

**YCS Presentation to Peel Land Use Planning Commission  
Workshop  
Oct. 29 & 30, 2008**

Thank you for the invitation to make a brief presentation at this meeting. I'm really glad to see the Peel Commission once again out in the public and producing products.

YCS is working closely with CPAWS Yukon and our organization endorses the recommendations made by CPAWS Yukon, TIAY, WTAY and outfitters, in terms of the need to protect large, intact areas of the Peel watershed in order to protect cultural values and wilderness tourism, and the healthy land, water and wildlife that they depend upon.

Rather than repeat what CPAWS, WTAY and TIAY have to say, my presentation will focus on the consultation process and the general process for developing the plan. YCS has a 40 year history of helping Yukon people to provide input into policies and plans. We have been thoroughly involved in the development of the new placer regime and forest act. We've experienced successful and unsuccessful public consultations and we'd like to share what we've learned with you.

The 2006 PWPC newsletter states that communication is key to a successful process for developing the plan. I agree.

Yukon people are passionate about the Peel region, as we saw from the unprecedented response to YESAB's assessment of the proposed winter road along the Wind River. Land use planning in the Peel can avoid these kinds of conflicts by giving certainty to all interests. If the commission genuinely listens to Yukon people the planning process and final plan can be widely supported. If the consultation process isn't effective the planning process and the plan could create rather than defuse conflict.

**Timelines:**

Allowing enough time for Yukon people to absorb information and documents and comment on them, and enough time for the PWPC to process responses is critical.

The original time line that is still posted on the PWPC's website, provided for 14 months between the release of the Conservation Priorities Assessment Report (CPAR) and the Resource Assessment Report (RAR), and completion of the final recommended Land Use Plan. The Conservation Priorities Assessment and Resource Assessment Reports have just been released. 14 months would take us to December 2009. In fact the original timeline did not allow sufficient time for some stages, so I would say that for there to be sufficient time for real consultation we should not expect a recommended plan until early in 2010.

The following timeline has the same amounts of time for consultation as the original timeline, except I've added an extra month for Scenario Methods Report consultation and one extra month for the Commission to pull together the final recommended plan.

Nov 08	Dec 08	Jan 09	Feb 08	March 09	April 09	May 09
CPAR and RAR consultation	Scenario Methods Report consultation <i>(This is very short to review two huge and very important documents.)</i>	Scenarios analysis by PWPC	Scenarios analysis by PWPC	Scenarios analysis by PWPC	Scenarios options discussion paper consultation tour & workshop	Scenarios options discussion paper public input

June 09	July 09	August 09	September 09	Oct. 09	Nov. 09	Dec. 09
PWPC incorporates public input into draft plan	Draft plan public tour	Draft plan public input	Draft plan public input	PWPC revisions to draft plan	PWPC revisions to draft plan	Public feedback on revisions to draft plan

Jan 2010	Feb 2010
PWPC incorporates public input into revised plan	Final plan recommended

I'm sure the PWPC has done some work on scenarios development already but it would be very disturbing if they felt they could go ahead with the scenarios without incorporating public input into the Conservation Priorities Assessment Report and Resource Assessment Report.

And we haven't even seen the Scenario Criteria and Methods report which the original timeline allows consultation time for.

Consultation on the Conservation Priorities and Resource Assessment reports should start once you have made Yukon people aware that they exist. Nov. 1<sup>st</sup> would be an appropriate day to start a 30 day consultation process on these documents if you

announce the consultation in the next few days by email, letters and media. Hard copies need to be available on request.

Trying to get to a draft plan by March or April (the dates we've recently heard the PWPC estimate) would be an affront to Yukon people – it would indicate that there is no real interest in having a public process. Consultation on the scenarios is critical to the process. And it is absolutely necessary to give Yukon people a chance to provide carefully considered input to the draft plan, and then to the revised plan after that. The original timeline allocated time for this and the fact that the planning process is behind schedule does not mean that you can skimp on consultation during the most important phase.

Another important aspect of timelines is giving sufficient notice of public consultation tours, workshops and focus group consultations. I appreciate being invited to this workshop but notice was limited – we heard about this meeting at the reception on Oct. 8<sup>th</sup>, received the invitation on Oct. 10<sup>th</sup>, and didn't get the agenda and answers to our questions about what the workshop is about until Oct. 23<sup>rd</sup>. Considering that participants are being offered a chance to make presentations, an earlier understanding of the purpose of the workshop would have been helpful.

