



Government of Yukon

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**YUKON FISH AND WILDLIFE
MANAGEMENT BOARD**



FOR RELEASE #10-211
 November 22, 2010

Joint review of Wolf Conservation Management Plan begins

WHITEHORSE – The Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board (YFWMB) and Environment Yukon are jointly conducting a review of the territory's Wolf Conservation and Management Plan to find out what values and ecological conditions have changed since it was released in 1992.

"Through the review process, we hope interested parties will learn about the measures in place to manage Yukon wolves that recognize wolves and their prey are integral parts of Yukon ecosystems," Environment Minister John Edzerza said.

The Wolf Conservation Management Plan provides guidelines for decisions that ensure the long term survival of wolf populations in Yukon.

"This review will clarify what, if any, new principles are needed to guide future decision-making around wolf management in general in Yukon," YFWMB chair Richard Sidney said.

The Wolf Conservation and Management Plan Review will include public meetings and meetings with renewable resources councils and First Nations. A dedicated website will be available for sharing reports, research and other information about wolves and wolf management, as well as the original plan. The six-person review committee will coordinate the review and evaluate the 40 recommendations of the original management plan, taking into consideration the comments received and current research.

It is anticipated that final recommendation(s) on revisions to the plan will be ready by July 2011. The YFWMB is recognized within land claims Final Agreements as the primary instrument of fish and wildlife management in Yukon, with a mandate to make recommendations on wolf management.

Yukon has a healthy wolf population of 4,000 – 4,500 animals. About 130 wolves are harvested annually through trapping or hunting. It is illegal to waste the pelt.

More information is available on the Wolf Conservation and Management Plan Review website at yfwcm.ca/yukonwolfplanreview. The review committee will hold public meetings beginning early in the new year.

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See backgrounder attached.

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Background information on the Wolf Conservation Management Plan

The Wolf Conservation and Management Plan (WCMP) was released in 1992. It was prompted by growing public concern over the use of wolf reduction to help stabilize or grow the population of key caribou herds: Finlayson, Southern Lakes and Aishihik.

A diverse group of nine people, supported by an independent facilitator, created a plan that would provide a variety of human values of wolves and their prey as well as the inherent/existence values of wolves. Of its 40 recommendations, only three dealt with wolf population reduction – and these set out specific conditions.

The WCMP recommendations covered eight areas: non-consumptive use of wolves (e.g. wildlife viewing); consumptive use of wolves (e.g. trapping); management of ungulate species; wolves and agriculture; wolf reduction programs; public education and conflict resolution; research requirements; and future review and amendment of the plan.

The Yukon government, in cooperation with affected First Nations, has conducted two successful caribou recovery programs that did not involve wolf reduction:

- Chisana – newborn calves were protected from predation by a fenced enclosure. Over three seasons (2003 – 05), the herd size stabilized. However, this method may only be useful for herds with fewer than 100 animals.
- Southern Lakes – no licenced hunt allowed since 1993; First Nations governments successfully encouraged their hunters to voluntarily refrain from harvest; development that would harm caribou habitat discouraged. The population is now growing but it will be many years before a limited hunt can begin.

Environment Yukon continues to dedicate staff time to wolf research. Most recently, a \$45,000 wolf survey was completed in 2009 in the Southern Lakes area.

Yukon has a naturally regulated system which is reflected in ungulate (moose and caribou) harvest management decisions, especially harvest levels. Currently, most ungulate populations across the territory are healthy. However, wilderness – of which Yukon has plenty – is not synonymous with high levels of wildlife available to harvest so restrictions on harvest are needed in some areas for some populations.

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