

Department of Environment  
Briefing Binder for Fall Legislative Sitting 2023  
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\* Other departments' briefing notes are included as information only and are printed on blue paper.

**Session Briefing Note****Fall 2023****Canada-Yukon Nature Agreement**Environment

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**Recommended response:**

- The Canada-Yukon Nature Agreement is a three-year agreement that supports Indigenous leadership in conservation, increased protection of sensitive habitat, recovery actions for species at risk, and the protection and conservation of new lands and waters in the Yukon.
- The Yukon has already conserved approximately 19.3 per cent of the territory and is working towards meeting Canada's 25 per cent target by 2025.
- Additionally, this Agreement will support how the Yukon can make meaningful contributions towards Canada's 30 per cent target by 2030.
- We will make these contributions by building on existing commitments, such as those established through First Nations Final Agreements, which include parks and habitat protection areas, and by supporting Indigenous governments and groups in identifying additional conservation and protection interests.
- Any new area identified for protection and conservation will require the support of Indigenous governments and groups.
- The \$20.6 million in funding from the Agreement will also support effective land use planning, which is our main mechanism to support additional protection of wild spaces and biodiversity.

**Additional response:**

- The Government of Yukon has a responsibility and a commitment to work together with Indigenous partners to protect our lands, waters, and fish and wildlife for generations to come.



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### Canada-Yukon Nature Agreement

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- While this Agreement was negotiated between Canada and Yukon to support our government's work towards conservation initiatives, we identified the need for funds from the Agreement to be available for Indigenous partners to support collaboration on the conservation actions identified in the Agreement.
  - Letters were sent to Yukon First Nations and transboundary Indigenous governments and groups to notify them of the intent to negotiate a Nature Agreement, and later to notify of the intent to sign the Agreement during COP15 in Montreal.
  - A portion of funds from this Agreement will be directly allocated to Indigenous partners to support their capacity to lead in advancing their conservation interests. This will support knowledge gathering and data sharing and advance collaboration on conservation in the Yukon.
  - The collaborative approach to conservation planning within the Yukon Nature Agreement is consistent with the most recent Nature Agreements that have been signed between the federal government and the governments of British Columbia and Nova Scotia.
  - These agreements will support similar objectives to the agreement Yukon signed and include funding from Canada to the tune of \$500 million and \$28.5 million respectively.

#### Third response:

- 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.
- There is no single definition or view of what constitutes an Indigenous Protected and Conserved Area.

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- The scope of what could constitute an Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas may include areas identified for protection. It may also include collaborative approaches to management of lands, resources, and heritage, approaches to consultation, and development of strategies for economic development and tourism.
  - 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 what the implementation of the Canada-Yukon Nature Agreement will look like and how the Government of Yukon will meet the Agreement's commitments.
  - Further questions may be raised on the progress of the establishment of protected areas and other targets under the Agreement.
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#### Background:

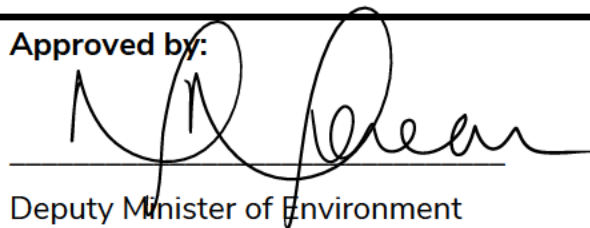
- The 2021 Federal Budget allocated \$200 million, spread across five years (until 2025-26), to advance Canada's protected area goals, as well as to support provinces and territories to collaborate with partners on conservation initiatives. (see objectives underway in Appendix C)
  - Governments from 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.
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- 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.
- On October 13, 2023, Indigenous governments across the Northwest Territories, along with the governments of Canada and the Northwest Territories and private philanthropies, announced they are entering into the Northwest Territories Project Finance for Permanence. Environment and Climate Change Canada has made an initial \$100 million commitment to the agreement. This significant Indigenous-led conservation effort will “fund the protection of lands, support thriving cultures, and foster economic diversification across the Northwest Territories”.
- On November 3, 2023, Canada, British Columbia, and the First Nations Leadership Council signed a Tripartite Framework Agreement on Nature Conservation. The agreement is intended to advance Canada and British Columbia’s commitment to protect 30 per cent of British Columbia land by 2030. Canada and British Columbia are contributing \$1 billion (approximately \$500 million each) in joint federal-provincial funding to implement that Nature Agreement.

Approved by:



Deputy Minister of Environment

2023.11.22

Date approved

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## Canada-Yukon Nature Agreement

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## Appendix A: Sites in the Yukon Currently Reported in CPCAD

Site	Status	Size (ha)	YT Percentage*
Coal River Springs Ecological Reserve	Protected area	1,570	0.0032%
Ni'iinlī Njik (Fishing Branch) Ecological Reserve	Protected area	16,970	0.035%
Ni'iinlī Njik (Fishing Branch) Wilderness Preserve	Protected area	521,700	1.1%
Tombstone Natural Environment Park	Protected area	204,650	0.42%
Asi Keyi Natural Environment Park	Protected area	294,797	0.61%
Kusawa Natural Environment Park	Protected area	306,890	0.63%
Herschel Island – Qikiqtaruk Natural Environment Park	Protected area	11,600	0.024%
Tagish River Habitat Protection Area	Protected area	450	0.00093%
Lewes Marsh Habitat Protection Area	Protected area	2,030	0.0042%
Łútsāw Wetland Habitat Protection Area	Protected area	3,232	0.0067%
Horseshoe Slough Habitat Protection Area	Protected area	7,700	0.016%
Ts'alwnjik Chu - Nordenskiöld Wetland Habitat Protection Area	Protected area	7,847	0.016%
Ddhaw Ghro Habitat Protection Area	Protected area	161,000	0.33%
Big Island Habitat Protection Area	Protected area	760	0.0016%
Van Tat K'atr'anahtii (Old Crow Flats) Habitat Protection Area	Protected area	54,500	0.11%
Devil's Elbow Habitat Protection Area	Protected area	7,510	0.016%
Ch'ihilii Chik Habitat Protection Area	Protected area	47,460	0.098%
Peel Watershed LMU 2	Interim protected area	95,777	0.20%
Peel Watershed LMU 8	Interim protected area	1,909,405	3.95%
Peel Watershed LMU 9	Interim protected area	1,089,488	2.25%
Peel Watershed LMU 11	Interim protected area	161,100	0.33%
Peel Watershed LMU 12	Interim protected area	162,156	0.34%
Peel Watershed LMU 14	Interim protected area	233,345	0.48%

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Kluane National Park and Reserve	Protected area	2,206,100	4.56%
Ivvavik National Park	Protected area	967,100	2.0%
Vuntut National Park	Protected area	434,500	0.90%
Nisutlin River Delta National Wildlife Area	Protected area	5,483	0.011%
Settlement Land R-01A and R-10A (Van Tat K'atr'anahtii - Old Crow Flats – SMA)	Interim protected area	394,703	0.82%
Settlement Land R-5A and S-3A1 (Ni'iniilii Njik - Fishing Branch protected area complex)	Interim protected area	14,094	0.029%
<b>Total Yukon Lands</b>		<b>5,301,937</b>	<b>10.96%</b>
<b>Total Settlement Lands</b>		<b>408,797</b>	<b>0.84%</b>
<b>Total Federal Lands</b>		<b>3,613,183</b>	<b>7.47%</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>9,323,917 ha (93,239 km<sup>2</sup>)</b>	<b>19.3%</b>

- \*Based on a Yukon area of 483,662 km<sup>2</sup>

## Appendix B: Potential Yukon Sites that may be added to CPCAD by 2025

Site	Size (ha)	YT Percentage *	Action Required to Allow Reporting to CPCAD	Likelihood of Addition to CPCAD by 2025
Aullaviat/ Aunguniarvik (the Eastern Yukon North Slope)	~800,000	~1.7%	Actions have been completed with Wildlife Conservation and Management Plan being endorsed by all Parties in XX 2023.	<b>High</b> Will be reported during the December 2023 CPCAD data request.
Dàadzàii Vàn Territorial Park (within the North Yukon Regional Land Use Plan area)	152,500	0.3%	Obtain the support of partner First Nations to report as an interim protected area in advance of completing designation and management planning. - or - Complete and sign the park management plan and designate the park under	<b>High</b> Permanent mineral withdrawals in place. If the management plan is not completed in time, the option to designate in advance of the management plan can be pursued.

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			the Parks and Lands Certainty Act. - or - Designate the site under the Parks and Lands Certainty Act before the management plan is complete.	
Pickhandle Lakes Habitat Protection Area	5,100	0.01%	Obtain the support of partner First Nations to report as a protected area. - or - Designate under the Wildlife Act after the management plan is approved, then report as a protected area.	<b>High</b> Steady progress is being made on the management plan, and if the management plan is not completed in time, the option to report with First Nation partners' support can be pursued.
Recommended Dawson Land Use Plan Special Management Areas	Up to 1,359,800 <sup>2</sup>	Up to 2.8% <sup>2</sup>	Dawson Land Use Plan is complete and signed by all Parties. All Parties grant permission for Special Management Areas to be reported in CPCAD in advance of protected areas designation under an act and management planning (as was done for the Peel Watershed Special Management Areas).	<b>High</b> Current process timelines anticipate Parties choosing to accept, reject or modify the Recommended Plan in 2023. If a Final Recommended Plan is required, the process will extend into 2024.
	2: The area encompassed by any grandfathered mining claims within the Special Management Areas would be removed from these totals before reported to CPCAD.			
Agay Mene Territorial Park	72,500	0.1%	Permanent withdrawals of mineral rights now (as requested by the First Nations). - with intention to - Complete and sign the park management plan,	<b>Medium</b> In the past, Government of Yukon has been unwilling to put in place permanent withdrawals in absence of a

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			implement withdrawals (if this is the outcome of management planning), and designate under the <i>Parks and Lands Certainty Act</i> .	management plan, and First Nation partners have been unwilling to engage in management planning without permanent withdrawals in place.
Mining claims in Peel Special Management Areas	Up to 246,113 (accounting for 1061 quartz claims as of August 26, 2022) <sup>1</sup>	Up to 0.5 % <sup>1</sup>	Continue discussions with mineral claims holders to relinquish claims.	<b>Medium</b> The claim holders who were considered the most willing to relinquish claims have already been approached. Some claim holders have indicated that they will not relinquish their claims. As of July 20, 2023, 5031 quartz claims have been relinquished in Peel Conservation Areas since the Peel Plan was signed.
	1: The Department of Energy, Mines and Resources is working with claim holders to have claims within Peel Special Management Areas relinquished. The area encompassed by any relinquished claims can be added to CPCAD.			
Ni'iinlii'Njik (Fishing Branch) Habitat Protection Area	97,800	0.2%	The current management plan did not contemplate protection. However, the plan is up for review and the option to protect could be brought forward for consideration. Previously Government of Yukon has not been supportive of permanent withdrawals, which are required to achieve protection.	<b>Low</b> Would require a reversal of the Government of Yukon's previously held position.



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Van Tat K'atr'anahtii (Old Crow Flats) Habitat Protection Area (sections outside of the core wetland complex)	327,900	0.7%	The 2006 management plan states that Government of Yukon and Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation will review the status of all 20-year withdrawals prior to expiration. Permanent protection of the site was not contemplated in the current management plan. The plan is up for review and the option to protect could be brought forward for consideration. Permanent withdrawal of mineral rights will be required to achieve protection.	<b>Low</b> The commitment to review period falls beyond 2025.
Future Land Use Planning	Unknown	Unknown	As future land use planning processes are initiated, there will be potential for other protected areas arising from these new plans.	<b>Unknown</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>Up to 3,061,700 ha (30,617 km<sup>2</sup>)</b>	<b>Up to 6.31%</b>		

- \*Based on a Yukon area of 483,662 km<sup>2</sup>

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### Canada-Yukon Nature Agreement

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#### Appendix C – Canada-Yukon Nature Agreement Objectives Underway

- The Nature Agreement supported several initiatives this past field season to increase our monitoring and surveys of fish, wildlife and habitat. For example, the Agreement supported work to:
  - Increase our understanding of Northern Mountain caribou through the deployment of GPS collars on several Yukon herds.
  - Assess and monitor biodiversity and the distribution of rare plants and rare ecosystems.
- These monitoring and surveys will provide data and information that will inform land use future planning processes.
- The Government of Yukon is starting work with interested Indigenous partners to support capacity towards an Indigenous lens on management approaches for species at risk in the Yukon.
- In the coming months, a call for Expressions of Interest will be going out to Yukon First Nations and other transboundary Indigenous governments and groups to enable funding opportunities for projects that will support the Agreement's objective to protect and conserve land and water in the Yukon.
- We anticipate that there will be workshops to support Indigenous leadership and conservation early in 2024.



## Session Briefing Note

### Outfitting in the Yukon

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**ENV #2**  
**Fall 2023**  
Environment

#### Recommended response:

- Outfitting is a valued industry in the Yukon that benefits communities through employment opportunities, the purchase of goods and services and, in many cases, a donated supply of fresh meat.
- Our government continues to work with the Yukon Outfitters Association to support the industry while ensuring the sustainability of Yukon wildlife.
- We recognize that there continues to be several outstanding issues of concern, and we are committed to resolving them collaboratively with the outfitting industry.
- To improve support for the outfitting community, the Department of Environment hired an Outfitter Liaison Officer in May of 2023.
- The Outfitter Liaison Officer has been proactively working with Yukon outfitters and the Yukon Outfitter Association to answer questions, address specific issues of concern, and identify potential ways to resolve them.
- Earlier this year, the Department of Environment received recommendations from the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board to modernize the Yukon Outfitter Quota Guidelines.
- We agree that modernization of these guidelines is necessary for various reasons, like ensuring they conform with the Yukon Wildlife Act, addressing the Yukon's legal obligations to consult First Nations, and better aligning with how wildlife management is conducted in the Yukon.

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- The Government of Yukon has responded to the Board that given its mandate to make recommendations on all matters related to Yukon fish and wildlife management, legislation, research, policies and programs, that the Board could initiate the review and engagement on the Yukon Outfitter Quota Guidelines.
- Should the Board accept this role, the Government of Yukon is committed to providing the Board with technical and financial support to undertake this work.

### **Additional response:**

- We recognize the certainty that multi-year quotas provide to Yukon outfitters. However, multi-year and over-harvest quotas do not comply with the *Wildlife Act*.
- The Department of Environment has implemented an interim solution to provide outfitters certainty, flexibility and predictability.
- This interim process states that unless a legal, environmental or socio-economic factor necessitates a change in the non-resident allocation, quotas will remain unchanged until we have a new process in place to establish quotas.
- It also allows outfitters with quota agreements before 2022 to access unused moose and caribou quotas from the previous four years, up to a maximum value.
- We remain committed to working with the outfitting industry, Renewable Resources Councils, the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board, licensed hunters, and Yukon First Nations to ensure a fair, transparent, and sustainable solution.
- There are currently 20 outfitting concessions in the Yukon. All are active.

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## Outfitting in the Yukon

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### Third Response:

- Prior to the 2022 hunting season, the Department of Environment worked with outfitters to place outfitters on quotas.
- In 2021, the Department of Environment was made aware that multi-year quotas and roll-over provisions do not comply with the Wildlife Act. As a result, starting in 2022, quotas are established annually.
- Given the changes made to the quota process and the fact that some outfitters were assigned quotas for the first time in 2022, the Outfitter Quota Appeal Committee and the Concession and Compensation Review Board received an unprecedented number of appeals.
- Our government responded to all timelines and information requests from the coordinating Secretariat on these hearings, but the number of appeals created significant delays in the appeal processes.
- The deadline for outfitters to submit appeals for their 2023 season quotas was April 18, 2023. Five outfitters submitted appeals to the Outfitter Quota Appeal Committee. Two of the five also submitted similar appeals to the Concession and Compensation Review Board. These requests are now following the appropriate procedures.
- Written submissions have been provided to the Secretariat for three Outfitter Quota Appeal Committee appeals and two Concession and Compensation Review Board appeals.
- Concession and Compensation Review Board hearings are scheduled for December 4, 2023. No Outfitter Quota Appeal Committee hearing have been scheduled yet.
- In 2022, two of the 36 caribou quotas and three of the 20 moose quotas were used to their maximum.
- These are complex matters, and we are allowing the outfitter appeals to work through the process before any decisions or changes are made.

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Environment


## 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 process.

## Background:

- Allocating quotas for all outfitters for all big game species provides a level playing field for the industry in the Yukon and business predictability for individual outfitters.
- The Department of Environment is responsible for making decisions about wildlife management to conserve all wildlife while respecting treaty rights and the diverse needs of Yukoners.
- In 2022, a total of 11 appeals were submitted; nine outfitters submitted appeals to the Outfitter Quota Appeal Committee. Two of the nine also submitted similar appeals to the Concession and Compensation Review Board.
- Seven of the 11 appeals from 2022 did not go to hearing: three were withdrawn by the appealing outfitters and four were cancelled by the Outfitter Quota Appeal Committee for various reasons.
- The Department of Environment meets frequently with the Yukon Outfitter Association and Yukon outfitters. Since December of last year, the Yukon Outfitter Liaison Committee has met four times to discuss issues important to the industry. The department's Outfitter Liaison Officer and Wildlife Harvest Specialist also meet regularly with Yukon outfitters.

Approved by:



Deputy Minister of Environment

2023-11-07

Date approved



**Session Briefing Note  
Yukon Wetland Policy  
Implementation**Environment and  
Energy, Mines and Resources

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**Recommended response:**

- I am pleased to share that we are working on a number of initiatives for the wetland stewardship policy.
- The implementation working group identified several priority actions, including wetland classification, guidance for wetland identification, and comprehensive, territory-wide wetland mapping.
- We are developing guidance to ensure wetland impacts are considered in project assessments and finalizing guidance for the nomination, evaluation and protection of Wetlands of Special Importance.
- We will be initiating collaborative research on wetlands to further the implementation of this important policy.

**Additional response:**

- Our wetland stewardship policy implementation actions include broad-scale wetland mapping within the Peel, Beaver River, Mayo and McQuesten watersheds.
- We are collecting data to support local mapping in key areas, and we will be initiating a multi-party research project designed to explore the extent of carbon release and potential for carbon sink restoration following placer mining. (See EMR BN #92)
- We will be launching new wetland information pages on Yukon.ca.

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Yukon Wetland Policy  
Implementation**Environment and  
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**Third response:**

- We acknowledge the importance of being responsive to new information as we continue to build our knowledge and improve our understanding of Yukon's wetlands, including recognizing and respecting traditional, local, and scientific 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:**

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

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**Background:**

- A Policy for the Stewardship of Yukon's Wetlands was released on January 10, 2023. The goal of the policy is to ensure the benefits of Yukon's wetlands are sustained.
- The Government of Yukon conducted an online public survey in October 2021 to gather feedback on the draft policy. First Nations consultation in 2022 followed the release of the March 2022 What We Heard report from the public survey.
- 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 co-chaired by the Energy, Mines and Resources - Strategic Alliances Branch (Manager, Partnerships and Strategic Initiatives) and Environment - Fish and Wildlife Branch (Senior Biologist, Habitat).

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Yukon Wetland Policy  
Implementation**Environment and  
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- The working group is composed of members of Environment (Environmental Protection and Assessment, Fish and Wildlife, Policy and Planning), Energy Mines and Resources (Strategic Alliances, Compliance Monitoring and Inspection, Mineral Resources Branch, Corporate Policy, as well as occasional members from Agriculture and Forest Management Branch), Executive Council Office (Major Projects Yukon), and Highways and Public Works.
- The group meets monthly to advance various aspects of policy implementation, as well as ensuring a whole-of-government approach to policy implementation.
- In addition to policy approval, Management Board approved \$1.68 million in time-limited funding over two fiscal years (2023-24 to 2024-25) for the departments of Environment and Energy, Mines and Resources to begin jointly implementing the Wetlands Policy. This included:
  - \$840,000 in 2023-24 and \$840,000 in 2024-25 to support the policy's implementation.
  - Personnel have also been approved for one, 2-year FTE at the Department of Environment, and one 2-year and one permanent FTE at the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources.
- The Wetlands Policy contains 16 implementation actions with near-term, mid-term and long-term implementation targets over the next 10 years.

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## Yukon Wetland Policy Implementation

**Fall 2023**

Environment and  
Energy, Mines and Resources

Appendix A: Actions described and committed to within the wetland stewardship policy			
Policy Actions (bold = near-term priorities)	Timeline * priority adjusted	Lead Department	Status update Inactive Initiated Underway Near_Complete
1. Develop guidance for the evaluation of wetland benefits in the Yukon	Long-term	ENV	
<b>2. Update and finalize a Yukon wetland classification system</b>	Near-term	ENV	External review and engagement
3. Develop an accessible and easy to use guide to identifying Yukon's wetlands for proponents and the public	Mid-term	External	DUC-lead (ENV supporting), completion in 2024
<b>4. Develop wetland mapping standards for regional, local, and project specific mapping applications</b>	Near-term	ENV	Ready for internal review
<b>5. Create a broad scale territory-wide wetland inventory</b>	Near-term	ENV	Underway (year 1 of 5)
<b>6. Support local scale wetland mapping, where needed</b>	Near-term*	ENV	Underway (Data acquisition for priority areas of goldfields)
<b>7. Promote northern wetland research</b>	Near-term*	EMR	Limited communications to potential research partners
8. Promote public awareness of wetlands	Long-term	ENV	
<b>9. Develop guidance for the application and use of the mitigation hierarchy</b>	Near-term	EMR / ENV	Internal guidance only

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## Yukon Wetland Policy Implementation

**Fall 2023**

Environment and  
Energy, Mines and Resources

Appendix A: Actions described and committed to within the wetland stewardship policy			
Policy Actions (bold = near-term priorities)	Timeline * priority adjusted	Lead Department	Status update
			Inactive Initiated Underway Near_Complete
10. Update or develop proponent guidance to be used when submitting wetland impact mitigation information	Near-term	EMR	Limited new guidance; reliance on existing guidance (Ruby Creek guidelines)
11. Update or develop Standard Operating Procedures / Preferred Management Practices for different activities impacting wetlands	Long-term	EMR	
12. Update or develop general wetland reclamation guidelines, and, where required, sector specific guidelines	Near-term*	EMR	Limited new guidance; reliance on existing guidance (Ruby Creek guidelines)
13. Develop guidance for offsetting wetland impacts	Long-term	ENV / EMR	
14. Develop specific and measurable guidance for the interpretation and application of Wetland of Special Importance nomination criteria	Near-term	ENV	Draft being finalized for internal 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 Environment Act	Mid-term*	ENV	
16. Create a publicly accessible catalogue of Wetlands of Special Importance.	Mid-term	ENV	Initial discussions underway

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## Yukon Wetland Policy Implementation

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### Appendix B: Detailed Status of Wetlands Policy Implementation Working Group Priorities

Timeline	Commitment/Description	Rationale / Plan to complete and achieve	Lead department
<b>BUILDING KNOWLEDGE – WETLAND RESEARCH, CLASSIFICATION AND MAPPING</b>			
<b>Near-Term (1 – 3 years)</b>	<b>2. Update and finalize a Yukon wetland classification system</b>  Engagement level outlined in policy: YG-led, with review from all parties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ENV is currently developing updated descriptions and classification of wetlands with authoritative descriptions of each wetland class.</li> <li>A draft version was completed in June 2023.</li> <li>A technical wetland identification key is being finalized, which is intended for experienced/qualified professionals doing wetland field identification/mapping.</li> <li>Broader YG engagement and refinement is underway and will be complete in October 2023.</li> <li>External engagement, including Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC), on this will be conducted following a YG review.</li> <li>This classification and key will be used by Ducks Unlimited Canada in the development of a more widely accessible field guide to Yukon wetlands (Policy Action 3). DUC is aiming to complete this in 2024.</li> </ul>	ENV lead, multi-depart. support
<b>Near-Term (1 – 3 years)</b>	<b>4. Develop wetland mapping standards for regional, local, and project-specific mapping applications</b>  Engagement level outlined in policy: YG-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ENV is leading a cross-departmental working group to develop wetland mapping standards with the objective of meeting technical mapping needs.</li> <li>First draft completed in September 2023.</li> <li>Broader YG engagement and refinement will begin in October 2023.</li> <li>External review will be undertaken following internal YG review.</li> </ul>	ENV lead, multi-depart. support



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	led, with review from all FN and industry		
Within five years of policy approval	<b>5. Create a broad scale territory-wide wetland inventory</b>  Engagement level outlined in policy: YG-led, with involvement from FN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ENV is initiating a variety of projects to advance this policy commitment and complete territory-wide wetland mapping over the next 5 years.</li> <li>ENV will assemble a standardized inventory of validated data on upland and wetland ecosystems by the end of August 2023, with ongoing efforts to continually build this repository.</li> <li>ENV plans to issue a tender for the next phase of wetland mapping in late 2023.</li> <li>ENV has completed: i) initial feasibility pilot studies in the Peel and Mayo/McQuesten watersheds; ii) initial evaluation of use of SPOT imagery during predictive mapping; iii) piloted a map accuracy assessment protocol; iv) compiled and updated all available wetland ground truthing data; and will be v) orthorectifying territory-wide SPOT imagery for use in future mapping.</li> <li>Indigenous governments will be provided an opportunity to review the mapping tactical plan, and to participate as appropriate/desired in future mapping efforts.</li> </ul>	ENV lead
Ongoing	<b>6. Support local scale wetland mapping, where needed</b>  Engagement level outlined in policy: YG, FN and project proponents to complete as necessary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ENV has been working with EMR to determine priorities for local and broad-scale wetland mapping.</li> <li>Additional budget and time may be necessary to meet the mapping objectives based on the identified local-scale mapping needs.</li> <li>ENV and EMR-Forest Management Branch are collaborating on aerial imagery acquisition through planned Dawson Vegetation Inventory (planned imagery acquisition in summer 2023).</li> <li>First Nation governments and industry will be engaged as areas are confirmed.</li> </ul>	ENV lead, EMR support



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## Yukon Wetland Policy Implementation

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Ongoing	<b>7. Promote northern wetland research</b>  Engagement level outlined in policy: Case-by-case	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Government of Yukon plans to proceed with a research initiative on carbon emissions from wetlands affected by placer mining as it aligns with policy research priorities regarding carbon storage and release and wetland reclamation.</li> <li>EMR will lead and facilitate the project through discussions with First Nations and with the assistance of program areas/subject matter experts.</li> <li>Industry associations and ENGOs confirmed their interest in participating and EMR has met with ENGOs to identify their representatives.</li> <li>Once the interest and participation of First Nations has been confirmed, the anticipated next step will be to collaboratively develop a scope and schedule for research.</li> <li>Similar research initiatives are also underway that involve private proponents, research institutes, and some support from Yukon government.</li> </ul>	EMR lead, ENV support
<b>MANAGING WETLAND IMPACTS – PROPONENT GUIDANCE AND GUIDELINES</b>			
Near-Term (1 –3 years)	<b>9. Develop guidance for the application and use of the mitigation hierarchy</b>  Engagement level outlined in policy: YG-led, with input and review from FN, boards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This applies to all sectors and types of activities. However, the focus for developing written guidance documents will start with the mining sector.</li> <li>ENV and EMR are developing a brief 2-page overview for Mining Land Use Applications.</li> </ul>	ENV and EMR co-lead

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## Yukon Wetland Policy Implementation

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Energy, Mines and Resources

	and councils and assessment and regulatory bodies		
<b>Near-Term (1-3 years)</b>	<p><b>10. Update or develop proponent guidance to be used when submitting wetland impact mitigation information</b></p> <p>Engagement level outlined in policy: YG-led, with input and review from FN, boards and councils and assessment and regulatory bodies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EMR has released a template for placer wetland reclamation plans within the Indian River Wetlands, based on the wetland reclamation guide developed in 2017 for the Ruby Creek and Indian River East Block Placer Mine.</li> <li>EMR is currently working on a guidance document to help operators use the tools available on GeoYukon for wetland mapping purposes. In addition, ENV and EMR are developing a brief 2-page overview for Mining Land Use Applications. It is anticipated that it will take several months to complete this work.</li> <li>The Yukon Water Board is in the process of developing new Wetland Information Guidelines for Placer Applications. A draft is available on their website for proponent use (see related priority below).</li> </ul>	EMR lead, ENV support
<b>*Near-Term (1 – 3 years)</b>	<p><b>12. Update or develop general wetland reclamation guidelines and, where required, sector-specific guidelines</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>While identified in the policy as a mid-term action (within 5 years), more comprehensive guidelines for the exploration and mining sector have been identified by the working group as a near-term priority. It is anticipated that this work will follow the completion of #10 above and build off the resulting guidance.</li> <li>Placer and Quartz project proponents are currently being directed to the guidance provided in the Ruby Creek and Indian River East Block Placer Mine wetland reclamation guide.</li> </ul>	EMR lead, ENV support

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## Yukon Wetland Policy Implementation

