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Hon. Robert C. McLeod  
Minister of Environment and Natural Resources  
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[Robert\\_C\\_McLeod@gov.nt.ca](mailto:Robert_C_McLeod@gov.nt.ca)

***Delivered via email***

October 26, 2016

**Re: Final Decisions and Recommendations on the Bluenose East ʔekwé (Caribou) Hearing**

Dear Minister McLeod:

I am writing on behalf of the ʔehdzo Got'İne Gots'É Nákedı (Sahtú Renewable Resources Board – SRRB) to thank you for your letter of September 26, 2016, with your department's response to the SRRB's July 28, 2016 Report on the Bluenose East ʔekwé Hearing, *ʔekwé hé Dene Ts'İl - Sustaining Relationships*.

As required under the Sahtu Dene and Metis Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement (SDMCLCA) section 13.8.27, the SRRB met to review your response and make final decisions and recommendations in reply where you have requested variations to the Board's original decisions and recommendations.

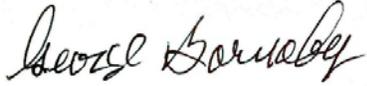
As you know, the SRRB's final report is based on accepting the community conservation planning approach proposed in the Délıne *Belare wıle Gots'É ʔekwé* plan. The SRRB appreciates the support shown in your response for the principle of community ʔekwé conservation planning and the Délıne plan in general. The SRRB shares your view that, having accepted the approach of the Délıne plan in principle, further and ongoing efforts must be made by all parties to monitor its effectiveness in reaching conservation goals.

In addition to its own internal review process, therefore, the SRRB met with representatives from Délıne on October 19 and 20, and held a public meeting in Délıne on October 19, to review your response to the SRRB's Hearing Report and the Délıne plan, and to hear from Délıne about how suggested variances would affect the proposed community conservation plan.

In the attached report, the SRRB shares its final decisions, and identifies a number of specific actions now required for this year's harvest seasons and beyond.

The SRRB looks forward to continued collaboration with ENR, Délı̄ne, the other ʔehdzo Got'ı̄ne (Renewable Resources) to ensure the best conservation planning and practices to support Bluenose East ʔekwé health and recovery.

Máhsi,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "George Barnaby". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

George Barnaby, Vice-Chair  
*On Behalf of the Board*

**Copied to**  
Parties in the SRRB Bluenose East ʔekwé (Caribou) Hearing  
Wek'èezhì Renewable Resources Board  
Advisory Committee for Cooperation on Wildlife Management



Final Decisions and Recommendations  
of the ʔehdzo Gotʔne Gotsʔé Nákedı  
(Sahtú Renewable Resources Board)

Regarding the Response of Hon. Robert McLeod  
(Minister of Environment and Natural Resources)  
to the SRRB Bluenose East ʔekwé (Caribou) Hearing Report  
*ʔekwé hé Dene Tsʔıı - Sustaining Relationships*

October 26, 2016

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## Introduction

This document contains the final decisions and reply of the ʔehdzo Got'ıne ʔots'ę Nákedi (Sahtú Renewable Resources Board – SRRB) to a September 26, 2016 letter from the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources (ENR). In the September 26 letter, the Minister responded to the *ʔekwé hé Dene Ts'ıı - Sustaining Relationships: Final Report on the Sahtú Bluenose East ʔekwé Hearing 2016* (the “BNE Report”) released by the SRRB on July 28, 2016.

The SRRB thanks the Minister, ENR and the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) for the response to the SRRB's BNE Report. The SRRB particularly thanks the Minister and ENR for affirming in principle the benefits of community conservation planning (as laid out in the Délıne's *Belare wıle ʔots'ę ʔekwé – Caribou for All Time* plan (the Délıne plan). The SRRB shares the Minister's view that, having accepted the approach of the Délıne plan in principle, further and ongoing efforts must be made by all parties to monitor its effectiveness in reaching conservation goals.

In these SRRB final decisions and recommendations which reply to the Minister's response, the SRRB groups its comments by themes. These themes capture the key areas where the Minister has suggested that the SRRB's decisions and recommendations be varied:

- ❖ **Conservation Approach** (including harvest rates and male/female ratio for harvesting) – related to SRRB Decisions 7, 10, 11, 14, 15, 23, 24, 25, 27, 28, 30, 32, 33, 34, 37, 39
- ❖ **Cross-Regional Coordination** – related to SRRB decisions 22, 26, 36 primarily; also related to SRRB Decisions 15, 25, 30 and 33
- ❖ **Herd Status** – related to SRRB decisions 2, 4, 5
- ❖ **Research Needs** – related to SRRB decisions 1, 3, 6, 16, 20, 35
- ❖ **Policy Reform** – related to SRRB decisions 17, 19, 21, 22, 29, 31, 36, 38
- ❖ **Funding** – related to SRRB decision 12 as well as research and policy decisions
- ❖ **Youth and Education** – related to SRRB decisions 8, 9 13

Included with this document are a summary of actions (Appendix A) and a proposed workplan with timelines (Appendix B). The overall objective of the SRRB is to support the potential success of the Délıne plan as a model for community conservation planning. The SRRB also, in these final decisions and recommendations, prioritizes the need for the inter-regional user dialogue needed in order to protect the institutional space for the Délıne plan to be piloted.

