twice to discuss issues important to the industry.
  - The most recent Yukon Outfitter Liaison Committee occurred on June 13, 2024.
- The Wildlife Harvest Biologist and other Fish and Wildlife Branch staff also meet regularly with individual Yukon outfitters, as needed.

#### Approved by:

**Dennis Berry**

**October 16, 2024**

Deputy Minister of Environment

Date approved



## Session Briefing Note

Fall 2024

### Grizzly Bear Management – hunting and conservation

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Environment

#### Recommended response:

- We acknowledge some groups have concerns regarding grizzly bear hunting in the Yukon and we appreciate the continued advocacy to ensure the conservation of this species.
- While grizzly bears are listed as a Species of Special Concern in Canada, data collected by wildlife managers in the Yukon, as well as local and Traditional Knowledge holders, indicate the population of grizzly bears in the territory is currently stable.
- A Conservation Plan for Grizzly Bears in Yukon was completed in 2019, as recommended by the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board. The plan's management goals and recommended actions serve as guidance for grizzly bear monitoring and management in the territory.
- To improve our understanding of grizzly bear densities and their habitat needs, we have been surveying specific populations and gathering biological data from their environments throughout the Yukon on a 2-year cycle.
- Grizzly bear management decisions incorporate Traditional Knowledge from Yukon First Nations, Inuvialuit, and include local insights from Renewable Resources Councils and other Yukoners who work closely with the land.
- We use this information to monitor bear populations and adjust harvest levels, if our data indicates there is a conservation concern.



## Session Briefing Note

**Fall 2024**

### **Grizzly Bear Management – hunting and conservation**

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Environment

**Additional response:**

- During the last ten years, the yearly average mortalities caused by humans for grizzly bears has been 80. This includes mortalities caused by vehicle collisions, hunting and defence of life or property.
- Over this same period, there was an average of 2,240 grizzly bear seals sold annually; an average increase of 736 seals compared to the previous 10 years. Despite this increase in seals, the average grizzly bear harvest only increased by 4 bears.
- Throughout the last 10 years, 78% of these seals were sold to Yukon residents. It is customary practice for residents to purchase seals in case of potential conflicts with bears and not because they are actively seeking to harvest a grizzly bear. With an estimated 6,000 – 7,000 grizzly bears in the territory, the 80 annual mortalities are a small number.
- We recognize these mortalities are not evenly distributed across the territory and for this reason, in some areas, mortalities may not be sustainable. As such, department staff review human-caused grizzly bear mortalities on an area-specific basis to assess whether additional localized management approaches are needed.

**Third response (Road-side bear hunting):**

- In 2022, the Department of Environment implemented a recommendation from the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board to adaptively regulate hunting of grizzly bears from the roadside.



## Session Briefing Note

Fall 2024

### Grizzly Bear Management – hunting and conservation

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Environment

- Following this change, roadside grizzly bear hunting is now prohibited on certain roads and highways in the Southern Lakes area.
- This specific prohibition was proposed to the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board by the Taku River Tlingit First Nation and Carcross/Tagish Renewable Resources Council.
- Yukoners, municipalities, and First Nation governments can submit requests for the prohibition of roadside hunting of grizzly bears in their communities to the Minister of Environment.

#### Fourth response (Klukshu grizzly bear):

- Conservation Officer Services was aware locals named one of the many bears known to be in the Klukshu area as "The Mayor" but were unable to determine whether this was the same bear which was harvested in November 2023.
- Conservation Officer Services worked collaboratively with Justice to investigate the Klukshu grizzly bear incident. The decision to stay charges was made based on the evidence and information collected during the investigation.
- Conservation Officers investigate suspected infractions of environmental and wildlife-related laws through the collection of physical evidence and multiple interviews. Officers utilize forensic techniques and collaborate with other law enforcement agencies to build cases which are then reviewed by the courts for prosecution.
- Yukon Conservation Officer Services has concluded its investigation, and the file is now closed.



## Session Briefing Note

**Fall 2024**

### Grizzly Bear Management – hunting and conservation

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Environment

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**Context—this may be an issue because:**

- Grizzly Bear Protection Yukon submitted a petition calling on the Yukon government to ban roadside hunting, ban trophy hunting and prioritize wildlife viewing.
  - In November 2023, the harvest of a grizzly bear in the Klukshu area received media attention when charges were laid against the hunter and then dropped. There may be questions about why the charges were dropped.
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**Background:**

- In 2023, 75 grizzly bears were harvested in the Yukon, 25 were harvested by resident hunters and 50 were harvested by non-resident hunters.
- In 2023, four grizzly bears were killed in self-defence, eight were killed for public safety by Conservation Officers and three were killed in vehicle collisions.
- In 2023, a non-resident hunter was charged with several offences under the *Wildlife Act* for providing false or misleading information to obtain a Yukon resident hunting license and illegally killing two black bears and a grizzly bear.
- The Yukon and Northwest Territories are the only Canadian jurisdictions that allow resident grizzly bear hunting. However, in June 2024, Alberta lifted an 18-year moratorium on grizzly bear hunting to address conflict bears or those in 'areas of concern.' Hunters will be selected through the Alberta licensing and draw system, similar to the Yukon's Permit Hunt Authorization lottery process. Nunavut allows for outfitter-guided grizzly bear hunts only.

**Approved by:**

Marc Cattet

September 20, 2024

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A/Deputy Minister of Environment\_\_\_\_\_  
Date approved



## Session Briefing Note

Fall 2024

### Bison Management

Environment

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#### Recommended response:

- The Aishihik Bison Technical Team, which includes all governments and organizations with a role in bison management, has collaboratively drafted a new management plan for the Aishihik wood bison herd in southwestern Yukon.
- This plan updates the 2012 management plan and seeks a better balance between bison control and harvest as well as managing the impacts of bison hunters on people, other wildlife, and the land. It also provides interim bison harvest guidelines.
- The Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board completed a 60-day public engagement on the draft plan and made recommendations for changes that the Department of Environment subsequently accepted.
- The Government of Yukon completed consultation with First Nations on the draft plan and released the new Conservation and Action Plan for the Aishihik Bison (Bison bison) Population on October 22.
- This new collaborative plan articulates a longer-term vision and recommendations for conservation and management of the Aishihik bison population.
- The updated plan is available on Yukon.ca.

#### Additional response (Cost for implementation):

- The Conservation and Action Plan for the Aishihik Bison Population contains many actions intended to modernize the management goals and align local management with national and international conservation efforts.



## Session Briefing Note

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### Bison Management

Environment

- The plan focuses on an adaptive management framework to allow us to adjust our bison management approaches by monitoring the impact of management actions and modifying those approaches to achieve desired outcomes, when necessary. Changes to bison management approaches will be done in consultation with affected First Nations, Renewable Resources Councils, and the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board.
- As an adaptive management plan, many of the actions are enabling and will only be implemented on an as needed basis.
- The Bison Technical Team will determine the actions to be implemented, and the order of priority, for the long-term management and conservation of the Aishihik Bison population.
- There is currently no budget for the implementation of the actions. The required budget will be developed based on the implementation plan.
- Over the last two years the Department of Environment has spent approximately \$300,000 on Bison management in the Yukon. This figure includes funds for the management and conservation of the Nahanni and Nordquist Bison populations whose range extends into southeastern Yukon, as well as funds used for management of the Aishihik Bison population.
- These costs were 100% recovered from the federal government through their Priority Species funding.

#### **Additional response (bison population):**

- A 2022 population survey estimated the Aishihik bison population to be just under 2,000 adult animals, indicating continued population growth. (See BN #31 Wildlife Surveys and Data Use)



## Session Briefing Note

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### Bison Management

Environment

- One of the goals of the new draft plan is to ensure a viable bison population is restored to the land, which will require managing harvest to maintain a minimum population of 1,000 bison. (See BN #30 [Predator Control and Principles of Wildlife Population Management](#))
- The plan supports the national recovery strategy for bison, which is a requirement under the federal *Species at Risk Act*. The Aishihik bison population contributes significantly to the global conservation of bison.
- As the current population of bison remains healthy and viable, and is above 1,000 adult animals, hunters will not see a reduction in bison harvest opportunities for the 2024-2025 season.

#### Third response (bison refugia):

- Nationally, bison are a threatened species, but in the Yukon the population is healthy and growing.
- Action 4.15 of the conservation and action plan enables the Bison Technical Team to recommend to the Yukon government areas that should be temporarily set aside as refugia. This targeted approach will be used to close specific areas when needed to reduce hunter-induced impacts on bison, moose and other wildlife.
- These areas will be identified using scientific data and local and Traditional Knowledge and may vary in size according to the needs of the animals. While these areas are set aside as refugia, other areas of the bison distributional range will remain open for hunting.
- Creating hunting refugia is a traditional harvest management approach that lets an area rest and recover from hunting pressure. This action was added to the management plan based on input from First Nations partners.



## Session Briefing Note

Fall 2024

### Bison Management

Environment

- At this time no areas have been identified or suggested for closure. Action 4.15 will only be implemented on an “as needed” basis.

#### Fourth response (shortened bison season):

- The Bison Technical Team, which includes all governments and organizations with a role in bison management, recommended in January 2024 that the bison hunting season be shortened by one week.
- Bison cows begin giving birth as early as the last week of March, and throughout April and May. The early calving coincides with when we typically see an increase in bison harvest in late March due to warmer weather and longer daylight hours. Shortening the season by one week may help reduce pressure and stress on pregnant and lactating cows.
- The Government of Yukon has notified Yukon First Nations and wildlife co-management partners of this recommendation.
- There are no changes for the 2024-2025 bison hunting season. Discussions with co-management partners are ongoing and this recommendation is being considered for the 2025-2026 season.

#### Fifth response (stats):

- In 2023-2024 the Department of Environment sold 2,105 wood bison seals with 2,079 purchased by residents and 26 by non-residents (9 through outfitters and 17 for special guiding).
- During the 2023-2024 hunting season a total of 238 bison were harvested, including 134 males and 104 females.



## Session Briefing Note

Fall 2024

### Bison Management

Environment

- Eight bison were harvested by non-residents with five occurring through outfitter-guided hunts and three through hunts that were special-guided by a Yukon resident.

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#### Context—this may be an issue because:

- Bison hunting has become extremely popular in the Yukon, with bison being the second-most hunted species by Yukon hunters.
- The Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board recently completed public engagement on the revised conservation and action plan for the Aishihik bison population. There may be questions on whether the management approach for bison hunting has changed.
- The Opposition asked about bison refugia, hunting closures and no hunting zones.

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#### Background:

- The Yukon is an important global steward of wood bison, which were once nearly extinct. The Aishihik bison population was reintroduced to southwestern Yukon 36 years ago to help restore the species to its native range and is now one of the largest free-ranging populations.
- Bison recovery is guided by a national recovery strategy, which was completed in 2018, because they are listed as Threatened in the federal *Species at Risk Act*.
- To date, there have been no restrictions on which age or sex of bison licensed hunters can kill. Licensed hunters are permitted to kill only one bison per year.
- The Aishihik Bison Technical Team has representatives from the territorial and federal governments, Champagne and Aishihik First Nations, Little Salmon/Carmacks First Nation, Kluane First Nation, and White River First Nation, the Alsek, Carmacks, Dän Keyi and Laberge Renewable Resources Councils, and the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board. It also includes observer participants from Parks Canada, the Yukon Fish and Game Association, and the local outfitter.



# Session Briefing Note

## Bison Management

Fall 2024  
Environment

Approved by:

Dennis Berry

November 12, 2024

Deputy Minister of Environment

Date approved

Bison Harvest – monthly harvest for 2023-2024 and monthly average over the last five years.

Table 1. Five-year average and number of bison harvested by licensed hunters in the Yukon between the hunting season 2018-2019 and 2022-2023 and the number of bison harvested in 2023-2024\*.

	2018/2019 - 2022/2023		2023/2024*
Month	Harvest #	5 yr average	Harvest #
September	79	15.8	22
October	27	5.4	6
November	111	22.2	24
December	84	16.8	9
January	113	22.6	17
February	241	48.2	69
March	524	104.8	89
<b>Total</b>	<b>1179</b>	<b>235.8</b>	<b>236</b>

\*The harvest from the 2023-2024 hunting season is incomplete as some harvest from March is still being processed and data sets must be verified.



## Session Briefing Note

### Caribou Herd Management

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Spring 2024  
Environment

#### Recommended response:

- Caribou are an ecologically and culturally important species for Yukoners, with many people relying on caribou for subsistence and spiritual well-being.
- Conserving and protecting key caribou habitat – rutting areas, migration corridors and winter range for woodland caribou, as well as calving areas, summer range, and migration corridors for migratory caribou – is important for herd health and abundance.
- There are 30 different caribou herds that range within the Yukon.
- The primary tools we use to manage caribou populations are population monitoring, harvest management and habitat management.
- Various tools are used to monitor caribou including deploying satellite GPS collars to track distribution, movement, and survival rates; and conducting composition and population surveys to determine population trends.
- We use our monitoring data to better understand the needs of the caribou herds and develop information sharing tools, including maps of habitat quality, caribou distribution, movement pathways and assessments of harvest sustainability.
- Using this information, we may develop herd and habitat management plans to guide harvest and habitat management and ensure existing processes, like environmental assessment and land use planning, incorporate caribou habitat values.



## Session Briefing Note

### Caribou Herd Management

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Spring 2024  
Environment

#### Additional response:

- The Government of Yukon uses permit hunt authorizations, outfitter quotas, registration hunts, and season closures to manage licensed caribou harvest.
- These management tools are intended to ensure harvest stays within sustainable limits or to allow a herd to recover from a population decline.
- Outfitting quotas for caribou have now been established for all herds, fulfilling a commitment that was agreed to by the Government of Yukon and the outfitting industry in 1996.

#### Third Response (Caribou Surveys):

- The Department of Environment is committed to working to better understand caribou populations throughout the Yukon.
- Information collected through surveys of caribou populations is analyzed alongside data submitted by licensed harvesters and information shared by our co-management partners. (see [BN #31 Wildlife Survey and Data Use](#))
- The Department has allocated over \$1 million this fiscal year to implement caribou surveys and caribou collaring.
- The Department of Environment is conducting various caribou surveys this fall including:
  - GPS-collar deployments in the Pelly, Bonnet Plume, Chisana, Hart River, and Clear Creek herds;
  - a population survey of the Klaza herd;
  - a calving survey of the Hart River herd; and
  - composition surveys in the Liard, Southern Lakes, and Kluane regions.



## Session Briefing Note

### Caribou Herd Management

Spring 2024  
Environment

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- Caribou surveys have already been completed for herds in the Liard, Southern Lakes, Northern Tutchone, North Yukon and North Slope regions.

#### Final Response:

- Harvest management discussions can be challenging, and we make informed and collaborative decisions by generating and sharing knowledge (see BN #30 [Predator Control and Principles of Wildlife Population Management](#)).
- With this knowledge, the Department of Environment employs adaptive measures to manage caribou more responsively and to adjust our actions and impacts as needed.
- The Department works directly with Renewable Resources Councils to manage the many woodland herds in the Yukon and several boards and councils (e.g., Porcupine Caribou Management Board), domestically and internationally to co-manage our large migratory herds.
- We also manage several herds with other governments, including First Nations, the Inuvialuit, provincial and territorial agencies, Canadian federal agencies and Alaskan state and federal agencies.

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#### Context — this may be an issue because:

- There may be questions on the status of Yukon's caribou herds, how we collect data to know a herd requires harvest management tools to be applied, and what steps the government has taken to help herds recover.
- First Nations and Inuvialuit may have concerns about caribou populations and potential overharvest in their traditional territories and settlement lands.

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#### Background:

- Caribou populations are declining globally, including in jurisdictions adjacent to the Yukon.



## Session Briefing Note

### Caribou Herd Management

Spring 2024  
Environment

- The Department of Environment is actively involved in several initiatives to manage caribou, including an update to the 2012 Chisana caribou management plan, developing the Southern Lakes Caribou Relationship Plan with eight other governments, completing and implementing range assessments for the Carcross, Klaza, and Clear Creek caribou herds, and participating in several co-management bodies.
- In June 2024, the Inuvialuit Game Council, Inuvialuit Regional Corporation, Aklavik Hunters and Trappers Committee, Aklavik Community Corporation, Government of Yukon and Government of Canada announced the creation of the Aullaviat/Anguniarvik Traditional Conservation Area. One of the goals of this area is to “Protect and conserve the wildlife, habitat, and biological productivity and contribute to the implementation of the goals of the Inuvialuit Final Agreement, the Porcupine Caribou Management Agreement and the Wildlife Conservation and Management Plan.”
- In the 2023-2024 fiscal year, for Northern Mountain woodland caribou, the Department conducted one population estimate, 12 composition surveys, and deployed satellite-collars in four caribou herds. For the migratory herds, two had a new population estimate, all three had composition surveys, and all three had collars deployed by the Government of Yukon or our partners ([see BN #31 Wildlife Surveys and Data Use](#)).
- In the 2024-2025 fiscal year, for Northern Mountain woodland caribou, the Department will conduct one population estimate, 12 composition surveys, one calving survey, and deploy satellite-collars in five caribou herds. For the migratory herds, updated population estimates, and composition surveys will be attempted for all the herds, and collars will continue to be deployed on all three herds.

**Approved by:**

Dennis Berry

Deputy Minister of Environment

October 15, 2024

Date approved



## **Session Briefing Note**

### **Elk–Agriculture Management**

Environment and  
Energy, Mines and  
Resources

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#### **Recommended response:**

- The Government of Yukon aims to sustain Yukon's elk populations for their health and harvest, while ensuring elk do not negatively impact the production of local foods and crops on agricultural land.
- In 2022, we implemented a two-year pilot plan to minimize elk impact on agricultural properties while maintaining elk on the landscape.
- A Steering Committee with representation from the Government of Yukon, the Yukon Fish and Game Association and the Yukon Agricultural Association is implementing the plan.
- In March of this year, the Steering Committee hired a Pilot Project Coordinator to work with property owners and hunters to implement measures to deter elk from properties and respond when elk are present.

#### **Additional response:**

- The pilot project includes the creation of a Limited Exclusion Zone to deter elk in the affected agricultural areas of Takhini Valley, applying localized and range-scale herd management, supporting fencing options, implementing an elk radio-collaring program, and conducting a social survey to understand more about how we interact with elk.
- We have increased elk monitoring by deploying 20 radio-collars. The radio-collaring program will allow for better tracking of elk movements and distribution by season and greater accuracy to estimate population size from elk surveys.



