



Wek'èezhìi Renewable Resources Board

2019- 2024

STRATEGIC PLAN

JANUARY 30, 2019

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INTRODUCTION



The 2019-2024 Strategic Plan is intended to guide the work of the Wek'èezhì Renewable Resources Board (WRRB) over the next five years. The Strategic Plan sets out broad directions for the WRRB by listing the organization's strategic priorities. It aims to help WRRB employees identify how their work fits into the bigger picture. It provides a means for community stakeholders to understand the direction that the WRRB is headed, and how the organization is aligning its activities with the communities' larger planning when relevant to the WRRB's mandate. The Strategic Plan's purpose is to support the WRRB in

continuing to achieve high levels of performance. When aligned with the Strategic Plan, the organization's activities will deliver intended results.

The WRRB Strategic Plan is intended to:

- communicate the WRRB's strategic direction within the organization, and with partners and stakeholders;
- provide overarching vision, mission, and values to serve as guiding principles to the WRRB activities;
- support a more integrated approach to how resources are allocated, and how operational direction is provided; and
- describe the opportunities and challenges arising in the WRRB's planning environment.

A Strategic Plan is meant to be an evolving, living document that can be adapted to respond to changes in the environment.



PLANNING – TWO STORIES

These stories from two perspectives speak to the importance of planning and show that success comes from preparation, knowledge of the environment, and the ability to adapt to change.

GOING “TO THE BUSH”

“As a hunter and trapper, I plan. What specific traps do I carry? What areas should I harvest? Even where to set up my tent and where you can find wildlife. You have to know how wildlife thinks and its behavior; How the animals moves; Where does it try to get away from wolves? If you don’t plan anything, things can happen.”

—Eddie Chocolate, *WRRB Board Member*

GOING “IN THE FIELD”

“When going ‘in the field’, there is continuous learning about the environment, oneself, and about each other. While the purpose may be to collect samples to better understand the state of the environment and to exchange knowledge, it is the shared moments during preparation, planning and participation which allow people to better understand each other and to deal with many challenges.”

—Boyan Tracz, *former WRRB Wildlife Management Biologist*

GOVERNANCE

MANDATE

The Wek'èezhì Renewable Resources Board (WRRB) is responsible for managing wildlife and wildlife habitat (forest, plants, protected areas) in Wek'èezhì. The WRRB is an institution of public government and is responsible for working with Tłıchǫ communities and the public to ensure renewable resources in Wek'èezhì are managed in a sustainable manner.

The WRRB operates on a co-management basis in the management of resources. The Board works collaboratively with Tłıchǫ communities; Indigenous, territorial and federal governments; regional renewable resources boards; and regulatory authorities such as the Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board.

AUTHORITIES

The WRRB was established under the guidance of the Tłıchǫ Agreement in 2005. The WRRB's power and authority are described in Chapters 12, 13, 14 and 16 of the Tłıchǫ Agreement.

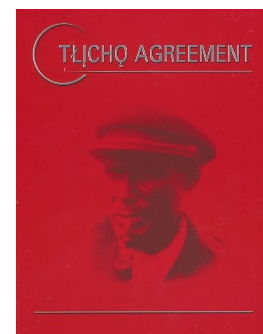
The primary powers of the WRRB include:

- Wildlife management – Chapter 12
- Commercial activities related to wildlife – Section 12.10
- Forest management – Chapter 13
- Plant management – Chapter 14
- Protected areas – Chapter 16

ACTIVITIES

The Board's main activities include:

- reviewing proposals and applications;
- participating in working groups and committees;
- collaborating on research activities;
- starting or supporting monitoring and/or research programs;
- engaging and communicating with the public; and
- conducting community consultations.



