

True North Safaris Ltd
NS2010GWP0001 - Black Bear Baiting
Management Proposal V.1

Background:

On August 10, 2009, True North Safaris submitted an application for a General Wildlife Permit (GWP) to bait black bears for the 2009/2010 season. Environment and Natural Resources (ENR) has previously issued a GWP with conditions to bait black bears within Wildlife Management Unit "R" for the hunting seasons 2007/2008 and 2008/2009. Previous to 2007/2008 permit to bait black bears, the outfitter had been spot-and-stalk black bear hunts in the area for the previous four years by this outfitter.

Under the 2007/2008 and 2008/09 permits, baiting took place during the months of May and June along Highway 3, south of Behchoko within the Wek'èezhii Management Area. Two bears were harvested under the 2007/2008 permit and three bears in the 2008/2009 permit. Prior to the 2009/2010 application, the Tli Cho Government has given support and the WRRB has given conditional support on an annual basis.

In the spring of 2009, a contract was issued to BearWise to compile information on the baiting of black bears, baits used in Canada and the United States, and to provide recommendations to the GNWT with respect to black bear baiting in the Northwest Territories. A copy of the report can be sent to you upon request.

A GWP to bait bears requires a Preliminary Screening (PS) under the *Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act (MVRMA)*. The PS decision is to decide whether the activity "*might cause significant adverse impact to the environment*" or "*might be cause of public concern*". The application for a GWP was deemed complete on October 16, 2009, initiating that start of the PS. The PS included a broad public review and an internal assessment in order to make a final decision. ENR had made the decision not to refer to an Environmental Assessment which was forwarded to the Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board (MVEIRB) for a review on December 21, 2009. The MVERIB confirmed their decision to not pull up to an EA on January 6, 2010.

Rationale:

1. *Wildlife Licenses and Permits Regulations* under the Wildlife Act states:
 - 17. (1)** *The holder of a general wildlife permit is entitled to possess wildlife, allow otherwise unauthorized harassment of wildlife, bait wildlife, use meat of big game for bait and serve as a meal big game or upland game birds at a place other than a private residence.*

2. *Tli Cho Agreement* states:
 - 12.5.1** *A Party shall, before taking any action for management of wildlife in Wek'èezhii, including such actions as set out in a management plan, submit its proposals to the Wek'èezhii Renewable Resources Board for review under 12.5.4. These proposals may include provisions respecting such matters as protection or enhancement of habitat, research, identification and reporting requirements, monitoring, total allowable harvest levels, limitations on methods of harvesting and other limitations on harvesting activities, allocations of any total allowable harvest levels, designation of species or stocks at risk and*

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identification of lands where harvesting or access for harvesting is prohibited for safety purposes. The Board may identify types of actions that need not be sent to it for review. In preparing any proposal, a Party shall consult with any other Party or other body with powers to manage any aspect of the proposal.

Description:

An application was submitted to ENR by True North Safaris Ltd. requesting an additional year to bait black bears in the Wildlife Management Unit "R". This area overlaps with the Tli Cho, Wek'èezhii, Deh Cho and Akaitcho Boundaries along with the Mackenzie Bison Sanctuary. Additional methods of hunting being offered will include using tree stands, ground blinds and spot and stalk.

The bait stations would be set up by the first of May and removed by the end of June or within a week of the last hunt. The actual hunts are planned from Mid-May to the 3rd week of June. Bait stations will be situated at least 500 m from any public roads or use areas, buildings, campsites. The bait stations will be situated in secluded areas that are not easily accessible or visible to the public. The bait stations will require approval by a Renewable Resource Officer prior to the establishment of the baits. Each bait station will have warning signs posted for each direction of any approaches to the sites, one sign at 50 m and the second sign at 100 to 150 meters from the sites.

