

Délįnę 2021 ʔetets'éhkwę Godı
Public Listening Session (PLS) – February 1-3, 2022

Responses to Round 2 Information Requests

Fort Good Hope Deshıta Got'ıneke (Renewable Resources Council)



Délįnę 2021
Public Listening
Tıch'adıı hé Gots'edi
Living with Wildlife



Deadline for responses October 15, 2021

This template includes Round 2 Information Requests (IRs) addressed to **Fort Good Hope Deshıta Got'ıneke (Renewable Resources Council)** for the Délįnę 2021 Public Listening Session on *Tıch'adıı hé Gots'edi (Living with Wildlife) – Predators and Competitors* being held on February 1-3, 2022. The SRRB encourages those Parties that wish to add submissions related to Round 1 IRs (see Appendix A) in their submissions for this round.

IRs are written requests for information directed to a Party or Parties in the PLS. Please submit responses to Round 2 IRs, along with additional submissions for Round 1 IRs (see Appendix A) by **October 15, 2021**. IR1 responses already submitted are available on

Parties are also encouraged to submit information requests for other parties that will be included in Round 3 IRs (to be issued on December 1, 2021). Reminders of other opportunities for Public Registry submissions are also included in this template.

Information Request (IR) 2.1: *Tıch'adıı he Gots'edi – Caribou, Predators and Competitors*

2.1.1 The Conservation Picture: Caribou, People, Planning, and the Public Listening Session

Fort Good Hope and Tulıt'a IRs to all Parties

- ENR and other Parties presenting scientific information at the Délįnę 2021 PLS are requested to prepare a glossary of terms with plain language definitions.

Fort Good Hope has already submitted a glossary as part of Round 1 IR responses, and will provide an additional glossary along with our written presentation before the Délįnę 2021 PLS.

- Does the concept of conservation and modern western conservation institutions conflict with our Indigenous knowledge systems and practices, and infringe upon our collective rights as Indigenous peoples? If it does conflict, how does it conflict?

- The GNWT's approach to environmental management and conservation is in conflict with our Indigenous knowledge systems and practices
- As Indigenous peoples, we follow our ancestor's teachings. If the caribou population was going down, they would stop hunting them or there was less hunting.
- According to our traditional ways, the amount of caribou we harvest varies with the population. For example, in the 1960s and 1970s there were a lot of caribou, and people

were hunting a lot of caribou. Now that caribou have gone down again, people in Fort Good Hope have said they're going to harvest less and that's good, it's our traditional conservation approach.

- The hunters and trappers notice the changes out on the land, and we have our own practices to address conservation concerns.
- We have a right to exercise our own conservation practices in accordance with our traditional ways pursuant to: (i) the SDMCLCA, (ii) section 35 of the Constitution; and (iii) article 29(1) of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, which the GNWT committed to implement in its Mandate (2019-2023).
- The *Wildlife Act* even states that the GNWT must recognize and value "traditional Aboriginal values and practices in relation to the harvesting and conservation of wildlife" under section 2(1)(d)
- The GNWT's environmental management and conservation approaches conflict with our traditional ways. The GNWT's management ignores our inherent rights to exercise our Indigenous conservation practices.
- For example, when the GNWT imposes measures like tags it infringes on our rights to exercise our own conservation practices.
- Even the way the GNWT monitors caribou conflicts with our conservation practices. Now we have Guardians in place who will monitor caribou according to our Indigenous knowledge. The Guardians stop young hunters from killing too many females.

4. Do you think community conservation plans or the *Wildlife Act* affect our rights as Indigenous peoples?

- The GNWT and people in Yellowknife that have never set foot on our land are making significant environmental management and conservation decisions on our land. They are empowered by the *Wildlife Act*. That's not traditional.
- Community conservation plans are a way for us to have a say in what happens in our own homelands. We have to take a stronger stand.
- It's up to the communities to look after our own wildlife. If we are going get anywhere, the community conservation plans have to be recognized under the *Wildlife Act* and its regulations. Otherwise it's a Yellowknife plan and it doesn't fit in with us.

