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Public Input Requested on New NWT Wildlife Act

YELLOWKNIFE (July 19, 2010) – The Government of the Northwest Territories is seeking input from the public on a proposed new Wildlife Act for the Northwest Territories.

“Our government has been working to develop a new Wildlife Act that reflects Northerners’ values and respect for wildlife, so we can conserve wildlife for present and future generations,” said ENR Minister J. Michael Miltenberger. “The proposed legislation has been developed using the same collaborative working group process used for the development of the Species at Risk (NWT) Act, and the next step is seeking input from members of the public to ensure the legislation meets the needs and views of our residents.”

Public engagement and consultation is an important component of developing new wildlife legislation. The GNWT is ensuring Aboriginal governments and organizations, resident harvesters, and other stakeholders are considered when developing the legislation.

As part of that process, a public engagement and consultation document outlining the major elements of the proposed new Wildlife Act is available at local ENR Offices or by visiting the ENR website at www.enr.gov.nt.ca

“I encourage everyone in the territory with a stake in this process to review the document and provide us with your comments,” said Minister Miltenberger. “Our goal is to introduce a new Wildlife Act for review by the Legislative Assembly during the 2011 winter session, and we want to ensure that all NWT residents have an opportunity to make their voices heard.”

Some of the main elements of the proposed new legislation are:

- **Broader Application** – The new act will apply to almost all animals that are wild in nature, including insects, but excepting fish.
- **Principles** – Includes principles similar to those found in land-claim agreements.
- **Aboriginal Rights** – Respects and supports Aboriginal rights to harvest, possess, barter, trade, gift and be involved in the management of wildlife.
- **Cooperative Management** – Promotes a collaborative working relationship among all bodies responsible for managing wildlife in the NWT.

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Media requests for interviews with Members of the Executive Council may be directed to:

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- **Emergency Actions** – Includes the development of a process to guide the implementation of emergency actions taken for conservation purposes.
- **Community Involvement** – Includes elders and local harvesting committees in developing hunter education and identifying traditional values and practices.
- **Aboriginal Harvesters** – General hunting licences would no longer be needed. Proof of entitlement to harvest or an Aboriginal harvester card would be sufficient.
- **Resident Hunters** – People who have lived in the NWT for one year would be eligible for a Resident Hunting Licence.
- **Harvest Reporting** – All licensed hunters would be required to report their annual harvest.
- **Priority for Harvest Allocation** – Follow priorities for allocation of harvest established through land claim agreements. Priorities for allocation in areas without a settled land claim agreement would be set out in the legislation.
- **Wastage** – Prohibitions against wastage would be strengthened and improved.
- **Increased Fines and Penalties** – Maximum fines would increase to \$50,000 for individuals, \$100,000 for corporations and \$250,000 for commercial offences related to wildlife and wildlife habitat.
- **Five Year Review** – The Act would be reviewed by the Legislative Assembly in five years to determine if changes or additions are required.

Development of new wildlife legislation supports the GNWT's Managing This Land strategic initiative and the 16th Legislative Assembly's goal of realizing an environment that will sustain present and future generations.

For more information, contact:

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