

R(16)515

Yellowknives Dene First Nation and GNWT Sign Agreement to Support Recovery of Bathurst Caribou Herd

NDILO (October 7) – The Yellowknives Dene First Nation (YKDFN) and the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) have signed an agreement on actions to support the recovery of the Bathurst barren-ground caribou herd within the Chief Drygeese Area.

The agreement was signed today by Environment and Natural Resources (ENR) Minister J. Michael Miltenberger and YKDFN Chiefs Edward Sangris (Dettah) and Ted Tsetta (Ndilo).

“This is an example of what can be accomplished by working together while respecting rights and traditional laws,” said Chief Edward Sangris.

“The next step will be to bring all parties together to develop a long term plan for this herd whose range includes Wek’eezhii and Nunavut,” added Minister Miltenberger.

The YKDFN cancelled its fall hunt in September 2009 as a response to continued decline of the Bathurst caribou herd. The herd’s numbers decreased to 32,000 animals from more than 128,000 in 2006 and about 350,000 in 1996.

The GNWT established a no-hunting conservation zone was created north of Yellowknife in January 2010 to protect the Bathurst herd.

The YKDFN and the GNWT agree harvest of the Bathurst herd must be reduced to allow for the recovery of the herd.

Under the Agreement signed today, the YKDFN will manage a limited harvest of the Bathurst caribou within the Chief Drygeese Area in the no-hunting zone. The First Nation will also work jointly with the GNWT to monitor all harvesting of barren-ground caribou and to develop a conservation education program to promote Akaitcho values and cultural practices related to caribou.

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

Office of the Press Secretary • Premier/Cabinet
Government of the Northwest Territories • PO Box 1320 • Yellowknife • NT • X1A 2L9
Tel: (867) 669-2302 • Fax: (867) 873-0111

YKDFN will hire a coordinator to work with harvesters and ENR staff.

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*Backgrounder and map attached.

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Backgrounder

Barren-ground Caribou Harvesting Interim Agreement Between Yellowknives Dene First Nation And the Government of the Northwest Territories October 7, 2010

- Interim Agreement was signed by the Yellowknives Dene First Nation (YKDFN) and the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) on October 7, 2010.
- The Interim Agreement will remain in effect for two years.
- The YKDFN and GNWT agree to form a joint committee, known as the Ekwo (Tech'adi) Committee, to develop and oversee:
 - A joint monitoring program of the barren-ground caribou harvest including joint monitoring of the winter road station, snowmobile trails, monitoring stations and check stops.
 - Monitoring health and numbers of barren-ground caribou using both scientific and traditional knowledge and maximizing the involvement of YKDFN members including youth.
 - A hunter education program for any YKDFN hunters who may not have experience harvesting caribou in a sustainable manner.
- Seven members of the YKDFN, including a co-ordinator, will be hired to assist in the monitoring program.
- Under the Agreement the YKDFN may:
 - Harvest 50 Bathurst caribou from the no hunting management zone during the fall community hunt, using best efforts to harvest 40 males.
 - Harvest 100 Bathurst caribou from the no hunting management zone during the mid-winter hunt from December to April, using best efforts to harvest 80 males.
 - Harvest a limit of 50 caribou from other barren-ground caribou herds (Ahiak, Bluenose-East) within the Chief Drygeese Area and the no-hunting management zone during an annual supplemental fall community hunt.

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- Individual members of the Yellowknife Dene First Nation may harvest up to 200 caribou from other barren-ground caribou herds (Ahiak, Bluenose-East) within the Chief Drygeese Area in the no-hunting zone.
- The YKDFN and the GNWT agree mechanisms for wildlife management within the Akaitcho Territory will be one of the objectives of the Akaitcho Process and be included in negotiations through the Akaitcho Process.
- The GNWT will involve the YKDFN, and other Aboriginal peoples with harvesting rights in the NWT, in the development a long-term management plan for barren-ground caribou.
- If necessary, the YKDFN will be given tags to harvest musk-ox and wood bison as an alternative to the harvesting of barren-ground caribou.
- The Interim Agreement will be reviewed after one year to assess the current trend of the Bathurst caribou herd, review harvest to date.