## **Session Briefing Note**

### **Elk–Agriculture Management**

Environment and  
Energy, Mines and  
Resources

- In 2022, we introduced a new adaptive *Wildlife Act* permitting process for elk in the Limited Exclusion Zone.
- This resulted in eight additional adaptive permits being available for hunting elk. Adaptive permits restrict hunting of elk to bulls with five-point antlers or less.
- These additional permits were part of the two-year pilot program. The permits were offered in 2023 and again in 2024.
- Four of the eight adaptive *Wildlife Act* permits were filled in the 2023-2024 hunting season.
- In addition to the eight *Wildlife Act* permits, there are Permit Hunt Authorizations for elk including two permits for the Braeburn elk herd, and four permits for the Takhini elk herd.
- During the 2023-2024 hunting season, five Permit Hunt Authorization hunters were successful. Two in the Braeburn area and three in the Takhini Valley.
- This means a total of nine elk were harvested in the 2023-2024 season, seven in the Takhini Valley and two in the Braeburn area.
- Landowners and farmers can apply for a permit to shoot elk damaging their properties. These permits are only used in specific cases where there are ongoing issues and damage, and where all other reasonable measures have been unsuccessful.
- Since 2020, there have been two control kills by the Conservation Officer Services Branch and sixteen elk mortalities due to collisions with vehicles.



## **Session Briefing Note**

### **Elk–Agriculture Management**

Environment and  
Energy, Mines and  
Resources

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#### **Third response:**

- Since 2014, the departments of Energy, Mines and Resources, and Environment have funded elk exclusion fencing and electric fencing.
- The use of the elk permit hunt, exclusion fencing, and electric fencing is reducing the number of complaints where elk have been persistent on farms.
- Fencing projects for three agriculture properties have been completed, and there are ongoing discussions with interested agriculture property owners for future projects.
- The number of calls to the Conservation Officer Services Branch concerning elk-agriculture conflicts remains low, with a total of eleven complaints received since 2020.
- In 2023, there were no applications for compensation claims.
- Any Yukoner experiencing a conflict with elk on their property can call the TIPP line at 1-800-661-0525 to report the issue to our Conservation Officers.

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#### **Context — this may be an issue because:**

- Affected farmers may seek an update on government actions to address the conflict between the wild elk population and agricultural properties in the Limited Exclusion Zone
- There may be questions about how the Government of Yukon works with the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board and the Yukon Agricultural Association to address the conflict.



## **Session Briefing Note**

### **Elk–Agriculture Management**

Environment and  
Energy, Mines and  
Resources

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#### **Background:**

- In 2022, a focus group was formed to identify options for the Takhini Elk Herd. The focus group was comprised of representatives from the Yukon Agricultural Association, Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board, Yukon Fish and Game Association, First Nations, and the departments of Energy, Mines and Resources and Environment.
- The objective was to develop a two-year pilot program aimed at effectively regulating the elk population to reduce harm to agricultural lands and infrastructure.
- In May 2023, following focus group recommendations, the Elk-Agricultural Steering Committee was established and tasked with implementing a two-year action plan.
- The Government of Yukon is providing funding of \$175,000 over two years to implement the plan.
- The Elk-Agricultural Steering Committee is comprised of representatives from the Yukon Agricultural Association, the Yukon Fish and Game Association, the departments of Environment and Energy, Mines and Resources, and the Ta'an Kwäch'än Council in an observer capacity. The Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board, Kwanlin Dün First Nation, Champagne and Aishihik First Nations, and Little Salmon/Carmacks First Nation are not active participants on the Committee but are kept informed of its implementation work.
- Since 2014, the Government of Yukon has provided funding to compensate farmers for elk damage and funding to install exclusion fencing, although it has not fully covered farmers' time and other costs associated with mitigation.
  - Between 2014 and 2023, there has been \$195,665 paid in compensation for elk damage to farms. In 2023, there were no applications for compensation claims.
  - Between 2014 and 2020, there was \$200,914 provided for elk exclusion fencing projects.
  - Between 2021 - 2024, the Government of Yukon established an additional funding program for farmers to install elk exclusion fencing on agricultural properties in the Takhini Valley eastern buffer zone. \$289,576 was allocated for nine fencing projects under this program. Current and ongoing funding for elk



## **Session Briefing Note**

### **Elk–Agriculture Management**

Environment and  
Energy, Mines and  
Resources

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exclusion fencing now comes from Sustainable-Canadian Agriculture Partnership.

**Approved by:**

**Dennis Berry**

Deputy Minister, Environment

**September 26, 2024**

Date approved

**Paul Moore**

Deputy Minister, Energy, Mines and Resources

**September 25, 2024**

Date approved



## Session Briefing Note

Fall 2024

### Moose Management in Southern Lakes

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Environment

#### Recommended response:

- The Government of Yukon is pleased to see that moose populations have increased in the Fish Lake, Mt. Lorne and Wheaton River Moose Management Units south of Whitehorse.
- This is an example of how collective conservation actions have been effective in supporting the recovery of moose populations.
- Our results from moose surveys conducted in November 2021 show that numbers of moose have increased in these three Moose Management Units since surveys were last conducted in 2010. (See [BN #31 Wildlife Surveys and Data Use](#))
- Licensed harvest has been restricted in these areas for the past 35 years following the implementation of a Permit Hunt Authorization system in 1989.
- The current allocation of 11 permits across these three MMU's was set in 1998 and remains in place today.
- The 2021 survey results indicate that the licensed harvest allocation is well below the sustainable harvest. Sustainable harvest includes all forms of human-caused mortality (i.e. roadkill, subsistence harvest, licensed harvest).
- In January of this year, the Department of Environment initiated consultation with Kwanlin Dün First Nation, Carcross/Tagish First Nation, Champagne and Aishihik First Nations, the Ta'an Kwäch'än Council, Taku River Tlingit First Nation and the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board on a proposal to increase the number of Permit Hunt Authorizations available in these areas.



## Session Briefing Note

**Fall 2024**

### **Moose Management in Southern Lakes**

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Environment

- The Department also notified the Laberge, Carcross/Tagish, and Alsek Renewable Resources Councils of this proposal.

**Additional response:**

- Following initial discussions with Kwanlin Dün First Nation and the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board, and after receiving written responses from the Taku River Tlingit First Nation and Carcross/Tagish Renewable Resources Council, the department acknowledged the need for all co-management partners to convene at a workshop to share concerns and identify a collaborative approach to moose management.
- On May 21 and 22, 2024, Kwanlin Dün First Nation, Carcross/Tagish First Nation, Ta'an Kwäch'än Council, Taku River Tlingit First Nation, Champagne and Aishihik First Nation, Alsek Renewable Resources Council, Carcross/Tagish Renewable Resources Council, Laberge Renewable Resources Council, Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board, and the Government of Yukon met in Whitehorse for a Co-Management Partners' Workshop on the Regional Conservation and Management of Moose.
- Themes that were discussed include access, education, monitoring, habitat enhancement, predator harvest, moose harvest and overall governance.
- A Southern Lakes Moose Action Plan to address co-management issues has now been drafted, and among other items it includes a commitment to discuss a moose PHA increase.



## Session Briefing Note

Fall 2024

### Moose Management in Southern Lakes

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Environment

- A follow up workshop on October 31 re-affirmed co-management partners' interests in working together, with an increase to moose PHAs being a priority item.
- A commitment was made to advance discussions on increasing PHAs for moose early in the new year, with a focus on having additional harvest opportunities available for the 2025-26 hunting season.
- We look forward to continued collaboration with all parties to develop a co-management plan for moose in the Southern Lakes.

#### Third response:

- Harvest opportunities for moose are informed by discussions with co-management partners, the best available survey data and the *Science-Based Guidelines for Management of Moose in Yukon*.
- The 2021 moose survey results are publicly available on Yukon.ca.

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#### Context—this may be an issue because:

- Moose are the most harvested species by Yukon hunters. Licensed harvesters are interested in additional hunting opportunities.

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#### Background:

- The Fish Lake, Mt. Lorne and Wheaton River Moose Management Units are all currently on Permit Hunt Authorizations:
  - Fish Lake MMU has 3 permits.
  - Mt. Lorne MMU has 4 permits.
  - Wheaton River MMU has 4 permits.
- This approach aligns with the mandate commitment to work with Yukon First Nations, the Fish and Wildlife Management Board and stakeholders to continue to ensure all Yukoners are provided opportunities to sustainably harvest fish and game



**Session Briefing Note****Fall 2024****Moose Management in  
Southern Lakes**

Environment

while looking for new opportunities for Yukon hunters to pursue activities across the territory. (See BN #4 Hunting Opportunities)

**Approved by:****Dennis Berry****November 7, 2024**

Deputy Minister of Environment

Date approved



## Session Briefing Note

**Fall 2024**

### Freshwater Fish

Environment

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**Recommended response:**

- The Government of Yukon works to protect the health of our territory's fish and the waters they call home.
- We do this work alongside Yukon First Nations, the federal government, and anglers to implement fish monitoring programs, collect data to better understand fish health, and introduce measures to better protect fish and their habitat.
- We also work to better understand the impacts that industry may have on our fish and waters, and work with partners to design and implement mitigations when necessary.

**Additional response:**

- This summer, the Department of Environment conducted focused fisheries assessments to monitor lake trout populations on Marsh Lake, Lake Laberge, and Pine Lake.
- Surveys on Marsh and Laberge Lakes were conducted to help understand the status of these populations and provide needed information for the Whitehorse Rapids Generating Station assessment.
- The survey on Pine Lake was part of a developed recovery strategy to evaluate the state of recovery of this population.
- In addition to these programs, the Department continued research on Arctic grayling within the traditional territory of the First Nation of Nacho Nyak Dun, focusing on how these fish adapt to ongoing industrial activity.
- This work is in addition to the ongoing fisheries monitoring programs, developed by the Department of Environment and the First Nation of



## Session Briefing Note

**Fall 2024**

### Freshwater Fish

Environment

Nacho Nyak Dun, to determine long- and short-term changes related to the Eagle Gold mine heap leach failure.

- This year, the Department also developed Yukon's first northern pike monitoring program, which will be starting next year to assess these populations.

#### **Third response:**

- We also work alongside anglers in the Yukon to inform them of rules and regulations that are in place to ensure that fish can continue to be sustainably harvested now and for generations to come.
- In April this year, it became mandatory for anglers to use barbless hooks when fishing in nine Yukon lakes. These additional nine lakes bring the Yukon's total number of lakes that require anglers to use barbless hooks to 63.
- Barbless hooks help improve live-release practices. They are easier to remove and cause less harm to the fish.
- To support fish populations and long-term angling opportunities, the Department of Environment encourages anglers to always use barbless hooks, even when not legally required.
- All changes to the *Yukon Territory Fishery Regulations* are aimed at managing Yukon fish populations for sustainability and, when necessary, recovery.

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#### **Context—this may be an issue because:**

- The Yukon's fish monitoring efforts have received significant media and public attention following the Department of Environment's response to the Victoria Gold heap leach failure.



# Session Briefing Note

**Fall 2024**

## Freshwater Fish

Environment

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### Background:

- The Government of Canada, through the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada, has the legal authority to manage Canada's fisheries and oceans through the federal *Fisheries Act* and *Fishery (General) Regulations*.
- The Government of Yukon has the mandate to manage freshwater fish through the 1989 Canada-Yukon Freshwater Fisheries Agreement.
- Through the *Fishery (General) Regulations*, the Department of Environment's Director of Fish and Wildlife has the authority to approve changes to closed (and open) fishing times, catch, possession and length limits in the *Yukon Territory Fishery Regulations*.
- Changes to the *Fishery (General) Regulations*, under section 6(4), now permit the Director of Fish and Wildlife to also approve changes to limit gear or equipment.
- This authority allows us to enact the changes recommended by the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board, and accepted by the Minister of Environment, to restrict angling to barbless hooks only, on nine lakes in the Yukon.
- Other changes, including type of game fish, fees, ticketable offences and fines under the federal regulations, still require approval from the Government of Canada's Cabinet to enact and be enforceable.
- The nine lakes that now have mandatory use of barbless hooks include:
  - Fish Lake
  - Fox Lake
  - Kusawa Lake
  - Lake Laberge
  - Little Salmon Lake
  - Louise Lake
  - Mayo Lake
  - Nares Lake



# Session Briefing Note

## Fall 2024

### Freshwater Fish

Environment

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- Pine Lake

**Approved by:**

Marc Cattet

A/Deputy Minister of Environment

September 19, 2024

Date approved



## Session Briefing Note

### Deer/Country Residential Hunting

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Fall 2024  
Environment

#### Recommended response:

- The Government of Yukon currently offers 12 deer permits per year through the permit hunt authorization (PHA) process.
- Deer permits are only offered to licensed resident hunters. Two of these 12 permits are reserved for youth hunters aged 14 and 15. Subsistence rights holders do not require a permit to hunt deer.
- During the 2023-2024 hunting season, seven deer were harvested in the Yukon by licensed hunters.
- To better understand deer behaviors and numbers in the territory, we have launched the Yukon's first-ever deer monitoring project using trail cameras, collars, and an aerial drone survey.
- The results of this work will inform decisions on future deer harvest opportunities in the Yukon, including the possibility of an expanded deer hunt.

#### Additional response:

- The collaring and cameras are part of a movement and habitat study being done alongside Yukon University.
- To date we have collared 16 deer. It is our intention to collar an additional 14 during February and March.
- We are currently running an aerial drone survey to count deer in the Takhini valley, along the Takhini Hot Springs Road and the North Klondike Highway to Grizzly Valley. This work will be conducted throughout November.



## Session Briefing Note

### Deer/Country Residential Hunting

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Fall 2024  
Environment

- The drone is solar powered and equipped with conventional and infrared cameras. Our biologists are excited to explore the use of this new technology and hope to expand its use to other species pending its success with the deer program.
- The drone surveys will be conducted during times of clear weather and daylight, and efforts are made to avoid disturbances to people and domestic animals.
- The results of this project should provide a population estimate and sex ratio of deer, which will inform decisions on future deer harvest opportunities, including a possible expansion of the deer hunt.

#### **Third Response (Deer Harvest Opportunities):**

- Deer permits were first introduced in the Yukon in the 2006-2007 hunting season.
- At the time, the department was criticized for issuing deer permits without a clear understanding of Yukon's deer population and how many animals could be sustainably harvested.
- Before increasing permit numbers, it is important that the Department of Environment gathers the population information required to make evidence-based decisions to ensure the long-term sustainability of deer hunting in Yukon.
- We will continue to work with our partners to make informed wildlife management decisions.

#### **Fourth response (Country Residential Hunting):**



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Fall 2024

### Deer/Country Residential Hunting

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Environment

- Deer range across much of the Yukon - individuals with permit hunt authorizations (PHA's) for deer are permitted to hunt for deer throughout most of the territory.
- Hunting in country residential areas is permitted if hunters who have received PHAs:
  - have permission from private landowners to hunt within one kilometre of their residence;
  - have permission to hunt on private land or settlement land outside of public land available for hunting;
  - are hunting within an area (i.e. Game Management Zone or subzone) where the PHAs apply; and
  - are following all other laws of general application (e.g. municipal or other land use restrictions such as discharging a firearm within the municipal boundary of Whitehorse).
- Hunters are also prohibited from hunting in a way that is likely to injure any person, or cause damage to personal property, crops, livestock or domestic animals.

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#### Context—this may be an issue because:

- Deer hunting is becoming more popular with applications increasing every year.
- Concerns have been raised about deer hunting in country residential areas.
- Minister Clarke's 2023 Mandate Letter directs him to work with Yukon First Nations, the Fish and Wildlife Management Board and stakeholders to continue to ensure Yukoners are provided opportunities to sustainably harvest fish and game while looking for new opportunities for Yukon hunters.



# Session Briefing Note

## Deer/Country Residential Hunting

**Fall 2024**  
Environment

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### Background:

- The season to hunt male deer is August 1 to November 30.
- Deer hunting is permitted in all Yukon Game Management Subzones (GMS), except for subzones within National Parks, Herschel Island - Qikiqtaruk Territorial Park, Aullaviat/Anguniarvik Traditional Conservation Area, Ddhaw Ghro Habitat Protection Area (GMS 4-03), and GMS 4-51 (surrounding the Faro area).
- Of the 12 deer permits available through the permit hunt authorization lottery, two are for young hunters aged 14 and 15. Young hunters aged 12 and 13 can only apply to increase their weighting in future lotteries.
- As of November 4, 2024, there were 11 motor-vehicle collisions with deer, with 6 of those being in the Lake Laberge area.
- In 2024-2025, 757 applications were received for 10 permits. 24 applications were received for the two youth permits. This is a total of 781 applications for 12 permits.
- In 2023-2024, 742 applications were received for 10 permits. 27 applications were received for the two youth permits. This is a total of 769 applications for 12 permits.

### Approved by:

**Dennis Berry**

Deputy Minister of Environment

**November 13, 2024**

Date approved



## Session Briefing Note

**Fall 2024**

### **Campground Improvements and Planning**

Environment

**Recommended response:**

- The Department of Environment is engaging with Yukon First Nations to enhance and expand camping opportunities near Whitehorse and across the territory in a way that respects our shared cultural and ecological priorities.
- This work includes our work to redesign and enhance Tatchun Lake campground in the coming years.
- Work with Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation is underway to plan Tatchun Lake campground enhancements that aim to honour and celebrate the cultural significance of the area while creating enhanced opportunities for recreation and connection with nature.
- This includes, subject to regulatory approvals, adding new campsites, an improved day-use area and trail system to the Tatchun Lake campground.
- This past camping season, we added 14 new campsites to the territory's network, including 10 new sites at the Snafu Lake campground and four new sites to Ethel Lake campground.
- In addition, this past summer Yukon Parks completed a full revamp of facilities at Grizzly Lake Campground in Tombstone Territorial Park including new tent pads, cook shelters, bear-proof food storage, outhouses, and grey water barrels.

**Additional response:**

- This year, Yukon Parks replaced four boat launches at Nunatuk, Frances Lake, Little Salmon Lake, and Simpson Lake. Teslin Lake is expected to be completed this winter.



