

**DISCUSSION PAPER ON
OPTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A
REGIONAL WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT PROCESS
IN THE NORTHERN INTERIOR REGION**

March 2, 2003

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Due to fundamental differences in the wildlife interests and mandates of the Parties at the Lheidli T'enneh treaty negotiation table, Canada, British Columbia and Lheidli T'enneh entered into a Treaty Related Measure termed the Wildlife Management Committee Study on January 10, 2001 "to develop options towards the creation of a formal process that would enable the Lheidli T'enneh to participate in the management of wildlife within their Traditional Territory." As part of the Treaty Related Measure, a Steering Committee was established and a literature review was completed. The Parties then hosted a regional wildlife management workshop on November 14-15, 2001 in Prince George which brought together the players Lheidli T'enneh believes need to be involved in a regional wildlife management process.

This phase of the project led to the establishment of a multiparty working group of the organizations and first nations present at the November 2001 workshop (herein referred to as the Wildlife Working Group) to design and implement a regional wildlife management process and set out specific organizational steps to accomplish this objective.

A functional wildlife management process in the north interior region would provide:

- Lheidli T'enneh the opportunity to participate in wildlife management
- A means for other First Nations in the north interior to participate in wildlife management
- A means for third party groups with interests in wildlife to participate in wildlife management

Such a process is intended to:

- Help identify commonalities with respect to the interests in wildlife
- Encourage the sharing of information among the participants
- Enhance working relationships
- Assist participants in reaching a common understanding of the rights and interests of the First Nations and third parties, and address those rights and interests
- Operate independently, yet co-operatively and complimentary to other processes and initiatives in the region
- Achieve an acceptable method of decision-making with respect to wildlife management in the northern interior region

The Wildlife Working Group recommends that the Parties approve and implement, in accordance with the following recommendations, the creation of a Regional Wildlife Management Process in the Northern Interior Region.

Recommendation 1

The initial Regional Wildlife Management Process should generally consist of the present members of the Wildlife Working Group and the Process Planning Committee.

Recommendation 2

Immediate priorities for the Regional Wildlife Management Process should focus on:

- *Harvest management, including harvest levels, seasons, bag limits, allocations and harvest sharing*
- *Habitat*
- *Collection and management of inventories, research and relevant information*

Recommendation 3

The Regional Wildlife Management Process should have a decision-making role for operational, “on the ground” issues within the region. The Process should have an advisory role for:

- *Legislative and policy issues*
- *Plans submitted by other resource use groups, such as forestry and mining*
- *Decisions that affect other regions or areas*

Recommendation 4

All members of the Regional Wildlife Management Process should participate in decisions for all issues being considered by the process, but members should have the option to voluntarily abstain from taking part in decisions, including decisions not relevant to their interests.

Recommendation 5

The Regional Wildlife Management Process should make decisions and recommendations based on the best available information. The Process should facilitate and be able to enter into formal information sharing protocols regarding harvest data.

Recommendation 6

The Regional Wildlife Management Process should be supported with secure long-term provincial government funding in accordance with the province’s primary responsibility for wildlife management. The Process should nevertheless be open to receiving additional funding support from other sources.

Recommendation 7

The Regional Wildlife Management Process should proceed on the basis of the geographic area proposed in Appendix A.

Recommendation 8

Where the geographic area of the Regional Wildlife Management Process includes the traditional territory of a First Nation that chooses not to participate in the Process, government should fulfill its legal obligations through other processes.

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DEFINITIONS

Many words or terms have a specific meaning for the specialized field of wildlife management and process development. A glossary of terms will be developed for participants' reference, including drafting operational or procedural context for terms such as "conservation" that may have no agreed or universally defined meaning.

Definitions for the purposes of this discussion paper include the following:

- "Parties" means the parties to the Lheidli T'enneh treaty negotiations, Canada, British Columbia and Lheidli T'enneh.
- "Process Planning Committee (PPC)" refers to the designated group of individuals that have been tasked with tabling this Final Report containing recommendations for a Regional Wildlife Management Process and that will continue to consult with the Wildlife Working Group in the implementation of these recommendations.
- "Regional Wildlife Management Process (RWMP)" refers to the process that the Process Planning Committee will be tabling recommendations on through this Discussion Paper.
- "Treaty Related Measure (TRM)" refers to a type of interim measure that is negotiated within the treaty negotiation context to resolve matters on an interim basis and facilitate treaty negotiations.
- "Wildlife Working Group (WWG)" refers to the regional group of individuals representing the federal and provincial government, the Lheidli T'enneh, other First Nations in the region and interested third party groups with whom the Process Planning Committee has consulted in the development of these recommendations for the creation of a Regional Wildlife Management Process.