The bait will consist of primarily rotten fish and meat, some fillers like oats and corn and scent attractants like anis and cooking oil. To ensure that the baits are not identified with humans, foods such as old pastry and processed food will not be used. The bait will be contained in plastic & metal 45 gallon barrels. In some case the bait will be hung from trees using ropes and/or wire. The barrels, rope & wire used for the bait will be removed and stored at the base camp at the end of the season.

In previous years the harvested bears had been offered to friends and Tli Cho elders for food and also to for making traditional medicine. The unused carcasses from the hunts will be used for baits and afterwards disposed in a discrete manner that is at least 1 km from any public access.

Desired Outcomes:

The permit will allow True North Safaris Ltd. to continue operating for an additional season within a designated area. The final terms and conditions associated with the permit will assist in mitigating potential impacts to the public and to the environment that may occur as a result of the activity.

Alternatives:

No other alternatives are available to the outfitter other than to obtain a General Wildlife Permit from Environment and Natural that will allow the baiting of big game.

Consultation:

True North Safaris Ltd

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As part of the Preliminary Screening process a broad public review was conducted. On October 16, 2009 the broad review was initiated by sending an application package to all members on a distribution list and posting a public notice in local newspapers. (Appendix 1). The initial deadline for this review was set for November 6, 2009 but continued on till November 26, 2009.

All reviews that were received by letter, email, fax and by phone were logged, filed and included as part of an internal assessment conducted by a preliminary screening working group that consisted of ENR technical experts (Appendix 2).

Monitoring:

Any permit or license issued under the Wildlife Act is subject to routine inspections by ENR officers to ensure the terms and conditions of the permit are being adhered to. Inspections were conducted for both the 2007/2008 and the 2008/2009 season and no infractions were filed. A General Wildlife Permit will also require an application to be submitted on an annual basis.

A draft set of terms and conditions and a modified map (Appendix 3) were prepared as part of the PS process. The final terms and conditions are yet to be finalized in consultation with the Wildlife Management Board within an existing land claim area. For the Wildlife Management Unit "R", this would be the Wek'èezhii Renewable Resource Board (WRRB). Last year, an inspection had been conducted in coordination with a Renewable Resource Officer and a member of the WRRB board.

This operation to bait black bears is the first in the NWT and will set precedence for any other individuals or business that request a General Wildlife Permit to use bait to hunt big game. This project is a pilot project and will require close monitoring which will include inspections, reporting and sample collection. This monitoring will assist the department in gathering more information on an activity that is considered controversial, lacking information both scientifically and traditionally and will be valuable in the development of a Black Bear Management Plan that ENR has committed in developing as a result of management concerns that were raised during the PS process.

Relevant Documentation:

Appendix 1: Consultation

- PS Distribution List
- Public Notice
 - News/North
 - Yellowknifer

Appendix 2: Preliminary Screening Assessment & Letters

1. BearWise
2. Yellowknives Dene First Nations (YKDFN)
3. Environment Canada (EC)
4. North Slave Metis Alliance (NSMA)
5. Tli Cho Government
6. Deh Cho First Nations (DFN)

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7. Letter of Support- Edward Zoe

Appendix 3: Draft 2010 T & C and Map

Appendix 4: Application 2009/2010

- Application Form
- TNS Cover letter
- Map

Appendix 5: Inspection Report Summary

Appendix 1

Consultation

Distribution List

NS2010GWP001
True North Safaris

Public Notice

**News/North &
Yellowknifer**

Appendix 2

Preliminary Screening

Assessment

Bearwise

October 26, 2009

Yellowknives Dene First Nations (YKDFN)

October 27, 2009

Environment Canada (EC)

October 29, 2009

North Slave Metis Alliance (NSMA)

November 6, 2009

Tli Cho Government

November 12, 2009

November 23, 2009

Deh Cho First Nations (DFN)

November 26, 2009

Letter of Support

Edward Zoe
December 17, 2009

Appendix 3

Draft T & C and Map

Appendix 4

Application

(Form, Cover letter & Map)

Appendix 5

Inspection Report

Summary