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Responses to Wek'èezhì Renewable Resources Board Information Requests - Belarewílé Gots'é ʔekwé – Caribou for All Time Proposal

February 27, 2016

The Délı̨nę ʔehdzo Got'ı̨nę thanks the Wek'èezhì Renewable Resources Board (WRRB) for the opportunity to provide further information about our perspective related to the *Belarewílé Gots'é ʔekwé – Caribou for All Time* proposal. Below please find our response to the Board's Information Request.

Information Request 10

The new Wildlife Act for the Northwest Territories came into force in November 2014. There are a number of actions and approaches for the purpose of ensuring compliance for caribou harvest.

What role has your organization played in the compliance and public education programs run by ENR for the Bluenose-East caribou herd?

Response

The primary emphasis for Délı̨nę ʔehdzo Got'ı̨nę collaboration with NWT Environment and Natural Resources (ENR) as a co-management partner during this first season of implementation of the *Belarewílé Gots'é ʔekwé* plan (winter 2015-2016) has been not so much on Délı̨nę participation ENR compliance and public education programs, but the reverse – Délı̨nę has invited ENR to participate in its plan implementation activities.

Belarewílé Gots'é ʔekwé plan combines research, monitoring, training, public education and communication in a single program area entitled Dene Náowerá (Dene knowledge). In this first year of implementation, this was the primary focus of community efforts, with a minimal objective of achieving public awareness and consensus about the plan, and agreement to accept the community decision to end the hunt when the limit of 150 had been reached.

The issue of compliance is addressed under the rubric of the Nátsezé (harvesting) program area, and in the *Déljñę ʔekwé Code*. Activities specific to compliance have not been undertaken by the community at this early phase, although there has been preliminary discussion about the need for future implementation of on-the-land monitoring, a buddy system for younger hunters, and the three step community plan to address non-compliance outlined in the *Code*. For more details, see our response to ENR Information Requests, posted on the Public Registry at www.srrb.nt.ca.

This first round of collaborative implementation with ENR has been remarkably successful, with some weak areas that we feel have strong potential to be successful in the 2016-2017 harvest season, with advance planning, coordination, training and funding support. It should be noted that ENR has provided invaluable assistance in documenting our collaborative activities. The following is a table listing and assessing four key activities that ENR was invited to participate in:

Déljñę Collaborative Activities with ENR

Activity	Description
1. ʔekwé Working Group	Déljñę was supported by the NWT Species At Risk Stewardship Program to initiate ʔekwé conservation planning. The initial planning work was done in July 2015, and ENR was invited to participate in early November, just prior to and including the public meeting at which the plan was presented and approved. Since that time, the Sahtú Region Manager of Wildlife for ENR has been a regular participant in Working Group processes, and Déljñę has requested that the local ENR officer become more involved. ENR played a valuable role in posing questions to Working Group members that led to formulation of community responses, thereby adding more detail about procedures for plan implementation.
2. Health sample program	Déljñę strongly supported the use of health sample kits as a way to strengthen the knowledge base for ʔekwé conservation. However, this program was not a success. In our view the problem was lack of advance planning and adequate training and coordination. The Déljñę ʔehdzo Got'jñę has hopes that with a major planning effort over the coming months and a campaign prior to the 2016-2017 harvest season including training, awareness-building and incentives, this program will be more successful on the second round, with an objective of achieving as close to a 100% return rate on harvested ʔekwé as possible.
3. Harvest monitoring and management	Déljñę established a monthly routine starting in early January 2016 of meeting with ENR and the ʔehdzo Got'jñę Gotsé Nákedı (Sahtú Renewable Resources Board – SRRB) to review harvest practices and numbers and plan any actions to be taken. The meetings each led to consensus among the three parties about the status of the harvest, improvements in monitoring methods, and significant decisions taken by the Déljñę ʔehdzo Got'jñę and Working Group regarding harvest

Activity	Description
	<p>management measures. The January meeting identified that the harvesting threshold had been reached as defined in the plan of 100 yárégo (young males) and no tsída (females) – triggering a public meeting to discuss ending the harvest that ENR participated in. The February meeting identified that the harvest limit of 150 had been reached, with ENR involvement.</p> <p>Délįnę also envisioned a harvest and ǰekwé monitoring program on the land in collaboration with ENR - including locating kill sights, collecting hides and fecal samples for genetic analysis. But by the time the <i>Belarewílé Gots'é ǰekwé</i> plan was approved it was too late to plan, secure funding, hire monitors and coordinate training to fulfill this objective. The hope is that with advance planning a successful program can be undertaken in 2016-2018.</p>
4. Public awareness	<p>ENR was invited to assist in distribution of community brochures regarding the <i>Belarewílé Gots'é ǰekwé</i> plan and the community decision to end the harvest, as well as the effort to put up signs on the winter road. We have not yet received a report on this initiative from ENR (ideally in the future Délįnę community members will participate, so reporting including feedback on the effectiveness of communication materials can be jointly provided to the Délįnę ǰehdzo Got'įnę).</p>

ENR did invite Délįnę ǰehdzo Got'įnę to participate in their compliance patrols on February 9 and there was interest in participating, however this was not possible due to lack of advance planning and capacity support.

There are a number of additional ENR compliance and public education activities that the Délįnę ǰehdzo Got'įnę believes could greatly benefit from a more collaborative approach in the future, including but not limited to:

- School education program
- Development of communication materials (with the inclusion of culturally appropriate messages and Dene terminology, and drawing from the *Belarewílé Gots'é ǰekwé* plan).
- Sight your rifle and hunter education activities.
- Caribou