

Department of Environment
Briefing Binder for Spring Legislative Sitting 2024
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Session Briefing Note
Our Clean Future
Implementation

Environment and Energy,
Mines and Resources

Recommended response:

- We recognize the urgency of the climate emergency and launched Our Clean Future in September 2020 to map our route forward.
- The Government of Yukon continues to make significant progress on implementing Our Clean Future. In December 2023, we released the third Our Clean Future annual report outlining the progress we made responding to climate change in 2022.
- The report announced the addition of 42 new actions to help us reach our climate goals. These new actions are a product of the important work of the Yukon Climate Leadership Council, the Yukon Youth Panel on Climate Change, Navius Research and the findings in the Climate Risk Assessment report.
- The 42 new actions implement 15 recommendations from the Yukon Climate Leadership Council and three recommendations from the Yukon Youth Panel on Climate Change.
- Additionally, several of the new recommendations put forward by the Yukon Climate Leadership Council align with existing Our Clean Future actions.
- We will continue to work together to advance our efforts to reduce emissions as we assess our progress year-to-year, consider new research and the input of others, and increase our resilience to climate change.
- We have also revised 19 existing actions to better align with our efforts to reduce the Yukon's greenhouse gas emissions and build a climate resilient territory.

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Additional response:

- As we continue to address climate change it is important for us to look back on our progress as we diligently work towards our objectives.
- We legislated greenhouse gas emissions targets and associated reporting through the Clean Energy Act in 2022.
- We installed electric vehicle chargers in every road-accessible community in the Yukon, enabling zero-emissions travel throughout the territory. (See EMR BN #29)
- We launched the five-year Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership in 2023 which will enhance the agriculture sector's resiliency and adaptation to climate change.
- In collaboration with the Yukon's public utilities, we met our target to install seven megawatts of renewable electricity capacity through the Micro-Generation program by 2030. (See EMR BN #38)
- We launched the Better Buildings Program to offer affordable financing for energy retrofits to Yukoners' homes and buildings in 2022.
- We established a geohazard mapping program to understand risks from climate change to the Yukon's transportation corridors.
- We advanced emergency preparedness as we progressed the 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 to develop flood hazard maps for all flood-prone Yukon communities. We expect to release flood maps for the Southern Lakes, Carmacks, and Teslin in 2024. Flood hazard mapping

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for Old Crow and Dawson and the Klondike Valley will begin in 2024 and 2025.

- In May 2023, we completed the installation of a biomass heating system at Elijah Smith Elementary School in Whitehorse.
- In January 2024, we passed an electric vehicle charging station regulation under the *Public Utilities Act* to allow First Nation governments, private businesses and municipalities to sell electricity through electric vehicle charging stations.

Third response:

- Of the original 136 actions released in Our Clean Future in 2020, we have completed 45 actions. Eighty-seven actions are in progress and four are yet to begin.
- The ambitious addition of 42 new actions in 2023 puts us on track to reduce the Yukon's emissions by 30 per cent by 2030; however, there is still significant work required to meet our target reduction of 45 per cent by 2030.
- We are working with industry to establish a path to implement the mining intensity target of a 45 per cent reduction in emissions per unit of production by 2035.
- We will continue to build on Our Clean Future as we learn more and implement new actions. This will be reflected in future annual reports.
- We will continue to find opportunities to reach our targets as we work with experts, stakeholders and partner governments across the territory and beyond.

Context — this may be an issue because:

ENV #1 / EMR #33

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Our Clean Future Implementation

Environment and Energy,
Mines and Resources

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

Background:

- Our Clean Future was released on September 14, 2020 and now has 178 actions, of which 136 are original actions and 42 are new actions. These actions seek to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and support the Yukon to be highly resilient to the impacts of climate change by 2030 (see Appendix A).
- The Government of Yukon reports annually on progress for the implementation of Our Clean Future. Three Annual Reports have been published to date, with the latest report released on December 20, 2023.
- The Our Clean Future website was launched in December 2023, which shows our commitments and successes towards fighting climate change.
- On February 16, 2024, the Government of Canada released an update on design options being considered for the upcoming Clean Electricity Regulations. This regulation is one of the Government of Canada's central commitments towards transitioning Canada towards a net-zero electricity grid by 2035.
- Yukon will be exempted from the Clean Electricity Regulations as the territory's electricity grid is currently not interconnected with any other region and is therefore not regulated by North American Electric Reliability Corporation.

Approved by:

March 19, 2024

Deputy Minister
Department of Environment

Date approved

March 19, 2024

Deputy Minister
Department of Energy, Mines and Resources

Date approved



Appendix A: Department of Environment Our Clean Future Actions Status

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

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

COMPLETED:

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

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

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

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

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


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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



IN PROGRESS:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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


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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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


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

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

Response: This is an ongoing annual report.

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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Recommended response:

- Our government continues to work with the Yukon Outfitters Association to support the industry while ensuring the sustainability of Yukon wildlife.
- Despite the setbacks of the COVID years, Yukon's outfitting industry has performed strongly in recent years. The seven highest annual number of licences sold to non-residents occurred over the past 10 years.
- The Department of Environment reports the annual harvest of big game species by resident and non-resident hunters in the Yukon Hunting regulations summary. Sheep, moose and caribou remain the most popular non-resident harvested big game species.
- When making decisions on the allocation of hunting opportunities, we prioritize the allocation of subsistence harvest as per the First Nation Final Agreements. The remainder of the harvest opportunity is then divided between resident Yukon hunters and outfitter clients.
- The principles of sustainability and conservation guide the department's management of all wildlife species.
- We recognize that there continue 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 and Wildlife Harvest Biologist meet frequently with Yukon outfitters and the Yukon Outfitter Association to



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answer questions, address specific issues of concern, and identify potential solutions. This includes questions about the quota system, individual quotas and other conditions of licences, appeal process, harvest information, general information to new outfitters, wildlife population information, etc.

Additional Response (Review of the Outfitter Quota Guidelines):

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

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Third Response: (Multi-Year Quotas):

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

Fourth Response (Outfitter Quota Appeals):

- In 2021, the Department of Environment was made aware that multi-year quotas and roll-over provisions do not comply with the *Wildlife Act*. As a result, the Department worked with outfitters to place them on annual quotas. Starting in 2022, quotas are established annually.



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- Given the changes made to the quota process and the fact that some outfitters were assigned quotas for the first time, the Outfitter Quota Appeal Committee and the Concession and Compensation Review Board received an unprecedented number of appeals in 2022 and 2023.
- Our government responded to all timelines and information requests from the Secretariat coordinating the appeal hearings, but the number of appeals created significant delays in the appeal processes.
- In 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.
- For 2024, the Department of Environment is aware of one appeal to the Concession and Compensation Review Board and one appeal to the Outfitter Quota Appeal Committee, both from the same outfitter.
- These are complex matters, and we are allowing active appeals to work through the process before any decisions or changes are made.
- The Government of Yukon recognizes and supports the right to appeal. At the same time, we must consider the public's interest, as well as the time and resources required to properly hear and address each appeal.
- We have clearly articulated to the Secretariat and the outfitting industry that, following the Concession and Compensation Review Board hearing and decision on an appeal, a subsequent Outfitter Quota Appeal Committee appeal process by the same outfitter on the same issue is not warranted.
- At present, the Government of Yukon remains committed to providing support to outfitter quota appeals and decisions under both processes.

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- However, the Government of Yukon will not be attending Outfitter Quota Appeal Committee hearings when the same matter has previously been addressed through the Concession and Compensation Review Board process and a decision has been made and communicated to the outfitter.

Fifth Response (Hunting in the Peel):

- There are no outfitting concessions in the two Land Management Units included in the Peel Watershed feasibility assessment for the proposed national park, this would be the areas including Turner Lake Wetlands, Caribou River, and Peel River.
- The area is quite remote and therefore has limited licensed hunting opportunities.
- Parts of the territory that have Special Management Area designations, such as the Peel region, are designed to be compatible with recreational and economic activities including wilderness eco-tourism, big game outfitting and trapping.
- Any future designation recommendations made in the Special Management Areas would respect the objectives of the protected area and facilitate the continuation of big game outfitting.

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.
- The department received a request from the Secretariat to meet regarding the government's participation, or lack thereof, in the appeal process.



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Background:

- In 2022, 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.
 - In 2023, the Yukon Outfitter Liaison Committee met twice to discuss issues important to the industry.
 - The most recent Yukon Outfitter Liaison Committee occurred on April 22, 2024.
- The department's Outfitter Liaison Officer and Wildlife Harvest Biologist also meet regularly with Yukon outfitters.

Approved by:

Deputy Minister of Environment

April 26, 2024

Date approved

Briefing Note**Outfitter Multi-Year Quotas
Legal Review**

Environment

Recommended response:

- Establishing quotas for all outfitters for all big game species is a complex process that requires balancing the sustainability of wildlife populations with the rights of Yukon First Nations, the needs of Yukon residents, and the commercial interests of outfitters.
- It is the Government of Yukon's position that there is no authority to issue multi-year quotas on an annual operating certificate under section 54 of the *Wildlife Act*.
- Recognizing the certainty that multi-year quotas brought to the outfitting industry, the Department of Environment developed an interim process to establish outfitter quotas on an annual basis that provides outfitters with certainty, flexibility and predictability.
- To implement the interim process, the Deputy Minister of Environment sent a letter to all outfitters stating that their annual quotas will remain the same in 2022 and subsequent years, as in 2021, until a new process is in place.
- The letter clarified that unless legal, environmental or socioeconomic factors necessitate a change, the outfitter quotas can be expected to remain the same.
- I acknowledge that the question of multi-year quotas continues to be a topic of great interest for the outfitting industry.

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**Outfitter Multi-Year Quotas
Legal Review**

Environment

- I am committed to working towards a durable solution to the question of multi-year quotas that is science-based and meets the needs of the outfitting industry, First Nations and Yukoners.

Additional response:

- Officials in the Department of Environment have since been seeking alternative solutions to allow the issuance of multi-quotas, including the possibility of using section 50 of the *Wildlife Act*.
- We understand that legal advice can differ, which is why the Department of Environment provided the Outfitter Quota Appeal Committee with funding to seek out an independent legal opinion.
- In March 2024, the Department of Environment received a copy of the independent legal opinion on multi-year outfitting quotas that was sought by the Yukon Outfitter Quota Appeal Committee (OQAC).
- Department of Environment officials are currently reviewing this independent opinion.
- As the Department of Environment was not the client for the independent legal opinion, it is not our information to share.
- We recognize the value multi-year quotas provide to outfitters and we remain committed to seeking a resolution to this issue.
- Department of Environment officials meet regularly with the Yukon Outfitters Association and Yukon outfitters to understand and address their concerns.

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**Outfitter Multi-Year Quotas
Legal Review**

Environment

- In order to promote mutual understanding and resolve issues as they arise, the Yukon Outfitters Liaison Committee was established. This committee is co-chaired by the Deputy Minister of Environment and a nominee from the Yukon Outfitters Association executive. The Yukon Outfitters Liaison Committee will be meeting later this month.

Context—this may be an issue because:

- On April 4 in the Legislative Assembly the Opposition asked Minister Clarke about the change to multi-year quotas in 2022 and the unprecedented appeals.
- CBC asked the Minister additional questions on April 4 during scrum and reached out to the department for further comment on the interim-process and appeals.

Background:

- Given the changes made to the quota process and the fact that some outfitters were assigned quotas for the first time, the Outfitter Quota Appeal Committee and the Concession and Compensation Review Board received an unprecedented number of appeals in 2022 and 2023.
- In 2022, 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.
- In 2023, seven appeals were submitted: two to the Concession and Compensation Review Board and five to the Outfitter Quota Appeal Committee. The Concession and Compensation Review Board hearings were held in December 2023 and the recommendations were sent to the Minister in March. The Minister's decisions will be communicated in April.



ENV #2B

Spring 2024

Environment

Briefing Note

Outfitter Multi-Year Quotas Legal Review

Approved by:

April 9, 2024

Deputy Minister of Environment

Date approved

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

Recommended response:

- I am pleased to share that we are making progress on several initiatives to implement the wetland stewardship policy.
- The implementation working group has identified several priority actions, including wetland classification, guidance for wetland identification, and comprehensive, territory-wide wetland mapping.
- The Government of Yukon is reviewing the potential for project impacts on wetlands during the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act assessment stage. We are also requesting more detailed wetland impact mitigation and reclamation planning at the licensing and post-licensing stages.
- In December 2023, we established standard operational guidelines for mineral activities in wetlands to be included in class 1 mineral exploration authorizations.
- We intend to engage with First Nations and interested parties on the guidance for the nomination, evaluation, and protection of Wetlands of Special Importance in 2024. When this work is completed, we will work towards an initial intake of nominations for Wetlands of Special Importance.

Additional response:

- To support wetland policy implementation, we recently released broad-scale wetland mapping within the Peel, Beaver River, Mayo and McQuesten watersheds.

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- During the summer of 2023, we collected aerial imagery to support local-scale wetland mapping and vegetation mapping in the Klondike goldfields region. We anticipate undertaking wetland mapping in key drainages beginning in 2024.
- With support from Government of Yukon, Ducks Unlimited Canada will be releasing a user-friendly, common sense field guide to identifying wetlands for use by a variety of stakeholders including industry.
- We will be launching new wetland information pages on Yukon.ca to share guidance documents and resources as they become available.
- A more detailed summary of wetland actions will be provided in the 2024 State of the Environment report from the Department of Environment.

Third response:

- We acknowledge the importance of being responsive to new information as we continue to build our knowledge and improve our understanding of the Yukon's wetlands, including recognizing and respecting traditional, local, and scientific knowledge.
- We are preparing to launch a three-year wetland research project this summer with the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS). The research will look at the effects of placer mining and reclamation activities on peatland greenhouse gas emissions and removals (fluxes) in the Yukon.
- We will continue to engage with other governments, departments, agencies, regulatory bodies, and external partners to discuss specific aspects of wetland stewardship policy implementation.

Session Briefing Note Yukon Wetland Policy and Status

Environment and
Energy, Mines and Resources

- We remain committed to addressing wetland stewardship and protection within land use planning discussions and project reviews.

Context — this may be an issue because:

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

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 committed \$1.68 million over two fiscal years (2023-24 to 2024-25) for the departments of Environment and Energy, Mines and Resources to begin jointly implementing the wetland stewardship policy.
- In January 2023, the Government of Yukon formed an internal working group to advance and coordinate the implementation of the wetland stewardship policy.
- The working group is composed of members of Environment, Energy Mines and Resources, Executive Council Office, and Highways and Public Works.
- The group meets monthly to advance various aspects of policy implementation and ensure a whole-of-government approach to policy implementation.
- See **Appendix A** for updates on implementation status.

Deputy Minister
Department of Environment

March 1, 2024

Date approved

March 5, 2024

Acting Deputy Minister
Department of Energy, Mines and Resource

Date approved

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Yukon Wetland Policy and Status

ENV #3 / EMR #91
Spring 2024

Environment and
Energy, Mines and Resources

Appendix A: Actions within the wetland stewardship policy			
Policy Actions (bold = near-term priorities)	Timeline * priority adjusted	Lead	Status update Not Started Initiated Underway Near_Complete
1. Develop guidance for the evaluation of wetland benefits in the Yukon	Long-term	ENV	We have completed some initial work comparing processes in other jurisdictions.
2. Update and finalize a Yukon wetland classification system	Near-term	ENV	We have completed a draft wetland classification document. We will be circulating this draft for review by our management partners and interested stakeholders in 2024.
3. Develop an accessible and easy to use guide to identifying Yukon's wetlands for proponents and the public	Mid-term	External	We have been working with Ducks Unlimited Canada to support their efforts to develop an accessible field guide—ensuring it will align with our classification system (action 2). Ducks Unlimited Canada plans to release this field guide in March 2024.
4. Develop wetland mapping standards for regional, local, and project specific mapping applications	Near-term	ENV	We are continuing to develop a draft wetland mapping standards document. Following internal government review, we will be circulating the draft to our management partners, as well as interested stakeholders, for review.
5. Create a broad scale territory-wide wetland inventory	Near-term	ENV	In 2023/24 (Year 1 of this work), we have completed work on a tool for evaluating map accuracy, evaluation of methodologies for predictive mapping and compilation of existing wetland field information. We are also exploring options to collaborate with Environment and Climate Change Canada to advance territory-wide wetland mapping. We should have a

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			working draft wetland map completed by spring 2024 but it will require further refinement before this map is suitable for wider use.
6. Support local scale wetland mapping, where needed	Near-term*	ENV	We have partnered with EMR's Forest Management Branch, to collect stereo (3D) aerial imagery for the Yukon Plateau region. We anticipate completing local scale wetland mapping in priority areas, within the Klondike Plateau, in 2024/25.
7. Promote northern wetland research	Near-term*	EMR/ENV	Environment is seeking opportunities to support ongoing work on this with other parties. A three-year research project is planned to begin this summer, led by the Wildlife Conservation Society and with funding support from Environment and Climate Change Canada.
8. Promote public awareness of wetlands	Long-term	ENV	
9. Develop guidance for the application and use of the mitigation hierarchy	Near-term	EMR/ENV	Addressed in Main message bullets. EMR is leading the development of guidance for the application and use of the mitigation hierarchy. ENV is continuing to work with regulatory agencies, particularly related to mining activity, to address wetland impacts during project assessment and regulatory approvals.
10. Update or develop proponent guidance to be used when submitting wetland impact mitigation information	Near-term	EMR	Plans are in place to develop proponent guidance on how to communicate impact mitigation plans.
11. Update or develop Standard Operating Procedures / Preferred Management Practices for	Long-term	EMR	EMR has developed standard terms and conditions for Class 1 mining activities. These are now being applied at the regulatory stage.

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different activities impacting wetlands			EMR will review the effectiveness of these standard terms and revise as necessary.
12. Update or develop general wetland reclamation guidelines, and, where required, sector specific guidelines	Near-term*	EMR	EMR continues to apply the Ruby Creek reclamation plan guidelines for placer activities in the Indian River area. During the initial policy implementation phase, reclamation plans are not currently required outside of this area.
13. Develop guidance for offsetting wetland impacts	Long-term	ENV/EMR	Long-term objective that will be explored after near-term and midterm priorities have been advanced.
14. Develop specific and measurable guidance for the interpretation and application of Wetland of Special Importance nomination criteria	Near-term	ENV	See recommended response. We have completed a draft implementation document. YG departments are reviewing this document internally. Following this review, we will be circulating the draft for comment by our wetland management partners.
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	Due to legislative agenda, developing regulations to support legal designation has been postponed. It will be advanced at a later date. In the interim, there are a number of existing tools (e.g., withdrawal of mineral staking) that can be used to protect Wetlands of Special Importance.
16. Create a publicly accessible catalogue of Wetlands of Special Importance.	Mid-term	ENV	In advance of the first call for Wetlands of Special Importance (WSI), we are developing the tools and systems to support a public catalogue. This will be available once we complete our first WSI intake.

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Canada-Yukon Nature Agreement

Environment

Recommended response:

- The Canada-Yukon Nature Agreement is a three-year agreement that is boosting our efforts to protect and conserve new areas of the Yukon.
- This work is important and will help us be better prepared and informed for future planning processes and discussions on land and resource management issues.
- It supports Indigenous leadership in conservation by providing funding opportunities to First Nations governments to support their conservation interests.
- It also supports the Government of Yukon's work to improve monitoring, surveying and protection of species at risk to better inform the way we manage wildlife in the territory.
- All this work is helping to address climate resiliency and to preserve biodiversity.
- Throughout the first year of the Nature Agreement's implementation, the Government of Yukon has made progress on several fronts, including supporting initiatives last field season to increase our monitoring and surveying of fish, wildlife and habitat that will inform future land use planning processes.
- It provides additional resources to gather mapping imagery and develop a public-facing database that will show the current level of surface disturbance.
- The agreement will help Canada reach its goal of conserving 25 per cent of Canadian lands and waters by 2025 and 30 per cent by 2030.
- The Government of Yukon recently reported an additional 1.8 percent of protected land within the Yukon under the Canadian Protected and Conserved Areas Database, bringing our total conserved land to 21.1 percent. This is significant as the Yukon now has, proportionally, the

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highest amount of protected land accounted for of all provinces and territories in Canada.

- The Nature Agreement provided an opportunity for Environment and Climate Change Canada and the Yukon government to co-host a workshop with Yukon First Nations and Indigenous governments and groups. This two-day event enabled a discussion on the challenges and opportunities around conservation in the Yukon and highlighted the need for a collaborative approach to protect biodiversity.
- We will continue to work towards protecting areas in the Yukon that are of important ecological and cultural value. New areas for conservation will always be collaboratively identified with First Nation governments.

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.
- Under the Nature Agreement, the Indigenous-led Conservation Capacity Fund has been developed to support Indigenous partners to lead in advancing their conservation interests. This will support knowledge gathering and data sharing and advance collaboration on conservation in the Yukon.
- In January, a call for Expressions of Interest went out to Yukon First Nations and other transboundary Indigenous governments and groups to access this fund.
- We are currently working to establish a two-year funding agreement with the Council of Yukon First Nations to support capacity towards an Indigenous lens on management approaches for species at risk in the Yukon.

Third response:

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Canada-Yukon Nature Agreement

Environment

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

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.

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.
- Governments from around the world met at the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity COP15 conference in 2022 and agreed to the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. The framework includes four global goals and 23 global targets to be achieved by 2030 to halt and reverse biodiversity loss and put nature on a path to recovery by 2050.
- The framework's objectives align with commitments made under the Nature Agreement, including the conservation of 30 per cent of lands and oceans by 2030.
- Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas include lands and waters where Indigenous governments or organizations have a lead role in managing and

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Canada-Yukon Nature Agreement

Environment

conserving ecological and cultural values. They protect Indigenous rights and reflect Indigenous laws and traditions.

- The Canada-Yukon Nature Agreement spans three fiscal years, starting in April 2023 until March 2026; Canada is providing \$20.6 million to the Yukon over this period.
- On October 10, 2023, Canada and Nova Scotia announced the signing of a \$28.5 million Nature Agreement to support nature protection and conservation in the province. Both parties will be working collaboratively with the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia to implement the Agreement.
- 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.
- 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.
- The Government of Yukon recently reported an additional 1.8% of conserved land in the Canada Protected Data Base, bringing the total conserved land in the territory to 21.1%. This new area includes the Eastern North Slope through the Aullaviat/Anguniarvik [Au-la-viat / On-gun-ni-ar-vik] Traditional Conservation Area Agreement and a few very small parcels of relinquished mining claims in the Peel region.

Approved by:

Deputy Minister of Environment

April 23, 2024

Date approved

Session Briefing Note

2024 Hunting Changes and Opportunities

Spring 2024
Environment

Recommended Response:

- The Government of Yukon is committed to managing the Yukon's wildlife sustainably to ensure populations remain healthy and resilient, now and for future generations.
- We are also committed to evaluating harvest sustainability to identify areas where increased licensed hunting opportunities would not result in conservation concerns.
- We base our management decisions on species-specific guidelines, information gathered from hunters, Indigenous harvesters, community and co-management partners, and targeted survey results.
- As wildlife surveys are undertaken and results analyzed, the Department of Environment engages with co-management partners including the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board and affected Yukon First Nations and Renewable Resources Councils before proceeding with changes to hunting opportunities.
- Working with co-management partners helps to ensure Indigenous participation in wildlife management and harvest management decisions that are informed by local perspectives and traditional knowledge.

Kluane Wildlife Sanctuary Sheep Permit (ref **BN #7)**

- 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 a unique permit hunt process, and another can be auctioned to a non-resident by the First Nation.

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2024 Hunting Changes and Opportunities

Spring 2024
Environment

- Due to conservation concerns with sheep populations in their Traditional Territory, the Kluane First Nation cancelled their auction of the Kluane Wildlife Sanctuary sheep permit for at least 2 years, including the 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 seasons.
- In the spirit of co-management, the Yukon government also cancelled the 2023-2024 lottery for the single Permit Hunt Authorization.
- 2023 survey results from both the Department of Environment and Parks Canada indicate populations in this area are still in decline.
- To support sheep population recovery, the Yukon government has cancelled the single Permit Hunt Authorization for the 2024-2025 hunting season.
- We are continuing to monitor the sheep populations the area and will continue to work with Kluane First Nations to re-establish this one of a kind opportunity.

Elk Permits (ref BN #55)

- Eight new permits for hunting elk in the Takhini Valley were made available in 2022 and 2023 and are once again being offered in 2024.
- These 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.

Bison season dates

- The Bison Technical Team, which includes all governments and organizations with a role in bison management, has recommended that the bison hunting season be shortened by one week.

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Environment

- Bison cows begin giving birth as early as the last week of March, and throughout April and May. The early calving coincides with when we typically see an increase in bison harvest in late March due to warmer weather and longer daylight hours. Shortening the season by one week may help reduce pressure and stress on pregnant and lactating cows.
- The Government of Yukon is consulting with Yukon First Nations and wildlife co-management partners on this recommendation.
- Currently, there are no changes for the 2024-2025 bison hunting season. Discussions with co-management partners are ongoing and this recommendation is being considered for the 2025-2026 season.