## Session Briefing Note

**Fall 2024**

### **Campground Improvements and Planning**

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Environment

- Five new boat docks were also installed at Watson Lake, Tatchun Lake, Simpson Lake, Frenchman Lake and Nunatuk.
- In 2024, trails at Lapie Canyon and Conrad Campground were also improved.

#### **Third response (Firewood):**

- The Yukon is one of two jurisdictions in Canada to offer free firewood at its campgrounds.
- By providing free firewood, we are helping ensure that camping in the Yukon is more affordable and accessible.
- The Government of Yukon is committed, through the Yukon Parks Strategy, to continuing to supply firewood at all territorial campgrounds across the Yukon.
- In 2023, the Government of Yukon spent \$528,735 to provide over 1,200 cords of firewood to campers in the territory.
- When we can, Yukon Parks purchases this wood from local suppliers, fueling both campfires across the territory and our local economy.
- In addition, providing free firewood in our campgrounds helps prevent timber cutting in our parks and the use of deadfall for campfires. This helps protect the ecological integrity, natural beauty and privacy of some of the most beautiful campsites in the country.
- I encourage campers in the territory to be mindful of their firewood consumption, exercise safe campfire practices and ensure that your campfire is out when you leave your campsite.

#### **Fourth response (Campsite development):**



## Session Briefing Note

Fall 2024

### Campground Improvements and Planning

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Environment

- Since 2017, the Government of Yukon has invested in the development of 126 campsites across the territory.
- This includes 80 drive-in sites and 46 walk-in sites ([See Appendix A](#)).
- Specifically:
  - 63 sites at Congdon Creek;
  - 4 sites at Ethel Lake;
  - 6 sites at Five Mile Lake;
  - 8 sites at Little Salmon;
  - 15 sites at Marsh Lake;
  - 10 sites at Snafu Lake
  - 7 sites at Grizzly Lake;
  - 3 sites at Twin Lakes;
  - 4 sites at Wolf Creek; and
  - 6 sites at Conrad.
- In addition to creating more campsites across the territory, the Department of Environment is investing in helping improve recreational experiences in Yukon territorial parks and campgrounds. This includes investing in ([Appendix B](#)):
  - 11 new boat launches at Aishihik Lake, Otter Falls, Tagish Bridge, Ethel Lake, Twin Lakes, Nunatuk, Frenchman Lake, Frances Lake, Simpson Lake, Little Salmon Lake and Teslin Lake to be completed shortly.



## Session Briefing Note

**Fall 2024**

### **Campground Improvements and Planning**

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Environment

- 8 new docks at Watson Lake, Simpson Lake, Nunatuk, Frenchman and Tatchun Lakes. Pine Lake, Squanga Lake and Twin Lakes campgrounds; and
- 2 trail improvement projects at Lapie Canyon and Conrad.
- Developing the Charcoal Ridge in Tombstone Territorial Park by working in partnership with the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Community Development Corporation to develop the Charcoal Ridge Trail in Tombstone Territorial Park.
- The Government of Yukon will continue to work Yukon First Nations, Inuvialuit, and transboundary Indigenous governments and groups to expand camping opportunities and enhance park experiences across the territory.

#### **Fifth Response (Deep Creek/Lake Laberge Campground):**

- Camping in the Yukon is becoming more popular and Yukon campgrounds continue to host more and more Yukoners and visitors each year and we anticipate that this demand will continue to grow.
- The Department of Environment's Parks Branch has been working to enhance existing campgrounds by investing in recreation opportunities, improving campground infrastructure, adding new campsites and expanding campground boundaries.
- Expansion concepts include treating these areas as full parks and not just campgrounds, including a focus on First Nation and Inuvialuit collaborative management and cultural continuity.
- One of the areas identified for potential expansion is the 185-hectare area of public land northwest of the Lake Laberge Campground.



## Session Briefing Note

**Fall 2024**

### **Campground Improvements and Planning**

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Environment

- In July 2023, a feasibility study of this area of public land was completed.
- This study explored options to add up to 60 new campsites in this area, expand and improve the day use area along the waterfront, and create a hiking trail system that could support year-round recreation.
- By providing more camping opportunities and better recreation experiences we are helping to reduce the impacts of unmanaged recreation and camping in this area.
- The Lake Laberge campground shares overlapping traditional territory with Ta'an Kwäch'än Council and Kwanlin Dün First Nation, and the current campground is surrounded by many privately owned land parcels.
- The Department of Environment is still in the exploration phase of this potential development and is committed to working with First Nation partners and community stakeholders to ensure that our work aligns with their values and vision for this area.

#### **Sixth Response (Garbage Disposal):**

- Yukon Parks manages waste at Yukon territorial campgrounds and works to ensure that that our campgrounds continue to be clean and safe for all campers.
- Waste collected at Yukon campgrounds is disposed at the closest waste transfer facility.
- The Department of Environment is engaging with the Village of Haines Junction to discuss more sustainable options for waste management for campgrounds in that area.



## Session Briefing Note

**Fall 2024**

### Campground Improvements and Planning

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Environment

- To reduce dumping in Yukon campgrounds, the Department of Environment has implemented restrictor plates on garbage cans in campgrounds, which reduce the size of the hole on the garbage can. This has proven to be effective to restrict dumping.
- The Government of Yukon will continue to work with community partners to explore all options of responsibly and sustainably disposing of garbage collected at Yukon campgrounds.

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**Context—this may be an issue because:**

- The Yukon Parks Strategy includes commitments to expand camping opportunities near Whitehorse and to add campsites to existing campgrounds.

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**Background:**

- Yukon Parks operates 42 road-accessible campgrounds offering 1,189 campsites.
- Twelve recreation sites provide day-use recreation opportunities including picnic shelters and boat launches.
- Significant facility development projects in territorial parks involve engagement with Indigenous governments and groups, stakeholders and local communities.

**Approved by:****Dennis Berry**

Deputy Minister of Environment

**November 7, 2024**

Date Approved



# Session Briefing Note

## Fall 2024

### Campground Improvements and Planning

### Environment

#### Appendix A: Campsites added since 2017

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	TOTAL INFILL
Congdon Creek									
Back-in Sites	2						41		43
Tent Sites	20								20
Total	22						41		63
Conrad									
Back-in Sites									
Tent Sites	6								6
Total	6								6
Ethel Lake									
Back-in sites								4	4
Tent Sites									
Total								4	4
Five Mile Lake									
Back-in Sites			6						6
Tent Sites									
Total			6						6



# Session Briefing Note

## Fall 2024

### Campground Improvements and Planning

### Environment

Little Salmon									
Back-in Sites				8					8
Tent Sites									
Total				8					8
Marsh Lake									
Back-in Sites	10						-2		8
Tent Sites					7				7
Total	10				7		-2		15
Snafu Lake									
Back-in Sites								10	10
Tent Sites									
Total								10	10
Tombstone - Grizzly Lake									
Tent Sites	4							3	7
Total	4							3	7
Twin Lakes									
Back-in Sites									



**Session Briefing Note****Fall 2024****Campground Improvements and Planning**

Environment

Tent Sites			3						3
Total			3						3
Wolf Creek									
Back-in Sites									
Tent Sites							4		4
Total							4		4



# Session Briefing Note

# Fall 2024

## Campground Improvements and Planning

## Environment

### Appendix B Infrastructure Improvements:

	Projects			
Location	2021	2022	2023	2024
Aishihik Lake			New boat launch	
Congdon Creek			New playground equipment	
Conrad		New trails		Trail developments
Dezadeash Lake	New boat launch			
Ethel Lake			New boat launch	Upgrades to existing infrastructure
Five Mile Lake	New playground equipment			Improvement of the day-use area (in progress)
Fox Lake	New playground equipment	New pedestrian bridge		
Frances Lake				New boat launch
Frenchman Lake			New boat launch	New dock
Klondike River				Trail rehabilitation and bridge replacement
Lapie Canyon				Trail improvement
Little Salmon Lake				New boat launch
Marsh Lake			New playground equipment	
Nunatuk				New boat launch New dock



# Session Briefing Note

# Fall 2024

## Campground Improvements and Planning

## Environment

Pine Lake	New boat launch	Day-use area improvement: new playground, parking upgrade, changing cabin	New dock	
Simpson Lake				New dock New boat launch
Snafu Lake				Day use parking improvements and additional infrastructure (in progress)
Tatchun Lake				New dock [2025 - Potential campground improvement by adding more sites, improving day-use areas and new trails.]
Teslin Lake				New boat launch (in progress)
Twin Lake		New trails	New boat launch	
Watson Lake	New playground equipment			New dock Minor site improvements
Wolf Creek			Trail improvement New playground equipment	



## Session Briefing Note

**Fall 2024**

### Parks Strategy Implementation

Environment

**Recommended response:**

- The Yukon Parks Strategy outlines a vision for the Yukon's parks system to enhance park experiences while preserving and protecting the ecological and cultural values of these special places.
- Since the Yukon Parks Strategy was released in fall 2020, we have made progress on several of the 24 strategic actions.
- The Government of Yukon plans to publish a brief report in 2024 on our progress to implement the strategy.
- We continue to make updates and modifications to enhance visitor experiences in Yukon parks and campgrounds.

**Additional response:**

- Four years into implementing the 10-year Yukon Parks Strategy, the Government of Yukon has made significant progress.
- This includes:
  - Launching the campground reservation service pilot project this past spring, which allows campers to book select sites at frontcountry campgrounds including Wolf Creek, Pine Lake, Marsh Lake and Tombstone Mountain.
  - Updating day-use areas and playgrounds at Fox Lake, Watson Lake, Yukon River, Five Mile Lake, Klondike River, Pine Lake, Congdon Creek, Kookatsoon Lake, Marsh Lake and Wolf Creek.
- Improving the servicing of recreation and camping facilities on Tágà Shāw Jādālǰ /The Thirty-Mile section of the Yukon River in collaboration with Ta'an Kwäch'än Council,.



## Session Briefing Note

**Fall 2024**

### Parks Strategy Implementation

Environment

- 
- Since 2020, we have replaced 8 boat launches and repaired 6 boat docks.
  - During the 2024 season we completed five boat launch installations at Watson Lake, Tatchun Lake, Simpson Lake, Frenchman Lake and Nunatuk.
  - The other three locations with new boat launches since 2020 include Teslin Lake, Frances Lake and Little Salmon Lake.
  - Yukon Parks continues to update Yukon camping facilities and provide enjoyable recreational opportunities, but Parks is much more than just camping.
  - Parks are also about protecting and monitoring biodiversity. We continue to prioritize collaborative efforts to monitor ecological and cultural values in parks and gather information from multiple sources to support informed decision making.
  - For example, working toward the goal of enhancing collaborative biodiversity data collection, 1,923 species, including 200 rare species, have been observed and recorded in Yukon territorial parks to date through iNaturalist, a citizen science monitoring platform.

#### Third response:

- Reconciliation is a priority in the Strategy and we continue to focus on building meaningful partnerships and relationships with Yukon First Nations for park management planning, monitoring and facility development.
- First Nations, communities and Yukoners are engaged in Yukon parks, with a high level of participation and feedback being received on



## Session Briefing Note

**Fall 2024**

### Parks Strategy Implementation

Environment

everything from developing the new parks regulations to providing feedback on facility developments and upgrades.

- We are committed to implementing the Strategy, setting our long-term direction for Yukon's territorial parks system through to 2030.
- We are developing a Yukon parks systems plan that will guide the development of existing and emerging parks and the establishment of future parks. It will ensure that Yukon parks are in the right places with the right facilities and services.
- Long term, our actions will be guided by our vision, which sees protection, reconciliation and service as the foundation of everything we do. Our work will continue with meaningful engagement with First Nations, providing valued park services and a more modernized parks system.

#### Context—this may be an issue because:

- Yukoners will be interested to know the progress the Government of Yukon has made on the implementation of the Yukon Parks Strategy.
- The first Yukon Parks Strategy progress report is anticipated to be released Fall 2024.

#### Background:

- The Government of Yukon released the Yukon Parks Strategy in September 2020. The Strategy sets the direction for the Yukon's system of territorial parks.
- The Yukon Parks Strategy commits the Government of Yukon to taking 24 specific strategic actions to advance 10 priorities. Since 2020, the Government of Yukon has added 69 sites to Yukon campgrounds across the territory.

#### Approved by:

Briar Young

A/Deputy Minister of Environment

September 5, 2024

Date approved



## Session Briefing Note

**Fall 2024**

### Parks Regulations

Environment

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**Recommended response:**

- As committed in the Yukon Parks Strategy, the Government of Yukon is taking steps to modernize the territory's park and campground regulations.
- The new proposed regulations under the *Parks and Land Certainty Act* aim to better protect the territory's natural, historical, and cultural values in Yukon parks, ensure safe and enjoyable experiences for both Yukoners and those visiting our territory, and provide efficient operation and administration.
- The new proposed regulations will apply to all types of territorial parks, campgrounds and recreational sites.

**Additional response:**

- In 2023, the Government of Yukon released the What We Heard report following our engagement on modernized regulations for Yukon parks and campgrounds with Yukoners, First Nations, Inuvialuit, transboundary Indigenous governments and groups, Renewable Resources Councils, non-governmental organizations, industry associations and tourism operators.
- Over 1,400 individuals provided feedback to a public survey and there was overall strong support for all proposed regulations.
- The new regulations will cover 10 thematic areas, including:
  - noise;
  - domestic animals;
  - liquor;



## Session Briefing Note

**Fall 2024**

### Parks Regulations

Environment

- smoking (including cannabis);
  - on- and off-road vehicles;
  - aircraft use (including drones);
  - park zoning;
  - permitting; and
  - general park, campground and recreation site regulations.
- We anticipate that the new regulations will be in place for the 2025 operating season. Our implementation efforts will first focus on educating Yukoners and visitors about the new changes.

**Third response:**

- Regulations under the *Parks and Land Certainty Act* have not been significantly updated since 2000, making it difficult to effectively manage the range of parks that now exist in the Yukon.
- The new proposed regulations will improve campground experiences, provide better tools for enforcement, and help better implement park management plans. The Government of Yukon is committed to ensuring that new regulations will meet the needs of both Yukoners and visitors for years to come.
- We continue to take the right steps to ensure that these new regulations capture the wide range of activities that are happening in Yukon parks and campgrounds and provide better user experiences for everyone.



# Session Briefing Note

**Fall 2024**

## Parks Regulations

Environment

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**Context—this may be an issue because:**

- Yukoners will be interested to know how a new proposed regulation will affect their camping, recreating or operations experience within Yukon parks and campgrounds.

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**Background:**

- The Government of Yukon released the Yukon Parks Strategy (2020-2030) in September 2020. The Strategy sets the direction for the Yukon's system of territorial parks.
- Modernizing regulations under the *Parks and Land Certainty Act* is identified as one of the Strategy priorities to effectively manage the Yukon's system of parks.

**Approved by:**Dennis Berry

Deputy Minister of Environment

September 27, 2024

Date approved



## Session Briefing Note

### Animal Protection and Control Act Implementation

Environment  
Energy, Mines and  
Resources

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#### Recommended response:

- The *Animal Protection and Control Act* modernizes the Yukon's animal protection and control framework, specifying the responsibility of Yukoners to provide proper care for, and control of, the animals they own.
- The Act regulates animal businesses and rescues, and clarifies ownership of exotic pets. It creates tools to address feral and high-risk animal species to better protect Yukoners and the environment.
- The Act received assent in the fall 2022 session of the Legislative Assembly and additional public engagement on the regulations occurred in summer 2023. The regulations have now been finalized and the Act came in force as of April 4, 2024.
- The Act and regulations were developed following extensive engagement and reflect Yukoners' values, our relationships with animals and our way of life.
- I would like to thank Yukoners for sharing their diverse and unique perspectives during the engagement. All feedback was carefully considered as we developed the regulations.

#### Additional response:

- There are changes under the new legislation, and implementation started with the hiring of a Program Manager in July 2024. The Program Manager is supporting officers in both responsible



**Session Briefing Note****Animal Protection and  
Control Act  
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departments to inform Yukoners about the new requirements under the new legislation.

- Stakeholders emphasized that education and information sharing are the cornerstones of implementation. These priorities will be reflected in the enforcement approach, which is to first assist people to meet their obligations under the new law.
- We appreciate the interest and support from specialty stakeholder groups in the Yukon to help with training officers so that they will better understand the unique circumstances for care of animals such as sled dogs and horses used for outfitting.
- There are new permit and inspection requirements for animal-related businesses such as rescues, boarding facilities, and pet stores. These businesses have a year to obtain their permits and staff of both departments will assist them to complete the permit process and arrange for the initial inspections.
- There are new opportunities for partnership agreements with Yukon First Nations and municipal governments to establish deputy enforcement officers and caretakers to deliver education and enforcement locally. Again, local enforcement starts with education about responsible animal ownership.
- We are committed to working with communities and governments interested in taking on animal protection and control enforcement roles to ensure that enforcement respects local values and priorities.



## Session Briefing Note

### Animal Protection and Control Act Implementation

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#### Third response:

- This legislation is shared between the Departments of Environment and Energy, Mines and Resources. Officers in the Agriculture Branch will respond to welfare and control concerns regarding livestock, and officers in the Animal Health Unit will respond for other species.
- Staff with essential qualifications will be appointed as Animal Protection and Control officers under the Act to ensure there are qualified and trained employees to meet the Act requirements. In addition, we have identified caretaker authorities that will be put in place as required.
- Initially, resources from existing departmental budgets will be used to for implementation, but this is a significantly enhanced legislative framework and additional resources may be required in future years.

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#### Context — this may be an issue because:

- There may be questions about what the Government of Yukon is doing to enforce the new requirements when there have been complaints on social media about some individuals who operate animal related businesses in Yukon.
- There may also be questions about the support available to assist Yukoners to comply with the *Animal Protection and Control Act* and regulations when they come into force.

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#### Background:

- The Act was passed in fall of 2022 and there was extensive engagement with stakeholders to finalize regulations that were endorsed by Cabinet, bringing the legislation into effect on April 4, 2024.