- The GNWT has an obligation to support community conservation plans pursuant to article 29(1) of UNRIP which requires governments to support the implementation of Indigenous conservation practices

5. Please share your knowledge about any caribou plans that have been developed outside the Sahtú region.

- We look forward to hearing from other Parties about Indigenous peoples caribou conservation plans in other areas. That's the right way to go, conservation plans by the people.
- We Indigenous peoples have to learn our own practices from our elders as our first priority. We just lost our elder Gabe Kochon who has a lot of knowledge, and there are just two elders left in Colville.
- We recognize each other's territories and it's also good to listen to each other as Indigenous peoples. The problem is that the government gets in the way and we end up fighting each other instead of sharing. A good example is the arguing that happens between Inuvialuit and Colville about whether to follow the government tag system.

NWT Environment and Natural Resources (ENR) IR to Sahtú community Parties

What support can ENR provide in your planning work? Do you have more specific examples?

- Is ENR recognizing the RRC's authority?
- Is ENR adequately funding the RRC?
- Is ENR providing adequate support for monitoring?
- Are there other projects you want support on?

6. Is ENR adequately consulting the RRC's on decisions

- ENR can work with us. ENR is acting independently without adequate engagement and collaboration with Indigenous peoples. For example, we don't feel that ENR is collaborating in a meaningful way with respect to caribou monitoring. Another good example is collaring caribou. ENR hasn't listened to our concerns of caribou collaring, they are acting without the consent of Indigenous peoples.
- ENR's independent actions are contrary to the SDMCLCA, which promotes co-management, and the *Wildlife Act*, which states that the GNWT must recognize and value "traditional Aboriginal values and practices in relation to the harvesting and conservation of wildlife" under section 2(1)(d)

SRRB IRs to all parties

7. As of the deadline for Round 2 IRs, it will have been eight months since Parties made submissions on the conservation picture (through Round 1 IR responses). Please provide updates on the status of caribou, people and planning.

The status of caribou, including ɾədə, ɬɔdzı and shíta goɾədə hasn't changed since we provided a status update in January 2021. People have been harvesting some ɬɔdzı and they seem to be doing well – mostly they've been getting moose for our Dene béré. There was concern because the ice last winter so the caribou couldn't get across from the islands, and they weren't able to escape from the wolves. So the Deshɬta Got'ɬneɬ was telling hunters to monitor wolves when they go out.

We can't say much about ɾədə. There's no real agreement about how to monitor the big lake area between Colville and the Mackenzie River, north of Fort Good Hope, including Canoe Lake, Carcajou Lake, Ron Lake, Rory Lake – all those big lakes where people used to live. There used to be a big trail there, and barren-ground caribou used to travel there. Someone needs to take responsibility for monitoring that area. One year there were no caribou around and they were all in Gwich'in land around Travaillant Lake. It would be good to check it out with skidoos.

With respect to people, we have noticed that if any food were killed, people were really good about sharing.

On the topic of planning, it's been impossible for the ʔədə Working Group to meet over the past months due to the pandemic conditions. We are now finding alternative ways to make our contributions for the Déljné 2021 PLS. Pub. Listening sessions

SRRB IRs to all Sahtú community Parties

15. If your local ʔehdzo Got'jné (RRC) has convened ʔekwé/ʔədə (Caribou) Working Groups and/or appointed technical teams to support Working Groups, please explain how your Working Group operates (such as membership selection, approach to community conservation planning, and division of roles between Working Group and technical teams)?

The Fort Good Hope ʔədə Working Group consists of members of the Deshʔta Got'jné (RRC), Yamoga and Métis Land Corporations, K'áhsho Got'jné Band Council, as well as elders and knowledge holders, youth, and women. The Working Group has expertise in both Dene/Métis knowledge and science. The Working Group is now just beginning to think about our work in Community Conservation planning, and we're watching other communities in the Sahtú and elsewhere to learn from their experience. We had three people from Fort Good Hope take a Healthy Country Planning course, and that will help us moving forward. The Technical Team has been really important for doing homework in between meetings of the Working Group, so that we can have productive meetings. This has been especially important during the pandemic when it's hard for the Working Group to get together. We have had to contact Working Group members one on one to make sure that they have opportunities to provide input on draft submissions for the Public Listening Sessions in the working.

16. What, if any, are lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic that are relevant to consider in discussions about caribou and people?

