



Délįnę ʔehdzo Got'įnę's Written Presentation for the Sahtu Renewable Resources Board's Tłegóhłı (Norman Wells) Public Listening Session

February 16, 2024

1. What should people's role be in addressing the impacts of climate change and wildfires on caribou?

- Humans should not interfere with ʔekwé. We should not be talking about ʔekwé this much. We need to leave ʔekwé alone.
- We can work to protect the lands, waters and wildlife. This will help the ʔekwé to come back, but we should not be interfering with ʔekwé at all.
- Our number one ʔeᗪa is that we have to take good care of our wildlife. We need to protect all the food and plants for the animals so that they can survive. Our food comes from the land, and we need to protect and take care of our food on the land.
- ʔekwé have left because they have been disturbed. We have seen this happen before. They were gone for 30 years, but they came back. They are gone again, but they will come back. It is a cycle that happens. Our stories are that the ʔekwé will come back, so we have to wait.
- We know that the GNWT has made ʔekwé suffer with collars. ʔekwé are aware. They are like us. They know what is happening around them. They

know that the GNWT is making their lives worse by collaring them and bothering them. We need to leave them alone and they will come back.

- We need to respect ʔekwé. We need to respect the land. The only way we can survive is with wildlife, land and people. The three of us make one.

Our role in addressing the impacts of Climate Change

- We are seeing the impacts of climate change every year. Freeze up is coming later and thawing happens earlier. We are seeing new species of insects and birds. The ice conditions are changing, and it impacts how we can use the Lake. The water levels are dropping.
- We want to pay our people to be out on the land to see what is happening and to collect data. Then we want to report that data back to our people so that we know the impacts of climate change. We need to know what is happening so that we can prepare and deal with the changes. We do not have the resources now to do enough research and monitoring. When outsiders do research and monitoring, they do not always give us the data or report back to us about what they have found. This needs to change.
- Others who are collecting data about climate change and wildfires need to share it with us. We need it shared with the whole community often and in plain language. We need to know what is happening to our lands, waters and wildlife.
- Climate change is going to happen. We cannot stop it. We need to prepare. We want people to be safe and live a good life.
- We can see and feel the changes every month. Eventually, the warm weather may cause the wildlife we depend on to disappear. We will run out of food. This is what we need to prepare our youth for. We want to help youth prepare for climate change and teach them the skills they will need to survive.
- Climate change is not just impacting wildlife, it also impacts our medicines and plants. We need to protect these things too.

- Our Elders have told us that a big change is coming in the future. It will be summer for the whole year or winter for the whole year. One summer, it may be winter. And one winter, it may be summer. This will have a big impact on the land, water and wildlife and us as a people.
- We know a change is coming and we need to be ready.

Our role in addressing the impacts of wildfire

- We are worried about wildfires. Climate change has meant that things are drier and the permafrost is disappearing. In the past, fires would not spread because the permafrost would put out the fire. But now, fires can spread further and more quickly. We need put wildfires out quickly before they can spread and cause damage.
- We want all animals to live a good life and not to have danger. This is one of the reasons that we need to put fires out as soon as possible. We do not want animals to suffer or be in danger.
- Wildfires should always be put out as soon as possible so that fires do not kill animals, plants and put ash into the air and water.
- The people of Délı̨nę need equipment, training and resources to fight wildfires. We want to have equipment in Délı̨nę so that we can fight wildfires ourselves when we decide it is needed.

2. What are the impacts of climate change and wildfires on people, caribou and caribou habitat?

- Our Belare Wíle Gots'ę ʔekwé – Caribou for All Time – A Délı̨nę Got'ı̨nę Plan of Action (Belare Wíle Gots'ę ʔekwé Plan) says that we are not to harvest ʔekwé now. We are following our plan and not harvesting ʔekwé right now. So, we cannot tell you the impacts of climate change and wildfires on ʔekwé.
- We do see the impacts of climate change and wildfires on ʔekwé habitat though. For example, this fall the ground was frozen and hard, then it

snowed, then it was freezing rain. So, there is a layer of ice above the snow and ground. We are worried that this will make it hard for the ʔekwé to get to their food.

- We are also seeing the impacts of climate change on the people in Délıne. Climate change is changing ice conditions and water levels. This impacts our ability to get out onto the land. Climate change is also changing the timing of the seasons, which impacts when we can harvest and in what ways. We are also seeing changes in species, and this will impact us as a people and the animals and plants we rely on to survive.