## Session Briefing Note

### Animal Protection and Control Act Implementation

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- A What We Heard report was published summarizing feedback received on the compliance and enforcement framework, permitting for commercial facilities, animal control, cosmetic surgeries, standards of care and ownership of animals.
- While feral animal populations are afforded some protection under the new legislation, there have been requests for a management plan for feral horses.
- Social media concerns related to animal rescue or businesses have led to investigations that remain confidential unless and until charges are laid. The current enforcement approach is to support individuals to come into compliance with new legislation.
- The legislation enshrines care and control of livestock animals specifically for the agriculture sector. This provides a framework to raise and produce livestock in Yukon through recognized industry codes of care for livestock animals.
- Under the legislation, Eurasian boar and all hybrids are prohibited and considered a high-risk species in the Yukon. Staff of the Agriculture Branch have obtained an inventory of all Eurasian boar that exist. These are being depopulated from the Yukon through the options of relocating outside of the Yukon, and by harvesting at slaughter size to avoid wasting Yukon grown meat, with appropriate compensation.

**Approved by:****Dennis Berry****September 25, 2024**

Deputy Minister of Environment

Date approved

**Paul Moore****September 24, 2024**

Deputy Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources

Date approved



## Session Briefing Note

### Domestic Sheep and Goats Control Order

Environment and  
Energy, Mines and Resources

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#### Recommended response:

- In 2020, we issued a Control Order requiring domestic sheep or goat owners to meet testing and fencing requirements to prevent disease spread to wild sheep and goats. This order is in effect until December 31, 2024.
- The order was issued because domestic sheep and goats can carry *Mycoplasma ovipneumoniae* (*M. ovi*), a pathogen that can cause fatal respiratory disease if spread to wild sheep and goats, and potentially other wild animals.
- The Control Order is a precautionary measure to safeguard the health of the Yukon's wild sheep and goats.
- In 2024, the Government of Yukon commissioned three independent contractors to provide reports that will help inform next steps for the Control Order after December 2024.
- Stakeholders and partners were engaged during the creation of these reports to help us understand the impacts of the Control Order and the current risk of disease transfer to wild sheep and goats.

#### Additional response:

- We continue to test domestic sheep and goats for the respiratory pathogen *M. ovi* and assess fencing to ensure compliance with the order.
- We remain up-to-date with new research and we have confidence in the testing methods and laboratories we use to monitor *M. ovi*, the primary bacteria of concern, in sheep and goats.



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Energy, Mines and Resources

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- There is no cost to farmers for testing sheep and goats in the Yukon and they can apply for compensation for the destruction of an animal testing positive if that animal was bred in the Yukon or previously tested negative prior to import.
- From the time the Control Order was announced (October 2018) to March 2024, approximately \$515,000 has been spent on compensation and funding to assist sheep and goat owners to come into compliance.

**Third Response:**

- Annual testing of sheep and goats in the Yukon shows that importing live animals presents a high risk of bringing *M. ovi* to the Yukon.
- We continue to monitor wildlife populations for pathogens. To date, *M. ovi* has not been detected in the Yukon's wild sheep or goats.
- Surveillance in wild sheep and goats and other wildlife species is ongoing to assess the risk of *M. ovi* and related pathogens to the health of these wild populations.

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**Context — this may be an issue because:**

- Sheep and goat owners and wildlife stakeholders are aware of the commissioned reports and are asking about next steps as the date of expiry for the Control Order approaches (December 2024).

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**Background:**

- The Yukon has the largest population of wild thinhorn sheep in Canada. This species is of intrinsic, cultural and commercial value.



## Session Briefing Note

### Domestic Sheep and Goats Control Order

### Environment and Energy, Mines and Resources

- The three commissioned reports that will help inform next steps with the Control Order are:
  - “Risk Assessment of Respiratory Pathogen Transmission from Domestic Small Ruminants to Thinhorn Sheep and Mountain Goats in the Yukon and Northern British Columbia”: *an updated assessment of the risk of pneumonia disease transfer from domestic sheep and goats to wild sheep and goats;*
  - “Sheep and Goat Control Order Impact Assessment Synthesis Report”: *an assessment of the impact this order had on domestic sheep and goat owners in Yukon; and*
  - “Mycoplasma spp. Testing in domestic sheep and goats and wildlife: Assessment of testing options and recommendations for the Yukon”: *a summary of the best available information about the options for testing for M. ovi.*
- The Risk Assessment report concludes there is an ongoing risk of pathogen transfer from domestic sheep and goats to wild populations, which could lead to devastating respiratory disease in those wild sheep and wild goat populations. This conclusion is unchanged from the initial risk assessment completed in 2016 by a different contractor.
- Members of Yukon Renewable Resource Councils, Yukon First Nations, agriculture associations in Yukon and neighboring jurisdictions as well as veterinarians of state, territorial and provincial governments and representatives from national and regional wildlife associations, were engaged in developing the Risk Assessment report. Members of the Yukon Wild Sheep Foundation and B.C. Guide Outfitters Association also provided their comments. Most of these stakeholders including representatives from Renewable Resources Councils and Yukon First Nations expressed support for restrictions on domestic sheep and goats to protect wildlife health and traditional ways of life.
- All past and current sheep and goat owners subject to the Control Order were invited to participate in the industry impact assessment. They expressed concerns about the effects of the Control Order on operating costs, logistics of importing animals, impacts of fencing on animal care, impacts on the genetic variation and dangers of inbreeding on local breeding stock, anxiety caused by previously



**Session Briefing Note****Domestic Sheep and  
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negatively testing animals testing positive, and the emotional toll of destroying positive tested animals. Representatives from agriculture associations and subject matter experts from the Agriculture Branch and Animal Health Unit were also interviewed.

- On October 22, 2024, the Government of Yukon released the risk assessment and impact assessment reports on Yukon.ca. Officials from Environment and Energy, Mines and Resources provided letters and copies of the reports to sheep and goat owners, stakeholders, Renewable Resource Councils and governments. A separate report on testing methods for *Mycoplasma* spp. in domestic sheep and goats and wildlife is available upon request.

**Approved by:****Paul Moore**Deputy Minister  
Department of Energy, Mines and Resources**November 4, 2024**

Date approved

**Dennis Berry**Deputy Minister  
Department of Environment**November 5, 2024**

Date approved



## Session Briefing Note

### Flood Mapping

**Fall 2024**  
Environment

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#### Recommended response:

- As outlined in Our Clean Future, the Yukon's climate strategy, the Government of Yukon is developing flood hazard maps for 14 flood-prone communities across the territory.
- Flood hazard maps show an area that may be impacted by flooding during different flood occurrences and are a critical tool for:
  - Land use planning;
  - Flood preparedness;
  - Emergency management; and
  - Public awareness of flood risk.
- We are developing flood hazard maps for Yukon communities through a phased approach that prioritizes communities based on multiple criteria, including flood risk, available data and information, and development pressures.
- Input from municipal and First Nation governments is informing our work to develop flood hazard maps through community-specific flood mapping advisory committees and technical committees.

#### Additional response:

- In June 2024, the Government of Yukon released the territory's first flood hazard maps for the communities of Carcross, Tagish, Marsh Lake, Lake Laberge and Carmacks.
- In addition, flood hazard maps for Teslin were also released this October.
- Flood hazard mapping studies are now underway for Old Crow, Dawson City, and the Klondike Valley. These maps are anticipated to be completed in 2025.



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### Flood Mapping

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- All flood hazard maps are available for the public to view by visiting the Government of Yukon's Flood Atlas at [flood-atlas.service.yukon.ca](https://flood-atlas.service.yukon.ca).

#### Third response:

- Flood maps are a valuable tool that helps inform Yukoners of the hazard that flooding poses to an area and provides the information needed to make informed decisions.
- As official flood maps are developed, we will continue to work with all orders of government and the Yukon's Emergency Measures Organization to support flood preparation, mitigation, and response.

#### Context:

- The release of flood hazard maps may lead to questions regarding how flood maps will be used to make decisions and how the information may impact home insurance, development, and property value.

#### Background:

- The 14 flood-prone communities identified for flood hazard mapping are Teslin, Carcross, Tagish, Marsh Lake, Lake Laberge, Upper Liard, Mayo, Pelly Crossing, Ross River, Whitehorse, Carmacks, Dawson, Klondike Valley, and Old Crow.
- Completing flood hazard maps for all 14 communities is dependent on available resources, but is expected by 2028. Federal funding covers most costs; each flood hazard map is expected to cost between \$400,000 and \$500,000.

#### Approved by:

Dennis Berry

Deputy Minister of Environment

October 21, 2024

Date approved



## Session Briefing Note

### Water Quality Monitoring

Fall 2024  
Environment

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#### Recommended response:

- The Department of Environment strives to ensure that water resources in the Yukon are protected, conserved and managed responsibly and is committed to responsible and collaborative management, protection, and conservation of the territory's valuable water systems.
- This requires the Department to monitor water quality and quantity in various parts of the Yukon to understand the health of our rivers, lakes and underground water systems, and to watch for potential changes.
- Through our partnerships with federal and First Nations governments we manage:
  - 90 hydrometric stations;
  - 82 groundwater stations;
  - 54 snow survey stations;
  - 14 surface water quality stations; and
  - 8 meteorological stations.
- This work also helps inform actions that the Government of Yukon may take to mitigate impacts from climate change, industry and mining to the Yukon's freshwater and the fish and wildlife that call our waters home.

#### Additional response:

- The Department of Environment's Water Resources Branch currently operates 14 long-term water quality monitoring stations on Yukon rivers under the Canada-Yukon Water Quality Monitoring Network



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### Water Quality Monitoring

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agreement. Data collected from this network informs our understanding of long-term trends in water quality throughout the Yukon.

- This work is done in partnership with Yukon First Nations and community members, who support work to collect data in remote areas.
- In addition, the Department operates a Yukon Observation Well Network, which consists of 82 groundwater stations that help us better understand groundwater quantity and quality in the territory.
- Groundwater is the Yukon's main source of drinking water. It is the source for 97 percent of the territory's drinking water. It also plays an important ecosystem function in replenishing lakes, rivers and ponds.
- Monitoring the territory's groundwater system helps us ensure that we protect the health of the Yukon's groundwater and that it continues to be a sustainable source of drinking water for generations to come.

#### Third response:

- In addition to long-term water quality monitoring of the territory's natural water systems, the Department of Environment also works to monitor water quality in response to unexpected or emerging environmental concerns, ongoing remediation work, and industry.
- In 2022, the Department started to monitor microplastics in the Yukon River.
- Work is also underway to monitor pesticides in select waterways to better understand potential impacts from agricultural activities.



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### Water Quality Monitoring

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- The Department also conducts multiple Water Resources Audits each year, which are in-depth studies to assess potential impacts to surface and groundwater from water-related undertakings such as quartz mines, and municipal wastewater treatment plants.
- We will continue to work with Yukon First Nations, municipalities, and other Government of Yukon departments to ensure we understand the health of our water systems and help inform actions that we can take to mitigate negative impacts to the territory's water.

#### Context—this may be an issue because:

- Water quality monitoring in the territory has been a focal point following the Victoria Gold heap leach failure on June 24.
- The Water Resources Branch has received significant media attention regarding their work monitoring surface water and groundwater quality in the Haggart Creek watershed following the Victoria Gold incident.

#### Background:

- The Water Resources Branch currently has water monitoring partnerships with four First Nations governments and groups including Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, Nacho Nyäk Dun, Vuntut Gwitchin Government and the Dena Kayeh Institute to support water monitoring, training and capacity.
- The Department of Environment, in collaboration with EMR and FNNND, has developed a water monitoring plan to address short and long-term monitoring needs in response to the Victoria Gold Heap Leach failure. Long-term water quality monitoring as part of the Canada-Yukon Water Quality network is also ongoing at:
  - Liard River (since 1991)
  - Rose Creek (since 2008)
  - South McQuesten River (since 2005)
  - Haggart Creek (since 2015)



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### Water Quality Monitoring

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- Klondike River (since 1993-1996, 2005-present)
  - Ogilvie River (1993-1997, 2016-present)
  - Eagle River (1993-1997, 2016-present)
  - Porcupine River (1992-2002, 2007-2008, 2014-present)
  - Old Crow River (2007-2008, 2014-present)
  - Firth River below Sheep Creek (since 2011)
  - Firth River near the mouth (since 2000)
  - Yukon River above Takhini River confluence (since 2005)
  - Yukon River below Marsh Lake (1980-1996, 2005-present)
  - Indian River (since 2023)
- These stations focus on monitoring temperature, pH, nutrients, organics and metals.
  - The Department worked with Living Lakes Canada to host a lake monitoring course for Indigenous guardians in July 2024. Additional work is underway to establish lake monitoring protocols to support First Nations and other groups leading lake monitoring.
  - Information regarding water quality results, data, sampling techniques and protocols and Yukon water quality standards are available on [yukon.ca/water-quality-monitoring](https://yukon.ca/water-quality-monitoring).

**Approved by:**

Briar Young

September 5, 2025

A/Deputy Minister of Environment

Date approved



**Session Briefing Note  
First Nation of Nacho Nyak  
Dun Regional Planning**Energy, Mines and  
Resources  
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**Recommended response:**

- The Government of Yukon is committed to working with the First Nation of Nacho Nyak Dun to advance land use planning in their Traditional Territory, including the Beaver River watershed.
- Regional planning with the First Nation of Nacho Nyak Dun is in the pre-planning stage.
- The Government of Yukon and First Nation of Nacho Nyak Dun are actively discussing how the Beaver River planning process may interact with the Chapter 11 regional land use planning process.

**Additional response:**

- The Government of Yukon remains dedicated to prioritizing the important work of land planning. The ongoing emergency response to the situation at Victoria Gold's Eagle Mine is a priority for both Yukon government and the First Nation of Nacho Nyak Dun. (See EMR # 1)
- The outcomes of the recent appeal decision regarding the proposed Metallic Metals exploration project in the Traditional Territory of the First Nation of Nacho Nyak Dun highlight the important role of land use planning.

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**Context — this may be an issue because:**

- There may be questions regarding land use planning in First Nation of Nacho Nyak Dun's Traditional Territory.



## **Session Briefing Note**

### **First Nation of Nacho Nyak Dun Regional Planning**

Energy, Mines and  
Resources  
and Environment

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#### **Background:**

- The Government of Yukon and First Nation of Nacho Nyak Dun continue to discuss the Beaver River planning process and linkages to the Chapter 11 regional planning process.
- The Beaver River land use planning process is not an Umbrella Final Agreement Chapter 11 sub-regional planning process. Rather, it comes out of the 2018 Intergovernmental Agreement between the First Nation of Nacho Nyak Dun and the Government of Yukon, which supports the proposed ATAC all-season tote road.
- The Agreement states that a land use plan must be finalized before any road construction occurs.
- ATAC Resources Ltd. has sold many of its mineral holdings in the Yukon to Hecla Mining, including its Rackla Gold and Connaught projects.
- On March 15, 2021, the First Nation of Nacho Nyak Dun petitioned the Supreme Court of Yukon to set aside the Government of Yukon's issuance of a Decision Document for the Metallic Minerals proposed exploration project in the Beaver River Watershed in part due to the ongoing Beaver River Land Use Planning process.
- On January 31, 2023, the Supreme Court of Yukon ruled consultation with the First Nation of Nacho Nyak Dun to be inadequate and overturned the Government of Yukon's decision document for the Metallic Minerals project. The Government of Yukon appealed this court decision to the Yukon Court of Appeal. The Court of Appeal largely dismissed the Government of Yukon's appeal in a decision released on April 9, 2024. (See EMR BN #90)
- The heap leach failure at Victoria Gold Corporation's Eagle Mine on June 24, 2024, and ongoing emergency response has required a significant diversion of Government of Yukon and First Nation of Nacho Nyak Dun personnel and resources.



**EMR #80 / ENV #80**

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**Session Briefing Note**  
**First Nation of Nacho Nyak**  
**Dun Regional Planning**

**Approved by:**

Heather Mills A/DM  
Deputy Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources

September 5, 2024

Date approved

Briar Young  
A/Deputy Minister of Environment

September 5, 2024

Date Approved



**Session Briefing Note****Fall 2024****Peel Land Use Planning Implementation** Environment

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**Recommended response:**

- We continue to work with our First Nation partners, Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, First Nation of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun, Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation and the Gwich'in Tribal Council to implement the Peel Watershed Regional Land Use Plan.
- Our governments have been working together to designate specific Special Management Areas identified in the Peel Plan as protected areas under legislation.
- We are working with the federal government on a feasibility assessment for a national park for the areas including Turner Lake Wetlands, Caribou River, and the Peel River corridor.
- We are also working toward designating Special Management Areas that cover the Wind, Snake, Bonnet Plume, and Vittrekwa Rivers as territorial parks.
- Combined, these three areas will cover over seven percent of the Yukon.

**National Park Feasibility Assessment in the Peel Watershed**

- Recently, the Government of Yukon, in close partnership with the Gwich'in Tribal Council, the First Nation of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun and Parks Canada, announced that we are working together on a feasibility assessment for a new national park in the Peel Watershed.
- The national park feasibility assessment will provide the opportunity to consider a national park as the permanent protected area designation, determine the protected area boundaries and discuss longer term management of this area.



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### **Peel Land Use Planning Implementation** Environment

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- A feasibility assessment for a national park in this area is a key step toward implementing the Peel Watershed Regional Land Use Plan and supports the conservation and protection goals of the Canada-Yukon Nature Agreement.
- If established, a new national park would permanently protect this area, which includes 3,000 square kilometres of rich and diverse landscapes.
- All governments involved in the feasibility assessment are preparing for upcoming public engagement as part of the work to determine whether a national park is feasible and desirable.

#### **Peel Territorial Parks:**

- The Parties to the Peel Plan (the governments of First Nation of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun, Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation, the Gwich'in Tribal Council and Yukon) have recommended that two parks be established in the Peel Watershed.
- We are working together to designate these parks under the Yukon's *Parks and Land Certainty Act* and hope to have them established next year. Once designated, the Yukon will work with our First Nation partners to co-develop the management direction for these protected areas, which will include an opportunity for the public to provide input.
- One park will include the Wind and Bonnet Plume Watersheds and will be known as Tagé Héninlin (Nijin Han Niinlaih) (*Ta-gay Hen-in-lin Ni-jin Hahn Ni-inlay*) Territorial Park.
- This Territorial Park will cover about 6 per cent of the Yukon and will be 14 times larger than Tombstone Park.



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### Peel Land Use Planning Implementation Environment

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- The second park, which has not been named yet, will include the Richardson Mountains and Vittrekwa River.