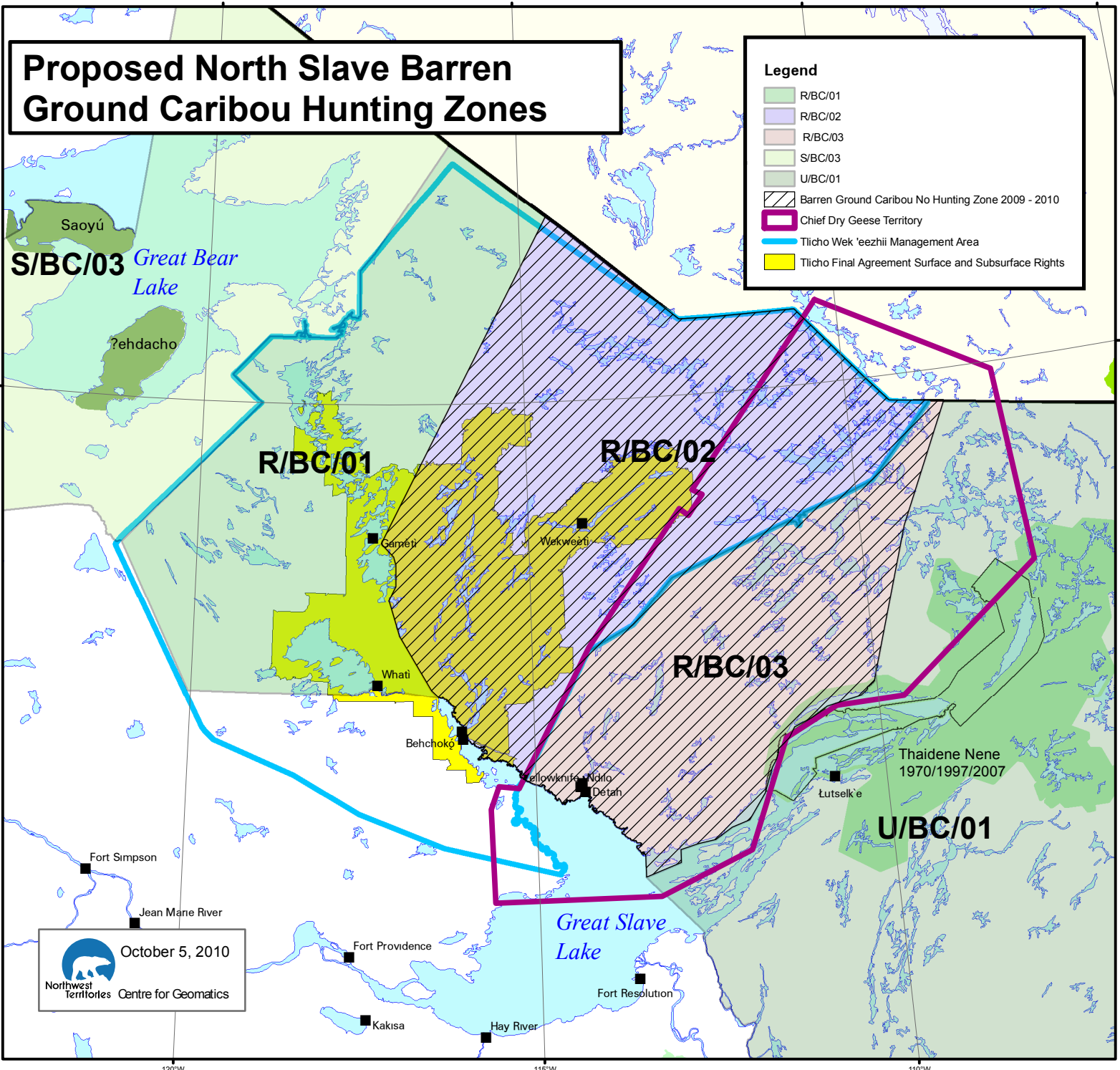
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Proposed North Slave Barren Ground Caribou Hunting Zones

Legend

- R/BC/01
- R/BC/02
- R/BC/03
- S/BC/03
- U/BC/01
- Barren Ground Caribou No Hunting Zone 2009 - 2010
- Chief Dry Geese Territory
- Tlicho Wek 'eezhii Management Area
- Tlicho Final Agreement Surface and Subsurface Rights




 October 5, 2010
 Northwest Territories Centre for Geomatics