



Tłıchǫ Government

Box 412, Behchokǫ, NT X0E 0Y0 • Tel: (867) 392-6381 • Fax: (867) 392-6389 • www.tlicho.ca



Northwest Territories Environment and Natural Resources

Mr. Grant Pryznyk, Acting Chair
Wek'èezhii Renewable Resources Board
102A, 4504 – 49 AVENUE
YELLOWKNIFE NT X1A 1A7

JUN 29 2016

Dear Mr. Pryznyk:

WRRB Recommendations

#1-2016 and #2-2016 from Decision Report on Bathurst Herd (May 26, 2016)

The Tłıchǫ Government (TG) and Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT), Department of Environment and Natural Resources (ENR) would like to thank the WRRB for its May 26, 2016 report on management of the Bathurst herd in Wek'èezhii. In its Report, the WRRB indicated that it required Recommendation #1-2016 to be implemented by July 1, 2016 and expected Recommendation 2-2016 to also be implemented by July 1, 2016.

At this time, ENR and TG wish to provide the WRRB with their responses to those recommendations.

Recommendation #1-2016: The Board recommends that TG and ENR come to an agreement on whether the Bathurst Mobile Core Conservation Zone (MCBCMZ) or Wildlife Management Units Subzones is the most effective way to differentiate between caribou herds, and then implement the approach with criteria for managing any overlaps between herds, for the 2016/17, 2017/18, and 2018/19 harvest seasons.

Representatives of the TG and ENR met on June 22, 2016 to review Recommendation #1-2016 and we provide the following joint response.

Although a system of sub-zones with fixed boundaries is an option for management of harvest of Bathurst caribou and neighbouring herds, it would be challenging to create and implement a system of fixed sub-zones on a short-term time-frame, and certainly not by July 1, 2016. The reason it would be difficult to do this in the short-term is the need to identify and achieve a consensus on the appropriate features on the natural landscape area to allow smaller zones to be properly mapped and incorporated into legal descriptions. As a result, a continued use of the MCBCMZ is the preferred approach for the 2016-17 harvesting season.

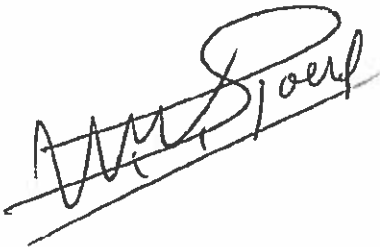
As a result of a number of discussions between TG and ENR, the approach to defining the MCBCMZ has been modified slightly from the initial two winters to reduce the number of times that the zone is re-defined, and make the zone more predictable and practical for hunters. The criteria for defining the zone for the 2016-2017 harvest season is expected to be as follows:

- The mobile zone boundary will be defined from a minimum convex polygon (MCP) around all functioning collars on Bathurst caribou (cows and bulls) plus a 60 km buffer around the MCP.
- Where collared Bathurst caribou show distinct, well-separated sub-groups, the mobile zone can be shaped as 2 or more parts of the mobile zone.
- Once established, the mobile zone boundaries will not change as long as all the collared Bathurst caribou remain within the mobile zone.
- If one or more collared Bathurst caribou move to within 5 km of the boundary of the zone or move out of the mobile zone, the mobile zone will be re-defined based on the same method described above, and the new zone boundaries will be in effect as long as all collared Bathurst caribou remain within the new boundaries.
- With respect to areas where collared Bathurst caribou may overlap with collared Bluenose-East or Beverly and Ahiak caribou, the WRRB determination of a zero (0) harvest on the Bathurst herd means that no caribou will be harvested within the mobile zone, regardless of herd affiliation. The possibility of dividing the mobile zone into two or more parts provides some flexibility with respect to identifying areas where collared caribou from neighbouring herds may be found and where some harvest is possible provided there are not Bathurst collars in the area.
- The mobile zone will be defined in the NWT beginning when collared Bathurst caribou move back into the NWT, potentially as early as mid-summer, and will continue until the end of the winter harvest season.
- TG and ENR will explore ways of modifying zone boundaries to use natural features such as rivers or lake edges as a way of making the zone more practical for hunters, provided that there is no significant reduction in protection for the Bathurst herd. Review of the mobile zone boundaries from winter 2015-2016 suggests that from about the end of November to the end of March, there was little directional movement of collared Bathurst caribou and a relatively fixed zone may be possible. Boundaries on the land that are readily recognized by hunters would be very helpful to both harvesters and enforcement officers.
- TG and ENR will also explore ways of making information about the mobile zone location more easily accessible to hunters by making it available in formats for GPS devices and Google Earth, and by using signs on the winter road to show the direction of the zone boundary.

Recommendation #2-2016: The Board recommends that TG and ENR provide weekly updates to the WRRB and the general public on aerial and ground-based surveillance of the Bathurst caribou herd throughout the fall and winter harvest seasons for the 2016/17, 2017/18, and 2018/19 (seasons).

GNWT is currently going through a period of severe fiscal restraint and budget reduction. It is not possible for ENR to commit to weekly aerial monitoring of the Bathurst mobile zone. Regular monitoring by air and by ground patrols will occur, as they did in winters 2014-2015 and 2015-2016. TG and ENR can provide weekly updates to the WRRB on any new monitoring information about the Bathurst mobile zone.

Sincerely,



Sjoerd van der Wielen
Manager, Lands Section
Department of Culture and Lands Protection
Tłıchǫ Government
BEHCHOKQ NT X0E 0Y0
Phone 867-392-6381
Fax: 867-392-6406
E-Mail: SjoerdvanderWielen@tlicho.com



Bruno Croft
A/North Slave Regional Superintendent
ENR, GNWT
YELLOWKNIFE, NT X1A 2P9
Phone: 867-767-9238 Ext: 53247
Fax: 867-873-6263
E-Mail: Bruno_Croft@gov.nt.ca

c. Grand Chief Eddie Erasmus, TG

Ms. Laura Duncan, Tłıchǫ Executive Officer, TG

The Honourable Wally Schumann, Minister, ENR, GNWT

Ms. Lucy Escalante, Executive Secretary to Minister Wally Schumann
ENR, GNWT

Mr. Ernie Campbell, Deputy Minister, ENR, GNWT

Ms. Lynda Yonge, Director of Wildlife, ENR, GNWT

Ms. Jody Pellissey, Executive Director, WRRB