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	Engagement level outlined in policy: YG-led, with input and review from all parties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FN, industry and regulatory partners will have the opportunity to be engaged in developing comprehensive guidelines.</li> <li>Guidelines for other sectors may be developed.</li> </ul>	
Near-Term (1 – 3 years)	14. Develop specific and measurable guidance for the interpretation and application of nomination criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wetlands of Special Importance (WSI) nomination process, authorities and criteria were largely completed prior to the approved policy and requires little work.</li> <li>Current Implementation document will be revised and finalized with the nomination process in October 2023.</li> <li>Internal review will be completed in late 2023, and external review in early 2024.</li> </ul>	ENV lead
Mid-Term (3 – 5 years)	15. Establish a process for legal designation of Wetlands of Special Importance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>While identified in the policy as a near-term action (1 – 3 years), the Department or Environment will focus on developing the WSI nomination process utilizing existing tools (e.g., admin reserves, map notations or Wildlife Key Areas) and look to develop a new legal designation tool in the mid-term (3 – 5 years).</li> </ul>	ENV lead
OTHER/OPERATIONAL NEEDS (NOT OUTLINED IN APPENDIX A OF THE YUKON WETLANDS POLICY)			
High	Project review and approval: The Government of Yukon must ensure that	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This requirement affects program areas across the Yukon government that are responsible for reviewing, authorizing and overseeing land use activities. Often, project review and approvals involve multiple program areas and require interdepartmental coordination.</li> </ul>	EMR and ENV

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### Yukon Wetland Policy Implementation

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	projects occurring in wetland areas conform to the wetland policy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To meet this requirement, internal operational policies and procedures are required. Process for initial project reviews is established.</li> <li>Processes and resources to oversee projects throughout the term of the project (e.g., to review and respond to reporting, etc.), including the development of database and submission portals, have yet to be established.</li> <li>ENV and EMR have received funding to support this work, including new full-time positions (ENV, MRB and CMI). This work is anticipated to be an ongoing and evolving operational effort.</li> <li>As an external component, proponent guidance and communications will be necessary to support project applications and their conformity with the policy.</li> </ul>	
High	Compliance and enforcement: The Government of Yukon must ensure projects approved in wetland areas comply with the terms and conditions of their authorizations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Compliance, Monitoring and Inspections Branch is responsible for inspecting mineral projects in wetland areas and ensuring activities comply with any wetland-related terms and conditions. More specifically, the policy requires that projects employ a mitigation hierarchy to plans and activities in wetland areas (i.e., avoid, minimize, reclaim, offset).</li> <li>Inspections of projects will document compliance and enforce the terms and conditions of authorizations to ensure wetland avoidance, where required, and confirm wetland disturbance and wetland reclamation. This will require new tools and resources as well as coordination and communication with project regulators (e.g., Mineral Resources Branch, etc.).</li> <li>CMI is currently reviewing policies and procedures to identify how to incorporate this work into normal duties and investigating additional tools to support the work of Natural Resource Officers. Additional training and technical support for staff may be needed.</li> </ul>	EMR (Mineral projects)

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## Yukon Wetland Policy Implementation

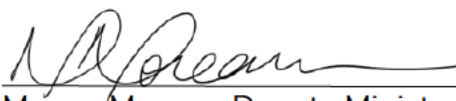
**Fall 2023**  
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This work is anticipated to be an ongoing and evolving operational effort, dependent on the resources and tools developed (e.g., mapping products, project reporting, etc.), as well as proponent requirements set out in wetland reclamation plans.</li> </ul>	
High	Develop a Yukon.ca wetlands policy landing page as a centralized location for finding relevant information (from mining applications to mapping)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ENV and EMR are coordinating the development of a landing page.</li> <li>ENV aims to have structure and content ready for approval/publication by October 2023.</li> </ul>	ENV-lead, EMR support

**Session Briefing Note  
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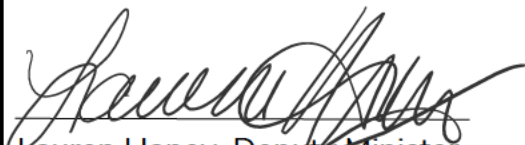
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Manon Moreau, Deputy Minister  
Department of Environment

2023-10-30

Date approved



Lauren Haney, Deputy Minister  
Department of Energy, Mines and Resources

2023-10-30

Date approved



## Session Briefing Note

### Elk–Agriculture Conflicts

Environment and  
Energy, Mines and Resources

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#### Recommended response:

- For many Yukoners, it [is important](#) to sustain our elk populations [and](#) provide [agriculture producers](#) with land to produce local foods and crops.
- In 2022, a focus group was formed to identify options for the Takhini Elk Herd. [Their objective was to develop a two-year trial program aimed at effectively regulating the elk population; and reducing 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 minimizing elk impacts on agricultural properties while maintaining elk on the landscape.](#)
- The pilot plan recommendations include hiring a coordinator, applying localized and range-scale herd management, supporting fencing options, implementing a collaring program, and [conducting](#) a social survey. [The Government of Yukon is providing the funding for the coordinator to implement the plan.](#)
- [Progress has been made on:](#)
  - [The Department of Environment increased elk monitoring by deploying 20 collars. The collaring program will allow for better tracking of elk movement and greater accuracy for spot counts in the spring for population estimates.](#)
  - [Last year, we introduced a new adaptive Wildlife Act permitting process and made eight additional permits available for hunting elk in the Takhini Valley, increasing the total to 12 permits; and](#)
  - [Fencing projects are being planned for three agriculture properties with ongoing discussions with interested agriculture property owners for future projects.](#)



## Session Briefing Note

### Elk–Agriculture Conflicts

Environment and  
Energy, Mines and Resources

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- With representation from the Government of Yukon, hunters, the agriculture sector and Ta'an Kwäch'än Council, the Steering Committee represent a proactive and collaborative approach to addressing a longstanding concern.

#### Additional response:

- We continue to review and implement actions to address damage caused to crops and farm infrastructure by the Takhini Elk Herd.
- Three Permit Hunt Authorization hunters were successful, two with Braeburn Permit Hunt Authorizations and one with a Takhini Permit Hunt Authorization. None of the adaptive Wildlife Act permit hunters have been successful thus far.
- 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.

#### 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. We will continue collaborating with affected landowners, farmers, interest groups, the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board, and First Nations to find solutions and options to manage elk and support agricultural land use.
- The number of calls to the Conservation Officer Services Branch concerning elk-agriculture conflicts remains relatively low, with nine total complaints received since 2020.

## Session Briefing Note

## Elk–Agriculture Conflicts

Environment and  
Energy, Mines and Resources

- From the nine complaints, there have been two controlled kills (euthanized elk) by Conservation Officer Services Branch, and 13 mortalities due to traffic accidents.
- I encourage any Yukoner experiencing a conflict with elk on their property to call the TIPP line at 1-800-661-0525 to report the issue to our Conservation Officers.

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

- Takhini Valley farmers may seek an update on government actions to address the conflict between the wild elk population and agricultural properties in the Takhini Valley.
- 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.

**Background:**

- The focus group was comprised of representatives from the Yukon Agriculture Association, Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board, First Nations, Energy, Mines and Resources and Environment.
- The Elk-Agricultural Steering Committee is comprised of representatives from the Yukon Agricultural Association, the Yukon Fish and Game Association, the department 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.
  - A total of \$178,096 in compensation for elk damage to farms was provided from 2014 to 2022.
  - A total of \$200,914 in funding was provided for elk exclusion fencing projects from 2014 to 2020.

**Session Briefing Note****Elk–Agriculture Conflicts**Environment and  
Energy, Mines and Resources

- In 2021, 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. To date, \$187,210 of funding has been allocated for seven fencing projects under this program.
- There is \$250,000 in funding available for exclusion fencing in 2023/24.

**Approved by:**

Deputy Minister  
Department of Environment

November 14, 2023

Date approved



November 14, 2023

Deputy Minister  
Department of Energy, Mines and Resources

Date approved

## **Session Briefing Note**

### **2023 Hunting Changes and Opportunities**

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#### **Recommended Response:**

- The Government of Yukon is committed to sustainable management of the Yukon's wildlife to ensure populations remain healthy and resilient, now and for future generations.
- We are committed to expanding hunting opportunities for Yukoners in areas and for species where conservation concerns do not exist.
- The Department of Environment is currently undertaking an internal review of all existing hunting restrictions both by species and area.
- The conservation status of these populations will be evaluated and compared against targeted surveys with a view to easing hunting restrictions where possible.
- As a result of this review, we anticipate being able to offer additional hunting opportunities to Yukoners in the 2024-2025 season.

#### **New Moose Permits in Sifton-Miners Range**

- Survey results in the Sifton-Miners Range Moose Management Unit showed the number of moose in this area to be greater than expected.
- As a result, we were able to increase the number of permits available in this area from 12 to 24.

#### **Kluane Wildlife Sanctuary Sheep Permit (ref BN #8)**

- This year, the Kluane Wildlife Sanctuary sheep permit was not offered due to conservation concerns with the local sheep population. Kluane First Nation and Yukon Government have both postponed the permit hunt in this special area.

## **Session Briefing Note**

### **2023 Hunting Changes and Opportunities**

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- 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 the First Nation. One permit goes to a Yukon resident hunter through the permit hunt process, and another can be auctioned to a non-resident by the First Nation.

#### Elk Permits (ref BN #3)

- Eight new permits for hunting elk in the Takhini Valley were made available in 2022 and are once again being offered in 2023.
- These adaptive *Wildlife Act* elk permits are restricted to the harvest of a bull elk with five-point antlers or fewer.
- These additional permits are part of a two-year pilot project to reduce conflict between elk and agricultural landowners in the Takhini Valley.

#### Deer Permits

- The Government of Yukon currently offers 12 deer permits per year through the permit hunt authorization process.
- The Yukon's first-ever deer project is currently underway, utilizing both trail cameras and collaring.
- The results of this project will be available in 2025-26, at which time decisions on future deer harvest opportunities can be made, including a possible expansion of the deer hunt.

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

- On April 6, the Department of Environment announced changes to Yukon's hunting opportunities for this licensing year.

**ENV #5**

**Fall 2023**

Environment

## **Session Briefing Note**

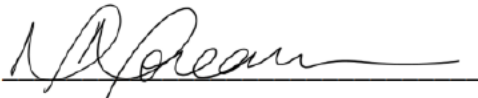
### **2023 Hunting Changes and Opportunities**

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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 which game management zones wildlife may be hunted.
- Year-to-year changes to permit hunting opportunities are done through amendments to the General Ministerial Order.

#### **Approved by:**



Deputy Minister of Environment

2023-11-09

Date approved

## **Session Briefing Note**

### **Campground Planning**

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#### **Recommended response:**

- Yukon campgrounds continue to be popular destinations for Yukoners and visitors alike.
- User demand for campsites is anticipated to increase steadily in the coming years, and we are actively working to expand the number of campsites and user experience at parks across the territory.
- Next year we will be piloting a reservation system at select popular campgrounds to allow campers the comfort of knowing a spot is available when they arrive.
- To support the reservation system, we will be piloting a Visitor Service Operator program at three campgrounds, where staff will be onsite to provide support to campers and ensure regulations and rules are followed.
- The Government of Yukon continues to explore all options to improve and add more camping opportunities near Whitehorse.
- This season have added 4 new tenting campsites at Wolf Creek and celebrated the re-opening of 41 sites at Congdon Creek campground that had been closed for over 20 years.
- The Department of Environment is exploring opportunities in collaboration with First Nations, and public – private partnerships.
- We are planning to improve and expand the Snafu campground and Tatchun Lake locations, we are in the process of developing the YESAB project assessments and expect to file them this winter.

## **Session Briefing Note**

### **Campground Planning**

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#### **Additional response:**

- Yukon Parks offers a range of recreation opportunities that appeal to a diversity of park visitors.
- Our goal is to support our growing visitor population in providing a great experience while visiting Yukon Parks.
- For example, we completed two new trails at the Conrad and Twin Lakes campgrounds, redesigned and reopened a popular Wolf Creek trail, and upgraded playgrounds at Congdon Creek, Marsh Lake and Wolf Creek.
- We are planning numerous infrastructure upgrades in the 2024 season such as boat launches, docks and accessible infrastructure.
- Rancheria Falls and Lapie Canyon will see improved trails that will enhance the visitor experience and ensure safety for users.

#### **Third response:**

- Advancing reconciliation through collaborative management of parks and campgrounds with First Nations and Inuvialuit is one of the four building blocks of the Yukon Parks Strategy and will be upheld throughout the planning process.
- Yukon Parks will continue to add sites to existing campgrounds over the next few years and will be introducing a reservation system pilot project for the 2024 camping season ([ref BN #72](#)).
- We have heard directly from Yukoners that they value and cherish their Yukon parks experiences and we will continue to explore ways to enhance our parks system for years to come.



## ENV #06

Fall 2023

Environment

# Session Briefing Note

## Campground Planning

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

- The Yukon Parks Strategy includes commitments to build a bigger, better campground near Whitehorse and to add campsites to some existing campgrounds.
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### Background:

- Yukon Parks operates 42 road-accessible campgrounds offering more than 1,150 campsites. This includes 51 campsites that we have added over the last three years.
- There are 109 remote hike-in and paddle-in sites, including those in Tombstone and the Thirty-mile section of the Yukon River.

Approved by



Deputy Minister of Environment

2023.10.16

Date approved

**Session Briefing Note****Fall 2023****Permit Hunt  
Authorization Weighting**

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Environment

**Recommended response**

- Hunting is an important part of the Yukon, and remains a very popular activity for Yukoners and visitors to the Territory.
- Many permit hunts in the Yukon are offered on a lottery basis annually, with lottery winners offered the option of a permit to hunt in a specific part of the Yukon. The lottery is weighted, so applicants who do not win are more likely to win in subsequent years.
- The successful applicants of the 2023-2024 Permit Hunt Authorization (PHA) weighting lottery were notified through email and their e-licensing account on June 13<sup>th</sup>.
- We encourage all applicants to check their e-licensing account to confirm their permit status.
- PHA permits also appear on applicants' hunting licenses when reprinted after the PHA draw.

**Additional response**

- We recognize the importance of a fair PHA lottery to ensure distinct hunting opportunities for Yukoners.
- To ensure a fair distribution of PHAs, we use a weighted, computerized lottery system that randomly selects applicants. It is administered by the Yukon Bureau of Statistics.

**Third response**

- We continue to encourage PHA applicants to double check their e-licensing accounts to see if they were successful.
- If applicants have any questions about their PHA application, weighting or permit, they can phone or visit the closest district office.

## Session Briefing Note

Fall 2023

### Permit Hunt Authorization Weighting

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Environment

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

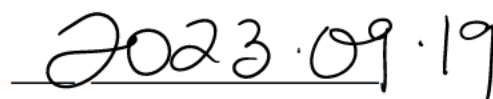
- Yukoners participating in the Permit Hunt Authorization (PHA) lottery have previously voiced concerns on the integrity of the weighting process.
- 

**Background:**

- In the past, the validity and integrity of the PHA lottery have been called into question resulting in a re-draw.
- In 2019, a new process was implemented, and successful applicants were sent an email or received a phone call when an applicant did not have email access. This has resulted in technical concerns and questions on draw transparency.
- Five PHA applicants for the 2022-23 lottery claimed they did not receive communication of a successful draw. This resulted in the reinstating of four PHA weightings.
- The Department provided extra communications on social media and to the Fish and Game Association to encourage clients to check their e-licensing account.
- All communications for the 2023-24 PHA directed applicants to check their e-licensing account for permit status.
- The Department of Environment is committed to improving online service delivery for Yukoners and out-of-territory visitors (see **Appendix A**).

**Approved by:**

Deputy Minister of Environment



Date approved

**Session Briefing Note****Fall 2023****Permit Hunt**

Environment

**Authorization Weighting**

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Appendix A: Online vs. in-person licence sales from April 1, 2023 to September 12, 2023

	Campground permit	Fishing licence	Hunting licence	Hunting seal	Trapping licence	Total
Online	5,827	8,489	2,520	N/A	N/A	16,836
In-Person	410	2,413	2,378	15,450	82	20,733
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,237</b>	<b>10,902</b>	<b>4,898</b>	<b>15,450</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>37,569</b>
Carmacks	6	33	28	180	7	254
Dawson	33	127	164	997	14	1,335
Faro	11	107	95	437	6	656
Haines Junction	20	154	130	692	8	1,004
Mayo	5	23	29	195	1	253
Ross River	1	13	14	63	0	91
Teslin	20	100	96	391	8	615
Whitehorse	294	1,733	1,702	11,952	32	15,713
Watson Lake	20	123	120	543	6	812

## Session Briefing Note

Fall 2023

### Sheep

Environment

**Recommended response:**

- Thinhorn sheep are an iconic species of Yukon wildlife and are economically and culturally significant.
- Aerial sheep surveys conducted by the Department of Environment this summer noted sheep population declines in several management units across southwest Yukon.
- The results of the 2022 and 2023 aerial surveys conducted by the department of Environment were published on Yukon.ca on November 2, 2023.
- Similarly, in recent years, other government wildlife agencies have observed low sheep population counts and low lamb survival rates in Northern British Columbia and Alaska.
- This year, Parks Canada also observed the lowest numbers of sheep in Kluane National Park and the Reserve since their surveys began in the 1970s.

**Additional response:**

- It is likely that environmental factors such as deep snowpacks and late springs over the last few years have reduced survival rates and contributed to the decline in sheep populations.
- Harvest pressure can also put additional strain on these populations. The department of Environment monitors harvest rates annually and makes management decisions based on harvest rates and survey results.
- Due to a conservation concern with these populations, the Kluane First Nation cancelled their auction of the Kluane Wildlife Sanctuary sheep permit for the 2023-2024 season. In the spirit of co-management, the Yukon government also cancelled the 2023-2024 lottery for the single Permit Hunt Authorization.

## Session Briefing Note

Fall 2023

## Sheep

Environment

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**Third response (Amendments to the Wildlife Regulation):**

- As a result of these conservation concerns, we are now proceeding with accelerated amendments to the *Wildlife Regulation* to enable the use of adaptive wildlife management tools to sustainably manage declining sheep populations in the Brooks Arm, Donjek, Nutzotin, Flat Top and Ruby Range Sheep Management Units. We are aiming to complete the necessary *Wildlife Regulation* amendment by the start of the next licensing year on April 1, 2024.
  - Adaptive wildlife management would present a long-term solution for managing these sheep populations. With an adaptive framework, the Yukon government will be empowered to adjust allowable sheep harvest in response to changes in sheep harvest patterns and success rates, as well as fluctuations in sheep populations.
  - We have initiated Consultation with affected First Nations in southwest Yukon and the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board on these potential amendments.
  - In addition to these Consultations, we also intend to engage with other affected stakeholders, including the Renewable Resources Councils, affected outfitters, the Yukon Outfitters Association, the Yukon Fish and Game Association, the Yukon Wild Sheep Foundation and Environmental Non-Governmental Organizations.
- 

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

- Due to declining sheep populations across the southwest Yukon, the Kluane First Nation asked resident and subsistence hunters to avoid hunting sheep in the Brooks Arm, Donjek, Nutzotin, Flat Top Sheep Management Units. Yukoners may have questions about what steps the Yukon government is taking to protect sheep populations.

## Session Briefing Note

Fall 2023

## Sheep

Environment

**Background:**

- Sheep populations are cyclical and population fluctuations of highs and lows are to be expected. Recent surveys conducted in 2022 and again in 2023 show a general trend of decreasing sheep populations since the last surveys in 2015.
- Regionally, surveys of neighbouring sheep populations [Thechàl Dhàl' (tay-shawl-doll) and Vulcan Mountain in Kluane National Park] found similar trends over the same time period (2015–2023).
- Between 2017–2022, a regional trend in below-average recruitment rates was also observed in other nearby wildlife populations, including the neighbouring Kluane caribou herd, and the Alsek and Kluane/Paint Mountain moose populations.
- On November 16, 2023, Consultation letters were sent to the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board, Kluane First Nation, Champagne and Aishihik First Nations and White River First Nation notifying them of Yukon government's intention to amend the *Wildlife Regulation*.

Approved by:



Deputy Minister of Environment

2023.11.16

Date approved

## Session Briefing Note

Fall 2023

### Extended Producer Responsibility

Environment

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#### Recommended response:

- The Yukon government is working to establish an Extended Producer Responsibility framework in the Yukon by 2025. We are on track to become the first territory to adopt such a framework, which will ensure Yukoners can continue to recycle and responsibly manage a variety of materials.
- Recent amendments to the *Environment Act* give us the ability to place the responsibility of waste management collection and processing on large national corporations rather than on Yukon's small businesses.
- Extended Producer Responsibility is a waste management framework that provides a long-lasting solution to the underlying structural issues facing the Yukon's recycling system and reduces the cost of recycling to the Yukon taxpayer.
- We have all noticed the impact to recycling services over the last year. Most recently, processors announced that they would no longer be accepting soft plastics. Under an Extended Producer Responsibility system, the government can require producers to collect products like soft plastics, glass and other hard-to-recycle materials to ensure they are designed out of the system, reused or recycled.
- We are aware of a recent decision by a federal court overturning aspects of the Government of Canada's ban on single use plastics.
- This decision is not expected to affect Yukon's single-use bag ban and we are waiting for the federal government to assess the impacts of this court decision on their single use plastics ban.

#### Additional response:

- While we heard widespread support for an Extended Producer Responsibility system during our public engagement period, respondents



## Session Briefing Note

Fall 2023

### Extended Producer Responsibility

Environment

raised concerns about potential cost impacts to residents and Yukon businesses.

- Because Extended Producer Responsibility systems are already in place across Canada, national chains have already incorporated the cost of funding these systems into their prices.
- A recent economic analysis estimated that collectively Yukoners are already paying an estimated \$1.3M - \$2.9M annually for Extended Producer Responsibility services that the territory is not receiving.

#### Third response:

- We anticipate having an Extended Producer Responsibility regulation in place by this winter.
- Once the regulation is adopted, we will begin an implementation period of approximately two years, where we will work with Yukon producers to establish a functioning Extended Producer Responsibility system.
- The implementation period will start with stewardship plan development and approval, and end in 2025, with the producer-led waste diversion programs in operation.
- The stewardship plan review and approval stage will allow our government to ensure that plans align with service level expectations, recovery targets and our waste diversion objectives.
- To ensure concerned Yukon businesses and recycling stakeholders have the certainty they need, the Yukon government has maintained an ongoing dialogue to address concerns and inform the development and implementation of our system.
- We are committed to continuing this dialogue up to and beyond the implementation of an Extended Producer Responsibility system in the Yukon.

## Session Briefing Note

Fall 2023

## Extended Producer Responsibility

Environment

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

- In April 2023 Raven ReCentre announced they will no longer accept soft plastics and Yukoners may want to know if Extended Producer Responsibility will restore those services.
- Yukon businesses may have questions about how an Extended Producer Responsibility framework may impact their operations and finances.

**Background:**

- From January to May 2022, the Department of Environment worked with an 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 (see Appendix A).
- In 2022, the Government of Yukon spent approximately one million dollars to support the recycling of non-refundable paper and packaging through diversion credits. The cost is expected to increase in 2023 to approximately \$1.5 million.
- In April 2023, Raven Recycling announced that they will close the public drop-off for non-refundables by the end of 2023 unless there is a budgeted blue box program being implemented.
- At the July meeting of the Canadian Ministers of the Environment, the Yukon delegation heard from the representative of large producers who expressed their support for Extended Producer Responsibility across Canada, including in the Yukon.
- On November 9, 2023, the City of Whitehorse announced that they would be launching a Request for Information to explore the feasibility of a curbside recycling program. The City estimates that a curbside recycling program would cost approximately \$960,000 in capital costs for the purchase of recycling containers and \$2.2 Million in yearly operating costs.
- On November 16, 2023, a Federal Court ruled against the federal government's 2021 decision to list plastic as toxic under federal pollution legislation. Listing plastics as toxic enabled the federal government to implement a single use plastics ban. The federal government is currently considering appealing the court decision.
- The Yukon's single use bag ban is unlikely to be impacted by the federal court decision as it is enabled through the Yukon's Environment Act. Under the Act, the

**Session Briefing Note**

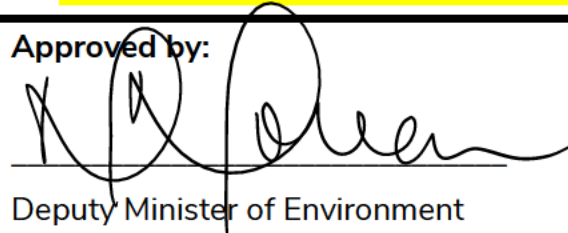
**Fall 2023**

**Extended Producer Responsibility**

Environment

Yukon's Minister of Environment can ban the sale of products or packaging that will cause a significant impairment of the natural environment.

Approved by:



Deputy Minister of Environment

2023-11-20

Date approved

## Session Briefing Note

## Fall 2023

### Extended Producer Responsibility

### Environment

#### Appendix A: Summary of public engagement on Extended Producer Responsibility

(November 1, 2022 – February 17, 2023)

**EPR Advisory Committee (EPRAC)** is composed of the City of Whitehorse, Association of Yukon Communities, Town of Watson Lake, Raven ReCentre, P&M Recycling, Blue Bin, Community Services, Whitehorse Chamber of Commerce and Yukon Chamber of Commerce.

Date and time	Format	Audience	Participation
<b>Pre-engagement Period (January 1, 2022 - October 31, 2022)</b>			
Jan 26, 2022, 1pm-4pm	Zoom	EPRAC	8 EPRAC members, support from 4 Producer Responsibility Organizations and the BC and Alberta Ministries of Environment
Feb 17, 2022, 1pm-4pm	Zoom	EPRAC	8 EPRAC members, support from 5 Producer Responsibility Organizations and the BC Ministry of Environment
Mar 9, 2022, 1pm-4pm	Zoom	EPRAC	10 EPRAC members, support from 4 Producer Responsibility Organizations and the BC Ministry of Environment

Prepared for Minister Clarke  
Department of Environment

Date prepared: August 11, 2023  
Last Updated: October 16, 2023

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## Session Briefing Note

## Fall 2023

### Extended Producer Responsibility

### Environment

Date and time	Format	Audience	Participation
Apr 5, 2022, 1pm-4pm	Zoom	EPRAC	8 EPRAC members, support from 3 Producer Responsibility Organizations and the BC Ministry of Environment
May 31, 2022, 2:30pm-4:30pm	Zoom	EPRAC	EPRAC members
Oct 25, 2022, 10:30am-12pm	In-person, AYC office	AYC Executive Director	Direct information session
Oct 26, 2022, 2pm-3:30pm	In-person, Yukon Chamber of Commerce office	Executive Directors of Yukon Chamber of Commerce and Whitehorse Chamber of Commerce	Direct information session
<b>Engagement Period (November 1, 2022 – February 17, 2023)</b>			
Nov 2 at 2:15pm	In-person (KDCC) & Zoom	Yukon Recycling Summit participants	~40 in person and ~15 online participants
Nov 16, 9:30am-10:30am	Zoom	Food Producers of Canada	Direct information session
Nov 21, 12pm-1pm	Zoom	Retail Council of Canada	Information session to ~50 online participants
Nov 24, 6:30pm – 8pm	Zoom	Yukon stakeholders (aimed at potential obligated producers)	No attendance

## Session Briefing Note

## Fall 2023

### Extended Producer Responsibility

### Environment

Date and time	Format	Audience	Participation
Nov 25, 10am-11:30am	Zoom	Yukon stakeholders (aimed at potential obligated producers)	5 people
Nov 29, 6:30pm – 7:30pm	Zoom	General public	No attendance
Dec 2, 11:30am-12:30pm	In-person, Takhini Arena	Association of Yukon Communities administrators	Chief Administrative Officers and other AYC members
Dec 3, 1:45pm-2:30pm	In-person, Takhini Arena	Association of Yukon Communities elected officials	Chief Administrative Officers and elected officials
Dec 5, 1:30pm-3pm	Zoom	Yukon service providers sessions	2 people
Dec 6, 10:30am to 12pm	Zoom	Non-Yukon stakeholders	17 people
Dec 8, 2:30pm-4pm	Zoom	First Nations	6 people representing 3 First Nations, 1 transboundary First Nation, and CYFN
Dec 14, 5:30-7 pm	In-person, Whitehorse Library	General public	2 people
Dec 15, 10am-11:30am	Zoom	Yukon stakeholders (aimed at potential obligated producers)	5 people
Dec 12, 10am-11am	Microsoft Teams	Product Care	Direct meeting
Dec 13, 10am-11am	In-person, 10 Burns Rd	What's Up Yukon	Direct meeting

**Session Briefing Note****Fall 2023****Extended Producer Responsibility**

Environment

Date and time	Format	Audience	Participation
Dec 14, 11am-12pm	Microsoft Teams	Call2Recycle	Direct meeting
Jan 9, 9:30am-10:30am	Microsoft Teams	Klondike Placer Mining Association and Yukon Chamber of Mines	Only Yukon Chamber of Mines attended
Jan 9, 1pm-2pm	Microsoft Teams	Canadian Consumer Specialty Products Association	Direct meeting
Jan 9 at 2:30pm-4pm	In-person, Whitehorse Library	Yukon stakeholders (aimed at potential obligated producers)	9 people
Jan 9, 6:30pm-7:15pm	Zoom	Village of Teslin, City Council Meeting	Teslin City Council
Jan 13, 3pm-4pm	Microsoft Teams	Circular Materials	Direct meeting
Jan 10, 1pm-2pm	Microsoft Teams	BC Used Oil Management Association	Direct meeting
Jan 16, 6pm-7pm	Zoom	General public	1 person
Jan 17, 9:30am-11am	Zoom	First Nations [additional session offered due to power outage on Dec 8]	No attendance
Jan 17, 1:30pm-3pm	Zoom	General stakeholders meeting	22 people
Jan 18, 9:30am-11am	Zoom	EPRAC (Presentations from Eunomia and Policy Integrity)	8 EPRAC members
Jan 25, 12pm-1pm	Zoom	General public	No attendance

# Session Briefing Note

## Fall 2023

### Extended Producer Responsibility

### Environment

Date and time	Format	Audience	Participation
Jan 26, 9:30am-10:30am	Zoom	Yukon Chamber of Commerce and their member businesses	18 people, supported by Circular Materials (Producer Responsibility Organization)
Jan 31, 11am-12pm	Zoom	Info session - Opportunity for Yukon businesses to ask questions to Producer Responsibility Organizations	11 people, 3 representative of Circular Materials
Feb 2, 10am-11:30am	Zoom	General stakeholders meeting	11 people
Feb 3	In-person	Meeting between Minister Clarke and Yukon Chamber of Commerce, McDonalds, Tim Hortons, Canadian Tire, Whitehorse Motors, and Integraphics	Direct meeting
Feb 7, 3pm-4pm	Microsoft Teams	Retail Council of Canada	Direct meeting
Between Dec 16 and Jan 27	In-person, visiting stores to provide information about EPR and ongoing engagement	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Real Canadian Superstore</li> <li>2. Home Hardware</li> <li>3. Walmart</li> <li>4. Marks Work Warehouse</li> <li>5. Save on Foods</li> <li>6. Ashley Home Store</li> <li>7. Staples</li> <li>8. Wykes Your Independent Grocer</li> <li>9. Shoppers Drug Mart (Qwanlin)</li> <li>10. Shoppers Drug Mart (Downtown)</li> </ol>	Visits completed

Prepared for Minister Clarke  
Department of Environment

Date prepared: August 11, 2023  
Last Updated: October 16, 2023



**Session Briefing Note****Fall 2023****Extended Producer Responsibility**

Environment

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Date and time	Format	Audience	Participation
		11. Coast Sports (the Hougen's Group) 12. The Brick 13. Super A Riverdale 14. Super A Porter Creek 15. Inspired Interiors 16. Kilrich 17. Bigway Foods 18. Dollarama	

# Information Note

## Renewable energy comparison across Canada

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Environment  
Energy, Mine and Resources

### Key Messages:

- In recognition of growing energy demands, the Yukon is advancing our climate change goals to deliver affordable, reliable and sustainable electricity to Yukoners.
- In comparison to the rest of Canada, the Yukon is a leader in adopting and using renewable energy for generating electricity.
- For a jurisdiction with a small population, the Yukon is holding its own, ranking 2nd overall for percentage of total energy generated from solar and 5th overall for percentage of total hydro energy generated in comparison with other jurisdictions across Canada.
- As we transition to a green economy, we are looking for new sources of clean power to increase electrification and meet both our 2030 short-term goals and our long-term net-zero climate goals.
- Thanks to Yukon residents, communities, First Nations Governments and businesses who are investing, installing and using renewable energy generating systems, we are building a sustainable and locally-sourced renewable energy supply.

