



PRESS RELEASE

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“For Immediate Release to All Media”

Peel Watershed Planning Commission Releases Draft Regional Land-Use Plan

After four years of intensive research, consultation and planning, the Peel Watershed Planning Commission is pleased to be releasing its Draft Regional Land-Use Plan today. Albert Genier, Chair of the Commission sums up what he feels has been accomplished to date *“In trying to respond to the challenging terms of reference for this work, I believe we have heard from a good cross-section of Yukon society on what the future of the Peel region should look like. Clearly, there are conflicting views and concerns about what types of economic activities should be permitted, how the land should be protected and how the landscapes can be managed for the long-term. With the proposed planning framework, management recommendations and implementation linkages offered in our Draft Plan, we are satisfied that the discussion has now achieved greater focus”*.

The Plan addresses four key issues: 1) management of sensitive ecosystems for water, fish and wildlife 2) long-term maintenance of the region’s wilderness character 3) access to existing mineral claims for further exploration and potential development 4) realizing future long-term economic potential, while ensure full restoration of surface disturbances.

Commission spokesperson Dave Loeks reflects on some of what they have heard over the past week, since presenting a summary of the Plan during its public tour of affected northern communities and in Whitehorse yesterday. *“Initial response indicates certain misgivings about what has been proposed – some people think the Plan does not go far enough with land protection recommendations. Others consider our proposal to withdraw lands from future sub-surface development as a dangerous precedent not just for the Peel but other regional planning initiatives.”*

Highlights of the planning region are outlined in the forward of the document:

- o 37 % is in the Integrated Management Zone (IMZ), and can be considered the ‘working landscape’. 9 % of region is an IMZ which has a higher industrial development focus.
- o 15 % of region has been recommended for Tier I Ecosystem Protection with emphasis on river corridors, Lakes and wetlands; and no access to existing claims unless activities shown to have minimal impact
- o 48 % of region designates Tier II Wilderness Conservation for renewable resource uses, with strict controls on use and development of access to existing mineral claims
- o For both Tier I and II Recommended Protection area to result in approx. 59% for recommended land withdrawal

Whitehorse-based Commissioner Ray Hayes elaborates further: *“We appreciate the positions being expressed so far, and hope the public will look closely at the details on what we propose for land management and implementation. The Peel watershed is unique, and our recommendations are intended both environmental and economic needs. This Draft Plan is based upon the Umbrella Final Agreement(s), and we are confident that our work has clearly articulated the objectives of Chapter 11 dealing with regional Land-Use Planning in the Yukon. We also strongly recommend the Parties to consider designation of “Special Management Areas” based upon UFA-Chapter 10 provisions, and other Yukon legislative tools to more closely regulate land-use in this sensitive ecosystem”* (see Backgrounder).

Chair Albert Genier concludes: *“I am proud to see that the entire Planning Commission is unanimous in presenting this Draft Land-Use Plan. Considerable collaborative effort and expertise has gone into creating this document. We now ask that the Parties thoroughly review our recommendations, and we also invite the public to weigh in further with their comments – especially with concrete suggestions and even wording to improve the Plan so it can eventually move to adoption. We certainly don’t want this important work shelved – Yukon people deserve to see the Umbrella Final Agreement implemented with the spirit and intent which it was intended”*.

The Draft Plan and other supporting documents and public comment will be available at its web-site www.peel.planyukon.ca. The public is encouraged to download copies of the Draft Plan, and offer written comments to its feedback email: PWPCPlanFeedback@planyukon.ca.

Further enquiries can be directed to the PWPC office at 667-2374 or toll free 866-353-2374 with attention to Senior Planner Reg C. Whiten, P.Ag. MCIP. or planning staff Sam Skinner and Nadele Flynn.

Information Background

During production of this Draft Plan, PWPC believes it has fulfilled the requirements of its guiding documents (Statement of Intent, Terms of Reference, Principles, and Final Agreements) in a manner that gives articulation to Chapter 11, Section 11.4.5, in the following ways:

Umbrella and First Nation Final Agreements		Draft Plan
11.4.5.3	Shall ensure adequate opportunity for public participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PWPC held numerous workshops, presentations and open houses during the planning process. • PWPC consulted widely on the Draft Plan; comments have been incorporated into this document.
11.4.5.4	Shall recommend measures to minimize actual and potential land use conflicts throughout the planning region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PWPC examined various commissioned studies, independent industry reports, and developed future land use scenarios to understand potential land use conflicts. • PWPC recommended a number of tools and approaches to minimize land use conflicts, including various forms of Land Use designation and management corridors (Dempster Highway, recommended Protected Areas, Integrated Management Areas)
11.4.5.5	Shall use the knowledge and traditional experience of Yukon Indian People, and the knowledge and experience of other residents of the planning region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A number of heritage and traditional knowledge workshops were held during the planning process • Traditional knowledge was utilized equally with science-based knowledge.
11.4.5.6	Shall take into account oral forms of communication and traditional land management practices of Yukon Indian People	
11.4.5.7	Shall promote the well-being of Yukon Indian People, other residents for the planning region, the communities, and the Yukon as a whole, while having regard to the interests of other Canadians	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Plan is balanced and reflects the social and economic well-being of residents and Yukoners, both by providing for continued economic activity, sustaining resources for future use, and ensure restoration of surface disturbances that may result. • Applies sustainability principles to ensure conservation, social, cultural and economic objectives can be achieved. • Interests and management regimes in adjacent jurisdictions have been considered.
11.4.5.8	Shall take into account that the management of land, water and resources, including Fish, Wildlife and their habitats, is to be integrated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The tools and approaches of this Plan facilitate integrated landscape management. • The Plan considers cumulative impacts to land and water from multiple land use activities.
11.4.5.9	Shall promote Sustainable Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Plan addresses ecological, social and economic themes through an underlying understanding of ecosystem function and processes • The Plan recommends measures to manage cumulative impacts of multiple land use activities.
11.4.5.10	May monitor the implementation of the approved regional land use plan, in order to monitor compliance with the plan and to assess the need for amendment of the plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PWPC has recommended implementation tasks and methods for monitoring plan effectiveness • Potential processes and time-lines for revising the Plan have been suggested.

The Plan also provides recommendations for Implementation which build upon specific linkages within the Umbrella Final Agreement as outlined in the following table.

Task	Actions	Timeline
Detailed Implementation Strategy		
1. Prepare detailed implementation strategy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare a detailed implementation strategy as a separate document. • Develop the implementation strategy concurrently with the Plan approval process. • In the implementation strategy, address the tasks listed below. 	Final Plan Review and Approval
Plan Concepts and Recommendations		
2. Apply land designation.	2.1 Adopt and implement Landscape Management Units and Land-Use Designation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporate landscape management units and land-use designation into existing Yukon land-status databases and land-use decision-making processes. 	Final Plan Approval
	In accordance with Section 10.3.0 of the Umbrella Final Agreement, Vuntut Final Agreement, Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Final Agreement, and Nacho Nyak Dun Final Agreement respectively, undertake to establish the following types of Special Management Areas:	
	2.2 Establish a contiguous Special Management Area for “Watershed Protection” as per Section 10.2.0 for the following LMU’s: Drainage basins LMU’s 1-4 (except 3d) as a contiguous landscape unit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grandfather existing surface-use and subsurface tenures • Remove Yukon public lands within from disposition in River corridors LMU 13-1 to 13-4, Fairchild Lake (LMU 2d), Duo Lake (LMU 2e), Bonnet Plume Lake (LMU 2f), Margaret Lake (LMU 2g), Quartet Lakes (LMU 2h) , Elliot Lake, McLuskey Lake, Goz Lake by Order in Council withdrawal; • Remove Yukon public lands within LMU;s 1 c 2-a-c, 3a,b and 4 a,b for subsurface disposition by Order in Council withdrawal; • Prepare a “Sub-Regional Plans” in accordance with UFA 11.8.0 and Management Plan for each Special Mgt Area, including creation of a Management Advisory Board consistent with Final Agreements Section 10.5.2. and 10.5.7, respectively 	Land withdrawal immediate; other TBD

Task	Actions	Timeline
	<p>2.3 Establish a Special Management Area for “Special Wildlife Management” as per Section 10.2.0 for the following LMUs: Turner Wetlands and Caribou River (LMU 8a), Jackfish Lakes (LMU 7b), Tabor Lakes (LMU 7c), Vittrekwa River (LMU 12b), Chappie Lake (LMU 2c), and West Hart (4b)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove Yukon public lands from disposition by Order in Council Withdrawal; • Prepare “Sub-Regional Plans” in accordance with UFA 11.8.0 and Management Plan for each Special Mgt Area, including creation of a Management Advisory Board consistent with Final Agreements Section 10.5.2. and 10.5.7, respectively. 	<p>Land withdrawal immediate</p> <p>other TBD</p>
	<p>2.4 Establish a Special Management Area for “Designated Heritage Sites” as per Section 10.2.0 for: Nihtavan diniinelee – Fish Lake (LMU 1d) Nash Creek (LMU 3d) Hungry Lakes (LMU 3c) Doll Creek (LMU 9b) and Aberdeen Canyon (LMU 11d)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove Yukon public lands from disposition by Order in Council Withdrawal. • Prepare a Prepare “Sub-Regional Plans” in accordance with UFA 11.8.0 and Management Plan for each Special Mgt Area, including creation of a Management Advisory Board consistent with Final Agreements Section 10.5.2. and 10.5.7, respectively 	<p>Land withdrawal immediate;</p> <p>other TBD</p>