INTRODUCTION

This effort to develop a Regional Wildlife Management Process (RWMP) in the northern interior of British Columbia originated in Lheidli T'enneh treaty negotiations. Although the negotiations have made substantial progress on many issues, the Parties approached wildlife from fundamentally different perspectives, neither of which lacked validity, but which were irreconcilable within the existing mandates of the Parties. Little progress was made during several years of table negotiations, facilitated processes, exchange of discussion papers and drafting exercises. Ultimately, the parties agreed to explore an option that might reconcile the interests through meaningful joint participation in wildlife management.

The Parties therefore agreed to conduct a Treaty Related Measure (TRM) commencing in January 2001 to study and develop a mutually agreeable management process. A tripartite wildlife management steering committee guided the project and conducted an extensive world-scope literature review of initiatives and theories ranging from privatisation of wildlife to advisory processes. The wildlife management steering committee also hosted an intergovernmental information-gathering workshop in April 2001 and a regional multi-party workshop in November 2001. Through these measures a number of common grounds were identified including a mutual commitment to conservation, a focus on consumptive users of wildlife and their habitats and recognition that a management process must be capable of functioning effectively with or without a final treaty agreement.

Lheidli T'enneh tabled the TRM final report on February 21, 2002, which included the following recommendations:

“Recommendation 1: That the Parties to Lheidli T'enneh treaty negotiations proceed pursuant to the information collected and the discussions carried out by the Wildlife Management Steering Committee to:

- Establish a multi-party working group to design and implement a RWMP;
- Base the membership in such a multi-party working group on the organizations and first nations represented at the November 14 – 15, 2001 Wildlife Management Process Workshop; and
- Adequately address Lheidli T'enneh's interests in wildlife management and related opportunities.

Recommendation 2: That the next steps include:

- Designation by participating groups of individual representatives to sit on the process design working group;
- Appropriation of unexpended TRM funding for British Columbia to contract Lheidli T'enneh to facilitate the proposed multi-party planning process;
- Assembly of a comprehensive background information document, including the various draft principles that have been identified to date;
- Meeting of the process design working group; and

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- Meeting with provincial wildlife managers at the operational and senior management levels regarding the linkage of a RWMP with strategic shifts in the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection wildlife management services.”

The Parties accepted these recommendations and brought together the recommended participants to establish an umbrella Wildlife Working Group (WWG) and a Process Planning Committee (PPC) to function as a process development working group. These groups worked together and developed a proposed RWMP for the north interior region. The current membership of the PPC and WWG are set out in Appendices B and C, respectively.

Further momentum has been provided by a number of simultaneous initiatives occurring at broader levels:

- a province-wide regional survey by the BC Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks to gauge the “appetite” for more decentralized management of wildlife
- the release of provincial ministry Service Plans that clearly signalled strategic shifts in wildlife management service delivery
- the establishment of the Recreation Stewardship Panel, which has recommended ways to improve existing management models

REGIONAL WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT PROCESS

The Regional Wildlife Management Process described in this paper has been developed and is being recommended by the multi-party Wildlife Working Group. The WWG began by agreeing to a statement of principles that formed the basis for discussion. A summary of the discussions and recommendations that resulted is as follows.

1. Statement of Principles

A very important first step was to reach common agreement on the fundamental principles to be used as the basis for analysis and decision-making in the RWMP. To develop a statement of principles, three sources were used: the Treaty Related Measures literature review, a statement of interests prepared by the wildlife working group of the Northern Interior Regional Advisory Committee and the BC Environment summary report on regional management processes. The PPC and WWG adapted and refined these into the following guiding principles:

General

- Conservation of the resource is paramount
- Agreement is necessary on the criteria to be used to constitute a conservation issue
- After conservation, aboriginal and treaty rights need to be recognized
- Harvesting of animals is recognized as a management tool and as a legitimate use of wildlife resources
- Participants must have a common understanding of the process, participants' objectives, and the rights and interest of all parties in the process
- Participants should share in benefits through equitable allocation of the resource