#### **Additional response:**

- Other implementation activities from the Peel Plan include the establishment of two hydrometric stations on the Snake and Wind Rivers. These stations monitor water levels and flow, and the data can be accessed by the public in real time.
- Accessible water data increases safety of river users and is valuable for understanding environmental change in the area.
- We have also produced publicly-available mapping products, which used satellite imagery to map wetlands and areas of existing disturbance. These products can be used to inform future land management planning and decision-making.
- Two areas within the Peel Watershed have been nominated by the Gwich'in Social and Cultural Institute to be National Historic Sites. These are areas of great cultural importance to the Tetlit Gwich'in. The nominations are supported by all five parties to the Peel Plan.
- We look forward to continuing collaborative work with First Nations partners to implement the Peel Watershed Regional Land Use Plan.

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#### **Context—this may be an issue because:**

- The public continues to show interest in the implementation of the Peel Watershed Regional Land Use Plan.

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#### **Background:**

- The Peel Plan Implementation Committee consists of representatives from all five governments who are signatories to the Peel Plan and are responsible for overseeing the Plan's implementation.



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- The two areas nominated to be National Historic Sites are Tshuu tr'adaojich'uu and Teetl'it njik. They are culturally significant locations along the Peel River.
- The First Nations Parties have expressed interest and expectations in jointly working to designate the two territorial parks due to the commitments in the Peel Plan to jointly manage the Special Management Areas.
- In the proposed territorial park areas, non-industrial land uses, such as hunting, trapping, outfitting, and commercial tourism will be allowed to continue within the parks. Commercial tourism will be respected and allowed to continue, although operators may require a park permit prior to visiting the parks. As per the Peel Plan, no new industrial development or new surface access will be allowed. Existing mining claims will be recognized.
- The proposed national park area does not overlap with any outfitting concession and licensed resident hunters rarely visit the area because of its remoteness. Subsistence harvest rights in this area will not be affected should it become a national park.
- Between 1995 and 2023, three animals were harvested by licensed resident hunters in the area identified in the national park feasibility study assessment, with the last animal harvested being a caribou in 2022.
- As the Game Management Subzones where these three animals were harvested have minimal overlap with the area of the national park feasibility assessment, in addition to Tetlin Gwich'in lands where permission to hunt is required, it is probable that there were no animals harvested within the potential national park area.

**Approved by:**

Dennis Berry

November 5, 2024

\_\_\_\_\_  
Deputy Minister of Environment\_\_\_\_\_  
Date approved



## Session Briefing Note

**Fall 2024**

### **McIntyre Creek Protected Area Planning**   Environment

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**Recommended response:**

- The establishment of Chasàn Chùà/ McIntyre Creek as a protected area continues to be a priority for the Government of Yukon.
- In 2023, we announced measures that provide interim protection to the area by expanding the boundary of an existing Order-in-Council under the Quartz Act to prevent new mineral staking in the proposed protected area.
- In addition, we established an administrative reserve in the area to ensure public land use applications align with the purpose of a protected area and the City's Official Community Plan.
- In April 2024, the Government of Yukon, Kwanlin Dün First Nation, Ta'an Kwäch'än Council, the City of Whitehorse and Parks Canada, signed a Memorandum of Understanding outlining our commitment to protect the McIntyre Creek area.
- This MOU commits partners to work together to recommend a boundary for the area. They will also recommend the type of protected area tool to use, and a governance model for managing this protected area in the future.

**Additional response (Public Engagement):**

- A steering committee for this work, which includes representatives from all partners, has been established and launched engagement on October 29, 2024, to gain feedback from Kwanlin Dün First Nation and Ta'an Kwäch'än Council citizens and beneficiaries, key stakeholders and the public.



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### **McIntyre Creek Protected Area Planning**   Environment

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- Understanding how important this area is to Yukoners, and how Yukoners recreate in this area, will help the Steering Committee make recommendations to the five governments on the best way to protect Chasàn Chùà (McIntyre Creek) into the future.
- The Steering Committee has launched a website, [chasanchua.ca](http://chasanchua.ca), to provide information about the initiative and engagement opportunities, which include:
  - An online survey that is now open until December 6, 2024;
  - A public open house at the Kwanlin Dün Cultural Centre on November 6 from 11am-2pm and 4 to 8 p.m.; and
  - Meetings with targeted stakeholders.

#### **Third response:**

- Chasàn Chùà (McIntyre Creek) is a culturally important area within the Traditional Territories of Kwanlin Dün First Nation and the Ta'an Kwäch'än Council, with a history of use by First Nations peoples going back at least 8,000 years and continuing to present day.
- We know that the McIntyre Creek area supports a diversity of habitats important to wildlife, including wetlands. It is an important wildlife corridor that runs through the heart of the City of Whitehorse.
- Additionally, it is an accessible recreation area widely used by cross-country skiers, rock climbers, hikers, bikers, snowmobilers, and disc golfers.
- Our governments collectively recognize the importance of Chasàn Chùà (McIntyre Creek) and are committed to working together to protect the area for future generations of Yukoners.



## Session Briefing Note

**Fall 2024**

### **McIntyre Creek Protected Area Planning**   Environment

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#### **Fourth response:**

- On October 24, 2024, Kwanlin Dün First Nation (KDFN) and Gladiator Metals Corp. announced that they have entered into a Capacity Funding Agreement as of August 1, 2024, regarding mineral exploration in the City of Whitehorse and KDFN Traditional Territory
- Gladiator Metals is currently in the initial phase of permitting and authorized to work within Class 1 limits, which allows for the lowest level of exploration work.
- While new mineral staking is prohibited in the McIntyre Creek area, existing claim holders can work their claims if they obtain relevant permits from both the Government of Yukon and the City of Whitehorse, and conduct permitted work in compliance with regulatory requirements.
- If Gladiator Metals would like to further their work on their claims, they would need to undergo an assessment by the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board, which will allow the public to provide their views on the project.
- They would also need a development permit from the City for any further exploration work within City limits.
- Their recent Agreement with KDFN only outlines Gladiator's responsibility to provide financial support for KDFN's review of their proposed projects and for their participation in consultation and environmental assessments.
- The Department of Environment remains engaged on any proposed mineral activity in the McIntyre Creek area and we will continue to work with all affected parties to discuss ways to ensure environmental protection for the McIntyre Creek area.



## Session Briefing Note

**Fall 2024**

### **McIntyre Creek Protected Area Planning**    Environment

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- The Steering Committee is asking for input before recommending to their respective governments what tools could be used for protection, including which “instruments” should be used for protection, or the way that formal protection will be put in place for the area.
- We continue to work with the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, the primary regulator of mineral development projects, on any options to address existing mineral claims and mineral development activities in the proposed park area.
- A collaborative planning approach is key, due to the number of parties involved, and local interests.

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#### **Context — this may be an issue because:**

- There may be questions about the Yukon government's progress toward the commitment to begin the process of creating Chasàn Chùà/ McIntyre Creek as a protected area.
- A mining company with active quartz claims that overlap the proposed park boundary received approval to conduct Class 1 activities from the Government of Yukon. The City of Whitehorse also approved a development permit to allow exploration-related activities to occur.

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#### **Background:**

- The area includes public lands within the City of Whitehorse boundary. Both the City of Whitehorse and the Government of Yukon have responsibilities to authorize land use activities in this area. While within their traditional territories, neither Ta'an Kwäch'än Council nor Kwanlin Dün First Nation have Settlement Lands within the proposed area.
- The City of Whitehorse has formally adopted *Whitehorse 2040* as the City's new Official Community Plan. *Whitehorse 2040* details the proposed boundaries for Chasàn Chùà/McIntyre Creek Park.
- Additional interests in this area include mining claim holders, gravel extraction and other commercial and institutional land tenures, including Icy Waters and Yukon University. Existing authorizations are not directly impacted by the mineral staking withdrawal or the administrative reserve.



**Session Briefing Note****Fall 2024****McIntyre Creek Protected Area Planning**

Environment

Approved by:

Dennis Berry

November 12, 2024

\_\_\_\_\_  
Deputy Minister of Environment\_\_\_\_\_  
Date approved



## Session Briefing Note

### Gladiator Metals

Energy, Mines and  
Resources

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#### Recommended response:

- Gladiator Metals Ltd. has been conducting exploration work near the former Whitehorse Copper mine. This area is not near homes, but some of the claims lie within city limits.
- On November 14, 2023, a Class 1 authorization for the company's exploration work in the area was issued after consultation with Kwanlin Dün First Nation and Ta'an Kwäch'än Council. This authorization allows for only the lowest level of exploration work.
- [The Government of Yukon is committed to ensuring that resource development is done responsibly, and that any proposed mineral development project adheres to our regulatory framework.](#)

#### Additional response:

- The [original](#) Cowley Creek claims were staked decades ago and predate the nearby homes and staking prohibition. Claims may be renewed if the claim holder complies with renewal requirements.
- [The new claims staked in the Łu Zil Män \(Fish Lake\) planning area are subject to mineral development and environmental laws, official community plans, local area plans and zoning regulations.](#)
- [Should the company submit a Class 1 application in the Łu Zil Män \(Fish Lake\) area, this will be reviewed, assessed for potential environmental impacts, and consulted on with affected First Nations before any project is approved.](#)
- We have heard some residents raise concerns that mining exploration could increase the risk of radon in groundwater. Radon is sometimes



## Session Briefing Note

### Gladiator Metals

Energy, Mines and  
Resources

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present in groundwater in the area, but core drilling for exploration is unlikely to alter groundwater quality.

- The Government of Yukon is collaborating with the University of Saskatchewan, Ta'an Kwäch'än Council and the City of Whitehorse to examine groundwater quality and hazards in Whitehorse to better understand the risks of radon in the groundwater. This is a three-year project funded by the National Research Council of Canada.

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#### Context — this may be an issue because:

- There is significant public interest in Gladiator Metals' exploration program given the locations of these activities and the recent court case.
- [The Fish Lake Steering Committee and local residents have raised concerns about Gladiator Metal's staking of 55 new quartz claims that were registered on May 21, 2024 in the Fish Lake planning area.](#)

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#### Background:

- On May 11, 2023, the Mineral Resources Branch received a complaint about the Class 1 activities near the Cowley Creek site, and requested the Compliance, Monitoring and Inspections Branch inspect the site. A Natural Resource Officer inspected the site and identified numerous violations.
- The company was convicted of six offences for unauthorized activities. On August 30, 2023, the company was fined \$38,000, plus a \$5,700 victim fine surcharge.
- On November 14, 2023, Gladiator Metals received a new authorization to conduct Class 1 quartz exploration near the former Whitehorse Copper property. The site lies along the Copper Haul Road, north of the Mt. Sima Road, not near residential subdivisions. Exploration work commenced in early January 2024. The Class 1 authorization was amended to include claims in the Cowley Creek area and will require full remediation prior to November 13, 2024.
- On January 18, 2024, a Natural Resource Officer collaborated with bylaw officers from the City of Whitehorse and company representatives to inspect the site. No concerns were noted at the time.



## Session Briefing Note

### Gladiator Metals

Energy, Mines and  
Resources

- Due to the overlap with the City of Whitehorse municipal boundaries, the company requires development permits from the City to proceed with work.
- Natural Resource Officers regularly inspect the Class 1 activities to ensure the company is complying with its authorization conditions. An inspection conducted on July 10, 2024, identified several reclamation issues that required attention.
- An inspection on August 13, 2024, confirmed that the previously outstanding reclamation issues had been corrected and no further issues were noted.
- On May 21, 2024, Gladiator Metals registered 55 new quartz claims in the Łu Zil Män (Fish Lake) land planning area.
- The current Whitehorse Periphery zoning regulation does not allow the issuance of Development Permits for any significant exploration project. Mine development is also prohibited within this zoning regulation.

**Approved by:****Lauren Haney****October 14, 2024**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Deputy Minister  
Department of Energy, Mines and Resources

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date approved



## Session Briefing Note

### Vehicle-Wildlife Collisions

Fall 2024  
Environment

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#### Recommended response:

- Wildlife are attracted to highways for various reasons, including foraging and travel ease.
- Vehicle collisions with large mammals are a risk to public safety and to the Yukon's wildlife populations.
- The Government of Yukon mitigates highway collisions using several prevention strategies. These include:
  - developing vegetation control plans for clearing highway rights-of-way to improve visibility for motorists,
  - installing permanent signage notifying drivers they are travelling through wildlife corridors, and;
  - using real-time warning on digital signs to drive cautiously when wildlife is known to be in the area.
- Reducing wildlife collisions on the Yukon's highways improves the safety of motorists and contributes to the conservation of wildlife species.

#### Additional response:

- The departments of Environment and Highways and Public Works work together to mitigate and manage wildlife collisions on Yukon highways.
- The Department of Environment collects wildlife collision information which informs the Department of Highways and Public Works of locations for signage placement and helps prioritize road corridor vegetation clearing.



## Session Briefing Note

### Vehicle-Wildlife Collisions

Fall 2024  
Environment

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- Road ecologists and biologists have been contracted to analyze collision data and recommend additional appropriate and effective mitigation measures. This has included actions like the removal of snow berms to facilitate animal movement off roadways.
- The Department of Environment is working to make wildlife mortality information accessible to the public through web portals, which will include wildlife road collision data.

#### Third response:

- The risk of vehicle-wildlife collisions increases between November and April due to shorter daylight hours and increased wildlife activity.
- Pay attention to road conditions, adjust your speed accordingly and give yourself extra time for your commute. During twilight hours, slow down and look ahead into the ditch for movement or for the reflection of animal eyes in your headlights.
- In addition to clearing the right-of-way and providing signage, we warn motorists about areas where collisions with wildlife are frequent by announcing cautions through annual public education campaigns and on our social media channels.
- Wildlife collisions can be reported to the TIPP line at 1-800-661-0525.
- Your reports increase the data collected and help inform ways to reduce wildlife collisions in the territory.

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#### Context—this may be an issue because:

- Managing human and wildlife conflicts is an issue of public concern.



## Session Briefing Note

### Vehicle-Wildlife Collisions

Fall 2024  
Environment

- Members of the opposition have written to Minister Clarke to inquire about vehicle-wildlife collision statistics in their ridings.

#### Background:

- There is a wildlife-vehicle collision working group made up of representatives from the departments of Environment and Highways and Public Works with a mandate to work together to develop and implement adaptive strategies to decrease the rate of wildlife-vehicle collisions.
- The group seeks input from boards and councils, and the public to contribute to sound management decisions through accepted procedures and approvals.
- The working group regularly consults and collaborates with First Nations who have expressed concerns about wildlife collisions.
- Wildlife-vehicle collisions are another form of human-wildlife conflict, resulting in the deaths of 49 animals in 2024, with most being ungulates.
- Conservation officers respond to reports of injured or deceased wildlife on roadways and are responsible for euthanizing injured wildlife when necessary.
- Vehicle-wildlife collision statistics for the last three calendar years (Note that not all resulted in wildlife deaths):
  - 2024 total of 236 incidents (as of August 23)
  - 2023 total of 319 incidents
  - 2022 total of 388 incidents

#### Approved by:

Briar Young

September 5, 2024

A/ Deputy Minister of Environment

Date approved



## Session Briefing Note

Spring 2024

### Extended Producer Responsibility Implementation

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Environment

#### Recommended response:

- At the start of this year, the Extended Producer Responsibility Regulation came into force to help the Yukon develop a stable and successful waste diversion system.
- While every province in Canada has established an Extended Producer Responsibility framework, the Yukon is the first territory to adopt Extended Producer Responsibility.
- Extended Producer Responsibility will provide a long-lasting solution to the underlying structural issues facing the Yukon's recycling system and will shift the cost of recycling from Yukon taxpayers and municipalities to product manufacturers and producers.
- The Yukon government has been working with partners to fully establish the Extended Producer Responsibility programs in the Yukon by the end of 2025.

#### Additional response (PRO's and Stewardship Plans):

- The Government of Yukon is working with national producers, local businesses, municipalities, and industry representatives to establish the details of an Extended Producer Responsibility framework and implement the programs.
- The first step in the implementation process is the development of stewardship plans.
- Producers, or producer responsibility organizations on their behalf, will develop a stewardship plan. The development of the plan will require engagement with stakeholders.
- Stewardship plans outline the details of collection, processing and transportation of recycling services throughout Yukon communities.



## Session Briefing Note

Spring 2024

### Extended Producer Responsibility Implementation

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Environment

Stewardship plans are the foundation of what the recycling services will look like upon implementation.

- I would like to clarify that membership with a producer responsibility organization is not mandatory. The producer of a product has a choice to either fulfill their obligation under the regulation themselves, or through a membership with a producer responsibility organization.
- The regulation does not limit the number of producer responsibility organizations; however, due to the small number of producers in the Yukon, we expect to only see one producer responsibility organization per waste stream.
- Once complete, the stewardship plans will be reviewed and approved by the Government of Yukon.
- A producer responsibility organization becomes recognized once the stewardship plan has been approved, and the permit is issued to the producer responsibility organization for their specific waste stream program.
- The stewardship plan review and approval stage will allow our government to ensure that the final plans align with service level expectations, recovery targets and our waste diversion objectives.
- Timing of plan approval depends on when the plan is submitted and whether additional information or review is required.
- It is anticipated that these producer-led waste diversion programs will begin operation throughout 2025.
- Producer responsibility organizations have submitted three stewardship plans on behalf of producers so far:
  - Call2Recycle for batteries;



## Session Briefing Note

Spring 2024

### Extended Producer Responsibility Implementation

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Environment

- Interchange Recycling for waste oil and antifreeze; and
  - Circular Materials for packaging and paper products.
- The Government of Yukon has maintained an ongoing dialogue with Yukon businesses and recycling stakeholders to address concerns and inform the development and implementation of the framework, including the stewardship plan process.
- We are committed to continuing this dialogue throughout the implementation of an Extended Producer Responsibility framework in the Yukon.

#### Third response (Raven and COW):

- The Government of Yukon acknowledges the importance of recycling to Yukoners and is working to ensure that Yukoners can continue to do their part to reduce waste and protect the environment.
- We are aware that Raven ReCentre announced on April 10th that they will not be accepting, processing or shipping most non-refundable recyclables including paper and packaging as of September 15 this year.
- The Government of Yukon is pleased to see the City of Whitehorse take steps to implement a fee-for-service recycling depot to be set at the Whitehorse landfill to ensure that Yukoners can continue to recycle following the closure of Raven ReCentre's free public drop-off for paper and packaging at the end of this year.
- On April 11, a letter was sent to Mayor Cabott reiterating our support for the City of Whitehorse as we move forward with Extended Producer Responsibility implementation.
- The Government of Yukon is therefore also pleased to see the City take steps to implement a residential curbside recycling program. It is the



## Session Briefing Note

Spring 2024

### Extended Producer Responsibility Implementation

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Environment

hope of the Government of Yukon that implementing curbside recycling collection prior to Extended Producer Responsibility will take some of the financial burden off producers and allow for a smoother transition into the new recycling system.