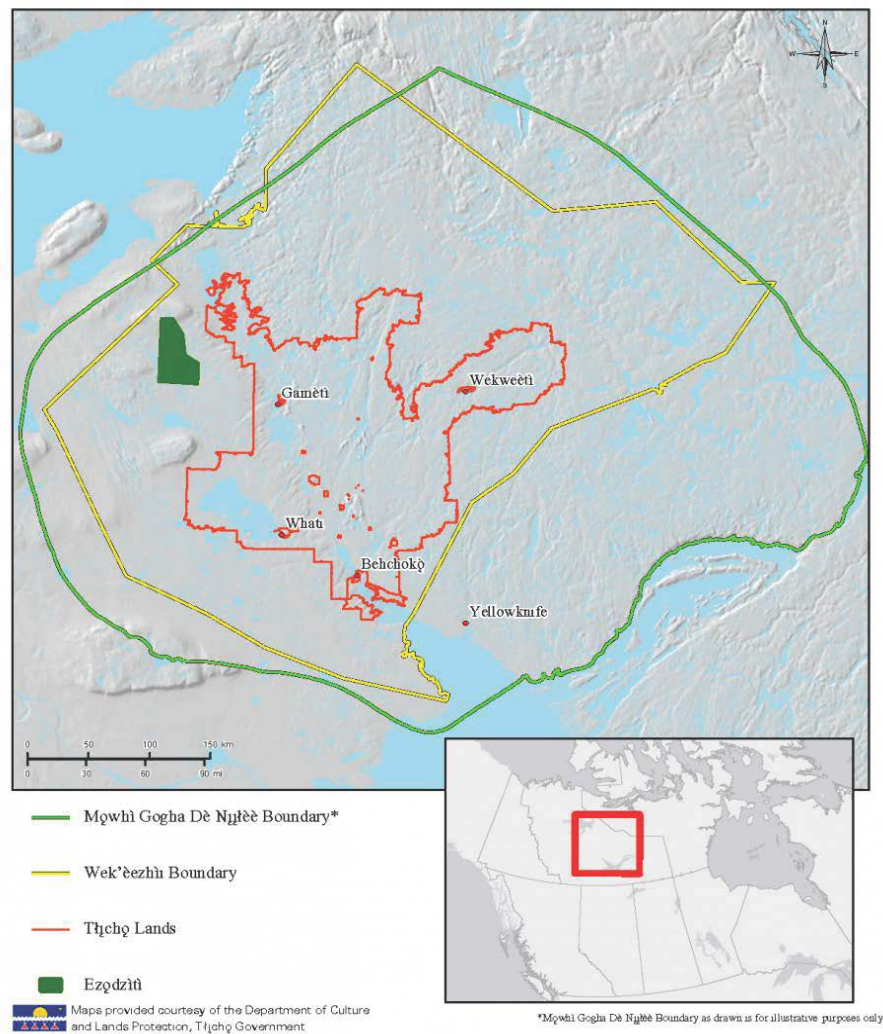
For more on the WRRB'S mandate, see Chapter 12 of the Tłıchǫ Land Claims and Self-government Agreement, also referred to as "the red book."



MAP OF WEK'ÈEZHÌ

The area shown in yellow on the map below identifies Wek'èezhì, which is the area where the WRRB manages resources. This land shares boundaries with the Sahtú, Dehcho and Akaitcho regions, as well as Nunavut. The area shown in red identifies Tłı̨chǫ lands, which are owned by the Tłı̨chǫ Government. The four Tłı̨chǫ communities are Gamètì, Wekweètì, Whatì and Behchokò. The area shown in green identifies Mq̄whì Gogha Dè Nı̨tlèè, the traditional area of the Tłı̨chǫ, as described by Chief Mq̄whì.

