

**NACHO N'YAK DUN, TETLIT GWICH'IN, TSIIGEHTCHIC,
TR'ONDEK HWECH'IN
ELDERS STATEMENT ON THE PEEL WATERSHED
at the
Peel Watershed Gathering
February 18, 2007**

In the Peel Watershed all life is connected to the *water**

We are brothers and sisters who share our history and culture in the Peel Watershed.

We are seeing great changes in the Earth, such as climate change, yet the Watershed is still a natural place.

The Peel Watershed is the place where all the rivers flow from their headwaters in the mountains into the *Peel River**; all the tributaries are the *Wind, Snake, Ogilvie, Bonnet Plume, Blackstone, and Hart Rivers**

We want our people to protect the Peel Watershed, which means the Watershed remains as it was created, with a high level of protection for the land and water and our heritage, and all living things, where we can continue to practice our traditional way of life and care for the land, water, air, wildlife, and medicinal plants.

We want our people to find a way to give a high level of protection to the Peel Watershed, in the way a park gives protection. With such protection in place, we still practice our rights to hunt, fish, trap, and use the land (*as outlined in our land claim agreements*).

We want to form an Elders Advisory Committee so Elders can keep giving their direction on protecting the Peel Watershed.

We want our people to work together on protecting the Watershed, among the communities of the Peel Watershed.

**traditional words to be used*

As we work on finding a way to protect the Watershed, we will make sure our people:

- use and preserve traditional knowledge;
- keep clean water flowing for all time, and protect the Earth source of the water;
- continue to be stewards of the Watershed by monitoring land use; setting up cabins and monitors/watchmen at special sites;
- teach youth traditional knowledge and their culture by bringing them out to their traditional territories;
- use the Watershed as a place of research, learning and science such as climate change studies;
- protect our heritage sites such as burial sites, old camp sites, old trails;
- when others use the land and water of the Watershed, such as harvesting, they must protect the Watershed and bring our people benefits;
- support the youth so they can make a living from the land in its natural state.

We want this direction to be implemented.