- The Government of Yukon is committed to continuing to work with the City of Whitehorse and community partners to find solutions and ensure Yukoners have an option to recycle in Whitehorse.

#### **Fourth response (service levels):**

- Over the next year and a half, the Government of Yukon will transition the responsibility for managing non-refundable recyclables and a range of hazardous and special products to the producers of those materials.
- Once implemented, large producers and manufacturers of residential packaging and household hazardous waste will be tasked with funding and managing the collection, handling and recovery of those materials.
- While the specific details of the Yukon's new waste management approach will be determined during the stewardship plan development, review and approval period, Yukoners can expect the same or better access to waste collection and recovery services as they do now.
- As the Department of Community Services works towards regionalization of waste service delivery across the Yukon, we know that some community transfer stations may be closed.
- Where possible, waste and recycling services should align to support an overall efficient system.
- So far in the draft stewardship plans released, proposed service levels align with existing services and have considered any changes planned to happen during the transition period.



## Session Briefing Note

Spring 2024

### Extended Producer Responsibility Implementation

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Environment

- This is why it is important for the local governments and communities to participate in the remaining producer-led engagements that will take place over the coming months.

#### **Fifth response (cost):**

- We understand from recent conversations with the Producers Responsibility Organizations that the proposed stewardship plans under Extended Producer Responsibility may be more expensive than those in other jurisdictions.
- This is mainly due to the longer transportation distances for staging materials and the high levels of service expected in the Yukon.
- Costs for consumer products under EPR in other jurisdictions range from fractions of a single cent for individual grocery store items, to a couple dollars for items that are hazardous in nature.
- The specific cost per product is dependent on the entire system cost. Until consultation has been completed and the Producers have worked with businesses to build the system, the government cannot influence cost structures.
- As the system is being developed, there has been open dialogue with producer responsibility organizations to determine how best to keep these costs as low as possible.
- Assigning responsibility for waste management to the highest available producer in the supply chain reduces the impact on smaller Yukon businesses.
- The small business exemption for packaging and paper producers with revenues of under \$1M a year will also help reduce costs associated with products for small, local businesses.



## Session Briefing Note

Spring 2024

### Extended Producer Responsibility Implementation

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Environment

- EPR programs for printed paper and packaging materials are not expected to increase costs of groceries and other consumer goods in the Yukon that generate such waste materials.
- Most large producers in the Yukon are national companies that have already incorporated some collection and diversion costs into their product costs because many southern jurisdictions already have EPR programs in place.
- For other materials, costs may be passed down to consumers via fees charged at point of sale or incorporated into the product cost. This supports the “user-pay” and “user-responsibility” principles of waste management.

#### **Sixth response (Interchange Recycling/cost for hazardous products):**

- The Producer Responsibility Organization (PRO) Interchange Recycling began charging Environmental Handling Charges (EHC) to its Yukon members on July 1, 2024 for hazardous products, including lubricating oil, antifreeze, oil filters diesel exhaust fluid and automotive containers, etc.
- The fee charged by Interchange Recycling is not set or regulated by the Government of Yukon.
- It is a result of business working with business in the private sector and the agreement between Interchange Recycling and their members.
- As a condition of membership with Interchange Recycling, businesses are required to remit an EHC fee. This is true for their membership in British Columbia, as well as the Yukon.



## Session Briefing Note

Spring 2024

### Extended Producer Responsibility Implementation

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Environment

- Interchange Recycling has decided to charge its Yukon members EHC fees to assist with the development of the Stewardship Plan, not just implementation.
- The Government of Yukon is not collecting the fees, and Interchange Recycling was not expected to consult with the government on the EHC fees.
- Communication about the fee would have come directly from Interchange Recycling to their membership, not from the Government of Yukon.
- EPR will be implemented in the Yukon for hazardous products once Interchange Recycling's Stewardship Plan is approved, which is anticipated for 2025.

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#### Context—this may be an issue because:

- The Yukon public and Yukon businesses may have questions about how the implementation of Extended Producer Responsibility framework will impact the Yukon's waste management system and Yukon businesses.
- Producer Responsibility Organizations have indicated to Yukon government and stakeholders that costs to operate these programs will be higher in the territory than seen in other jurisdictions.

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#### Background:

- From January to May 2022, the Department of Environment worked with Extended Producer Responsibility Advisory Committee to collect preliminary input on Extended Producer Responsibility. Public engagement on Extended Producer Responsibility was held from November 1, 2022, to February 17, 2023.
- In the fall 2023, the amendments to the *Environment Act* were passed allowing Yukon to place Extended Producer Responsibility obligations on national brands rather than Yukon municipalities and taxpayers.



## Session Briefing Note

**Spring 2024**

### Extended Producer Responsibility Implementation

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Environment

- Department of Community Services is planning to close several rural transfer stations over the next several years at Johnson's Crossing, Silver City, Braeburn and Stewart Crossing.
- On January 25, 2024, the *Extended Producer Responsibility Regulation* was passed.
- Producer responsibility organizations submit stewardship plans on behalf of producers. As of September 2024, four out of five producer responsibility organizations have completed producer-led engagement for stakeholders.

**Approved by:****Dennis Berry****November 13, 2024**\_\_\_\_\_  
Deputy Minister of Environment\_\_\_\_\_  
Date approved



**Session Briefing Note****Fall 2024****Environmental Liabilities and  
Remediation Program Project Updates**

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Environment

**Recommended response:**

- The Government of Yukon is working to clean up government-owned contaminated sites in the territory.
- We do this work to protect the health of our communities and the health of our land, water and air.
- By cleaning up contaminated sites, we are not only protecting the environment but also creating sites that are suitable for future development.
- Clean land can be bought and sold, while contaminated lands continue to be an environmental liability.

**Additional response:**

- The cost to remediate and monitor government-owned contaminated sites is substantial and can increase as assessment work progresses and we learn more about each site.
- In 2024-2025, the Government of Yukon has earmarked \$26 million for assessment, monitoring, and remediation work at government-owned contaminated sites, of which \$21.22 million is recoverable through mine securities paid by the operator.

Wellgreen Mine

- We have recently completed a final remediation plan for Wellgreen Mine, where a water license is anticipated to be obtained later this year, and remediation work could start as early as summer of 2025.



## Session Briefing Note

**Fall 2024**

### **Environmental Liabilities and Remediation Program Project Updates**

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Environment

- We are working closely with Kluane First Nation on the remediation plan for the site and assessing opportunities to ensure that the community benefits economically and that the land and water is protected.

#### Old Crow Nursing Station

- The soil and supra-permafrost groundwater at the former Old Crow Health Centre (also known as the Nursing Station) is contaminated by petroleum hydrocarbons caused by historic fuel spills and leaks that have accumulated over time.
- A human health and ecological risk assessment completed in 2019, as well as ongoing air quality monitoring, suggests that there are no immediate risks of vapour exposure to occupants inside the building.
- The contamination is currently stable and does not appear to be moving further off-site.
- In early 2024, the Department of Environment completed a re-evaluation exercise for managing the contamination at the site. The results of the re-evaluation determined that allowing the contamination to naturally degrade overtime, while eliminating or managing the potential risks to human health and the environment, was the new preferred option to remediate the site.
- The Department of Environment continues to provide updated information to the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation regarding this site as well as other contaminated sites in Old Crow and is committed to working collaboratively as these remediation projects progress.

#### Ross River Fire Hall

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Prepared for Minister Clarke  
Department of Environment

Date prepared: August 15, 2024  
Last Updated:



**Session Briefing Note****Fall 2024****Environmental Liabilities and  
Remediation Program Project Updates**

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Environment

- The Ross River community drinking water well remains protected and clean.
- Annual groundwater monitoring continues at the former Fire Hall in Ross River to monitor and assess contamination origins and migration paths.
- This work is being completed in partnership with the Ross River Dena Council owned Dena Cho Environmental and Remediation Inc.

Wolverine Mine

- The Departments of Environment and Energy Mines and Resources are working together to assess and manage the remediation for the Wolverine Mine.
- In 2023/24 fiscal year, reclamation work was paused to focus budget and staffing resources on the Minto Mine.
- Energy Mines and Resources is developing long-term management options for presentation by spring 2025.
- A Transfer Payment Agreement was established with Ross River Dena Council to financially support their work in the reclamation planning for the site, and we are awaiting a response from Liard First Nation before providing their funding.
- A tender is in development for procuring a water treatment service provider to lower water levels in the tailing's storage facility during two summer periods in 2025 and 2026.



**Session Briefing Note****Fall 2024****Environmental Liabilities and  
Remediation Program Project Updates**

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Environment

- A multi-year asset removal program has been initiated by Norzinc, the company that purchased many of the assets at site from the previous owner, Welichem.

Minto Mine

- The Departments of Environment and Energy Mines and Resources are also working together to assess and manage the remediation for the Minto Mine.
- \$25 million is anticipated to be spent implementing year-two activities detailed in the YG-approved 2018 Reclamation and Closure Plan. Costs associated with reclamation plan implementation for the Minto Mine are 100% recoverable from the surety bonds held against the site, and YG is reimbursed by the bonding company monthly.
- Energy Mines and Resources awarded contracts to Yukon companies for site operations, earthworks reclamation, and environmental monitoring of surface and groundwater.

Whitehorse Highway Maintenance Yard

- A phase 2 site assessment was completed in March 2024. Development of remedial options was completed in May 2024.
- A groundwater monitoring program has been initiated to better understand the extent of known contamination at the property.
- Construction of the new replacement facility is scheduled for 2028-29. Demolition of the current site is scheduled for 2031.



## Session Briefing Note

**Fall 2024**

### Environmental Liabilities and Remediation Program Project Updates

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Environment

- Options for site remediation will be assessed and implemented in partnership with Highways and Public Works.

**Third response:**

- Remediation is mostly or entirely complete at four sites across the Yukon for the 2023/2024 fiscal year.
- The four sites are the Isabelle Pringle Library in Carcross, the Garden Creek Road Lot in Watson Lake, the Fraser Highway Maintenance Camp, and the Swift River Highway Maintenance Camp.
- Yukoners can go to the contaminated sites information map on Yukon.ca to see the location of contaminated sites, a summary of the contamination and the work completed at those sites.

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**Context—this may be an issue because:**

- Undertaking assessment and remediation work at contaminated sites is visible and expensive – this leads to questions from the Opposition, the public and the media.

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**Background:**

- As of the fall of 2024/2025 fiscal year, 141 Government of Yukon-owned or operated sites have been identified as contaminated or where contamination is suspected.
- The Government of Yukon's overall environmental liability is estimated at \$237 million, with \$118 million of that total being allocated to the Minto Mine. This is adjusted annually to reflect new information and progress made to remediate contamination.

**Approved by:**

Briar Young

A/Deputy Minister of Environment

September 5, 2024

Date approved

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Prepared for Minister Clarke  
Department of EnvironmentDate prepared: August 15, 2024  
Last Updated:

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**Kudz Ze Kayah Mine  
Project (BMC Minerals)**

ECO – EMR - ENV

**Recommended response:**

- BMC Minerals' quartz mining licence and lease applications for the Kudz Ze Kayah Mine Project are undergoing regulatory review.
- We are committed to continued consultation with the Kaska First Nations as we consider these applications to construct and bring the mine into production.
- The governments of Yukon and Canada jointly issued the March 8, 2024 Decision Document following full consideration of the potential impacts of the project on asserted Kaska rights, which approved the project to proceed to licensing and included a number of mitigations intended to limit impacts to those rights.
- The Government of Yukon remains committed to deep and meaningful consultation with the Kaska throughout the appeal process and once a decision is rendered by the Court of Appeal.
- Outside of these applications, we continue to consult with the Kaska First Nations throughout the project's lifetime, in line with our commitment to reconciliation and to building strong relationships with First Nations governments.

**Additional response:**

- We are committed to meaningful consultation and reconciliation with the Ross River Dena Council, Liard First Nation, Dease River First Nation, and Kwadacha Nation.



**Kudz Ze Kayah Mine  
Project (BMC Minerals)**

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ECO – EMR - ENV

- The Government of Yukon expects proponents to build relationships with and provide funding to First Nation governments and communities impacted by development projects.
- We look forward to the clarity that the Court of Appeal decision is expected to provide.

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**Context — this may be an issue because:**

- During the project assessment and subsequent consultation, Ross River Dena Council and Liard First Nation identified impacts from the project to their asserted Aboriginal rights. The First Nations oppose the project being licensed.
- Ross River Dena Council filed an appeal to the January 2, 2024, Supreme Court of Yukon decision. The appeal was heard in September 2024. The judges reserved their judgment.

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**Background:**

- On June 15, 2022, the Governments of Canada and Yukon issued a joint decision document to vary the Executive Committee's recommendations to allow the Project to proceed, subject to terms and conditions specified in the Final Screening Report.
- On July 20, 2022, the Ross River Dena Council, on its own behalf and on behalf of the Kaska First Nations, filed a petition for judicial review of the decision.
- In August of 2022, BMC Minerals submitted applications to the Yukon government for a quartz mining license and land leases. A Type-A water licence application was submitted to the Yukon Water Board.
- The Supreme Court of Yukon hearing for the petition was held in April of 2023.
- On January 2, 2024, the Supreme Court of Yukon issued its Reasons for Decision on the judicial review of the decision document for the Kudz Ze Kayah mine project.



### Kudz Ze Kayah Mine Project (BMC Minerals)

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ECO – EMR - ENV

- The Supreme Court of Yukon concluded that the governments of Yukon and Canada failed to consult Ross River Dena Council and Liard First Nation's concerns raised in the June 14, 2022 submission.
- The Yukon government's regulatory review of BMC's regulatory applications was paused as a result of the Court's Decision, which set aside the June 15, 2022 decision document until consultation obligations are fulfilled and a new decision document issued.
- As directed in the January 2, 2024 Supreme Court of Yukon's decision, the Government of Yukon and Government of Canada consulted on the Project with Ross River Dena Council and Liard First Nation on February 7 and 8, 2024 in Ross River.
- In February of 2024, Ross River Dena Council filed an appeal to the January 2, 2024 decision from the Supreme Court of Yukon.
- In their appeal of the Supreme Court's decision, the Kaska First Nations requested:
  - That both the January 2, 2024, Supreme Court decision and the June 15, 2022, decision document be set aside;
  - That decision bodies complete meaningful and deep consultation with the Kaska First Nations on the Project; and
  - That the court refers the project back to Decision Bodies for reconsideration or to a Panel review by YESAB (Yukon Environmental & Socio-economic Assessment Board).
- On March 8, 2024, decision bodies issued a Decision Document recommending the project proceed to the regulatory phase.
- The appeal was heard in September of 2024. The judges reserved their judgment.
- (See [ECO TAB 37](#) Ross River Dena Council – Issues and Initiatives).



## Session Briefing Note

**ECO #4/ EMR #90 / ENV #102**  
**Fall 2024**

### **Kudz Ze Kayah Mine Project (BMC Minerals)**

ECO – EMR - ENV

#### Approved by:

Justin Ferbey

October 15, 2024

Deputy Minister of the Executive Council Office

Date approved

Lauren Haney

October 14, 2024

Deputy Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources

Date approved

**Dennis Berry**

**October 9, 2024**

A/Deputy Minister of Environment

Date approved



**Session Briefing Note****Fall 2024****HPW Compliance re: Airport  
Renovation & Water Licence**

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Environment

**Recommended response:**

- The Department of Environment is aware of the Whitehorse Airport main runway improvement project, led by the Department of Highways and Public Works, which started in 2023 and is scheduled to be completed in 2025.
- When Environment inspectors became aware of the project in 2023, they noted that Highways and Public Works did not seek a Yukon Environmental and Socio-Economic Assessment Board assessment nor a water licence under the Waters Act.
- Environment inspectors have been working with Highways and Public Works officials, Water Resources Branch and associated contractors on ensuring no unauthorized deposit of waste to water occurs as a result of the project, including sediment, given that a water licence does not exist for this project.
- An Erosion and Sedimentation Control plan was requested by Environment officials and has been implemented by the Highways and Public Works contractors. Environment officials are closely monitoring project developments and water quality at the site as the work progresses.
- The Department of Environment notes that as of August 27, 2024, the Department of Highways and Public Works has put forward YESAA Project Proposal 2024-0146 for Approach Lights Replacement and Installation, involving a request for a Type B Water Licence due to a watercourse crossing and possible deposit of waste to water.



## Session Briefing Note

**Fall 2024**

### HPW Compliance re: Airport Renovation & Water Licence

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Environment

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**Context—this may be an issue because:**

- The media and the public have raised concerns with this project concerning the lack of a YESAB assessment and the surfacing groundwater at Baxter's Gulch.
  - The area of the project is very visible to the public and bystanders.
- 

**Background:**

- The Yukon Waters Act sets out two main prohibitions, namely, a prohibition on the use of water, and another on the deposit of waste into water or in any other place where waste may enter water, unless authorized by a water licence issued by the Yukon Water Board.
- Water licence applications require a YESAB assessment and decision document.
- There is a considerable risk of waste being deposited into water as a result of the Whitehorse airport project.
- Environment officers did record high total suspended solids last year when they conducted water sampling of the groundwater coming out of the road embankment. This improved over time and erosion and sediment and settlement control measures are currently in place and being monitored by Highways and Public Works and Environment staff.

**Approved by:**

Shehnaz Ali

September 10, 2024

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A/Deputy Minister of Environment

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Date approved



## Session Briefing Note

**Fall 2024**

### Landfill Adaptive Management Plans

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Environment

**Recommended response:**

- The Department of Environment regulates landfills in the territory. The Department of Community Services and municipalities operate those landfills for the benefit of all Yukoners.
- Semi-annual groundwater and surface water quality sampling and annual reporting are required as a condition of the permit for operation of a landfill.
- Based on the most current groundwater and surface water quality data, 20 Solid Waste Disposal Facilities have now triggered the requirement for an Adaptive Management Plan as described in Protocol 13 of the *Contaminated Sites Regulations*.
- Protocol 13 outlines triggers for adaptive management in cases where exceedances of parameters have been identified multiple times over a two to three-year period.
- Adaptive management plans, or AMPs, are a tool under *Contaminated Sites Regulations* that allow landfill operators to consider future mitigation scenarios when contamination is found to be present.
- For example, how should operations change at a landfill if concentrations of certain contaminants like manganese or selenium in groundwater increased, stayed the same, or decreased.
- AMPs support the ongoing analysis of each unique landfill, and the information is used to outline better operational practices to protect the environment.