### Context:

- Maintaining the Yukon's renewable electricity supply will enable the territory to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from its largest sources: mining, transportation and heating.
- Our renewable energy policies and strategies are successfully diversifying our energy supply by expanding the amount of energy available through renewable sources, encouraging new business opportunities, growing our economy and protecting the environment.

# Information Note

## Renewable energy comparison across Canada

Environment  
Energy, Mine and Resources

- The Government of Yukon is working with the public utilities on a balanced strategy for achieving our climate goals. This includes integrating renewable energy into the Yukon's main grid and into the micro-grids in rural communities.

### Background:

- In 2022, the Yukon had 92 per cent of its electricity on the main grid generated from renewable energy sources.
- In 2022, diesel and natural gas made up approximately 8% of total electricity generation on the Yukon's main grid and was the primary source of electricity in Yukon's four off-grid communities. Yukon's closest neighbours BC and NWT respectively use diesel and natural gas for 4.5% and 51% of their electricity.
- The diesel generators in Mayo, Faro, Dawson and Whitehorse also help to provide backup power in these communities during maintenance outages, and in case of transmission issues.
- The table below shows the ranking of Canadian jurisdictions per the Government of Canada's Energy Fact Book 2022-2023. These numbers capture all Yukon communities, including those that are not connected to the grid. If we were to exclude off grid communities, the Yukon's overall renewable energy generation rankings would be higher.

Government of Canada's Energy Fact Book (2022)

Provinces / Territories Rankings for Energy Generation											
Hydro		Solar		Petroleum		Natural Gas		Biomass, coal, & other		Nuclear	
Jurisdiction	Generated (%)	Jurisdiction	Generated (%)	Jurisdiction	Generated (%)	Jurisdiction	Generated (%)	Jurisdiction	Generated (%)	Jurisdiction	Generated (%)
Canada	60.2	Canada	0.7	Canada	1.0	Canada	10.7	Canada	7.4	Canada	14.6
Manitoba	97.0	Ontario	2.5	Nunavut	99.4	Alberta	55.0	Nova Scotia	48.7	Ontario	56.8
Newfoundland and Labrador	95.8	Yukon (2 <sup>nd</sup> )	1.1	Northwest Territories	46.6	Saskatchewan	46.3	Saskatchewan	32.4	New Brunswick	40.0
Quebec	93.6	Nunavut	0.6	New Brunswick	9.0	Nova Scotia	19.7	Alberta	32.1	Alberta	n/a
British Columbia	89.1	Prince Edward Island	0.5	Nova Scotia	8.9	Northwest Territories	12.4	New Brunswick	18.7	Saskatchewan	n/a
Yukon (5 <sup>th</sup> )	81.9	Alberta	0.4	Yukon (5 <sup>th</sup> )	8.1	Yukon (5 <sup>th</sup> )	8.9	British Columbia	5.9	Nova Scotia	n/a
Northwest Territories	38.1	Nova Scotia	0.3	Newfoundland and Labrador	3.0	Ontario	6.9	Ontario	1.1	Northwest Territories	n/a
Ontario	25.2	Northwest Territories	0.2	Alberta	1.8	New Brunswick	6.2	Quebec	0.7	Yukon	n/a
New Brunswick	23.1	Saskatchewan	0.2	British Columbia	1.0	British Columbia	1.4	Prince Edward Island	0.6	British Columbia	n/a
Saskatchewan	18.0	Manitoba	0.12	Quebec	0.3	Newfoundland and Labrador	0.6	Manitoba	0.2	Newfoundland and Labrador	n/a
Nova Scotia	8.0	Quebec	n/a	Prince Edward Island	0.2	Manitoba	n/a	Newfoundland and Labrador	0.1	Manitoba	n/a
Alberta	2.8	New Brunswick	n/a	Manitoba	0.1	Quebec	n/a	Yukon	n/a	Quebec	n/a
Prince Edward Island	n/a	British Columbia	n/a	Ontario	0.1	Prince Edward Island	n/a	Nunavut	n/a	Prince Edward Island	n/a
Nunavut	n/a	Newfoundland and Labrador	n/a	Saskatchewan	n/a	Nunavut	n/a	Northwest Territories	n/a	Nunavut	n/a

Approved by:



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

October 25, 2023

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



\_\_\_\_\_  
Deputy Minister of Environment

2023-10-24

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

## **Session Briefing Note**

### **Climate Change and Emergency Preparedness**

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Environment

#### **Recommended response:**

- Yukoners have experienced a large number of climate-related emergencies over the last several years, including large-scale flooding and severe wildfire events.
- This past summer, we witnessed several Yukon communities and neighbouring provinces and territories experience the most destructive wildfire season ever.
- Strengthening our emergency management and preparedness is a significant priority in order to keep Yukoners safe as we adapt to the impacts of climate change.
- That is why we are continuing to build on our adaptation commitments in Our Clean Future, while working with partners, experts and knowledge holders to advance climate resilience in the Yukon. (ref BN #21)

#### **Additional response:**

- The Government of Yukon has over 50 adaptation actions in Our Clean Future that support climate resilience.
- Progress has also been made on a number of adaptation actions, including delivering emergency management training, updating emergency management plans and working with First Nations and municipalities to conduct Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment workshops, and continuing geohazard and flood hazard mapping projects in communities across the Yukon.
- In Fall 2022, we endorsed the Community Wildfire Protection Plans for two communities (Village of Teslin and Haines Junction), and are actively supporting the planning processes for six additional communities.

## Session Briefing Note

### Climate Change and Emergency Preparedness

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Environment

- In addition, we are funding the acquisition of a mobile incident command station that will double as a clean-air shelter for first responders working in wildfire areas.
- We will continue to take action to reduce our exposure to climate hazards like wildfires and flooding, increasing our resilience to those hazards, and increase our capacity to adapt through the actions laid out in Our Clean Future.

#### Third response:

- In 2022, the Government of Yukon released the Assessing Climate Change Risk and Resilience in the Yukon report.
- This is a key resource for our government as it identifies where government and community actions are contributing to resilience and where further action is needed.
- We are building off the findings of the report through the implementation of Our Clean Future and advancing actions that will enhance climate resilience and emergency preparedness across the territory.

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

- Climate change and emergency preparedness is a topic of high public interest. There may be questions about how actions in Our Clean Future will support how communities adapt and prepare for climate-related emergencies (e.g., floods and fires).

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#### Background:

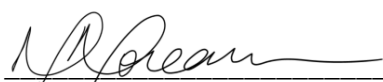
- Adapting to the impacts of climate change is one of the four goals of Our Clean Future.
  - This includes the target of the Yukon being “highly resilient to the impacts of climate change by 2030.”
- On September 12, 2022, the Government of Yukon released the Assessing Climate Change Risk and Resilience in the Yukon report.
- The 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.

## Session Briefing Note

### Climate Change and Emergency Preparedness

Environment

Approved by:



Deputy Minister of Environment

2023-10-17

Date approved

#### Appendix A – Climate Change Preparedness Funding in the Yukon

- With support from Crown Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada's Climate Change Preparedness in the North Program, Yukon Government is implementing ten projects.
- Of these, seven projects, representing a \$1.17M investment (Fiscal Years 2023-2026), are directly tied to improving emergency prevention, preparedness, and response. The projects are as follow:
  - Tatchun mobile incident response; led by Community Services; \$371K. Acquisition of mobile facility to provide expanded incident response capability and clean air shelter for firefighters.
  - Implementation of wildfire management plans in Teslin and Haines Junction; led by Community Services; \$256K. Completion of forest treatments in communities with endorsed community wildfire management plans.
  - Klondike regional slope hazard study; led by Energy Mines and Resources; \$212K. Monitoring and research of steep slopes that may threaten community values in the Klondike region.
  - Geomatics support for flood hazard mapping; Department of Environment; \$130K. Technical support to facilitate the use of high resolution "LIDAR" imagery to generate flood maps for Yukon communities, and development of platforms to display flood maps online.



## Session Briefing Note

### Climate Change and Emergency Preparedness

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Environment

- Targeted improvements to flood forecasting; \$82K. Technical improvements to the operational platform and hydrological models used for flood forecasting and research to develop tools to improve ice-jam forecasting.
- Incident Command System emergency management training; led by Community Services; \$77K. Delivery of training events, conducted in coordination with emergency management planning, to help ensure readiness of emergency responders.
- Do-it-yourself indoor air cleaners (for wildfire smoke); led by Health and Social Services; \$41K. Community workshops to train individuals and local organizations how to quickly make indoor air cleaners that can reduce the negative health impacts of wildfire smoke.
- Lead departments for these activities are working in partnership with First Nation and local governments which ensures that they are engaged and active participants in this important work.
- The remaining three projects funded by the Climate Change Preparedness in the North program, representing a \$0.38M investment (Fiscal Years 2023-2026), relate to addressing other climate risks. The projects are as follow:
  - Climate Resilience Infrastructure Strategy; Highways and Public Works; \$300K. Development of infrastructure risk evaluation and risk management tools for use by those making real-property decisions for Yukon government buildings.
  - Safety on the land outdoor education courses; Department of Environment; \$45K. Delivery of short courses in communities to support safe travel on ice, in mountain environments, and through extreme conditions.
  - Dempster Highway Geohazard Analysis; Energy, Mines and Resources; \$37K. Completion of work by graduate students to analyze permafrost-related geohazards along the Dempster Highway.
- One position located within the Climate Change Secretariat at Department of Environment oversees coordination of these and other adaptation activities.

## ENV #21 / EMR #36

Fall 2023

### Session Briefing Note Our Clean Future Implementation

Environment and Energy,  
Mines and Resources

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#### Recommended response:

- Our Clean Future is the Government of Yukon's path to address the climate emergency.
- The strategy is continually being strengthened year after year as we assess our progress, review new research, consider the input of others and identify new and innovative solutions.
- We have committed to an ambitious target of reducing our emissions by 45 per cent below 2010 levels by 2030.
- We have also committed to ensuring the Yukon is highly resilient to the impacts of climate change by 2030, because we know the North will face climate impacts.

#### Additional response:

- It is important to look back on our progress to date and remain diligent in implementation when it comes to addressing climate change.
- We have legislated greenhouse gas emissions targets and associated reporting through the Clean Energy Act. (See EMR BN #31 / ENV #23)
- We launched the five-year Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership this year which will enhance the agriculture sector's resiliency and adaptation to climate change. (See EMR BN # 20)
- In collaboration with Yukon's public utilities, we exceeded our target to install seven megawatts of renewable electricity capacity through the Micro-Generation program by 2030. ( See EMR BN #37)
- We launched the Better Buildings program to offer affordable financing for energy retrofits on Yukoners' homes and buildings.

## ENV #21 / EMR #36

Fall 2023

### Session Briefing Note Our Clean Future Implementation

Environment and Energy,  
Mines and Resources

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- We established a geohazard mapping program to understand risks from climate change to the Yukon's transportation corridors.
- We advanced emergency preparedness by progressing on Community Wildfire Protection Plans for Dawson City, Mayo, Watson Lake, Beaver Creek, the Town of Faro and the Kluane Lake Region.
- We have begun work on developing flood maps for all flood-prone Yukon communities. Flood maps for the Southern Lakes, Carmacks, and Teslin [are anticipated to be released in 2024](#). The next communities for flood hazard mapping will be Old Crow, Ross River and Dawson/Klondike, with work occurring in 2024-25.
- We completed the installation of a biomass heating system at Elijah Smith Elementary School in May 2023.

#### Third response:

- Although we have made progress on many of our commitments, there is still significant work required to meet our 45 per cent greenhouse gas emissions target reduction by 2030.
- We are working with industry to establish a mining emissions intensity target for quartz and placer mining operations.
- 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.
- [Our 2022 Annual Report will be released in late 2023. We look forward to highlighting the good work that has been done in 2022.](#)
- [As this is an adaptative management strategy which involves 14 departments and agencies, it has taken some time to ensure that the report is strategically focused on helping us reach our targets.](#)

## ENV #21 / EMR #36

Fall 2023

### Session Briefing Note Our Clean Future Implementation

Environment and Energy,  
Mines and Resources

- As a government, we continue to collaborate on implementation of actions.
- We will continue to work with experts, stakeholders and partner governments across the territory and beyond, to identify opportunities to accelerate and intensify our efforts to reach our ambitious targets.
- We established the Yukon Climate Leadership Council to provide advice and perspectives to support us in meeting our greenhouse gas emissions targets. We are working to integrate the work of the Council directly into Our Clean Future and continue to implement existing actions that align with their recommendations.
- With the end of the second Yukon Youth Panel on Climate Change in 2022, we are exploring how to continue mentorship opportunities on climate change for the important voice of youth.

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

- Climate change is of high interest to Yukoners; they will want to know the government's progress in delivering on Our Clean Future commitments.

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#### Background:

- Our Clean Future was released on September 14, 2020.
- Our Clean Future contains 136 actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and support the Yukon to be highly resilient to the impacts of climate change by 2030.
- The Our Clean Future 2020 Annual Report was publicly released on August 12, 2021. The 2021 Annual Report was publicly released on September 12, 2022.

## ENV #21 / EMR #36

Fall 2023

### Session Briefing Note Our Clean Future Implementation

Environment and Energy,  
Mines and Resources

Approved by:



Deputy Minister  
Department of Environment

2023-11-14

Date approved



Deputy Minister  
Department of Energy, Mines and Resources

November 14, 2023

Date approved

# **Session Briefing Note**

## **COP 28 and Adaptation Futures**

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**ENV #22**  
**Fall 2023**  
Environment

### **Recommended response:**

- Canada's North is experiencing rapid climate change, so it is critical that Yukon's voice be heard on adaptation and resilience.
- Last fall, the Government of Yukon sent two representatives to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, known as Conference of the Parties (COP27), but we have chosen not to send a delegation to COP 28 in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.
- This year, we turned our focus towards another important international conference, Adaptation Futures, which was held in Montreal from October 2 to 6<sup>th</sup>.

### **Additional response:**

- Two representatives from the Department of Environment attended the Adaptation Futures conference.
- In a joint panel with the governments of the Northwest Territories and Nunavut, the representatives shared the progress of the Yukon's adaptation efforts, and learned about projects across Canada's North and across the world.
- The collaboration of the territorial governments will continue to be important as we work to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change.

### **Third response:**

- Adaptation Futures is a biennial conference. This is the first time that it has been held in Canada.
- The Yukon remains committed to highlighting the Yukon's climate leadership on the international stage.
- Participation in international climate events allows the Yukon to share its perspective and to learn from leading international practices on climate action.

## Session Briefing Note

## COP 28 and Adaptation Futures

## Environment

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

- There may be questions whether the Government of Yukon is going to COP28, and why we are not attending.
- There may be questions about the Government of Yukon bringing youth to attend international conferences, as committed to in Our Clean Future.

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**Background:**

- COP27 took place from November 6 to November 18, 2022, in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt. COP27 concluded with a breakthrough cover decision, known as the Sharm el-Sheikh Implementation Plan.
- While the Government of Yukon did not take youth to the Adaptation Futures conference this year, the Yukon First Nation Climate Action Fellows attended with Yukon University representatives and were invited to participate in the Government of Yukon's panel session.

**Approved by:**

Deputy Minister of Environment

2023-08-30

Date approved

**Session Briefing Note****Fall 2023****Clean Energy Act  
Implementation**Energy, Mines and Resources  
and Environment

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**Recommended response:**

- The *Clean Energy Act* requires the Government of Yukon to achieve ambitious climate change targets, including a 45 per cent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and net zero emissions by 2050.
- As the Yukon's first climate change legislation, the *Clean Energy Act* is an important tool in our efforts to reduce the impacts of climate change, reduce our carbon footprint and build our green economy.
- We [are working towards](#) an amendment to the *Clean Energy Act* to include [a mining intensity target and taking the time to ensure we set and scope the target in the most effective way for its goals](#).
- [Setting this target well](#) is critical to achieving our 2030 and 2050 greenhouse gas reduction targets and will satisfy a commitment under Our Clean Future.

**Additional response:**

- Following engagement with the mining industry in fall 2022, we announced that we will establish an intensity-based target to reduce the industry's greenhouse gas emissions per unit of production by 45 per cent by 2035, compared to 2023.
- We continue to work with industry to set baselines for mine operations, and support operators who are seeking innovative solutions to reducing their greenhouse gas emissions.



**Session Briefing Note****Fall 2023****Clean Energy Act  
Implementation**Energy, Mines and Resources  
and Environment

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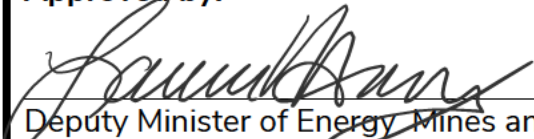

**Context — this may be an issue because:**

- There may be interest in the continued implementation of the *Clean Energy Act* and its legislated targets.

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**Background:**

- The *Clean Energy Act* came into force in November 2022 with the following targets:
  - greenhouse gas emissions reduction of 45 per cent by 2030 compared to 2010 levels (not including mining emissions);
  - greenhouse gas emissions reduction of net zero for all sectors by 2050;
  - 50 per cent renewable heating by 2030 for all homes and buildings;
  - zero-emission vehicle sales of 10 percent by 2025 and 30 per cent by 2030.
- The *Clean Energy Act* also establishes the authority to set sector-specific targets and reporting requirements on the government's climate actions.

**Approved by:**  
Deputy Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources  
Date approved  
Deputy Minister of Environment2023-10-17  
Date approved

## Session Briefing Note

### Mining Intensity Target

Energy, Mines and Resources

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#### Recommended response:

- The Government of Yukon is [working towards](#) establishing an intensity-based target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions per unit of production [in the mining sector](#).
- The Government of Yukon recognizes our approach is unique and ambitious [and we are taking the time needed to get it right](#).
- We are working with a consultant and the mining industry to set baselines and find solutions which enable industry to achieve the target.

#### Additional response:

- An intensity-based approach accounts for progress made to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, encourages mine operators to innovate and adopt low-carbon practices, and accounts for the growth and substantial year-to-year fluctuations that occur in the Yukon's mineral sector.
- The mining intensity approach recognizes the differences between the types of activities undertaken by different quartz and placer operations throughout their mining lifecycles.
- Mining emissions are included in the economy-wide, net-zero, 2050 target legislated in the Clean Energy Act.

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

- Some questions regarding Action I9 in *Our Clean Future* may be raised regarding establishing an intensity-based greenhouse gas reduction target for the Yukon's mining industry. [\(See BN #35\)](#)

## Session Briefing Note

### Mining Intensity Target

### Energy, Mines and Resources

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#### Background:

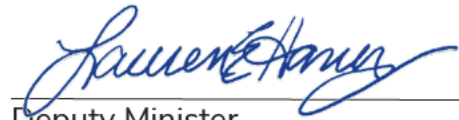
- The percentage of emissions from mining is variable year-to-year. From 2009-2020 it contributed eight to 15 per cent of the Yukon's total greenhouse gas emissions.
- Energy, Mines and Resources conducted an engagement on the mining intensity target in the fall of 2022. A What We Heard report from that engagement is available on Yukon.ca.
- The target proposed in the engagement was for the mining sector to reduce 45 per cent of greenhouse gas emissions per unit of production by 2035.
- Energy, Mines and Resources is working with a consultant and the mineral industry to establish mining intensity baselines and benchmarks.
- Through the quartz mine licensing process, quartz mines are required to project their anticipated greenhouse gas emissions, identify measures to reduce emissions, and annually report greenhouse gas emissions. This fulfills an Our Clean Future commitment.
- 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 the greenhouse gas emissions reduction target.
- Canada's approach to pricing carbon pollution for emission-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 pricing system.
- The Department of Finance is leading the development of a separate rebate that will return carbon levies collected from larger mines under the Output-Based Pricing System to the mining industry to help the industry achieve the mining intensity target. Energy, Mines and Resources is assisting with this work. (See BN #29)

**Session Briefing Note**

**Mining Intensity Target**

Energy, Mines and Resources

Approved by:



Deputy Minister

Department of Energy, Mines and Resources

October 5, 2023

Date approved

## ENV #25 / EMR #38

Fall 2023

### Session Briefing Note

### YCLC and Reducing

### Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Environment

Energy, Mines and Resources

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#### Recommended response:

- Government cannot tackle climate change alone. It has to be a collaborative effort.
- We are thankful to the Yukon Climate Leadership Council for providing valuable advice and insight that is guiding our efforts to embolden our climate action.
- The Government of Yukon has undertaken a review and analysis of the advice put forward by the Yukon Climate Leadership Council in their Climate Shot 2030 report.
- The analysis found that the recommendations align with the vision and core values of the Our Clean Future strategy and support our efforts to strengthen our climate action and reduce our greenhouse gas emissions.
- We plan to share more information about how the Council's findings have factored into climate change decision-making so that we can address them moving forward.

#### Additional response:

- Many recommendations of the Yukon Climate Leadership Council align with actions the government has committed to through Our Clean Future. We are working on the following actions that closely align with a number of the Council's recommendations, for example:
  - E9. Develop a framework by 2022 for First Nations to economically participate in renewable electricity projects developed by Yukon's public utilities.

## ENV #25 / EMR #38

Fall 2023

### Session Briefing Note

### YCLC and Reducing

### Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Environment

Energy, Mines and Resources

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- H21. Continue to provide rebates for residential, commercial and institutional biomass heating systems and smart electric heating devices and increase the current rebate for smart electric heating devices beginning in 2020.
- C15: Continue to provide funding for community gardens and greenhouses, especially in rural communities.

#### Third response:

- We will continue to advance our efforts to reduce emissions as we assess our progress year-over-year, consider new research and the input of others, and we will continue to increase our resilience to the impacts of climate change over the coming years.
- I would like to acknowledge the important work of the Council and thank them for their efforts in supporting the Government of Yukon's progress in reducing the Yukon's greenhouse gas emissions once again.

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

- Yukoners may want to know more about the Council's recommendations and what the Government of Yukon is doing to respond to them.
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#### Background:

- On September 2, 2022, the Yukon Climate Leadership Council shared 61 recommendations with the Government of Yukon in its final report, Climate Shot 2030: Recommendations on how to reduce Yukon's greenhouse gas emissions by 45 percent by 2030.
- This report was released publicly on September 28, 2022.

# ENV #25 / EMR #38

Fall 2023

## Session Briefing Note



### YCLC and Reducing

### Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Environment

Energy, Mines and Resources

- As requested by the Yukon Climate Leadership Council, the Government of Yukon undertook third-party verification of the emissions reduction potential of the recommendations through Navius Research Inc. in the fall of 2022 after the Climate Shot 2030 report was released.
- Minister Clarke and Minister Streicker sent a joint response letter to the Council on March 10, 2023. The letter thanks the Council for their work and outlines the government's next steps to address their recommendations.

<p>Approved by:</p>  <p>Deputy Minister Department of Environment</p>	<p>2023-10-03</p> <p>Date approved</p>
 <p>Deputy Minister Department of Energy, Mines and Resources</p>	<p>2023-10-04</p> <p>Date approved</p>

## Session Briefing Note

Fall 2023

### Lodgepole Lane

Environment

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#### Recommended response:

- The Government of Yukon is aware of issues reported at 2 Lodgepole Lane regarding public health, safety and potential environmental concerns.
- Currently, as this situation stands, the lead for this property rests with the City of Whitehorse.
- We understand from the City of Whitehorse that they are directing clean-up efforts at the property, including surface debris removal, sorting of the various materials into organized piles, and dealing with the condemned residential property.
- Longer-term, we understand clean-up efforts may also involve soil remediation. However at this point in time and based on testing the Department conducted as part of an exercise completed several years ago with the City of Whitehorse, there does not appear to be significant hydrocarbon contamination on this private property.
- Legal action is not being pursued at this time and the Government of Yukon continues to support the City of Whitehorse with technical expertise and assistance.

#### Additional response:

- Spills on private properties are common, and living near a site with contamination does not necessarily present an inherent risk to public health.
- Following testing, it does not appear to be significant hydrocarbon contamination on this private property.
- 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.



## Session Briefing Note

### Lodgepole Lane

### Environment

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- Number 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.
- **Out of the interest of transparency, there is an important distinction between a site listed on the Contaminated Sites Information Map and a Designated Contaminated Site under the Contaminated Sites Regulation. A Designated Contaminated Site is a formal process and designation used for heavily contaminated sites with a known and recorded history, such as Marwell Tar Pit or Upper Tank Farm. Not all sites on the Contaminated Sites Information Map is a designated site, as is the case with this property.**
- **Although contaminated soil was found at 2 Lodgepole Lane, it is not present at a level that warrants a formal designation of the property.**
- The public is encouraged to contact the Environmental Protection and Assessment Branch at 1-867-667-5683 with any questions or information they have on contaminated sites in the Yukon.

#### Third response:

- I would like to reiterate again that we are committed to supporting the 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.**

## Session Briefing Note

Fall 2023

### Lodgepole Lane

Environment

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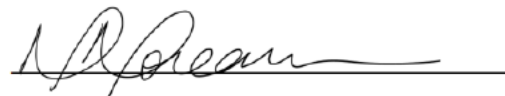
**Context—this may be an issue because:**

- Neighbours of number 2 Lodgepole Lane have been vocal about several issues with the property, including soil contamination. The City of Whitehorse is aware of this and has requested support from the Government of Yukon over the last few years.
- MLA Geraldine Van Bibber raised this issue in the Fall 2022 and Spring 2023 sittings on behalf of their constituent.

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**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.).
- The Lodgepole Lane property is an example of a complex site with a wide range of reported concerns involving multiple agencies. These include Health and Social Services, Fire and Protective Services, City of Whitehorse and RCMP.