## 1. Conservation Approach

This section relates to Minister's response to SRRB Decisions 7, 10, 11, 14, 15, 23, 24, 25, 27, 28, 30, 32, 33, 34, 37, and 39.

The SRRB remains of the view that community conservation planning reflects the best precautionary approach to conservation for the Bluenose East ʔekwé in the Sahtú Region. The science and Dene náoweré evidence in the hearing confirmed that this approach holds the best chance of succeeding in meeting conservation goals. The SRRB's analysis, based on what was heard in the hearing, is that the community conservation planning process is also consistent with objectives outlined in the land claim agreement. In order to be successful, the approach must be consistently applied and the community planning process must be respected.

The Minister's recognition of the principles of both ʔekwé and community ʔedets'é k'áokerewe (self-regulation) is truly ground-breaking. The SRRB notes that as of September 1, community ʔedets'é k'áokerewe in Délıne will now be implemented under the umbrella of self-government. The conservation approach defined in Délıne's *Belare wıle Gots'é ʔekwé* plan, and accepted by the SRRB based on the hearing evidence, offers a suite of conservation measures drawing upon community governance processes, and including sustainable máhsı ts'ıne (ceremonial) harvest management practices. The evidence in the hearing demonstrated that as ʔekwé are less available, the community of Délıne has moved away from considering this as a subsistence harvest species.

However, the SRRB finds that aspects of the Minister's response are inconsistent with acceptance of this conservation approach and the evidence supporting this approach. This may indicate a need for further clarification of the principles underpinning the distinct concepts of ʔekwé and community ʔedets'é k'áokerewe.

Most importantly, the Minister's response singles out harvest management based on numbers as the focal point of attention, and requests that the SRRB vary two of its key decisions with respect to harvest rate and quantity of tsıda (female) harvest. In addition to concerns about the modification to the core conservation approach accepted by the SRRB based on the evidence, the request for a modification calls into question the collaborative process with our Délıne co-management partner to support community ʔedets'é k'áokerewe.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Another indication of the need for clarification is the Minister's response to Hearing Decision 7, which refers to harvest management and not the ecological principles of ʔekwé ʔedets'é k'áokerewe that are the basis for this decision.

## A. Harvest Rate

The Minister requests that the SRRB vary its decision to support the principles of *ekwé* and community *zedets'é k'áokerewe* (self-regulation) by imposing a harvest quota of 129 for all communities in the Sahtú Settlement area. This request is based on the decision put forward in the Wek'èezhì Renewable Resources Board (WRRB) Bluenose East Hearing Report. The WRRB decided that for the purpose of calculating the harvest allocation within Wek'èezhì, the Total Allowable Harvest should be 750 and not 950 as recommended by ENR in its submission to the SRRB.

Based on a review of the Dene *náoweré* and scientific evidence provided at the Sahtú Hearing, the SRRB has determined that conditions do not exist to invoke the Total Allowable Harvest (TAH) provisions of the land claim agreement. The SRRB has determined that a TAH should be a conservation mechanism of last resort and, moreover, is a conservation mechanism that has less potential of successfully achieving conservation goals, based on the evidence provided in the hearing. For these reasons, the SRRB in its Report instead decided to adopt a community conservation planning approach.

The SRRB has four concerns about the Minister's request for a total harvest limit of 129 *zekwé*:

1. The focus on harvest numbers in isolation from other harvest management measures is inconsistent with the more multifaceted and culturally appropriate *zekwé gha máhsì ts'ìniwe* (ceremonial harvest) approach defined in the Délìne plan, which encompasses harvest methods, timing, and location.
2. There was no evidence in front of the SRRB during its Hearing with respect to the option of a harvest of 129. There was also not request for, or conservation justification provided for, an overall herd harvest level of 750 rather than 950 in the hearing in which all the evidence was weighed.
3. No evidence has been presented after the hearing to demonstrate that there is new information, based on science or Dene *náoweré*, that is a sufficient basis for this change within the Sahtú Settlement Area. A summer photo census supported the evidence already before the SRRB in its hearing and no other new evidence has been provided to the SRRB to justify this change.
4. The SRRB's community co-management partners have not been provided with an opportunity to properly consider incorporating a threshold of 129 in their harvesting plans, or to discuss how this threshold would be distributed. It would not be appropriate for this decision to be imposed on the Sahtú communities without a proper consultation process and evidence to justify this change.

The SRRB remains willing to discuss the appropriate thresholds for harvesting, for the purpose of herd-wide conservation coordination. As discussed below, the SRRB recommends that a key next step is cross-regional discussion of harvesters regarding harvest timing and location plans for this harvest season, and subsequent dialogue with regional leaders and ENR about coordinated harvesting and conservation planning.

## Decisions and Actions

1. **Decision:** The SRRB affirms its decision, based on the evidence in the hearing, that the conservation approach which best meets the precautionary principle and which has the best chance of achieving conservation success is the community conservation planning process and the existing Délı̨ne plan with its suggested harvesting rate of 150 ʔekwé.
2. **Decision:** The SRRB affirms its decision requiring collaborative development of a detailed monitoring system involving Sahtú user communities, ENR, and the SRRB.
3. **Action:** The SRRB requests that ENR and Sahtú user communities work together with the SRRB in development of a detailed collaborative monitoring system. This system should involve annual plan reviews in order to assess whether the community conservation planning approach is working, including whether harvests are being adequately monitored and authorized by the Délı̨ne ʔehdzo Got'ı̨ne (Renewable Resources Council).