## Session Briefing Note

**Fall 2024**

### **Landfill Adaptive Management Plans**

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Environment

- In August, the Government of Yukon notified 6 municipalities and the Department of Community Services that AMPs were required for their specific sites.
- Next steps for the landfill operators are to analyze the data and start to draft the plans through winter 2024-2025.

**Additional response:**

- Adaptive Management Plans have been used for other landfills in the Yukon in 2019 and 2022.
- The costs associated with adaptive management include the cost of the plan preparation and potential costs associated with additional data collection and potential costs of the necessary adaptive measures, which are very site specific.
- The Department of Environment is working with municipalities and the Department of Community Services to ensure mitigation and management of landfills are done efficiently and cost effectively.
- Each municipal or community landfill will be considered as unique and thus the costs of an AMP will vary based on the unique considerations of each landfill.

**Third response:**

- The Adaptive Management Plan process starts with an assessment of the site-specific conditions at each location.
- The assessment confirms the need for contaminant mitigations and suggests measures for improvement. It also helps determine whether the landfill in question must engage in the full AMP process or whether specific mitigation measures may suffice.



## Session Briefing Note

Fall 2024

### Landfill Adaptive Management Plans

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Environment

- This means some sites may be able to demonstrate that a full AMP is not required.
- We also recognize that there are likely to be data gaps that will need to be filled to inform the final Adaptive Management Plans.
- Any additional water monitoring or installation of groundwater wells required for further data can be completed in the summer of 2025.
- We aim to have the plans submitted to the Department of Environment for review and approval by the fall 2025.

#### **Final Response (Cost sharing for AMPs):**

- As a regulator, the Department of Environment is responsible for ensuring that the facilities are managed in a way that is protective of the environment.
- The departments of Environment and Community Services are working with each municipality to determine a fair cost-sharing agreement for the mitigation work and adaptive management plans required for landfills.
- Shared costs cannot be quantified until AMP's are developed, but both departments are committed to working with municipalities on the most effective cost-sharing approach.
- The regional funding agreements specifically state that the Department of Community Services and the municipalities shall work together on environmental issues and monitoring.



## Session Briefing Note

**Fall 2024**

### Landfill Adaptive Management Plans

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Environment

- As such, Community Services has confirmed that they are developing an approach for supporting the initial costs for creation of the AMPs - as municipalities may wish to work with specific consultants - as well as anticipated ongoing costs for the final Adaptive Management Plan recommendations.
  - For Government of Yukon owned landfills, the Site Assessment and Remediation Unit pays for water monitoring and well installation, through the Government of Yukon's Environmental Liabilities and Remediation Program.
  - This team identifies, assesses and remediates Government of Yukon-owned contaminated sites on behalf of the entire government, including monitoring at Government of Yukon landfills, highway maintenance camps, airports, and other facilities.
- 

#### **Context—this may be an issue because:**

- In August 2024, the Department of Environment notified some municipalities and the Department of Community Services of the requirement to prepare adaptive management plans for their landfills.
  - This requirement will result in additional costs to the permittees.
- 

#### **Background:**

- The approximate costs for developing adaptive management plans are in the range of 25k-40k per plan. The shared costs of additional monitoring, well installation and other actions set out in the plan cannot be quantified until adaptive management plans are developed.
  - Because the Site Assessment and Remediation Unit (SARU) pays for water monitoring and well installation at the Community Services Sites, a Management Board submission may be required once monitoring, evaluation, and regulatory costs are better understood.
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**Session Briefing Note****Landfill Adaptive  
Management Plans**

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- The 6 municipal sites include:
  - Watson Lake
  - Whitehorse
  - Teslin
  - Faro
  - Carmacks
  - Haines Junction
- The 14 Community Services sites include:
  - Ross River
  - Braeburn
  - Burwash Landing
  - Carcross
  - Deep Creek
  - Horsecamp Creek
  - Keno
  - Mount Lorne
  - Silver City
  - Johnson's Crossing
  - Marsh Lake
  - Pelly Crossing
  - Tagish
  - Upper Liard

**Approved by:****Dennis Berry****November 7, 2024**\_\_\_\_\_  
Deputy Minister of Environment\_\_\_\_\_  
Date approved



### Recommended response:

- Yukoners continue to face challenges across the housing continuum, which include:
  - Homelessness and a lack of access to housing with services;
  - A lack of affordable rental supply; and
  - High house prices and mortgage rates.
- Exceptionally high building costs and high borrowing costs due to interest rates are creating significant challenges for both Yukon Housing Corporation and partners.
- The corporation's five-year strategic plan, Creating Home, will help transform affordable housing service delivery through the adoption of a more client-centred and collaborative approach that integrates support and leads to better outcomes for Yukoners.

### Additional response:

- Across governments, we are working with stakeholders to develop new land parcels, increase housing stock while also responding to the findings of the 2022 Office of the Auditor General Report on Housing.
- We continue to advance projects that provide new housing to meet Yukoners' needs.

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### Context:

- The combination of high rental costs, limited affordable housing options and difficulties in securing mortgages, continues to be a challenge for many Yukoners.

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### Background:

#### General housing information in the Yukon

##### Homelessness

- At least 197 people were experiencing homelessness in the 2023 Whitehorse Point-in-Time Count. This included: 58% men; 38 % female; 4% other.

##### Rental housing

- According to the Census 2021, within the renter population in Whitehorse:



- 22.7% of households live in unaffordable housing;<sup>1</sup>
- 17.9% live in unsuitable housing; and
- 10.5% live in inadequate housing.

#### Rents and vacancy rate, Yukon (YBS)

	<a href="#">October 2022</a>	<a href="#">April 2023</a>	<a href="#">October 2023</a>	<a href="#">April 2024</a>
Median rent (all types)	\$1,300	\$1,325	\$1,350	\$1,420
Vacancy rate (all types)	1.9%	2.2%	1.8%	1.8%

#### Housing construction

- Labour shortages contribute to higher construction costs and are leading to lower residential construction output.<sup>2</sup>

#### Residential building construction, Yukon (YBS)

	<a href="#">January-June 2023</a>	<a href="#">January-June 2024</a>
# residential permits issued*	518	329 (-35% decrease)
\$ value of new permits*	\$59.4 million	\$47.6 million (-20% decrease)

\*In addition to new dwelling units, residential permits include renovations, garages, and additions. The totals do not include permits issued for plumbing or stoves.

#### House prices

- Yukon Bureau of Statistics reports that there were 84 real estate transactions recorded in Whitehorse in the first quarter of 2024 – a decrease of 35 compared to the first quarter of 2023 (119).
- While average prices for single-detached homes in Q1-2024 had fallen relative to Q1-2022 and Q1-2023, condo prices for Q1-2024 had increased 13% since Q1-2023.

#### Average House Prices, Whitehorse (YBS)

Residence type	Whitehorse Average House Prices		
	<a href="#">2023 Q1</a>	<a href="#">2024 Q1</a>	% Change
Single-detached house	\$635,000	\$629,500	-0.9%
Condominium	\$403,800	\$456,400	13.0%

<sup>1</sup> Housing costs are considered “unaffordable” when they exceed 30% of household income.

<sup>2</sup> Northern Housing Report, 2023



#### Yukon Housing Corporation Approach to Address Housing Issues

##### Creating Home – YHC's new strategic plan

- Creating Home draws on a recognized framework intended to re-design and transform health care delivery, called the Quadruple Aim, and adapts it to housing.
- This innovative approach to housing delivery will lead to better outcomes by:
  - Improving the client and provider experiences;
  - Strengthening community wellbeing; and
  - Contributing to a sustainable future.
- Creating Home represents a significant shift in how Yukon Housing Corporation operates and delivers housing services.

##### Capital builds recently completed by YHC or partners:

- Since 2022, 10 YHC-led projects have been completed, creating a total of 77 new residential units; and
- 8 major partnership projects have been completed through the Housing Initiatives Fund, creating over 276 new units.

##### YHC projects completed 2022-2024

YHC Project	Construction Start Date	Construction Completion Date	Number of Units
401 Jeckell Street, Whitehorse	May 2020	December 2022	47
RHI affordable triplex, Whitehorse	June 2021	June 2022	3
RHI affordable triplex, Watson Lake	June 2021	March 2022	3
RHI affordable triplex, Mayo	June 2021	March 2022	3
Accessible duplex, Mayo	July 2022	June 2023	2
Accessible duplex, Carmacks	August 2022	July 2023	2
RRDC staff trailer, Ross River	June 2023	December 2023	3
10-plex*, Old Crow (*Asset owned by HPW and managed by YHC)	Summer 2021	January 2024	10
Accessible duplex, Faro	Summer 2023	Spring 2024	2
Affordable duplex, Dawson City	August 2022	June 2024	2
Total units completed (YHC projects):			77



#### Major partnership projects completed 2022-2024

Project (Lead)	Construction Completion Date	Number of Units
Bringing Citizens Home, Whitehorse (Champagne and Aishihik FN)	Summer 2022	20
Cornerstone multi-use building, Whitehorse (Opportunities Yukon)	July 2022	53
Normandy Living seniors supportive residence, Whitehorse (KBC)	December 2022	84
Boreal Commons apartments, Whitehorse (536754 Yukon Inc)	January 2023	87
Affordable modular housing, Mayo (Na-Cho Nyäk Dun FN)	March 2023	8
Jëje Zho 12-bed men's shelter, Dawson City (Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in FN)	July 2023	8
VGFN elders complex, Old Crow (Vuntut Gwitchin FN)	January 2024	9
VGFN mobile homes, Old Crow (Vuntut Gwitchin FN)	March 2024	7
Total units completed (major partnerships):		276

#### Underway or upcoming housing capital projects for YHC and partners

##### YHC – Underway (113 units):

- 10-unit Supported Living Residence in Watson Lake
- 34-unit residential building with 8 accessible units in Dawson (former Korbo Apartments)
- 45-unit residential building, which includes 9 accessible units in Whitehorse (former Ryder Apartments)
- 6 staff units across three duplexes in Burwash Landing
- 18 two-bedroom units – purchase of 190 Olive May Way in Whitehorse

##### YHC – Upcoming (37+ units):

Community housing	Staff housing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10 units in Mayo</li> <li>• 6-plex in Teslin</li> <li>• 6-plex in Carcross</li> <li>• 6-plex Haines Junction</li> <li>• Accessible triplex in Whitehorse</li> <li>• Accessible duplex in Ross River</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accessible duplex in Destruction Bay</li> <li>• Accessible duplex in Pelly Crossing</li> </ul>



Major partnership projects underway (299 units):

Project	Anticipated Start Date	Anticipated Completion Date	Number of Units
Safe at Home Society's permanent supportive housing project "The Hearth"	March 2024	Spring 2026	67
Safe at Home Society's temporary housing project at 408 Alexander	May 2024	October 2024	17
DDDC's affordable rental project "Winter Crossing"	Spring 2024	Spring 2026	105
Northern Community Land Trust Society's "Project 1096"	June 2024	December 2025	32
HIF-7 funding recipients	Spring 2024	Fall 2026	78
Total units			299

#### Rent subsidy programs to make life more affordable for renters and seniors

- July 2023, the corporation acquired an additional 16 units for lease from Normandy, for a total of 26 units to lease to clients through its rent supplement program.
- Since 2020, the corporation has supported over 300 households pay rent through the Canada-Yukon Housing Benefit. As of September 2024, 170 clients are receiving monthly support.

#### Support for homeowners

- March 8, the corporation announced the Canada-Yukon Housing Benefit Homeowner Stream for homeowners in severe core housing need<sup>3</sup> with annual household incomes under \$100,000:
  - Clients received a one-time payment of \$1,000.00 for Whitehorse homeowners and \$1,500.00 for homeowners living outside of Whitehorse.
- June 2023, the Yukon government launched an \$8.25 million flood recovery program for residents and businesses affected by flooding in the Klondike Valley.
- April 2023, Yukon Housing Corporation launched the expanded Yukon Home Ownership Program to provide qualified households with mortgages to build or buy their homes across the territory, including Whitehorse.
- The program was recently discontinued due to low uptake and the corporation is currently exploring alternative program options to support homeownership.

<sup>3</sup> Severe core housing need is spending 50% or more of a household's income on shelter costs.



- In 2020, Yukon Housing Corporation launched the revised Home Repair Program to support low to moderate-income Yukon homeowners to remain in their homes and age in place by providing funding to address mobility requirements, repairs or core housing needs.

#### Support for new residential land development

September 2024	<p>As part of the Government of Yukon's ongoing commitment to increase land and housing availability and support business growth, new residential and industrial lots were released in partnership with municipalities and Yukon First Nations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>seven residential lots in Haines Junction, Mayo and Watson Lake; and</li> <li>three industrial lots in Teslin and Haines Junction</li> </ul> <p>This was the sixth lot release this year and is a direct result of the Government of Yukon's historic investment in land development. Through the lotteries and tenders process, the Government of Yukon has released 685 lots across the territory since 2021 and is on track to release over 1,000 lots by 2026 (TAB #59).</p>
August 2024	<p>As part of its efforts to work in collaboration with municipalities and Yukon First Nations governments to address housing and business space needs across the territory, the Government of Yukon released 33 new residential lots across the Yukon.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Twelve lots were made available in Carmacks and Faro</li> <li>21 country residential lots were made available in the Lone Tree subdivision north of Teslin.</li> </ul>
June 2023	Government of Yukon partnered with the Government of Canada and the City of Dawson to develop four new residential lots in Dawson.
February 2023	120 lots, including single family, multi-family and townhouse lots in Whistle Bend made available through public lottery.
March 2023	Government of Yukon partnered with Liard First Nation on developing 43 new residential lots on Frances Avenue in Watson Lake.
March 2023	74 residential lots in Logan, Mayo and in Whitehorse's Whistle Bend made available through public lottery.
November 2022	Signed a loan agreement with Kwanlin Dün First Nation's arm's-length development corporation, Chu Níkwän Limited Partnership, for a new



	residential land development project at Copper Ridge West in Whitehorse, the first large-scale residential land development on settlement land in the Yukon. An amended loan agreement was signed August 2023 with Chu Níkwän for the same development.
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25-09-24  
Date approved



# Session Briefing Note

## Supplementary Overview (Corporate Note)

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### Recommended response:

- The 2024-25 Supplementary Estimates No. 1 forecasts an overall gross increase of \$150.1 million in O&M spending, with an offsetting increase of \$20.7 million in recoveries. The net increase in new O&M spending is forecast at \$129.4 million.
- Capital spending for Supplementary Estimates No. 1 reflects a slight overall gross decrease of \$299,000 in spending and a \$4.2 million decrease in recoveries, resulting in a net increase in spending of \$3.9 million. These adjustments are mainly the result of updated cashflow forecasts for various projects.
- Revenues are projected to decrease by \$8.8 million, primarily due to a revenue forecast update from Canada which revised the projection for Corporate Income Tax downward by \$6.7 million as well as a reduction in royalty payments from Victoria Gold of \$2.5 million. This is partially offset by a \$350,000 increase for driver licenses due to recently increased fees.
- The Yukon government continues to maintain a surplus. As part of the 2024-25 Main Estimates, the Yukon government budgeted for a \$50 million contingency to address emergency pressures. \$50 million of the contingency has been applied towards the pressures identified in the Supplementary Estimates No. 1.
- The use of the contingency fund allows the government to present a revised surplus of \$75.4 million as part of these Supplementary Estimates. Changes in the Supplementary Estimates result in a revised year-end net debt of \$530.4 million



# Session Briefing Note

## Supplementary Overview (Corporate Note)

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### Additional response:

- The Supplementary Estimates reflect an O&M increase mainly for:
  - \$50 million for payments to the Receiver for environmental protection work at the Eagle Gold Mine;
  - \$34 million for pressures in Insured Health reflecting support for the wellbeing of Yukoners;
  - \$21 million for wildland firefighting costs in response to the significant fire season experienced in the territory and which helped ensure the safety of Yukoners; and
  - \$10 million for various Yukon Hospital Corporation funding requirements including the added O&M costs of converting ten beds at the Thompson Centre for Acute Care use.
- For the Supplementary Estimates, updates to the 2024-25 Capital Plan have resulted in a decreased allocation of \$299,000. Notable changes include:
  - \$1.9 million towards the completion of the Mental Wellness Unit at Whitehorse General Hospital;
  - \$1.9 million for long-term and acute care bed optimization at Whistle Bend Place and Whitehorse General Hospital;
  - Decrease of \$3.2 million due to cash flow revisions for the construction of the school in Burwash Landing;
  - Decrease of \$600 thousand for the creation of new campsites aligning costs with the revised project timeline.



## Session Briefing Note

### Supplementary Overview (Corporate Note)

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- There is an increase of 46.6 in FTEs (Full Time Equivalents) for Supplementary Estimates No. 1. These are primarily to hire new long-term care staff in support of additional care beds at Whistle Bend Place, for the Aging with Dignity initiative and new FTEs for schools including teachers, clerical and custodial staff.
- There is also an increase in FTEs related to a transfer in the Capital Planning Office from Highways and Public Works capital budget to Finance in the O&M budget.

#### **Corporate approach to fiscal sustainability:**

- We continue to work to ensure that government spending is allocated in a way that meets key priorities and long-term goals.
- To meet these priorities, departments continue to follow established processes to ensure that funding is distributed efficiently and effectively across public services and programs.
- This means regular financial scrutiny is applied to decision-making and that new requests for funding are approved in a financially sustainable way, while continuing to provide the services that Yukoners expect.
- This coordinated approach to funding ensures that government can respond to new and evolving challenges, while managing resources responsibly.



**Session Briefing Note**  
**Supplementary Overview**  
**(Corporate Note)**

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**Context—this may be an issue because:**

- The 2024-25 Second Appropriation Act is tabled in the fall session and will be the subject of debate.

