

Joint Proposal on Caribou Actions Submitted to Wek'èezhii Renewable Resources Board

YELLOWKNIFE, November 6, 2009 – A joint proposal outlining caribou actions in Wek'èezhii was submitted to the Wek'èezhii Renewable Resources Board (WRRB) today. The proposal was developed by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (ENR) in collaboration with the Tłıchq Government (TG) to assist in the recovery of Bathurst caribou herd.

“This joint proposal recommends some tough management actions,” said Environment and Natural Resources Minister Michael Miltenberger. “But given the importance of the Bathurst herd to many of our communities, these actions are needed to help this herd recover.”

"This is about sustainability and about guaranteeing that there will be caribou for future generations and it has to start now," said Tłıchq Grand Chief Joe Rabesca.

The proposal was developed following a number of community meetings and workshops held by both Governments on the 2009 summer survey results. Results of the 2009 calving ground survey showed the herd numbers had dropped from just over 100,000 animals in 2006 to 32,000.

The WRRB is a wildlife co-management authority established by the Tłıchq Agreement. It is responsible for managing wildlife in the Wek'èezhii area and reviews all resource management action proposals.

ENR and TG reached consensus on a number of proposed management actions for the herd including establishing mandatory reporting of harvest and eliminating all commercial, outfitter tags and resident hunting for a three-year period. Other proposed actions deal with increasing the number of collars on females, maintaining current levels of protection of the herd's calving grounds and increasing compliance and public education of harvesting practices.

No consensus could be reached on two recommendations relating to limiting Aboriginal or subsistence harvest. As a result, the joint proposal contains separate ENR recommendations and TG resolutions regarding female and bull harvests.

The proposed management actions are intended to help the herd stabilize and recovery during the next several years. A calving ground survey of the Bathurst herd is scheduled for 2012.

The GNWT will consult with other Aboriginal governments, harvesters, and stakeholders on the proposed management actions during November.

All partners involved in the management of the Bathurst herd agree management actions should be implemented before the winter hunting season begins

The Tłı̄chǫ Agreement and case law require that priority be given to subsistence harvest over commercial and resident harvest.

A copy of the joint proposal can be found online at www.enr.gov.nt.ca

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