Tłı̨chǫ Agreement Boundaries



Credit: Department of Culture & Lands Protection, Tłı̨chǫ Government

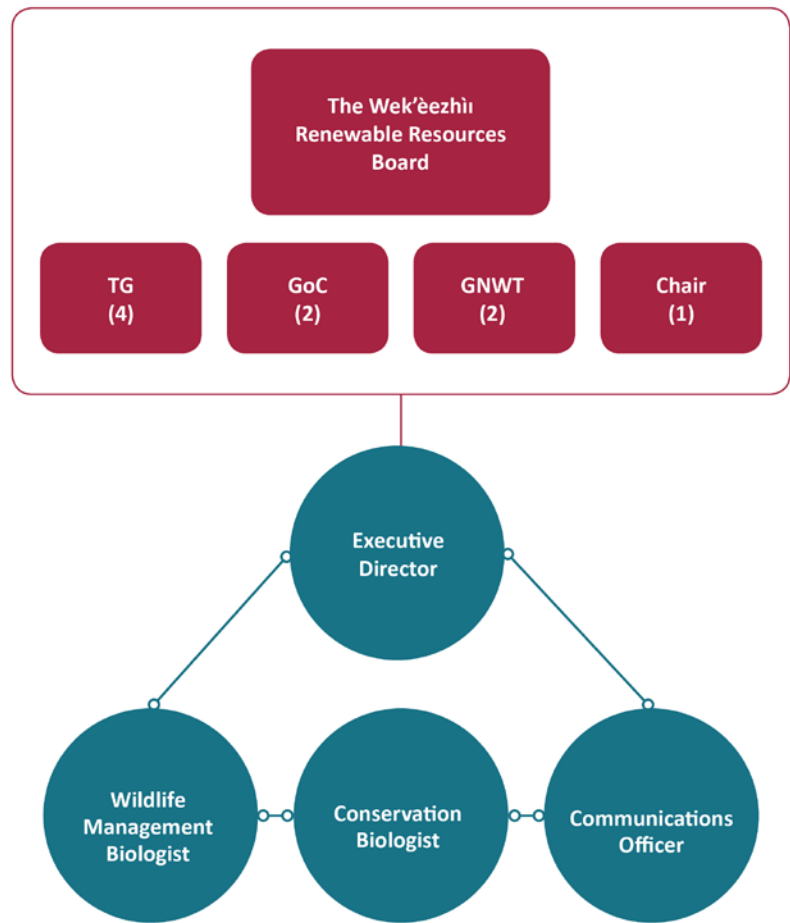


WHO WE ARE

BOARD

The WRRB is an administrative tribunal with the authority to hold hearings related to renewable resources in Wek'èezhìi, as determined by the Tłıchq Agreement.

The Board is composed of up to nine members, one of whom is the Chairperson. Of the eight remaining members, four are appointed by the Tłıchq Government (TG). The other members are appointed by the GNWT and the Government of Canada (GoC), with two members each. The chairperson is nominated by the Members of the Board and appointed jointly by the Government of Canada, GNWT, and Tłıchq Government.



WRRB organizational chart.

STAFF

The staff members support the Board in its operations and in fulfilling its mandate. These individuals are identified in the above organizational chart. The Executive Director oversees the operations and functioning of the organization, as well as ensures alignment with the Board. A Wildlife Management Biologist provides the Board with scientific research, monitoring and management advice on wildlife and fish in the Wek'èezhìi, and conducts regulatory reviews on land use permits and water licences. The Conservation Biologist provides the Board with scientific research, monitoring and management advice on plants, forests, species at risk, and protected areas in Wek'èezhìi. The Communications Officer ensures effective outreach and messaging with partners and the public.





CURRENT OPERATING ENVIRONMENT

STRENGTHS

WORKING TOGETHER

The WRRB is entering its fourteenth year of operation with strengthened relationships with local, territorial, and transboundary management and research partners. The Board has strived to put processes in place that allow the Board, staff, community stakeholders, and co-management partners to share knowledge, gain better understanding of the current state of Wek'èezhìi, and communicate the role and relevance of the Board.

One Tłıchq̓ ideal encourages all to strive to be “strong like two people”. In the same spirit, members of the Board recognize the strength of its diversity and experience. The Board understands the importance of working together to be effective and to strengthen its capacity to fulfill its mandate. This is achieved through learning from each other and leaning on both traditional and scientific knowledge in decision-making processes.

The Board has good working relationships with all four Tłıchq̓ communities in the Wek'èezhìi. Activities such as Tłıchq̓ Aquatic Effects Monitoring Program and the Barren-Ground Caribou Technical Working Group are examples of the benefits of a co-management model. In these initiatives, all partners benefit from the exchange of Tłıchq̓ culture and traditional knowledge, and scientific knowledge. Drawing on the benefits of co-management model, the Board wishes to continue community-based research and monitoring projects.

COMMUNICATION AND EDUCATION

Since its establishment, the Board has been working to build relationships with partner organizations and communities through communication and education. The Board has improved its communications with increased outreach activities and information sharing opportunities. Use of Tłıchq̓ language in Board meetings and events involving communities has enhanced the exchange of culture and knowledge that benefits all involved in WRRB activities.

CAPACITY & DECISION MAKING

Having secured funding and staffing, the WRRB has increased its capacity to fulfill its mandate. Since the last planning cycle, the Board has increased its organizational capacity and improved its processes. The Board recognizes the strength and dedication of its staff. The addition of a Conservation Biologist to the WRRB staff is allowing the Board to better address management and research needs.