Dene béré became even more important to us than usual because of the pandemic. There were no jobs, and people were really stuck. During the COVID outbreak during August-October the Land Corporation and Deshʔta Got'jné have been able to provide support to hunters to harvest moose and fish for the community. We did some challenges with the fact that our Land Corporation election couldn't happen so we don't have decision-makers to support these programs right now.

17. What is the review and approval process for wildlife, habitat and harvesting planning within your community? Is your planning shared with ENR?

The ʔədə Working Group makes presentation to the leadership organisations that are members of the Working Group, as well as community meetings. People listen to it and add onto it, and there are more ideas. Everyone has a chance to have input. That was the process that led to consensus as the basis for approving the Ts'udá Njlné Tuyeta Protected Area. People make the

decisions, otherwise it starts problems, arguments. There's a lot of work to build consensus over time. If it's our culture, it's easy to agree to things.

Other communities are putting down on paper the principles and practices that have been in place for thousands of years. That's what we'll be doing when we work on our plan. All the Indigenous communities are similar, they all live on the land and animals, so they have knowledge that is similar to ours. It's good to look at their plans so we don't miss something important. We have our knowledge, but we might forget something.

This is all new to us, so we're not comfortable working with ENR on our plan yet. We find it hard to work with ENR. We don't feel like we're being heard. We know our land, we know the people, we know the animals, how they move around. We know what we want, and we work closely with our neighbours, especially Colville Lake. We need to do our own work first to put our plan on paper so that we can confidently present it for approval and then get feedback from ENR. The Fort Good Hope plan will be our plan that will work for our community, and we don't want to be bullied into adopting ENR's approaches to caribou conservation.

18. Are there tools that the SRRB can provide to assist in building awareness and understanding of the Public Listening process in your community?

We've already asked for plain language materials that can be used in the community and talked about on the radio. It would be good if there were community fieldworkers to go door to door to raise awareness of the Public Listening Session and our planning work. Funding, more proposals for future planning.

2.1.2 Predators

SRRB IR to all Sahtú Parties

10. Please provide any relevant information you have on the issue of baiting as an approach to bele (wolf) harvesting.

It's sort of a way of culling bele, or a support for sport hunting which we don't support. The stories we've been told from the elders and harvesters is they let nature take its course. If there are a lot of bele, we know they'll die off on their own. Bele will fight each other, and compete with each and limit their own population. Nature works to achieve the balance between bele and the animals that are their food. This is something to discuss within our community. Way back the government was baiting and poisoning wolves and the elders were really against that. It was disrespectful, and they were affecting other animals as well that would feed on the bait. We have to let nature take its course. Dene/Métis have never managed wolves before, so why start?

2.1.3 Competitors

Tulít'a IRs to all Parties

4. Do you know if ʔəjire crossed Dəgho (Mackenzie River)

We don't usually see caribou or muskox or sign of them on the west side of the Mackenzie River when we're travelling on the river. They do know how to swim, but we normally don't see them swimming on the big river.

5. How might ʔəjire impact shúhta goʔepé (mountain caribou) and doe (sheep) if they go into the mountains?

No concerns as of yet. We don't know of ʔəjire in the mountains. There were no ʔəjire for about 100 years, so we don't know much about them – they were gone for so long. They must have been around a long time ago.

Information Request 2.2: Harvest Regulation

As described in the SRRB's July 7, 2021, Resumption Notice, the following questions arise from the Colville 2020 Public Listening session on *Sahtú Ragóʔa (Hunting Law) and Approaches to Wildlife Harvesting*.

2.2.1 Harvest Regulation Planning Toolkit

Note: the SRRB provided a draft Hıdó Gogha Sėnégots'ızá (Community Conservation Plan – CCP) Guide for review by Parties and the public on September 14, 2021. The deadline for comment on the CCP Guide is November 15, 2021.

SRRB IRs to all Parties

1. The SRRB provided a Harvest Regulation Planning Toolkit on January 15, 2021. What is missing from the toolkit?

We're happy to learn from what other communities have done, so that we can use it to make our own plan. It would be good to include other community plans in addition to the Délıne and Colville plans.