### B. Male-Female Ratio for Harvest

The Minister has requested that the SRRB vary its decision to support the principles of ekwé ʔedets'é k'áokerewe (caribou self-regulation) and community ʔedets'é k'áokerewe (community self regulation) by imposing a limit of five tsída (females), which would not be reflected in *Wildlife Act* regulations. The SRRB has reviewed the Minister's response and reasons for this requested change, and has decided not to accept this limit. The SRRB also continues to recommend a change in the regulations to recognize the tsída gha máhsı ts'ı̨ı̨we (ceremonial harvest of females) and prevent the criminalization of those who harvest any tsída for ceremonial purposes.

As discussed above in the SRRB's analysis of the Minister's response regarding the harvest rate, a conservation approach based only on harvest numbers does not respect the multi-faceted and carefully constructed ʔekwé gha máhsı ts'ı̨ı̨we (ceremonial harvest) management approach put forward in Délı̨ne's *Belare wı̨le Gots'é ʔekwé* plan.

The SRRB maintains that no new science or Dene náoweré has been presented after the hearing to provide a basis for the limit of five tsída, as opposed to the threshold of 20% determined by the Board based on evidence presented at the Hearing. The SRRB recognizes that the key motivation for this suggested amendment is to impose similar restrictions across regions.

The SRRB heard evidence in the hearings, however, that 100% bull harvest restrictions have not been successfully implemented. The SRRB finds that it is contrary to conservation goals to impose a restriction that will almost certainly be violated (even in a limited number of situations), thus putting harvesters in the position of being criminalized for harvesting activities. The SRRB also heard Dene náoweré in the hearing, and in its discussion with Délı̨ne regarding the Minister's response, that a 100% male harvest is not an appropriate

conservation mechanism due to the impact on the herd structure and social processes. It is also inconsistent with Dene cultural beliefs regarding the need to honour situations when ʔekwé offer themselves to hunters.

The SRRB recognizes that management of tsída harvest is complex, and is committed to working with Délı̄nę and ENR to develop a workable method to support a majority yárégo (younger bull) harvest.

#### Decisions and Actions

4. **Decision:** The SRRB has reviewed the request for further reduction of the tsída (female) harvest and affirms its decisions, based on the evidence, that a majority yárégo (younger bull) harvest is appropriate, with a maximum of 20% tsída (female) harvest.
5. **Action:** The SRRB requests the Délı̄nę and ENR collaborate with the SRRB in development of a workable method to support a majority yárégo (younger bull) harvest.
6. **Action:** The SRRB asks the Délı̄nę ʔekwé Working Group to provide the SRRB with information by November 30, 2016 about how the harvest plans for this year will maximize the potential for yárégo rather than tsída harvest and how health sample kits will be used in a planned manner in order to better monitor harvest rates.

## 2. Cross Regional Coordination

This section relates to the Minister's response to SRRB decisions 22, 26, and 36 primarily, as well as to SRRB Decisions 15, 25, 30 and 33.

The SRRB acknowledges and thanks the Minister for affirming the conservation value, in principle, of community conservation planning processes.

In the Minister's response to the SRRB's report and the Délı̄nę plan, ENR shares its concern about how to address the "need for an overall coordinated approach to herd-wide management" (response to Decision 15). In ENR's response to Decision 30 of the SRRB's report, the Minister expresses concern that:

Variable herd harvest management would allow one user group to potentially negatively affect the herd and thereby impact other user groups with equal rights to harvest that herd and equal interests in conservation and food security. Additionally, it would be difficult to rationalize and manage harvest of 80% bulls in the Sahtú region and 100% bulls in Wek'èezhì for the same herd, particularly as harvesters from the two land claim areas may be harvesting in the other land claim area.

The SRRB does not agree with the assumption that a difference in approaches between the regions should be the rationale for imposing either a Total Allowable Harvest (TAH) or a community conservation planning process on another region without support from that

region for such a measure. The Minister’s suggestions would, for instance, effectively superimpose the TAH approach used in the Tłı̨chǫ region onto the Sahtú community conservation planning process, where the SRRB found based on the evidence that a TAH approach is not the best alternative for meeting conservation goals and is not compatible with community conservation planning in the Sahtú Region at this time.

Maintaining the mutual respect of the two regions for their respective approaches does, however, depend on communication and coordination. The SRRB recommends to ENR that the best conservation approach is to bring together user groups from the Sahtú and Tłı̨chǫ regions to discuss how to coordinate annual conservation efforts. For instance, the SRRB heard compelling evidence in its hearings that an effective way to shape and monitor appropriate harvest rates is for communities to share intended harvest locations and times (including in overlap areas) and the conservation plans. Based on the evidence in the hearing, the SRRB finds that one of the best potential conservation mechanisms for addressing harvest rates and male/female ratios is coordinating harvest locations and times (so that conservation is place-based).

