



Teet'it Gwich'in Council

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Peel Watershed Planning Commission

February 15, 2011

201-307 Jarvis Street

Whitehorse, Y.T.

Y1A 2H3

Dear Members of the Peel Watershed Planning Commission,

The Teet'it Gwich'in Council congratulates the PWPC on the production of the Recommended Plan for the Peel Watershed.

The Teet'it Gwich'in Council has not changed its position regarding the Peel Watershed as communicated to you by our former Chief, Wilbert Firth (see attached). Guided by our Elders, our people and our youth, we reiterate our wish to see 100% of the watershed protected from industrial development and roads.

We invite you to refer to the verbatim records of the Parties' public consultation meeting on the Recommended Plan which took place in Fort McPherson on Tuesday, 21 September 2010, where many members of our community expressed their concern about the future of the Peel Watershed. We also hope that you will review the posters drawn by our school children regarding the watershed and its importance to them.


The message from our people at the September meeting was unequivocal. Our people support 100% protection of the Peel watershed from industrial development and roads so they can keep this place pristine, and quiet and peaceful. We live downstream of all the rivers in the Peel, we drink the waters, we eat the fish, we hunt caribou and we eat berries from the lands and waters of the Peel. What happens there will affect our way of life, our health, our future and most importantly, the future of our children and grandchildren.

We wish to point out that Land Management Unit (LMU) 5, Peel Plateau, is connected to and close to many of our site specifics and R-blocks. It is a traditional harvesting area of cultural and spiritual importance to us with many travel routes and archeological sites. LMU 4, Dalglish Creek, is part of the Porcupine Caribou Herd fall migration and wintering grounds which clearly

must be protected from industry and roads. Water quality and quantity flowing into the Peel River from Dalglish and other creeks would be negatively impacted by industrial development, as would the caribou and fish we depend on.

For these reasons, Integrated Management Area status is inappropriate for LMU 4 and 5. We therefore respectfully request modification of the Recommended Plan to give LMUs 4 and 5 Special Management Area (SMA) status with full protection from extractive industry and roads.

Sincerely,



Chief William Koe



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Attention: Albert Genier, Chair

Dear Albert,

The Tetlit Gwichin Council congratulates the PWPC on the production of the draft plan for the Watershed. This takes a lot of work for the commission and the staff who put in a lot of extra work to ensure that our voices are heard. The consultation that took place over the last few years was not as we envisioned it but we put our concerns forward as best we could.

The Tetlit Gwichin have been stewards of the watershed as far back as we can remember and would settle only for a pristine untouched wilderness as our ancestors left it for us to look after and pass onto our children.

The Ecosystem and the health of the plants and animals are to be protected as our ancestors did when they lived, moving between the Snake, Bonnetplume, Wind, Hart and the Blackstone as well as the Ogilvie which we refer to as the Peel River. As our elders pointed out many times they want to see the watershed left as it is for the enjoyment of all peoples and this has been happening for generations ever since the first Caucasian came through in the early 1800s. This was allowed because of the religious aspects and the teachings we shared with each other and it was a reciprocal arrangement we had, where we showed them the trails and points of interest in the watershed.

Our definition of Sustainable Development is as referenced in the UFA and is a "beneficial socio-economic change that does not undermine the ecological and social systems on which our communities and societies are dependent on". This we must reiterate does not include industrial development and do not see any mining taking place as we only have to look at the Faro Mines

and the Giant Mine to see it cannot be done in a safe way that would have global implications just by the very nature of opening up the lands. Ecotourism is the only type of development we would sanction and this has to be done by the traditional land users and that includes the Tettit Gwichin. We see many benefits to the Yukon as a whole just by this type of Sustainable development which would include our community and the knowledge we would freely give to the world about the lands and waters in the watershed.

The Management Goals have to reference the Commissions statement of intent about ensuring the wilderness characteristics are maintained and the plan has to reflect this.

The Wilderness Zones should not have any industrial tenure of any kind which undermines the pristine and natural ecosystem as it was, and is already being polluted by the large scale exploration that is taking place. We as a First Nation have not even received one phone call from any of the Companies that are exploring in our backyard as my elder " Robert Alexie" is always saying to me and at every meeting we have attended.

We have to say again that the whole watershed should be protected and a land withdrawal should be done for the watershed in its totality. This would be a feather in the cap of the Yukon who would no doubt be recognized for by the world and give further comfort to our ancestors who are buried by the thousand throughout the watershed. The whole watershed for us a grave yard for our ancestors who have lived and died there and we can only give them a good rest and be quiet as we do when we travel through the pristine areas that they left for us and our grandchildren.

In summary we urge the commission to establish a legal protected area or legislate it into a Park that we would help set up and provide members to monitor, end all free entry mining, no road access, and maintain the natural ecosystem so it continues to flourish with the animals not being disturbed and allow them to increase in numbers. We need to sustain the ecosystem and it has global implications with global warming taking place and all others watersheds being compromised throughout the world. Lastly the water quality and the quantity has to be maintained and this has to be done by proper and measurable means so we are assured that this is so.

Sincerely,

Chief Wilbert Firth