Deer

- The Government of Yukon currently offers 12 deer permits per year through the permit hunt authorization process.
- In the 2023-2024 hunting season, 6 deer were harvested in the Yukon.
- The Yukon's first-ever deer project is currently underway utilizing trail cameras and collaring. Collaring started this past February, and we plan on collaring 20 deer this year.
- We are also working towards partnering with the Yukon University on a research project to better understand the movement patterns and range extent of deer in southern Yukon.
- An aerial drone survey to count deer in the Takhini valley, along the Takhini Hot Springs Road and the North Klondike Highway to Grizzly Valley is planned in 2024.

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2024 Hunting Changes and Opportunities

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- The results of this project provide a population estimate and sex ratio of deer and will inform decisions on future deer harvest opportunities, including a possible expansion of the deer hunt.

Context—this may be an issue because:

- Minister Clarke’s 2023 Mandate Letter directs him to work with Yukon First Nations, the Fish and Wildlife Management Board and stakeholders to continue to ensure Yukoners are provided opportunities to sustainably harvest fish and game while looking for new opportunities for Yukon hunters.
- April 1, 2024, is the start of the licensing year, Yukoners will be interested in what changes have been made for the 2024-2025 hunting season.

Background:

- Under Section 193 of the *Wildlife Act*, the Minister has the authority to adjust hunting season dates, determine permit numbers, and determine in which game management zones wildlife may be hunted once enabled by amendments to the *Wildlife Regulation*.
- Year-to-year changes to permit hunting opportunities are made through amendments to the General Ministerial Order.

Approved by:	
<hr/>	March 19, 2024
Deputy Minister of Environment	Date approved

Session Briefing Note

Campground Planning

Spring 2024
Environment

Recommended response:

- Yukoners and visitors alike value the high-quality recreational and camping opportunities available in the Yukon's parks and campgrounds.
- We are currently engaging with Yukon First Nations as we continue our efforts to enrich and expand these camping opportunities near Whitehorse and beyond, in a way that respects the cultural and ecological priorities that Yukoners value.
- Redesign and enhancing of the Tatchun Lake campground, a project of interest to Yukon Parks and Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation, is planned for 2024 and 2025. Yukon Parks plans to enhance Tatchun Lake campground in a way that collaborates, honours, and celebrates the values of Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation through language, signage, and education events.
- Subject to regulatory approvals, we plan add approximately 26 new RV campsites, five walk-in campsites, and an improved day-use area and trail system.
- A revitalization of Snafu Lake campground is planned in 2024 to formalize ten new sites to address unmanaged camping in the area.
- Finally, with mitigations to protect heritage values now complete, we will improve campground design and add four sites to Ethel Lake campground during the 2024 season.

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Additional response:

- Last season, infrastructure improvements were made at campgrounds throughout the Yukon to support recreation opportunities that appeal to the diversity of visitors and groups that enjoy our Parks.
- New playgrounds were built at the Marsh Lake, Wolf Creek and Congdon Creek Campgrounds, new boat launches were constructed at the Aishihik Lake, Otter Falls, Twin Lakes, Ethel Lake and Frenchman Lake campgrounds and new docks were installed at Pine Lake, Squanga Lake and Twin Lakes campgrounds.
- In July of last year, we opened 41 additional campsites at Congdon Creek Campground. In addition, four walk-in tenting sites were installed at Wolf Creek Campground.

Third response:

- In 2024, Yukon Parks will continue to enhance camping experiences in the Yukon by improving recreational opportunities and the availability of campsites.
- This season planned infrastructure upgrades will improve user experience in Yukon's parks and campgrounds.
- New boat launches, improved docks and accessible infrastructure are slated for the Nunatuk and Teslin Lake campgrounds.

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Campground Planning

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- Rancheria Falls, Lapie Canyon, Snafu and Tatchun Lake campgrounds will see improved trails that will enhance the visitor experience and ensure safety for users.
- The Department of Environment remains committed to working with Community Services on the boat launch repair and replacement project.
- To date, nine boat launches in Yukon Parks have been repaired or replaced, with another six planned for future years.

Fourth Response (Firewood):

- As committed to in the Yukon Parks Strategy, the Government of Yukon will continue to supply firewood at Yukon territorial campgrounds as part of the service offering.
- The Yukon is one of the only jurisdictions in the country to offer firewood without a separate fee, allowing camping in the Yukon to be more affordable and accessible to everyone.
- In 2023, the Government of Yukon invested \$583,485 to provide a total of 1344 cords of firewood to campers in the territory.
- When we can, Yukon Parks purchases this wood from local suppliers, fueling not only campfires across the territory but also our local economy.
- By providing firewood in our campgrounds, we are ensuring that the natural beauty and privacy of Yukon campsites remain intact in some of the most beautiful campgrounds in the country.

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Spring 2024

Sheep

Environment

Recommended response:

- Thinhorn sheep are an iconic species of Yukon wildlife and are economically and culturally significant.
- Recent aerial sheep surveys conducted by the Department of Environment 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, other government wildlife agencies have observed low sheep population counts and low lamb survival rates in Northern British Columbia and Alaska in recent years.
- This past 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:

- Due to these conservation concerns, the Department initiated consultation with co-management partners on proposed accelerated amendments to the Wildlife Regulation. The proposed amendments would enable the department to use wildlife management tools in 2024 to manage harvest levels for declining sheep populations in the Brooks Arm, Donjek, Nutzotin, Flat Top and Ruby Range Sheep Management Units, and the Kluane Wildlife Sanctuary.
- Consultation with co-management partners includes Kluane First Nation, White River First Nation, Champagne and Aishihik First Nations, the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board, and the Dän Keyi and Alsek Renewable Resources Councils.

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Sheep

Environment

- In addition to these consultations, the Department also engaged with affected stakeholders, including affected outfitters, the Yukon Outfitters Association, the Yukon Fish and Game Association, the Yukon Wild Sheep Foundation, the Yukon Conservation Society and the Wildlife Society Canada – Yukon Chapter.
- Co-management partners and stakeholders generally agree that sheep populations in southwest Yukon are in decline and that intervention is needed. However, there is no consensus on what conservation methods and management tools should be used.
- Co-management partners and stakeholders also shared their desire to reestablish the wildlife regulation amendment intake process under Chapter 16 of the First Nation Final Agreements. This intake process was last initiated by the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board in 2019 and has been paused since the Covid 19 pandemic.
- To help come to a consensus on what conservation methods and management tools should be used for the conservation and management of sheep in southwest Yukon, department officials held a workshop with Kluane First Nation, White River First Nation, Champagne and Aishihik First Nations, the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board, the Dän Keyi and Alsek Renewable Resources Councils and Parks Canada Agency (Kluane National Park) on March 6 and 7, 2024.
- The workshop discussed conservation concerns on a sheep management unit population-by-population basis and options for a broader suite of management tools for sheep while also considering options that can be implemented in the short term to protect these vulnerable populations.

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- The partners concluded the workshop by drafting a Memorandum of Understanding to express the consensus on conservation concerns and management options. The Memorandum of Understanding will be finalized this spring.

Third 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, especially when populations are under higher-than-normal environmental stress. The Department of Environment monitors harvest rates annually and makes management decisions based on harvest rates and population survey results.

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, and Flat Top Sheep Management Units in 2023.
- Yukoners may have questions about what steps the Yukon government is taking to protect sheep populations.

Background:

- Sheep populations are cyclical, and population fluctuations of highs and lows are to be expected. However, 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 Dhâl' (tay-shawl-doll) and Vulcan Mountain in Kluane National Park] found similar trends over the same time period (2015–2023).

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Sheep

Environment

- Between 2017 and 2022, a regional trend of 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.
- 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 and called on the department to implement a range of management actions.
- In the spirit of co-management, the Government of Yukon cancelled its 2023-2024 Permit Hunt Authorization lottery for the Kluane Wildlife Sanctuary. Due to continuing conservation concerns the Kluane Sheep Wildlife Sanctuary sheep permit will not be offered for the 2024-2025 season.

Approved by:

March 19, 2024

Deputy Minister of Environment

Date approved

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Spring 2024

Extended Producer Responsibility Implementation

Environment

Recommended response:

- In January of this year, the Extended Producer Responsibility Regulation came into force, marking an important milestone on the Yukon's journey to a stable and successful waste diversion system.
- While every province in Canada has established an Extended Producer Responsibility program, the Yukon is the first of the northern territories to adopt Extended Producer Responsibility.
- Extended Producer Responsibility will provide a long-lasting solution to the underlying structural issues facing the Yukon's recycling system and will reduce the cost of recycling to the Yukon taxpayers and municipalities.
- The Yukon government will be working with partners to fully establish the Extended Producer Responsibility framework in the Yukon by 2025.

Additional response:

- Over the next two years we will work with national producers, local businesses, municipalities, and industry representatives to establish the details of an Extended Producer Responsibility framework and implement the programs.
- The first step in the implementation will be a producer-led stakeholder consultation to inform the development of stewardship plans. These plans will be reviewed and approved by Government of Yukon setting the path forward for the producer-led waste diversion programs. These programs will be operating as early as fall of 2025.
- The stewardship plan review and approval stage will allow our government to ensure that the final plans align with service level expectations, recovery targets and our waste diversion objectives.

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Extended Producer Responsibility Implementation

Environment

- To ensure concerned Yukon businesses and recycling stakeholders have the certainty they need, the Government of Yukon has maintained an ongoing dialogue to address concerns and inform the development and implementation of the framework, we are currently in active conversations with producers, producer responsibility organizations, and other stakeholders (see **Appendix A**).
- We are committed to continuing this dialogue throughout the implementation of an Extended Producer Responsibility framework in the Yukon.

Third response:

- The Government of Yukon acknowledges the importance of recycling to Yukoners and is working to ensure that Yukoners can continue to do their part to reduce waste and protect the environment.
- We are aware that Raven ReCentre announced on April 10th that they will not be accepting, processing or shipping most non-refundable recyclables including paper and packaging as of September 15 this year.
- The Government of Yukon is committed to continuing to work with the City of Whitehorse and community partners to find solutions and ensure Yukoners have an option to recycle in Whitehorse.
- On April 4, Department of Environment officials met with Circular Materials to discuss how we could further support the City of Whitehorse with recycling.
- On April 9th, senior officials from the Departments of Environment, Community Services and Circular Materials met with City of Whitehorse to discuss options to integrate a possible short-term curbside collection program into an ongoing producer-led program.

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Extended Producer Responsibility Implementation

Environment

- During these discussions, the Government of Yukon provided assurance that the design of a collection program, in collaboration with Circular Materials, would be supported by the Department of Environment to ensure that it meets requirements in the Stewardship Plan review.
- On April 11, a letter was sent to the Mayor reiterating our support for the City of Whitehorse as we move forward with Extended Producer Responsibility implementation.
- During a Council meeting on April 15, we understand Council members were briefed by City officials on the options to maintain recycling services and support the transition to an industry managed Extended Producer Responsibility system.
- On April 22, the Council unanimously passed a motion that:
 - the administration participate in stakeholder consultations with the Producer Responsibility Organization and bring forward a recommendation on the City's next steps with respect to a curbside collection program in June of 2024; and
 - that administration bring forward a budget amendment in May 2024 to establish a temporary fee for service depot for paper and packaging products.
- The Government of Yukon will continue to work with partners to find an interim solution to recycling in Whitehorse while continuing to work towards a producer-led program.
- Over the next two years, the Government of Yukon will transition responsibility for managing non-refundable recyclables as well as a range of hazardous and special products to the producers of those materials.

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Extended Producer Responsibility Implementation

Environment

- Once implemented, large producers and manufacturers of residential packaging and household hazardous waste will be tasked with funding and managing the collection, handling and recovery of those materials.
- While the specific details of the Yukon's new waste management approach will be determined during the stewardship plan development period, Yukoners can expect the same or better access to waste collection and recovery services as they do now.
- As the Department of Community Services works towards regionalization of waste service delivery across the Yukon, we know that some community transfer stations may be closed.
- We recognize that the producer organizations will take the evolving waste services into account when designing their services.
- It makes sense to align waste and waste diversion or recycling services where possible to ensure an overall efficient system.
- It will be up to the producers to propose service levels that align with existing services and to take into consideration any changes that are planned to happen during the transition period between now and fall of 2025.
- This is why it is important for the local governments and communities to participate in the producer-led engagement that will take place over the coming months.

Context—this may be an issue because:

- The Yukon public and Yukon businesses may have questions about how the implementation of Extended Producer Responsibility framework will impact the Yukon's waste management system and Yukon businesses.

Background:

Prepared for Minister Clarke
Department of Environment

Date prepared: January 25, 2024
Last Updated: April 24, 2024

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Extended Producer Responsibility Implementation

Environment

- From January to May 2022, the Department of Environment worked with Extended Producer Responsibility Advisory Committee to collect preliminary input on Extended Producer Responsibility. Public engagement on Extended Producer Responsibility was held from November 1, 2022, to February 17, 2023.
- In the fall, the amendments to the *Environment Act* were passed allowing Yukon to place Extended Producer Responsibility obligations on national brands rather than Yukon municipalities and taxpayers.
- Department of Community Services is planning to close several rural transfer stations over the next several years at Johnson's Crossing, Silver City, Braeburn and Stewart Crossing.

Approved by:

April 26, 2024

Deputy Minister of Environment

Date approved

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Extended Producer Responsibility
Implementation

Environment

Appendix A:

Summary of public engagement on Extended Producer Responsibility
post release of the What We Heard (June 26, 2023 – present)

Date and time	Format	Audience	Participation
Apr 26, 2023, 10-10:30am	Microsoft Teams	Food, Health and Consumer Products of Canada (FHCP)	Direct meeting (Whitney Givans, Michelle Saunders)
What We Heard (WWH) Report Published			
Jun 26, 2023, 10:30am-12pm	Microsoft Teams	Extended Producer Responsibility Advisory Committee – present What We Heard report and proposed path forward	
Jul 6, 2023, 9am-9:45 am	Microsoft Teams	Canadian Consumer Specialty Products Association (CCSPA)	Direct meeting (Simon Kinsman)
Aug 2, 2023, 3pm-4pm	Microsoft Teams	Extended Producer Responsibility Advisory Committee – question period for WWH and proposed path forward, follow up on Jun 26 th meeting.	Yukon Liquor Corporation, Community Services, City of Whitehorse, Association of Yukon Communities
Sep 7, 2023, 1:30pm	Phone	McDonalds Whitehorse	Direct conversation (Mike Thorpe)
Sep 7, 2023, 1:45pm	Phone	Tim Hortons Whitehorse	Direct conversation (Doug Terry)
Sep 8, 2023, 10am-11am	Microsoft Teams	Canadian Consumer Specialty Products Association (CCSPA)	Direct meeting (Simon Kinsman)
Sep 8, 2023, 11am-12pm	Direct meeting	Product Care	Direct meeting (Mannie Cheung)

Session Briefing Note

Spring 2024

Extended Producer Responsibility
Implementation

Environment

Date and time	Format	Audience	Participation
Sep 8, 2023, 1:30pm-2:30pm	Microsoft Teams	Interchange Recycling	Direct meeting (Will Burrows)
Sep 11, 2023, 1pm-2pm	Phone	Circular Materials	Direct meeting (Allen Langdon)
Sep 18, 2023, 10am-10:45am	Direct meeting	Call2Recycle	Direct meeting (Jason Brown)
Sep 18, 2023, 2:50pm	Phone	Whitehorse Motors	Direct conversation (Tina Woodland)
Sep 19, 2023, 2pm-2:30pm	Microsoft Teams	Yukon Liquor Corporation	Direct Meeting (Danielle Hubert, Dustin Biero)
Sep 20, 2023, 2pm-3pm	In-person	Raven ReCentre	Direct Meeting (Heather Ashthorn)
Sep 22, 2023, 1pm-2pm	In-person	Whitehorse and Yukon Chambers of Commerce	Direct Meeting (Keara and Luke)
Sep 22, 2023, 3pm-3:45pm	Microsoft Teams	Retail Council of Canada (RCC)	Direct Meeting (Kelsey and Greg)
Sep 26, 2023, 2pm-3pm	Microsoft Teams	Klondike Placer Miners' Association (KPMA) and Yukon Chamber of Mines (YCM)	Direct Meeting (Brienne, Brooke, Lisa)
Nov 17, 2023, 2pm-3pm	Microsoft Teams	Yukon Liquor Corporation	Direct Meeting (Dustin Biero, Sarah Waters)
Dec 5, 2023, 2pm-2:30pm	Microsoft Teams	Circular Materials	Direct meeting (Jon Inrig)
Dec 19, 2023	Phone	MacDonalds Whitehorse	Phone chat (Mike Thorpe)
Jan 12, 2024, 10am-10:30am	Microsoft Teams	Canadian Battery Association	Direct meeting (Colin McKean)
Jan 19, 2024, 1:30pm-2:30pm	In-person	City of Whitehorse, Community Services	Meeting (Tracy Allen, Ira Webb, Craig Van Lankveld, Dave Albisser)

Session Briefing Note

Spring 2024

Extended Producer Responsibility
Implementation

Environment

Date and time	Format	Audience	Participation
Regulation Passed on January 25, 2024			
Feb 6, 2024, 9:30am-11am	Microsoft Teams	Extended Producer Responsibility Advisory Committee	
Feb 8, 2024, 3pm-4pm	Microsoft Teams	Circular Materials	Direct Meeting (Jon Inrig, Richard Hodges, Allen Langdon)
Feb 22, 2024	Microsoft Teams	Call2Recycle	Direct Meeting (Jason Brown)
Feb 22, 2024, 3pm-4pm	Microsoft Teams	Circular Materials	Direct Meeting (Jon Inrig, Richard Hodges, Allen Langdon, Bob Nichols)
Feb 27, 2024	Microsoft Teams	Interchange Recycling	Direct Meeting (Will Burrows, David Lawes, Kelly Duran, Birthe Levie)
Feb 28, 2024	Microsoft Teams	ProductCare	Direct Meeting (Mario Ando, Mannie Cheung)
Feb 29, 2024	Microsoft Teams	Info Session Webinar	33 people, mostly stewards
Mar 7, 2024, 3pm-4pm	In-person	Circular Materials	Direct Meeting (Jon Inrig, Richard Hodges)
Mar 8, 2024, all day	In-person, KDCC	Extended Producer Responsibility Day	~40 participants registered
Mar 13, 2024	Microsoft Teams	Info Session Webinar	~45 participants registered
Mar 14, 2024	In-person	City of Whitehorse	Direct Meeting (Tracy Allen)
Mar 15, 2024	In-person	AYC (Municipalities)	Direct Meeting (AYC)

Session Briefing Note

Dawson Regional Land Use Planning

EMR # 1 / ENV #9
Spring 2024

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 in 2025.

Additional response:

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

Context — this may be an issue because:

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

Background:

- The Government of Yukon and Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in formed the Dawson Regional Land Use Planning Commission in December 2018.

Energy, Mines and Resources
and Environment

- Approved by:**

Date approved

Session Briefing Note

Spring 2024

Southern Lakes Moose

Environment

Recommended response:

- Our results from moose surveys conducted in November 2021 show that numbers of moose have increased in the Fish Lake, Mount Lorne and Wheaton River Moose Management Units since surveys were last conducted in 2010.
- Licensed harvest has been restricted in these areas for the past 35 years following the implementation of a Permit Hunt Authorization system in 1989.
- Survey results show that collective conservation actions have been effective in supporting the recovery of these populations.
- In January 2024, the Department of Environment initiated consultation with Kwanlin Dün First Nation, Carcross/Tagish First Nation, Champagne and Aishihik First Nations, the Ta'an Kwäch'än Council, Taku River Tlingit First Nation and the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board on a proposal to increase the number of Permit Hunt Authorizations available in these areas.
- The Department also notified the Laberge, Carcross/Tagish, and Alsek Renewable Resources Councils of this proposal.

Additional response:

- Department staff met with all affected First Nations, except the Ta'an Kwäch'än Council, from October to December 2023 to present survey results and to identify potential concerns regarding an increase in licensed harvest of moose in these areas.

Session Briefing Note

Spring 2024

Southern Lakes Moose

Environment

- Following initial discussions with Kwanlin Dün First Nation and the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board, and after receiving written responses from the Taku River Tlingit First Nation and Carcross/Tagish Renewable Resources Council, the department acknowledges the need for all co-management partners to convene to share concerns and identify new moose harvest opportunities for licensed hunters.
- Department staff are scheduling a co-management partner workshop for later this year.
- This approach aligns with my mandate commitment to work with Yukon First Nations, the Fish and Wildlife Management Board and stakeholders to continue to ensure all Yukoners are provided opportunities to sustainably harvest fish and game while looking for new opportunities for Yukon hunters to pursue activities across the territory.

Third response:

- Harvest opportunities for moose are informed by discussions with co-management partners, the best available survey data and the *Science-Based Guidelines for Management of Moose in Yukon* which recommends a minimum of 30 adult bulls per 100 adult cows for a population that can sustain harvest.
- Survey results are publicly available on Yukon.ca.

Context—this may be an issue because:

- Minister Clarke and Kwanlin Dün First Nation Chief Sean Uyenets'echi'a Smith met on February 9, 2024, to discuss Southern Lakes moose permits.

Session Briefing Note

Spring 2024

Southern Lakes Moose

Environment

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

Background:

- The Fish Lake, Mt. Lorne and Wheaton River Moose Management Units are all currently on Permit Hunt Authorizations. The current allocation of permits (11) was set in 1998 and remains in place today.
- The 2021 survey results indicate that the sustainable harvest levels are well above what is currently authorized under Permit Hunt Authorizations. Sustainable harvest includes all licensed and subsistence harvest.

Approved by:

February 28, 2024

Deputy Minister of Environment

Date approved

Session Briefing Note

Spring 2024

Salmon and Fish Hatchery Development

Environment

Recommended response:

- Salmon are culturally important and a subsistence resource to Yukon First Nations, as well as a keystone species for our ecosystems.
- 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.

Agreement Regarding the Recovery of Yukon River Salmon

- Recently, the Government of Yukon welcomed an agreement signed by Fisheries and Oceans Canada and the Alaskan State government regarding the recovery of Chinook salmon in the Yukon River Drainage.
- The agreement recognizes the decline of Chinook salmon and sets a larger escapement goal of 71,000 Chinook salmon over the next seven years, requiring all lower Yukon River subsistence harvesters to cease fishing of Chinook salmon until the escapement goal is reached. This includes the suspension of directed Chinook salmon commercial, sport, domestic and personal use fisheries in the mainstream Yukon River and Canadian tributaries for seven years.
- The agreement recognizes the importance of Chinook salmon for ceremonial use and cultural knowledge, allowing limited harvest opportunities for these purposes.
- It also calls for Alaska to minimize incidental harvest of Chinook salmon in all other mainstream Yukon River fisheries over this seven-year period, to help rebuild Chinook salmon stocks.

Session Briefing Note

Spring 2024

Salmon and Fish Hatchery Development

Environment

- The Government of Yukon is pleased to see that this agreement places a priority on traditional and local knowledge to better understand the causes of low Chinook salmon counts, while directing the Yukon River Panel to develop a recovery plan to guide a path forward in recovery. The Government of Yukon will continue to work with our partners, including Yukon First Nations to address the challenges and opportunities related to salmon management in the Yukon and across the border.

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.
- As in previous years, the returns in 2023 were low.
- 15,304 Yukon River Chinook entered into Canada, far short of the pre-season estimate of 26,000 to 43,000 and well below the escapement goal of 55,000.
- Of these, only 154 Chinook reached the Whitehorse Fish Ladder. In comparison, over 1,400 salmon were counted at the Whitehorse Fish Ladder in 2003.
- Yukon River Chum salmon saw similar low returns. Only 20,260 entered into Canada, well below the escapement goal of 70,000 – 104,000.
- We support the Canadian delegates of the Yukon River Panel in their continued efforts to negotiate for larger escapement numbers.
- On February 9, I met with Alaska Commissioner of Fish and Game, Doug Vincent Lang, Chief Leas of Ta'an Kwäch'än Council, and Chief Smith of the Kwanlin Dün First Nation to discuss the continued need for

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2024****Salmon and Fish Hatchery Development**

Environment

international collaboration on salmon recovery and limiting harvest on both sides of the border.

- We also discussed the value of establishing a conservation hatchery in the territory as one of several possible ways to improve salmon escapement levels.
- I look forward to continuing to advance discussions with our partners to pursue opportunities to secure the future of this important species.

Third response:

- In 2022, Fisheries and Oceans Canada announced the Pacific Salmon Strategy Initiative, a long-term strategy to reverse the decline of Pacific salmon stocks in the Yukon and British Columbia.
- The strategy includes 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 collaboration 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 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, 2023, 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 First Nation-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.