The SRRB met with Délı̨nę representatives and held a public meeting to discuss the Minister’s response, and also heard feedback from the Délı̨nę community about the need for cross regional coordination. The SRRB agrees with the elders from Délı̨nę, and the elders who are SRRB Board members and Special Advisors, who advised the SRRB that the regions need to come together to find common ground, reflecting the Dene cultural value of finding a consensus based on Dene law and traditions.

### Actions

7. **Action:** The SRRB recommends that Délı̨nę and the Sahtú Secretariat Incorporated request a meeting of harvesters and leaders from the Tłı̨chǫ and Sahtú regions to discuss cross-regional coordination of harvest plans.
8. **Action:** The SRRB recommends that after this meeting, the representatives from the two regions meet with the SRRB, WRRB and ENR to discuss the outcome of the cross-regional coordination meeting.

### 3. Herd Status

This section relates to the Minister’s response to SRRB Decisions 2, 4, and 5.

The SRRB acknowledges the Minister’s acceptance of the conclusion that there are wide natural variations in herd populations (response to Decision 5). The SRRB notes that the SRRB’s decision regarding wide natural variation in herd population also finds that “new social and ecological factors contribute new and unknown pressures that could accelerate decline or prevent recovery” (BNE Report, page 25). In its hearing report, the SRRB found that evidence supported concerns that new and unknown pressures on the BNE herd include “new harvesting technologies, cultural change, ʔehdanagokwı (climate change), and

industrial development” (BNE Report, page 23). The SRRB notes that ENR did not accept the SRRB’s finding regarding the impact of these new and unknown pressures.

The evidence in the hearing clearly supported the SRRB’s decision that herd recovery plans must include provisions to address these additional impacts (such as ʔehdanagokwı and industrial development) that are driving ʔekwé health and population changes. Both science and Dene náoweré evidence demonstrated that management of Aboriginal harvest is only a small piece of the conservation picture.

The SRRB reiterates the finding that both research (including funding for research) and policy reform commitments are needed to identify and address key factors potentially exacerbating the decline of the herd. It is the SRRB’s opinion, based on the evidence, that failure to address these factors could accelerate the decline or prevent recovery of the herd.

The SRRB therefore urges the Minister to acknowledge that new social and ecological factors contribute new and unknown pressures could accelerate decline or prevent recovery of the Bluenose ʔekwé herd, and that the GNWT will commit to further research and policy reform to better understand and address these pressures on ʔekwé.

#### 4. Research Needs

This section relates to the Minister’s response to SRRB Decisions 1, 3, 6, 16, 20, and 35.

The SRRB acknowledges and thanks the Minister for those aspects of the ENR response letter that affirm the need for research in the following areas:

- Genetics and Dene náoweré research to better understand BNE herd structure and distribution (Decision 1)
- Research to understand relationships between ʔededáhk’ó goʔekwé (ʔekwé habitat), tıch’ádıı (wildlife) interactions and ʔekwé harvesting (Decision 6)
- Research funding and support to understand the impacts of ʔehdanagokwı (climate change) on ʔekwé and ʔededáhk’ó goʔekwé (Decision 16)
- Research to identify, name and conduct baseline assessments of critical ʔededáhk’ó goʔekwé (Decision 20)
- Research based on existing Dene náoweré map datasets and stories to understand the social-ecological history of Bluenose East ʔededáhk’ó goʔekwé as a basis for community conservation planning (Decision 35)

The SRRB notes that research in these areas must include not only science-based research (which was affirmed in the Minister’s responses) but also Dene náoweré (traditional knowledge) research.

The SRRB also notes that, in order for this research to occur, the GNWT must commit funding resources for research in these areas, particularly where new research is required.

On the issue of ʔehdanagokwı (climate change), for instance, the Minister’s response lists GNWT initiatives already occurring; but the SRRB is of the view that additional research is critical.

The SRRB therefore recommends (as discussed below) that the GNWT identify funding for further collaborative research, including participation of Sahtú communities, on the impact of and potential mitigation plans for ʔehdanagokwı.

### Actions

9. **Action:** The SRRB accepts the Minister’s offer of a meeting with ENR representatives to discuss past research and necessary future research into the area of ʔehdanagokwı (climate change) mitigation and adaptation in NWT communities, and asks that this meeting include ENR, the SRRB, and ʔehdzo Got’ıne (Renewable Resources Council) representatives.

## 5. Policy Reform

This section relates to the Minister’s Responses to SRRB Decisions 17, 19, 21, 22, 29, 31, 36, and 38.

### *A. Build and Participate in Policy Responses on ʔehdanagokwı (Climate Change) (Decision 17)*

The SRRB thanks the Minister and ENR for acknowledging the importance of research on the impacts of ʔehdanagokwı (climate change) in the Arctic and related topics. The *2016 NWT Climate Change Strategy* has the potential to be an important tool in helping to mitigate the impacts of ʔehdanagokwı on Arctic environments.

The SRRB also recommends that the GNWT consider ʔehdanagokwı mitigation strategies as a necessary part of ʔekwé conservation, and a policy priority. ʔehdanagokwı and the related impacts on ʔekwé health and ʔededáhk’é goʔekwé (ʔekwé habitat) was raised as a priority concern by Sahtú Dene and Métis in their evidence at the BNE Hearing. Many of these concerns are rooted in Dene náoweré and years of observation and experience of elders and harvesters. We note the Board’s recommendations above regarding further research efforts required in this area.