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**Background:**

- Supplementary Estimates are used annually by a government to account for unforeseen spending at the time of tabling the annual Budget. It is common to have one or two spending updates throughout the fiscal year.
- They are tabled during the fall and spring sessions, debated and voted on in the legislature and provide departments with increased spending authority for O&M and Capital for the current fiscal year.

**Approved by:**

Jessica Schultz

September 19, 2024

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Deputy Minister, Finance

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Date approved



## **Truth and Reconciliation Commission – Update on Calls to Action**

Executive Council  
Office

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### **Recommended response:**

- Reconciliation is an ongoing process and a shared responsibility of all governments and individuals in the Yukon.
- Our government is deeply committed to advancing reconciliation through collaboration and partnership with Indigenous governments and groups.
- We continue to share our progress toward addressing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action, most recently through a progress report and Pathways magazine both released in Fall 2023.
- The magazine and report provided an update on the actions being taken across the Yukon government and in collaboration with First Nation governments and groups in areas including child welfare, health, education and justice.

### **Additional response:**

- The Government of Yukon and Yukon First Nation governments are leaders in demonstrating a collaborative approach to reconciliation.
- While there is still work to do, targeted investments are resulting in meaningful change and creating better programs and services for all Yukoners.
- We will continue our collaborative work to implement and report on the Calls to Action, including through work on the Yukon Forum joint priorities and by implementing the *Putting People First* recommendations.

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### **Context—this may be an issue because:**

- The 2023 mandate letters include a commitment to fulfill the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC's) Calls to Action.
- The 2023 Confidence and Supply Agreement includes a commitment to working with Yukon First Nations to continue to implement the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission through targeted investments.



### Truth and Reconciliation Commission – Update on Calls to Action

Executive Council  
Office

#### Background:

- The TRC report *Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future* was released in 2015 and contains 94 Calls to Action on redressing the harms resulting from Residential Schools and creating better relations between the federal, provincial and territorial governments and Indigenous Peoples. There are 32 Calls to Action that relate directly to YG.
- The Government of Yukon and Yukon First Nations (YFNs) collaborated on addressing the Calls to Action under the 2017 Yukon Forum Joint Priority Action Plan and through other reconciliation initiatives, such as supporting the important work of the YFN-led Yukon Residential Schools and Missing Children Project.
- The Government of Yukon has taken additional steps to address the Calls to Action, including:
  - establishing the position of Assistant Deputy Minister of First Nations Initiatives at the Department of Education, signing an agreement to establish a YFN School Board and entering into education agreements with all YFNs (speaks to Calls 7 and 10 directed to the federal government);
  - supporting Indigenous athletes and the North American Indigenous Games (Call 88);
  - implementing the YFN Procurement Policy (relates to Call 92) and the Representative Public Service Plan: *Breaking Trail Together* (relates to Call 7);
  - working with YFNs and Yukon Indigenous women's groups to implement the Yukon's *Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2-Spirit+ People Strategy* (MMIWG2S+ Strategy) (relates to Call 41);
  - participating at the Trilateral Table on the Wellbeing of YFN Children and Families to address gaps for culturally appropriate parenting programs (Call 5); and
  - receiving input from YFNs on Health and Social Services programming through the Mental Health Advisory Committee (relates to Call 19).

#### Approved by:

Justin Ferbey

2024 08 20

Deputy Minister, Executive Council Office

Date



# Session Briefing Note

## Inflation and Affordability (Corporate Note)

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### Recommended response:

- Inflation has continued to improve in recent months, but Yukon households continue to see their budgets stretched by elevated prices, with lower-income households often feeling the worst effects.
- The Government of Yukon continues to monitor inflation and its impact on Yukoners, so that we can take steps to ease the burden.
- As inflationary pressures continue to lessen, efforts to make life more affordable for Yukoners and to help industry are shifting from short-term assistance to measures with the potential to provide longer-term benefits, such as actions to improve home affordability.

### Additional response:

- The Main Estimates for this year has continued to build on existing supports for Yukoners by making sure they can access essential services at prices they can afford.
- Budget 2024-25 included investments to advance affordable housing projects across the territory. From the Housing First Project in Watson Lake to the recently awarded replacement of the Ryder Apartments in Whitehorse, the Yukon government is taking action to build more affordable homes for Yukoners, especially those in vulnerable situations.



## Session Briefing Note

### Inflation and Affordability (Corporate Note)

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- There is also over \$42 million in continued funding for early learning and childcare. This includes funding for the universal childcare program, which has reduced childcare fees to less than \$10 per day, on average.
- We are also making life more affordable and leading the nation with our Yukon-wide dental program, which has \$5.4 million in continued funding for 2024-25.
- To make sure that more people have the option of staying home when they are sick, the Temporary Paid Sick Leave was extended.
- We also extended the Interim Electrical Rebate, which provides welcome relief from power bills to Yukoners across the territory.
- In addition to items included in the 2024-25 Main Estimates, additional initiatives in many departments are continuing to assist Yukoners with the cost of living.
- The Department of Community Services, for example, is developing a program that will see free transit passes provided to non-governmental organizations, vulnerable populations and youth.
- The Department of Health and Social Services will also provide additional funding of \$777,000 for Safe at Home to provide temporary supportive housing at 408 Alexander Street.



# Session Briefing Note

## Inflation and Affordability (Corporate Note)

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- These are just a few examples of the many programs and initiatives that continue to support Yukoners.

### Third response

- The Government of Yukon has also remained responsive to higher inflation in recent years through its various grants and subsidies, which are indexed to inflation. These include:
  - Subsidies for medical travel
  - The Yukon Child Benefit
  - Social Assistance Payments
  - Student Financial Assistance
  - Seniors' benefits
  - The Pioneer Utility grant
  - The Comprehensive Municipal Grant Regulation
  - Residential rent caps
- The Yukon's minimum wage is also responsive to price changes, as its annual change is tied to inflation in the previous year.
- After growing 6.8 per cent in 2023, the minimum wage increased a further 4.9 per cent to \$17.59 per hour on April 1, 2024.
- The Yukon's minimum wage is the second highest wage in Canada, behind only Nunavut's minimum wage of \$19.00 per hour.



## Session Briefing Note

### Inflation and Affordability (Corporate Note)

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- These increases also contribute towards the strong earnings growth we continue to see in the territory, where average weekly earnings grew 6.1 per cent over the first half of 2024. This is the strongest growth in the country.

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#### Context—this may be an issue because:

- Inflation has fallen from historical highs, but Yukoners are still dealing with higher prices for a variety of goods and services following a lengthy period of elevated inflation.
- The moderation of inflationary pressures that began to take hold late last year has continued into 2024. Growth in the Whitehorse Consumer Price Index (CPI) has been much lower in every month in 2024, and inflation in recent months has been near or below the historic average of 2 per cent.

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#### Background:

##### Inflation – Recent performance and outlook

- Following ten increases in the overnight rate since March 2022, the Bank of Canada has made three 25 basis point cuts in 2024, with the overnight rate dropping from 5.0 per cent to 4.25 per cent. Expectations of further rate cuts this year and in 2025, could further reduce pressure on shelter prices as mortgage rates decline.



# Session Briefing Note

## Inflation and Affordability (Corporate Note)

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- Both locally and nationally, price pressures have lessened, and inflation continues to trend towards historic norms. The current outlook for the Whitehorse CPI reflects expectations of a return to 'normal' levels of inflation, with the inflation forecast of 2 per cent in 2024, much improved from 4.9 per cent in 2023 and 6.8 per cent in 2022. Beyond 2024, annual inflation is expected to remain at 2 per cent over the remainder of the five-year forecast.

### PROGRAMS AND OTHER MEASURES THAT SUPPORT AFFORDABILITY

Five-Year Capital Plan projects supporting housing affordability (Yukon Housing Corporation)

- The **Old Crow 10-Plex Mixed-Use Housing** facility is complete and opened in April 2024.
- Construction of the **10-plex Housing First Project in Watson Lake** began in the summer of 2023. It is scheduled to be completed in the fall 2024.
- Construction of the **Faro and Dawson Duplex** projects started in summer 2023 and is now complete.
- Groundwork began at the old **Ryder Apartments in Whitehorse** in September 2024 and we are aiming for completion in spring 2026. When completed, the new complex is anticipated to deliver over 45 new units.

Universal Child Care Program (Education)

- Universal child care is available to all Yukon families using licensed child care spaces. The universal child care program has reduced fees to less than \$10 per day, on average, for families across the Yukon.



# Session Briefing Note

## Inflation and Affordability (Corporate Note)

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### Dental Care program (Health and Social Services)

- The Yukon's Dental Program was launched in 2023 and provides \$1,300 per year in dental benefits to Yukoners without dental coverage. The program will cover dental treatments necessary to relieve pain and infection, prevent disease, treat cavities, and restore chewing and social function. It will also offer full coverage for preventive care, such as routine dental cleaning.

### Paid sick leave program (Economic Development)

- On April 1, 2023, the Department of Economic Development launched the Paid Sick Leave Rebate. The program runs for two 12-month blocks:
  - April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024; and
  - April 1, 2024 to March 31, 2025
- The Paid Sick Leave Rebate is a temporary program that offers up to 40 hours of paid sick leave to employees and self-employed Yukoners that earn less than the average private-sector wage of \$33.94/hour. The program includes all illnesses (and injuries not covered by any other Act, benefit, or program). The program is available to employees regardless of whether their employer offers paid sick leave, though employees must use all paid sick leave available to them through their employer before they are eligible for the Paid Sick Leave Rebate. The program is still in effect and will run until March 31, 2025.

### Yukon Child Benefit (Health and Social Services and Finance)

- The Yukon Child Benefit provides monthly payments to modest and low-income households who have children under 18. The maximum benefit per child is now tied to inflation, effective the 2023–24 benefit year.



# Session Briefing Note

## Inflation and Affordability (Corporate Note)

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### Yukon Seniors' Income Supplement (Health and Social Services)

- The Yukon Seniors' Income Supplement provides a monthly income supplement for eligible Yukoner senior's receiving Old Age Security (OAS) and the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) from the federal government. This amount is adjusted for inflation in October, each year.

### Inflation Relief Rebate and Interim Electrical Rebate (Yukon Development Corporation)

- The Inflation Relief Rebate, a \$50 rebate that was automatically applied to electrical customers' bills, was a temporary measure to address inflation. The Inflation Relief Rebate was most recently applied to all ATCO Electric Yukon and Yukon Energy bills for November and December 2023 and January 2024.
- The Interim Electrical Rebate continues to provide residential electrical customers with a maximum rebate of \$22.62 per month based on the electricity they consume, up to 1,000 kilowatt hours (up to \$271.44 per year). This affordability measure will continue until March 2025.

### Social Assistance Review (Health and Social Services)

- Health and Social Services is undertaking a review of the Yukon's Social Assistance rates to inform options to improve the delivery of the program and ensure it is meeting the needs of program clients.
- While the review is underway, the department is providing a \$100 monthly increase to eligible Social Assistance recipients.

### Out of Home Childcare Increases (Health and Social Services)

- To offset inflationary cost of living increases and provide sufficient financial resources to meet the needs of children placed in their care, Health and Social Services provided an ongoing 10 per cent increase to monthly payments to caregivers of children in out of home care in 2023-24, on top of the annual indexed increase.



# Session Briefing Note

## Inflation and Affordability (Corporate Note)

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- Combined, this amounted to a 16.46 per cent rate increase for community and extended family caregivers. The new rates are as follows:
  - o Whitehorse: \$46.86 per day
  - o Rural Communities: \$50.16 per day
  - o Old Crow: \$86.40 per day
- Rates are indexed annually to the Whitehorse Consumer Price Index, with an increase of 2.4% scheduled to take effect in October 2024.

### Supportive Housing (Health and Social Services)

- \$777,000 for Safe at Home will go towards establishing temporary supportive housing at 408 Alexander Street.

### Canada-Yukon Housing Benefit Rental Subsidy (Yukon Housing Corporation)

- The Canada-Yukon Housing Benefit offers a rental subsidy for low-to-moderate income renters.

### Comprehensive Municipal Grant (Community Services)

- The Comprehensive Municipal Grant is how the Government of Yukon directly funds municipal governments. This core funding supplements municipal resources and pays for vital services, like the provision of fresh drinking water, the collection of solid waste and recycling, recreation programming and other services as required under the Municipal Act and other legislation.
- The high inflation seen in 2022 (6.8 per cent) increased the grant payments provided in April 2024. This resulted in a \$2.3 million increase for Yukon municipalities with overall contributions of over \$24.5 million for the 2024-25 fiscal year.



**Session Briefing Note**  
**Inflation and Affordability**  
**(Corporate Note)**

Energy retrofits and funding to improve efficiency and offset costs (Energy, Mines and Resources)

- Energy efficiency rebate programs are available for the transportation sector, renewable heating sector, and the construction sector focusing on high efficiency buildings.
- For existing homes, the Energy Branch offers the Good Energy rebate program for high performance heating systems and upgrades to thermal enclosures including insulation and windows, and high-performance new homes. Taking these measures will save homeowners money on their energy costs.
- Between January 1, 2018, and June 30, 2024, 286 high-performance retrofits to residential, commercial and institutional buildings have been completed across the territory.
- Innovative programs like the Better Buildings Program that offer up-front funding, combined with our Good Energy rebates, make energy retrofits more accessible and affordable for Yukoners.

**Approved by:**

Jessica Schultz

September 25, 2024

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Deputy Minister  
Department of Finance

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Date Approved



## Eagle Gold Mine - Impacts

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ECO-FIN-EMR

### Recommended response:

- The Government of Yukon recognizes the seriousness of the heap leach failure that occurred at the Eagle Gold mine on June 24 and is treating the response as a government priority that reflects the urgency of the situation.
- Our priorities are to ensure the health and wellbeing of Yukoners and to protect the environment.
- An Independent Review Board has been established to investigate the heap leach failure that occurred at the Eagle Gold mine. Three highly qualified experts are on the Independent Review Board.
- We are committed to working with the First Nation of Nacho Nyak Dun to develop remediation strategies for the failure. A joint team of technical experts hired by the Government of Yukon and the First Nation meet on a regular basis to inform our actions.
- For the most up to date information on the situation at Eagle Gold Mine and actions we are taking, you can visit [Yukon.ca/victoria-gold-updates](https://Yukon.ca/victoria-gold-updates).

### Additional responses:

- On August 14, 2024, PricewaterhouseCoopers Inc. was appointed by the court as Receiver of the assets and property of Victoria Gold Corp. The Receiver is responsible for overseeing remediation of the heap



## Eagle Gold Mine - Impacts

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ECO-FIN-EMR

leach failure and its environmental impacts, including compliance with territorial and federal orders.

- The Government of Yukon is committed to a thorough accounting of events leading up to the failure and the development of recommendations so that a similar event does not happen again in the Yukon.
- As of September 4, 2024, there are 27 liens against Victoria Gold worth over \$58.7 million.

### *Environmental and health impacts:*

- The Department of Health and Social Services is monitoring impacts on human health. This includes ongoing review of any technical information and water sampling results, as well as situational reports, as they become available. Results from surface water samples taken show that the regulated drinking water system serving the area continues to meet the guidelines for drinking water quality.
- Water is sampled both at the site and downstream of Victoria Gold's Eagle Gold Mine. Water samples are collected regularly at select sites to monitor water quality. The results of the testing will let us know the impacts and inform next steps.
- Technical experts from the Government of Yukon, the First Nation of Nacho Nyak Dun and the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans



## Eagle Gold Mine - Impacts

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ECO-FIN-EMR

are working closely together to monitor the fish and wildlife in the surrounding areas of the Eagle Gold Mine.

### *Economic and labour market impacts:*

- Operations ceased at Eagle Gold Mine after the heap leach failure occurred. This situation has changed the outlook for mineral production in the Yukon and resulted in a notable downward revision in the medium-term outlook for the Yukon's real Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The 2024-25 Interim Fiscal and Economic Update released in early October includes the latest forecasts for real GDP.
- At the close of 2023, Victoria Gold had 471 direct hires and another 134 on contract.
- Of the more than 600 employed, the company reported that about 34 per cent were local, amounting to approximately 200 local workers. This represents about 0.8 per cent of the territorial labour force.
- Any possible negative impacts on the labour market are expected to be short-lived, as many displaced workers are likely to be reabsorbed into what is currently a tight labour market. The Yukon's unemployment rate is about half the national figure and the local job vacancy rate has been among the highest in the country throughout 2024.



## Eagle Gold Mine - Impacts

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- Monitoring of labour market data, such as the number of unemployed and the number of Employment Insurance claimants, for potential impacts of the mine closure is ongoing.
- As the Eagle Gold situation continues to unfold, we should have a better understanding if there may be longer-term impacts for the local economy.

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### Context — this may be an issue because:

- The June 24, 2024 heap leach failure at the Eagle Gold Mine affects the environmental and socio-economic wellbeing of Yukoners – from an environmental and business perspective.

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### Background:

- On June 24, 2024, a failure occurred at the heap leach facility of the Eagle Gold Mine operated by Victoria Gold Corporation.
- On July 30, 2024, the Premier provided remarks to the Council of Yukon First Nations' General Assembly on a variety of topics including mining and the incident at Eagle Gold Mine
- On August 5, 2024, the Premier provided a statement on mining activity in the Traditional Territory of First Nation of Nacho Nyak Dun.
- On August 14, 2024, the Government of Yukon with First Nation of Nacho Nyak Dun, submitted an application for receivership of Eagle Gold Mine.
- On August 16, 2024, the receivership was granted. It was appointed to PricewaterhouseCoopers. Implementing a receiver is an established process under federal bankruptcy legislation. Decision making and responsibility has



## Eagle Gold Mine - Impacts

ECO-FIN-EMR

shifted from Victoria Gold to PricewaterhouseCoopers, with direction from the Yukon government.

- As of September 20, 2024, the Government of Yukon has done 10 technical briefings to continue to keep Yukoners informed with up-to-date information.
- The Yukon.ca website is updated on a regular basis along with weekly information bulletins to inform the public on the Victoria Gold heap leach failure's current situation.

#### Approved by:

**Justin Ferbey**

**September 25, 2024**

Deputy Minister, Executive Council Office

[Date approved]

**Lauren Haney**

**September 20, 2024**

Deputy Minister, Energy, Mines and Resources

[Date approved]

**Jessica Schultz**

**September 20, 2024**

Deputy Minister, Finance

[Date approved]