Session Briefing Note

Spring 2024

Salmon and Fish Hatchery Development

Environment

Context—this may be an issue because:

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

Background:

- Yukon First Nations have voluntarily restricted salmon harvest for many years. This voluntary prohibition remained in place during the 2023 run.
- The Chinook salmon spawning escapement goal of 42,500 to 55,000 has not been met since 2018.
- The Department of Environment has met with Fisheries and Oceans Regional Director General and the US Consul General and raised the need for international collaboration on recovery and limiting harvest.
- Staff also met with Yukon First Nations and Fisheries and Ocean Canada to discuss Yukon River salmon stock rehabilitation.
- On January 8 and 9, 2024, department staff attended a two-day workshop related to the Whitehorse Generation Station relicensing project, which is directly related to fish passage and hatchery operations to support Chinook Salmon.

Approved by:

April 3, 2024

Deputy Minister of Environment

Date approved

Briefing Note**Spring 2024****Agreement Concerning Recovery
of Yukon Chinook Salmon**

Environment

Recommended response:

- On April 1, Fisheries and Oceans Canada and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game signed an agreement regarding the recovery of Chinook salmon in the Yukon River Drainage.
- The agreement recognizes the persistent decline of Chinook salmon and sets a larger escapement goal of 71,000 Chinook salmon over the next seven years, requiring all lower Yukon River subsistence harvesters to cease fishing, until the escapement goal is reached.
- This includes the suspension of directed Chinook salmon commercial, sport, domestic and personal use fisheries in the mainstream Yukon River and Canadian tributaries for seven years.
- The agreement also recognizes the importance of Chinook salmon for ceremonial use and cultural knowledge, allowing for parties to provide limited harvest opportunities for these purposes.
- It also calls for Alaska to minimize incidental harvest of Chinook salmon in all other mainstream Yukon River fisheries over this seven-year period, to help rebuild Chinook salmon stocks.

Additional response:

- The Government of Yukon is pleased to see that this agreement places a priority on traditional and local knowledge to better understand the causes of low Chinook salmon counts, while directing the Yukon River Panel to develop a recovery plan to guide a path forward in recovery.
- The agreement also urges parties to address long-term cumulative effects of other factors, including habitat degradation, competition

Briefing Note**Spring 2024****Agreement Concerning Recovery
of Yukon Chinook Salmon**

Environment

from hatchery production, cyclic natural phenomena and large-scale environmental variabilities affecting marine and freshwater habitats.

Final Response:

- Through our engagement with both the Alaska State Government and Fisheries and Oceans Canada, we are confident that this agreement reflects the values of Yukon First Nations and Yukoners, while setting an obtainable goal to increase Chinook salmon stocks.
- The Government of Yukon strongly supports this larger escapement goal shared by the Alaska State Government and Fisheries and Oceans Canada and will continue to work towards addressing challenges and opportunities related to salmon management with our partners, including with Yukon First Nations.

Context—this may be an issue because:

- On April 1, 2024, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game and Fisheries and Oceans Canada signed an agreement concerning the recovery of Yukon River Chinook salmon.

Background:

- On February 9, 2024, Commissioner Vincent-Lang met with Minister Clarke, Chief Smith and Chief Leas on the subject of salmon management in the Yukon River. A Canada-Alaska bilateral salmon agreement was discussed.
- Subsistence harvesters in Alaska have received a draft copy of the agreement and have voiced opposition to its adoption.
- The Canadian members of the Yukon River Panel have been seeking a higher escapement goal for at least eight years.

Briefing Note**Spring 2024****Agreement Concerning Recovery
of Yukon Chinook Salmon**

Environment

- Alaska always manages to the lower end of the Chinook escapement goal (approximately 41,000). This number is too small and cannot provide enough Chinook salmon to adequately seed the upper Yukon River drainage.
- It has been seven years since 71,000 Chinook passed into Canada.
- Last year, approximately 15,000 fish passed into Canada.
- The seven-year moratorium reflects the seven-year life cycle of Chinook salmon.

Approved by:

April 5, 2024

Deputy Minister of Environment_____
Date approved

Session Briefing Note

Spring 2024

McIntyre Creek Protected Area Planning Environment

Recommended response:

- The establishment of Chasàn Chuà/ McIntyre Creek as a protected area continues to be a priority for the Government of Yukon.
- Last year, we announced measures that provide interim protection to the area by expanding the boundary of an existing Order-in-Council under the Quartz Act to prevent new mineral staking in the proposed protected area.
- We also established an administrative reserve to ensure public land use applications align with the purpose of a protected area and the City's Official Community Plan.
- Most recently, on April 24, the Government of Yukon announced that, in partnership with Kwanlin Dün First Nation, Ta'an Kwäch'än Council, the City of Whitehorse and Parks Canada, we signed a Memorandum of Understanding outlining our commitment to protect the McIntyre Creek area in Whitehorse.
- The Memorandum of Understanding commits partners to work together to recommend a boundary for the area, the type of protected area tool to use, and a governance model for managing this area in the future.

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

Spring 2024

McIntyre Creek Protected Area Planning Environment

- The Government of Yukon also acknowledges the importance of the area to recreational users such as snowmobilers, cross-country skiers, rock climbers, hikers, bikers, and disc golfers.

Third response:

- While new mineral staking is prohibited in the McIntyre Creek area, existing claim holders can renew or work their claims if they continue to conduct such work in compliance with regulatory requirements and relevant permits obtained.
- The Department of Environment will remain engaged on any proposed mineral activity in the McIntyre Creek area, and we will continue to work with all affected parties to discuss ways to ensure the environmental protection of McIntyre Creek is moving forward.
- A collaborative planning approach is key, due to the number of parties involved, and local interests.

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 as a protected area.
- A mining company with active quartz claims that overlap the proposed park boundary received approval to conduct Class 1 activities from the Government of Yukon. The City of Whitehorse also approved a development permit to allow exploration-related activities to occur.

Background:

- The area is 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

Spring 2024

McIntyre Creek Protected Area Planning Environment

- Additional interests in this area include mining claim holders, gravel extraction and other commercial and institutional land tenures, including Icy Waters and Yukon University. Existing authorizations are not directly impacted by the mineral staking withdrawal or the administrative reserve.

Approved by:

Deputy Minister of Environment

April 26, 2024

Date approved

Session Briefing Note

Spring 2024

Environmental Awareness Fund

Environment

Recommended response:

- We appreciate the concerns recently raised by CPAWS Yukon and the Yukon Conservation Society regarding the closure of the Yukon Environmental Training Fund and the Environmental Awareness Fund.
- On July 6, 2023, I met with CPAWS to discuss a wide range of topics including the closure of the Environmental Awareness Fund and why the fund was no longer effective in supporting environmental projects.
- The Government of Yukon continues to offer over three dozen funding programs to support environmental awareness initiatives including the Yukon Research and Innovation Program, Community Development Fund, the Good Energy Program and the Staffing UP program, that eligible organizations can apply to for funding.
- I met with the Yukon Conservation Society on March 22, 2024, where we discussed a range of topics including the closure of the Environmental Awareness Fund and alternate opportunities for funding through the Yukon Government.
- The Environmental Awareness Fund was initially set up to provide financial support for projects that aligned with themes identified by the Department of Environment.
- Interest in the fund has historically been low, so it was closed in June of 2023. Past recipients were notified by email.

Context—this may be an issue because:

- On March 14, 2024, CPAWS Yukon sent a letter to Premier Pillai, Minister Clarke, MLA Lane Tredger and MLA Istchenko raising concerns about the closure of the Yukon Environmental Training Fund and the Environmental Awareness Fund.

Background:

- The Environmental Awareness Fund was active between 2018 and 2023.

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Spring 2024

Environmental Awareness Fund

Environment

- The Environmental Awareness Fund had five applications in 2021-22 of which three were fulfilled, five in 2022-23 of which two were fulfilled and one in 2023-24 which was fulfilled.
- In the last two fiscal years less than \$3,000 (10%) has been awarded annually to applicants.
- The monies from the Environmental Awareness Fund are now used for public engagement and education campaigns for new and existing initiatives.
- In 2023-24 there was only one applicant to the Environmental Awareness Fund, with an approval of \$2,475 in funding.
- The Yukon Environmental Training Fund was administered by the Department of Economic Development.

Environmental Awareness Fund 2023-24:

- Submissions received: 1
- Total funding requested: \$5,401.88
- Total funding approved: \$2,475.00
- Total funding amount spent: TBD – not to exceed \$2,475.00

Organi zation	Project description	Funding	Comments, feedback and rationale	Approved funding	Actual amount spent funding & details
Yukon Canoe and Kayak Club	Yukon River Camping Impact Assessment, Carmacks to the White River Confluence	Request: \$5401.88	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Received in-kind funding and contributions last year from Y2C2 in our department. 	\$2,475.00	\$TBD in 2024
Total		\$5,401.88		\$2475	\$TBD in 2024

Environmental Awareness Fund 2022-23:

Prepared for Minister Clarke
Environment

Date prepared: April 2, 2024
Last Updated: N/A
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Session Briefing Note

Spring 2024

Environmental Awareness Fund

Environment

- Submissions received: 5
- Total funding requested: \$19,505.00
- Total funding approved: \$24,500
- Total funding amount spent: \$7,782.88

Organization	Project description	Funding	Comments, feedback and Rationale	Approved funding & details	Actual Spent ss
Friends of McIntyre Creek	McIntyre Creek Waste Removal	Request: \$3622.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For waste removal by helicopter. • Would like to see a more educational component in application. 	\$3600	\$0
Nlaye Ndasaday e Daycare	Teaching Young Children about the Importance of Recycling	Request: \$1,226.66	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positives are educating little children about recycling. • Willing to consider this application for books requested in application. 	\$1,250	\$997.88
Centre for Human/ Wildlife Conflict Solutions (Wild Wise)	Whitehorse Waste Audit & Signage Project	Request: \$4,811	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waste audit and signage project. • Concern this is a duplicate request with other departments. 	\$3,150	\$0
Yukon Canoe and	Teslin River Recreational Impact Assessment	Request: \$11,491.25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requested EAF funding last year. • Due to COVID did not complete all the 	\$11,500	Amount spent \$11,500; however,

Session Briefing Note

Spring 2024

Environmental Awareness Fund

Environment

Kayak Club	t and Mendenhall Landing Outhouse		projects from last year. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data for toilet use success is required. 		they exceeded the scope of costs as the Agreement outlines. Amount awarded \$6,785
Yukon Invasive Species Council	Yard Waste Management Education Campaign	Request: \$20,530	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non-profit already has a TPA. Willing to cover ad and website requests – online campaign. Not to support printing costs and Outreach Coordinator wage. 	\$5000	\$0
Total		\$19,505		\$24,500	\$7,782.88

Environmental Awareness Fund 2021-22:

- Submissions received: 5
- Total funding requested: \$44,258.48
- Total funding approved: \$30,000.00
- Total funding amount spent: **\$14,293**

Organization	Project description	Funding	Comments, feedback and Rationale	Approved funding	Actual Spent
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Session Briefing Note

Spring 2024

Environmental Awareness Fund

Environment

Canada n Parks and Wildern ess Society (CPAW S)	CPAWS Yukon will facilitate a multilayered research project to understand how human activities impact wildlife around McIntyre Creek.	Request: \$4,500	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong stewardship and FN collaboration. • Ambitious request(s). • Concerns with funding for multi-year project(s). • Not focused on topic of illegal dumping. 	\$4,500	\$4,500
Raven Recyclin g Society and Zero Waste Yukon	Raven Recycling Society will recycle vehicles from the public.	Request: \$24,782.98	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerns about using funding to get rid of private property. 	\$6,000	\$4,293
Whiteh orse Commu nity Thrift Store	An education campaign about the social and environment al costs of our consumer habits with respect to clothing.	Request: \$6,457.50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus needed on educational component for recycling and uses of old clothing (as well as behaviour change in purchasing) and target groups outside thrift store users. 	\$5,500	\$5,500

Session Briefing Note

Spring 2024

Environmental Awareness Fund

Environment

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supportive of educational component. 		
Yukon Helpers Network		Request: \$N/A Recommendation to award: \$0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unclear how much funding is being requested and what it would be used for. Operational costs, are ineligible. 	\$0 Application was in complete.	\$0
Yukon Canoe and Kayak Club	Impact assessment of river uses on rivers in the territory	Request: \$8,518.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applicant satisfied concerns over potential multi-year project ineligibility by ensuring funding does not go to operational costs and focuses on the new rivers being addressed this year. Addresses topic of illegal dumping. 	\$14,000	\$0
Total		\$ 44,258.48		\$30,000	\$14,293

 Deputy Minister, Environment

 April 2, 2024

 Date Approved

Session Briefing Note

WildWise Yukon

Spring 2024
Environment

Recommended response:

- WildWise Yukon, established in 2012, has had a presence in promoting environmental education and awareness in the Yukon.
- Over the years, WildWise Yukon has launched several programs and projects aimed at reducing human-wildlife conflict, for example the electric fencing program to protect domestic sheep and goats from predators.
- The Department of Environment funded the program between 2013 and 2022 and is aware of WildWise Yukon's recent dissolution.
- The Department received an email from the Board in early August 2023 sharing that they were considering dissolving the society.
- The Department of Environment funded Wildwise for nine years with Transfer Payment Agreements ranging from \$25,000 to \$42,000 depending on the projects proposed:
 - 2022/23 \$30,000
 - 2021/22 \$40,000
 - 2020/21 \$50,000
 - 2018/19 \$35,000
 - 2017/18 \$40,000
 - 2016/17 \$40,250
 - 2015/16 \$42,000
 - 2014/15 \$25,000
 - 2013/14 \$35,000

Session Briefing Note

WildWise Yukon

Spring 2024
Environment

- Up until the dissolution, the Conservation Officer Services, Communications and Finance branches had been working with the organization to support efforts in securing a Transfer Payment Agreement for 2023-2024.
- Department of Environment officials met with the organization multiple times to help identify new projects that would meet the funding requirements; however, they were unable to put forward a suitable project for funding.
- We understand that uncertainties with recruitment and retention for the Executive Director, as well as other Board members, placed significant stress on the volunteer board and the organization.
- The new Executive Director and all board members, except for one, resigned when they were unable to arrive at a suitable project for funding that aligned with the Department of Environment's Mandate.
- By August 2023, we understand the board had essentially dissolved.

Additional response:

- The Department of Environment works with a diverse range of local organizations that work to support conservation and sustainability in the territory.
- While the dissolution of WildWise Yukon marks the end of an era, it also opens a pathway for new initiatives and collaborations to emerge, ensuring that the foundational goals of WildWise continue to influence community engagement and environmental stewardship in Yukon.

Session Briefing Note

WildWise Yukon

Spring 2024
Environment

- Our work with organizations like WildWise Yukon is ever evolving and adapting. We are always looking to find new ways to foster innovation and more effective ways of supporting our environment and enhancing stewardship among Yukoners and visitors.
 - I would like to recognize the impact that WildWise Yukon had in promoting environmental education and awareness to safeguard the public from dangerous bear encounters while also protecting wildlife.
 - We are thankful for their years of hard work and advocacy. I know that their absence among our local conservation organizations will be felt. The legacy of WildWise Yukon will endure through the lasting impact of its programs and their continued presence on social media.
-

Context—this may be an issue because:

- WildWise Yukon dissolved and will cease all active outreach and programming efforts. The organization will maintain a presence through social media to continue providing education and awareness.
 - According to WildWise Yukon's Facebook post, they dissolved due to several key factors:
 - Persistent internal communication issues disrupted organizational effectiveness;
 - A lack of support and funding from the Department of Environment hindered operations and strategic planning;
 - Financial constraints led to an inability to maintain a stable Executive Director, and ongoing operational challenges.
 - Department officials met with WildWise on May 1, 2023 to discuss Transfer Payment Agreement reporting requirements and future programming. Email exchanges also occurred:
 - May 8, 11, 18, 30
-



Session Briefing Note
WildWise Yukon

- June 2, 18, 19
- August 3 when WildWise shared the Board's decision to dissolve the society.

Approved by:

April 22, 2024

Deputy Minister of Environment

Date approved

Session Briefing Note**Climate Change and Emergency
Preparedness**

Environment

Recommended response:

- Yukoners have experienced climate-related emergencies over the last several years, including large-scale flooding and severe wildfire events.
- This past summer, 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 to keep Yukoners safe as we adapt to climate change.
- That is why we are continuing to build on our climate preparedness commitments in Our Clean Future, while working with partners, experts, and knowledge holders to advance climate resilience in the Yukon.
- New adaptation actions announced in December 2023 help us address the recommendations and priorities in the 2022 Climate Risk and Assessment report.

Additional response:

- The Government of Yukon has over 50 adaptation actions in Our Clean Future that support climate resilience.
- Recognizing our immediate need to prepare for the impacts of climate change, we recently announced several new actions that support emergency preparedness.
- New actions include increasing our fire, flood and weather forecasting capacity by hiring a meteorologist and data scientist to improve available systems, additional digital tools and reporting structures for emergency preparedness and response in recognition of the increasing frequency and severity of these types of events.

Session Briefing Note

Spring 2024

Climate Change and Emergency Preparedness

Environment

- We are also updating emergency preparedness communications that support household resilience to climate-related hazards including flooding, fires, landslides, and power outages.
- We will also be developing a flood information platform to better share timely and vital information with communities and to better inform emergency planning and response.
- We are also undertaking geohazard and flood risk hazard assessments for Yukon campgrounds and other key public infrastructure in territorial parks which will help support enhanced resilience and hazard mitigation.

Third response:

- 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 (Villages of Teslin and Haines Junction) and are actively supporting the planning processes for six additional communities.
- In addition, we are protecting the health of communities and first responders by establishing clear air spaces in communities and by purchasing a mobile incident command station that will double as a clean-air shelter for first responders working in wildfire areas.
- We will continue to take action to reduce our exposure to climate hazards like wildfires and flooding, increasing our resilience to those hazards, and

Session Briefing Note

Climate Change and Emergency Preparedness

Environment

increase our capacity to adapt through the actions laid out in Our Clean Future.

Context—this may be an issue because:

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

Background:

- Adapting to the impacts of climate change is one of the four goals of Our Clean Future. This includes the target for the Yukon to be “highly resilient to the impacts of climate change by 2030.”
- 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.

Approved by:

Briar Young
A/Deputy Minister of Environment

2024-02-09

Date approved

Session Briefing Note

Mining Intensity Target

Recommended response:

- The Government of Yukon has established a target of a 45 per cent reduction in the mining sector's greenhouse gas emissions intensity by 2035.
- We are working towards legislating an intensity-based target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions per unit of production in the mining sector.
- We are working with a consultant and the mining industry to set baselines, establish benchmarks and find solutions that 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*.
- Since 2022, through the licensing process, quartz mines have been required to project anticipated greenhouse gas emissions, identify reduction measures, and annually report on greenhouse gas emissions.

Session Briefing Note

Mining Intensity Target

Context — this may be an issue because:

- There may be questions regarding Action I9 in Our Clean Future to establish an intensity-based greenhouse gas reduction target for the Yukon's mining industry.
(See BN #32)

Background:

- The percentage of emissions from mining is variable year-to-year. From 2009-2020 it contributed 8 to 15 per cent of the Yukon's total greenhouse gas emissions.
- A target of an overall mining emissions intensity reduction of 45 per cent below 2023 levels for 2035 and subsequent years was announced during the spring 2023 legislative session.
- Energy, Mines, and Resources has committed to bring forward an amendment to the Clean Energy Act that would set this target into legislation.
- The legislation will include a requirement to report annual progress towards the target.
- Energy, Mines and Resources is working with a consultant and the mineral industry to establish baselines and benchmarks to measure progress towards the target.
- Industry was notified in October 2023 that it would be presented an opportunity to provide feedback on the consultant's report when it is completed.
- An initial report and proposal were presented to officials in November 2023. An updated report is expected in February 2024.
- The proposed baseline methodology will be presented to industry later in the Spring once it is reviewed by the department.
- Energy, Mines and Resources is also working towards legislating a greenhouse gas emissions reduction target for post-production reclamation activities, including reclamation for abandoned mines.
- Using data provided through the quartz mine licensing process and from fuel tax data, the Government of Yukon will track the sector's progress toward achieving greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets.



Session Briefing Note Mining Intensity Target

- Energy, Mines and Resources conducted public engagement on the overall mining intensity target in fall 2022. A What We Heard report from that engagement is available on Yukon.ca.
- 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 it achieve the mining intensity target. Energy, Mines and Resources is assisting with this work. (See BN #28)

Approved by:

Deputy Minister
Department of Energy, Mines and Resources

February 29, 2024

Date approved

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2024****Carbon Pricing
(Corporate Note)**Environment & Finance

Recommended response:

- Since its introduction in 2019, the Government of Yukon has been supportive of carbon pricing as a policy to help us reduce emissions and move toward our ambitious climate targets.
- The Department of Environment and the Department of Finance work closely to ensure that we take a balanced approach to carbon pricing in the territory, one which considers the need to reduce emissions as well as the fair return of carbon pricing revenues to Yukoners.
- Our two departments work together to coordinate with our federal counterparts to assess the implications of carbon pricing in the territory and to ensure the needs of the territory are recognized in national policy.
- This includes retaining control over how revenues are distributed back to Yukon individuals, municipal governments, Yukon First Nations and businesses.
- It also includes excluding carbon price from electricity generation or aviation, in recognition of the unique constraints of our northern jurisdiction.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2024****Carbon Pricing
(Corporate Note)**Environment & Finance

Additional response:

- Carbon pricing is just one tool in our toolkit to address the climate emergency.
- We continue to implement Our Clean Future to reduce the Yukon's greenhouse gas emissions and, more broadly, to reduce the impact of the carbon levy on Yukoners.
- In December of last year, we announced 42 new actions under Our Clean Future as part of the third Our Clean Future annual report outlining the progress we have made on the strategy.
- Although we have made progress on many of our commitments, there is still significant work required to meet our target of reducing our emissions by 45 per cent by 2030
- Our government continues to stand by carbon pricing as sound, evidence-based policy on climate change, but we share concerns about equity; specifically, for those Yukoners who do not use heating oil for their homes.
- The policies in Our Clean Future, as well as carbon pricing, are intended to incentivize Yukoners to make the switch to low carbon energy sources, like electric heating or heat pumps. Despite this change to the federal carbon levy, Yukoners continue to lead the way to support this low carbon transition.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2024****Carbon Pricing
(Corporate Note)**

Environment & Finance

- Ensuring that we utilize every policy lever at our disposal, including carbon pricing, is essential to meet our goals.
- Together, we are finding solutions to reduce our emissions while strengthening our economy and supporting our industry partners.

Third response:

- The Yukon's carbon rebate is revenue-neutral. We are committed to both reducing carbon emissions in the territory and to returning all the federal government's revenues to Yukoners.
- Returning proceeds to individuals, municipal governments, Yukon First Nations, and businesses is a critical part of our approach to carbon pricing in the Yukon.
- We are returning 100 per cent of the federal carbon levy to these four rebate groups who receive more, on average, than they pay in carbon pricing levies.

Context—this may be an issue because:

- In October 2023, the federal government announced a temporary 3-year exemption for home heating oil from the federal carbon price, with the intention of helping Atlantic Canada in particular.
- While Atlantic Canada welcomed this change, the exemption has received considerable backlash. Most provincial governments (except for British Columbia) have called for extending the carbon price exemption to all home-heating fuels (including natural gas).

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2024****Carbon Pricing
(Corporate Note)**

Environment & Finance

- Critics also argued that the exemption undermines the credibility of the carbon tax, and may weaken the incentives to switch to lower carbon heating options.

Background:

- The federal Draft Regulations Amending the Fuel Charge Regulations stipulate that all heating oil will be exempt from the fuel charge starting November 8, 2023, until April 2027.
- This means that light fuel oil consumption in all buildings, including residential, commercial, and institutional, will be exempt from the fuel charge.
- Nearly half (49.2% in 2022) of Yukon homes use oil-based heating.
- In Yukon, individuals, businesses, placer/quartz mining operations, Yukon First Nations governments and municipal governments are all eligible for a rebate for carbon pricing.
 - Individuals who live outside of Whitehorse receive a remote supplement, which was recently increased from 10 to 20% (and is now in line with the federal remote supplement for backstop jurisdictions including Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario, and Saskatchewan).

Approved by:

Michael Prochazka, Deputy Minister of
Environment

March 1, 2024

Date approved

Deputy Minister of Finance

February 26, 2024

Date approved

Session Briefing Note

Reducing Government of Yukon Emissions

Spring 2024

Environment / HPW

Recommended response:

- Reducing greenhouse gas emissions and ensuring climate resiliency continues to be a priority for the Government of Yukon.
- We are committed to tracking greenhouse gas emissions from our internal operations. We also track how climate change may be impacting government owned infrastructure.
- In December 2023, we released a report detailing the Government of Yukon's total greenhouse gas emissions. The report showed that in 2021, the government generated 49.9 kilotonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (Appendix A).
- Of this total, the Government of Yukon's departments emitted about three quarters of this, at about 34.6 kilotonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent, with government corporations and Yukon University making up the other portion (Appendix B).
- The Government of Yukon is taking action to reduce emissions from our buildings, fleet vehicle use and other operations.