### *B. Review current Nerekó (Wildfire) Management Policy and Develop a New “Forest Management” Plan for the Sahtú Region: (Decision 19)*

The SRRB thanks the Minister for offering that the GNWT meet with the SRRB to review ENR’s approach to nerekó (wildfire) management. The SRRB recognizes that wildfire management is a matter that involves a number of GNWT departments, and that the GNWT is balancing protection of human life with other values such as habitat conservation.

The SRRB's primary concern with respect to wildfire management is the associated forest management planning that must occur. Chapter 14 of the SDMCLCA provides that the SRRB must approve forest management plans and must be part of the process for determining appropriate land use plans and policies affecting forestry in the Sahtú. However, the GNWT has not, to date, involved the SRRB in forest management planning for the Sahtú region.

As stated in Decision 19 of the SRRB Report, it is the SRRB's recommendation that a new forest management plan for the Sahtú region must be developed. Based on the evidence heard in the hearing, this plan must include provisions that address ʔekwé habitat concerns. The impacts of nerekó on ʔekwé habitat is priority concern for Sahtú Dene and Métis that is rooted in Dene náoweró, and this was strongly communicated to the Board at the BNE hearings.

#### Action

10. **Action:** The SRRB accepts the Minister's offer of a meeting with GNWT representatives to review ENR's approach to nerekó (wildfire) management, and asks that this also be a discussion on the need for a forest management plan for the Sahtú and that representatives of ʔehdzo Got'ine (Renewable Resources Councils) also be invited to participate in this discussion.

#### *C. Collaborative Input on Requirements for Establishing Né Kárla K'ets'edí (Conservation Areas) During the Next Sahtú Land Use Plan Five-Year Review Scheduled for 2018-2019. (Decision 21)*

The SRRB thanks the Minister and ENR for indicating support for the SRRB and its community co-management partners in providing input into the five-year review of the Sahtú Land Use Plan with the goal of advocating for the need to establish ʔekwé conservation areas.

#### Action

11. **Action:** The SRRB affirms its commitment to working with ENR and ʔehdzo Got'ine (Renewable Resources Councils) on a ʔededáhk'á goʔekwé (ʔekwé habitat) focused review of conservation areas as part of five year Sahtú Land Use Plan review.

#### *D. Collaborative Input on Nunavut Land Use, Wildlife Management and Regulatory Planning Affecting BNE ʔekwé (Decision 22)*

The SRRB acknowledges the Minister's ongoing efforts to participate in regulatory, wildlife management and land-use planning processes in Nunavut that affect BNE ʔekwé, including environmental assessments and meetings of the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board and Nunavut Planning Commission.

#### Action

12. **Action:** The SRRB affirms its continued collaboration with ENR in providing input into Nunavut land use planning, wildlife management and regulatory processes affecting BNE ʔekwé and ʔededáhk'á goʔekwé.

## ***E. Amendments to the Big Game Hunting Regulations Regarding Harvesting Authorization and Bull Harvests (Decision 29, 31 and 36)***

The SRRB thanks the Minister for indicating ENR's willingness to review the *Wildlife Act's Big Game Hunting Regulations* to discuss amendments necessary to reflect the community conservation planning approach, including through the use of ʔehdzo Got'ıneę (Renewable Resources Council) authorizations for harvest rather than the current requirement for tags.

The SRRB also thanks ENR for agreeing to work together to address overlap, zoning and naming issues that may require amendments to the *Regulations*. The Minister's response requests clarification on the possible changes being suggested to address overlap, zone and naming issues. This clarification will be provided through dialogue with Délıneę and other community co-management partners.

The SRRB notes that there is an issue with the Minister's requested variance that the current *Regulations* requirement for a "bull only" harvest remain. As noted in the comments above, the SRRB continues to find, based on the science and Dene náoweré evidence provided in the hearing, that a male-only harvest is not an appropriate conservation approach. The Minister's response suggests an annual harvest limit of five tsída (females) for ceremonial purposes (rather than the SRRB's decision accepting a harvest of 20% tsída). The SRRB is concerned that maintaining a "bull only" harvest regulation still results in criminalizing those who harvest any tsída at all, including those allocated for máhsı ts'ıneęwe (ceremonial purposes).

The SRRB suggests, consistent with the community conservation planning approach, and in order to prevent criminalization of those who harvest even a reduced number of tsída, that the *Regulations* be amended to simply provide for ʔehdzo Got'ıneę (Renewable Resources Council) authorizations for any harvest rather than the current requirement for tags or for a "bull only" harvest. As an alternative, the *Regulations* could be amended to provide for ʔehdzo Got'ıneę authorization for a tsída harvest specifically.