Please understand that I'm not trying to be critical– I am just using examples of what does and doesn't work for successful consultation.

To get people out to presentations and consultations you will need to give at least 2 or 3 weeks notice.

### **Publicizing the process:**

This planning process has been dormant for two years. Yukon people need to be re-energized about it.

I strongly encourage you to do media. That isn't just sending out a media release. It means getting radio spots, writing letters to the editor and doing interviews about the process, the difficult decisions that will have to be made, the many kinds of values in the watershed, and the importance of Yukon people making their values known. Inevitably some stakeholders will be discussing the process in the media – the PWPC's neutral position will also need to be heard.

So far the Commission has only produced one newsletter – I'm not sure if newsletters are the best method but there needs to be some regular update on the process – maybe a blog? This doesn't have to be fancy – just up to date!

You'll also need posters in high traffic places in the communities like the post office, grocery stores, etc., especially when you have meetings to announce.

It is hard to get people out to community tours – you will need to work with the local First Nation and RRC to get a crowd out and make sure you don't pick times that don't

work for the community. A public tour that only gets 2 or 3 people out is pointless. You need to build into your timelines the fact that community meetings may need to be postponed due to bad weather or a death in the community.

Obviously a new timeline with clear consultation periods, as well as updated information about staff, commission members, technical committee members etc. needs to be posted on the PWPC website right away.

Does this all sound like a lot of time and effort? It is – that’s why it’s necessary to build in the needed time!

**Format and availability of PWPC information:**

Hard copies of the documents need to be available – it isn’t possible to review them on a computer screen, and people with only dial up have a lot of trouble with big documents on websites. Time to mail out copies of the documents or to have people go someplace to pick them up has to be factored into the timelines.

**Quality of information:**

Although experts in a number of fields have been contributing to the process, there may be additional information needs that the consultation process brings to light. This is another reason that the timeline can’t be too tight.

**Documenting the consultation:**

Part of the transparency of the process, and of ensuring that the consultation is working, is documenting what was said, and how the PWPC dealt with the input. Some YG consultation ‘what we heard’ documents have only included comments that they heard several times. There may be important information or recommendations in comments that only come from one source. The ‘what we heard’ document needs to include all the comments and how they were considered.

All consultation meetings of course need detailed notes taken – people are assuming that by making presentations or oral comments, their comments are entered into the record. Oral submissions need to be treated as seriously as written ones.

Documenting how many people you get out to meetings, and who they represent will be an important indication of whether the consultation process, advertising and information dissemination is working.

**Involvement of Commission Members:**

Since it is the Commission, not the staff that has the responsibility to recommend the final plan, the Commission needs to be more involved in the process than just quarterly meetings. Ideally all Commission members would attend community meetings, focus group meetings, workshops like this one, etc.

**Importance of getting this plan right:**

We often hear Yukon government representatives that YESAB will protect environmental values – YESAB isn't a planning process and it rarely provides effective mitigations. If the Peel plan doesn't provide prescriptive zoning and descriptions of what kinds of activities should happen where, and how they may be undertaken, YESAB will not and cannot do so. YESAB will base reviews on projects proposed for the Peel on the land use plan – another reason why this plan is so important.

**Importance of doing this right:**

The Peel land use plan is complex– there are several First Nation's involved, and protected areas will have to be negotiated from scratch. The Peel is also used by a successful and growing wilderness tourism industry, which depends on maintaining the roadless, pristine aesthetic, and there is mineral and fossil fuel potential that cannot co-exist with tourism and traditional uses on the same part of the land base. There is wildlife like caribou, peregrine falcon and wolverine, that are rare or threatened elsewhere, creating a moral obligation to protect them here. Because of the diverse and rare values in the Peel watershed, the eyes of not just the Yukon, but the world are on this process.

This process will also set a precedent for the land use plans that will happen all over the Yukon. I urge you to take the time to make sure that the process results in a plan that will receive broad support.

I am hoping that the Commission's response to these process recommendations is that they are obvious. Unfortunately we've seen many consultation processes that haven't been effective, so we're taking the chance that we're stating the obvious. The most fundamental thing is that if you try to rush the process you will not get buy-in for the plan. This job is worth taking the time and effort to do well.