The Board takes pride in its resolve to put the well-being of wildlife first in all decision making. It is consistent in leveraging traditional and scientific knowledge in its reviews and recommendations. To better fulfill its decision-making role, the Board has developed and implemented clear, relevant processes and guiding documents, such as the Rule for Management Proposals. In the future, the Board plans to increase research and monitoring activities, as well as gather, document and access information needed for management decisions.

CHALLENGES

WILDLIFE AND HABITAT DISTURBANCES

A number of disturbances, both natural and human-caused, are creating increased pressures on the wildlife and habitat of Wek'èezhìi. These disturbances include climate change, change in species populations, invasive species, and industrial and infrastructure development. These disturbances require ongoing research and analysis to build an understanding of impacts and the effectiveness of mitigation strategies.

The impacts of disturbances are increasingly being felt, and there is widespread concern over the population decline observed in the barren-ground caribou herds. There is also the need to ensure responsible use of land and wildlife resources in Wek'èezhìi. Close monitoring of the health of wildlife and their habitat is essential to conserving species from now and into the future.

TRANSBOUNDARY ISSUES

Wildlife activity does not adhere to political boundaries. Migration and species distributions require the WRRB to work with management organizations both inside and outside Wek'èezhìi and the Northwest Territories (NWT).

In order to conduct its business, the Board needs collaborative relationships with other regulatory bodies in the NWT and Nunavut. This allows for an exchange of knowledge and insight, and a collaborative approach to management, allowing the Board to make and implement sound management decisions.



BOARD LIMITATIONS

The Board's activities are challenged by the absence of two appointed Board Members. Ongoing training and professional development, as well as utilizing the services of contractors and experts, can help alleviate some of the pressures experienced by the Board and staff.

Activities that might maximize the Board's reach and impacts cannot all be pursued given the current funding provided to the WRRB. Funding is needed to properly support training new members, travel and other costs related to carrying out Board duties.

COMMUNICATION AND EDUCATION LIMITATIONS

While the Board excels in many communication and education activities, they also face challenges in these areas. Faced with ongoing staff turnover in government and partner organizations, the WRRB must be prepared to re-educate stakeholders about its mandate. Ensuring effective communications with members of the Tłıchq communities is also a responsibility which requires ongoing dedication, creativity and resources, including building and maintaining of personal connections.

Communication and education are two of the same in Tłıchq culture. Communication activities need to be seen also as educational opportunities, fostering land stewardship and cooperation, as well as an awareness of the Board's role and decisions. Building on its Communication Strategy, and continuing to foster the exchange of knowledge, the Board is well positioned to continue to create opportunities for the benefit of all partners. Furthermore, continued efforts to build relationships with governments and other regulatory partners will also allow the Board to maximize WRRB's reach and effectiveness.





STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

OUR MISSION

The Wek'èezhì Renewable Resources Board manages wildlife, plants, forests and protected areas within Wek'èezhì.

OUR VISION

In the face of change, wildlife populations are strong and thriving, and habitats are healthy, both today and in the future.

OUR VALUES

RESPECT

We treat wildlife, each other, our clients, our partners, our community stakeholders and other members of the public with fairness and respect.

CONSERVATION

We actively seek to conserve wildlife and habitat in the Wek'èezhì for future generations. We seek to consult the public and knowledge-holders such as elders, hunters and scientists.

ACCOUNTABILITY

We are open in our dealings, and work to ensure our processes and practices are effective and benefit those that reside in Wek'èezhì, as well as all members of the public.

INTEGRITY

We are considerate and act in a fair, respectful and professional manner, putting into action what we say we will do.

CONSENSUS-BASED DECISION MAKING

We strive for inclusiveness and consensus in our decisions and are responsive to the people we serve.

TRANSPARENCY

We strive to share knowledge by communicating with and educating our stakeholders.



OUR STRATEGIC GOALS

The Board will seek to achieve these five strategic goals over the next five years.

GOAL 1 - REGULATORY/MANDATE

Ensure recommendations and decisions are meaningfully implemented, and based on existing expert opinion and Tłıchǫ, scientific, and local knowledge.

GOAL 2 - WILDLIFE AND HABITAT FIRST

Manage wildlife and habitat in Wek'èezhì to ensure their health and sustainability in the face of change, through management and conservation efforts.