### **Decision and Actions**

13. **Decision:** The SRRB recommends that the *Big Game Hunting Regulations* should be amended to simply provide for ʔehdzo Got'ıneę (Renewable Resources Council) authorizations for any harvest rather than the current requirement for tags or for a "bull only" harvest. As an alternative, the *Regulations* could be amended to provide for ʔehdzo Got'ıneę authorization for a tsída harvest specifically.
14. **Action:** The SRRB requests a meeting of legal counsel for the SRRB and GNWT, as well as GNWT legislative drafters, to discuss how a provision for a limited tsída gha máhsı ts'ıneęwe (ceremonial harvest of females) could be addressed in revisions to the regulations.
15. **Action:** The SRRB undertakes to collaborate with the Délıneę ʔekwé Working Group to provide ENR with an outline of the overlap, zoning and naming issues, and with

suggested times for a preliminary meeting to discuss next steps for how these issues can be addressed in *Regulations* amendments.

#### **F. Development of a Restorative Justice Code for Enforcement under the Wildlife Act (Decision 38)**

The SRRB acknowledges and thanks the Minister for ENR's willingness to explore the option of recognizing the Déłıne restorative justice code (dealing with community members who do not respect the community's harvesting plan) as an enforcement option under the *Wildlife Act*. The SRRB recognizes that initiative will require the involvement of the GNWT Department of Justice as well, and the potential need for both short and long term agreements between Déłıne and the GNWT on enforcement protocols to ensure clarity regarding enforcement processes for the current and future harvesting seasons.

The SRRB notes that the new Déłıne Got'ıne Government has now established the Déłıne K'e Dats'eredi Ke (Justice Council). The SRRB suggests that it may be appropriate to involve this Council in discussion with the GNWT regarding development of an agreement on enforcement including restorative justice options under the *Wildlife Act*.

The SRRB recognizes that an agreement on a restorative justice code may take some time to develop and that enforcement decisions will need to be made in the interim, including in the current harvest season. The SRRB therefore recommends that the GNWT and Déłıne Got'ıne Government consider an interim enforcement agreement that lays out interim acceptance of the Déłıne enforcement approach on a trial basis, pending negotiation of an agreement regarding the option for an alternative code under the *Wildlife Act*.

#### **Action**

**16. Action:** The SRRB requests that ENR, the Department of Justice and the Déłıne Got'ıne Government meet as soon as possible to discuss next steps for establishing a restorative justice agreement dealing with enforcement of the Déłıne plan. The SRRB further recommends that these parties consider the use of an interim enforcement agreement to deal with the upcoming harvest seasons, while the work proceeds on the establishment of a restorative justice agreement.

#### **G. Predator Control (Decision 23)**

The SRRB, in its Final Report on the BNE Hearings, committed to review and evaluate the Wek'èezhı Renewable Resources Board's díga (wolf) control feasibility study when it is complete, and then engage in dialogue with ʔehdzo Got'ıne (Renewable Resources Councils) to identify future research needs and whether a díga program should be put in place in the Sahtú Region. The SRRB thanks ENR for the update on this process, in the Minister's response.

The SRRB recognizes that predator-ʔekwé ecology and management is complex. The SRRB was reminded, in discussions with Déłıne community members last week, that questions are continuing to be raised about the impact of both díga and sahcho (grizzly bears) on the

BNE herd. The SRRB is aware that some predator control initiatives already exist, such as incentives for trapping wolves (and these incentives are not dependent on the outcome of the díga control feasibility study). The SRRB looks forward to ongoing dialogue with ENR and ʔehdzo Got'ıne on this issue.

## 6. Funding

This section relates to the Minister's response to SRRB Decision 12 as well as the SRRB decisions related to research, policy and youth and education.

The SRRB thanks the Minister and ENR for support in principle of the ʔehdzo Got'ıne (Renewable Resources Councils) in developing community ʔekwé conservation plans for all Sahtú communities.

In the Minister's response, ENR recommended that the SRRB pursue other potential sources of funding to develop community ʔekwé conservation plans and capacity building for ʔehdzo Got'ıne. The SRRB understands that a creative funding approach is required to initiate community planning as a new framework for ʔekwé conservation in the Sahtú Region. However, assuming that this approach is successful, the Board expects that long term funding support will be required, along with a corresponding shift in ENR funding priorities.

In the meantime, the SRRB requests ENR's guidance in identifying and approaching other potential funding resources in Government of the Northwest Territories programs.

To support the roles of ʔehdzo Got'ıne in the manner anticipated under the SDMCLCA, the SRRB also requests ENR's assistance in approaching the Sahtú Secretariat Incorporated and Canada to ensure proper implementation funding is available for the functions required of the ʔehdzo Got'ıne.

Further resources will be needed to implement research and policy reform recommendations that are critical for the successful implementation of the community conservation plans, addressing conservation needs, and meeting obligations of ʔehdzo Got'ıne under the SDMCLCA.

More specifically, additional funding resources are needed to implement the research, policy reform, and youth and education decisions and recommendations made by the SRRB.

### Action

17. **Action:** The SRRB recommends that the GNWT identify funding for further collaborative research, including participation of Sahtú communities, on the impact of and potential mitigation plans for ʔehdanagokwı (climate change).
18. **Action:** The SRRB requests that ENR collaborate with the SRRB to develop a funding framework to support the community conservation planning approach.

## 7. Youth and Education

This section relates to Minister's response to SRRB Decisions 8, 9 and 13.