Membership

- The RWMP must include a plurality of voices including first nations, hunters, trappers and guide outfitters from within the region
- New membership will be in accordance with the RWMP's terms of reference when finalized
- Government managerial staff must be involved as members in the process
- Government technical staff should not be members but should be invited to provide technical expertise
- Continuity of membership is required, particularly in the early developmental stages of the process

Financing

- Obtain secure, multi-year funding from the provincial government supplemented by available funding from other sources
- Recognize budgetary impacts on the provincial government
- Per diems and travel rates will be paid to participants

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Process

- Ensure the process is flexible and adaptable
- Influence the standardization of operating principles across the province as much as possible
- Wherever possible plain language will be used to avoid the use of acronyms and the need for definitions
- Include a decision-making role for specific issues relevant to regional “on the ground” operations, and an advisory role for issues of broader consequences such as policy, legislation and other matters or decisions that affect other regional processes or adjacent areas

Decision-making

- Consensus-based decision-making is required
- The Minister has statutory authority to make decisions
- Decisions should be based on the best available science and be in balance with local and indigenous knowledge
- Collection of and access to available data and information is required to make recommendations and decisions on issues relating to wildlife management in the geographic area
- Rationale should be provided if the Minister’s decision differs from the recommendations and decisions of the RWMP
- A dispute resolution mechanism is necessary when a decision cannot be reached by consensus

Implementation

- Allow for incremental implementation in which the skills, interests and capacities of participants are recognized
- Keep all communities informed by advising them of the value and achievements of the process
- Incorporate regular evaluations of the process as required

2. Rights and Interests

As recognized in the draft principles, the rights and interests that each participating party brings to the process are fundamentally significant to analysis and decision-making. However, there is no need to undertake the difficult task of defining these rights and interests. Such an exercise could put the process at risk.

It is more effective to structure a regional wildlife process along interest lines such that there is mutual respect for aboriginal or treaty rights and respect for the statutory rights and specific interests of participants and effected non-members. Program mechanisms such as information workshops and joint social or cultural events may assist to clarify and

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inform process members on these respective rights and interests in order to create an essential climate of respect and comfort so that common work can be accomplished.

3. Membership

At the present time, it is understood that the membership of a RWMP would consist generally of the first nations, sectoral interests, and federal and provincial government agencies participating in developing the recommendations in this discussion paper through the Process Planning Committee and the Wildlife Working Group as listed in Appendices “B” and “C” of this Discussion Paper. There has been considerable work done by these groups, which has helped gain trust and mutual respect for each other. This has already led to the establishment of a good working relationship. It has also been agreed that, initially at least, membership participation will be linked to the consumptive uses of wildlife. These parameters may change from time to time as influenced by changes in geographic scope or intergovernmental planning.

Recommendation 1

The initial Regional Wildlife Management Process should generally consist of the present members of the Wildlife Working Group and the Process Planning Committee.

4. Responsibility of Members

The terms of reference for a RWMP would set out the relationship between members, those they represent, and other external interests. At a minimum, members will be expected to participate in the process within the terms and spirit of the process terms of reference and to inform and engage the constituencies they represent as fully as possible. This includes providing updates and notes of the meetings, discussing suggestions, ideas, rationale, and seeking comments and approval for decisions required to achieve the objectives of the process.

Members would also have the responsibility to provide up-dates, meeting notes, documents, relevant advice and materials to their alternates. Participants would be responsible for meeting with their technical advisors and would be encouraged to invite such advisors to RWMP meetings, subject to any necessary approvals.

5. Management Issues

The most important aspect of a RWMP will be the nature and scope of the issues to be discussed and decided on by the participants in the process. Many factors and influences impact wildlife and wildlife management. This process should deal with as many of these relationships and concerns as is necessary to address wildlife management issues and impacts.

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WWG members have identified the following topics, concerns and issues for discussion and decision:

- Harvest levels
- Inventories
- Research projects
- Establishing seasons
- Bag limits
- Allocations
- Harvest sharing
- Designated species
- Regulations
- Habitat issues and impacts
- Access issues
- Surcharges and fees
- Legislation and policy creation with ‘on the ground’ consideration

The RWMP should also be tasked with considering the above “on the ground” issues in the context of:

- Results based management
- Provincial Biodiversity Strategy development
- Implementation of conservation and sustainability principles

The WWG recognizes that it may not be practical to deal with all management issues initially. Prioritisation may have to occur with the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection at the time of implementing the RWMP. With this in mind, the RWMP should in the early stages concentrate on the following management issues:

- Harvest management
- Habitat
- Inventory

Recommendation 2

Immediate priorities for the Regional Wildlife Management Process should focus on:

- *Harvest management, including harvest levels, seasons, bag limits, allocations and harvest sharing*
- *Habitat*
- *Collection and management of inventories, research and relevant information*

6. Decision-making

WWG members are firmly of the view that in order to be effective and acceptable, a RWMP must necessarily involve a meaningful level of decision-making authority. The

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Process Planning Committee therefore notes that although the Final Report and Recommendations of the provincial Recreation Stewardship Panel dated November 29, 2002 as released January 28, 2003 did not follow through with Recommendation 8 of the Panel's September 15, 2002 draft report, which had recommended that "(t)he Regional Wildlife Management Process, currently being piloted in Prince George, should continue to be supported and allowed to develop as a decision-making model that can be used, as appropriate, more broadly across the province", the Panel did recommend in favour of a participatory decision-making model.

At the same time, participants recognize that a meaningful decision-making model would involve a departure from historical wildlife management regimes and would require clear understandings of the procedural and structural components. For that reason, it is understood that the scope and content of decision-making would evolve as the process evolves. By way of example, routine matters such as season dates and area closures that have primarily local impact could relatively easily be delegated to a regional body. Similarly, issues which are not currently the subject of provincial decision-making, such as distribution of hunting pressure to reflect habitat alterations associated with the provincial Forest Health Strategy for dealing with the Mountain Pine Beetle infestation, are seen as appropriate for a regionally-focussed body.

The Wildlife Working Group does recognize that an advisory role, if meaningful, has validity with respect to certain issues. Such issues might include provincial level legislative and policy development, review of appropriate development plans submitted by other resource users and decisions that affect other regions or areas, such as macro distribution of hunting pressure. However, a meaningful advisory capacity must be complemented by reasonable level of decision-making authority to be credible and effective.

The Process Planning Committee has also considered the issue of first nation consultation within the context of a Regional Wildlife Management Process. We recognize some potential for such a process to develop creative approaches to meeting mutual obligations in respect of Crown and industry consultation obligations. As a general proposition, a reasonable level of collective decision-making within a mutually acceptable process would be a full answer to many aspects of the fiduciary obligation that founds the consultation requirement. Even though a process which is focussed primarily on wildlife may be ill-equipped to focus meaningfully on other aboriginal rights, the opportunities afforded in a polycentric process with a credible blend of decision-making and advisory responsibilities are considerable.

Recommendation 3

The Regional Wildlife Management Process should have a decision-making role for operational, "on the ground issues" within the region. The Process should have an advisory role for:

- ***Legislative and provincial policy issues;***
- ***Plans submitted by other resource groups, such as forestry and mining; or***
- ***Decisions that affect other regions or areas.***

a. Method of Decision-making

WWG members agree that decisions will be based on consensus. Consensus will be reached when there is an agreement that all members are willing to support or not oppose. It may not be possible to reach consensus on every step of the process and the RWMP's terms of reference should include a process or processes to manage opposing views where consensus cannot be reached.

When initial agreement is achieved, it is understood that members will have to take the agreement back to their constituencies for approval. It is also understood that agreement by RWMP members carries an obligation that they will represent the benefits of any agreement to their respective constituencies.

Although there are many models of consensus decision-making in practice today, the following principles of consensus building form the basis of an effective regime:

- The purpose of this process is to reach agreement
- The members agree to act in "good faith" in all aspects of the process
- Members recognize the concerns and goals of others as legitimate
- Members agree to share information in a structured way
- Members agree to fully explore issues and search for solutions
- The focus should be interests and concerns rather than positions and demands
- Members are committed to the broadest possible consideration of alternatives and solutions
- All suggestions and offers will be regarded as tentative until consensus is achieved
- Members are obliged to explain their interest and not stall the process without legitimate reason

b. Dispute Resolution

A democratic decision-making system, regardless of its form, requires a mechanism for reviewing disagreements and achieving a final decision when consensus is not achieved. The WWG is proposing the following approach if consensus cannot be reached:

- Clearly define the issue and identify the members concerned and their specific interest in the issue
- Ensure all relevant information regarding the issue is made available for review
- Develop a range of solutions for discussion
- Analyse the solutions for their impacts and determine if they meet the objectives of the process
- Select a solution that best meets the needs of all participants

If any member disagrees with the proposed solution, they will then be responsible for demonstrating clearly that:

- The issue is a matter of such principle that they can not accept the decision
- Their interests would be inequitably impacted by the proposed decision

If the dissenting member or members can demonstrate either condition, then the remaining members of the RWMP will make efforts to address those concerns using the above steps. Disputes between a first nation and government may also be referred to the dispute resolution provisions of a final treaty agreement.