Additional response:

- The Government of Yukon's emissions are largely the result of heating and powering buildings, operating maintenance equipment and fleet vehicle use.
- Given this, the Department of Highways and Public Works represents the largest share of emissions, due to the significant role they play in maintaining our buildings, roads, airports, and our main pool of vehicles.

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Spring 2024

Reducing Government of Yukon Emissions

Environment / HPW

- The Department of Highways and Public Works is also the Department who is leading a one-government approach to reduce emissions from Government of Yukon buildings by improving energy efficiency and installing renewable energy systems.
- Building improvements are prioritized based on where they will make the most impact in reducing emissions across government and are not tied to any one department.
- The Government of Yukon is also involved in providing homes, healthcare, and electricity for Yukoners. These areas also represent a high portion of Government of Yukon's emissions.

Third response (actions)

- Many actions in Our Clean Future empower Yukoners in taking climate action, while other actions support the Government of Yukon in reducing our own emissions and building resilience.
- To date, we have completed 31 retrofits to Government of Yukon buildings to improve efficiency and reduce emissions.
- To date, we have completed 81 certified energy assessments on our high-emission Government of Yukon buildings and will complete assessments for the remaining 36 high-emitting sites this year.
- To date, we now have 23 full battery-electric vehicles, including three cars, two trucks and three cargo vans, and 15 compact SUVs. In addition, we have 25 plug-in hybrid vehicles, including 13 trucks and 12 SUVs.
- In addition to these retrofits, we completed the installation of a biomass heating system at Elijah Smith Elementary School and began

Session Briefing Note

Reducing Government of Yukon Emissions

Spring 2024

Environment / HPW

installing solar panels and battery energy storage systems at two highway maintenance camps.

- In 2022, we also completed the expansion of the Government of Yukon's video and teleconferencing systems and developed requirements for employees to consider these options when requesting permission for work travel.
- To support emissions reductions in other Government of Yukon operations, we have actions that are designed to track emissions from health and social services, reduce travel emissions related to healthcare through provision of virtual health care services and retrofitting community housing buildings.

Context—this may be an issue because:

- During budget Opposition briefings, MLA Lane Tredger has asked several departments what their overall carbon footprint is. MLA Tredger has also stated that they intend to ask about the Government of Yukon's carbon footprint in the Yukon Legislative Assembly.

Background:

- Every year, the Department of Environment publishes a report on the Government of Yukon's greenhouse gas emissions alongside the Our Clean Future annual report and the Greenhouse Gas Emissions in the Yukon report.
- Emissions from the Government of Yukon have increased since 2010 as the Yukon's population grows.

Approved by:

Deputy Minister of Environment

April 3, 2024

Date approved

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

Environment / HPW

Appendix A: Total Government of Yukon emissions

Organization type	2021 emissions (ktCO ₂ e)
Departments	34.6
Corporations	13.3
Yukon University	2.0

Appendix B: 2021 emissions by department*.

Department**	Building emissions (ktCO ₂ e)***	Government Fleet, waste and refrigerants (ktCO ₂ e)	Total (ktCO ₂ e)
Community Services	1.11	1.51	2.62
Education	7.57	0.10	7.67
Energy, Mines and Resources	0.07	0.23	0.30
Environment	0.19	0.78	0.97
Health and Social Services	4.31	0.44	4.75
Highways and Public Works	7.05	6.47	13.53
Justice	1.00	0.04	1.04
Tourism and Culture	0.24	0.08	0.32

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

Environment / HPW

Unknown**			3.4
		DEPARTMENT TOTAL	34.6

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

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

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

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Lodgepole Lane

Environment

Recommended response:

- The Government of Yukon is aware of issues reported at 2 Lodgepole Lane regarding public health, safety, and potential environmental concerns.
- Some reports received by the Department of Environment about 2 Lodgepole Lane date as far back as 2008.
- I can confirm that the Department of Environment has worked diligently with appropriate agencies to address the concerns received regarding this property.
- The Lodgepole Lane property is an example of a complex site with a wide range of reported concerns involving multiple agencies. Over the years, this has included Health and Social Services, Fire and Protective Services, the City of Whitehorse and RCMP.
- Currently, as this situation stands, the lead for this property remains with the City of Whitehorse.
- We understand that the City of Whitehorse recently laid bylaw charges against the owner of the property regarding this matter.
- The City of Whitehorse continues to direct 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 clean-up efforts may also involve soil remediation. However, 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.

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Lodgepole Lane

Environment

- Legal action is not currently being pursued by the Government of Yukon and we continue to support the City of Whitehorse with technical expertise and assistance on this important file.

Additional response:

- Although contaminated soil was found at 2 Lodgepole Lane, it is not present at a level that warrants a formal designation of the property.
- Testing results showed that there 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.
- Spills on private properties are common, and living near a site with contamination does not necessarily present an inherent risk to public health.
- 2 Lodgepole Lane was added to the Contaminated Sites Information Map, which is a public inventory of properties for which the department holds evidence of some level of contamination at one point in time.

Third response:

- I would like to reiterate again that we are committed to supporting City of Whitehorse officials with technical expertise and assistance in navigating applicable regulatory requirements.
- The Department of Environment will continue to be an active and collaborative partner and will continue to support the City of Whitehorse however possible.

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Spring 2024

Lodgepole Lane

Environment

- The public is encouraged to report all spills – on or off private property – to the Yukon Spill Line at 867-667-7244. Proper management of spills is key to ensuring long term contamination is prevented.

Context—this may be an issue because:

- Neighbours of number 2 Lodgepole Lane have been vocal about several issues with the property, including soil contamination.
- MLA Van Bibber has raised this issue in each sitting since 2022 on behalf of their constituent.

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.).

Approved by:

Michael Prochazka, Deputy Minister of Environment

____ April 9, 2024 _____

Date approved

Session Briefing Note

Spring 2024

Environmental Liabilities and Remediation Program Project Updates

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 increase as we complete assessment work and learn more about each site.

Additional response:

- In 2024-2025, the Government of Yukon has earmarked \$26 million for assessment, monitoring, and remediation work at government-owned contaminated sites, of which \$21.22 million is recoverable through mine securities paid by the operator.

Wellgreen Mine

- We have recently completed a final remediation plan for Wellgreen Mine, where a water license is anticipated to be obtained in 2024, and remediation work could start as early as summer of 2025.
- We are working closely with Kluane First Nation on the remediation plan for the site and assessing opportunities to maximize economic benefits for the community while ensuring the land and water is protected.

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Environmental Liabilities and Remediation Program Project Updates

Environment

Old Crow Nursing Station

- At the Old Crow Nursing Station, a Human Health Inhalation Risk report was completed in 2019 and various indicators from this report have been monitored regularly since 2019 to manage the contamination at site and are shared with Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation.
- The Department of Environment completed a re-evaluation exercise in early 2024 for managing the contamination at site. This finalized report is anticipated to be completed in June 2024 and will be shared with Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation.
- The Department of Environment has communicated with Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation regarding this site and stays committed to being available to discuss this site with Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation.

Ross River Fire Hall

- The community drinking water well remains protected and clean
- Annual groundwater monitoring continues at the former Fire Hall in Ross River to monitor and assess contamination origins and migration paths
- Field work portion's of this groundwater monitoring program's has been jointly completed with the Ross River Dena Council owned Dena Cho Environmental and Remediation Inc.

Wolverine Mine

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Environmental Liabilities and Remediation Program Project Updates

Environment

- The Departments of Environment and Energy Mines and Resources are working together to assess and manage the remediation for the Wolverine Mine.
- In 2023/24 fiscal year, reclamation work was paused to focus budget and staffing resources on the Minto Mine.
- Energy Mines and Resources is looking at resuming reclamation planning in fall 2024.
- A Transfer Payment Agreement is being considered with Liard First Nation and Ross River Dena Council to financially support their work in the reclamation planning for the site.
- It is expected that in the 2025/26 fiscal year water treatment of the tailing storage facility will occur.
- \$2.5 million has been allocated for the assessment of remediation options for the Wolverine Mine.

Minto Mine

- The Departments of Environment and Energy Mines and Resources are also working together to assess and manage the remediation for the Minto Mine.
- \$21.5 million has been allocated for the assessment and initial remediation options available for the Minto Mine. These costs associated with the assessment and initial remediation for the Minto Mine are anticipated to be 100% recoverable from the surety bonds held against the site.

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Spring 2024

Environmental Liabilities and Remediation Program Project Updates

Environment

- Energy Mines and Resources are currently out for tender for a site operator for the site and will soon be going out for tender for surface and groundwater monitoring.
- An ice bridge to the site was constructed to support the removal of hazardous waste, mobilizing heavy equipment for earthworks and delivery of diesel and gasoline.

Whitehorse Highway Maintenance Yard

- A phase 2 site assessment was completed in March 2024. Development of remedial options is underway for the Whitehorse Highway Maintenance Yard and expected to be completed this summer.
- A groundwater monitoring program will be initiated this year to better understand the extent of known contamination at the property.
- Construction of the new replacement facility is scheduled for 2028-29. Demolition of the current site is scheduled for 2031.
- Options for site remediation will be assessed and implemented in partnership with Highways and Public Works.

Third response:

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

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Environmental Liabilities and Remediation Program Project Updates

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.

Context—this may be an issue because:

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

Background:

- At the start of the 2024/2025 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 \$91.8 million, with \$40.2 million of that total being allocated to the Wolverine Mine. This is adjusted annually to reflect new information and progress made to remediate contamination.

Approved by:

April 23, 2024

Deputy Minister of Environment

Date approved

Session Briefing Note**ECO #8 / EMR #87 / ENV #32****Spring 2024****Kudz Ze Kayah Mine
Project (BMC Minerals)**

ECO – EMR - ENV

Recommended response:

- Our government is committed to responsible mineral resource development and collaborative resource stewardship alongside First Nations partners.
- As directed in the January 2, 2024 Supreme Court of Yukon's decision, the Government of Yukon, Government of Canada, Ross River Dena Council and Liard First Nation had a consultation meeting on February 7 and 8, 2024 in Ross River.
- The Government of Yukon and Canada issued a Decision Document on March 8, 2024, recommending the project proceed to the regulatory phase.
- In response to Kaska concerns raised at the consultation meeting, existing terms and conditions were modified and new terms and conditions included.
- The government of Yukon is committed to continued consultation with the Kaska as it considers applications for authorizations and licences required by the proponent to construct and bring the mine into production.
- More broadly, we will also continue to engage meaningfully with the Kaska throughout the project's lifetime, in line with our commitment to reconciliation and to build strong relationships with First Nations governments.

Additional response:

- We are committed to meaningful engagement and reconciliation with the Ross River Dena Council and Liard First Nation.

Session Briefing Note**ECO #8 / EMR #87 / ENV #32****Spring 2024****Kudz Ze Kayah Mine
Project (BMC Minerals)**

ECO – EMR - ENV

Context — this may be an issue because:

- On January 2, 2024, the Supreme Court of Yukon issued its Reasons for Decision on the judicial review of the decision to approve the Kudz Ze Kayah project.
- The Supreme Court of Yukon concluded that that the Crown failed in its duty to consult with respect to the June 14, 2022, submission.
- Ross River Dena Council have filed an appeal to the Supreme Court of Yukon decision, [which is scheduled to be heard in November 2024](#).
- During the project assessment and subsequent consultation, Ross River Dena Council and Liard First Nation identified impacts of the project to their Aboriginal rights and title.
- The Kaska Nation 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 Nation, filed a petition for judicial review of the decision.
- In August 2022, BMC Minerals submitted applications to the Yukon government for a quartz mining licence, a Type-A water licence and land leases.
- A Supreme Court of Yukon hearing was held in April 2023.
- The Court's Decision was given on January 2, 2024.
- The Yukon government's regulatory review of these applications [was](#) paused in response to the Court's Decision, which sets aside the Decision Document for the project until consultation obligations have been fulfilled [and a new Decision Document issued](#).



Session Briefing Note

ECO #8 / EMR #87 / ENV #32
Spring 2024
ECO – EMR - ENV

Kudz Ze Kayah Mine
Project (BMC Minerals)

- On March 8, 2024, Decision Bodies issued a Decision Document recommending the project proceed to the regulatory phase.
- (See ECO TAB 31 Ross River Dena Council – Issues and Initiatives).

Approved by:

<hr/>	<u>March 13,2024</u>
Deputy Minister of the Executive Council Office	Date approved
<hr/>	<u>March 13, 2024</u>
Deputy Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources	Date approved
<hr/>	<u>March 13, 2024</u>
Deputy Minister of Environment	Date approved

Briefing Note

Spring 2024

Old Crow Gasifier Compliance

Environment

Recommended response:

- We recognize that the gasifier in Old Crow is currently not operational and that the Department of Community Services and the Vuntut Gwitchin Government are working together to bring it back into operation this summer.
- We are aware of the open burning of household waste at the Old Crow solid waste facility. The open burning of household waste creates harmful air emissions that could impact human health.
- The operator is currently not in compliance with the Environment Act and requires a renewed permit.
- To support compliance, the Department of Environment has requested that the Department of Community Services provide regular updates and progress reports to ensure the expedient resumption of incinerator operations or other appropriate waste disposal methods.
- Officials from the Department of Environment continue to work with the Department of Community Services to consider options for alternative waste management practices and bring their operations back into compliance with the *Environment Act*.

Context—this may be an issue because:

- Household waste has been disposed of through open burning since the gasifier was damaged in an accident in 2017. Old Crow residents may have questions about the compliance of the open burning operations.

Background:

- The household waste gasifier in Old Crow was severely damaged in 2017 from several small explosions that occurred inside the gasifier causing significant damage to the refractory cement lining and controls system.
- The primary contractor involved in building the system resides in Washington State and repairs were not possible due to travel restrictions during the COVID

Briefing Note

Spring 2024

Old Crow Gasifier Compliance

Environment

pandemic. Officials have since successfully repaired the unit and it will come back on line in 2024.

- Open burning of solid waste was phased out at all public solid waste facilities in Yukon during 2011. The incinerator was established in Old Crow at that time.

Approved by:

March 28, 2024

Deputy Minister, Environment

Date Approved

Session Briefing Note

Animal Protection and Control Act Implementation

Environment and
Energy, Mines and
Resources

Recommended response:

- The new *Animal Protection and Control Act* modernizes the Yukon's animal protection and control framework, specifying the responsibility of Yukoners to provide proper care for, and control of, the animals they own.
- The new Act regulates animal businesses and rescues and clarifies ownership of exotic pets. It creates tools to address feral and high-risk animal species to better protect Yukoners and the environment.
- The Act received assent in the fall 2022 session of the Legislative Assembly. Additional public engagement on the regulations occurred in summer 2023. The regulations have now been finalized and the Act is in force as of April 4, 2024.
- A technical briefing took place on April 8 to review the requirements of the new Act and regulations, and to provide an overview of implementation.
- In addition, two information sessions were held on April 11th and 16th to provide stakeholders involved in the engagement on the new Act and regulations with an overview of implementation.
- The Act and regulations were developed following extensive engagement and reflect Yukoners' values, our relationships with animals and our way of life.

Session Briefing Note

Animal Protection and Control Act Implementation

Environment and
Energy, Mines and
Resources

- A report on what we heard during engagement on the regulations was released in February.
- I would like to thank Yukoners for sharing their diverse and unique perspectives during the engagement. All feedback was carefully considered as we developed the regulations.

Additional response:

- There will be changes under the new legislation, and the first phase of implementation will be to share the details of these changes with affected individuals, groups and businesses. This is an extension of the conversations that took place during the engagement period.
- Targeted engagement has continued with stakeholders since the close of the formal public engagement period to gather further feedback and clarity on stakeholder input.
- Stakeholders emphasized that education and information sharing are the cornerstones of implementation. These priorities will be reflected in the enforcement approach, which is to first assist people to meet their obligations under the new law.
- We appreciate the interest and support from specialty stakeholder groups in the Yukon to help with training officers so that they will better understand the unique circumstances for care of animals such as sled dogs and horses used for outfitting.
- There are new permit and inspection requirements for animal-related businesses such as rescues, boarding facilities, and pet stores. These

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businesses will have a year to obtain their permits and staff of both departments will assist them to complete the permit process and arrange for the initial inspections.

- There are new opportunities for partnership agreements with Yukon First Nations and municipal governments to establish deputy enforcement officers and caretakers to deliver education and enforcement locally.
- We are committed to working with communities and governments interested in taking on animal protection and control enforcement roles to ensure that enforcement respects local values and priorities.

Third response:

- This legislation is shared between the Departments of Environment and Energy, Mines and Resources. Officers in the Agriculture Branch will respond to welfare and control concerns regarding livestock, and those in the Animal Health Unit will respond for other species.
- During our engagement on the regulations, similar to our engagement on the Act, there remained some concerned about the authority of officers. I want to reiterate that authority to enter a premises without a warrant is unchanged from the current legislation and is granted only to RCMP officers. It can only be exercised in urgent circumstances when all the criteria for gaining a warrant are met, but it is not feasible to take a request to a justice.

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- To ensure there are qualified and trained employees to meet the Act requirements, staff with essential qualifications will be appointed as Animal Protection and Control officers. In addition, caretaker authorities have been identified and will be put in place as required.
 - Initially, the implementation will be resourced from existing departmental budgets, but this is a significantly enhanced legislative framework and additional resources will likely be required in future years.
 - Recruitment is underway for a Program Manager (ENV) to oversee development, delivery and evaluation of new programs and agreements. In addition, one position will be dedicated for the first two years to the education, extension and networking required to ensure these new responsibilities are understood by everyone affected.
-

Context — this may be an issue because:

- There may be questions about what the Government of Yukon heard during engagement with stakeholders and the public and how decisions were made when there were conflicting opinions.
 - There may also be questions about the support available to assist Yukoners to comply with the Animal Protection and Control Act and regulations when they come into force.
-

Background:

- Initial conversations about the regulations began with some stakeholders soon after the Act was passed in the legislature. The formal process began in 2023.
- Invitations to engage on the regulations were sent in May 2023 to First Nations governments, Renewable Resources Councils, municipal governments, local advisory councils, and stakeholders including the agriculture industry, groups and

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organizations that work with animals, and local religious groups. Meetings were held at the convenience of respondents between May and October. Local religious groups did not respond.

- Public engagement took place between June and September 2023 and members of the public were invited to respond via email or participate in individual interviews with Government of Yukon staff.
- The What We Heard report outlines feedback received on the compliance and enforcement framework, permitting for commercial facilities, animal control, cosmetic surgeries, standards of care and ownership of animals.
- Eurasian boar was particularly emphasized in the feedback on ownership of animals. This included concerns around the risk of escape and potential for Eurasian Boar becoming established as a feral population.
- Under the new legislation, Eurasian boar are now prohibited and a high-risk species in Yukon. During consultation, there were two viewpoints on how to manage concerns relating to Eurasian Boar. One was to prohibit or ban Eurasian boar; the other was to manage through listing as high-risk species with strict containment standards throughout the whole supply chain.

Approved by:

April 18, 2024

Deputy Minister of Environment

Date approved

April 18, 2024

Deputy Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources

Date approved



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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.

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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
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

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Phase 2 Engagement (2022-23)

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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
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

Prepared for Ministers Clarke and Streicker
Departments of Environment and Energy, Mines and
Resources

Date prepared: January 25, 2024
Last Updated: April 15, 2024
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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
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

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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
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



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Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation – Rodney D’Abramo Director of Policy Executive Office	Meeting	October 4, 2023
Klondike Farmers Forum	Correspondence (email)	Oct 10, 2023
Yukon Agricultural Association	Meeting	October 27, 2023

Note – targeted engagement continued beyond Phase 2

Session Briefing Note

Spring 2024

Feral Horses

Environment

Recommended response:

- We understand Yukoners feel strongly about the feral horse population and that there are diverse values and viewpoints.
- Members of the public raised concerns last year that feral horses in the Champagne area were being destroyed or injured. The animal protection officer responded to investigate but was unable to locate horses in distress.
- The animal protection officer remains available to respond to concerns about the welfare of feral horses and the officer and the RCMP have the authority to relieve any domestic animal, including feral horses, of suffering.
- The Government of Yukon has developed the tools necessary to better manage all aspects of animal protection and control across the Yukon through the new *Animal Protection and Control Act* that came into effect in April 2024.
- The legislation reflects the opinion of Yukoners that domestic animals deserve to have appropriate care and that owners must be responsible to control them.

Additional response:

- The Department of Environment deeply values the welfare and respectful treatment of all animals. The new comprehensive legal framework provides enforcement tools for animal protection officers to address feral animals and prohibits anyone from capturing or killing them unless they have a permit issued by the Government of Yukon.

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Feral Horses

Environment

- While tools for control of feral populations **have been established** in this new legislation, an actual plan to manage existing feral populations including these horses, would require engagement with Yukon First Nations, co-management partners and stakeholders.
- Yukon First Nations may have an interest in the future of feral horses as the known range is within their traditional territory and the horses may be descendants of horses that were once owned by them.

Third response:

- The Government of Yukon continues to be open and transparent with the work that is done to protect the health and welfare of domestic animals and wildlife in the territory.
- Our goal is that Yukoners are aware of how the government can support the protection and control of all animals, including feral horses.
- 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.
- **The regulations came into force in April 2024 and provide our territory with new tools** to help keep both Yukoners and animals safe.

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.

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Feral Horses

Environment

- First Nations have expressed concerns that members of the public monitoring the feral horses are placing trail cameras and pursuing horses on traditional territory without permission or engagement of the First Nations government.

Background:

- There are an estimated 100 feral horses along the Alaska Highway between Whitehorse and Haines Junction.
- 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.

Approved by:

Deputy Minister of Environment

April 8, 2024

Date approved

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2024****Yukon Wildlife Preserve Funding**Environment

Recommended response:

- The Department is aware that the Yukon Wildlife Preserve's veterinarian recently resigned their position and that this has created a new funding and operating pressure for the Preserve.
- We are committed to continuing to work with the Preserve to address its operational concerns and are prepared to provide advice and support their decisions to meet staffing needs.
- The Department of Environment provides approximately \$762,000 annually in core funding to the Yukon Wildlife Preserve, which bolsters the Preserve's approximate \$776,000 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.

Additional response:

- The Government of Yukon values the services that the Preserve offers, including providing high quality care for animals, rehabilitating wildlife, maintaining the infrastructure at the Preserve, and increasing the overall revenue generated by the Preserve.
- We recognize there is an international veterinary shortage and the specialized requirements of caring for a captive wildlife population make recruitment of veterinary services more challenging – even as part-time or on a retainer.
- The Yukon government's Animal Health Unit veterinarians will continue to provide the Preserve with advice and direction on animal health where

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Yukon Wildlife Preserve Funding

Environment

operationally feasible, but they do not have the capacity to provide veterinary services to sustain the current collection of wildlife.

- They will also help confirm requirements for care and assist in veterinary recruitment as requested.

Context—this may be an issue because:

- On December 15, 2023, representatives from the Yukon Wildlife Preserve requested support and additional funding to meet operational needs after the resignation of the employee who is both veterinarian and animal care manager.
- The Executive Director was advised that there are no additional funds available in this fiscal year, nor are there predicted to be any in future years.

Background:

- The Preserve currently houses over 140 animals including mule deer, bison, elk, caribou, muskox, mountain goat, thinhorn sheep, moose, lynx, and fox. Some wildlife is housed at the preserve for rehabilitation.
- The land, buildings, and animals of the Preserve 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*.
- While the veterinary responsibilities comprised approximately 20% of the employee's role, this oversight is mandatory to maintain accreditation with Canadian Association of Zoos and Aquariums. The options are to seek an exemption or extension for this requirement or determine whether membership is justified.
- While the Preserve has financial resources to fill the role of animal care manager, there are few if any suitable candidates and the existing budget will not support the veterinary role as well.
- In the absence of veterinary care, the Department cannot refer injured or abandoned wildlife to the preserve for rehabilitation. This may impact their fund-raising efforts and result in public concern because the rehabilitation service is highly valued.
- Females of most species will deliver offspring this year, compounding the risk of animal welfare challenges if veterinary needs are not met.

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Yukon Wildlife Preserve Funding

Environment

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
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

Approved by:

Briar Young, A/Deputy Minister of Environment

____February 7, 2024____

Date approved

Session Briefing Note

Spring 2024

Yukon Quest Sled Dog Injuries

Environment

Recommended response:

- The Department of Environment is aware of a published research report evaluating injuries in dogs that competed in the Yukon Quest between 2018 and 2020.
- The report confirmed that dogs that were entered into the race received stringent veterinary monitoring, that included health and soundness evaluations, and that this monitoring and evaluation continued throughout the race.
- It is normal for athletes competing at a high level, whether humans or animals, to experience strains and injuries. It is a testament to the monitoring which included veterinary examinations of dogs at checkpoints and ongoing documented care by the mushers throughout the race, that these strains or injuries are identified early so dogs can receive treatment.
- Dogs with significant injuries were removed from the race, reflecting the importance of veterinary assessment to ensure those dogs receive the treatment they require and confirming the commitment of mushers to the welfare of their dogs.
- The research was thorough, documenting even minor injuries that did not prevent dogs from completing the race. It will assist mushers and veterinarians to better understand the factors that may contribute to injury such as snow and trail conditions, which will improve safety for dogs that compete in future events.