The SRRB thanks the Minister and ENR for acceptance of the principle of community-based education on the topics of ası́ı́ godı́ hé Dene ts'ı́ı́ı́ hé (biocultural diversity) and ʔedets'ę́ k'áots'erewe (self-regulation). The SRRB notes that resources will be required for curriculum development in these areas.

The SRRB looks forward to seeing plans for integrating this into the curriculum of schools in Sahtú communities. The SRRB suggests that a model for integrating this knowledge and these activities into school curriculum can be found with the Opaskwayak Cree Nation's education authority in Manitoba, which has developed for-credit integrated trapping, forest ecology, and Cree language courses using a land-based pedagogy.

The SRRB decisions 8, 9, and 13 stressed the importance of initiatives aimed at educating youth and others on environmental stewardship, including education on biocultural diversity and ʔekwé self-regulation, and leadership development for youth. The Minister's responses were largely focused on hunter-education initiatives.

While hunter education is important it is also important to ensure that youth and others are provided with meaningful opportunities to develop their relationships with land and to learn about the ecosystems and the complex webs of relationships among people, animals, and the land, as it is this knowledge and these interactions that form the basis of the Délı́ne plan.

The evidence before the SRRB in the hearing was that the Sahtú communities believe that youth have a responsibility to develop knowledge and skills that will allow them to be responsible stewards of the land as they become leaders and, eventually, elders. The SRRB heard that it is thus imperative that youth are provided with opportunities to develop their leadership skills through meaningful participation and inclusion in community conservation planning processes, implementation of community conservation plans, and other activities related to wildlife and ecosystem management.

### Action

**19. Action:** the SRRB requests a meeting with ENR representatives to discuss how the SRRB and ENR can take steps to jointly develop a youth research and environmental leadership initiative.

## APPENDIX A - Summary of Decisions and Actions by Theme

This section summarizes specific priority decisions and action items identified in the SRRB's reply to the Minister.

### Conservation Approach

20. **Decision:** The SRRB affirms its decision, based on the evidence in the hearing, that the conservation approach which best meets the precautionary principle and which has the best chance of achieving conservation success is the community conservation planning process and the existing Délı̨nę plan with its suggested harvesting rate of 150 ʔekwé.
21. **Decision:** The SRRB affirms its decision requiring collaborative development of a detailed monitoring system involving Sahtú user communities, ENR, and the SRRB.
22. **Action:** The SRRB requests that ENR and Sahtú user communities work together with the SRRB in development of a detailed collaborative monitoring system. This system should involve annual plan reviews in order to assess whether the community conservation planning approach is working, including whether harvests are being adequately monitored and authorized by the Délı̨nę ʔehdzo Got'ı̨nę (Renewable Resources Council).
23. **Decision:** The SRRB has reviewed the request for further reduction of the tsída (female) harvest and affirms its decisions, based on the evidence, that a majority yárégo (younger bull) harvest is appropriate, with a maximum of 20% tsída (female) harvest.
24. **Action:** The SRRB requests that Délı̨nę and ENR collaborate with the SRRB in development of a workable method to support a majority yárégo (younger bull) harvest
25. **Action:** The SRRB asks the Délı̨nę working group to provide the SRRB with information by November 30, 2016 about how the harvest plans for this year will maximize the potential for yárégo rather than tsída harvest and how health sample kits will be used in a planned manner in order to better monitor harvest rates.

### Cross-Regional Coordination

26. **Action:** The SRRB recommends that Délı̨nę and the Sahtú Secretariat Incorporated request a meeting of harvesters and leaders from the Tłı̨chʔ and Sahtú regions to discuss cross-regional coordination of harvest plans.
27. **Action:** The SRRB recommends that after this meeting, the representatives from the two regions meet with the SRRB, WRRB and ENR to discuss outcome of the cross-regional coordination meeting.

### Herd Status

*See actions related to research and policy reform.*

## Research Needs

28. **Action:** The SRRB accepts the Minister's offer of a meeting with ENR representatives to discuss past research and necessary future research into the area of ʔehdanagokwı (climate change) mitigation and adaptation in NWT communities, and asks that this meeting include ENR, the SRRB, and ʔehdzo Got'ıne (Renewable Resources Council) representatives.

## Policy Reform

29. **Action:** The SRRB accepts the Minister's offer of a meeting with GNWT representatives to review ENR's approach to nerekó (wildfire) management, and asks that this also be a discussion on the need for a forest management plan for the Sahtú and that representatives of ʔehdzo Got'ıne (Renewable Resources Councils) also be invited to participate in this discussion.

30. **Action:** The SRRB affirms its commitment to working with ENR and ʔehdzo Got'ıne (Renewable Resources Councils) on a ʔededáhk'á goʔekwé (ʔekwé habitat) focused review of conservation areas as part of five year Sahtú Land Use Plan review.

31. **Action:** The SRRB affirms its continued collaboration with ENR in providing input into Nunavut land use planning, wildlife management and regulatory processes affecting BNE ʔekwé and ʔededáhk'á goʔekwé.

32. **Decision:** The SRRB recommends that the *Big Game Hunting Regulations* be amended to simply provide for ʔehdzo Got'ıne (Renewable Resources Council) authorizations for any harvest rather than the current requirement for tags or for a "bull only" harvest. As an alternative, the *Regulations* could be amended to provide for ʔehdzo Got'ıne (Renewable Resources Council) authorization for a tsída harvest specifically.

