

Colville 2020 Public Listening Session

Sahtú Ragúza (Hunting Law) and Approaches to Wildlife Harvesting

Chair's Opening Remarks



George Barnaby, Zehdzo Got'ine Gots'é Nákedı

January 21-23, Colville Lake

9:00 am Call Public Listening Session to Order

Introduction

Good morning everyone. Welcome to the Public Listening or Hearing Session on *Sahtú Ragúza and Approaches to Wildlife Harvesting*. My name is George Barnaby and I am the Chair of the Zehdzo Got'ine Gots'é Nákedı – the Sahtú Renewable Resources Board, also fondly known as the SRRB.

I'd like to start out by thanking the Behdzi Ahda First Nation or Dehlá Got'ine for hosting us in their homeland, and for partnering with us in convening this Public Listening Session.

Máhsı to all of you who are here today, as Board Members, Parties and community members. We are here because we all care about caribou. It is good to see that people are willing to give their time to work on these important issues.

This gathering is a chance for all of us to be part of thinking about our relationship with caribou, and how we can protect and live with caribou in a way that ensures they will be there for our peoples in the future.

All the Parties bring different experiences and knowledge, different evidence, and different ideas what needs to be done. This Public Listening Session is about working together, respectfully, to share ideas and come to a better understanding.

This Session is the first in a series related to the topic of caribou. For these Public Listening Sessions, the Board is taking a new approach. In the past, Hearings have considered caribou through a herd-by-herd approach. Our Public Listening Sessions are going to take a “hot topics” approach.

Each session will focus on one hot topic with respect to all three kinds of caribou that live in our region – ʔədə (barren-ground caribou), ʔədzı (boreal caribou), and shúhta goʔepé (mountain caribou). The focused approach will allow us to have an in-depth exploration of each hot topic. We will benefit from both science and the knowledge of communities in their special relationships with caribou.

The Public Listening Sessions will consider topics such as Sahtú ragúʔa or hunting law, knowledge about caribou, wildfire and climate change, predators, and the Sahtú economy – all addressing the question, “What is the most effective way to conserve caribou?”

For this Public Listening Session, we are asking the question “What is the most effective way to *regulate the harvest* of caribou?” We are also asking a number of related questions, including: What the status of the different kinds of caribou? What are indigenous systems for regulating and monitoring harvest? How can harvesting be coordinated across communities and regions?

The trigger for this hearing comes from the Land Claim Agreement. Colville has brought forward a proposal for a different approach to regulating the harvest of caribou. This proposal will be considered, along with evidence about harvest regulation presented by other Sahtú communities and ENR.

The SRRB is holding these formal Public Listening Sessions because the Board has the responsibility for dealing with caribou use and protection in the Sahtú region. We are a co-management Board established by the Sahtú Land Claim Agreement. It's a collaborative Board.

Members are nominated by Dene communities and government, and work together to bring together traditional knowledge and science as a basis for making wise decisions about ʔch'ádı́, wildlife, and néné́, the landscapes they depend on.

We are set up this way so that Dene and Métis hunting rights and Dene ts'ı́ı or ways of life are respected and supported, and so that Dene communities can be directly involved in making decisions about ʔch'ádı́ and néné́.

The SRRB is the main body that deals with wildlife in this region. Under the terms of the Land Claim Agreement, our Board must both consider land claim objectives, and act in the public interest when we make decisions about ʔch'ádı́.

Each Board Member here brings their own perspective and views but when we come together as a Board we act as one, we think about what the public needs – not just what we would like to see happen – and most importantly, we think about how we can all serve the caribou.

The hearing has been broadly advertised and reported in the media. We have media present, from CBC North and from APTN (Aboriginal Peoples Television Network). As well, a public registry was established October 04, 2019 and updated regularly.

In these opening remarks, we will provide a brief overview of key aspects of the Public Listening Session, covering the following topics:

- An introduction to the SRRB team
- Overview of confirmed Parties and visiting Observers
- Recording the proceeding
- Agenda for today
- Fairness and timing
- Housekeeping items for this gathering

Introduction to SRRB Team

I would like to introduce the other SRRB Board Members and Alternates, who will be serving as Board Members this week: Samuel Haché, Camilla Tutcho, Camilla Rabisca, Faye d'Eon-Eggertson, and Keith Hickling.