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Spring 2024

Yukon Quest Sled Dog Injuries

Environment

Additional response:

- The Government of Yukon's *Animal Protection Act* requires that all dog owners provide adequate food, shelter, and care, and prohibits people from causing or permitting animals to be in distress.
- We expect that entrants in the Yukon Quest respect the needs of their dogs, as specialized athletes, for optimum nutrition and care appropriate to race conditions.
- Any concerns with the welfare of dogs competing in the Yukon Quest can be brought to the attention of the Animal Protection Officer who will investigate those concerns.
- These requirements for care apply under the new *Animal Protection and Control Act* that came into force in April 2024.
-

Third response:

- Travel by dog sled has long played an important role in northern transportation, is part of the Yukon's history and remains an important part of Yukon First Nations culture.
- The Yukon Quest has been a mainstay of Yukon's winter event season for 40 years, drawing competitors and spectators to the Yukon and Alaska from all over the world.
- The Yukon government values the contributions of the Yukon Quest International Association in its work to help promote the Yukon as a year-round tourism destination.

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Yukon Quest Sled Dog Injuries

Environment

- Experience Development, Sports Tourism, Events and Festivals and Community Visitors Experiences are key actions under the Yukon Tourism Development Strategy and the Yukon Quest helps contribute to these objectives.

Context—this may be an issue because:

- A February 2024 CBC article reported that one third of sled dogs were injured in past races.
- A petition to ban the Yukon Quest recently received 150,000 signatures and was delivered to Premier Pillai.

Background:

- The Department of Tourism and Culture has invested in the Yukon Quest annually since 1998. The current transfer payment includes an investment of \$150,000.
- The Yukon Quest receives funding as a key Yukon event that attracts participants, spectators, volunteers, sponsors and media coverage from around the world.

Approved by:

April 8, 2024

Deputy Minister of Environment

Date approved

Session Briefing Note

Spring 2023

Humane Society Funding

Environment

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.
- In addition, the Department of Environment has a contract with both humane societies to offset the cost of rehoming companion animals that become the property of a local or territorial government when they are not reclaimed by their owners. This will approach \$30,000 for Humane Society Yukon for the 2023-24 fiscal year.

Additional response:

- In 2023, the Department of Environment increased core funding to the Humane Society Yukon. The department provided a total of \$175,000. This is in addition to the \$26,906 provided to replace the boiler and ensure a safe, efficient source of heat for the shelter.
- In the 2022-2023 fiscal year, we provided an 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 and increased their operational funds by \$15,000 for the 2023-24 fiscal year to correspond to the increase to Humane Society Yukon.
- In the 2024-2025 Main Estimates we have allocated **\$118,000** to Humane Society Yukon and \$25, 000 to the Humane Society Dawson.

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Humane Society Funding

Environment

However, the department is continuing to work with both of the societies to ensure that they have the support they need and can address funding pressures as they arise.

Third response:

- Department officials have met with the new Board of Humane Society Yukon and officials from the City of Whitehorse on an ongoing basis to explore options for improved sustainability. We expect the Board will share their new strategic plan and a request for funding for the 2024-25 fiscal year when we meet this month.
- We recognize that all Yukon communities have unique needs when it comes to the care and control of companion animals.
- In anticipation of the new Animal Protection and Control Act coming into force to provide for enhanced local enforcement opportunities, we expect to engage with municipal and First Nation governments to better understand their needs for animal care and identify additional partnerships opportunities.
- Department officials will be adapting and expanding existing programs to implement the new legislative regime and look forward to ongoing conversations with the humane societies and other partners to establish better, sustainable models 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 were raised at the 2024-2025 Main Estimates Opposition Briefing.

Background:

- Humane Society Yukon and Humane Society Dawson are the two animal rescues in the Yukon recognized under the Yukon Societies Act.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Humane Society Funding**

Environment

- 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:**April 2, 2024**_____
Deputy Minister of Environment_____
Date approved

Session Briefing Note

Caribou Herd Management

Spring 2024
Environment

Recommended response:

- Caribou are important ecologically and culturally. Many people in the Yukon rely on caribou for subsistence and spiritual well-being.
- Conserving and protecting key caribou habitat – rutting areas, migration corridors and winter range for woodland caribou, as well as calving areas, summer range and migration corridors for migratory caribou – is important for herd health and abundance.
- 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 GPS collars to track distribution, movement, and survival rates, and conducting composition and population surveys to determine population trends.
- We develop information using our monitoring data to better understand the needs of the caribou herds, including maps of habitat quality, caribou distribution, movement pathways and assessments of harvest sustainability.
- Using this information, we may develop herd and habitat management plans to guide harvest 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.

ENV #50

Session Briefing Note Caribou Herd Management

Spring 2024
Environment

- These management tools are intended to ensure harvest stays within sustainable limits or to allow a herd to recover from a population decline.
- Outfitting harvest quotas for caribou have now been established for all herds, 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.

Context — this may be an issue because:

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

Background:

- Caribou populations are declining globally, including in all jurisdictions adjacent to the Yukon. There are 29 different caribou herds located throughout the Yukon.

ENV #50

Session Briefing Note

Caribou Herd Management

Spring 2024

Environment

- The Department of Environment is actively involved in several initiatives to manage caribou, including an update to the 2012 Chisana caribou management plan, developing the Southern Lakes Caribou Relationship Plan with eight other governments, completing and implementing range assessments for the Carcross, Klaza, and Clear Creek caribou herds, and participating in several co-management bodies. Several initiatives are underway with migratory caribou programs including significant research and monitoring, and the development of plans to support those herds.
- The Department also works directly with Renewable Resources Councils to manage the many woodland herds in the Yukon and several boards and councils (e.g., Porcupine Caribou Management Board), domestically and internationally to co-manage our large migratory herds.
- In the 2023-2024 fiscal year, for mountain woodland caribou, the Department conducted one population estimate and 12 composition surveys, and will deploy satellite-collars in four caribou herds. For the migratory herds, two herds had new population estimates, all three had composition surveys, and all three will have collars deployed by the Government of Yukon or our partners (see BN #52).

Approved by:

Michael Prochazka, Deputy Minister of Environment

February 5, 2024

Date approved.

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

Environment

Recommended response:

- We understand the concerns that Yukon First Nations have raised about harvest pressures, and we appreciate their commitment to caring for wildlife in their traditional territories.
- We share their priority of conserving wildlife and we take our responsibility of manage hunting, trapping, fishing and to protect habitat very seriously and this it is done in a sustainable manner.
- The Department of Environment and conservation officers continue to work with Yukon First Nation governments to ensure a respectful approach to hunting, fishing and trapping in their traditional territories.

Additional response:

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

Session Briefing Note

Spring 2024

First Nations Hunting Bans and Permits

Environment

Third response:

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

Context—this may be an issue because:

- During the 2023-24 hunting season Champaigne and Aishihik First Nation notified the department that they would not be granting permission to hunt bison on their Settlement Lands.
- In 2023, the Ross River Dena Council posted signs in their asserted traditional territory at Dragon Lake and Finlayson Lake asking for resource users to respect the area and acquire a permit from RRDC to hunt or fish in those areas.

Background:

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

Session Briefing Note

First Nations Hunting Bans and Permits

Environment

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

Approved by:

March 8, 2024

Deputy Minister of Environment_____
Date approved

Session Briefing Note

Spring 2024

Wildlife Survey and Data Use

Environment

Recommended response:

- The Department of Environment is committed to collecting robust wildlife population data to evaluate harvest sustainability.
- We survey and monitor wildlife populations as well as use information from licensed harvesters and our co-management partners to make informed decisions about harvest opportunities for resident and non-resident hunters.
- The Department of Environment does not survey all wildlife populations annually and therefore 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:

- Surveys for populations of moose, caribou, sheep, grizzly bear, black bear, fish, pikas, bats and ground squirrels were completed in 2023. Populations of elk and bison will be surveyed this winter.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2024****Wildlife Survey and Data Use****Environment**

- Results from the 2023 surveys are currently being analyzed.
- Survey results are first shared with wildlife co-management partners, including relevant Renewable Resources Councils, impacted First Nations, and the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board, and then with interest groups, such as the Yukon Fish and Game Association.
- We continue to share our work, research, and monitoring activities with the public through information we post on Yukon.ca.

Context — this may be an issue because:

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

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 2023, the Department of Environment allocated approximately \$292,000 for two moose-related projects (moose surveys were conducted in the Hyland River and Goldfields Moose Management Units) and 1 million for 17 caribou-related projects.
- The Department of Environment dedicated \$320,000 to conduct the 2023 Aishihik and Nordquist Bison population surveys.

Approved by:_____
Deputy Minister of Environment

March 20, 2024

Date approved

Session Briefing Note

Spring 2024

Wildlife Survey and Data Use

Environment

Appendix: 2023-24 Fish and Wildlife Surveys

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

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Spring 2024

Wildlife Survey and Data Use

Environment

	Little Atlin Lake	Lake Trout, Pike	Catch/Possession Limits, Harvest slot size, gear restrictions	Angler Survey Summer 2023	Yes
	Caribou Lake	Lake Trout	Catch/Possession Limits, Harvest slot size, gear restrictions	Population Assessment	No

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	Fall rut composition survey; Sept/Oct 2023	yes
	Finlayson	Northern Mountain Caribou	Closed	Caribou lichen habitat assessment; Summer 2023 Fall rut composition survey; 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

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Spring 2024

Wildlife Survey and Data Use

Environment

Region	Location	Species	Management tool	Survey completed	Analysis Completed
Northern Tutchone	Ethel Lake	Northern Mountain Caribou	Open (voluntary closure)	Fall rut composition survey; Oct 2023	Yes
	Tatchun	Northern Mountain Caribou	Open	Fall rut composition survey; Oct 2023	Yes
	Clear Creek	Northern Mountain Caribou	Open	Collar deployment: Nov 2023 and March 2024	No
	Clear Creek	Caribou Moose Bear		Game Camera Study: Cumulative effects	No
	Klaza	Northern Mountain Caribou	Open	Fall rut composition survey; Oct 2023 Collar deployment; Nov 2023 and March 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

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

Environment

	Frenchman Lake Creek	Lake Trout Pike	Catch/ Possession Limits, Harvest slot size, gear restrictions	Angler harvest Survey	No
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Region	Location	Species	Management tool	Survey completed	Analysis Completed
Kluane	Chisana	Northern Mountain Caribou	Closed	Fall rut composition survey; Oct 2023	yes
	Aishihik	Northern Mountain Caribou	PHA	Population survey; Oct 2023	yes
	Ruby Range	Sheep	Open	Minimum count Summer 2023	Yes
	Brooks Arm	Sheep	Open	Minimum count Summer 2023	Yes
	Flat Top	Sheep	Open	Minimum count Summer 2023	Yes
	Donjek	Sheep	Open	Minimum 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

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Wildlife Survey and Data Use

Environment

Region	Location	Species	Management tool	Survey completed	Analysis Completed
North Yukon	Hart River	Northern Mountain Caribou	Open permit	Spring calving parturition survey; May 2023 Fall rut composition survey; Sept 2023	Yes
	Fortymile	Migratory Caribou	Summer registration hunt and winter threshold hunt	Calving, calf mortality, fall rut composition, survival monitoring, photo census population estimate	Yes
	Goldfields	Moose	Open	Early winter population and composition survey; Nov 2023	No
	Coffee Creek	Caribou Moose Bear		Game Camera Study: Cumulative effects	No
	Tombstone Park	Sheep	Open	Summer recruitment survey; July 2022	Yes

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

Environment

Region	Location	Species	Management tool	Survey completed	Analysis Completed
North Slope	Richardson Mountains and Yukon North Slope	Moose	Open	Productivity and survival monitoring	Yes
	Porcupine	Barren-ground Caribou	Open	Calving and post-calving, survival monitoring, community-based condition monitoring	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 2024****Yukon Species at Risk**Environment

Recommended response:

- All species play an important role in our northern ecosystem. At times, some species may require additional protection to ensure their conservation and survival.
- Other jurisdictions in Canada have specific legislative tools to list and conserve species at risk and their habitats.
- Over the next two years, the Canada-Yukon Nature Agreement will increase the Yukon's capacity to work collaboratively with other parties on a variety of species at risk matters. This includes the potential to develop species at risk legislation in the Yukon. (see [BN #4](#))
- We continue to work on species at risk conservation with our partners in wildlife management, including Yukon First Nations, the Inuvialuit, and transboundary Indigenous governments and groups, the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board, Renewable Resources Councils, the Wildlife Management Advisory Council (North Slope), interest groups and other government organizations.

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 lessons learned across Canada and the world to prevent the endangerment of species.
- Under the Canada-Yukon Nature Agreement, funding will support further surveying and monitoring of species at risk in the Yukon.

Session Briefing Note

Spring 2024

Yukon Species at Risk

Environment

Third response:

- Our efforts to ensure viable populations for species such as wood bison, woodland caribou and grizzly bear in the Yukon are guided by management plans co-developed with Yukon First Nations, the Inuvialuit, the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board and the Wildlife Management Advisory Council (North Slope).
- While we explore potential approaches to species at risk legislation in the Yukon, vulnerable populations are managed through our existing wildlife management tools.

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.

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, the Inuvialuit and other Indigenous governments and groups on approaches to managing species at risk.
- The Yukon has 43 species listed as being at risk under the federal Species at Risk Act. Ten additional species in the Yukon have been recommended by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada to the federal government for listing.

Approved by:

Briar Young, A/Deputy Minister of Environment

February 6, 2024

Date approved

Session Briefing Note

Spring 2024

Predation Control & Principles of Wildlife Population Management

Environment

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 and co-management partners, and targeted survey results.
- We are committed to ensuring licensed harvest is done sustainably while respecting the primary importance of wildlife conservation and Indigenous subsistence harvest rights.

Additional response:

- Ungulates, including moose, caribou, sheep, goat, bison, elk, and deer are highly sought after by Yukon hunters, and many of these species are important culturally.
- The Department of Environment does not use large-scale predator control programs as a method to increase ungulate populations.
- In addition to Yukoners' strong public opposition to large-scale predator control, these programs are costly and have been shown to have only short-term impacts.
- Instead, we manage harvest, human activity, and habitat to conserve and maintain wildlife populations.
- We recognize that environmental factors contribute to wildlife's well-being and success, and not all population declines can be attributed to harvest.

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Spring 2024

Predation Control & Principles of Wildlife Population Management

Environment

- Along with our partners, we are exploring additional management strategies to address conservation concerns not attributed to harvest.

Third response:

- The Government of Yukon is committed to protecting wildlife and their habitat to ensure populations remain healthy and support sustainable harvest opportunities for Yukoners into the future.
- A sustainable approach to harvest management 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 management plans are co-drafted with our management partners and consider habitat availability, subsistence needs and management objectives for species populations.

Context — this may be an issue because:

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

Background:

- In addition to the harvest data collected each year, targeted wildlife surveys are also conducted to estimate population sizes.

Approved by:

_____ Feb 5, 2024 _____
Michael Prochazka, Deputy Minister of Environment Date approved

Session Briefing Note

Elk–Agriculture Management

Environment and
Energy, Mines and
Resources

Recommended response:

- It is important to sustain and balance Yukon's elk populations for harvest and wildlife viewing opportunities, and to ensure that agricultural lands continue to produce local foods and crops.
- We have recently implemented a two-year pilot project to minimize elk impact on agricultural properties while maintaining elk on the landscape.
- The pilot project includes hiring a coordinator, creating a Limited Exclusion Zone to provide intensive deterrents for problem elk in the Takhini Valley, applying localized and range-scale herd management, supporting fencing options, implementing an elk radio-collaring program, and conducting a social survey.
- The Government of Yukon is providing funding of \$175,000 over two years to implement the plan.
- A Steering Committee with representation from the Government of Yukon, the Yukon Fish and Game Association and the Yukon Agricultural Association is implementing the plan as a proactive and collaborative approach to addressing a longstanding concern.

Additional response:

- The Government of Yukon remains committed to addressing the ongoing issues related to elk and agricultural landowners in the Takhini Valley.
- We continue to review and implement actions to address damage caused to crops and farm infrastructure by the Takhini Elk Herd by increasing elk monitoring by deploying 20 radio-collars. The radio-collaring program will allow for better tracking of elk movement and greater accuracy for elk surveys to estimate population size.

Session Briefing Note

Elk–Agriculture Management

Environment and
Energy, Mines and
Resources

- Fencing projects for three agriculture properties have been completed, and there are ongoing discussions with interested agriculture property owners for future projects.
- In 2022, we introduced a new adaptive Wildlife Act permitting [process for elk in the Takhini Valley](#). This resulted in eight (8) additional adaptive permits available for hunting elk. [Adaptive permits restrict hunting of elk to bulls only and have 5-point antlers or less. Four \(4\) of the adaptive Wildlife Act permits were filled in 2022-23 season.](#)
- There are Permit Hunt Authorizations for two (2) permits for the Braeburn elk herd, and four (4) permits for the Takhini elk herd.
- During the 2022-2023 hunting season, [five \(5\) Permit Hunt Authorization hunters were successful. Two \(2\) in the Braeburn area and three \(3\) in the Takhini Valley.](#)
- [A total of nine \(9\) elk were harvested in the 2022-23 season.](#)
- In certain circumstances, 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

Session Briefing Note

Elk–Agriculture Management

Environment and
Energy, Mines and
Resources

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 eleven complaints received in total since 2020.
- Since 2020, there have been two controlled kills (euthanized elk) by the Conservation Officer Services Branch and 14 elk mortalities due to traffic accidents.
- Any Yukoner experiencing a conflict with elk on their property can call the TIPP line at 1-800-661-0525 to report the issue to our Conservation Officers.

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:

- In 2022, a focus group was formed to identify options for the Takhini Elk Herd. The focus group was comprised of representatives from the Yukon Agricultural Association, Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board, Yukon Fish and Game Association, First Nations, and the departments of Energy, Mines and Resources and Environment.
- The objective was to develop a two-year pilot program aimed at effectively regulating the elk population to reduce harm to agricultural lands and infrastructure.

Session Briefing Note

Elk–Agriculture Management

Environment and
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Resources

- In May 2023, following focus group recommendations, the Elk-Agricultural Steering Committee was established and tasked with implementing a two-year action plan.
- The Elk-Agricultural Steering Committee is comprised of representatives from the Yukon Agricultural Association, the Yukon Fish and Game Association, the departments of Environment and Energy, Mines and Resources, and the Ta'an Kwäch'än Council in an observer capacity. The Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board, Kwanlin Dün First Nation, Champagne and Aishihik First Nations, and Little Salmon/Carmacks First Nation are not active participants on the Committee but are kept informed of its implementation work.
- [The Steering Committee hired a Coordinator in March 2024 to work with property owners and hunters to address elk on farms. This includes proactive measures to deter elk from properties and responding when elk are present.](#)
- Since 2014, the Government of Yukon has provided funding to compensate farmers for elk damage and funding to install exclusion fencing.
 - Between 2014 and 2023, there has been \$195,665.05 paid in compensation for elk damage to farms. In 2023, there were no applications for compensation claims.
 - Between 2014 and 2020, there was \$200,914 provided for elk exclusion fencing projects.
 - 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, \$289,576 of funding has been allocated for nine fencing projects under this program.



Session Briefing Note

**Elk–Agriculture
Management**

Environment and
Energy, Mines and
Resources

Approved by:	
April 23, 2024	
_____ Deputy Minister, Environment	_____ Date approved
_____ Deputy Minister, Energy, Mines and Resources	_____ April 18, 2024 Date approved

Briefing Note**Spring 2024****Elk survey in the Takhini Valley**Environment

Recommended response:

- It is the Government of Yukon's goal to support the health of the Yukon's elk herds, to manage their habitat and range carefully, and to understand and mitigate the impacts of elk on the landscape.
- The Department of Environment routinely monitors the number of elk in the Takhini Valley by conducting annual minimum count surveys.
- These surveys provide us with an indication of how the number, age and sex composition of the herd change through time.
- A minimal count survey is being conducted in the Takhini Valley on March 20 and 21 via helicopter.
- The helicopter flies a pattern that encompasses the majority of the Takhini Valley where elk are known to roam.
- Surveys are only conducted during times of clear weather and daylight.
- The Department of Environment only flies with helicopter companies and pilots who are experienced in conducting wildlife surveys and who follow all guidelines and regulations for operating.
- Efforts are always made to avoid disturbing people and domestic animals.

Context—this may be an issue because:

- Residents on the Mayo Road Facebook group are actively commenting on helicopter disturbance due to the survey flying.

Background:

- The Department of Environment notified the Yukon Agricultural Association on Monday, March 18, of the dates for the survey and requested they share this information with their membership – many of whom are property owners in the Takhini Valley area.

Briefing Note

Spring 2024

Elk survey in the Takhini Valley

Environment

- A social media post will be published on March 20 on the Conservation Officer Services Facebook page informing Yukoners of the survey.
- Minimum count surveys in the Takhini Valley are done by helicopter once a year, annually for the past 12 years to support population estimates and efforts to ensure sustainable harvest of elk herds in the territory.
- Helicopters may intermittently drop down lower in some instances to assess the sex and age class of the animals but use caution in these cases and make every effort to avoid disturbance of domestic animals.
- Elk, which were introduced into the Yukon more than 70 years ago, continue to risk conflict with agriculture and continue to be a risk of motor vehicle accidents on highways. Improving our understanding of elk behavior through data collection can contribute to mitigation efforts.
- Gathering additional data about elk will contribute to satisfying the goals of the government’s elk management plan:
 - Ensure herds remain healthy and self-sustaining
 - Carefully manage elk habitat and range
 - Provide for greater human use, appreciation and understanding of elk
 - Acknowledge and address concerns about the presence of elk on the landscape

Approved by:

March 20, 2024

Deputy Minister, Department of Environment

Date Approved

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2024****Fish and Wildlife Regulation Change Process**

Environment

Recommended response:

- The Government of Yukon is committed to managing Yukon's wildlife sustainably 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 we collaborate is through developing and implementing new regulations and amendments to existing regulations for the conservation and management of fish and wildlife to ensure our regulatory framework remains current and relevant.
- The COVID-19 pandemic interrupted the previously established regulation change cycle, which occurred every 2 years. Since then, we have been working collaboratively with Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board to improve the efficiency of the regulation change process.
- In addition to the ongoing meetings that the Director of the Fish and Wildlife Branch has with the Board, department officials have been meeting regularly with Board members and staff over the last year to improve the regulation change process before the next cycle commences.
- We expect to initiate the next regulation change cycle in fall 2024.

Additional Response:

- The Department of Environment and the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board are working together to establish a collaborative regulation review process that is cost-effective, timely, and avoids duplication of effort.

Session Briefing Note

Spring 2024

Fish and Wildlife Regulation Change Process

Environment

- The revised regulation change process will place a greater emphasis on meeting our consultation obligations with Yukon First Nations and transboundary Indigenous governments and groups.
- It will also help align the process with Yukon's land claim agreements, clarify roles and responsibilities, improve transparency and streamline the regulation change process.
- The intention of the new process is to provide greater certainty to Yukoners when regulation changes are identified and put forward for review and consideration.
- By streamlining the process and improving transparency, the regulation change cycle should occur in a more predictable and efficient manner for all parties involved.
- The Department and the Board hope to trial the new regulation change process in the coming months.

Third Response:

- The Government of Yukon and the Board agree on the importance of revising and reestablishing the fish and wildlife regulation change cycle. Discussions between the Department of Environment and the Board, on an approach that would satisfy our collective needs, have been progressing well.
- 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 Resources Councils, the Wildlife Management Advisory Council (North Slope) and fish and wildlife management stakeholders.

Session Briefing Note

Spring 2024

Fish and Wildlife Regulation Change Process

Environment

Context:

- The last fish and wildlife regulation change intake occurred in 2019. Co-management partners, stakeholder groups and members of the hunting community may be interested in when the next intake will occur.
 - MLA Istenchko asked Minister Clarke about the Wildlife Act regulation change process during question period on April 16, 2024.
-

Background:

- Typically, every two years, the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board has an intake of proposals for regulation changes to the *Wildlife Regulations*, *Trapping Regulations* and *Yukon Territorial Fishery Regulations*.
- The Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board was created under Chapter 16 of the Umbrella Final Agreement. The Board acts in the interest of the public and makes recommendations to the Minister of Environment on all matters related to fish and wildlife management, legislation, research, policies and programs.
- In addition to regular correspondence, officials from the Department of Environment met with Board members and staff on the following dates to improve the efficiency of the regulation change process:
 - June 2, 2023
 - July 13, 2023
 - July 28, 2023
 - January 9, 2024
 - January 11, 2024
 - January 29, 2024
 - April 17, 2024
- The Government of Yukon enters into a Transfer Payment Agreement with the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board annually. The Agreement is administered through the Aboriginal Relations Branch with the Executive Council Office as it is part of implementing the Umbrella Final Agreements. The Department of Environment

Session Briefing Note

Spring 2024

Fish and Wildlife Regulation Change Process

Environment

provides content and reviews the work plan due to our role with overseeing the functions of the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board.