33. **Action:** The SRRB requests a meeting of legal counsel for the SRRB and GNWT, as well as GNWT legislative drafters, to discuss how a provision for a limited tsída gha máhsi ts'ıne (ceremonial harvest of females) could be addressed in revisions to the regulations.

34. **Action:** The SRRB undertakes to collaborate with the Délıne ʔekwé Working Group to provide ENR with an outline of the overlap, zoning and naming issues, and with suggested times for a preliminary meeting to discuss next steps for how these issues can be addressed in Regulations amendments.

35. **Action:** The SRRB requests that ENR, the Department of Justice and the Délıne Got'ıne Government meet as soon as possible to discuss next steps for establishing a restorative justice agreement dealing with enforcement of the Délıne plan. The SRRB further recommends that these parties consider the use of an interim enforcement agreement to deal with the upcoming harvest seasons, while the work proceeds on the establishment of a restorative justice agreement.

## Funding

36. **Action:** The SRRB recommends that the GNWT identify funding for further collaborative research, including participation of Sahtú communities, on the impact of and potential mitigation plans for zehdanagokwı (climate change).
37. **Action:** The SRRB requests that ENR collaborate with the SRRB to develop a funding framework to support the community conservation planning approach.

## Youth and Education

38. **Action:** the SRRB requests a meeting with ENR representatives to discuss how the SRRB and ENR can take steps to jointly develop a youth research and environmental leadership initiative.

## APPENDIX B – Proposed Workplan

The following table provides a suggested approach for accomplishing actions proposed in this letter. Action numbers are provided in Appendix A. Note that proposed timelines are based on a combination of priority and capacity levels.

Task/Actions	Timeline
Meeting of Délıne Working Group to develop harvest management and monitoring plan, including plan for ensuring majority yárego (younger bull) harvest and implementing health sampling program. <i>Actions 5 and 6.</i>	November 2016 (Working Group meeting planned for November 4)
Meeting of ENR, the Department of Justice and the Délıne Got'ıne Government to discuss next steps for establishing a restorative justice agreement dealing with enforcement of the Délıne plan and consider the use of an interim enforcement agreement to deal with the upcoming harvest seasons, while the work proceeds on the establishment of a restorative justice agreement. <i>Action 16.</i>	November 2016
Meeting of harvesters and leaders from the Tıchq and Sahtú regions to discuss cross-regional coordination of harvest plans. <i>Action 7.</i>	January 2017
Meeting of representatives from Tıchq and Sahtú regions with the SRRB, WRRB and ENR to discuss outcome of the cross-regional coordination meeting. <i>Action 8.</i>	January 2017
Meeting to review ENR's approach to nereko (wildfire) management and the need for a forest management plan, including SRRB, ENR and ?ehdzo Got'ıne representatives. <i>Action 11.</i>	March 2017
SRRB and ENR meeting to discuss: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Past research and necessary future research into the area of ?ehdanagokwı (climate change) mitigation and adaptation in NWT communities, including ENR, the SRRB, and ?ehdzo Got'ıne (Renewable Resources Council) representatives. <i>Action 10.</i></li> <li>• A funding framework to support the community conservation planning approach. <i>Action 17.</i></li> <li>• Steps to jointly develop a youth research and environmental leadership initiative. <i>Action 18.</i></li> </ul>	March 2017
GNWT identifies funding for further collaborative research, including participation of Sahtú communities, on the impact of and potential mitigation plans for ?ehdanagokwı (climate change). <i>Action 9.</i>	March 2017
The SRRB collaborates with the Délıne ?ekwé Working Group to provide ENR with an outline of overlap, zoning and naming issues, and with suggested times for a preliminary	March 2017

Task/Actions	Timeline
meeting to discuss next steps for how these issues can be addressed in <i>Regulations</i> amendments. <i>Action 15.</i>	
The SRRB recommends that the <i>Big Game Hunting Regulations</i> be amended to simply provide for ?ehdzo Got'ine? authorizations for any harvest rather than the current requirement for tags or for a “bull only” harvest. As an alternative, the <i>Regulations</i> could be amended to provide for ?ehdzo Got'ine? authorization for a tsída harvest specifically. <i>Action 14.</i>	May 2017
Meeting of SRRB and GNWT legal counsel and GNWT legislative drafters to discuss how a provision for a limited tsída gha máhsı ts'ine?we (ceremonial harvest of females) could be addressed in revisions to the regulations. <i>Action 15.</i>	May 2017
ENR and Sahtú user communities and SRRB develop a detailed monitoring system involving Sahtú user communities, ENR, and the SRRB, and including annual plan reviews. <i>Action 3.</i>	Fall 2017 (following completion of Sahtú Harvest Study validation)
SRRB collaboration with ENR and ?ehdzo Got'ine? on a ?ededáhk'é gozekwé (zekwé habitat) focused review of conservation areas as part of five year Sahtú Land Use Plan review. <i>Action 12.</i>	March 2018
Continued SRRB collaboration with ENR in providing input into Nunavut land use planning, wildlife management and regulatory processes affecting BNE zekwé and ?ededáhk'é gozekwé. <i>Action 13.</i>	Ongoing