**Approved by:**

Deputy Minister of Environment

2023-10-30

Date approved

**Session Briefing Note****Fall 2023****Environmental Liabilities and  
Remediation Program Project Updates**

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Environment

**Recommended response:**

- The Government of Yukon takes responsibility for cleaning up government-owned contaminated sites in the territory.
- Cleaning up these sites helps protect our health, land, water and air, making valuable land available for new development projects.
- Clean land can be bought and sold, while contaminated lands are an environmental liability.
- The cost to remediate and monitor government-owned contaminated sites is substantial and can grow as we complete assessment work and learn more about each site.

**Additional response:**

- In 2023-2024, the Government of Yukon has earmarked \$5.5 million for assessment, monitoring and remediation work at government-owned contaminated sites.
- The Department of Environment is working on several sites across the Yukon, including:
  - Whitehorse Highways and Maintenance Yard - Initial phase 2 environmental site assessment work has been completed. Yearly groundwater monitoring to proceed.
  - Wellgreen Mine – A final remediation plan has been completed and remediation work may start in the summer of 2024.
  - Old Crow Nursing Station – An updated risk assessment is being completed to confirm potential risk at the site.

**Session Briefing Note****Fall 2023****Environmental Liabilities and  
Remediation Program Project Updates**

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Environment

- Former Fire Hall in Ross River – Groundwater monitoring is taking place yearly and contaminants are being delineated.
  - Highways and Maintenance Camps in Stewart and Teslin – Initial phase 2 environmental site assessment has been complete at both locations. Ground water to be monitored to confirm if contamination is found at either location.
  - 23 Landfills throughout the Territory – Groundwater monitoring takes place twice a year to meet environmental permit requirements.
  - Wolverine Mine. A remediation plan is currently being developed for the site.
- Assessment and Abandoned Mines of Energy, Mines and Resources is working with the Site Assessment and Remediation Unit of Environment to assess and manage the costs associated with the Wolverine Mine.
  - \$2.2 million is allocated for the assessment of remediation options for the Wolverine Mine.

**Third response:**

- Remediation is mostly or entirely completed at four sites across the Yukon for the fiscal year 2023/2024.
- The four sites are the Isabelle Pringle Library in Carcross, the Garden Creek Road Lot in Watson Lake, the Fraser Highways and Maintenance Camp, and the Swift River Highways and Maintenance Camp.

**Session Briefing Note****Fall 2023****Environmental Liabilities and  
Remediation Program Project Updates**

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Environment

- 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 and interest from the public and the media.
- The Minto Mine was abandoned on May 12, 2023. Public questions about its remediation may spur questions about the Yukon's remediation efforts more broadly.

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**Background:**

- As of the beginning of the 2023/2024 fiscal year, 164 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 \$92.8 million, with \$39 million of that total being allocated to the Wolverine Mine. This is adjusted annually to reflect new information and progress made to remediate contamination.
- The Department of Environment is responsible for managing the Environmental Liabilities & Remediation Program, as per the FAM 8.9.2.
- The Yukon government has 170 sites that are booked liabilities, they include:
  - 36 airports and aerodromes,
  - 23 highway maintenance camps,
  - 30 landfills,
  - 81 other sites that mostly include schools and Yukon government facilities.

## **Session Briefing Note**

**Fall 2023**

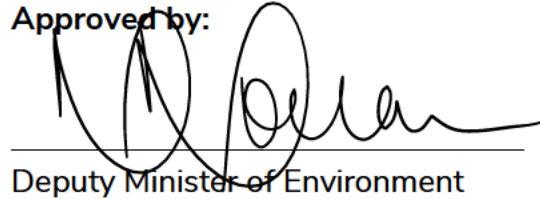
### **Environmental Liabilities and Remediation Program Project Updates**

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Environment

- Just because a site is booked as a liability by the Yukon government does not mean that it is a confirmed contaminated site.

Approved by:



Deputy Minister of Environment

2023.11.07

Date approved

**Session Briefing Note****Fall 2023****YEC Diesel Generator  
Stations Projects**Environment &  
Executive Council Office

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**Recommended response:**

- Under the *Environment Act* and *Air Emissions Regulations*, Yukon Energy holds Air Emissions Permits for the operation of their diesel generators.
- Air Emissions Permits contain conditions to mitigate potential impacts to human health from air emissions.
- The operations regulated by these permits are subject to routine inspections to ensure Yukon Energy maintains compliance with permit conditions.

**Additional response:**

- The Government of Yukon understands the importance of living in a healthy environment and uses technical experts to evaluate the risks and impacts of air emissions from diesel generators.
- If a permit holder is found to be out of compliance with their Air Emissions Permit, the Department of Environment works with the permittee to achieve compliance in a timely manner.

**Third response:**

- The Government of Yukon recognizes the role diesel generators play in providing a reliable energy supply for Yukoners particularly during winter peaks, emergencies and whenever renewable resources are not available. We are committed to working with Yukon Energy to ensure diesel generators are operated safely and appropriately.
- While diesel generators help to ensure that Yukoners have reliable access to electricity in the short term, the Government of Yukon remains committed to significantly decarbonizing the electricity generation sector by 2030.

## Session Briefing Note

Fall 2023

YEC Diesel Generator  
Stations ProjectsEnvironment &  
Executive Council Office


- Our Clean Future: A Yukon strategy for climate change, energy and a green economy commits to requiring 93 per cent of on-grid electricity to be generated from renewable sources.
- The Department of Environment will continue to operate within its legislative authority over air emissions to support the health of Yukoners.

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

- Some of Yukon Energy's diesel generating stations are located within communities, in close proximity to residential areas.
- Emissions from diesel generators contain pollutants that may impact human health.
- Some Yukon residents have voiced concerns regarding the noise levels of diesel generators in certain communities.

**Background:**

- Yukon Energy uses diesel generators to supplement hydroelectric power generation at four sites: Whitehorse, Faro, Mayo and Dawson City.
- Air Emissions Permits for Mayo, Whitehorse and Dawson City are expiring within the next two years. Yukon Energy is currently going through the YESAA assessment for the re-permitting of the Mayo diesel generators.

**Approved by:**
  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 A/ Deputy Minister of Environment

2023-09-11

Date approved

  
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September 8, 2023

A/ Deputy Minister of Executive Council Office Date approved



**Session Briefing Note****ECO #2 / EMR #4 / ENV #33****Fall 2023****Kudz Ze Kayah Mine  
Project (BMC Minerals)**ECO – EMR - ENV

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**Recommended response:**

- The Yukon government is committed to continuing consultation with the Kaska First Nations on the Kudz Ze Kayah mine licensing in a way that supports our commitments to build strong relationships with First Nations and meets our obligations to consult on this project.
- We are committed to implementing the Finlayson Caribou Herd Oversight Committee and implement terms and conditions of the decision document in collaboration with the Ross River Dena Council and the Liard First Nation.

**[If a court decision has been issued]**

- We are currently reviewing the court decision. Once we have analyzed the decision, we will decide on next steps.

**[If a court decision is still pending]**

- We look forward to the court providing clarity on the issues raised in the judicial review. As this case is before the court, we will not be commenting on it further at this time.

**Additional response:**

- Our government is committed to responsible mineral resource development and collaborative resource stewardship.
- We are partnering with Yukon First Nations to develop new minerals legislation. We are proud of this government-to-government collaboration to develop a modernized resource management regime that serves the interests of Yukoners.

**Session Briefing Note****ECO #2 / EMR #4 / ENV #33****Fall 2023****Kudz Ze Kayah Mine  
Project (BMC Minerals)**ECO – EMR - ENV

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

- The Yukon Supreme Court is expected to issue a decision in early fall 2023 on the judicial review of the decision to approve the Kudz Ze Kayah project.
  - Ross River Dena Council and Liard First Nation identified impacts of the project to their Aboriginal rights and title. The Kaska Nations requested the project be rejected or be referred to a panel during the assessment.
- 

**Background:**

- On June 15, 2022, a joint decision document was issued by the governments of Canada and Yukon to vary the Executive Committee's recommendations that the project be allowed 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 Nations, filed a petition for judicial review of the decision. A Yukon Supreme Court hearing was held in April 2023.
- In August 2022, BMC Minerals submitted the application to the Yukon government for a quartz mining licence, a Type-A water licence and land leases. The Yukon government's regulatory review is ongoing.
- The Yukon government submitted an intervention to the Yukon Water Board on April 21, 2023, outlining concerns and gaps in BMC's water licence application.
- The Yukon government is aiming to establish the Finlayson Caribou Herd Oversight Committee and implement terms and conditions of the decision document. The Yukon government has committed to providing Liard First Nation and Ross River Dena Council capacity funding.
- Liard First Nation and Ross River Dena Council have indicated they would prepare a draft Terms of Reference for the Finlayson Caribou Herd Oversight Committee and noted the need for capacity funding to support development of the committee and consultation with the Yukon government on the project.

**Session Briefing Note****ECO #2 / EMR #4 / ENV #33****Fall 2023****Kudz Ze Kayah Mine  
Project (BMC Minerals)**

ECO – EMR - ENV

- Discussions with the Yukon government, Liard First Nation and Ross River Dena Council on the Oversight Committee, capacity funding, and the regulatory review and oversight of the proposed project are ongoing. (See ECO TAB 31 Ross River Dena Council – Issues and Initiatives).

**Approved by:**

**September 11, 2023**

A/Deputy Minister of the Executive Council Office

Date approved



September 8, 2023\_

a/Deputy Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources

Date approved



2023-09-08

Briar Young

Date approved

A/Deputy Minister of Environment

# Session Briefing Note

## Whitehorse Rapids Generating Station

ECO #14  
Executive Council  
Office

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### Recommended response:

- The Whitehorse Rapids Generating Station is a critical source of reliable, renewable electricity in the territory. The Yukon government has been working with Carcross/Tagish First Nation, Kwanlin Dün First Nation, Ta'an Kwäch'än Council and Yukon Energy Corporation on agreements to support the renewal of the water licence which expires in 2025.
- I would like to highlight the intent of this work including:
  - A commitment to build strong relationships with First Nations impacted by the project.
  - A commitment to strengthen our understanding and conservation of environmental and cultural values.
  - A commitment to establish honest and collaborative processes to work together.
- The Whitehorse Rapids Generating Station renewal will go through an independent environmental and socio-economic assessment and a independent water licence review prior to the licence being renewed.
- The Yukon government anticipates that concerns such as potential impacts to salmon will be discussed as part of the assessment and regulatory review.
- As a decision body for this project, the Yukon government is consulting with the Carcross/Tagish First Nation, Kwanlin Dün First Nation, Ta'an Kwäch'än Council and Taku River Tlingit First Nation in a way that meets our obligations and our commitment to build strong relationships with First Nations.

### Additional response:

# Session Briefing Note

## Whitehorse Rapids Generating Station

ECO #14  
Executive Council  
Office

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- We are committed to establishing a constructive, collaborative long-term relationship with respect to the continued operation of the Whitehorse Rapids Generating Station, planning to meet the Yukon's future energy needs as well as supporting cultural practices and traditional uses in the Southern Lakes area.

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

- A November 6, 2023, CBC News article titled “Unsafe Passage: How the Whitehorse Dam and its Powerful Turbines Could be Affecting Young Chinook Salmon” referred to a study conducted by Yukon Energy Corporation that estimated as much as a third of juvenile salmon could be killed while passing through the Whitehorse dam.

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### Background:

- The Whitehorse Rapids Generating Station (WRGS) is operating under 25-year Water Licence that expires on May 31, 2025.
- Yukon Energy Corporation, the proponent, is working collaboratively with the Yukon government and affected First Nations to support the relicensing of the generating station. The affected First Nations are Carcross/Tagish First Nation (C/TFN), Kwanlin Dün First Nation, Ta'an Kwäch'än Council. The Yukon government will also consult with Taku River Tlingit First Nation during the assessment of the project.
- This collaborative work began in April 2022 for WRGS and has been ongoing since then. Work to date has been primarily focused on:
  - Developing a project proposal to submit to the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board. This work is led by a Technical Working Group.
  - Preparation for licensing (Water Licence and Fisheries Act Authorization) and associated application materials.
  - Negotiated agreements to supplement assessment and licensing processes and support a long-term relationship. This work is being led by negotiators.
- A Technical Working Group and a negotiators group have been established with representation from Yukon government, Yukon Energy Corporation, Carcross/Tagish First Nation (C/TFN), Kwanlin Dün First Nation, and Ta'an Kwäch'än Council.

**Session Briefing Note**  
**Whitehorse Rapids Generating  
Station**

ECO #14  
Executive Council  
Office

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Approved by:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Deputy Minister, Executive Council Office

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Session Briefing Note****Regulations for the  
Animal Protection and  
Control Act**Environment and  
Energy, Mines and Resources**Recommended response:**

- The new *Animal Protection and Control Act* modernizes the Yukon's animal protection and control framework to better protect Yukoners and animals in the territory.
- The new Act strengthens enforcement of animal care and control, improves animal welfare standards and regulates animal-related businesses.
- While the Act received assent in the Fall 2022 session of the Legislative Assembly, the Act will not come into force until the regulations are developed.
- We expect the regulations to be completed and the Act to come into effect by spring of 2024.

**Additional response:**

- The Act provides a broad framework for animal care and control and the regulations will provide the specific detail required to implement this new law.
- It is important that these regulations reflect Yukoners' values, our relationships with animals and our way of life.
- We have engaged broadly on the development of the *Animal Protection and Control regulations* with industry associations, municipalities, First Nations, the public and interest groups.

**Session Briefing Note****Regulations for the  
Animal Protection and  
Control Act**Environment and  
Energy, Mines and Resources

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- This engagement focused on standards of care for domestic animals, exotic animals, control standards for livestock and prohibited cosmetic surgeries.

**Third response:**

- A report on what we heard during engagement will be released later this fall.
- We are now considering all feedback from the engagement process as we develop the regulations for the new *Animal Protection and Control Act*.
- Once the regulations are developed, we will consider how best to support communities and governments that are interested in taking on animal protection and control enforcement roles.

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

- There may be questions on how the Government of Yukon is engaging with stakeholders and the public on the development of the *Animal Protection and Control Act* regulations and when the Act and regulations will come into force.

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**Background:**

- Invitations to engage were sent to stakeholders including First Nations governments, Renewable Resources Councils and local religious groups in May 2023, with meetings held from May to September. Local religious groups did not respond.



**Session Briefing Note****Regulations for the  
Animal Protection and  
Control Act**Environment and  
Energy, Mines and Resources


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- In addition to many members of the public, we spoke to and heard from:
    - Municipal and First Nations governments,
    - Association of Yukon Communities,
    - Local advisory councils,
    - Renewable Resources Councils,
    - Yukon Conservation Society,
    - Wilderness Tourism Association of the Yukon,
    - Yukon Dog Mushing Association,
    - Dog Powered Sports Yukon,
    - Yukon Outfitters Association,
    - Yukon Agriculture Association,
    - Yukon Agriculture Industry Advisory Committee,
    - Equine Association of Yukon,
    - Yukon Game Growers Association,
    - Growers of Organic Food Yukon,
    - Klondike Farmers Forum,
    - Boarding facilities, and
    - Animal rescues and humane societies.
  - Public engagement took place between June and September 2023, with members of the public invited to respond via email or participate in individual interviews with Government of Yukon staff.

**Session Briefing Note**

**Regulations for the  
Animal Protection and  
Control Act**

Environment and  
Energy, Mines and Resources

Approved by:



Deputy Minister of Environment

2023-10-17

Date approved



Deputy Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources

October 17, 2023

Date approved

# Session Briefing Note

## Regulations for the Animal Protection and Control Act

Fall 2023

Environment and  
Energy, Mines and Resources

Record of Engagement on the Animal Protection and Control Act (Phase 1 and Phase 2 from 2018- 2023) (last updated October 4, 2023)

### Summary:

**Phase 1:** The Department of Environment sent letters and follow-up emails to First Nations, communities, organizations, and other interested stakeholders. 10 public meetings were held and a public survey was released. Formal meetings and correspondence recorded, informal discussions and ongoing correspondence not included.

**Phase 2:** The Department of Environment sent letters to the same stakeholders as in Phase 1 which included invitations to meet.

### Detail:

#### Phase 1 Community Meetings

Community	Date (2018)	Time	Location
Carmacks	Monday, November 5	6:30-8:00pm	Carmacks Recreation Centre
Mayo	Thursday, November 8	6:30-8:00pm	Mayo Curling Rink Lounge
Teslin	Tuesday, November 13	6:00-8:00pm	Teslin RecPlex
Tagish	Wednesday, November 21	6:30-8:30pm	Tagish Community Centre
Pelly Crossing	Monday, November 26	4:00-6:00pm	Selkirk Old Community Hall
Dawson City	Tuesday, November 27	1:00-3:00 or 6:00-8:00	Downtown Hotel
Old Crow	Wednesday, November 28	6:00-8:00pm	Community Hall
Whitehorse	Monday, December 3	6:30-8:30pm	High Country Inn
Carcross	Tuesday, December 4	10:00-12:00pm	Carcross Learning Centre

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### Phase 1 Engagement Summary (2018)

Who	Engagement	Date
Animal Protection Officer	Meeting	December 13, 2018
Little Salmon/Carmacks First Nation and Community of Carmacks	Meeting	November 5, 2018
Champagne and Aishihik First Nations	Meeting	November 14, 2018
Mayo community	Meeting	November 8, 2018
Teslin community	Meeting	November 13, 2018
Several dog team owners and dogsledders (Yukon Quest, Yukon Dog Mushing Association, etc.)	Meeting	November 15, 2018
Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA)	Correspondence (email)	
RCMP	Meeting	October 29, 2018
Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board	Correspondence (letter)	July 23, 2018

### Phase 2 Engagement Summary (2019)

All (First Nations, municipalities First Nations, municipalities, advisory groups and stakeholders, etc.) received letters on August 5, 2019 with the 2018 engagement What We Heard attached, and invitation to meet.

Who	Engagement	Date
Dog Musers incl.: Muktuk Adventures, Dog Powered Sports, Wilderness Tourism Association Yukon (Yukon Quest and Yukon Dog Musher's Association not in attendance)	Meeting	August 1, 2019

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Kluane First Nation	Meeting	October 16, 2019
Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation	Correspondence (email)	August 28, 2019
Livestock Health and Wellness Subcommittee	Meetings	October 25, December 2, and December 7, 2019
RCMP	Correspondence (email)	August 30, 2019
Selkirk First Nation	Correspondence (letters/emails)	September 2019
Watson Lake	Meeting (and follow up email)	Nov 2019 (December 2, 2019)
Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board	Meeting	October 22, 2019
Yukon Wildlife Preserve	Correspondence (email)	January 13, 2021
Dawson with Klondike Farmers Forum	Meetings	September 26 and December 10, 2019
Yukon Agricultural Association	Correspondence (letter)	September 19, 2019
Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Farm	Correspondence (email)	October 17, 2019
Agriculture Industry Advisory Committee	Meetings	October 24, 2019; January 23, March 5, October 22 and December 10, 2020
Open public workshop on APCA for livestock	Workshop	November 14, 2019
Public Presentation on APCA for livestock	Presentation	November 20, 2019
Agriculture Industry Advisory Committee – Livestock Welfare Subcommittee	Meetings	December 2 and 12, 2019

### Phase 2 Engagement (2022-23)

Who	Engagement	Date
Yukon Muslim Society	Correspondence (phone)	October 20, 2022
Jewish Cultural Society	Correspondence (phone)	October 20, 2022
Humane Society Dawson	Meeting with executive and correspondence	October 21, 2022
Humane Society Yukon	Meeting with executive	October 24, 2022

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Yukon Outfitters Association	Correspondence (phone)	October 25, 2022
Wilderness Tourism Association Yukon	Correspondence (phone)	October 25, 2022
Yukon Dog Mushers	Correspondence (phone)	October 25, 2022
Association of Yukon Communities	Correspondence (phone message)	October 31, 2022
Growers of Organic Food Yukon (GoOFY)	Correspondence	October 31, 2022
Community Advisor on behalf of Tagish Local Advisory Council	Email exchange, meeting booked Nov 10	October 31, 2022
Town of Watson Lake, Mayor Chris Irvine (3:20pm)	Correspondence (phone)	November 3, 2022
Yukon Agricultural Association – Carl Burgess, Executive Director (3:30pm)	Correspondence (phone)	November 3, 2022
Yukon Outfitters Association – Shawn Wassel, Executive Director (3:50pm)	Correspondence (phone)	November 3, 2022
Association of Yukon Communities – Ted Laking, President (4pm)	Correspondence (phone)	November 3, 2022
Dog Mushers Association – Mandy (4:15pm)	Left a message to call back	November 3, 2022
Growers of Organic Food Yukon (GoOFY) – Bart Bounds of Elemental Farm (4:20pm)	Correspondence (phone)	November 3, 2022
Dawson Humane Society	Elisha emailed earlier in day to offer to meet	November 3, 2022
Growers of Organic Food Yukon (GoOFY) – Brian Lendrum (4:30pm)	Left a message to call back	November 3, 2022
Yukon Agricultural Association – Cain Vangel (4:31pm)	Correspondence (phone)	November 3, 2022
Wilderness Tourism Association Yukon	Correspondence (phone)	November 4, 2022
Tagish Local Advisory Council	Attended meeting	November 10, 2022
Watson Lake Town Council	Attended meeting virtually	November 15, 2022
Yukon Dog Mushers Association – chair Mandy Johnson	Phone	November 21, 2022
Yukon Outfitters Association	Attended meeting	Dec 16, 2022
Faro Town Council	Attended meeting virtually	Jan 10, 2023
Haines Junction Town Council/CAFN Council	Attended meeting virtually	Jan 18, 2023
Agriculture Industry Advisory Council	Meeting	Jan 26, 2023
All-Paws Veterinary Clinic	Meeting	Jan 27, 2023

# **Session Briefing Note**

## **Regulations for the Animal Protection and Control Act**

**Fall 2023**

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Mayo Town Council	Attended meeting virtually	Feb 1, 2023
Alpine Veterinary Clinic	Meeting	Feb 8, 2023
Marsh Lake Local Advisory Council	Attended meeting	Feb 8, 2023
Selkirk First Nation Community Safety Officer	Attended meeting	Feb 21, 2023
Humane Society Dawson	Meeting	Feb 22, 2023
Dawson City Bylaw Officer- Jalen Henry	Meeting	Feb 22, 2023
John Overell –Dawson Veterinarian	Meeting	Feb 22, 2023
Mount Lorne Local Advisory Council	Attended meeting	April 11, 2023
Carcross Local Advisory Council	Attended meeting	April 20, 2023
City of Dawson Bylaw	Correspondence (email)	May 2, 2023
Carmacks RRC	Correspondence (email)	May 8, 2023
Shelley Cuthbert Rescue Organization	Correspondence (phone)	May 10, 2023
Tails and Trails Dog Hotel	Correspondence (Phone)	May 16, 2023
Major's Promise	Correspondence (Phone)	May 18, 2023
Yukon Dog Mushing Association	Meeting	May 17, 2023 and Aug 7, 2023
Dog Powered Sports	Meeting	June 5, 2023
Yukon Agricultural Association	Meeting	June 5, 2023
Humane Society Dawson	Meeting	June 8, 2023
Game Growers of Yukon	Correspondence (email)	June 8, 2023
Gator's Ranch	Correspondence (email)	June 13, 2023
Wilderness Tourism Association of the Yukon	Meeting	June 14, 2023
Association of Yukon Communities (AYC)	Attended meeting virtually	June 17, 2023 and August 16, 2023
Village of Haines Junction	Attended meeting	June 28, 2023

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## Regulations for the Animal Protection and Control Act

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Equine Association of Yukon	Meeting	June 28, 2023
Humane Society Yukon	Attended meeting	July 11, 2023
Stay and Play Dog Boarding Kennel	Meeting	July 14, 2023 and Aug 24, 2023
Yukon Conservation Society (YCS)	Correspondence (letter)	July 18, 2023
Laberge RRC	Attended meeting	July 20, 2023
Kluane First Nation	Meeting with council then public lunch meeting	July 26, 2023
Kluane Point Kennel	Met at Kennel	July 26, 2023
Village of Haines Junction	Attended meeting	June 28, 2023
Yukon Outfitters Association	Attended meeting virtually	July 28, 2023
Growers of Organic Food Yukon	Correspondence (email)	June 29, 2023
Teslin RRC	Correspondence (letter)	Aug 6, 2023
Dawson RRC	Correspondence (letter)	Sept 6, 2023
Yukon Agricultural Association	Meeting	August 18, 2023
Yukon Fish and Game Association	Meeting	August 24, 2023
Growers of Organic Food Yukon	Correspondence (email)	September 14, 2023
Duffy's Pets and Tanzilla Harness Supply	Correspondence (email)	September 28, 2023
Yukon Dog Mushing Association	Correspondence (letter)	September 28, 2023
Yukon Horse Packing Adventures	Correspondence (letter)	September 28, 2023
Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation – Rodney D'Abramo Director of Policy Executive Office	Meeting	October 4, 2023
Klondike Farmers Forum	Correspondence (email)	Oct 10, 2023



**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 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 pathogens that can cause devastating respiratory disease if spread to wild animals.
- The Control Order is a precautionary measure to safeguard the health of the Yukon's iconic wild sheep and goats.
- The Government of Yukon is working to assess the impact of the Control Order on the spread of disease and on sheep and goat owners. The results will inform the next steps after December 2024.

**Additional response:**

- We continue to conduct animal testing for respiratory pathogens and assess fencing to ensure compliance with the order.
- We remain up-to-date with new research and we have confidence in the testing capabilities we use to detect *Mycoplasma ovipneumoniae* (*M. ovi*), the primary bacteria of concern, in sheep and goats.
- There is no cost to farmers for testing sheep and goats in the Yukon and they can apply for compensation for eligible costs incurred to comply with the order.
- Over \$225,000 has been paid to owners for fencing costs, and almost \$270,000 has been paid to compensate owners for the loss and the destruction of animals that tested positive.

**Session Briefing Note****Domestic Sheep and  
Goats Control Order**Environment and  
Energy, Mines and Resources

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- Funding for fencing is available for farmers through the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership.

**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 in order 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 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 iconic species is of great intrinsic, cultural and commercial value.
- Farmers and owners of sheep and goats implement and maintain approved fencing requirements.
- Sheep or goat owners who test their animals prior to importing them into the Yukon are eligible for compensation. If testing does not occur prior to importing, owners are not eligible for compensation should the animal later test positive.

**Session Briefing Note**  
**Domestic Sheep and**  
**Goats Control Order**

**ENV #41 / EMR #19**  
**Fall 2023**


Environment and  
Energy, Mines and Resources

Approved by:

  
Briar Young, A/Deputy Minister  
Department of Environment

**2023-09-08**

Date approved

  
Deputy Minister  
Department of Energy, Mines and Resources

**September 8, 2023**

Date approved

## Session Briefing Note

### Funding Pressures on Humane Societies

Environment

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#### Recommended response:

- The Government of Yukon has legislated responsibilities for animal protection and control and is working toward a long-term, sustainable solution to ensure the delivery of these services to best serve Yukoners and their companion animals.
- We provide annual funding to the territory's two registered humane societies, supporting their mandate to rehome unwanted animals and promote responsible pet ownership.
- The Department of Environment also supports both humane societies through a contract to offset the cost of rehoming companion animals that become the property of local or territorial government when they are not reclaimed by their owners.

#### Additional response:

- In 2023, the Department of Environment increased core funding to the Humane Society Yukon, providing a total of \$175,000. This is in addition to the per animal contract amount the department provides, and project specific amounts.
- Last fiscal year, we provided additional one-time emergency support of \$135,000 to Humane Society Yukon to prevent closure of the shelter due to the increased funding pressures they were facing. This was in addition to the \$110,000 in base funding provided.
- We also provided Humane Society Dawson with an additional \$25,000 in the 2022-23 fiscal year.
- The Department of Environment continues to collaborate with both societies and provides technical expertise and support.

#### Third response:

## Session Briefing Note

### Funding Pressures on Humane Societies

Environment

- We recognize that all Yukon communities have unique needs when it comes to the care and control of companion animals.
- In the coming months, we will contact municipal and First Nation governments and humane societies to better understand their needs for animal care and identify additional partnerships opportunities.
- Together we can establish a long-term sustainable model for the care and rehoming of companion animals in the Yukon.

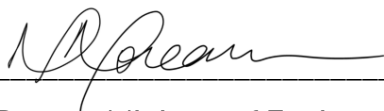
#### Context—this may be an issue because:

- There is a general interest in the Government of Yukon's funding support to animal rescues and questions on the subject have been raised in the Legislative Assembly.
- Humane Society Yukon has requested base funding of \$436,000 for 2023/24 onward from the department of Environment.

#### Background:

- Humane Society Yukon and Humane Society Dawson are the two animal rescues in the Yukon recognized under the Yukon Societies Act.
- In 2018, Humane Society Yukon received an increase in funding from \$79,500 to \$110,000 and Humane Society Dawson was increased from \$20,000 to \$25,000.
- On average, Humane Society Yukon receives approximately 85% of its animals from within the City of Whitehorse and 15% from communities.