GOAL 3 - COMMUNICATION & EDUCATION

Continue to improve communications with Tłıchǫ communities, governments, partners and members of the public to promote the exchange of knowledge and culture. Foster awareness of the Board, and its practices and decisions.

GOAL 4 - COLLABORATION & CO-MANAGEMENT

Develop and maintain collaborative partnerships that promote increased knowledge, and effective decision making in Wek'èezhì.

GOAL 5 - PROCESS

Improve the Board's processes and practices to ensure transparency, efficiency, effectiveness, and adaptability in implementing its mandate.

ACTIVITIES

GOALS	ACTIVITIES
<p>GOAL 1 - REGULATORY/MANDATE</p> <p>Ensure recommendations and decisions are meaningfully implemented, and based on existing expert opinion and Tłıchq̓, scientific, and local knowledge.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend relevant interjurisdictional conferences and workshops that expose the Board and staff to new partners and funding opportunities. • Encourage all stakeholders to participate and/or implement management actions. • Call upon the knowledge of experts, such as Tłıchq̓ elders and scientists, in support of Board decisions and actions.
<p>GOAL 2 - WILDLIFE AND HABITAT FIRST</p> <p>Manage wildlife and habitat in Wek'èezhìı to ensure their health and sustainability in the face of change, through management and conservation efforts.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify research and monitoring priorities. • Develop a research and monitoring strategy. • Increase support, participation and initiation of research and other activities to better understand the impacts of natural and human-caused changes in Wek'èezhìı. • Pursue new funding opportunities for research and monitoring projects, e.g. to monitor climate change impacts. • Encourage stewardship in Wek'èezhìı. • Encourage traditional and responsible resource use.



GOALS	ACTIVITIES
<p>GOAL 3 - COMMUNICATION & EDUCATION</p> <p>Continue to improve communications with Tłıchq communities, governments, partners and members of the public to promote the exchange of knowledge and culture. Foster awareness of the Board, and its practices and decisions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase communication opportunities with communities and the public. • Increase use of Tłıchq language in communication materials. • Draw on the strength of Tłıchq language and culture to enhance communication. • Consider community seasonal rhythms in communication activities. • Increase opportunities to educate, learn and share knowledge with communities, partners and other regulatory groups in the NWT, Nunavut and other regions of Canada. • Educate youth and elders about the WRRB and its activities. • Utilize the WRRB website to better communicate WRRB recommendations and decisions.
<p>GOAL 4 - COLLABORATION & CO-MANAGEMENT</p> <p>Develop and maintain collaborative partnerships that promote increased knowledge, and effective decision making in Wek'èezhìi.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pursue networking opportunities that expose the Board and staff to new partners and funding opportunities. • Work with the Government of Nunavut and the GNWT on management of caribou and caribou habitat. • Continue to support community-based monitoring of caribou and other wildlife. <p>Encourage community involvement in the status assessment process.</p>



GOALS	ACTIVITIES
<p>GOAL 5 - PROCESS</p> <p>Improve the Board's processes and practices to ensure transparency, efficiency, effectiveness, and adaptability in implementing its mandate.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide orientation and training opportunities to ensure staff and board members have the knowledge required to make sound decisions and recommendations.• Review and improve, internal policies and processes, where necessary.



APPENDICES

GLOSSARY

Conservation – The careful preservation and protection of the lands, water, wildlife and natural resources to prevent overexploitation, destruction, or neglect.

Habitat – The place or environment where plants and animals live and grow.

Health – The state of being free from threats, illness or injury.

Management – The conducting or supervising of something.

Mission – A short statement of an organization's purpose and its overarching goal.

Mitigation – The act of reducing the severity of something.

Monitoring – To watch, keep track of, or check, usually for a particular purpose or specific goal.

Research – Studious inquiry, examination, investigation, or experimentation aimed at the discovery and interpretation of facts.

Renewable resource – A substance of economic value that can be replaced or replenished in the same or less amount of time as it takes to draw the supply down. Examples include solar energy, wildlife, wind, and water.

Sustainability – The avoidance of the depletion of natural resources in order to maintain these resources now and for future generations.

Tribunal – A person or institution with authority to judge or determine claims or disputes.

Values – Core ethics or principles in which an organization abides by.

Vision – A statement that describes the long-term goal of an organization.

Wildlife – Living things such as mammals, birds, and fish, that are neither human nor domesticated.