- In addition to the Transfer Payment Agreement, the Department of Environment has had contracts with the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board for project specific work such as advertising and communications contract to support the annual Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board calendar.
- We are in discussion with the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board on the development of a contract and workplan for reviewing and engaging on the Yukon Outfitter Quota Guidelines.

Approved by:

April 17, 2024

Deputy Minister of Environment

Date approved

Briefing Note

Spring 2024

Renewable Resources Council Processes

Environment

Recommended response:

- The Yukon's Renewable Resources Councils are independent advisory bodies established in the traditional territory of a Yukon First Nation with a Final Agreement.
 - They operate at arm's length from the government as the primary instrument for local renewable resources management and the conservation of fish and wildlife.
 - All Renewable Resources Councils write their own Operating Policies and Procedures that outline their internal workings.
 - Council members are expected to follow the conflict of interest and code of conduct rules and guidelines provided by their respective Council. They are also expected to work constructively with each other and respect the free expression of opinion of other members.
 - If necessary, the Government of Yukon will work with Council members to understand conflicts and support a timely resolution.
-

Context—this may be an issue because:

- The Opposition and the Yukon public may have questions about the Minister of Environment's responsibilities when it comes to the operation of Renewable Resources Councils.
-

Background:

- The Yukon has 10 Renewable Resources Councils.
- Renewable Resources Councils are made up of an equal number of nominees from the Yukon First Nations and the Government of Yukon. Councils then select a chairperson or co-chairpersons from their membership.
- Renewable Resources Councils play an important advisory role to the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board by raising awareness of specific issues.
- The Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board mandate includes Yukon, national, and international fish and wildlife matters. As most fish and wildlife management issues address local and territorial interests, the Renewable

Briefing Note

Spring 2024

Renewable Resources Council Processes

Environment

Resources Councils and the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board often work closely together to manage their complementary roles.

- Under the Umbrella Final Agreement Implementation Plan, the Government of Yukon has the responsibility for passing core funding from Canada to the Renewable Resources Councils using a funding agreement called the Transfer Payment Funding Agreement.

Approved by:

May 2, 2024

Deputy Minister, Environment

Date Approved

Session Briefing Note

Spring 2024

Grizzly Bear Harvest

Environment

Recommended response:

- We acknowledge that some groups have concerns regarding grizzly bear hunting in the Yukon 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.
- A Conservation Plan for Grizzly Bear in Yukon was completed in 2019, as recommended by the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board. The plan's management goals and recommended actions serve as guidance for grizzly bear management decisions in the territory.
- To improve our understanding of grizzly bears and their habitat needs, we have been surveying and gathering biological data from specific populations throughout the Yukon.

Additional response:

- Over the last ten years, there were, on average, 80 human-caused grizzly bear deaths a year in the Yukon, including deaths from vehicle collisions, hunting and defence of life or property.
- With a population estimate of between 6,000 – 7,000 grizzly bears in the territory, 80 deaths account for just over 1 per cent of the population, which is low on a territory-wide basis.
- However, these mortalities are not evenly distributed across the Yukon and there may be sustainability issues in some areas. Consequently, departmental staff are now reviewing area-specific human-caused grizzly bear deaths to assess whether additional management approaches need to be implemented for some areas.

Session Briefing Note

Spring 2024**Grizzly Bear Harvest**

Environment

Third response:

- We recently implemented a recommendation from the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board to be able to adaptively regulate hunting of grizzly bears from the roadside.
- Roadside grizzly bear hunting is prohibited on certain roads and highways in the Southern Lakes area.
- This specific prohibition was proposed by the Taku River Tlingit First Nation and Carcross/Tagish Renewable Resources Council.
- Yukoners can submit requests for the prohibition of roadside hunting of grizzly bears in their communities to the Minister of Environment.

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, ban trophy hunting and prioritize wildlife viewing.

Background:

- In 2023, 74 grizzly bears were harvested in the Yukon, 24 were harvested by resident hunters and 50 were harvested by non-resident hunters.
- In 2023, four grizzly bears were killed in self-defence, eight were euthanized by Conservation Officers and three were killed in vehicle collisions.
- In 2023, a non-resident hunter was charged with several offences under the Wildlife Act for providing false or misleading information to obtain a Yukon resident hunting license and illegally killing two black bears and a grizzly bear.

Approved by:_____
Michael Prochazka, Deputy Minister of Environment____ February 5, 2024 ____
Date approved

Session Briefing Note

Biodiversity Protection

Spring 2024
Environment

Recommended response:

- The Yukon is home to many rare, unique, or at-risk species found only in this region, including plants known nowhere else in the world such as the Yukon Draba and the Yukon Goldenweed. The Yukon is also home to wide-ranging species that are more abundant here than elsewhere, such as wolverine, bison, caribou, and grizzly bears.
- The Government of Yukon takes a whole-of-government approach to advance several important initiatives to protect the Yukon's biodiversity, habitat, and species at risk, while contributing to Canada's goal of increasing protected areas across the country.
- Examples include regional land use planning, the Yukon's climate change strategy, 'Our Clean Future', implementation of the Canada-Yukon Nature Agreement, and development and implementation of the wetland stewardship policy.
- On March 2, 2024, I had the pleasure of attending the Yukon Biodiversity Forum.
- Speakers at the forum, including Yukon government officials, discussed a range of biodiversity related topics that included concerning trends, but also reasons for optimism.

Additional response:

- Our efforts to inventory and document biodiversity in the territory show an incredible richness of species, which we are just beginning to understand.

Session Briefing Note

Biodiversity Protection

Spring 2024
Environment

- We have conducted “bio-blitz’s” in various areas of the territory since 2015 to document the Yukon’s biodiversity.
- A recent Government of Yukon led inventory of biodiversity in the Beaver Creek area in 2022, supported by various technical experts in Canada, identified what we believe is the most species detected of any bioblitz in North America to date.
- The Beaver Creek bioblitz recorded 1,852 species, and only 27 were not native to the region, which means that even with a highway and a community, there remain very few invasive species. It remains one of the most pristine areas in North America.
- We work collaboratively with our partners including First Nations, the Inuvialuit, Indigenous groups, wildlife management boards and councils, interest groups and other governments on the protection of biodiversity and species at risk conservation.
- Recently, the Yukon signed the Canada-Yukon Nature Agreement, which supports our efforts to protect and conserve new areas in the Yukon, support Indigenous leadership in conservation, monitor and protect species at risk and biodiversity, and support the protection and conservation of lands and waters. (See BN #04)
- The agreement will increase the Yukon’s capacity to work collaboratively with other parties on a variety matters, including the development of Yukon species at risk legislation and funding to further support our continued efforts to survey and monitor species at risk in the Yukon. (See BN #53)

Third response:

Session Briefing Note

Biodiversity Protection

Spring 2024
Environment

- We continue to work with our partners to develop area-specific management plans for wildlife and habitat to guide how the Yukon's northern ecosystem is managed.
- We previously completed the Yukon's first conservation plan for grizzly bears in collaboration with the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board and are in the process of completing our fourth conservation plan for bison, in cooperation with affected First Nations and renewable resources councils.
- We are in the process of implementing the wetland stewardship policy which aims to improve our knowledge of wetlands, manage, and minimize our impacts on wetlands, and protect the most important wetlands, all while promoting paths towards responsible and sustainable resource development and land use activities. (See BN #3)
- These initiatives will help inform protected area planning, identify species that require additional monitoring or support and better conserve the Yukon's biodiversity.

Fourth Response [Groundberries]

- At this year's Yukon Biodiversity Forum, a range of topics were discussed including the important role that groundberries play in the health of our boreal forest and providing seasonally important food for many birds and mammals, and a staple source of traditional foods for many Yukoners.
- The Government of Yukon has been sampling five species of groundberries at Kluane Lake in southwestern Yukon since 1997, and in central Yukon since 2005.

Session Briefing Note

Biodiversity Protection

Spring 2024
Environment

- This includes the bearberry, red bearberry, crowberry, lingonberry and toadflax.
- Overall, samples show the five berries have been declining over the past 20 years, except for the crowberry in Mayo and the lingonberry in Kluane.
- Recent work from our partners in Alaska has identified various stewardship strategies to mitigate the reduction of groundberries in the North.
- Some of these have been practiced by Indigenous People across the continent for many years, including thinning shrubs and forest cover near favoured berry patches, small-scale prescribed fires, and transplanting plants.
- The Government of Yukon will continue to sample and monitor the success of groundberries in the territory to ensure that they continue to support the Yukon's ecosystem and Yukoners' way of life.

Context—this may be an issue because:

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

Background:

- The Yukon government began reporting on the Yukon's rich biodiversity in our annual state of the environment report, beginning in 2023.
- One of the greatest reasons for worldwide biodiversity loss is the lack of knowledge about the needs of most species and their habitats and to provide more information for land use planning.



- The Yukon is addressing these needs through our recent Canada-Yukon Nature Agreement commitments to protect biodiversity in the Territory, and to inventory our rich biodiversity through programs such as the annual bio-blitz.

Approved by:

March 18, 2024

Deputy Minister of Environment

Date approved

Session Briefing Note

Spring 2024

Variation Order for Fishery Regulations

Environment

Recommended response:

- As of April 1, 2024, angling in nine lakes will change from recommended barbless hooks to required barbless hooks.
- Barbless hooks help improve live-release practices. They cause less harm to the fish, as they are easier to remove. This results in less time for the fish to be out of the water and less handling of the fish overall.
- To support fish populations and long-term angling opportunities, the Department of Environment encourages anglers to always use barbless hooks, even when not legally required.

Additional response:

- All accepted and approved changes to the *Yukon Territory Fishery Regulations* are aimed at managing Yukon fish populations for sustainability and, when necessary, recovery.
- These changes were recommended by the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board and accepted by the Minister of Environment in 2004, 2013, 2015 and 2017.
- The nine lakes will be added to the existing list in Schedule VI of the federal *Fishery (General) Regulations* of the 54 lakes already regulated to be barbless. This means there are a total of 63 lakes in the Yukon that require barbless hooks only.

Third response:

- The Department of Environment has communicated in the annual Fishing Regulations Summary that barbless hooks were recommended in these nine lakes, as we did not hold the authority to enforce the requirement under federal legislation.

Session Briefing Note

Spring 2024

Variation Order for Fishery Regulations

Environment

- As of June 2023, the Yukon now has the authority to make changes to the federal *Fishery (General) Regulations* to limit fishing gear or equipment through Variation Orders signed by the Director of Fish and Wildlife.
- The authority provided to the Director of the Fish and Wildlife Branch does not alter the regulation change process. Changes to fishery regulations will continue following the regulation change process we carry out with the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board.

Context—this may be an issue because:

- Yukoners may question why recommended changes as far back as 2004 are only being enacted now.

Background:

- The Government of Canada, through the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada, has the legal authority to manage Canada's fisheries and oceans through the federal *Fisheries Act* and *Fishery (General) Regulations*.
- The Government of Yukon has the mandate to manage freshwater fish through the 1989 Canada-Yukon Freshwater Fisheries Agreement.
- Through the *Fishery (General) Regulations*, the Department of Environment's Director of Fish and Wildlife has the authority to approve changes to closed (and open) fishing times, catch, possession and length limits in the Yukon Territory *Fishery Regulations*.
- Changes to the *Fishery (General) Regulations*, under section 6(4), now permit the Director of Fish and Wildlife to approve changes to limit gear or equipment.
- This authority allows us to enact the changes recommended by the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board, and accepted by the Minister of Environment, to restrict angling to barbless hooks only, on nine lakes in the Yukon.

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Spring 2024

Variation Order for Fishery Regulations

Environment

- Other changes, including type of game fish, fees, ticketable offences and fines under the federal regulations, still require approval from Government of Canada's Cabinet to enact and be enforceable.

Item	Lake	Year regulation change accepted
a	Fish Lake (60°37'04"N, 135°11'06"W)	2017
b	Fox Lake (61°14',43"N, 135°28,16"W)	2017
c	Kusawa Lake (60°21'23"N, 136°20'26"W)	2015
d	Lake Laberge (61°10'57"N, 135°11'33"W)	2017
e	Little Salmon Lake (62°,11',12"N, 135°40'30"W)	2017
f	Louise Lake (60°42'06"N, 135°16'39"W)	2013
g	Mayo Lake (63°45'47"N, 135°02'47"W)	2017
h	Nares Lake (60°09'48"N, 135°39'45"W)	2017
i	Pine Lake (60°49'05"N, 137°27'00"W)	2004

Approved by:

March 19, 2024

Deputy Minister of Environment_____
Date approved

Breaking News**Spring 2024****Review of Fish and Wildlife
Branch Mandate**

Environment

Recommended response:

- In March 2024, the Department of Environment retained ERM Consultants Canada (formerly Stratos) to document how its mandate is defined through formal and informal requirements and expectations, and to gather input on mandate implementation.
- The cost of this contract is \$49,905 and this consultant was chosen for the Fish and Wildlife Branch mandate review due to their familiarity with the work of the Branch and partner organizations.
- ERM Consultants (previously Stratos) completed a review of the Fish and Wildlife Management Board in 2019 under contract with the Council of Yukon First Nations. The review of the Board resulted in 27 recommendations directed towards the 'actors' implicated by the Umbrella Final Agreement: the Government of Canada, the Government of Yukon, the Board, Renewable Resources Councils, and First Nations.
- One recommendation from the 2019 Stratos report is directed at all actors to clarify, achieve consensus and document the fish and wildlife structure and various roles within it, based on the current context/legal landscape, areas of overlap or duplication, and identified strengths and weaknesses. A review of the Fish and Wildlife Branch mandate will contribute to fulfilling that recommendation.
- I'd like to clarify that the only active review with the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board is the one we are jointly undertaking to review the wildlife regulation change process.

Breaking News**Spring 2024****Review of Fish and Wildlife
Branch Mandate**

Environment

- The ERM review will look at the strengths of the Department of Environment's Fish and Wildlife Branch in fulfilling its mandate, activities and objectives, and identify opportunities for improvement. This is part of a cycle of continuous improvement being undertaken by the Branch to ensure they continue to provide relevant services to Yukoners.
- The Fish and Wildlife Branch leads the management of fish and wildlife and their habitats for the conservation, appreciation, and sustainable use of naturally diverse and changing ecosystems, in a manner that is collaborative and adaptive while respecting Indigenous rights and title, and the provisions of Yukon's modern treaties.
- This work includes leading wildlife research and monitoring, coordinating harvest management, and delivering public education programming.
- As mentioned, the ERM review will look at how the mandate is defined in various agreements and legislation, and how it is being implemented alongside our partners.
- The review will examine and be informed by the branch mandate, activities and objectives - as established in Canadian and Yukon legislation and agreements, Indigenous agreements, Ministerial mandate letters and Departmental and Branch Strategic Plans. This includes, but is not limited to:
 - My 2023 Mandate letter
 - Supplementary Note on Minister's Mandate Commitment 2023
 - Department of Environment Strategic Plan, 2023-2026
 - Environment Strategic Plan, 2023-2025

Breaking News**Review of Fish and Wildlife
Branch Mandate**

- Branch Plan for Fish and Wildlife, 2023-2026
 - Umbrella Final Agreement Chapter 16
- The review includes interviews with current and former Fish and Wildlife staff, and members of the organizations that the Branch regularly engages with, including:
 - The Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board
 - Renewable Resources Councils
 - First Nation Land and Resources Directors
 - Wildlife Management Advisory Council – North Slope
 - Yukon Conservation Society
 - Yukon Fish and Game Association
- Interviews with key organizations and individuals are expected to be completed by the end of April 2024. Feedback from these partners is integral to the mandate review and I would like to take this opportunity to thank all participants for their input.
- Yukon government anticipates a final report summarizing the findings and providing recommendations in 2024.

Context—this may be an issue because:

- MLA Istenchko asked Minister Clarke about the internal review during question period on April 16, 2024.
-

Background:

- At the December 2018 Yukon Forum meeting, the Government of Yukon and First Nations decided to review the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board “to evaluate the success and effectiveness of this important Chapter 16 entity”.
-



ENV #60

Breaking News

Spring 2024

Review of Fish and Wildlife Branch Mandate

Environment

Approved by:

April 17, 2024

Deputy Minister of Environment

Date approved

Session Briefing Note

Spring 2024

Campground Reservation System and Visitor Service Operator Pilot

Environment

Recommended response:

- Our Yukon campgrounds are highly popular with both Yukoners and visitors to the Territory.
- Following our engagement with Yukoners on the 2020 Yukon Parks Strategy, we heard from the majority of survey respondents (58%) that they are in favour of testing out a reservation service at territorial campgrounds and we have listened to that feedback.
- We are piloting an online reservation system for some of our most popular campgrounds to improve access to these campsites.
- As user volumes at Yukon campgrounds continue to increase, the new reservation service will help users to secure and access campsites in a reliable and predictable way.
- We are piloting the new online reservation service for the 2024 and 2025 camping seasons. The pilot project will allow us to learn from Yukoners and visitors about what works, what does not and where we need to readjust for future camping seasons.

Additional response (Pilot Scope):

- For 12 years, backcountry campsite reservations for Tombstone Territorial Park have been available online and will now be moved to this modernized reservation service.
- This year, the Government of Yukon is piloting the new reservation service for four front country and three backcountry campgrounds.
- These include the front country campgrounds at Pine Lake, Marsh Lake, Wolf Creek, and Tombstone Mountain.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2024****Campground Reservation System and
Visitor Service Operator Pilot**

Environment

- This accounts for 103 sites of approximately 1100 frontcountry campsites across the territory,
- Backcountry campsites such as the Tombstone Territorial Park's Grizzly Lake, Divide Lake, and Talus Lake were already available by online reservation only, but have now shifted to the new reservation platform.
- The new reservation service was launched on March 6, 2024, with backcountry campgrounds being made available for reservations first and front country campgrounds being made available April 10, 2024.
- 50 per cent of campsites at each front country campground will be dedicated for reservations. The remainder will continue to operate on a first-come, first-served basis.
- Campers will need a MyYukon account to access the reservation service, the same account used to register your vehicle or apply for student financial assistance.
- Campers living outside of the territory can also make a MyYukon account at any time.
- Yukon resident seniors aged 65 years and older will receive a 50 per cent discount on all campground permits, including permits purchased through the campground reservation service.
- Reservations can be made by visiting yukon.goingtocamp.com or by calling the toll-free call centre at 1-888-352-0532 or 1-867-322-0222 if you are calling from outside of Canada.
- The call centre is open 7 days a week from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. YST.

Session Briefing Note

Spring 2024

Campground Reservation System and Visitor Service Operator Pilot

Environment

Third response (Annual Permit Holders):

- During the first year of the pilot, annual permits will not be eligible to be used for making reservations.
- While we are committed to enabling annual permit holder reservations for the 2025 camping season, we will need to ensure that our systems can accommodate this function.
- Annual permit holders will continue to be able to use their permits to camp at any front country territorial campground on a first come, first served basis.
- We are working to meet the needs and expectations of our valued visitors as our parks system grows and user volume increases in the Yukon.
- Over the course of this pilot project, we will continue to listen to Yukoners about how the system is working for them and determine the best approach for managing campsites and camper experience in the Yukon.

Fourth response (Visitor Service Operators):

- To support Yukon campers and visitors with this new reservation service. Yukon Parks has issued a tender for Visitor Service Operators contracts at the participating campgrounds to support guests with their reservation and campground needs.
- We anticipate having Visitor Service Operators located at Wolf Creek, Marsh Lake, and Pine Lake campgrounds.
- Park Officers currently dedicate a significant portion of their time encouraging visitor compliance with self-registration. Visitor Service

Session Briefing Note

Spring 2024

Campground Reservation System and Visitor Service Operator Pilot

Environment

Operators will ensure that Park Officers have time to visit more campgrounds and provide education to visitors over the camping season.

- The campground reservation service is a pilot project, and we look forward to hearing from Yukoners and visitors about what works, what does not and where we need to readjust for future camping seasons.
 - We look forward to welcoming our visitors and providing a new way to ensure a positive camping experience.
-

Context—this may be an issue because:

- The Yukon Parks Strategy commits to testing online reservations to improve fair access to some of the busier campgrounds, the public will be interested in the new system when it launches on March 6, 2024.
-

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, most survey respondents (58%) said that they are in favour of testing out a reservation service at territorial campgrounds.

Approved by:

March 7, 2024

Deputy Minister of Environment_____
Date approved

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2024****Parks Strategy Implementation**Environment

Recommended response:

- The Yukon Parks Strategy aims to enhance the visitor experience at Yukon Parks while preserving and protecting the ecological and cultural values of these special places.
- Since the Yukon Parks Strategy was released in fall 2020, we have made progress on several of the 24 strategic actions.
- 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:

- Under the Yukon Parks Strategy we have developed new trails, completed some needed maintenance on existing trails, and updated day-use areas and playgrounds in 14 parks.
- We have also improved wayfinding and guidance material including trail markers, maps, interpretive signs, and information kiosks. Locations include Fox Lake, Kusawa Lake, Watson Lake, Yukon River, Five Mile Lake, Klondike River, Pine Lake, Congdon Creek, Kookatsoon Lake, Marsh Lake, Wolf Creek, Conrad, Twin Lakes, and Tombstone parks.
- 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.
- We continue to manage territorial parks in partnership with First Nations and the Inuvialuit. We recognize that parks protect irreplaceable places with deep cultural connections.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2024****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 2023, together with Kluane First Nation and White River First Nation, we engaged the public and local communities on the future management of Asi Keyi Natural Environment Park.
- With our partners in the Peel land use plan, we reached agreement on territorial park legal designations for special management areas including the Wind, Snake, and Bonnet Plume watersheds and the Richardson Mountains and Vittrekwa River.
- 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:

Briar Young, A/Deputy Minister of Environment

____February 8, 2024_____
Date approved

Session Briefing Note

Flood Mapping

Recommended response:

- As committed in Our Clean Future, the Yukon's climate strategy, the Government of Yukon is developing flood hazard maps for 14 flood-prone communities across the territory to identify flood hazards and help mitigate flood impacts to property, infrastructure, and public safety.
- Flood hazard mapping will take place through a phased approach that prioritizes communities based on multiple criteria, including risk and readiness.
- The first flood hazard maps are being developed for the Southern Lakes area, Carmacks and Teslin. Engagement is underway to inform the finalization of the maps, which we expect to be completed before the end of 2024.

Additional response:

- We recognize that there is a strong desire in many communities to have an increased understanding of flood risks.
- To help provide direction and input from municipal and First Nation governments we have established a Flood Mapping Advisory Committee and a Technical Committee.
- The Flood Mapping Advisory Committee includes representatives from several Yukon government departments, the Council of Yukon First Nations, and the Association of Yukon Communities. The Technical Committee includes representatives from First Nation and municipal governments where we are actively working on flood mapping.

Third response:

- Flood maps are an important tool that informs everyone of the hazard flooding poses to an area and provides the information needed to make informed decisions.



Session Briefing Note

Flood Mapping

- These flood hazard maps provide insight into how flooding could impact different areas of communities and help the public and all levels of government determine what an appropriate response could be.
- As official flood maps are developed, we will continue to work with all orders of government and the Yukon's Emergency Measures Organization to support flood preparation, mitigation, and response.
- The next communities for flood hazard mapping will be Old Crow, Dawson City, and the Klondike Valley, with work occurring in 2024 and 2025.

Context:

- Public 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, and property value.

Background:

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

Approved by:

2024-02-09

Briar Young

Date approved

A/ Deputy Minister of Environment

Session Briefing Note

Spring 2024

2024 Flood Readiness

Community Services
Environment

Recommended response:

- We understand the concerns of Yukoners about the potential for spring flooding. We have experienced significant floods in recent years, and I want to assure Yukoners that we are working hard to be prepared to respond.
- The Emergency Measures Organization is planning and coordinating with local governments and agencies to establish an inventory of sandbags and necessary response tools and materials, and is focused on training to bolster capacity and ensure readiness.
- The Emergency Measures Organization is also working with municipalities, First Nations and other partners such as Water Resources Branch and Environment and Climate Change Canada to coordinate weather and flood forecasting moving into the spring melt.

Additional response:

- The April 1 snow bulletin, shows low flood potential in most of the territory this spring with higher risk in the Klondike and Porcupine.
- Spring weather, the timing and progression of snowmelt, the evolution of breakup, as well as the amount of rain we receive are important drivers of flooding regardless of snowpack levels.
- The Department of Environment continues to work with the Emergency Measures Organization to plan and coordinate with local governments and agencies to enhance flood preparedness and emergency response efforts.
- Officials from Community Services work closely with the Department of Environment to track water levels, snow levels, and provide forecasting data in the spring.