We have with us Nick Sowsun, our Legal Counsel, along with a staff support team of six: Deborah Simmons, Executive Director, Kirsten Jensen, Leon Andrew, Kyanna Dolphus-Lennie, Hannah Taneton, and Lori Ann Lennie. They are all here playing various roles to ensure that this hearing process runs smoothly and that the Board secures the information that it needs to make wise decisions.

We also have a Technical Advisor for this Public Listening Session. The Technical Advisor shares her expertise and help us think through issues. The Technical Advisor is Janet Winbourne, who will be joining by teleconference tomorrow to talk about the Sahtú Harvest Study.

Confirmed Parties and Visiting Observer

There are 17 confirmed parties for this Proceeding: ten Sahtú organizations, ENR, the Indigenous Leadership Initiative, and five Parties from other regions: the Acho

Dene Koe First Nation, Dehcho First Nations, the Inuvialuit Game Council, the Kugluktuk Angoniatit Association, and Ross River Dena Council.

I would like to recognize delegates from the Inuvialuit Game Council and thank them for making the long trip here. The Tłıchǵ Government has also sent a delegation, for which we are thankful. Tłıchǵ delegates are here as observers.

More than one Party has been confirmed from several of the Sahtú communities. For this reason, Sahtú community delegations are recognized in the agenda as Panels. The Sahtú Dene Council has requested Party status to support a space for elder delegates to contribute, and there is a Sahtú Youth Network delegation.

Knowing that not all Parties are able to join us in Colville, we have offered opportunities to participate in this event by teleconference. Parties on the phone will be given opportunities to ask questions, and can contribute closing remarks. All Parties will also have a chance to contribute Final Arguments after the Session.

Recognition of Written Submissions

The SRRB has already received an impressive number of written submissions, all of which are posted on the Board's Public Registry. There are a total of 22 documents now posted from 8 Parties and interested organizations. These documents will be considered in the Board's decisions, along with materials arising from the session this week, and Final Arguments that can be submitted until February 10.

Interpreting and Recording the Proceeding

These proceedings are being recorded by the Pido Production sound team in Sahtú Dene language, Tłıchǵ language, and English. The English language recordings will be transcribed later by Digi-Tran legal reporters. Sahtú Dene and Tłıchǵ language recordings will be shared on the Public Registry for this Session. Therefore, I ask that when you speak, please start by saying your name and who you represent.

Also, I ask that you please be mindful that we have interpreters: Laura Tutcho and Dora Duncan for Sahtú dialects, and two Tłıchǵ interpreters [ADD NAMES]. These proceedings are being simultaneously translated. We have scheduled time each morning to talk about key terms and concepts so there can be better understanding across cultures. Please bring your main terms and concepts to us before your presentation so we can review these together.

Please watch or listen to the interpreters so you know when you need to slow down. I will signal to speakers if you need to pause to allow interpreters to catch up. Sometimes we may need a longer pause when difficult concepts come up in Dene or English languages to make sure everyone understands what is meant. If the speakers are moving too fast, the interpreters will let our sound team know, and the sound will cut off. This means you must stop talking so the interpreters can catch up.

Another unique feature of this Public Listening Session is that we will have a graphic recording to assist in understanding.