#### Approved by:



Deputy Minister of Environment

2023-11-09

Date approved

## Session Briefing Note

**Fall 2023**

### Feral Horses

Environment

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**Recommended response:**

- We understand Yukoners feel strongly about the feral horse population and that there are diverse values and viewpoints.
- The Government of Yukon is aware of the concern regarding the health of some feral horses in the Champagne area and as previously mentioned, an official from the Department of Environment attended the area on multiple occasions but was unable to locate any horses in distress.
- The Government of Yukon is working to develop the tools necessary to better manage all aspects of animal protection and control across the Yukon through the new *Animal Protection and Control Act*.
- This new comprehensive legal framework will give additional enforcement tools for animal protection officers to address high-risk and feral animals and prohibits anyone from capturing or killing animals defined as feral or high-risk, unless they have a permit issued by the Department.
- The new act will include permits and inspections of animal-related businesses, expand enforcement tools and address high-risk and feral animals.
- In addition, it will give the Department the power to control or capture escaped livestock immediately, when the species could establish a feral population that threatens human, wildlife, or environmental health.
- The new *Animal Protection and Control Act* is on track to come into effect in early 2024, when the development of regulations is complete.

## Session Briefing Note

**Fall 2023**

### Feral Horses

Environment

- We are working with the Department of Justice to expedite the drafting of these regulations, following our extensive engagement with Yukoners on how we can better respond and address animal protection and control in the territory.

**Additional response:**

- The Department of Environment deeply values the welfare and respectful treatment of all animals.
- Currently, the Department of Environment has limited options to manage or control feral horses in the Yukon, other than deterring them from roadways or responding to reports of injured or distressed animals.
- The Yukon's feral horse population does not meet the definition of 'wildlife' according to the Wildlife Act.
- Wildlife are species that are 'wild by nature' and horses are domestic by definition.
- The Yukon government's animal protection officer and livestock control officers have authority under the Highways Act to deter feral horses from being on the highways or right-of-way for the protection of drivers.
- In addition, animal protection officers and the RCMP have the authority to relieve any domestic animal, including feral horses, of suffering.
- Officers may act to relieve the distress of a feral horse if conditions are met for an animal to be safely euthanized.
- This includes whether a firearm can be used safely, surrounding traffic and environmental conditions, and the state of the animal.

## Session Briefing Note

**Fall 2023**

### Feral Horses

Environment

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- Of course, the priority of our animal protection officer is always to give every animal a chance to survive.
  - The Yukon's feral horses can cause damage to agricultural properties, spread diseases to domesticated horses, and be a host to ticks that infest wildlife. There is a debate about whether they compete with wildlife and damage the Yukon's ecosystem.
  - As the current *Animal Protection Act* prohibits distressing any animal, including feral horses and owned animals, our animal protection officer will continue to investigate reports when presented with evidence that this may have occurred.
  - An animal protection officer can investigate allegations that someone has violated the existing *Animal Protection Act* that prohibits someone from causing distress to an animal.
  - If they have found that capture methods or the method of killing a feral horse caused distress, then a person could be charged.

#### Third response:

- The Department of Environment continues to ensure that we are open and transparent with the work that is done to ensure that all animals and wildlife in the territory are healthy, controlled, and well-cared for.
- Our goal is that Yukoners are aware of how the Department can support the protection and control of all animals, including feral horses.
- Yukoners concerned about these animals' health can contact the animal protection officer through the Animal Health Unit.



## Session Briefing Note

**Fall 2023**

### Feral Horses

Environment

- The Government of Yukon's new *Animal Protection and Control Act* was developed through extensive engagement with Yukoners and will better guide our territory in managing all aspects of animal protection and control in the Yukon.
- I look forward to seeing these new regulations come into force in the new year and provide our territory with new tools to help keep both Yukoners and animals safe.

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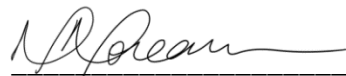
**Context—this may be an issue because:**

- There has been significant social media attention about the state of feral horse in the Champagne area, resulting in numerous calls to the TIPP line and ministerial correspondence.
- Reports have highlighted that two of the horses have sustained significant injuries.

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**Background:**

- There are an estimated 100 feral horses along the Alaska Highway between Whitehorse and Haines Junction.
- Questions regarding the Animal Protection Act or feral horses should be directed to the Animal Health Unit: 867-667-5600 or [animalhealth@yukon.ca](mailto:animalhealth@yukon.ca).

**Approved by:**

Deputy Minister of Environment

**November 15, 2023**

Date approved

**Session Briefing Note**  
**Caribou Herd Management**Environment

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**Recommended response:**

- Caribou are important ecologically and culturally. Many people in Yukon rely on caribou for subsistence and spiritual well-being. Conserving and protecting key caribou habitat – rutting areas, migration corridors and winter range – is important for herd health and abundance.
- The primary tools we use to manage caribou populations in the Yukon are population monitoring, harvest management and habitat management.
- Specific management actions under these tools may include deploying satellite-collars to track distribution, movement and survival rates, and conducting composition and population surveys to determine population trends.
- We also develop herd and habitat management plans to guide harvest management and ensure existing processes, like environmental assessment and land use planning, incorporate caribou habitat values.

**Additional response:**

- From a regulatory perspective, the Yukon government actively uses permit hunt authorizations, outfitter quotas, threshold hunts and season closures to manage the harvest of caribou.
- These management tools are intended to ensure harvest stays within sustainable limits, or to allow a herd to recover from a previous population decline.

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**Caribou Herd Management**Environment

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- All caribou herds now have quotas for all outfitters, fulfilling a commitment that the Yukon government and the outfitting industry agreed to in 1996.

**Third response:**

- Harvest management discussions across the territory can be challenging, and we make informed and collaborative decisions by generating and sharing knowledge.
- With this knowledge, the Department of Environment employs adaptive measures to manage caribou more responsively and as needed to adjust our actions and impacts.
- We co-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 health 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, the Inuvialuit and Indigenous groups may have concerns about caribou populations and potential overharvest in their traditional territories and settlement lands.

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**Background:**

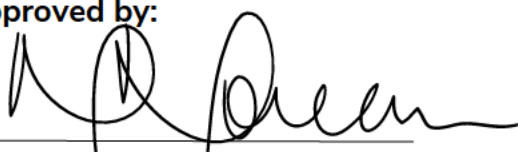
- Caribou populations are declining globally, including in all jurisdictions adjacent to the Yukon. There are 29 different caribou herds located throughout the Yukon.
- The Department of Environment is actively involved in several initiatives to manage caribou, including a review of the 2012 Chisana caribou management plan, completing range assessments for the Carcross and Klaza caribou herds, and

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**Caribou Herd Management**

Environment

participating in several co-management bodies. The Department also works directly with Renewable Resources Councils to manage the many woodland herds in the Yukon.

- This winter we are slated to conduct one population estimate, 11 composition surveys, and deploy satellite-collars in six caribou herds (see BN #53).

**Approved by:**

Deputy Minister of Environment

2023.09.05

Date approved

**Session Briefing Note****Fall 2023****Finlayson Caribou Herd**Environment

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**Recommended response:**

- The Finlayson Caribou herd in the traditional territories of the Ross River Dena Council and Liard First Nation is part of the Northern Mountain population of woodland caribou, which is a species of special concern under the federal *Species at Risk Act*.
- Based on a 2022 survey, the herd is likely stable or increasing, which marks the first time since 1990 that the herd has not exhibited a downward trend.
- We have conducted extensive work with our co-management partners to protect this herd since concerns arose in the 1980s.
- No resident hunting permits have been issued for the Finlayson caribou since the 2018-2019 hunting season. Outfitter quotas were also set at zero for the herd in 2019.
- The Government of Yukon is working on establishing a wildlife co-stewardship committee with the Ross River Dena Council to help develop a management plan for the herd (see [BN #50](#)).

**Additional response:**

- Although our latest population estimate and composition survey results indicate that the herd size has stabilized or is increasing, we will continue our monitoring to ensure this trend continues prior to initiating any hunting allocation discussions.
- A composition survey of the herd was conducted this fall in collaboration with BMC Minerals Limited (the Kudze Kayah mine project proponent). The results are being analyzed.
- To help us better understand this herd and the habitat that it needs, we are conducting a lichen mapping study. This will help us identify the

**Session Briefing Note****Fall 2023****Finlayson Caribou Herd**

Environment

location and extent of critical winter habitat and help inform future management decisions.

**Third response:**

- Any future licensed harvest of this herd will require discussion between the Yukon government, Ross River Dena Council and Liard First Nation.
- Outfitter quotas will not be available until licensed hunting reopens.
- When licensed hunting is available, new quotas will be discussed among outfitters, Ross River Dena Council and Liard First Nation, and the Government of Yukon.

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

- There may be interest in the status of the Finlayson caribou herd management plan, what actions have been taken to promote recovery and when hunters could expect harvest opportunities to open.
- Ross River Dena Council has strong concerns about caribou populations and potential overharvest within its asserted traditional territory.

**Background:**

- The department introduced a Permit Hunt Authorization for the Finlayson caribou herd in 1998, issuing 30 permits annually until 2018.
- Since 1982, the Department of Environment has estimated the population size of the Finlayson Caribou Herd seven times. The population estimate peaked in 1990 with an estimated 5,950 animals after a number of years of intensive recovery measures.
- In 2017 after continuing declines, the herd reached a low of 2,712 animals. Through a 2022 survey, we estimate there are currently 3,359 animals in the herd.

Approved by:



Deputy Minister of Environment

2023.10.30

Date approved

**Session Briefing Note****Fall 2023****Salmon and Fish Hatchery Development**Environment

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**Recommended response:**

- Salmon are culturally important to Yukon First Nations and Yukoners and are a subsistence resource.
- While the Government of Yukon does not play a formal role in salmon management, we are committed to working with our partners to conserve and protect wild Pacific salmon, including their freshwater habitats and ecosystems.
- The Department of Environment will continue to work with our partners, including Fisheries and Oceans Canada and First Nation governments, and explore opportunities toward the recovery and rebuilding of Yukon River salmon stocks.

**Additional response:**

- We share Yukoners' serious concerns about the continued low escapements of Chinook and Chum salmon and the overall decline in salmon returns to the Yukon.
- We want to see more salmon passing into the upper Yukon River.
- The Government of Yukon is working with our partners to understand potential impacts of the Whitehorse Rapids Generating Station on salmon and ensure they are considered as part of the relicensing process.
- This year's returns are once again low; the numbers for Chinook and Chum are projected to be small and are not expected to meet escapement targets.
- We support the Canadian delegates of the Yukon River Panel in their attempts to negotiate for larger escapement numbers.

**Session Briefing Note****Fall 2023****Salmon and Fish Hatchery Development****Environment**

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**Third response:**

- The Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada has announced they are implementing the Pacific Salmon Strategy Initiative, a long-term strategy to reverse the decline of Pacific salmon stocks in the Yukon and British Columbia.
  - The strategy will include the restoration and protection of critical salmon habitat, the modernization of Pacific salmon fisheries, the use of conservation hatcheries to rebuild vulnerable salmon stocks, and collaborations with First Nation governments, Territorial and Provincial governments, and the public.
  - The Department of Environment supports the idea of a Yukon-based conservation hatchery and we are continuing discussions with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada and Yukon First Nations to provide support when called upon.
  - Department of Environment staff met with Kwanlin Dün First Nation representatives on September 11 to discuss how the department can support the development of the new Kwanlin Dün First Nation Salmon Stewardship Centre, which will include a Kwanlin Dün-led conservation hatchery feasibility study.
  - We will continue to work with Kwanlin Dün First Nation in supporting this project and look forward to the next steps.
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**Context—this may be an issue because:**

- There is concern about the overharvesting of Canadian-born salmon populations in Alaskan waters.
  - The new 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.
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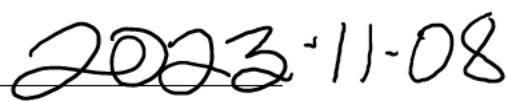


**Session Briefing Note****Fall 2023****Salmon and Fish Hatchery Development**

Environment

**Background:**

- The federal government has authority over migratory salmon and fish habitats.
- Yukon First Nations have voluntarily restricted harvest for many years. This voluntary prohibition will remain in place during the 2023 run.
- The Chinook salmon spawning escapement goal of 42,500 to 55,000 has not been met since 2018.
- As of August 26, 2023, the total number of Chinook salmon that had passed into Canada was just 15,304, with 154 having passed through the Whitehorse fish ladder by Sept 16, 2023. These numbers were the final updates, representing 100% of this year's run.
  - This represents only 28% of the escapement target.
- The Department of Environment collaborates with the parties and provides technical input on the Whitehorse Generating Station relicensing project through the Technical Working Group. Yukon government, Yukon Energy, Kwanlin Dūn First Nation, Ta'an Kwäch'än Council and Carcross/Tagish First Nation are parties to the Technical Working Group.
- Executive Council Office - Major Projects Yukon division and Aboriginal Relations are the lead on the relicensing project.

**Approved by:**  
Deputy Minister of Environment  
Date approved

## **Session Briefing Note**

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

Environment

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#### **Recommended response:**

- The Department of Environment is committed to collecting robust wildlife population data to evaluate harvest sustainability.
- We survey and monitor wildlife populations and utilize information from licensed harvesters, First Nations, Inuvialuit and community partners to make informed decisions about harvest opportunities for resident and non-resident hunters.
- The Department of Environment does not survey all wildlife populations every year and relies on reports from Yukoners, First Nations and Inuvialuit governments to evaluate harvest sustainability and guide decision-making until the next population survey.

#### **Additional response:**

- The Department of Environment dedicates significant resources to collecting and analyzing data to support evidence-based decisions about wildlife populations.
- We carry out population inventories, collect harvest data from hunters and perform ecological assessments to gather up-to-date information.
- We prioritize areas to survey based on a combination of factors, including harvest levels, access, community concerns, land-use planning data needs, the last survey date and human activity.

#### **Third response:**

- We have completed or are in the process of completing wildlife surveys for moose and caribou.
- The caribou surveys are mostly complete.
- Wildlife surveys for elk, bison, and deer are in the works.

**Session Briefing Note****Wildlife Survey and Data Use****Environment**

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- Surveys for some populations of sheep, grizzly bear, black bear, fish, pikas, bats and ground squirrels were completed this year.
- A few sheep surveys had to be cancelled this summer and fall due to the wildfire situation and the need for helicopters to fight fires.
- We are also researching elk and deer populations in the Takhini Valley to better understand their ecology and behaviour.
- We track deer and elk in the Takhini Valley and other species through the use of game cameras. The data gathered from cameras and collars will help us to better manage populations and determine if there is an opportunity to expand Yukon's deer hunt.
- We continue to share our work, research and monitoring activities with the public through information we post on Yukon.ca.
- In the past, a two-page summary of a survey was released alongside the fully analyzed report. To share information in a timelier manner, the Department of Environment will now be aiming to release the preliminary two-page summary within three to six months of the survey being complete, where it is feasible to do so.
- Survey results are first shared with wildlife management partners, including relevant Renewable Resources Councils, impacted First Nations, the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board and the Yukon Fish and Game Association, then the public.

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

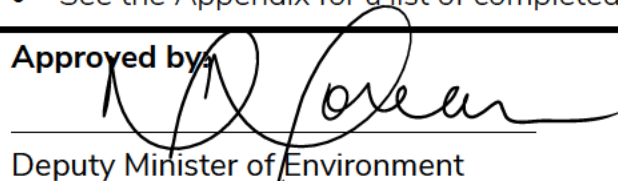
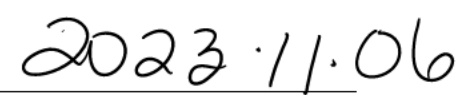
- Yukoners want to know that wildlife conservation decisions are being made with the best available data. The Opposition has raised questions about data quality and collection in the past.

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

Environment

**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 allocation of the sustainable harvest amongst user groups.
- In 2022, the Department of Environment allocated approximately \$448,000 for three moose-related projects and \$865,000 for 12 caribou-related projects.
- The Department of Environment dedicated \$74,000 to conduct the 2022 Aishihik Bison population survey.
- Last year, our fisheries group sampled fish in four lakes and stocked another 11.
- See the Appendix for a list of completed and pending 2023-24 surveys by region.

**Approved by**  
Deputy Minister of Environment  
Date approved

**Session Briefing Note****Fall 2023****Wildlife Survey and Data Use**

Environment

**Appendix: 2023-24 Surveys – As of September 1, 2023**

Region	Location	Species	Management tool	Survey completed	Analysis Completed
Southern Lakes	Aishihik	Caribou	PHA	Census Fall 2023	No
	Pelly	Caribou	Collar deployment	Fall 2023	No
	Laberge	Caribou	Open	Rut Fall 2023	No
	Carcross	Caribou	Not open	Rut Fall 2023	No
	Ibex	Caribou	Not open	Rut Fall 2023	No
	Wolf Lake	Caribou	Open Permit	Rut Fall 2023	Yes
	Caribou Mountain	Sheep	Not Open	Summer 2023	Yes
	Arnell	Sheep	Open Permits	Minimum count Summer 2024	No
	Pilot Mountain	Sheep	Open Permits	Minimum count Summer 2024	No
	Tarfu Lake	Lake Trout, Pike	Catch/Possession Limits, Harvest slot size, gear restrictions	Angler Survey Summer 2023	Yes
	Little Atlin Lake	Lake Trout, Pike	Catch/Possession Limits, Harvest slot size, gear restrictions	Angler Survey Summer 2023	No
	Caribou Lake	Lake Trout	Catch/Possession Limits, Harvest slot size, gear restrictions	Population Assessment	No

**Session Briefing Note****Fall 2023****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	No
	Coal River	Northern Mountain Caribou	Open Permit	Rut Count Sept/Oct 2023	No
	Finlayson	Northern Mountain Caribou	Closed	Caribou lichen habitat assessment summer 2023. Rut count Sept/Oct 2023.	No
	Liard River	Bison	NA	Mark-Resight September-October Fall 2023	No
	Nisutlin Bay	Pike Lake Trout	Catch/Possession Limits, Harvest slot size, gear restrictions	Angler Harvest Survey	No

Region	Location	Species	Management tool	Survey completed	Analysis Completed
Northern Tutchone	Ethel Lake	Northern Mountain Caribou	Open (voluntary closure)	Fall rut composition survey; Oct 2023	No
	Tatchun	Northern Mountain Caribou	Open	Fall rut composition survey; Oct 2023	No
	Clear Creek	Northern Mountain Caribou	Open	Collar deployment/range Assessment	No

**Session Briefing Note****Fall 2023****Wildlife Survey and Data Use**

Environment

	Clear Creek	Caribou Moose Bear		Game Camera Study: Cumulative effects	No
	Klaza	Northern Mountain Caribou	Open	Rut Count/collar deployment Winter 2024	No
	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
	Frenchman's Lake Creel	Lake Trout Pike	Catch/ Possession Limits, Harvest slot size, gear restrictions	Angler harvest Survey	No

Region	Location	Species	Management tool	Survey completed	Analysis Completed
Kluane	Chisana	Caribou	Closed	Rut count Fall 2023	No
	Aishihik	Caribou	PHA	Census Fall 2023	No
	Ruby Range	Sheep	Open	Minimal count Summer 2023	Yes
	Brooks Arm	Sheep	Open	Minimal count Summer 2023	Yes

**Session Briefing Note****Fall 2023****Wildlife Survey and Data Use**

Environment

	Flat Top	Sheep	Open	Minimal count Summer 2023	Yes
	Donjek	Sheep	Open	Minimal count Summer 2023	Yes
	Aishihik Lake	Bison	Open permit	Collar deployment/Mark- Resight; Fall 2023	No
	Kluane Lake area	Lynx, wolverine, marten, moose, fox and assorted small mammals	NA	Game Camera Study (7 years of data)	Yes

Region	Location	Species	Management tool	Survey completed	Analysis Completed
North Yukon	Hart River	Northern Mountain Caribou	Open permit	Fall rut composition survey; Sept 2022	Yes
	Fortymile	Migratory Caribou	Summer registration hunt and winter threshold hunt	Calving, calf mortality, fall rut composition, survival monitoring, photo census population estimate	Yes
	Coffee Creek	Caribou Moose Bear		Game Camera Study: Cumulative effects	No
	Tombstone Park	Sheep	Open	Summer recruitment survey; July 2022	Yes



**Session Briefing Note****Fall 2023****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	Yes
	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****Spring 2023****Yukon Species at Risk**Environment

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**Recommended response:**

- Other jurisdictions in Canada have specific legislative tools to list and conserve species at risk. Such tools are also a priority for the Government of Yukon.
- The Canada-Yukon Nature Agreement increases Yukon's capacity and resources to work collaboratively with other parties on a variety of species at risk matters over the next three years, including species at risk legislation (see [BN #1](#)).
- We continue to work collaboratively on species at risk conservation with our partners, including Yukon First Nations and transboundary Indigenous governments and groups, wildlife management boards and councils, interest groups and other government organizations.

**Additional response:**

- The Government of Yukon actively works with Environment and Climate Change Canada on technical reviews, recovery strategies and management plans for national species at risk that occur in the Yukon.
- The Yukon has an opportunity to benefit from the lessons learned in other parts of Canada and the world to prevent the endangerment of species.
- Under the Canada-Yukon Nature Agreement, funding will also support further surveying and monitoring of species at risk in the Yukon.

**Third response:**

- Our efforts to ensure that species such as wood bison,

## Session Briefing Note

**Spring 2023**

### Yukon Species at Risk

Environment

woodland caribou and grizzly bears continue to have viable populations in the Yukon are guided by management plans that the Government of Yukon has developed with First Nations and the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board.

- While the legislation is developed, we will manage vulnerable populations through our existing adaptive wildlife management tools.

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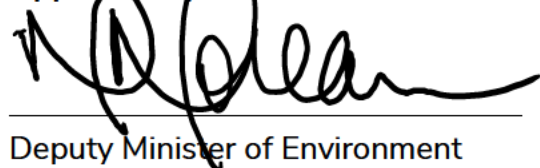
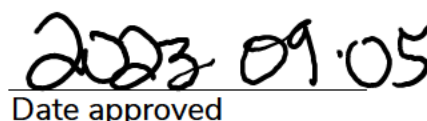
**Context — this may be an issue because:**

- 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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**Background:**

- The Canada-Yukon Nature Agreement commits the Government of Yukon to increase surveying and monitoring of species at risk and to engage with First Nations and other Indigenous governments and groups on approaches to managing species at risk.
- The Yukon has 43 species that are 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. The status of species at risk in the Yukon is publicly available on Yukon.ca.

**Approved by:**  
Deputy Minister of Environment  
Date approved

## Session Briefing Note

## EMR #92 / ENV #55

Fall 2023

### Placer Mining in Wetlands

Energy, Mines and Resources  
And Environment

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#### Recommended response:

- The Government of Yukon has released *A Policy for the Stewardship of Yukon's Wetlands* to guide how we make decisions on wetland use and conservation. (See ENV BN #3)
- The policy provides a publicly available framework to guide the Government of Yukon land and water regulators and may also assist boards and industry in the planning, assessment and permitting of development and reclamation projects.
- An interim approach for placer mining in the Indian River area is currently in place. This approach protects the most sensitive areas and requires a wetland reclamation plan for Class 4 placer mines.
- With the recent release of the wetland stewardship policy and the Dawson Regional Land Use Plan on the horizon, we will be evaluating the need for an interim approach to the Indian River area following the signing of a final land use plan that encompasses that region.
- We are planning the next steps in relation to implementation actions of the policy, many of which involve working in partnership with First Nations, industry and environmental non-governmental organizations.

#### Additional response:

- In conjunction with other planning tools, like regional land use plans, we aim to provide certainty to the industry as they design their operating and reclamation plans in wetland areas.
- Our regulators work with the industry to clarify reclamation requirements, support the design of effective wetland reclamation plans, and review submissions as part of mine authorization processes.

## Session Briefing Note

**EMR #92 / ENV #55****Fall 2023**

### **Placer Mining in Wetlands**    Energy, Mines and Resources And Environment

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- The Yukon Water Board has drafted wetland information guidelines for placer mining applications based on the feedback from the board's public interest hearing on placer mining in wetlands held in 2020.

**Third response:**

- We recognize the topic of carbon storage and release in the Yukon's wetlands is of high public interest.
- Peat-forming wetlands, such as bogs and fens, store large quantities of soil carbon. This carbon can be vulnerable to release when these types of wetlands are disturbed by human activities or climate change.
- To help fill knowledge gaps on the role of carbon sinks in northern wetlands and to continue to improve our reclamation practices, we have initiated a multi-party study designed to explore the extent of carbon release and potential for carbon sink restoration following placer mining.
- We look forward to working with our partners, including First Nations, industry and environmental organizations, to come together to coordinate additional wetland research.

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

- Wetlands are at the forefront of public discussion due to increasing development pressure from placer mining, calls for wetlands protection and the recent announcement of *A Policy for the Stewardship of Yukon's Wetlands*.

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**Background:**

- Development of the wetlands stewardship policy began in late 2017 using a collaborative roundtable partnership approach.
- The *Policy for the Stewardship of Yukon's Wetlands* was formally launched on January 10, 2023.

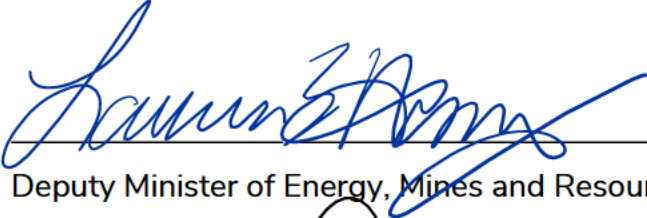
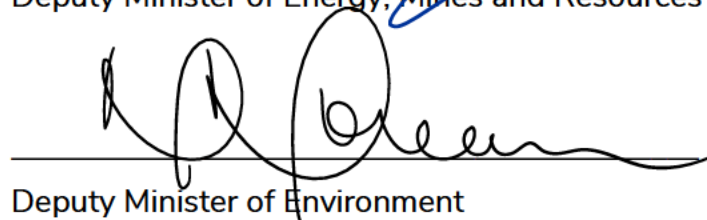
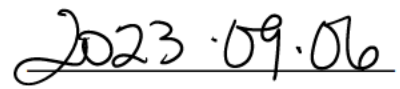
## Session Briefing Note

**EMR #92 / ENV #55****Fall 2023**

### **Placer Mining in Wetlands**    Energy, Mines and Resources And Environment

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- In response to land use planning and development assessment needs around wetlands, the Yukon government previously completed regional-scale wetland mapping for the Peel Watershed planning region and broad-scale mapping in the Beaver River, Mayo/McQuesten and Indian River watersheds.
- We are developing a revised wetland classification system, new wetland mapping standards, Yukon-specific methods for evaluating wetland benefits and functions, and improving our understanding of open-water wetland reclamation effectiveness.

**Approved by:**  
Deputy Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources  
Date approved  
Deputy Minister of Environment  
Date approved

## **Session Briefing Note**

**Fall 2023**

### **Predation Control & Principles of Wildlife Population Management**

Environment

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#### **Recommended response:**

- The Government of Yukon 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, information gathered from hunters, Indigenous harvesters, community partners and the results from our targeted wildlife population surveys.
- We are committed to ensuring licensed harvest is done sustainably while respecting the primary importance of wildlife conservation and Indigenous subsistence harvest rights.
- By sustainably managing wildlife harvest, we can ensure licenced harvest will remain for generations to come.
- A sustainable approach to harvest management also allows us to offer new opportunities in areas where wildlife populations have recovered.
- In addition to managing harvest, we are committed to species management planning at the regional and/or traditional territory scale.
- These plans consider habitat availability, subsistence needs and establishing management objectives for species populations.

#### **Secondary response:**

- Moose is the most harvested species by Yukon hunters, and they are an important species culturally. The Government of Yukon is committed to protecting moose and their habitat to ensure populations remain healthy and harvest opportunities remain sustainable for Yukoners.

## **Session Briefing Note**

**Fall 2023**

### **Predation Control & Principles of Wildlife Population Management**

Environment

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- The Department of Environment does not use large-scale wolf control programs as a method to increase moose populations. In addition to Yukoners' strong public opposition to large-scale wolf control, these programs are costly and have been shown to have only short-term impacts.
- Instead, we manage human activity and harvest and protect habitat to conserve and maintain wildlife populations.
- Licensed hunters can harvest seven wolves annually, and wolves are trapped without limit on registered traplines.

#### **Third response:**

- In 2022, the Department completed a review of the 2012 Yukon Wolf Conservation and Management Plan. It remains relevant, and contains flexible and responsive tools to conserve wolf populations.
- During meetings with stakeholders, we heard that respect for wolves continues to be a strong theme among Yukoners. The implementation review report is available on Yukon.ca.
- In the winter of 2021 and 2022, the Government of Yukon captured and collared wolves from five packs across the Southern Lakes Region to study wolf kill rates and composition.
- The results of the study suggested that wolf predation is not preventing population growth among caribou in the Southern Lakes, which are showing signs of range expansion and population increase.