3. How do caribou respond to climate change and wildfires?

- We are not seeing enough ʔekwé around to really know how ʔekwé are responding to the climate change that is happening right now.
- We also have not had any large fires near our community to see how ʔekwé have responded to a wildfire.
- We would like more funding to do more research and monitoring to assess the impacts of climate change and wildfires on our lands and waters. But, it is very important that we not disturb ʔekwé. Our Dene ʔeɁa are very clear, humans should not interfere with ʔekwé. We should never put collars on ʔekwé or study them in a way that impacts them.

4. What mitigation and adaptation should occur for climate change and wildfires related to caribou conservation?

Climate Change

- We need to do more research and monitoring ourselves to better understand the impacts of climate change and fires on our lands, waters and wildlife. It is very important that we do this monitoring ourselves so

that we can trust the information collected. It is also good jobs for our people to be paid to be out on the land. This information needs to be regularly reported back to the community so that we know what changes are happening.

- It is not for us as humans to interfere with ʔekwé.
- With our Belare Wíle Gots'é ʔekwé Plan we are encouraging harvesting of other species like łue and other furbearing animals. We need more funding to continue this important work. We want to have more camps to fish and do trapping together which will help us teach youth harvesting skills and help us adapt to rely on other species.
- Climate change is changing our ice and waters. We are worried about our safety with these changes. We want more funding to do more public awareness and safety campaigns to make sure our people are safe out on the land.
- We are worried about our youth. We are worried about their future, especially with climate change. We want to keep teaching youth about the land, on-the-land safety, and make sure that they have the knowledge and skills they need to do well in the future.

Wildfires

- Wildfires impact all wildlife. Animals can be killed or injured. Also, the food that furbearing animals rely on is destroyed in fires. All animals will then struggle to find enough food, especially in the winter.
- Wildfires need to be put out when they start and not left to burn. If a fire is left to burn, it can get into the ground and spread very quickly.
- There was a fire recently at Whiskey Jack Point and some areas were left to burn. These areas have not grown back properly after the fire. This impacts wildlife, plant species, and us as people.

- We need to all be working together to put out fires quickly. ENR, Parks Canada, and the Délı̄nę Got'ı̄nę Government need to be working together to fight fires that start in our area.
- We think that the best way to protect ʔekwé from the impacts of wildfires is to put fires out quickly.
- In Délı̄nę, we want to help put out fires in our district. We know the land and what areas are most important for us and for wildlife. We want funding for equipment and training so that the people of Délı̄nę are equipped and ready to act when a wildfire starts. We want to make the decision for ourselves in Délı̄nę to go out and put out wildfires. It should not be ENR's decision.
- We want to have good fire fighting equipment in Délı̄nę, but we also want equipment out on the land so that if a fire starts, it can be put out quickly. We need to protect our land, wildlife and our cabins from wildfires.
- When water bombers are brought in to fight fires, they should not use chemicals. We are very concerned that chemicals used to fight fires will enter into Great Bear Lake. Only water should be used to fight fires in the Great Bear Lake watershed.

5. How can Hı̄dó Gogha Sénégots'ı̄á (Planning for the Future - PFF) reflect and respond to climate change and wildfires?

- Our Belare Wı̄le Gots'é ʔekwé Plan deals with adapting to climate change and wildfires. Other communities' plans could do similar things.
- Throughout our plan we talk about the importance of adapting and relying on other species of wildlife. We talk about the importance of teaching our skills to our youth so that they are also prepared.
- Our plan also talks about the importance of research and monitoring so that we know what is happening.

- Our plan also calls on Canada and the GNWT to take more action internationally to combat climate change.

6. What is the minimum content for a Hı́dó Gogha Sė́nė́gots'ı́á (Planning for the Future –PFF) process and written plan?

- In Dė́lınė́, we have our Belare Wı́le Gots'ė́ ʔekwė́ Plan. We worked hard to write this plan. This is the plan we want now and into the future.
- This plan brings together our Dene ʔeʔa about protecting our lands and wildlife. This plan also has actions that we want to take to protect our lands and wildlife.
- We want to make sure that this is the plan that we use into the future. We do not want the SRRB telling us we need to change our plan. We worked very hard on this plan and brought together many groups in Dė́lınė́ to write it. Ours is a good plan.
- The SRRB's minimum requirements for a Hı́dó Gogha Sė́nė́gots'ı́á (Planning for the Future –PFF) must not impact our Belare Wı́le Gots'ė́ ʔekwė́ Plan.