2. Do you think any parts of the Toolkit should be changed?

See answer to question one above. ENR had a plan to tag and put limits and numbers, and they were looking at managing the whole thing through their tag system. They were going to give tags to all the communities. That's not our traditional way. K'áhsho Got'ıne are good to our visitors, but they don't have a right to say they can collect their caribou just because they have a paper from ENR. We need to make our own plan so we can answer what they're trying to do.

3. Are there additional components that would be relevant for conservation planning for predators and competitors?

We'll be able to answer this question when we work on our predator and competitor plan.

2.2.2 Stewardship Roles

SRRB IRs to all Parties

1. How is the stewardship role of a community that is a primary harvester of a certain caribou population different from the role of a community that might not have the same access to that caribou population?

In our area, we have allocated jurisdictional authority to the three districts. Within the districts there are families that live in certain areas. We respect the people that are there and we ask for permission to harvest. This harvest regulation system has been practiced since time immemorial. We don't just march in demanding things in other people's areas. There's a proper way of acting. And then people are good to visitors as well. If there are a lot of caribou there's more sharing, and we still try to share if the caribou are less available. It has to be our way of governing the harvest. In our homelands, everything has to fit within our culture. Non-Indigenous people don't have their own areas like we do, and they go all over the place. They don't have the same governance system.

2.2.3 ʔehdzo Got'Inę (Renewable Resources Council) Powers

SRRB IRs to all Parties

1. Describe the role of the local ʔehdzo Got'Inę (RRC) in your experience.

The Deshʔta Got'Inę supports our cultural practices, including harvesting. It might be support with gas, hunting supplies, shells, traps, nets. They are also responsible for taking care of the land, water and wildlife, making sure it's clean and treated with respect. They oversee land, animals, conservation, culture, and the people.

They have an organised approach that looks after programs or funding, so it's necessary to have some staffing, capacity and planning to do their work well. They also know it's important to work with people who are knowledgeable about different areas of the land.

All the outsiders, including government, know where to go in our community for working on issues related to the Deshʔta Got'Inę mandate.

2. How does the local ʔehdzo Got'Inę (RRC) manage harvesting?

They can do it by having meetings and people discuss it and decide what to do. We try to keep track of how much is being harvested so that we can make sure people are not taking too much. We have monthly meetings where we can assess how the wildlife are doing in the different seasons, and make decisions about how to regulate the harvest. Some of the younger hunters don't know about the protocols for a sustainable harvest, so they might overkill, or they might

harvest disrespectfully or in a season when the meat is not good to eat. These are the kinds of situations that the Desh̄ta Got'In̄ can address.

3. How is the local ʔehdzo Got'In̄ (RRC) accountable, and to whom it is accountable?

We report to the people of our community, and to our neighbours when they ask how things are going. We have a yearly Annual General Meeting and that's one of the ways we report back to the people.

2.2.4 Hunter Education

SRRB IRs to all parties

2. Are there harvesters that come from other places to your community's harvesting area? What are the different kinds of harvesters? Describe any protocols for harvesters visiting your area. How do they learn about these protocols?

We've answered parts of this question about visitors in our responses to other questions. Some of the kinds of visiting harvesters are relatives through marriage, Indigenous people who have jobs in our area, and general visitors. Visitors usually come to the Desh̄ta Got'In̄ office and ask questions. We explain our practices and ask them not to overstep that. Usually we don't even have to explain this to other Indigenous visitors, because we all share the same practices. A long time ago, when there was a lot of caribou, people would gather from different communities, everybody living good together and sharing. People have their cultural ways of living together. People were happy to have visitors, and everyone followed the same rules. When people don't follow those rules there was bad feeling. But was very unusual. There was a lot of respect for the hosting family or community. If you practice respect then everybody's happy. Then eventually they start moving back to their own areas. We have a lot of stories about these gatherings. It would be good to document them.

3. Do harvesters from your community go outside your community's harvesting area to harvest? Describe any protocols for visiting other areas. How do people learn about these protocols?

Yes, local harvesters travel huge distances. We practice the same protocols for visiting another area that we expect from visitors to our area. We ask for permission to harvest, and make sure we have an invitation from a local person. We travel with our young people and teach them these protocols so that's how they learn. We have had no complaints from other communities so far about our hunting behaviour when we travel there.