## **Session Briefing Note**

**Fall 2023**

### **Predation Control & Principles of Wildlife Population Management**

Environment

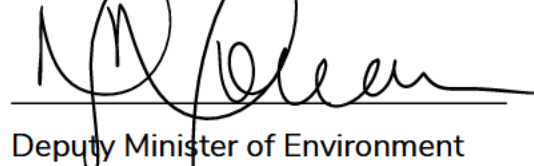
#### **Context — this may be an issue because:**

- On October 18, 2022, the Opposition asked about predator control to increase moose populations in the territory.

#### **Background:**

- In addition to the harvest data collected each year, targeted moose surveys are also conducted to estimate population sizes.
- The 2012 Yukon Wolf Conservation and Management Plan directs the Department of Environment to conserve wolf populations in recognition of the role of wolves in ecosystems and the maintenance of biodiversity.
- In 2019-20, the plan review team held 27 meetings with Indigenous governments and groups, boards, councils, and other stakeholders.

**Approved by:**



Deputy Minister of Environment

2023.10.06

Date approved

## Session Briefing Note

### ***Wildlife Act Conformity with First Nations Final Agreements***

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Environment

#### **Recommended response:**

- The Government of Yukon, Yukon First Nations and affected transboundary Indigenous governments and groups have expressed shared interest in addressing amendments to the *Wildlife Act*.
- Amending the *Wildlife Act* has been a focus of strategic discussions between the Government of Yukon and Yukon First Nations and was discussed at the October and November Yukon Forums in 2022.
- These changes would ensure consistency with the Yukon First Nation Final Agreements and the *Gwich'in Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement*.
- Completion of this initiative would provide clarity and certainty around the interpretation and implementation of land claim agreements in the Yukon.

#### **Additional response:**

- We are committed to working with Yukon First Nations, transboundary Indigenous governments and groups, the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board and Renewable Resources Councils on this initiative.
- Should amendments to the Act proceed, the Yukon Forum has provided direction to work in close partnership with Yukon First Nations and transboundary Indigenous governments and groups to develop them.
- The Department of Environment has begun preparatory work including a review of consultation actions since 2005 to identify policy issues and considering what additional resources will be needed within the Government of Yukon and Yukon First Nations to support advancing this.
- Undertaking revisions to the *Wildlife Act* is a process that can take several years to complete and requires prioritization and explicit support from all levels of government, including First Nations and other partners.

## Session Briefing Note

### **Wildlife Act Conformity with First Nations Final Agreements**

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Environment

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

- Amending the *Wildlife Act* was raised as a topic of discussion at the November 2022 Yukon Forum, where leaders discussed its importance.
  - In December 2022, the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board sent a letter to Minister Clarke urging the Government of Yukon to pursue amendments to the Act; Minister Clarke responded in January 2023, confirming similar interest.
- 

#### Background:

- The last substantive changes to the *Wildlife Act* occurred in 2002; changes to the Act were intended to:
  - Ensure that our enforcement provisions reflect modern practices.
  - Provide a modern framework for placing conditions on licences, permits, certificates and concessions.
  - Clarify residency provisions for Yukon hunters, trappers, and outfitters.
  - Require new hunters to take a hunter education and ethics development course.
  - Clearly explain which hunting practices are considered dangerous.
  - Clarify the roles and authorities of staff, the Minister and Cabinet.
  - Clarify the management of trade in wildlife and captive, live wildlife.
  - Enable a public review process.
  - Increase maximum penalties.
  - Enable the creation of a conservation fund.

**Approved by:**

Deputy Minister of Environment

2023-10-16

Date approved

## Session Briefing Note

### Bison Management

### Environment

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#### Recommended response:

- The Yukon is an important global steward of wood bison, which were once nearly extinct. The Aishihik bison population was reintroduced to southwestern Yukon 35 years ago to help restore the species to its native range and is now one of the largest free-ranging populations.
- The Aishihik Bison Technical Team recently completed drafting updates to modernize the 2012 *Conservation and Action Plan for the Aishihik Bison Population*.
- The Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board completed a 60-day public engagement on the draft plan and made recommendations for changes that we accepted.
- The Government of Yukon is now consulting with First Nations on the draft plan.

#### Additional response:

- Our relationship with reintroduced bison has evolved as we have learned more about their biology, and the impacts of the reintroduced species and bison hunting in the Yukon.
- The new draft plan enables wildlife managers to collaboratively resolve issues as they arise while allowing for both population growth and a sustainable harvest.
- A major change in the draft plan is to manage bison harvest in a similar way to how other big game species are managed in the territory: on a sustainable basis and with no established upper limit on population size.

## Session Briefing Note

Fall 2023

## Bison Management

Environment

**Third response:**

- A 2022 survey estimated the Aishihik bison population to be just under 2,000 adult animals, indicating continued population growth.
- The new draft plan provides harvest guidelines that ensure the population does not decrease below a minimum viable number of 1,000 adult animals while providing long-term harvest opportunities.
- At the population, hunters will not see a change in harvest levels.

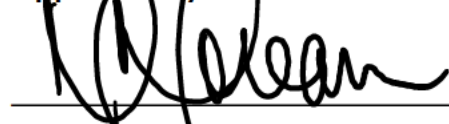
**Context—this may be an issue because:**

- 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.

**Background:**

- 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
- Bison hunting has become extremely popular in the Yukon, with bison being the second most hunted species by Yukon hunters. There have been no restrictions on which age or sex of bison hunters could 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 Laberge Renewable Resource Councils, the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board, the Yukon Fish and Game Association, and the local outfitter.

Approved by:



Deputy Minister of Environment

2023-09-04

Date approved

**Session Briefing Note****Fall 2023****Fish and Wildlife Regulation Change Process**

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Environment

**Recommended response:**

- The Government of Yukon is committed to sustainable management of the Yukon's wildlife to ensure populations remain healthy and resilient, now and for future generations.
- The Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board and the Yukon government work collaboratively to manage and conserve fish and wildlife populations, one way of achieving this is ensuring the regulations are current and relevant.
- The COVID-19 pandemic caused a pause in the regulations' intake and update of the process, and we are now working together to streamline the regulation change process before initiating the next regulation change cycle.

**Additional Response:**

- The Department of Environment works to manage human impacts on fish and wildlife using regulatory tools that are responsible, sustainable and informed by scientific, local and traditional knowledge.
- The new approach to the fish and wildlife regulation change process will support these principles.
- A new approach will place a greater emphasis on meeting our consultation obligations with Yukon First Nations and Inuvialuit, align the process with the First Nation Final Agreements and Inuvialuit Final Agreement, clarify roles and responsibilities and streamline the regulation change process.

**Session Briefing Note****Fall 2023****Fish and Wildlife Regulation Change Process**Environment



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**Third Response:**

- When the new regulation change process is complete, the Yukon government and the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board will work together to communicate the new approach to Yukon First Nations and Inuvialuit, Renewable Resource Councils, Wildlife Management Advisory Council (North Slope) and fish and wildlife management stakeholders.
- 

**Background:**

- Typically, every two years, the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board has an intake of proposals for regulation changes to the *Wildlife Regulation, Trapping Regulations* and *Yukon Territorial Fishery Regulations*.
- The Yukon government must consult the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board, First Nations, Inuvialuit and the public when changing regulations.

**Approved by:**  
Deputy Minister of Environment

Date approved

## Session Briefing Note

**Fall 2023**

### Grizzly Bear Harvest

Environment

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**Recommended response:**

- We acknowledge concerns regarding grizzly bears in Canada and 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, as well as local and Traditional Knowledge holders, indicate the population of grizzly bears in the Yukon is stable and healthy.
- The requirement associated with the Species of Special Concern ranking is that a management plan must be developed. The Yukon completed a grizzly bear management plan in 2019 and it is used as our guiding document.
- To improve our understanding of grizzly bears and their habitat needs, we are surveying and gathering biological data from specific populations on an annual basis.

**Additional response:**

- The Department of Environment is aware of the charges pending against an individual regarding hunting under the Wildlife Act.
- As these charges are still before the court, we are not in a position to comment on the case.
- In the Yukon, it is illegal to hunt cubs or sows accompanied by cubs. The prohibition defines a cub as a bear that is 3 years of age or less but does not include unborn animals.
- Legal resident hunters are permitted to harvest one grizzly bear every three licensed years.



**Session Briefing Note****Fall 2023****Grizzly Bear Harvest**Environment

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- Our Conservation Officer Services Branch investigates any suspected violations of these prohibitions. Where sufficient evidence exists, suspected violators will be prosecuted.
- Since 1995, the annual average grizzly bears harvested by residents is 28. The average non-resident harvest is 43.
- In total there are about 80 human-caused grizzly bear deaths reported each year in the Yukon, including deaths from vehicle collisions, hunting and defense of life or property.
- With a low population estimate of 6000 grizzly bears in the territory, 80 deaths account for just over 1 per cent of the population.
- Based on the evidence we have at hand, the grizzly bear population in the Yukon is stable, and the harvest of bears is well within sustainable harvest levels.

**Third response:**

- We recently implemented a recommendation from the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board to be able to adaptively regulate hunting of grizzly bear from the roadside.
- This action will protect grizzly bears from being hunted on or near the highway right of way as they forage for food. These corridors are important grizzly bears and the public and wildlife viewers.
- Local communities may now request the Minister prohibit roadside hunting of grizzly bears 100 metres from the centreline of additional specified roadways.
- Currently, via a Ministerial Order, a prohibition on roadside grizzly bear hunting is in effect in the Southern Lakes area, this is along the Alaska

## Session Briefing Note

**Fall 2023**

### Grizzly Bear Harvest

Environment

Highway from the M'Clintock River Bridge to Jakes Corner, the Tagish Road, the Atlin Road to the British Columbia border, and along the South Klondike Highway from the Carcross Corner to the British Columbia border.

- This specific prohibition was proposed by the Taku River Tlingit First Nation and Carcross/Tagish Renewable Resources Council.

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

- On Thursday October 26, 2023, MLA Annie Blake raised trophy hunting of grizzly bears in Question Period and asked that the Yukon government ban the practice.
- Grizzly Bear Protection Yukon\ submitted a petition calling on the Yukon government to ban roadside hunting of grizzly bears, ban trophy hunting and prioritize wildlife viewing.
- To date, the petition has 37,124 signatures. Many come from outside the Territory.

#### **Background:**

- In 2022, 56 grizzly bears were harvested in the Yukon, 21 were harvested by resident hunters and 35 were harvested by non-resident hunters.
- Resident hunters are allowed to harvest a grizzly bear once every three years.
- Yukon is home to an estimated 6,000 to 7,000 grizzly bears.
- Grizzly bears are listed as a Species of Special Concern in Canada. The federal Species at Risk Act has indicated their population numbers are vulnerable outside the territory. This ranking encourages vigilance from the management agency.
- There is no legal prohibition to hunting species listed under the legislation as Special Concern.
- 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.
- A person convicted of an offence under the Wildlife Act is liable to a maximum fine of \$50,000 per offence, to imprisonment for a term of not more than 1 year, or to

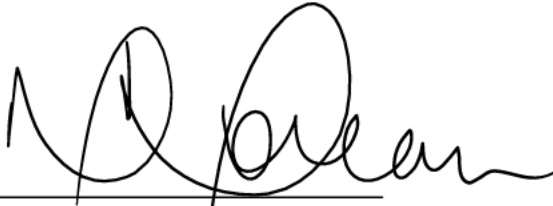
**Session Briefing Note**  
**Grizzly Bear Harvest**

**Fall 2023**  
Environment

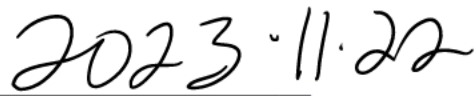
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both.

Approved by:



Deputy Minister of Environment



Date approved

**Session Briefing Note****Fall 2023****Porcupine Caribou Herd**Environment

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**Recommended response:**

- The Biden Administration's recent decision to cancel oil and gas leases in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge was a step in the right direction towards protecting this vital ecosystem.
- The Bureau of Land Management has now released a Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement to seek input on the Coastal Plain Oil and Gas Leasing Program.
- The public comment period for the Coastal Plain Oil and Gas Leasing Program—Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement was extended and the Government of Yukon submitted comments on November 7, 2023.
- The Yukon government is opposed to any development in the critical calving and post-calving grounds of the Porcupine Caribou Herd.
- On October 20, 2023, I met with US Consul General Jim Dehart and continue to raise the Yukon's concerns with the potential for development in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

**Additional response:**

- The Yukon government coordinated efforts with our partners to prepare a response to the Coastal Plain Oil and Gas Leasing Program—Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement.

**Session Briefing Note****Fall 2023****Porcupine Caribou Herd**Environment

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- Our comments included pertinent information to inform the U.S. Federal Bureau of Land Management's analysis and suggested improvements for the implementation of an oil and gas leasing program, consistent with the purposes of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.
- The law signed by former President Trump in 2017 does not allow the Bureau of Land Management to select a "no development" alternative for the refuge

**Third response:**

- The Porcupine caribou herd is a critical resource for northern First Nations, the Inuvialuit, and resident hunters in Yukon and Northwest Territories.
- We will continue to work together with the Porcupine Caribou Management Board and the other Parties to the Porcupine Caribou Management Agreement, including the governments of Canada and the Northwest Territories, Inuvialuit Game Council, Gwich'in Tribal Council, Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation, Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in and the First Nation of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun to advocate for the protection of the Porcupine caribou herd.

## Session Briefing Note

**Fall 2023**

### Porcupine Caribou Herd

Environment

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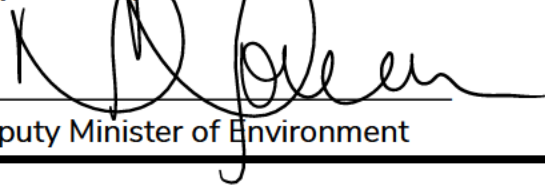
**Context—this may be an issue because:**

- On October 17, 2023, MLA Annie Blake moved a motion urging the Government of Yukon to submit comments in support of the Porcupine Caribou herd on the U.S. Bureau of Land Management's Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement seeking input on the Coastal Plain Oil and Gas Leasing Program before the deadline expires.

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**Background:**

- On September 6, 2023, the Biden Administration cancelled oil and gas leases in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge which were issued during the final days of the Trump Administration.
- The development of a Coastal Oil and Gas Leasing Program environmental impact statement and subsequent record of decision is a requirement under the U.S. National Environmental Policy Act.
- Yukon government has participated in all aspects of the review of the Coastal Oil and Gas Leasing program to date including the various phases of the original environmental impact statement, the previous record of decision and call for nominations, Marsh Creek Seismic Exploration program review, and the current supplemental environmental impact statement.
- The Porcupine caribou herd was the first caribou herd to have an international agreement, between Canada and the United States. This agreement outlines our mutual intentions and outlines the importance of conserving the herd for the communities that depend on it.

**Approved by:**

Deputy Minister of Environment

2023.11.14

Date approved

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Prepared for Minister Clarke  
Department of EnvironmentDate prepared: October 30, 2023  
Last Updated: November 14, 2023Page 3 of 3

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## **Session Briefing Note**

### **Park Fees 2023**

Environment

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#### **Recommended response:**

- Camping fees in the Yukon continue to be some of the lowest in the country.
- Modest camping fee increases were necessary to support the continued maintenance and development of our world-class parks system, while continuing to ensure high quality visitor experiences at all our campgrounds.
- This is particularly important as we anticipate more park users and greater tourism in the years ahead.
- We look forward to continuing to sustainably grow our system of world-class parks and campgrounds treasured by Yukoners and visitors alike (see [BN #53](#)).

#### **Additional response:**

- In 2022, we raised the price of our camping fees for the first time in twenty years.
- In response to public feedback, we phased in the new price of the annual camping permit over two years as it was noted that increasing the annual permit from \$50 to \$200 in a single year would have been too much, too fast.
- This meant the cost of an annual camping permit increased to \$100 in 2022 and to \$200 for the 2023 camping season. And Yukoners over 65 years of age receive a fifty percent discount on all camping fees.

## **Session Briefing Note**

**Fall 2023**

### **Park Fees 2023**

Environment

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- In 2021, before the campground permit fee increase, camping fees covered only seven per cent of campground operating expenditures. With the fee increase, campground fees now cover approximately 17 per cent of campground operating expenditures.

#### **Third response:**

- Improving the financial sustainability of our parks is one of the ten priorities identified in the Yukon Parks Strategy.
- We have seen an increase in camping fee-generated revenue since the end of the COVID-19 pandemic. This revenue helps to offset the cost of providing camping facilities and services.
- We are committed to ensuring quality experiences for Yukoners and visitors by financially sustaining our parks and campgrounds over the years ahead.
- Other amenities, such as park entry, day use, parking, boat launch use, firewood, and interpretive programs, where offered, will continue to be provided at no additional cost.

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

- The public will want to know what to expect regarding camping fees for the 2024 camping season.

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#### **Background:**

- The public was engaged on park fees in 2018 and 2019 to finalize the Yukon Parks Strategy.
- In public engagement, 41% of respondents agreed with fee increases as proposed, 46% disagreed and the remaining 13% were not sure.
- 61% of the respondents agreed public services need to be funded by the government with a reasonable amount of cost recovery from park users.



## ENV #70

Fall 2023

## Session Briefing Note

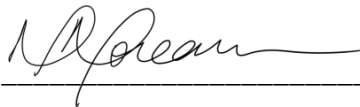
### Park Fees 2023

Environment

#### Park fees for 2023:

- Camping permits are \$20 per night per campsite, or \$18 if paid in advance through our new online service.
- Annual camping permits are \$200 and are available exclusively to Yukon residents.
- Yukoners aged 65 and older receive a 50 percent discount on all camping fees.
- A \$10 reservation fee applies to reservations for backcountry campsites in Tombstone Territorial Park.
- For activities requiring a park permit, such as commercial filming, a \$40 permit application fee will apply.

#### Approved by:



Deputy Minister of Environment

2023-10-17

Date approved

**Session Briefing Note****2023 Camping Season Summary**Environment

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**Recommended response:**

- Yukon Parks had a busy 2023 summer season and delivered another great camping experience for Yukoners and visitors.
- Campgrounds opened on May 4, 2023, ready for Yukoners to enjoy spring camping and a third, extended campground season.
- The Tombstone Interpretive Centre opened on May 13, with the Tombstone Territorial Park backcountry campgrounds opening on June 29.
- It was a very exciting season for Tombstone Territorial Park. This year the park hosted their first cultural camp with great success, opened its new gallery and exhibition space, and held numerous fireside talks with local elders and community members.
- In 2023, The Tombstone Interpretive Centre welcomed 21,435 visitors, with 1,840 participating in programs.
- Tombstone backcountry online reservations for the 2024 season will open in March 2024.
- As the 2023 camping season has now wrapped up, Parks staff are working hard to process all the payments and information received to prepare a summary to be shared with the public.
- In 2024, the Department of Environment will launch a new online campground reservation system pilot project, which will allow campers to book sites ahead of time at selected road-accessible campgrounds.

**Additional response:**

- Parks is investing approximately \$2.4 million in infrastructure upgrades this year to complete improvements to our campgrounds and recreational areas.

**Session Briefing Note****2023 Camping Season Summary****Environment**

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- Improvements to date include the new playgrounds at Marsh Lake, Wolf Creek and Congdon Creek. As well, we are happy to announce that five campgrounds received new boat launches this summer. New docks were installed at another three campgrounds.
- In July of this year, we opened 41 additional campsites to Congdon Creek. In addition, four walk-in, tenting sites at Wolf Creek have recently been installed. Additional sites planned for Ethel Lake and campground reconstruction are delayed to 2024 to complete heritage mitigations.

**Third response:**

- We will continue to improve our park infrastructure, including more boat launch replacements and dock systems in the future.
- Yukon Parks remains committed to completing the boat launch program while working in partnership with Community Services to deliver on these improvements.
- Parks is thinking ahead to the 2024 camping season and how we can create an even better experience for Yukoners and visitors.

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

- Yukoners may be interested to know about any highlights of the summer 2023 camping season.
- 

**Background:**

- The Yukon Parks Strategy identified 24 actions to address ten priorities from 2020 to 2030. Several of these actions relate to camping and recreation in territorial parks.
- New boat launches were installed at Twin Lakes, Otter Falls, Aishihik Lake, Frenchman Lake and Ethel Lake.
- New docks were installed at Pine Lake, Squanga Lake and Twin Lakes Campgrounds.
- Dezadeash Lake and Pine Lake boat launches were replaced in 2021, and the Tagish River Boat launch was replaced in 2022.
- A new boat launch will be installed at the Nunatuk Campground in the summer of 2024.

**Session Briefing Note****2023 Camping Season Summary**

Environment

- During the 2022 camping season, we hosted 79,620 visitors for 57,886 campsite-nights at our road-accessible campgrounds. This is a 55% increase from 2021 and is only 8% below the 2019 season (before the COVID pandemic reduced visitation from outside the territory).

Approved by:



Deputy Minister of Environment

2023-10-06

Date approved

**Session Briefing Note****Fall 2023****Campground Reservation System Pilot**Environment

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**Recommended response:**

- Our Yukon Campgrounds are highly popular with both Yukoners and visitors to the Territory.
- Under our 2020 Yukon Parks Strategy, we committed to pilot an online reservation system to service some of our Yukon campgrounds to improve access to campsites.
- We have been working with a contractor to develop an online reservation system that will work in Yukon and we will pilot the new reservation system for the start of the 2024 camping season.

**Additional response:**

- We currently have an online reservation system in place for back-country campgrounds in Tombstone Territorial Park, and we are planning to expand our network of reservable sites to include other campgrounds throughout the territory.
- We will use the pilot project approach to learn how to make reservations work efficiently as our parks system evolves.
- We are working to meet the needs and expectations of our valued visitors as our parks system and user volume increases in the Yukon.

**Third response:**

- Our plan is to pilot the online reservation in at least 5 campgrounds and back-country locations. The locations will be based on a variety of factors including campground demand and user visitation, the number of campsites per campground, and operational requirements.
- Yukon Parks will announce in the spring what the locations will be and how visitors can easily access the reservation system and what to do upon arrival to the campground.

**Session Briefing Note****Fall 2023****Campground Reservation System Pilot**

Environment

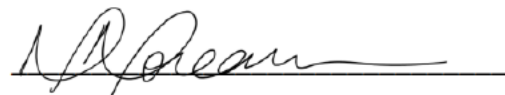
- As we learn from the pilot project, we plan to expand the reservation service to other campgrounds.

**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 and the public may want to know about the status and when they can use the new system.

**Background:**

- All of Yukon's 42 road-accessible campgrounds are available on a first-come-first-serve basis.
- During engagement on the Yukon Parks Strategy, Yukoners said they wanted some of these campsites to be available by online reservation.

**Approved by:**

Deputy Minister of Environment

2023-08-30

Date approved

## **Session Briefing Note**

### **Campground Firewood**

**Fall 2023**Environment

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**Recommended response:**

- We know that Yukoners value the services offered in our territorial parks and campgrounds, and the amenities provided, such as firewood.
- Firewood is a costly offering for Yukon Parks, and supply has been more complicated in recent years. We have been able to supply campgrounds this year and will work hard next year to do the same.
- We will continue to educate our campers and find creative ways to lower consumption when and where possible.

**Additional response:**

- We strongly encourage visitors to burn only what they need, and to never leave campfires unattended.
- An education campaign will be launched at the start of the 2024 camping season to encourage responsible firewood usage.
- Through the efforts of the Department of Environment, and the responsible actions of both Yukoners and visitors, we can lower consumption of firewood in Yukon campgrounds and prevent wasteful burning.

**Third response:**

- The Yukon is the only jurisdiction in Canada to include firewood with camping permits without additional fees.

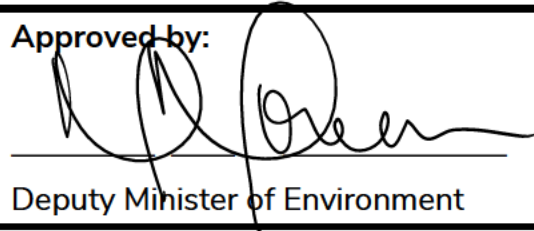
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**Context—this may be an issue because:**

- The Yukon experienced a territory-wide firewood shortage in 2022. Members of the public and the Official Opposition may ask what was done to limit the impact on firewood availability in Yukon campgrounds for the 2023 camping season.
- Yukoners may be concerned about the impact of free campground firewood on home heating firewood availability.

**Session Briefing Note**  
**Campground Firewood****Fall 2023**  
Environment**Background:**

- The Yukon Parks Strategy action, 4.10.1 *Update Park fees*, states that there will continue to be no separate fees for firewood.
- In 2022, Yukon Parks purchased 1,421 cords of firewood, totalling \$605,400.00.
- Yukon Parks saw a 26 percent increase in firewood usage in territorial campgrounds during the 2022 operating season.

**Approved by:**  
Deputy Minister of Environment2023.09.01  
Date approved



## **Session Briefing Note**

### **Parks Strategy Implementation**

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Environment

#### **Recommended response:**

- The Yukon Parks Strategy aims to enhance the visitor experience of Yukon Parks while preserving and protecting the ecological and cultural values of Yukoners.
- Since the Yukon Parks Strategy was released in fall 2020, we have made progress on several of the 24 strategic actions.
- To ensure Yukoners are informed, the strategy commits to publishing a brief report every three years on our progress in implementing the strategy and related commitments.
- The implementation progress report will be released later this year.

#### **Additional response:**

- We have created new campsites at existing campgrounds, including 41 additional sites at Congdon Creek, and we created two new trails at the Conrad and Twin Lakes campgrounds. In addition, 4 new sites were added to the Wolf Creek Campground.
- We invested in the repair and construction of campground infrastructure, including 5 boat launch replacements this year and 3 new dock installations at Squanga, Pine Lake and Twin Lakes this year.
- Park visitors may notice an increase in the use of indigenous languages and place names in maps and publications, as well as enhanced winter recreation opportunities at several sites.
- Following public engagement, we are pleased to say that the new parks and campground regulations will be rolled out during the 2024 camping season.

**ENV #74****Fall 2023****Session Briefing Note****Parks Strategy  
Implementation**

Environment

**Third response:**


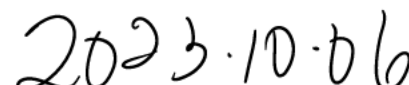
- We are committed to implementing the strategy, setting our long-term direction for Yukon's territorial parks system through to 2030.
- In 2024 we will launch and monitor a pilot reservation system for front-country and backcountry campgrounds and implement the new, modernized parks and campground regulations.
- We continue to engage with partners on exploring opportunities for new campground opportunities.
- Over the long term, our actions will continue to be guided by providing valued park services and shifting to a modern 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.

**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 2016, the Government of Yukon has added 117 sites to Yukon campgrounds across the territory.

**Approved by:**  
Deputy Minister of Environment

Date approved

# Session Briefing Note

## Flood Mapping

**ENV #80**  
**Fall 2023**  
Environment

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### Recommended response:

- As committed in the Our Clean Future climate strategy, the Government of Yukon is developing flood hazard maps for 14 flood-prone communities across the territory to identify flood hazards and help mitigate flood impacts to property, infrastructure and public safety.
- The first flood hazard maps are being developed for the Southern Lakes area, Carmacks and Teslin. Engagement on draft flood maps will occur this fall and winter and final maps **expected in summer 2024**. The southern lakes communities covered by the maps are Carcross, Tagish, Marsh Lake and Lake Laberge.
- The Government of Yukon will be seeking feedback on draft flood hazard maps by holding a series of community open houses, as well as online public engagement, to ensure the maps are accurate and reflect both community and Indigenous Knowledge.

### Additional response:

- We recognize that there is a strong desire in many communities to have an increased understanding of flooding risks and we have established a Flood Mapping Advisory Committee to help provided direction and input from local levels.
- The Flood Mapping Advisory Committee includes representatives from various Yukon government departments, the Council of Yukon First Nations, the Assembly of First Nations-Yukon and the Association of Yukon Communities.
- Due to the amount of work involved, we are taking a phased approach that prioritizes communities based on multiple criteria, including risk and readiness.

# Session Briefing Note

## Flood Mapping

**ENV #80**  
**Fall 2023**  
Environment

- As official flood maps are developed, we will continue to work with all levels of government and the Yukon's Emergency Measures Organization to support flood preparation, mitigation and response.
- The next communities for flood hazard mapping will be Old Crow, Ross River and Dawson/Klondike, with work occurring in 2024/25.

### Third response:

- Once finalized, official flood hazard maps will be publicly available.
- The Department of Environment is working with other departments to prepare for and understand how flood maps will support decision-making.

### Context:

- Fall engagement on draft flood maps may lead to questions on how flood maps will be used to make decisions and how the information may impact things such as home insurance, development, property value etc.
- On December 9, 2022, letters were sent to municipal and First Nations governments regarding the prioritization of flood map development and anticipated timelines.

### 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 is dependent on available resources but is expected by 2028. Federal funding is covering the majority of costs; each study is expected to cost between \$400,000 and \$500,000.
- In the long-term, investing in flood mapping now will inform future decision-making and should reduce future flood damages associated with building in flood-prone areas.