[DEB and SAM BRADD: INTRODUCE GRAPHIC RECORDING APPROACH]

Public Listening Agenda for Today

There are printed copies of the agenda for the three days available, and the agenda is also on the Board's website. Here is what is happening today:

- This morning we will start by hearing from our hosting community, Colville Lake, about their Dehlá Got'ıne ʔədə Plan and Ts'ıduweh ʔədə ʔeʔá, and there will be time for questions from the Parties and the Board.
- This afternoon Panels other four Sahtú communities will present their evidence in response to the central question for this Session, "What is the most effective way to regulate the harvest of caribou?". After each of their presentations, the other Parties and the Board can ask each of them questions.
- Tonight there are opportunities for Caucus sessions at 6:30 pm so any groups that wish to discuss any matters can meet together to do so. The Sahtú Youth Network will be meeting at the Youth Centre, and ʔehdzo Got'ıne (Renewable Resources Councils) will meet at the Behdzi Ahda Boardroom next door. Any others such as communities, women, hunters who might wish to meet together to discuss Public Listening topics can talk with Deb or Kirsten to book a space.
- Afterward, and every evening at 8:00 pm, there will be social and cultural events hosted by Colville. Tonight there will be a showing of the excellent films by Dennis Allen featuring Dehlá Got'ıne, *The Hunt* and *The Walk*.

There are people from the community who are really interested in what is going here at these hearings. As Board Chair, I am really happy to see that. If you are a

community member and want to say something to the Board, there are two chances for you to do that, or to ask questions.

- The first opportunity will be at the Public Forum on Wednesday evening at 6:30, and there will be a second opportunity on Thursday morning.
- If we aren't able to hear from everyone during these times, we will see if we can meet Thursday night.

Fairness, Timing and Respect

We will try to hear everyone who wants to say something, but the most important thing is that we want to make sure the Board has the chance to hear from the confirmed Parties in the hearing – the Sahtú community and regional Panels, Indigenous Leadership Initiative, and Inuvialuit Game Council, as well as any confirmed Parties on the teleconference line.

There are a lot of Parties that need to present and ask questions, and we have only three days to work together. So it is a matter of respect and fairness for all Panels and Parties that we ask people to keep to the scheduled times. We will be providing presenters with signals when they have 10 minutes, five minutes and one minute to finish their presentations, and will regretfully have to ask people to stop when their time is up.

We ask that people behave respectfully in all ways. There will be zero tolerance for people under the influence of alcohol or drugs at this hearing or evening cultural and recreation events. If anyone is under the influence, they will be asked to leave.

Format for Presentations and Questions

With the space constraints, we're only able to accommodate one delegate per Panel or Party at the main table. Presenting Panels are asked to use the table at the front for their presentation.

Parties or Panels can switch delegates at the main table during the proceeding as they wish, depending on who is designated as delegation lead during question periods.

Terms and Concepts

In the Chair's remarks, several key Dene terms have already been introduced. Colville has provided four key terms as part of their presentation. These are all listed on flip charts, so that we can all begin to share a common vocabulary for this proceeding. We ask that other Sahtú communities provide their terms during lunch hour.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I'd like to say that SRRB Board Members take their roles very seriously. We all care about doing a good job as Board Members and serving the Sahtú region and serving the wildlife.

We are glad you are all here. We hope we can work with one mind – we may have different views on some issues but we all care about one thing: the caribou. That is the most important thing – respecting the caribou, caring about the caribou. We are all here because we care.

Next we will turn to housekeeping matters. Before we do this, are there any other process or legal issues that Parties wish to raise?

Housekeeping Matters

We hope all the visitors are comfortable in your accommodations. If you have any concerns, you can speak with Kirsten Jensen.

There will be catered meals and snacks over the next few days. We are thankful to the Colville coordinator, cooks, and dishwashers for all their work so we'll be well fed. Please allow visitors and elders to eat first.

The dishwashers will be working very hard, so try to be helpful and use the same cup all day. We have markers available to put your name on cups. Do not take dishes home – we will provide disposable dishes if you're taking food with you.

We are hoping to keep people as healthy as possible during this gathering – it's been a bad year for infectious diseases. For this reason, we'd remind you to wash your hands with soap and use Lysol wipes often, especially after shaking hands and before meals. Be sure to drink plenty of water and get lots of rest to fight off those colds, flu and even worse, whooping cough that are going around.

And, please enjoy your time in this lovely community!

Colville Presentation

We are launching this proceeding with a presentation by our hosting community, Colville Lake, about their Dehlá Got'íne ʔədə Plan and Ts'íduweh ʔədə ʔeʔá (Law).