Third response

Old Crow Flood Risk:

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Spring 2024

2024 Flood Readiness

Community Services
Environment

- Old Crow currently has the highest relative flood risk due to the record snowpack (166% of normal) and the potential for that to drive high flows on the Porcupine River if the snow melts rapidly. This could result in flooding during breakup due to high ice jam-induced water levels, or the open water period due to high snowmelt peak flows.
- The risk of ice jamming is influenced by both the strength of the ice cover and upstream flows that drive the downstream progression of breakup; both highly dependent on the weather conditions leading up to breakup. Rapid warming could result in more severe ice jamming if river flow rises rapidly before substantial ice decay has occurred.
- The Emergency Measures Organization is in regular contact with Old Crow. Water levels are being carefully monitored by hydrologists at the Water Resources Branch.
- Any response will be appropriate to the circumstances on the ground and the unique challenges of Old Crow's remote location.

Dawson Flood Preparedness

- The Klondike is also seeing above average snowpack this year and is currently 124% of the historical median.
- The current flood risk for the Klondike Valley is above average and highest around the Klondike highway bridge and the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in C4 subdivision, and low-lying areas for several kilometers upstream of the bridge, as a result of the potential for ice jamming.
- On April 22, the Government of Yukon issued a high-water advisory for the Klondike River. Water levels could change rapidly with ice movements along the river this week.

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Spring 2024

2024 Flood Readiness

Community Services
Environment

- Planners from the Emergency Measures Organization are meeting with officials from the City of Dawson and Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in. They have conducted a tabletop exercise to support flood preparedness in the region.
 - Emergency equipment will be inventoried as part of this exercise.
 - For both Old Crow and Dawson, the Emergency Measures Organization is reviewing all mitigation options to ensure that the appropriate equipment and approaches are deployed.
-

Context:

- This may become an issue because annual flooding since summer 2021 has raised public interest in Yukon government's flood response role.
-

Background:

- The Emergency Measures Organization works with communities, municipalities, and First Nation governments across the Yukon on emergency preparedness. EMO has reached out to all Yukon communities to begin preparations for this response season. EMO will pre-position flood response materials in Yukon communities as needed.
- We are prepared for the flood season throughout the Yukon. We have adequate supplies to ensure communities are prepared for the onset of the flood response season.
- The Snow Survey Bulletin and Water Supply Forecast reports provide a summary of winter meteorological and hydrological conditions for major Yukon watersheds.
- They provide long-term snowpack averages, monthly data and current snow depth and snow water equivalent observations for 52 locations in the Yukon and five locations in the neighbouring areas of British Columbia and Alaska.
- The April 1 snow survey typically represents peak snowpack.
- Every March, April, and May the Government of Yukon conducts Yukon-wide snow surveys to help forecast water levels and flow conditions across the Yukon.


Approved by:

Session Briefing Note

Spring 2024

2024 Flood Readiness

Community Services
Environment

	April 29, 2024
_____	_____
	Date approved
	April 29, 2024

Deputy Minister, Environment	Date approved

**Session Briefing Note
Beaver River Land Use Plan
and First Nation of Nacho
Nyäk Dun Regional
Planning**

Recommended response:

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

Additional response:

- The Beaver River planning process supports the 2018 agreement between the Government of Yukon and the First Nation of Nacho Nyäk Dun regarding proposed construction of a tote road.
- The outcomes of the recent appeal decision regarding the proposed exploration project in the Traditional Territory of the First Nation of Nacho Nyäk Dun highlight the important role of land use planning.

Context — this may be an issue because:

- There may be questions regarding the Beaver River Land Use Plan's status and when it will be complete.

Background:

- The Government of Yukon and First Nation of Nacho Nyäk Dun met recently to discuss the Beaver River planning process and linkages to the Chapter 11 regional planning process. Discussions are ongoing.

Session Briefing Note

Beaver River Land Use Plan and First Nation of Nacho Nyäk Dun Regional Planning

- The Beaver River land use planning process is not an Umbrella Final Agreement Chapter 11 sub-regional planning process. Rather, it comes out of the 2018 Intergovernmental Agreement between the First Nation of Nacho 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.
- ATAC Resources Ltd. has sold many of its mineral holdings in the Yukon to Hecla Mining, including its Rackla Gold and Connaught projects.
- On March 15, 2021, the First Nation of Nacho Nyäk Dun petitioned the Yukon Supreme Court to set aside the Government of Yukon's issuance of a Decision Document for the Metallic Minerals proposed exploration project in the Beaver River Watershed in part due to the ongoing Beaver River Land Use Planning process.
- On January 31, 2023, the court referred the matter back to the Government of Yukon for consideration. The Government of Yukon [had](#) appealed to the Supreme Court decision in the Metallic Minerals case. [Government of Yukon's appeal was dismissed in large part. The decision on this case was released on April 9, 2024. \(See EMR BN #90\)](#)
- [Website updates are agreed to by the parties. Government of Yukon is working with First Nation of Nacho Nyäk Dun staff to update the website.](#)
- The March 2023 declaration of a State of Emergency by the First Nation of Nacho Nyäk Dun and the evacuation of the Village of Mayo during due to 2023 wildfires may also affect the timing of the Beaver River planning process.

EMR #80 / ENV #90

Spring 2024

Energy, Mines and
Resources
and Environment

**Session Briefing Note
Beaver River Land Use Plan
and First Nation of Nacho
Nyäk Dun Regional
Planning**

Approved by:

Deputy Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources

_____April 18, 2024____
Date approved

Approved by:

Deputy Minister of Environment

April 23, 2024
Date approved

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

Peel Watershed Regional Land Use Plan:

- 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 continue to implement the Peel Watershed Regional Land Use Plan.
- Our governments have been working together to designate the Peel Plan's Special Management Areas as protected areas under legislation. As recently announced, this includes a feasibility assessment for a national park for the areas including Turner Lake Wetlands, Caribou River, and the Peel River corridor.
- We will also work in partnership with Yukon First Nations to co-develop the management direction for these protected areas, which will include an opportunity for public input.
- Other implementation activities include the establishment of two hydrometric stations on the Snake and Wind Rivers. These stations monitor water levels and flow, and the data can be accessed by the public in real time.
- Accessible water data increases safety of river users and is valuable for understanding environmental change in the area.
- We have also produced publicly available mapping products, which used satellite imagery to map wetlands and areas of existing disturbance. These products can be used to inform future land management planning and decision-making.
- Two areas within the Peel Watershed have been nominated by the Gwich'in Social and Cultural Institute to be National Historic Sites.

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

These are areas of great cultural importance to the Tetlit Gwich'in. The 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 continuing collaborative work with First Nations partners to implement the Peel Watershed Regional Land Use Plan.

National Park Feasibility Assessment in the Peel Watershed

- Recently, the Government of Yukon shared the news that, in partnership with the Gwich'in Tribal Council, the First Nation of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun and Parks Canada, we are working on a feasibility assessment for a new national park in the Peel Watershed.
- While these areas of the Peel are already identified for permanent protection through the Peel Watershed Regional Land Use Plan, embarking on a national park feasibility assessment will provide the opportunity to:
 1. consider a national park as the permanent protected area designation;
 2. determine the protected area boundaries;
 3. discuss longer term management of this area; and
 4. consider the potential social, environmental, and economic benefits of establishing a national park in the area.
- If established, a new national park would provide long-term protection for this area, which includes 3,000 square kilometres of rich and diverse landscapes.

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Spring 2024

Peel Land Use Planning Implementation Environment

- A feasibility assessment for a national park in this area is a key step toward implementing the Peel Watershed Regional Land Use Plan and supports the conservation and protection goals of the Canada-Yukon Nature Agreement.

Harvest Opportunities in the Special Management Areas:

- The feasibility assessment will consider any social, environmental, and economic benefits and impacts; this includes implications of establishing a national park for this area could have on commercial interests or the impact on any harvest activities in the area.
- The area does not overlap with any outfitting concession and is very remote. As of now, there are very few hunting activities happening in the area. Subsistence harvest rights will be unchanged.
- Between 1995 and 2023, there were three animals harvested in the area identified in the feasibility study assessment, with the last animal harvested being a caribou in 2022.
- As the Game Management Subzones where these three animals were harvested have minimal overlap with the area of the feasibility assessment, in addition to Tetlin Gwich'in lands where permission to hunt is required, it is probable that there were no animals harvested within the potential national park area.
- Through this feasibility assessment, the Government of Yukon will be able, alongside all partners, to determine the impacts and benefits of establishing a national park in this area.
- More broadly, other future designations of Special Management Areas in the Peel Watershed are under review by the Parties and any

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

designation will respect the objectives in the plan. This includes renewable land uses of the wilderness eco-tourism, big game outfitting and trapping land use sectors.

- These activities are all compatible with the objectives of these Land Management Units in the plan and future protection area designations will facilitate the continuation and economic benefits of such activities in a manner consistent with the ecological values of the area.

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'adaojìich'uu and Teetl'it njik. They are culturally significant locations along the Peel River.

Approved by:

April 29, 2024

Deputy Minister of Environment_____
Date approved

Session Briefing Note

Spring 2024

Highlights of the State of the Environment Report

Environment

Recommended response:

- The 2023 State of the Environment Report is an information-rich resource on a suite of environmental indicators, based on information available at the end of 2022, and can be found on Yukon.ca.
- The 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:

- The report highlights many things that we can be proud of in the territory, such as our overall good air quality, with only occasional times of elevated levels of particulate matter primarily in the winter months.
- The amount of land and waters recognized in conservation areas in the Yukon increased in 2022, to 19.3 per cent of the territory.
- We continue to make progress on waste diversion, in 2022, Whitehorse disposed of an average of 610 kilograms of waste per person. Recycling, composting, and reuse efforts managed to divert 33 per cent of this waste from the landfill.
- We are also moving ahead with the implementation of the 2022 *Policy for the Stewardship of Yukon's Wetlands*. Broad-scale wetland mapping has been completed for approximately 81,000 km².

Session Briefing Note

Spring 2024

Highlights of the State of the Environment Report

Environment

Third response:

- The report also shows us environmental indicators of concern, and where our efforts should be focused.
- In 2022, an estimated 12,000 Chinook salmon reached their spawning grounds in the Yukon. This is the lowest recorded estimate and is well below the spawning escapement goal for Yukon River Chinook.
- The Yukon saw its greatest ever-recorded snowpack in 2022. New historical records were set at 29 of 57 snow survey stations. These levels have been increasing on average for years and are a contributing factor in spring flooding.
- Work has begun on the 2024 interim State of the Environment Report, which will be tabled in the legislature during the Fall Session.
- We will continue to share this valuable report and work to preserve the status of those indicators of which we can be proud and improve those indicators for which we are concerned.

Context—this may be an issue because:

- Tabling the State of the Environment Report is a legislative requirement. The 2023 State of the Environment Report was tabled in the Legislative Assembly in fall 2023.

Background:

- In accordance with the *Environment Act*, a full State of Environment Report is tabled triennially, and interim reports are tabled in the intervening years. The 2023 Report is a full report.
- The Yukon has been preparing State of the Environment reports since 1995.

Session Briefing Note

Spring 2024

Highlights of the State of the Environment Report

Environment

- 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:

March 8, 2024

Deputy Minister of Environment

Date approved

Session Briefing Note

Gladiator Metals



#2
Spring 2024
Energy, Mines and
Resources

Recommended response:

- Gladiator Metals recently applied to do exploration work near the former Whitehorse Copper mine. This area is not near homes, but some of the claims lie within city limits.
- A Class 1 authorization for the company's exploration work in the area was issued after consulting with affected First Nations. This authorization allows for only the lowest level of exploration work.
- The company recently completed its exploration work in the Cowley Creek area and is no longer authorized to conduct exploration work there. [An inspection confirmed the company completed its required reclamation work prior to the April 17, 2024 deadline to do so.](#)

Additional response:

- The Cowley Creek claims were staked decades ago and predate the nearby homes and staking prohibition. In the Yukon, claims may be renewed yearly provided the claim holder complies with renewal requirements.
- We have heard some residents raise concerns that mining exploration could increase the risk of radon in groundwater. Radon is sometimes present in groundwater in the area, but ore drilling for exploration is unlikely to alter groundwater quality.
- The Government of Yukon is collaborating with the University of Saskatchewan, Ta'an Kwäch'än Council and the City of Whitehorse to examine groundwater quality and hazards in Whitehorse to better understand the risks of radon in the groundwater. This is a three-year project funded by the National Research Council of Canada.

Session Briefing Note

Gladiator Metals



#2
Spring 2024

Energy, Mines and
Resources

Context — this may be an issue because:

- There is significant public interest in the work being undertaken by Gladiator Metals Ltd. given the locations of these activities and the recent court case.

Background:

- The Mineral Resources Branch received a complaint about the Class 1 activities near the Cowley Creek site on May 11, 2023, and requested the Compliance, Monitoring and Inspections Branch inspect the site. A Natural Resource Officer inspected the site and identified non-compliance issues.
- The company was convicted of six offences for unauthorized activities. On August 30, 2023, the company was fined \$38,000, plus a \$5,700 victim fine surcharge.
- Exploration activities near Cowley Creek concluded in October 2023. The company has until the permit's expiry date of April 17, 2024, to complete the required reclamation of the associated disturbance.
- Natural Resource Officers regularly visited the Cowley Creek site to ensure the company complied with its Class 1 notification terms and conditions. An interim site inspection was conducted in October 2023 to monitor ongoing reclamation efforts.
- On November 14, 2023, Gladiator Metals received authorization to conduct Class 1 quartz exploration near the former Whitehorse Copper property. The site lies along the Copper Haul Road, north of the Mt. Sima Road, and is not near residential subdivisions. Exploration work commenced in early January 2024.
- Due to the overlap with the City, the company required a development permit from the City of Whitehorse to proceed with work.
- The site was visited by the city of Whitehorse bylaw and development officers, company representatives and Compliance, Monitoring and Inspections on January 18, 2024. No concerns were noted at the time.
- A final site inspection [was conducted by Compliance, Monitoring and Inspections on April 2, 2024, confirming compliance](#) with all Class 1 permit conditions.



Session Briefing Note
Gladiator Metals

#2
Spring 2024
Energy, Mines and
Resources

Approved by:

April 16, 2024

Deputy Minister
Department of Energy, Mines and Resources

Date approved

Session Briefing Note

Mount Nansen



#43
Spring 2024

Energy, Mines and
Resources

Recommended response:

- We recognize that Little Salmon/Carmacks First Nation has raised concerns about environmental risks at the abandoned Mount Nansen Mine caused by high water levels in the tailings pond.
- The Government of Canada is responsible for environmental liabilities at the site and has contracted Mount Nansen Remediation Limited Partnership to lead this work.
- We understand that federal officials and representatives from Mount Nansen Remediation Limited Partnership are working with the First Nation to develop solutions to help address these risks.

Additional response:

- The Government of Yukon monitors the site to ensure the operator is compliant with the terms and conditions of its care and maintenance water licence issued by the Yukon Water Board.
- The most recent site inspection occurred on February 21, 2024. Water licence inspection reports are publicly available on Waterline.
- We will continue to monitor this situation and look for ways to support the parties in their efforts to address environmental risks at the site.

Context — this may be an issue because:

- At the Yukon Forum on February 16, Little Salmon/Carmacks First Nation expressed concern regarding potential environmental risk of water volume being stored behind the tailings dam as we begin to approach spring melt.

**Session Briefing Note****Mount Nansen**Energy, Mines and
Resources

- The First Nation previously raised concerns about reclamation and closure activities and the conditions of the existing water licence with the Yukon Water Board and with local media.

Background:

- Mount Nansen Mine was abandoned by its operator in 1999.
- The original mine was licensed by the Government of Canada before the Government of Yukon assumed responsibility for managing the territory's natural resources.
- In 2019, Mount Nansen Remediation Limited Partnership signed agreements with the Government of Canada and Little Salmon/Carmacks First Nation to undertake the remediation and environmental monitoring of the Mount Nansen site.
- The operator's care and maintenance water licence was issued by the Yukon Water Board in August 2021. Water licence inspection reports are publicly available on Waterline.

Approved by:

February 28, 2024Deputy Minister
Department of Energy, Mines and Resources

Date approved

Session Briefing Note

Spring 2024

Human-Wildlife Conflict

Environment

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 help reduce human-wildlife conflict overall.
- In 2023, we saw higher than usual bear activity. In some conflict situations when a bear poses a safety risk, it is captured and 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.
- In 2023, the Department of Environment responded to 239 bear related calls of which black bears accounted for 184 calls and 55 grizzly bear calls. 15 black bears and 3 grizzly bears were translocated in 2023.
- Conservation officers euthanized 29 black bears and 11 grizzly bears, while 10 black bears and 6 grizzly bears were killed by the public in defense of life and property in 2023.
- In comparison, in 2022 the Department of Environment responded to 178 bear-related calls and 178 in 2021.
- In 2023, unsecure garbage and birdseed accounted for 51% of attractants involved in conflict with bears. Yukoners, we can do better.
- The Department of Environment provides educational opportunities to reduce human-bear conflicts including:
 - Offering bear safety courses which review bear awareness and how to use bear-spray.
 - School education programs for all grades.
 - A community bear fair every spring to engage with Yukoners.

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Human-Wildlife Conflict

Environment

- Bear awareness and bear safety is taught in the Hunter Education and Ethics Development course for new hunters.
 - The Department regularly posts bear safety reminders on social media as well as sharing “bear in area” posts to alert the public of bears reported in residential areas and popular recreation areas.
 - We publish a booklet called “How you can stay safe in bear country” that is updated as knowledge around reducing bear conflict grows. This is available in hard copy at the Department of Environment and in PDF format on Yukon.ca
 - Additional information is available on Yukon.ca about bear identification and best practices when camping, hunting, fishing and other recreation activities such as hiking, biking, and paddling.
 - In addition to these education initiatives and resources, conservation officers regularly engage with First Nation partners, local organizations and municipalities to reduce bear conflicts across the territory.
- Yukoners dealing with aggressive wildlife or those who witness someone feeding wildlife 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.
- In 2021, the Yukon government launched the Urban Fox Monitoring Project to help us better understand fox populations in the city, their health and potential public safety risks.
- The concentration of foxes is directly related to the number of residences in the area, as more people usually means increased attractants.

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Human-Wildlife Conflict

Environment

- Conservation Officers control foxes when necessary and as a last resort in addressing problematic fox interactions with the public.
- In 2023, 12 foxes were relocated, and 4 foxes were euthanized.
- 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 (wolves):

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

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.

Background:

- The Department of Environment continues to raise awareness with brochures and communication initiatives to help minimize conflicts between people and wildlife.
- Wildlife-vehicle collisions are another form of human-wildlife conflict, resulting in the deaths of 104 animals 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-vehicle collisions on Yukon roads, such as signage and brush clearing to improve visibility.



ENV #100

Spring 2024

Environment

Session Briefing Note
Human-Wildlife Conflict

Approved by

Deputy Minister of Environment

April 8, 2024

Date approved

Session Briefing Note

Wildlife Collisions

Spring 2024
Environment

Recommended response:

- Animals are attracted to roadways for various reasons, including foraging and travel ease.
- Staff from the departments of Environment and Highways and Public Works work together to mitigate and manage wildlife collisions on the Yukon's highways.
- Reducing the rate of wildlife collisions on the Yukon's highways improves the safety of motorists and contributes to the conservation of wildlife species susceptible to highway collisions.

Additional response:

- The Government of Yukon mitigates highway collisions using several prevention strategies, including the development of vegetation control plans for clearing highway rights-of-way to improve visibility and installing permanent signage notifying drivers to be more aware and to drive cautiously – this includes using real-time warning on digital signs when travelling through wildlife corridors.
- We also warn motorists that they are in areas where collisions with wildlife are frequent by announcing cautions through our annual public education campaigns, social media communication and radio advertisements.
- To support education campaigns, the Department of Environment created “hot spot” maps to highlight areas where caribou collisions are most frequent.

Session Briefing Note

Wildlife Collisions

Spring 2024
Environment

Third response:

- The Department of Environment collects wildlife collision information which helps to inform the Department of Highways and Public Works of locations for signage placement and helps prioritize road corridor vegetation clearing.
- The Department of Environment is working to make this wildlife mortality information accessible to the public through subject-focused web portals, which will include wildlife road collision data.
- Road ecologists and biologists have been contracted to analyze collision data and recommend appropriate and effective mitigation measures. This has included actions like the removal of snow berms to facilitate animal movement off roadways.
- Wildlife collisions can be reported to the TIPP line at 1-800-661-0525. Conservation officers respond to reports of injured or deceased wildlife on roadways and are responsible for euthanizing injured wildlife when necessary.

Context—this may be an issue because:

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

Background:

- There is a wildlife-vehicle collision working group made up of representatives from the departments of Environment and Highways and Public Works with a mandate to work together to develop and implement adaptive strategies to decrease the rate of wildlife-vehicle collisions on the Yukon roads.
- The group seeks input from boards and councils, and the public to contribute to sound management decisions through accepted procedures and approvals.



Session Briefing Note

Wildlife Collisions

- The working group regularly consults and collaborates with First Nations who have expressed concerns about wildlife collisions.

Approved by:

March 18, 2024

Deputy Minister of Environment

Date approved

Session Briefing Note

Spring 2024

COSB 75th Anniversary & North of 60 Conference

Environment

Recommended response:

- In 2024, the Yukon Conservation Officer Services Branch is celebrating 75 years of service.
- Yukon Conservation Officers serve as stewards of the territory's natural resources. They investigate and enforce environmental law, including monitoring compliance with hunting, fishing and trapping regulations, and licences and permits issued under the *Wildlife Act*.
- While monitoring and enforcing the laws helps ensure conservation measures are respected, public education is also a key component of preserving the environment for current generations and ensuring that future generations can enjoy the outdoors responsibly and sustainably.
- Conservation is a collective effort, and the Conservation Officer Services Branch collaborates with other enforcement agencies and First Nations to ensure a comprehensive approach to protecting the territory's landscape and wildlife.
- Whether it's providing advice about trapping, hunting or fishing, conducting educational programs, or responding to wildlife-related issues and public safety, Conservation Officers are passionate about their work and take pride in assisting Yukoners with their outdoor activities.
- Their dedication to education, public safety and conservation law enforcement has been essential over their 75 years of service.
- Thanks to all Yukoners for your ongoing support and cooperation to fulfill the Conservation Officer Services Branch mission.

Session Briefing Note

Spring 2024

COSB 75th Anniversary & North of 60 Conference

Environment

Additional response (North of 60 Conference):

- The Yukon Conservation Officer Services Branch is hosting the Conservation Law Enforcement North of 60 Conference in Haines Junction from May 7 to 9.
- This international conference brings together approximately 40-50 Federal (US and Canada) and provincial/territorial/state resource law enforcement officers, US and Canadian prosecutors, as well as intelligence analysts from across Yukon, northern BC, NWT, and Alaska.
- The Conference will focus on cross-border intelligence and information sharing, casefile summaries and agency updates.
- The opportunity for information and intelligence exchange provided by this venue is invaluable for our officers, fostering collaboration between allied agencies to address areas and individuals of concern.
- Previous interagency cooperation, notably between Alaska and Yukon, has led to investigations of significant wildlife crimes and subsequent prosecutions.
- We are proud to work alongside partners in other jurisdictions and look forward to hosting the conference while commemorating 75 years of environmental protection and conservation enforcement in the Yukon.

Additional response (modern technology):

- Conservation Officers are taking advantage of modern mobile applications to increase efficiency, enhance public and officer safety and elevate officer effectiveness in the field.

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Spring 2024

COSB 75th Anniversary & North of 60 Conference

Environment

- The mobile apps are designed in-house by the Department of Environment team to help make communications between Conservation Officers more streamlined.
- The apps allow them to easily share information and coordinate their efforts in real-time. These systems give officers the ability to access and collect important information in the execution of their duties.
- The apps currently in use by the Yukon Conservation Officer Services Branch are:
 - Human-Wildlife Conflict Response App – This is a mobile app that enables Yukon Conservation Officers to report, collect, document and analyze conflicts involving wildlife.
 - Angling Inspection App – Designed to record inspections while in the field for angling licences and form an electronic version of the Conservation Officer's notes documenting the inspection.
 - Hunting Inspection App – Designed to record inspections while in the field for big game and small game licences and form an electronic version of Conservation Officer's notes documenting the inspection.
 - Elk–Agriculture Interactions App – Designed to support the Elk-Agriculture pilot program to addressing the ongoing issues related to elk and agricultural landowners in the Takhini Valley.

Context—this may be an issue because:

- The Yukon Conservation Officer Services Branch is celebrating 75 years of service in 2024 and is hosting the Conservation Law Enforcement 2024 North of 60 Conference in Haines Junction from May 7 to 9.