Approved by:



Deputy Minister of Environment

2023-11-16

Date approved

**Session Briefing Note****Beaver River Land Use Plan Update**      Energy, Mines and Resources  
and Environment

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**Recommended response:**

- The Government of Yukon is committed to working with the First Nation of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun to advance land use planning in their Traditional Territory, including the Beaver River watershed.
- Work is continuing to advance on the Beaver River Land Use Plan, which will support regional planning in the area.
- The Government of Yukon recognizes the unique challenges that have faced the First Nation of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun these past few months, including the wildfire evacuation, which have affected timelines.

**Additional response:**

- The Beaver River Land Use Plan would support the 2018 agreement between the Government of Yukon and the First Nation of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun to enable the construction of a tote road once planning is complete.
- The information we gathered during three stages of public and stakeholder consultation is informing the development of the draft Beaver River Land Use Plan, which we aim to complete in 2024.

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

- The Beaver River Land Use Plan work is advancing slowly and there may be questions regarding its status and when it will be complete.


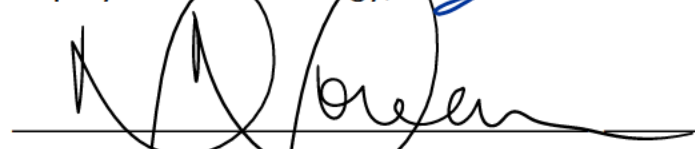
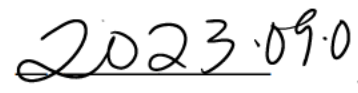
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**Background:**

- 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 Na-Cho Nyäk Dun and the Government of Yukon, which supports the proposed ATAC tote Road.
- The Agreement states that a land use plan must be finalized before any road construction occurs.

**Session Briefing Note****Beaver River Land Use Plan Update**      Energy, Mines and Resources  
and Environment

- The First Nation of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun has indicated they would consider including the Beaver River Land Use Plan in a broader Chapter 11 regional land use planning process.
- ATAC Resources Ltd. has recently 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 Na-Cho Nyäk Dun petitioned the Yukon Supreme Court to set aside the Government of Yukon's issuance of a Decision Document for a 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 court referred the matter back to the Government of Yukon for consideration. The Government of Yukon has appealed the Supreme Court decision in the Metallic Minerals case (EMR BN #90).
- The March 2023 declaration of a State of Emergency by the First Nation of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun and the evacuation of Mayo due to wildfire may affect the timing of the Beaver River planning process.

**Approved by:**  
Deputy Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources  
Date approved  
Deputy Minister of Environment  
Date approved

**Session Briefing Note****Yukon Forum –  
Regional Planning****Energy, Mines, and Resources  
and Environment**

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**Recommended response:**

- We remain committed to the goals and priorities set out by the Yukon Forum Regional Land Use Planning Working Group to advance land use planning in a way that honors the Final Agreements.
- The working group ensures the success of planning commissions and encourages new plans to begin.
- We continue to work with the working group, First Nations and the Yukon Land Use Planning Council to improve regional land use planning and to advocate for federal funding for implementation.

**Additional response:**

- We support the Yukon Forum's priorities and the efforts to build strong government-to-government relations and collaboration between parties.
- The Government of Canada, Council of Yukon First Nations and Government of Yukon are undertaking the 2024 Umbrella Final Agreement funding review.

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

- Regional planning continues to be raised as a priority for First Nations, industry and the public.
- Stable funding for Chapter 11 processes continues to be a concern for First Nations.

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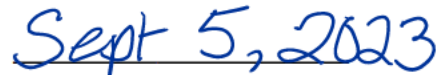
**Background:**

- The Yukon Forum is a quarterly meeting that takes place between leaders of Yukon First Nations, the Council of Yukon First Nations and the Government of Yukon, with the goal of building strong government-to-government relations.

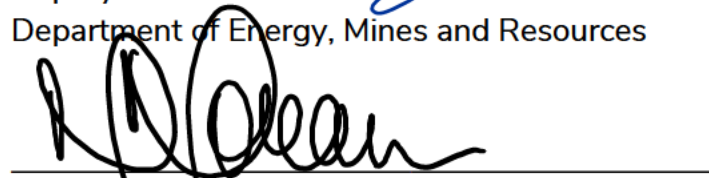
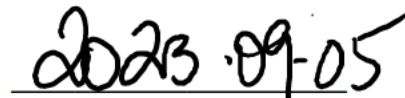


**Session Briefing Note****Yukon Forum –  
Regional Planning****Energy, Mines, and Resources  
and Environment**

- In accordance with the Yukon Forum's Joint Priority Action Plan, which identifies Chapter 11 land use planning as a priority, Yukon Forum leaders developed a strategic approach to restart and improve regional land use planning in the Yukon.
- The approach entails working together to implement four priority objectives:
  1. Set up commissions for success by examining the roles of the Yukon Land Use Planning Council, Planning Commissions and the Parties; review and agree on a broadly applicable process for regional land use planning; and review the information requirements of regional land use planning.
  2. Support several land use planning processes concurrently inside and outside of Chapter 11.
  3. Conduct a legislative review of First Nations' and Government of Yukon laws.
  4. Lead the 2019-2020 review of funding adequacy for regional land use planning under Chapter 11.

**Approved by:**Deputy Minister  
Department of Energy, Mines and Resources

Date approved

Deputy Minister  
Department of Environment

Date approved



## **Session Briefing Note**

**Fall 2023**

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

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#### **Recommended response:**

- We are working 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. (Ref BN #96)
- Our governments have been working together to designate the Plan's Special Management Areas as protected areas under legislation. We anticipate that the designations will be announced this year.
- After designation is complete, management planning processes will get underway. We will co-develop the management direction for achieving the vision for the park with our First Nation partners – this will also include public consultation.

#### **Additional response:**

- Other implementation activities include the establishment of two hydrometric stations on the Snake and Wind Rivers. These stations monitor water levels and flow and can be accessed by the public in real time. Accessible water data increases safety of river users and is valuable for research.
- We have also produced mapping products that are publicly available, which used satellite imagery to map wetlands and areas of existing disturbance. These products can be used to inform future land management.

#### **Third response:**

- Two areas within the Peel Watershed have been nominated by the Gwich'in Social and Cultural Institute to be National Historic Sites.

**Session Briefing Note****Fall 2023****Peel Land Use Planning Implementation** Environment

These are areas of great cultural importance to the Tetl'it Gwich'in.  
These nominations are supported by all five parties to the Peel Plan.

- The Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada will determine whether to recommend these sites as designated sites to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change Canada.
- We look forward to continued collaborative work with our First Nations partners to implement the Peel Plan.

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

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

**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.
- The two areas nominated to be National Historic Sites are Tshuu tr'adaojlich'uu and Teetl'it njik. They are culturally significant locations along the Peel River.

**Approved by:**

Deputy Minister of Environment

2023.09.01

Date approved

**Session Briefing Note****McIntyre Creek Park Planning**Environment

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**Recommended response:**

- The establishment of Chasàn Chuà/ McIntyre Creek Park continues to be a priority for the Government of Yukon.
- To support the creation of the proposed Park, we have taken 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 Park area.
- We have also established an internal administrative reserve to ensure public land use applications align with the purpose of a park and the City's Official Community Plan.
- In addition, we have initiated discussions with the City of Whitehorse, Parks Canada, Kwanlin Dün First Nation, and Ta'an Kwäch'än Council to support Chasàn Chuà/ McIntyre Creek Park management planning.
- Parks Canada has expressed a willingness to provide support and federal tools in management planning.
- We have planned meetings with the First Nations, Parks Canada and the City of Whitehorse this fall, where we will discuss the opportunities for collaboration and roles and responsibilities in management planning.

**Additional response:**

- The McIntyre Creek area supports a diversity of habitats important to wildlife, including wetlands.
- It is also known to be an important cultural area for both the Kwanlin Dün First Nation and Ta'an Kwäch'än Council, and Yukon University recognizes the importance of the area to support field-based learning and research.

## Session Briefing Note

### McIntyre Creek Park Planning

Environment

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#### Third response:

- A collaborative planning approach is key, due to the number of parties involved. I wrote to Mayor Cabott in July to discuss the next steps of the planning process for this project and a meeting was scheduled as a result of it.
- I met with Mayor Cabott on September 6<sup>th</sup>, and Parks Canada will be reaching out to their office, to discuss further steps.
- We will continue to work with all affected parties to discuss ways to ensure the environmental protection of McIntyre Creek is moving forward.

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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 Chuà/ McIntyre Creek Park.
- There has been a longstanding interest from several groups and stakeholders to establish a park in this area, including Friends of McIntyre Creek, Yukon Conservation Society, Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society and the Porter Creek Community Association.
- A mining company with active quartz claims that overlap the proposed park boundary has applied for approval to conduct Class 1 activities. The City of Whitehorse is aware of the proposal and is looking into whether it would meet the City's zoning requirements. The Department of Energy, Mines and Resources' decision as to whether or not to approve this Class 1 is pending.

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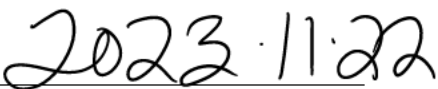
#### Background:

- The area is located within the City of Whitehorse boundary. The Government of Yukon, Ta'an Kwäch'än Council and Kwanlin Dün First Nation have land 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 Chuà/McIntyre Creek Park.

**Session Briefing Note****Fall 2023****McIntyre Creek Park Planning**Environment

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- 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 internal administrative reserve.

**Approved by:**  
Deputy Minister of Environment  
Date approved

# **Session Briefing Note**

## **Dawson Regional Land Use Planning**

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**EMR #1 / ENV #94**  
**Fall 2023**

Energy, Mines and Resources  
and Environment

### **Recommended response:**

- The Government of Yukon and Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in are making progress on consensus discussions regarding the decision on the Dawson Regional Land Use Recommended Plan.
- Engagement on the Recommended Plan concluded December 20, 2022. A What We Heard report detailing feedback received during the engagement was released in June 2023.
- Input gathered from the engagement will inform the Parties' decision whether to accept, reject or request modifications to the Recommended Plan.
- 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 by late 2024.

### **Additional response:**

- If a Final Recommended Plan is required, there will be another round of public engagement and First Nations consultation, and the Government of Yukon will provide detailed feedback to the Commission to support their work developing this plan.

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

- The Dawson Regional Land Use Plan and the Government of Yukon's response to the Recommended Plan, and the future of the interim withdrawals are of high interest to Yukoners.

# **Session Briefing Note**

## **Dawson Regional Land Use Planning**

**EMR #1 / ENV #94**  
**Fall 2023**

Energy, Mines and Resources  
and Environment

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### **Background:**

- The Government of Yukon and Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in formed the Dawson Regional Land Use Planning Commission in December 2018.
- The *Umbrella 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 effects and working within the Draft Plan prohibition of entry order (interim and permanent).
- The Planning Commission delivered the Recommended Plan to the Parties (Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in and the Government of Yukon) on June 10, 2022.
- The Government of Yukon and Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in 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, 2023 and may be extended to allow time to complete a final plan for the region.

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

**EMR #1 / ENV #94**  
**Fall 2023**

Energy, Mines and Resources  
and Environment

Approved by:



September 1, 2023

A/Deputy Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources

Date approved



Deputy Minister of Environment

2023-09-01

Date approved



**Session Briefing Note****Fall 2023****Department of Environment  
Accomplishments**

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Environment

**Recommended response:**

- Summer 2023 –Attended the Canadian Council of Minister of Environment meeting to advance shared goals of reducing plastic waste and creating more resilient communities.
- Spring/Summer 2023 - Updated infrastructure in several campgrounds, including creating 48 additional campsites in Congdon Creek, Wolf Creek and Ethel Lake campgrounds; building two new trails at Conrad and Twin Lakes campgrounds; replacing six boat launches and building new docks at the Squanga, Pine Lake and Twin Lakes campgrounds.
- Summer 2023 - The Hunter Education Program completed 58 courses related to wilderness skills, food security, ethical hunting/fishing practices and dangerous wildlife safety.
- Summer 2023 - Held public engagement on regulations for the *Animal Protection and Control Act* to ensure Yukoners had the opportunity to provide input on this new law.
- June 5, 2023 – Worked with the Department of Community Services to launch the new online Flood Atlas platform to strengthen public safety and improve access to flood information.
- April 17, 2023 - Increased protection of the proposed McIntyre Creek/Chasàn Chùà park by expanding the area withdrawn from mineral staking to include the full proposed boundary of the park.
- April 1, 2023 - Made sport fishing licences available electronically.
- March 8, 2023 - Hosted the Flood Hazard Mapping and Geoscience Forum for Yukon First Nations to foster collaborative dialogue on climate adaptation projects.

**Session Briefing Note****Fall 2023****Department of Environment  
Accomplishments**

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Environment

- February 8, 2023 - Designated the Tagish River as a Habitat Protection Area under the *Wildlife Act*.
- January 10, 2023 - Released *Policy for the Stewardship of Yukon's Wetlands* to improve local knowledge of wetlands, manage and minimize impacts on wetlands, and protect the most important wetlands, all while promoting paths towards responsible and sustainable resource development and land use activities.
- January 1, 2023 - Implemented a single-use paper bag ban to reduce waste in the Yukon.
- December 14, 2022 - Signed the Bilateral Nature Agreement with the Government of Canada to advance nature conservation and protection across the territory.
- November 16, 2022 - Passed the *Clean Energy Act* to legislate the Yukon's targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and deliver on several key climate actions found in *Our Clean Future*.
- November 16, 2022 - Passed the *Animal Protection and Control Act* to provide a comprehensive, enforceable legal framework for managing all aspects of animal protection and control in the Yukon.
- November 9, 2022 - Signed the final management plan for the Tagish River Habitat Protection Area to conserve fish and wildlife populations and their habitats, including migratory waterfowl, and recognize the relationship and connection that Carcross/Tagish First Nation have to this important area.
- November 1-3, 2022 - Held a recycling summit to ensure Yukoners' voices are reflected in an Extended Producer Responsibility System.

**Session Briefing Note****Fall 2023****Department of Environment  
Accomplishments**

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Environment

- September 12, 2022 - Released the Yukon Climate Risk Assessment, which is supporting us to make informed, forward-looking decisions to decrease the negative ways climate change can impact our health and wellbeing, livelihoods and way of life.
- August 31, 2022 - Hosted the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment in Whitehorse.
- August 30, 2022 – Signed a Bilateral Water Management Agreements with NWT (Liard and Peel Rivers) to strengthen relationships and cooperation between the Government of Yukon and transboundary partners, and ensure these waters are protected now and for future generations.
- June 15, 2022 – Signed a funding agreement with the Government of Canada for \$25 million to support ten climate initiatives, including the Atlin hydro expansion, flood forecast mapping, and wind power in Kluane.
- February 18, 2022 - Announced endorsement of the Yukon North Slope Wildlife Conservation and Management Plan (2021) to the Wildlife Management Advisory Council (North Slope).
- January 1, 2022 - Implemented a permanent extension to Yukon's campground season to enable Yukoners and visitors to have more time to enjoy our territorial parks.
- January 1, 2022-Updated Park fees to improve our parks system's financial sustainability, as committed to in the Yukon Parks Strategy.
- January 1, 2022 - Implemented a ban on single-use plastic bags to reduce waste in the Territory.

## Session Briefing Note

Fall 2023

### Department of Environment Accomplishments

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Environment

- 2021 and 2022 - Hosted two Youth Panels on Climate Change to build youth capacity and leadership on climate change.
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**Context—this may be an issue because:**

- The Cabinet Office has requested that each department include an Accomplishments Note in their session binder.
- 

**Background:**

- Minister Clarke was provided a new Mandate letter following the leadership change in early 2023.
- Many of the commitments are continuations of long-term goals, and some are new goals.

**Approved by:**

2023-09-27

A/Deputy Minister of Environment

Date approved

## **Session Briefing Note**

### **Peel Implementation and Compensation**

**Fall 2023**

Energy, Mines and  
Resources

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#### **Recommended response:**

- Implementation of the Peel Watershed Regional Land Use Plan is well underway, including managing permanent and temporary staking prohibitions within conservation areas identified in the plan.
- Mineral projects that are proposed on existing claims only proceed if they meet the requirements of the Plan as well as Yukon's assessment and regulatory regimes.
- We continue to meet regularly with our First Nations partners from Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, First Nation of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun, Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation and Gwich'in Tribal Council to implement the plan.

#### **Additional response:**

- We are working with our First Nations partners on protecting conservation areas in the plan. Towards this goal, more than 6500 out of almost 9000 mineral claims in the Peel have either lapsed or been relinquished in exchange for non-monetary compensation.
- We worked with our partners to include the Peel region's special management areas as interim protected areas under a federal conservation areas accounting initiative.
- We are working collaboratively with our First Nations partners through the Peel Plan Implementation Committee to clarify the Peel Plan recommendations of adequate baseline data required for evaluating proposed projects.

## Session Briefing Note

### Peel Implementation and Compensation

Fall 2023

Energy, Mines and  
Resources

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

- There has been some recent media coverage about implementation challenges of approved regional plans.

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#### Background:

- Three types of conservation areas in the Peel Watershed Region have been withdrawn from staking under the *Quartz Mining Act* and the *Placer Mining Act*. Special Management Areas have been withdrawn indefinitely and represent 55 per cent of the region. Wilderness Areas and Wilderness Areas-Boreal Caribou are withdrawn until January 1, 2030, representing 28 per cent of the region.
- We provide opportunities for relinquishment of mineral claims for eligible claims holders in the designated Peel conservation areas in exchange of non-financial incentives, such as a period of relief from assessment on mineral claims in other regions of the territory. (See BN #87).
- In 2021, Silver 47 Exploration Corp submitted a proposal for a Class 3 quartz exploration program on their Michelle Creek property, overlapping several Landscape Management Units within the Peel Watershed region. (See BN #91).
- Other implementation work includes working with the Government of Canada on a potential national Park in the area. (See ENV BN# 92, Peel Land Use Plan Implementation)

#### Approved by:



Deputy Minister  
Department of Energy, Mines and Resources

October 5, 2023

Date approved

## Session Briefing Note

Fall 2023

### Firearms – Federal Changes & Buyback Program

Justice

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#### Recommended response:

- The federal government's Bill C-21 would amend several Acts with changes focusing on organized crime, supporting violence prevention programs for youth, and taking measures to combat gun-related domestic violence and self-harm.
- Canadians are concerned about gun violence and the Government of Canada has reaffirmed that they are committed to protecting Canadians and making communities safer for everyone.
- The Government of Yukon supports the rights of legal gun owners in the territory, while also supporting an approach to gun control that helps protect the community and public safety.

#### Additional response:

- Our government will be closely monitoring the roll out of the Buyback Program to ensure that program implementation does not impact front line policing.
- The Government of Canada will need to ensure that Federal resources are provided to support the roll out of the Buyback Program.

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#### Context:

- Bill C-21 aims to bolster border and law enforcement capacity, reduce the number of firearms in circulation, stop crime before it starts, address root causes of violence, create red and yellow flag laws, and provide resources to help combat domestic violence involving firearms.
- The Yukon has the highest per capita number of prohibited and restricted firearms licenses in Canada. Lawful firearm owners in the territory include many hunters, trappers and people performing remote wilderness work.
- While many of the provisions of Bill C-21 have not been contentious, concerns heard in the Yukon relate to the Buyback Program and the impacts on hunters.

## Session Briefing Note

**Fall 2023**

### Firearms – Federal Changes & Buyback Program

Justice

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#### Background:

- On February 16, 2021, the federal government introduced Bill C-21. The Bill contains amendments to the Criminal Code and Firearms Act, including new “red flag” and “yellow flag” laws to allow people to apply to a court for the removal of someone’s firearm if there is cause to fear for personal safety (such as domestic violence or mental health concerns).
- Other changes introduced by Bill C-21 include measures to combat gun-related organized crime; provisions allowing municipalities to ban handguns through bylaws; violence prevention programming; stronger border controls for firearm offences; stricter criminal penalties; and technical amendments to federal authorities.
- The Bill passed third reading in the House of Commons on May 18, 2023, and its second reading at the Senate on June 21, 2023. It is currently at consideration in committee in the Senate but has not yet become law.
- On January 19, 2023, the Yukon’s MP Brendan Hanley and the federal Minister of Public Safety, Marco Mendicino, hosted a roundtable with Yukoners to discuss Bill C-21 and the proposed amendments (which have since been withdrawn).
- On January 20, 2023, Premier Ranj Pillai issued a statement on Bill C-21 that supports the Yukon MP Brendan Hanley’s efforts to advocate for and defend the interests of Yukoners, and his stance that the Yukon does not support Bill C-21 in its present form.
- On May 1, 2023, the Government of Canada introduced revised proposed amendments to Bill C-21. The proposed amendments align with recommendations put forward in the Final Report of the Mass Casualty Commission released on March 30, 2023.

#### Buyback Program

- In 2022, the Government of Canada banned more than 1,500 models and variants of assault-style firearms. The federal government is finalizing the development of a Buyback Program to safely remove the now prohibited firearms from our communities.



## Session Briefing Note

**Fall 2023**

### Firearms – Federal Changes & Buyback Program

Justice

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- The firearms ban includes a period of amnesty, to be followed by a mandatory Buyback Program for the newly banned models. The amnesty period has been extended to October 2025 to ensure affected firearm owners and businesses continue to be protected from criminal liability for unlawful possession while they come into compliance with the law.
  - According to the 2020 Commissioner of Firearms Report, the total number of individual firearms licenses in the Yukon was 8,056 in 2020. Of those, 2,050 licenses were for restricted firearms and 143 were prohibited firearms registered to Yukon residents.
  - Firearm owners will need to confirm intent to participate, disposal choice and the compensation amount for assault-style firearms using a Buyback Portal.
  - The buyback process is expected to involve four stages:
    - notification;
    - collection;
    - transportation/storage; and
    - destruction.
  - Once the Buyback Program is completed, the Government of Canada will create a report on the firearms collected, processed, destroyed and payments issued.
  - In keeping with its core policing mandate, the RCMP will be the agency responsible for leading the collection of these assault-style firearms as it has operations in the Yukon.
  - All RCMP resources used to support the delivery of this program will need to be funded exclusively by the federal government.
  - The mandatory buyback component is a departure from past Canadian firearm regulation changes, in which “grandfather clauses” allowed firearms owners to keep previously legal firearms already in their possession.

#### Privately made firearms:

- The Government of Yukon strongly supports measures to counter the manufacturing and prohibited use of privately made firearms (commonly known as ghost guns).

## Session Briefing Note

Fall 2023

### Firearms – Federal Changes & Buyback Program

Justice

- Privately made firearms are printed using a 3D printer and gun blueprints which can be downloaded online and assembled within hours at a low cost.
- The receiver portion of the firearm can be printed and will not have a serial number, while the remaining firearms parts can all be purchased at gun stores and online without a firearms license.
- The Government of Yukon is currently doing its due diligence by:
  - researching the social, political and criminal aspects of ghost guns;
  - keeping up-to-date on media and social media discussions on these guns;
  - keeping up-to-date with federal/provincial/territorial colleagues; and
  - following world and domestic news on illegal firearms.

#### Statistics:

- Statistics Canada (2022) notes that police-reported crime included a national increase in incidents of discharging a firearm with intent (up 8 per cent) and using a firearm in the commission of an indictable offence (up 3 per cent).
- The rate of violent *Criminal Code* firearm offences has increased for the eighth consecutive year (rising 4 per cent in 2022), while non-violent firearm offences remain stable.
- Of the 342 firearm-related homicides, 63 per cent were committed with a handgun, and 23 per cent were committed with a rifle or shotgun. The firearm type was unknown or of another type for the remaining 14 per cent of firearm-related homicides.

#### Approved by:



Deputy Minister, Justice

November 23, 2023

Date approved

**Session Briefing Note****Fall 2023****Yukon Wildlife Preserve Funding**Environment

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**Recommended response:**

- The Department of Environment provides approximately \$762,000 annually in core funding to the Yukon Wildlife Preserve, which bolsters the Preserve's approximate \$794,000 total revenue generated by operations, federal funding and non-governmental grants.
- In addition to the funding provided by the Department of Environment, the organization received approximately \$75,000 through agreements managed by other Yukon government departments.
- The Government of Yukon provided a total of \$837,000 in funding to the Yukon Wildlife Preserve in the 2022-23 fiscal year.
- We have recently met with representatives from the preserve to discuss funding concerns.
- After speaking with them and based on their prioritization we have agreed to provide an additional \$35,000 in one-time funding to assist the preserve with perimeter fence clearing.
- This project will allow easier access to the perimeter fence of the preserve at a remote location as well as support necessary fencing upgrades.
- We are committed to continue to work with the preserve to address its funding concerns and are actively working to enhance our collaboration.

# Session Briefing Note

# Fall 2023

## Yukon Wildlife Preserve Funding

## Environment

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

- On November 20, 2023, representatives from the Yukon Wildlife Preserve conducted an interview where they described concerns with the high cost of operating the preserve.

### Background:

- The land, buildings, and animals are all owned by the Government of Yukon and managed by the Minister of Environment through the *Environment Public Property Regulation* under the *Financial Administration Act*.
- The preserve is approximately 350 acres (map attached below) located at Kilometer 8 on the Takhini Hot Spring Road. It currently houses mule deer, bison, elk, caribou, muskox, mountain goat, thinhorn sheep, moose, lynx, and fox. Some wildlife is housed at the preserve for rehabilitation.
- The Yukon Wildlife Preserve employs approximately 13 staff, though there is some fluctuation in staffing levels due to turnover and hiring challenges.
- The preserve's strategic priorities have some overlap with the goals of the Government of Yukon; these are around providing high quality care for animals, rehabilitating wildlife, maintaining the infrastructure at the preserve, and increasing the revenue generated by the preserve.

**Yukon Wildlife Preserve Revenue by Source for 2022-23**


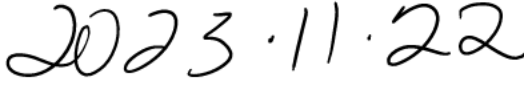
	Source	Amount
Revenue	Admissions	\$466,000
	Annual Memberships	\$59,000
	Nature Camp	\$62,000
	Gift Shop Sales	\$79,000
	Other Sources (i.e., Rentals/Photograph, Interest Income, etc.)	\$43,000
	Grants from non-governmental organizations	\$35,000
	Donations	\$33,000

**Session Briefing Note****Fall 2023****Yukon Wildlife Preserve Funding**

Environment

Government transfers	Core Funding (From ENV)	\$762,000
	Funding from the Department of Tourism and Culture	\$26,500
	Funding from the Department of Education	\$21,500
	Funding for the Operation of Swan Haven	\$17,000
	Funding for Summer Career Placement	\$10,000
	Federal funding	\$17,000
Total Revenue		\$1,631,000

- Admission price at the preserve are \$18 per Adult, \$11 per Child, membership prices begin at \$57.75 for an individual and go up to \$117.60 for a family and allow for unlimited visits to the Yukon Wildlife Preserve.

<b>Approved by:</b>  Deputy Minister of Environment	 Date approved
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**Session Briefing Note****Fall 2023****2023 State of the Environment Report**Environment

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**Recommended response:**

- Yukon's environment is changing due to climate change impacts and a growing population.
- More than ever, it is important that we continue to monitor the state of our environment across our land, air, and water so we can plan, adapt, and take action where we need to.
- This is the reason for tabling the State of the Environment Report in the Legislative Assembly.
- This report is an information-rich resource that provides an update on a suite of environmental indicators, based on information available up to 2022 and can be found on Yukon.ca.
- The State of the Environment Report is a collective effort involving scientific experts and specialists from government agencies and non-governmental organizations who have provided information, data and advice.

**Additional response:**

- In accordance with the *Environment Act*, the State of Environment Report is tabled annually. Full reports are tabled every three years, and interim reports are tabled in the intervening years. The 2023 Report is a full report.
- It reports on the status of many aspects of the environment, covering key areas such as land, air, water, fish, and wildlife and importantly, climate change in the Yukon.

## Session Briefing Note

Fall 2023

## 2023 State of the Environment Report

Environment

- Highlights from this year's report include Yukon's greatest ever recorded snowpack, the highest annual maximum groundwater levels on record, the lowest recorded number of Chinook salmon reaching their spawning grounds in the Yukon, and a precedent-setting number of Executive Committee screenings for the Yukon Socio-economic Assessment Board.


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

- Tabling the State of the Environment Report is a legislative requirement.
- Questions may be raised about the Report, and the timing of its tabling.

**Background:**

- The Yukon has been preparing State of the Environment reports since 1995.
- State of the Environment reporting is a requirement of the *Environment Act*. Numerous national and sub-national governments prepare similar reports to share information with citizens about the status of the environment.
- Various advocacy and research groups, including universities, use these reports to assist with their work. They also provide key environmental information to the Yukon public, planners and environmental consultants.