If a dispute cannot be resolved through this more in-depth analysis, members should endeavour to reach consensus on:

- The precise nature of the disagreement
- Options for resolution of the disagreement
- How the disagreement or lack of consensus will be reflected

c. Membership Participation in Decision-making

The success of the RWMP is dependent on the participation of the members in the decision-making process. For this reason, to be effective the RWMP requires that all members participate in all discussions and decision unless a member chooses to voluntarily abstain.

Recommendation 4

All members of the Regional Wildlife Management Process should participate in decisions for all issues being considered by the process, but members should have the option to voluntarily abstain from taking part in decisions, including decisions not relevant to their interests.

a. Frequency of Meetings

How often the members involved in a RWMP meet in order to accomplish the assigned tasks in an efficient and affordable manner is an important consideration in terms of human and financial resources. Demands are likely to fluctuate through development, implementation and routine operations periods but, at the very least, an effective schedule of meetings must recognize the influence of the following constraints:

- Government submission and decision point cycles
- First nation seasonal rounds
- Guiding and trapping seasons
- Natural wildlife cycles
- Emerging or emergent issues and tasks

Government must receive information, conduct analysis and make decisions in a timely fashion in order to fulfil legal obligations with respect to managing wildlife in the province. For example, February 15 annually for regional regulatory submissions, June 15 for printing of annual regulations, March 31 for end of fiscal year budget cycles.

7. Information Sharing

Good information is necessary to ground good decisions. Practices and expectations for providing, receiving and managing scientific, local, traditional, regional, global, written, mapped, oral or digital information are especially problematic. Governments are constrained by freedom of information and privacy legislation. First nations are increasingly recognizing both the value of information and the risks of disseminating it without prior informed consent as to its use. This is a rapidly emerging international issue, strongly influenced by ongoing work under the 1992 United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity and by common law consultation obligations that rest on the Crown and industry when aboriginal interests are at stake. The RWMP must acknowledge the need for and realise the use of information, while working within the constraints of accessibility. The following must be considered when seeking, gathering and using data for effective and timely wildlife management decisions:

- Formal information management protocols
- Transparency and openness principles
- Digital/electronic capabilities and compatibility
- Inclusion of all relevant sources
- Linkages to other processes
- Freedom of Information and Privacy legislation
- Industry-controlled databases
- Intellectual property issues
- Common law consultation requirements

Recommendation 5

The Regional Wildlife Management Process should make decisions and recommendations based on the best available information. The Process should facilitate and be able to enter into formal information sharing protocols regarding harvest data.

8. Communication

Formalized procedures for communicating between the wildlife management process and government officials, communities, constituencies, media, public, other processes and internally will be essential. The RWMP will conduct business as follows:

- Annual work plans would contain formal communications plans

The participants of the RWMP will on a yearly basis develop a plan for communicating information on the RWMP activities, recommendations, and decisions to first nations, constituencies, governments, special interests and the public. This plan will include the method and timing of communications.

- Designated media spokespersons

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The chair and the co-chair of the RWMP are the spokespersons for all formal communications to first nations, governments, special interests and the public. On behalf of the participants, the chair and co-chair, under direction of the participants will be the spokespersons for communicating to the media any public announcements and for responding to questions from the media.

- Individual members contact with organizations and constituencies

Participants are responsible for all communications to their constituency to provide information and obtain comments and advise on the business being conducted by the RWMP prior to any formal announcements to the public. The participants as a group may establish a formal method, including mechanisms and tools for communicating with constituencies.

- Communication with the public

Public communications may include methods such as “open houses”, workshops, news inserts or flyers, with the method and timing being determined by the topic, purpose and internal approval requirements.

- Communication with other interests and local governments

Communication with local governments and other interests such as non-consumptive users of wildlife and industry that are not members of the RWMP may be formalized through protocol or notification agreements with the RWMP. This could extend to other first nations as well.