Session Briefing Note

Spring 2024

COSB 75th Anniversary & North of 60 Conference

Environment

- MLA Istchenko is expected to attend the conference on the evening of May 8 and volunteer at the St. Elias Firearms Association Gun Range and Club House BBQ.
-

Background:

- Juneau, Alaska hosted the 2023 Conservation Law Enforcement North of 60 Conference.
- The central theme of this year's conference is mental health and critical incident stress management options for law enforcement officers.

Approved by:

April 23, 2024

Deputy Minister of Environment

Date Approved

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2024****Corporate Note – Budget Highlights**Finance

Recommended response:

- The Government of Yukon is committed to supporting Yukoners and communities while delivering strong, sustainable fiscal management.
- The Yukon's economy is returning to normal with inflation falling, tourism rebounding, and growth in wages leading to higher consumer spending.
- This budget will benefit all Yukoners by providing significant investments in health care, education, and housing, and will ensure that Yukoners have opportunities to thrive in a vibrant and sustainable economy:
 - An additional \$15.3 million in funding is included to support the operations of the Yukon Hospital Corporation and another \$30 million is directed towards our Insured Health services system.
 - \$4.4 million will help increase the number of educational support staff and wellness professionals in our schools and create a learning environment that is inclusive and responsive to the diverse needs of our students.
 - \$101 million in capital is dedicated for land development, housing, education and health care.
 - This year's budget also delivers on our commitment to environmental stewardship, demonstrated through more than \$55 million allocated to support existing and new actions identified in *Our Clean Future*.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2024****Corporate Note – Budget Highlights**

Finance

Embargoed until day of budget tabling

- Through Budget 2024-25, the government will continue to lay the foundation for the territory's new health authority. We will also provide funding to implement the *Substance Use Health Emergency Strategy* in coordination with our partners.
- This budget includes strategic investments in infrastructure, particularly in housing for the most vulnerable. Investments in housing include projects in Watson Lake, Mayo, Faro and Dawson City and funding support for various affordable and community housing projects.
- Like in previous budgets, Budget 2024-25 continues to build relationships and further reconciliation with Yukon First Nations.
- Revenue growth continues to accelerate alongside record levels of recoveries. The Yukon's strong financial position continues to improve as we look towards the future.

Additional response:

- The Yukon government is delivering on its commitment to grow a strong and resilient economy while ensuring robust, sustainable fiscal management.
- A strong surplus will serve as a prudent fiscal management tool and demonstrates the ability of the government to address unforeseen events without going into a deficit.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2024****Corporate Note – Budget Highlights**

Finance

Embargoed until day of budget tabling

- The fiscal summary includes a \$50 million contingency for unforeseen pressures and emergencies. Including a contingency has been a proven method to offset the cost of expected but undefined expenditures that arise throughout the fiscal year while limiting their impact on the territory's fiscal position.

Context—this may be an issue because:

- The 2024-25 Main Estimates will be debated during the March 2024 legislative session.
-

Background:

- The 2024-25 Main Estimates include a projected surplus of \$119 million and net debt of \$488.8 million.
- Total revenue is expected to be \$1.69 billion in 2024-25. This is an increase of \$115.8 million, or 7.4 per cent, from the 2023-24 Main Estimates.
- Gross O&M spending is forecast at \$1.6 billion, reflecting a \$141.4 million or 9.7 per cent increase over 2023–24 Main Estimates. Approximately 12 per cent is recoverable from Canada and other partners, making the net impact \$88.6 million, or a 6.7 per cent net increase over 2023–24 Mains.
- Forecast capital expenditures total \$484.0 million with recoveries of \$171.3 million. Although gross capital expenditures are consistent with the previous year (\$483.8 million in 2023-24) increased recoveries result in a 2.1 per cent decrease in net capital expenditures from the 2023-24 Main Estimates.

Session Briefing Note

Spring 2024

Corporate Note – Budget Highlights

Finance

Embargoed until day of budget tabling

- There are 5,484.5 FTEs in the 2024-25 budget, which is an increase of 152.8 FTEs from 2023-24. Growth primarily for CASA Education commitments (61.0) and Health Human Resources commitments (11.5) as well as Putting People First (28.5).

Approved by:

February 28, 2024

Deputy Minister, Finance

Date Approved

Session Briefing Note

Corporate Note – Fin/HPW 2023-24 Supplementary Overview

HPW TAB#1

FIN TAB#28

Spring 2024

Recommended response:

- The changes outlined in the Supplementary Estimates No. 2 highlight the government's commitment to supporting the health and wellbeing of Yukoners and communities. The government will continue to make important investments to support our healthcare system, enhance public safety, and provide needed infrastructure across the territory.
- The 2023-24 Supplementary Estimates No. 2 forecasts an overall net increase of \$32.1 million in spending. This includes:
 - A \$61.0 million increase in gross O&M spending, with an offsetting increase of \$29.4 million in recoveries, and
 - Other than a small transfer of \$143,000 in the Yukon Legislative Assembly, there is no change in overall gross capital spending, and a small decrease of \$397,000 in recoveries.
- Changes in the Supplementary Estimates result in a revised forecast surplus of \$1.7 million and year-end net debt of \$444.5 million.
- The ability to remain in a surplus position despite an increase in spending is largely owed to significant infrastructure investments:
 - Infrastructure investments, which are mostly tangible capital assets, impact net debt when they are realized. However, as they are anticipated to provide benefits over many years, their

Session Briefing Note

Corporate Note – Fin/HPW 2023-24 Supplementary Overview

HPW TAB#1

FIN TAB#28

Spring 2024

Embargoed until day of budget tabling

impact on the surplus/deficit position is recognized over their expected life.

O&M

- In O&M, the most significant increases are for programs and initiatives in the Department of Health and Social Services:
 - \$25.6 million is required for Insured Health Services for physician claims, hospital claims, pharmacare and medical travel.
 - More than \$12 million in O&M spending will increase funding for the Yukon Hospital Corporation for unanticipated costs, which are partially a result of a global shortage of health care providers and work done to retain our valuable nurses.
- Some other significant items in the supplementary estimates include:
 - \$6.7 million to sustain initiatives aimed at strengthening justice and community safety within our territory.
 - \$4.1 million to cover costs for new teachers, educational assistants, learning assistant teachers and mental health and wellness counsellors, as well as Yukon University and Governance increases.
- The 29.4 million increases in O&M recoveries are mostly comprised of a \$25 million recovery expected to be received for work completed and underway at the Minto Mine, this year.

Session Briefing Note

Corporate Note – Fin/HPW 2023-24 Supplementary Overview

HPW TAB#1

FIN TAB#28

Spring 2024

Embargoed until day of budget tabling

Capital

- In Capital, there is no significant change in overall expenditures, but there are increases in several projects which are offset by decreases in other areas:
 - Most of the increases are for the Dempster Fibre project, which will receive an additional \$18.4 million to support faster than anticipated progress during the year. This project will provide Yukoners with more reliable access to the internet as well as necessary redundancy.
 - There is also a \$14.6 million increase for the Nisutlin Bay Bridge Replacement project and a \$7.9 million increase for the Erik Nielsen Whitehorse International Airport taxiway improvements and main runway replacement.
 - Finally, a \$5.8 million increase is required for the Old Crow Health and Wellness Centre replacement and the Old Crow 10-unit mixed-use housing project.
- These increases are offset by a number of decreases in other capital projects to reflect revised timelines:
 - The most notable decrease is a \$21.3 million reduction for the Skagway Marine Service Platform project, which has been moved to 2025-26.

Session Briefing Note

Corporate Note – Fin/HPW 2023-24 Supplementary Overview

HPW TAB#1

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Spring 2024

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- There is also an \$8 million decrease in Northern Carve Out funding, which is being deferred to 2024-25.
- Delays in some of the community projects under the infrastructure development funding will also see an additional \$7.7 million decrease in capital.

Additional Response:

- Revenues for 2023-24 are expected to decrease by \$14.9 million, mainly to reflect lower forecasts for tobacco and corporate income tax revenues and quartz mining royalties.

Context—this may be an issue because:

- The 2023-24 Supplementary Estimates #2 is tabled in the spring session and will be the subject of debate.

Approved by:

Feb 29/24

Feb. 28, 2024

Deputy Minister, HPW

Approved

Session Briefing Note

Inflation and Affordability

(Corporate Note)

Recommended:

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

Additional response:

- This year's Budget continues to support Yukoners by making sure they can access essential services at prices they can afford.
 - o The Budget includes massive investments to advance affordable housing projects across the Yukon. From the Housing First Project in Watson Lake, the Ryder Apartments in Whitehorse, and the Korbo Multiplex in Dawson, the Yukon government will be taking action to build more affordable homes for Yukoners, especially those in vulnerable situations.
 - o There is also over \$42 million in continued funding for early learning and child care in this Budget. This includes funding for the universal child care program, which has reduced child care fees to less than \$10 per day on average.

Session Briefing Note

Inflation and Affordability

(Corporate Note)

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- o We are also making life more affordable and leading the nation with our Yukon-wide dental program, which will see \$5.4 million in continued funding for 2024-25.
 - o To make sure that more people have the option of staying home when they are sick, we have extended the Temporary Paid Sick Leave and included the necessary funding to do so in this Budget. We have also extended the Interim Electrical Rebate, which will provide welcome relief from power bills to Yukoners across the territory.
- These are just a few examples of the many programs and initiatives that will continue to support Yukoners this year.
- The Yukon's minimum wage has also been responsive to price changes, as its annual change is tied to inflation in the year prior. After growing 6.8 per cent in 2023, the minimum wage is scheduled to grow a further 4.9 per cent to \$17.59 per hour as of April 1, 2024. The new minimum wage would represent the second highest wage in Canada, behind only Nunavut's minimum wage of \$19.00 per hour.
- Higher inflation impacts various Government of Yukon programs through indexation, including:
 - o Subsidies for medical travel
 - o The Yukon Child Benefit
 - o Social Assistance Payments
 - o Student Financial Assistance
 - o Seniors' benefits
 - o The Pioneer Utility grant

Session Briefing Note

Inflation and Affordability (Corporate Note)

Spring 2024
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- o The Comprehensive Municipal Grant Regulation
- o The minimum wage
- o Residential rent caps
- o The tobacco tax rate

Context—this may be an issue because:

- Inflation has fallen from historical highs but remains elevated in Canada and in the Yukon.
- While improved, energy prices remain elevated, and food and shelter costs continue to be prominent drivers of overall inflation. These are all areas where higher prices are more obvious to consumers.
- Housing affordability has been a concern in the Yukon for several years.
- After more than a year of local inflation being among the highest in Canada, growth in the Whitehorse CPI trended down throughout 2023 and was once again below the national inflation in the last three months of 2023 [and the first two months of 2024](#).
- Higher earnings were reported across most industries in 2023, and several industries reported earnings growth more than 2023's average inflation of 4.9 per cent. Even as some industries had earnings gains outpace inflation, earnings growth of 2.8 per cent in the industry total fell short of the overall increase in prices in 2023.

Session Briefing Note

Inflation and Affordability

(Corporate Note)

Background:

Inflation – Recent performance and outlook

- 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 were key drivers of overall inflation in 2023.
- Actions taken by the Bank of Canada to rein in inflation by cooling the Canadian economy appear to be having the desired effects. The national labour market has softened, consumer spending has slowed, and real GDP has leveled out. Following ten increases in the overnight rate since March 2022, discussion among many analysts has shifted towards the timing of rate cuts.
- The Bank's efforts to tame inflation look to have set the stage for a soft landing for Canada, as inflation is trending down without an accompanying sharp downturn in economic activity. Weaker energy prices and improving supply chains have also helped contribute to a much-improved national inflation picture.
- Prior to the recent period of elevated inflation, prices in the Yukon had generally tracked close to the national trend. After averaging 3.9 per cent in 2023, the Bank expects national inflation to fall to 2.8 per cent in 2024 and 2.2 per cent in 2025. As price pressures continue to recede, a similar story is expected locally with growth of the Whitehorse CPI forecast to fall from 4.9 per cent in 2023 to 3.0 per cent in 2024 and 2.5 per cent in 2025.

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Inflation and Affordability (Corporate Note)

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PROGRAMS AND OTHER MEASURES THAT SUPPORT AFFORDABILITY

Projects under the Five-Year Capital Plan supporting housing affordability (Yukon Housing Corporation)

- The **Old Crow 10-Plex Mixed-Use Housing** facility will be completed and will be ready for residents to start moving in by March 2024.
- Construction of the **10-plex Housing First Project in Watson Lake** began in the summer of 2023. It is scheduled to be completed in the fall 2024.
- Construction of the **Faro and Dawson Duplex** projects started in summer 2023 and are scheduled to be complete in early 2024.
- The **Korbo Multiplex in Dawson** is in the design phase. This project will deliver approximately 34 new housing units.
- The old **Ryder Apartments in Whitehorse** was demolished in December 2023 and plans are underway to replace it with a new multi-family affordable housing complex. The project is in the design phase and is anticipated to deliver over 45 new units.

Universal Child Care Program (Education)

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

Dental Care program (Health and Social Services)

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

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Inflation and Affordability (Corporate Note)

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Paid sick leave program (Economic Development)

- 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 includes all illnesses (and injuries not covered by any other Act, benefit, or program). The program is available to employees regardless of whether their employer offers paid sick leave, though employees must use all paid sick leave available to them through their employer before they are eligible for the Paid Sick Leave Rebate.

Yukon Child Benefit (Finance)

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

Yukon Seniors' Income Supplement (Health and Social Services)

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

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

- The Inflation Relief Rebate, a \$50 rebate that is automatically applied to electrical customers' bills, was a temporary measure to address inflation. The Inflation Relief Rebate was most recently applied to all ATCO Electric Yukon and Yukon Energy bills for November and December 2023 and January 2024.

Session Briefing Note

Inflation and Affordability

(Corporate Note)

- The Interim Electrical Rebate continues to provide residential electrical customers with a maximum rebate of \$22.62 per month based on the electricity they consume, up to 1,000 kilowatt hours (up to \$271.44 per year). This affordability measure has been extended to March 2025.

Other Government initiatives

Initiatives under Health and Social Services:

- Engagement on the Yukon's Social Assistance rates started in late summer 2023 with clients on Social Assistance.
- While the review is underway, the department is providing a \$100 monthly increase to eligible Social Assistance recipients.
- To offset inflationary cost of living increases and provide sufficient financial resources to meet the needs of children placed in their care, the department is providing a 10 per cent increase to monthly payments to caregivers of children in out of home care, on top of the annual indexed increase.
- During the 2023-24 fiscal year, a 16.46 per cent rate increase for community and extended family caregivers was provided. The rates are as follows:
 - o Whitehorse: \$46.86 per day
 - o Rural Communities: \$50.16 per day
 - o Old Crow: \$86.40 per day

Comprehensive Municipal Grant (Community Services)

- The Comprehensive Municipal Grant is how the Government of Yukon directly funds municipal governments. This core funding supplements municipal resources and pays for vital services, like the provision of fresh drinking water, the collection of solid waste and recycling, recreation programming and other services as required under the Municipal Act and other legislation.

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Inflation and Affordability (Corporate Note)

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- The high inflation seen in 2022 (6.8 per cent) will increase the grant payments to be provided in April 2024. This will result in a \$2.3 million increase for Yukon municipalities with overall contributions of over \$24.5 million for fiscal year 2024/25.

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

- 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 rebate programs are available for the transportation sector, renewable heating sector, and the construction sector focusing on high efficiency buildings.
- For existing homes, the Energy Branch offers the Good Energy rebate program for high performance heating systems and upgrades to thermal enclosures including insulation and windows, and high-performance new homes. Taking these measures will save homeowners money on their energy costs.
- Between January 1, 2018, and December 31st, 2023, 221 high-performance retrofits to residential, commercial and institutional buildings have been completed across the territory.
- Innovative programs like the Better Buildings Program that offer up-front funding, combined with our Good Energy rebates, make energy retrofits more accessible and affordable for Yukoners.

Support to the forestry industry (Energy, Mines and Resources)

- To help increase the supply of firewood, over the past two years the Yukon government has offered an incentive to timber harvesters. In 2022-23, the Government of Yukon distributed \$315,000 to 33 Yukon businesses. The program has contributed to an increase in timber harvest volumes.

Session Briefing Note

Inflation and Affordability

(Corporate Note)

Spring 2024

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- In fall 2023, the Government of Yukon and the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency combined financial contributions to launch the \$200,000 Forestry Support Program. The program is helping to enhance operational safety and resilience by allowing commercial harvesters and retailers to purchase or repair things like harvest equipment, vehicles, trailers, and personal protective equipment.
- We have distributed over \$170,000 through this program and anticipate exhausting the funds by the application deadline of March 31, 2024.

Temporary Landlord Assistance Program (Economic Development)

- Vacancy rates in the local rental market remain very low. The Government of Yukon is committed to encouraging landlords to remain in the residential market. To help support this, the department of Economic Development introduced a temporary Landlord Assistance Program in November 2023.
- The program is available to all Yukon residential landlords who rent out accommodations to which the Yukon's Residential Landlord and Tenant Act applies and who rented out accommodation in 2023. The program provides a one-time, per-unit payment of \$338 for 2023.

Government initiatives indexed to inflation

- Higher inflation impacts various Government of Yukon programs through indexation, (indexation is updated each April unless otherwise noted), including:
 - 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)

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Inflation and Affordability (Corporate Note)

Spring 2024
Finance

- o Student Financial Assistance (updated each school year)
- o Tobacco Tax is updated each January
- o Yukon Child Benefit (July)

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:
 - o Providing tourism sector leadership;
 - o Rebuilding confidence and capabilities for tourism;
 - o Supporting the recovery of tourism industry operators; and
 - o 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:
 - o Tourism Accommodation Sector Supplement (TASS);
 - o Tourism Non-Accommodation Sector Supplement (TNASS);
 - o Culture and Tourism Non-profit Sector Supplement;

Session Briefing Note

Inflation and Affordability (Corporate Note)

- 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:

March 19, 2024

Deputy Minister, Finance

Approved

Recommended response:

- Many Yukoners continue to face challenges across the housing continuum, including:
 - homelessness and a lack of access to housing with services;
 - a lack of affordable rental supply; and
 - high house prices and mortgage rates.
- Exceptionally high building costs and rising interest rates are creating significant challenges for both Yukon Housing Corporation and its partners.
- The corporation's new strategic plan, Creating Home, will help transform affordable housing service delivery through the adoption of a more client-centred and collaborative approach that integrates supports and leads to better outcomes for Yukoners.

Additional response:

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

Context:

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

Background:

General housing information in the Yukon

Homelessness

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

Housing Issues

Yukon Housing Corporation

Rental pricing

- As of October 2023, the median rent for units in Whitehorse in all types of buildings \$1,368. This is 5.1% higher than it was in October 2022. For rental units in buildings with three or more units, the median rent was \$1,250, and the vacancy rate was 1.2%. Within the renter population in Whitehorse:
 - 22.7% live in unaffordable housing;
 - 17.9% live in unsuitable housing; and
 - 10.5% live in inadequate housing.

Rental and vacancy rate, Yukon (YBS)

	April 2022	October 2022	April 2023	October 2023
Median rent (all types)	\$1,300	\$1,301	\$1,325	\$1,368
Vacancy rate (all types)	1.6%	1.7%	2.2%	1.9%

Housing Construction

- Residential building construction declined by 19.3% over the same period. There was \$81.9 million in residential building construction in Yukon in 2023. This figure represents a 7.5% decline from 2022.
- Labour shortages contribute to higher construction costs and are leading to lower residential construction output.¹

House prices

- Yukon Bureau of Statistics real estate reports show that average prices for single detached and condos have fallen for three consecutive quarters; however, house prices remain high and many Yukoners face affordability challenges due to rising mortgage rates.
- Average House Prices (YBS)

Type	Whitehorse Average House Prices		
	2022 Q3	2023 Q3	Change
Single-detached house	\$701,200	\$664,600	(-5.2%)
Condominium	\$459,400	\$426,600	(-7.1%)

¹ Northern Housing Report, 2023

Yukon Housing Corporation Accomplishments

Creating Home – YHC new strategic plan

- Creating Home is the corporation's new 5-year strategic plan that will transform affordable housing service delivery through the adoption of a more client-centred and collaborative approach that integrates supports and leads to better outcomes for Yukoners and communities.
- The plan draws on a recognized framework intended to re-design and transform health care delivery, called the Quadruple Aim, and adapts it to housing.
 - This innovative approach to housing delivery will lead to better outcomes by:
 - improving the client and provider experience
 - strengthening community wellbeing; and
 - contributing to a sustainable future
- Creating Home represents a significant shift in how Yukon Housing Corporation operates and delivers housing services.

Capital builds recently completed by YHC or partners:

- 60 units completed between 21/22 and 22/23 by YHC
- **February 2024** 10 units in Old Crow (with HPW)
- **March 2024** accessible duplex in Faro
- **January 2024** – 3-unit mobile home delivered and prepared for occupancy for RRDC staff to help improve social conditions in the community.
- **August 2023** – two accessible, affordable duplexes in Mayo and Carmacks, YHC
- **July 2023** – a 12-bed men's shelter, Jëje Zho, in Dawson City, Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in
- **May 2023** – 9-unit Elders' complex, Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation
- **January 2023** – 87-unit rental development in Whitehorse by Boreal Commons
- **January 2023** – 47-unit build for in Whitehorse YHC
- **December 2022** – 84-unit Seniors' Supportive Housing Facility, Normandy Living.
- **July 2022** – 45-unit multi-use building, Cornerstone: Opportunities Yukon
- **June 2022** – triplex in Whitehorse, YHC
- **Summer 2022** – 20-unit, Whistle Bend: Champagne and Aishihik First Nations
- **March 2022** – triplexes in Mayo and Watson Lake, YHC

Housing Issues

Yukon Housing Corporation

Underway or Upcoming housing capital projects for YHC and partners

YHC- Underway (12 units)

- 10-unit Watson Lake Housing First building
- 2-unit affordable duplex in Dawson

YHC – Upcoming (112+ units) Community housing:

- 34-unit building with 8 accessible units in Dawson
- 45+ unit building with 9 accessible units on 6th Avenue in Whitehorse (formerly Ryder Apartments)
- 10 units in Mayo
- 6-plex in Teslin
- 6-plex in Carcross
- 6-plex Haines Junction
- Accessible triplex in Whitehorse
- Accessible duplex in Ross River

Staff housing:

- Accessible duplex in Destruction Bay
- Accessible duplex in Pelly Crossing
- Duplex in Burwash Landing

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

- July 2023, the corporation acquired an additional 16 units for lease from Normandy, for a total of 26 units to lease to YHC clients through its rent supplement program.
- Since 2020, the corporation has supported over 300 households pay rent through the Canada-Yukon Housing Benefit. As of April 2024, 177 clients are receiving monthly support.

Support for homeowners:

- March 2024 – CYHB Homeowners stream
- June 2023 the Yukon government launched an \$8.25 million flood recovery program for residents and businesses affected by flooding in the Klondike Valley. (Tab #19)

Housing Issues

Yukon Housing Corporation

- April 2023, YHC launched the expanded Yukon Home Ownership Program which provides mortgages for qualified households to build and buy their homes across the territory, including Whitehorse.
 - The program is currently under review and scheduled for revision in the coming year.
- In 2020, YHC launched the revised Home Repair Program to support low to moderate-income Yukon homeowners to remain in their homes and age in place by providing funding to address mobility requirements, repairs, or core housing needs.

Support for new residential land development 2023:

- June 2023, the Government of Yukon partnering with the Government of Canada and the City of Dawson to develop [four new residential lots in Dawson City](#).
- February 2023 – 120 lots, including single family, multi-family and townhouse lots in Whistle Bend made available through public lottery.
- March 2023 Government of Yukon partnered with Liard First Nation on developing 43 new residential lots on Frances Avenue in Watson Lake.
- March 2023 – 74 residential lots in Mayo and the Logan and Whistlebend subdivisions of Whitehorse made available through public lottery.
- November 2022, signed a loan agreement with Kwanlin Dün First Nation's (KDFN) arm's-length development corporation Chu Níkwän Limited Partnership (CNLP) for a new residential land development project at [Copper Ridge West in Whitehorse](#), the first large-scale residential land development on settlement land in the Yukon. An amended loan agreement was signed August 2023 with Chu Níkwän for the same development.

Approved by:

President, Yukon Housing Corporation

April 30, 2024

Date approved

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

Executive Council
Office

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 work to do, our efforts are resulting in meaningful change and creating better programs and services for all Yukoners.
- In 2023, on the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, 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 the actions being taken across the Yukon government and in close collaboration with First Nation governments and organizations in areas including child welfare, health, education and justice.

Additional response:

- The Government of Yukon and Yukon First Nation governments are leaders in demonstrating a collaborative approach to reconciliation.
- We will continue our collaborative work to implement and report on the Calls to Action, including through work on the Yukon Forum joint priorities and by implementing the *Putting People First* recommendations.

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.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission – Update on Calls to Action

Executive Council
Office

Background:

- The TRC report, *Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future*, was released in 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) 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
 - 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

2024.02.02

Date