Approved by:

  
Deputy Minister of Environment2023-11-16  
Date approved

**Session Briefing Note****Fall 2023****Human-Wildlife Conflict**Environment

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**Recommended response (bears):**

- Ensuring public safety is a priority for our conservation officers. They have a range of knowledge and tools to help residents discourage wildlife from coming onto their property and to reduce human-wildlife conflict overall.
- There were several incidents this fall in which bears were attracted to residential areas as a result of unsecured attractants. Conservation officers have reached out to Bylaw Services at the City of Whitehorse to explore options to better manage these attractants.
- We have seen lots of bear activity recently. When a bear poses a safety risk, it is captured, officers determine if the bear is a suitable candidate for a Global Positioning System radio collar and is relocated to a remote area away from people.
- Euthanizing wildlife, including bears, is always the last resort and is only done after all other measures have failed or if the bear's behaviour poses an immediate risk to public safety.
- So far in 2023, the Department of Environment responded to 144 black bear calls and 21 grizzly bear calls. One grizzly bear and six black bears were translocated. Conservation officers euthanized 23 black bears and 7 grizzly bears in 2023.
- Yukoners dealing with aggressive wildlife or those who witness someone feeding wildlife please 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.
- They are clever and resourceful animals and they adapt well to living in many different environments, and it is important that the public minimize their interaction with foxes as much as possible.



**Session Briefing Note****Human-Wildlife Conflict****Environment**

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- In 2021, the Yukon government launched the Urban Fox Monitoring Project that is helping us better understand fox populations in the City, their health and potential public safety risks due to urban foxes.
- The concentration of foxes is directly related to the number of residences in the area, as more people usually means increased attractants.
- Conservation Officers only control foxes when necessary, it is a last resort in addressing problematic fox interactions with the public.
- Foxes are relocated for various reasons such as reducing negative interactions with the public and pets or if there is a fox habituated in an unwanted area.
- In 2023, 10 foxes have been relocated and 2 foxes were controlled using lethal management.
- I encourage Yukoners to reduce their interactions with foxes in our communities by securing attractants, not feeding foxes and keeping their pets safe from urban foxes.

**Third response:**

- Wildlife-vehicle collisions are another form of human-wildlife conflict, resulting in the deaths of 67 wildlife in 2023, with most being ungulates.
- The Departments of Environment and Highways and Public Works work together to develop and implement adaptive strategies to decrease the rate of wildlife collisions on Yukon roads, such as signage and brush clearing to improve visibility.

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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.
- 2023 has been an unusually busy year for wildlife calls: conservation officers have dealt with a large number of animals.

**Session Briefing Note****Human-Wildlife Conflict**Environment

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- Conservation officers responded to reports of bears being illegally shot in Watson Lake, Whitehorse (Mary Lake) and Haines Junction. Wildlife are highly valued by Yukoners and all three of these poaching incidents are currently under investigation. While poaching is not a human-wildlife conflict, questions about interactions with bears may be generated by these incidents.
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**Background:**

- The Department of Environment continues to raise awareness with brochures and communication initiatives to help minimize conflicts between people and wildlife.

**Approved by:**\_\_\_\_\_  
Deputy Minister of Environment

2023-10-16

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

**Session Briefing Note****Fall 2023****Dispatch Services**Environment

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**Recommended response:**

- Dispatch services are integral for departments whose personnel conduct fieldwork or must be deployed to calls for assistance throughout the Yukon.
- Dispatchers ensure the safety of our personnel in the field and allow our critical and essential services to respond quickly to emergencies and time-sensitive issues.
- Our dispatch services contract provides services to the departments of Environment, Community Services, and Highways and Public Works, Energy, Mines and Resources and includes tracking and communicating with field personnel, notification and rapid response in case of emergency, and monitoring the Turn in Poachers and Polluters and Yukon Spill lines.
- Dispatch services also support Volunteer Fire Departments and the Fire Marshall's office.

**Additional response:**

- Early in the COVID-19 pandemic many of Yukon government essential workers were redeployed to new and often remote assignments and a critical need for dispatch services was identified to monitor employee safety.
- As such, a local dispatch service provider was issued the contract through a direct award process using an exception clause in the Yukon Procurement Policy, which allows direct award contracts in an emergency.
- The department is now preparing for a public procurement process for dispatch services, the successful vendor will commence services in May 2024. Until the procurement process is completed, the current contractor will continue to provide these critical services.

**Session Briefing Note****Fall 2023****Dispatch Services**

Environment

- The new contract for dispatch services will go to open tender in the Fall of 2023, to begin services in May 2024.

**Third response:**

- While the Yukon government makes it a priority to ensure Yukon businesses can benefit from procurement, we are also committed to following the processes set out in the Yukon Procurement Policy.
- We are required to conduct open bid processes as they are fairer for businesses and ensure Yukon taxpayers get the maximum return on their tax dollars.
- We will be taking steps to ensure that this open tender process does not create any disruption in dispatch services.

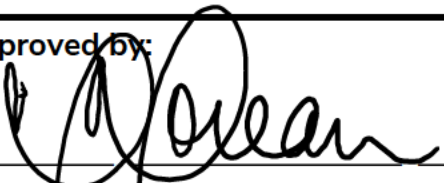
**Context—this may be an issue because:**

- There may be questions on the delay in pursuing an open tender process for dispatch services, following the direct award during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Background:**

- During Requests for Expression of Interest in 2019 and 2023, the Department of Environment received one response from a local company (the current vendor) and a few responses from respondents from outside the territory.
- This formal market research obligates the Yukon government to go to an open tender to provide fairness and transparency.
- The future contract covers the dispatch services for the departments of Environment, Community Services, Highways and Public Works, and Energy, Mines and Resources.

Approved by:

  
Deputy Minister of Environment

2023.09.04

Date approved

## Housing Issues

## Yukon Housing Corporation

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### Recommended response:

- There are challenges the Yukon's housing continuum, including:
  - a lack of affordable rental supply;
  - high house prices and mortgage rates; and
  - homelessness and a lack of access to housing with services.
- Exceptionally high building costs and rising interest rates are creating significant challenges for new housing projects, for both Yukon Housing Corporation and its partners.
- We continue working hard to move projects forward - through collaboration and strong partnerships - to provide relevant solutions to Yukoners' housing needs.

### Additional response:

- Our government is seeking to increase housing options across the continuum and to make housing more affordable for Yukoners. (See [Tab #0](#))
- We continue to work to increase housing and land supply and to provide rental subsidies and support programs for homeowners to offer more affordable options for Yukoners.
- Following the 2022 Office of the Auditor General's (OAG) report, the Corporation and Department of Health and Social Services continue to progress implementing the OAG's recommendations. ([Tab #09](#))

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### Context:

- On a square footage basis, contractors' bids for YHC projects have more than doubled in the last two years alone.
- The rental vacancy rate in the Yukon for all building types is currently 2.2 per cent (YBS Spring Rental Survey).
- The Banks 5-year average mortgage interest rate increased from 4.75 per cent in February 2022 to 6.24 per cent in May 2023 (Weekly Updates).

### Housing Issues

Yukon Housing Corporation

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#### Background:

- In 2022-23, the Yukon Housing Corporation lapsed 34 per cent of its revised capital budget.
  - This was largely due to cancellation and scaling back of projects being supported through the corporation's loans and grants programs.
- New housing projects led by YHC's partners – including the Safe at Home Society and the Vimy Heritage Housing Society – continue to face delays.
- The 5th and Rogers RFP received only a single application. It is currently under review.

Approved by:



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Colin McDowell  
A/ President, Yukon Housing Corporation

September 8, 2023

Date approved

# Session Briefing Note

## Inflation and Affordability (Corporate Note)

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### Recommended:

- All Yukon households continue to see their budgets stretched by higher prices, with lower-income households often feeling the worst effects.
- At the same time, our government continues to track inflation and its impact on Yukoners, so that we can take steps to ease the burden, as we have been doing for the last year.
- The Government of Yukon continues to work hard to make life more affordable for Yukoners and has announced an extension of the temporary \$150 Inflation Relief Rebate to reduce the impacts that inflation continues to have on Yukoners.
- All non-government residential and commercial electricity customers will see a \$50 credit on their bills starting in November 2023 and running through December 2023 and January 2024.
- Several other measures included in the 2023-24 Budget are helping to make life more affordable for Yukoners.
  - o funding for food in Yukon schools;
  - o the timber harvesting incentive and a support program for commercial fuelwood harvesters and retailers to boost the fuelwood supply;
  - o a quarterly top-up of \$150 to eligible recipients of the Yukon Senior Income Supplement;

## **Session Briefing Note**

### **Inflation and Affordability**

#### **(Corporate Note)**

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- o a \$100 monthly increase to eligible Social Assistance recipients;
  - o increasing the Yukon Child Benefit to \$867 per child and tying the benefit amount in future years to the rate of inflation; and
  - o a 10 per cent increase to monthly payments to caregivers with children in out of home care.
- The Government of Yukon has also made significant and ongoing financial investments in Early Learning and Child Care. The new Universal Child Care Program has reduced fees to less than \$10 per day on average.

#### **Additional response:**

- This government first established a strong record of making life more affordable for Yukoners with almost \$10 million-worth of inflation relief made available in last year's budget.
- This included more funding for Food Network Yukon, a 10 per cent top up to the Pioneer Utility Grant and rebates on the purchase of firewood.
- Yukoners are also receiving inflation relief from the federal government. This includes the accelerated Canada Workers' Benefit, the elimination of interest on student loans, a doubling of the GST tax credit, dental care and the Canada Housing Benefit for renters.



# **Session Briefing Note**

## **Inflation and Affordability**

### **(Corporate Note)**

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

- Inflation has fallen from many decade highs but remains elevated in Canada and in the Yukon.
- Energy prices remain elevated, and higher costs for food and shelter have become prominent drivers of overall inflation in recent months. These are all areas where higher prices are more obvious to consumers.
- Housing affordability has been a concern in the Yukon for several years.
- [While remaining above historic norms, inflation of 3.8 per cent in September matched the national figure and was the lowest year-over-year increase in the Whitehorse Consumer Price Index \(CPI\) since January 2022 \(3.7 per cent\).](#)

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#### **Background:**

##### **Key government initiatives addressing inflation in the Yukon**

- Our energy programs are successfully encouraging Yukon residents and local businesses to reduce their energy use, save money and choose low carbon options to live and move.
- A significant portion of the Government of Yukon's Five-Year Capital Plan is allocated to housing and land development in order to continue to help address the supply side of the housing equation.
- Yukon Housing Corporation is investing across all parts of the housing continuum, including increase to supportive housing, subsidized Community Housing, and rental subsidy programs.
- This builds on previous programs to improve affordability for Yukoners under previous budgets.
- Last year, the Government of Yukon announced almost \$10 million in new inflation relief measures targeted at vulnerable groups.

## **Session Briefing Note**

### **Inflation and Affordability**

#### **(Corporate Note)**

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- The inflation relief rebate covered seven months at a total cost to Government of \$7.6 million. The inflation relief rebate automatically applied a \$50 credit to all residential and commercial ATCO Electric Yukon and Yukon Energy electricity bills.
- Yukoners on social assistance received a one-time payment of \$150.
- Seniors were supported by a 10 per cent top up in the Pioneer Utility grant and a one-time payment of \$150 to recipients of the Yukon Seniors Income Supplement.
- Yukoners who heat their homes with wood are eligible for a \$50 rebate per cord of fuel wood purchased from April 1, 2022 to March 31, 2023. Yukon also introduced the Timber Harvesting Incentive that gives commercial timber harvesters \$10 per cubic metre.
- The pilot program that gave an extra \$500 per month to Extended Family Caregiver agreement caregivers and foster caregivers was extended by 6 months to March 31, 2023.
- In June 2022, the Yukon government extended the Tourism Accommodation Sector Supplement and Tourism Non-Accommodation Sector Supplement programs, administered through Economic Development.

#### **Yukoners are also supported by Federal Government affordability programs:**

- Accelerated Canada Workers Benefit payments and new minimum entitlement started in July 2023 (\$4 billion over six years, starting in 2022-23).
- All Canada Student Loans and Canada Apprentice Loans became permanently interest-free starting in April 2023 (\$2.7 billion over five years and \$556.3 million ongoing).
- GST Tax Credit: The GST tax credit has doubled for six months in the current benefit year. Additional payment will be provided in one lump sum, before the end of the benefit year. Targeted to individuals and families with low incomes

# Session Briefing Note

## Inflation and Affordability (Corporate Note)

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(below \$39,826, and gradually phased out above that level). Single Canadians without children will receive up to an extra \$234, and couples with two children will receive up to an extra \$467 this year. Seniors will receive an extra \$225 on average.

### **Government initiatives which are indexed to inflation:**

- Higher inflation impacts various government of Yukon programs through indexation, (indexation is updated each April unless otherwise noted), including:
  - o Tobacco Tax is updated each January
  - o Comprehensive Municipal Grant Regulation (with a one-year lag).
  - o The minimum wage.
  - o Subsidies for medical travel.
  - o Pioneer Utility grant.
  - o Residential rent caps.
  - o Seniors benefits (updated each October)
  - o Social Assistance Payments (updated each November)
  - o Student Financial Assistance (updated each school year)

### **Inflation outlook**

- Following record annual inflation for Whitehorse of 6.8 per cent in 2022, the same increase seen nationally, monthly inflation has remained elevated in 2023. [September's inflation of 3.8 per cent was the lowest since January 2022 and matched the national increase. Prior to September, Whitehorse inflation had exceeded the Canadian figure for fourteen consecutive months.](#)

## Session Briefing Note

### Inflation and Affordability (Corporate Note)

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- Early in the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, some price pressures were slower to materialize in the Yukon than in other parts of the country, as inflation for Whitehorse was amongst the lowest in Canada in the first half of 2022.
- Robust price growth in the CPI components of food, shelter and recreation, education and reading material have been key drivers of overall inflation in 2023. Stronger growth in these three components in the Whitehorse CPI, account for much of the difference between the overall levels of inflation for Whitehorse and Canada in recent months.
- The Bank of Canada continues to be aggressive in trying to get inflation under control. With a 0.25 percentage point increase in July, the Bank has raised the target for its overnight rate 4.75 percentage points since January 2022. At 5.0 per cent, the overnight rate is at its highest level since early 2001.
- Most forecasters still expect inflation in Canada will move towards historic norms over the next couple of years as the effect of higher interest rates move through the economy. Canadian inflation is expected to decline from near 7 per cent in 2022, to 3.5-4.0 per cent in 2023. Inflation in 2024 is expected to return to within the Bank of Canada's target range of 1-3 per cent.
- While inflation in Whitehorse has been stronger in recent months, it generally follows the national trend. Current expectations are for inflation to come in at 5.5 per cent in 2023, before falling to 2.5 per cent in 2024.

#### Carbon Taxes and Grocery Prices

- The effect of the carbon tax on CPI has contributed to inflation, but only modestly and mostly through the direct effect on fuel prices.
- According to the Bank of Canada, the direct effect of carbon tax is adding 0.15 percentage points to inflation this year.

## **Session Briefing Note**

### **Inflation and Affordability**

#### **(Corporate Note)**

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- An economist at the University of Calgary<sup>1</sup>, estimates that accounting for indirect effects brings this impact to 0.2 percentage points.
- For food in particular, the entire \$65 per tonne carbon tax increases monthly spending on groceries by at most \$20 per month, and likely closer to \$5 per month after accounting for emissions allowances provided by the federal Output Based Allocation system.<sup>2</sup>
- Overall, food price increases appear to be predominantly driven by other factors as prices have increased across North America independent of the implementation of a carbon tax.
- In the US, with no carbon tax system in place, food prices have increased by 26 per cent since the carbon tax came into effect in Canada in January 2018. In Canada the increase has been a similar 28 per cent.
- Whitehorse recorded an 18 per cent increase in food prices since January 2018 while Urban Alaska reported a 28 per cent increase.

#### **INFLATION RELIEF ACROSS GOVERNMENT**

##### **Programs currently in place:**

##### **Tourism and Culture:**

##### **Community Tourism Destination Development Fund**

- In October 2022, the Department of Tourism and Culture announced the creation of the Community Tourism Destination Development Fund, which is slated to run for an initial 3-year term.
- The new annual funding program is available to local businesses, First Nations governments, First Nation Development entities, municipalities and not-for-profit

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<sup>1</sup> Trevor Tombe

<sup>2</sup> Energy and Environmental Policy Trends: Indirect Carbon Tax Costs Reduced By Policy Design, Kent Fellows and Trevor Tombe, University of Calgary

## **Session Briefing Note**

### **Inflation and Affordability**

#### **(Corporate Note)**

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organizations for projects that will improve tourism-related services and infrastructure.

- Projects can focus on infrastructure like accommodations, attractions, activities and amenities, and special consideration will be given to umbrella projects, where multiple organizations are working together.

#### **Creative and Cultural Industries**

- In November 2021, the Department of Tourism and Culture released Creative Potential; Advancing the Yukon's Creative and Cultural Industries, a 10-year strategy to support the growth and development of the creative and cultural industries in the Yukon.
- The CCIS identified 4 strategic objectives and 22 key actions, which reflect input gathered through extensive public and sector engagement.
- We also identified 10 actions in support of pandemic recovery to be completed over 3 years as Phase 1 implementation, which includes:
  - Modernizing existing funding;
  - Offering new funding streams;
  - Industry branding and promotion;
  - Marketing and export strategies;
  - Workshops; and
  - Labour market supports.
- In 2023-24, 3 new funding programs will provide \$450,000 annually to the creative and cultural sectors, including:
  - Express Micro-grant;
  - Indigenous Artists and Cultural Carriers Micro-grant; and
  - Creative and Cultural Career Advancement Fund.

# **Session Briefing Note**

## **Inflation and Affordability**

### **(Corporate Note)**

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#### **Additional Funding Programs**

- Tourism and Culture also provides annual supports to the tourism and culture sectors through Transfer Payment Agreements (TPAs) with many NGOs across the Yukon and through a number of regular funding programs, including:
  - Advanced Artist Award;
  - Arts Fund;
  - Arts Operating Funds;
  - Cultural Industries Training Funds;
  - Culture Quest;
  - New Canadian Events Fund;
  - Touring Artist Fund;
  - Historic Properties Assistance Program;
  - Historic Resources Fund;
  - Museums Contribution Program;
  - Special Projects Capital Assistance Program (SPCAP); and
  - Tourism Cooperative Marketing Fund;

#### **Yukon Development Corporation:**

##### **Inflation Relief Rebate**

- The Inflation Relief Rebate (IRR) provides \$50 per month to all non-government residential and commercial electricity customers to help ease the impacts of rising inflation.
- The IRR was subsequently extended for March, April, and May 2023. The budget in 2023-24 is comprised of:

## **Session Briefing Note**

### **Inflation and Affordability**

#### **(Corporate Note)**

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- \$2,056,000 for program costs in April and May 2023 (costs for March 2023 are included in the 2022-23 Supplementary Estimates #2).
- \$3,246,000 for a further 3 additional months. We will continue to monitor inflation and costs of living, and we anticipate this will show on electricity bills next winter when electricity bills are typically higher.

#### **Economic Development:**

##### **Paid sick leave program**

- On April 1, 2023, Economic Development launched the Paid Sick Leave Rebate. The program will run 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 is available to employees regardless of whether their employer offers paid sick leave.

#### **Energy, Mines and Resources:**

##### **Energy retrofits and funding to improve efficiency and offset costs**

- Our energy programs are successfully encouraging Yukon residents and local businesses to reduce their energy use, save money and choose low carbon options to live and move.
- Energy efficiency 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.



## **Session Briefing Note**

### **Inflation and Affordability**

#### **(Corporate Note)**

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- For commercial and institutional buildings, the Energy Branch offers rebates for greenhouse gas-reducing retrofits and renewable heating.
- Between January 1, 2018, and June 30, 2023, 176 high-performance retrofits to residential, commercial and institutional buildings have been completed across the territory.
- Innovative programs like the Better Buildings Program, combined with our Good Energy rebates, make energy retrofits more accessible and affordable for Yukoners.
- For First Nation and municipal buildings, the Energy Branch offers retrofit and funding support through its Community Institutional Energy Efficiency Program.
- To help increase the supply of firewood, we distributed \$315,000 to 33 Yukon businesses under the Timber Harvest Incentive program in 2022-23. We are offering this program for another year as it increased timber harvest volumes and prompted new harvesting businesses to emerge. No new applications have been received yet for this year, but we did not anticipate to see them until the fall when the businesses start operating again.
- The Government of Yukon and the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency combined financial contributions to launch a new \$200,000 support program offering funding for commercial harvesters and retailers.
- The program will help forest sector businesses with the cost of purchases and repairs from local suppliers for harvest equipment, vehicles and trailers, personal protective equipment, and other equipment. For larger harvesting businesses, the funds can also be used for things like planning and administrative costs.
- Applicants have until March 31, 2024, to apply or until available funds are exhausted.

## **Session Briefing Note**

### **Inflation and Affordability**

### **(Corporate Note)**

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#### **Yukon Housing Corporation:**

#### **Projects under the Five-Year Capital Plan which support housing affordability and those in need include:**

- The 47-unit housing complex at 401 Jeckell Street in Whitehorse opened in January 2023. The building provides new homes to Yukoners, including 5 three-bedroom, 12 two-bedroom, 16 one-bedroom and 14 bachelor units.
- A Yukon Housing Corporation Housing Initiatives Fund recipient, Right On Property Group, has completed Boreal Commons, a new 87-unit rental development in Whitehorse's Whistle Bend neighbourhood. This large-scale housing project will help address the need for more rental housing in the Yukon, including for more affordable and accessible units.
- Normandy Living, the Yukon's first private seniors' supportive living community, has officially opened its doors in Whitehorse with 84 modern suites, including housing units for First Nations Elders and affordable units for low-income seniors.
- Triplex housing units in Watson Lake, Mayo and Whitehorse were completed in spring 2022 and are providing affordable homes to families in each of these communities.
- A 10-Plex Mixed-Use Housing complex in Old Crow is under construction.
- Construction of a 10-Plex Housing First Project in Watson Lake started in the summer 2023 and is expected to be completed by fall 2024;
- Two accessible duplexes in Mayo and Carmacks were completed this summer and are now available for YHC clients.

#### **Other highlights from the plan**

- More homes will be created for Yukon families in rural communities through the construction of three duplexes in Dawson City and Faro. These homes are on track for completion in summer 2024.

# **Session Briefing Note**

## **Inflation and Affordability**

### **(Corporate Note)**

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#### **Health and Social Services:**

- A 37.5 per cent top-up to eligible Yukon Senior Income Supplement recipients' monthly payment;
- a \$100 monthly increase to eligible Social Assistance recipients; and
- a 10 per cent increase to monthly payments to caregivers of children in out of home care.

#### **Covid-19 and other temporary inflation relief measures no longer in place:**

#### **Tourism and Culture:**

##### **COVID-19 Business Relief Programs**

- In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government of Yukon acted quickly and decisively by implementing one of the most robust business relief programs in the country. This began with the Yukon Business Relief Program (YBRP) in 2020, which was open to any business from any sector that experienced at least a 30 per cent revenue loss due to the pandemic.
- In that same year, Tourism and Culture (T&C) also launched the Tourism Relief and Recovery Plan (TRRP), which was reviewed and endorsed by the Yukon Tourism Advisory Board (YTAB) and industry.
- The Tourism Relief and Recovery Plan committed \$15 million over 3 years to support the tourism sector and was focused on 4 key themes:
  - Providing tourism sector leadership;
  - Rebuilding confidence and capabilities for tourism;
  - Supporting the recovery of tourism industry operators; and
  - Refining the brand and inspiring travelers to visit.
- Through the TRRP, various financial support programs were rolled out during the course of the pandemic to sustain the tourism industry and prepare it for the eventual reopening of borders, including:

# Session Briefing Note

## Inflation and Affordability

### (Corporate Note)

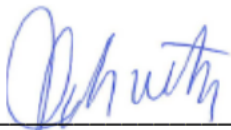
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- Tourism Accommodation Sector Supplement (TASS);
- Tourism Non-Accommodation Sector Supplement (TNASS);
- Culture and Tourism Non-profit Sector Supplement;
- Great Yukon Summer (GYS) program;
- Great Yukon Summer Freeze program;
- ELEVATE program; and
- A top-up to the Tourism Cooperative Marketing Fund (TCMF).

#### Health and Social Services:

- a one-time \$150 payment to social assistance recipients;
- a one-time payment of \$150 to Yukon Seniors Income Supplement recipients;
- a one-time 10 per cent additional payment to Pioneer Utility Grant recipients;
- a 6-month extension of \$500 per month to caregivers of children in out of home care; and
- a commitment of \$100,000 to Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition to continue to support food security across the territory.

**Approved by:**



Deputy Minister, Finance

October 26, 2023

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 our society.
- Our government is deeply committed to advancing reconciliation through collaboration and partnership with Indigenous governments.
- While there is still more work to do, our efforts are resulting in meaningful change and creating better programs and services for all Yukoners.
- In honour of the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation this year, we shared our progress toward addressing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action through the release of the Pathways magazine and an accompanying report.
- The magazine and report provide an update on our actions being taken across the Yukon government and in close collaboration with First Nations governments and organizations in areas including child welfare, health, education and justice.

#### Additional response:

- The Government of Yukon and Yukon First Nations governments are leaders in demonstrating a collaborative approach to reconciliation.
- We will continue our collaborative work to implement and report on the Calls to Action, including through work on 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) Calls to Action.
- CASA 2023 contains a commitment to work with First Nations to continue to implement the TRC recommendations through targeted investment.

**Truth and Reconciliation Commission  
– Update on Calls to Action**Executive Council  
Office

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- It is expected that the media and opposition will be interested in the fall 2023 public update, which will be the first comprehensive public update since 2016.

**Background:**

- The TRC report, *Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future*, was released in June 2015. It contains 94 Calls to Action focused on redressing the harms resulting from Residential Schools and creating better relations between the federal, provincial and territorial governments and Indigenous Peoples. Thirty-two of the Calls to Action relate directly to YG.
- YG and Yukon First Nations (YFNs) have 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.
- YG 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

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

Executive Council  
Office

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- receiving input from YFNs on Health and Social Services programming through the Mental Health Advisory Committee (relates to Call 19).

**Approved by:**



Deputy Minister, Executive Council Office

October 10, 2023

Date

**Session Briefing Note (Corporate)****Fall 2023****2023-24 Supplementary Estimates #1**

Finance

**Key Information**

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**Recommended response:**

- The 2023-24 Supplementary Estimates No. 1 forecasts an overall gross increase of \$132.7 million in O&M spending, with an offsetting increase of \$26.8 million in recoveries. The net increase in new O&M spending is forecast at \$105.9 million.
- Revenues are expected to increase by \$18.7 million, mainly to reflect an increase of \$2 million to the Canada Health Transfer and \$15 million for federal funding for Affordable Housing in the North.
- A large portion of the increase in O&M is for the new collective agreement between the Government of Yukon and Yukon Employee's Union. This new collective agreement was ratified in June and accounts for a \$36.9 million increase in O&M.
- The Supplementary Estimates also respond to several new or unanticipated challenges requiring funding. Some of these items include:
  - \$25.0 million for environmental care and maintenance work at the Minto Mine following the cessation of operations at the site in May, which will ensure that our environment remains protected;
  - \$19.6 million for wildland firefighting costs in response to the significant fire season experienced in the territory and which helped ensure the safety of Yukoners;
  - \$14.9 million in response to operational funding pressures at the Yukon Hospital Corporation to ensure that Yukoners have access to the health care services and supports they need;



**Session Briefing Note (Corporate)****2023-24 Supplementary Estimates #1****Key Information**

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- \$9.8 million in response to cost pressures for Insured Health to support the wellbeing of Yukoners; and
- \$1.9 million to support the Substance Use Health Emergency Strategy, and \$1.4 million for initiatives to support reconciliation with Yukon First Nations governments.
- The Supplementary Estimates also include a \$21.4 million capital allocation to support the development of a marine services platform in Skagway, which will create positive opportunities for Yukon's mining industry and its broader economy. We have identified offsetting adjustments based on timelines, loan program uptake, and the progress of various capital projects to accommodate this new project without any gross changes to capital spending.
- The Yukon government has maintained its surplus by making use of its contingency fund, included as part of Budget 2023-24. This \$50 million contingency fund helped shelter the government's fiscal position and allowed us to respond to emerging challenges throughout the year. The use of the contingency fund has allowed the government to present a revised surplus of \$3.6 million as part of these Supplementary Estimates.

**Additional response:**

- Changes in the Supplementary Estimates result in a revised year-end net debt of \$423.8 million.

# Session Briefing Note (Corporate)

**Fall 2023**

## 2023-24 Supplementary Estimates #1

Finance

### Key Information

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- The use of the contingency fund will cover the following emergency cost pressures:
    - \$25 million for unplanned maintenance costs at the Minto mine;
    - \$19.6 million for increased wildland firefighting activity.
    - \$2.3 million for other emergency response measures, like the Village of Mayo evacuation in response to the Talbot Creek fire;
    - and \$1.9 million for Substance Use Emergency response.
- 

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

- The 2023-24 Second Appropriation Act is tabled in the fall session and will be the subject of debate.
- 

### Background:

- Supplementary Estimates are used annually by a government to account for spending that is unforeseen 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:



Deputy Minister, Finance

September 29, 2023

[Date approved]