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February 4, 2010

Interim staking withdrawal made to support Peel Watershed Regional Planning Process

Whitehorse – The Government of Yukon has issued an immediate one-year interim withdrawal from mineral staking for all lands in the Peel Watershed Region in order to provide certainty during the ongoing regional land use planning process.

"This interim withdrawal ensures that the public, stakeholders and First Nations involved in the process can fully review and assess the plan on the basis of the current mineral claims in the region," Premier Dennis Fentie said. "This withdrawal will allow work on existing mineral claims while enabling continued progress on the region's planning process."

Effective immediately, the staking withdrawal applies to subsurface mineral staking administered under the *Quartz Mining Act* and *Placer Mining Act* until February 4, 2011. Rights for oil and gas, and coal will also not be issued in the region during this period.

Current regulatory processes for surface activities will continue to apply throughout the region. This interim staking withdrawal does not pre-determine any outcomes in the planning process.

To complete the planning process, the Government of Yukon is working collaboratively with the First Nation of Na-cho Nyak Dun; Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation; Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in; and the Gwich'in Tribal Council.

The Yukon government will continue to follow the processes outlined in Chapter 11 of the Final Agreements, to enable completion of the Peel Watershed Regional Land Use Plan.

Later this year, the public and other stakeholders will be provided with opportunities to offer their perspectives on the Recommended Plan.

For more information on the Peel Watershed Regional Planning process, visit www.emr.gov.yk.ca.

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