- Formal communications with Government

The communication plan will include the timing and form of communication required for sending any decisions or recommendations to governments. The timing and method of communications will take into account the reason for communications, such as whether and when a government response or decision is required.

9. Implementation and Funding

An effective process requires secure, long term funding to meet and perform its duties. While the provincial government clearly has responsibility for Crown resources, long standing deficiencies in wildlife funding, the current ministry Service Plans and final recommendations 18, 20 and 21 of the Recreation Stewardship Panel clearly indicate a need for thinking beyond present approaches. Various options have been identified in preliminary discussions which include:

- Ministry and agency base budgets under general revenue or dedicated revenues from outdoor equipment taxes, targeted license fees, or user fees
- Diversion of penalties and fines
- Lottery and casino revenues
- Self-funding process based on cost recovery options

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- Establishment of fish and wildlife trusts in treaty agreements

Start-up funds are required for the first year in the amount of \$50,000, with a commitment to future funding taking into account adjustments required to reflect the issues and changing responsibility of the RWMP.

Implementation of the RWMP should proceed as follows:

- The RWMP receives a mandate and funding from government by April 1, 2003
- The WWG meets in early April 2003 to finalize terms of reference for the RWMP
- Issues are identified with a work plan, schedule and budget included

Recommendation 6

The Regional Wildlife Management Process should be supported with secure long-term provincial government funding in accordance with the province's primary responsibility for wildlife management. The Process should nevertheless be open to receiving additional funding support from other sources.

10. Geographic Scope

Through consultation with first nations and assistance from government technicians, the WWG has delineated a geographic area in which the RWMP may function. This area is shown in Appendix A. The proposal takes into consideration the following variables:

- A defined area within which Lheidli T'enneh rights with respect to wildlife will be exercised under a treaty or other agreement
- The geographic locations in which other first nations located in the northern interior region assert rights with respect to wildlife, including common areas of traditional use of wildlife
- The geographic area of other regional wildlife processes
- Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection regional administrative boundaries and other applicable administrative boundaries such as Wildlife Management Units
- The geographic extent of applicable watersheds
- Ecosystem components including classification, location and extent

Because the above variables may change from time to time, there may be a need to change the geographic area of the RWMP in the future subject to the agreement of the members. The management process will also have to consider other dynamic factors flowing from the working relationships between a RWMP and other initiatives, processes or programs, which may in turn prompt a need to adjust the geographic scope. Such factors may include:

- Hunting regulations
- Conservation requirements
- New or evolving information such as research and inventory data

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- Problem animal management
- Law enforcement
- Wildlife management programs;
- Neighbouring jurisdictions and planning initiatives such as LRMPs
- Regional fisheries management processes
- Protocols between first nations respecting common areas

Recommendation 7

The Regional Wildlife Management Process should proceed on the basis of the geographic area proposed in Appendix A.

Recommendation 8

Where the geographic area of the Regional Wildlife Management Process includes the traditional territory of a first nation that chooses not to participate in the Process, government should fulfill its legal obligations through other processes.

The potential to establish meaningful consultation between the Crown and first nations through the RWMP will be addressed once the RWMP is established.

11. Recreation Stewardship Panel Draft Recommendations

The Recreation Stewardship Panel of experts was appointed by the Minister of Water, Land and Air Protection to review, among other things, the manner in which the Ministry manages wildlife. The Panel tabled a draft report with the Ministry on September 15, 2002 and a final report and recommendations on November 29, 2002 that was released publicly on January 28, 2003. The report concluded that while conservation and protection of wildlife are the responsibility of government and should be supported by general tax revenue, this principle should not preclude the provincial government from working co-operatively with the federal government, First Nations, industry, educational institutions and non-government organizations to accomplish conservation goals.

The Panel also noted in its Transmittal Letter that:

“The panel’s recommendations for stronger relationships with First Nations had the most wide-spread support of all the recommendations in the draft report. Submissions to the panel clearly indicated a desire for the provincial government to support existing agreements and include First Nations in meaningful consultation and cooperative management processes.”

Although the Panel’s final report did not maintain its draft recommendation in respect of the Regional Wildlife Management Process being allowed to develop as decision-making model, its principles and recommendations continue to expressly support the creation of a RWMP in the north interior of the province as well as the vision being contemplated by the PPC and the WWG for the RWMP:

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- Principle 3: First Nations have aboriginal rights related to fish and wildlife, as well as interests in parks. The province will work co-operatively with First Nations in developing, enhancing and managing outdoor recreation opportunities.
- Principle 6: Recreation management will include structured and ongoing mechanisms to ensure public consultation.
- Principle 7: The province will pursue partnerships with First Nations, local governments, the private sector, non-profit sector and individuals to increase capacity to acquire land and manage a diverse array of high quality recreation services.

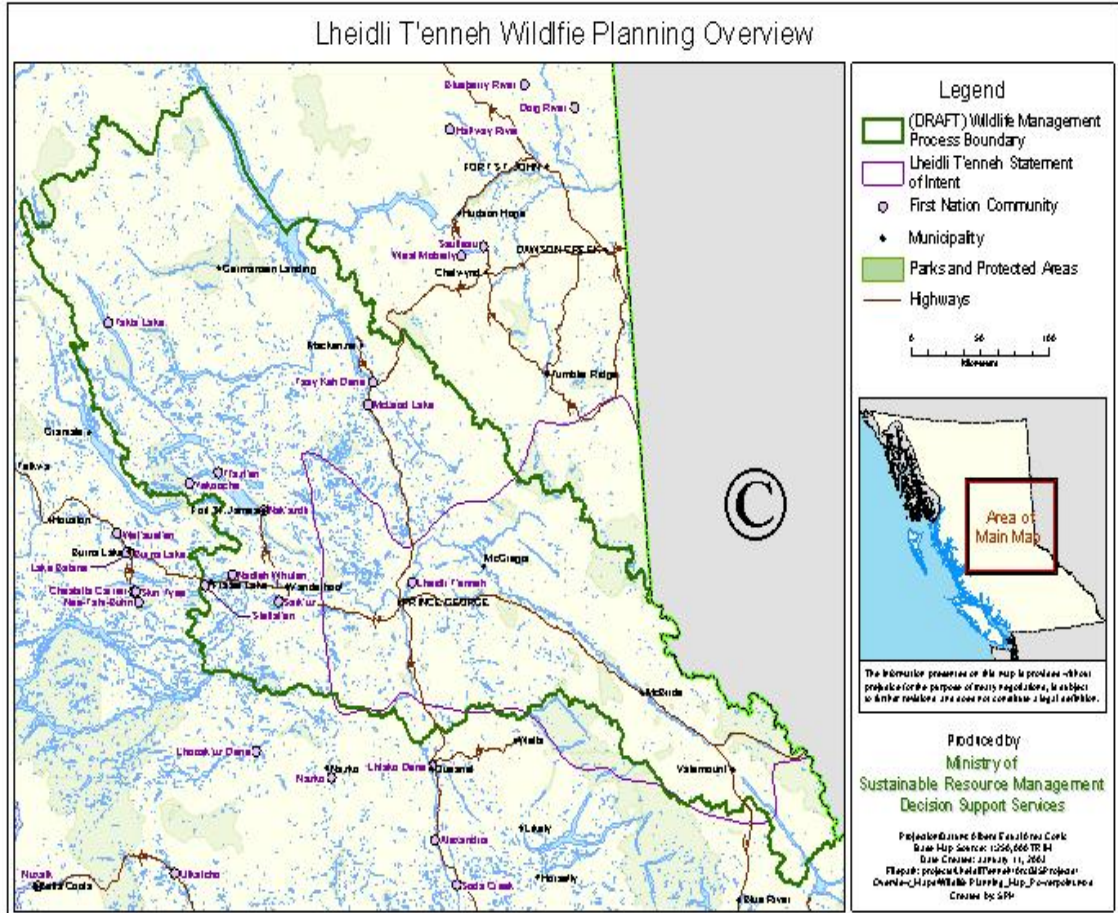
- Recommendation 8: The narrative for this recommendation includes the statement:

“The Regional Wildlife Management Process, currently being piloted in Prince George, should continue to be supported and allowed to develop as a model that can be used, as appropriate, more broadly across the province. The purpose of this regional process, initiated by the Lheidli T’enneh First Nation, is to develop the opportunity for First Nations and third parties with interests in wildlife to participate in wildlife management decisions.”
- Recommendation 12: All decisions on recreation opportunities, including activities, facilities and services will be subject to ... Policy and standards recommended by advisory bodies and endorsed by the Minister”.

The Parties are continuing to review the final recommendations.

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APPENDIX A



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APPENDIX B

Process Planning Committee Membership

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**Discussion Paper on Options and Recommendations for a
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