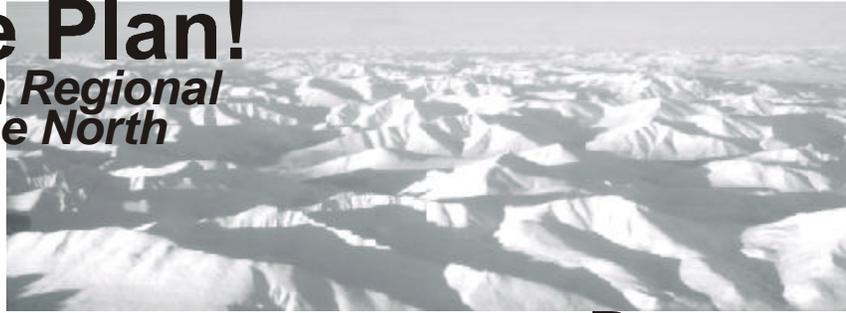


Ready or Not,

# Here We Plan!

**Learning from Regional  
Planning in the North**

Dec. 6+7  
Whitehorse



## Program

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### Setting the Stage for Regional Land Use Planning

*Plenary Session Room I*

*Wednesday 9:15-10:15 am*

Dr. John Curry, Acting Chair of the Environmental Studies Program at the University of Northern British Columbia, will contextualize land use planning within Canada.

John Curry has been working in the field of community planning for approximately 20 years. He is concerned with socio-economic and environmental planning and development in Atlantic and central Canada, and in BC. He is interested in sustainable communities, specifically, the physical planning of communities in a northern context, the restructuring of community economies to incorporate concepts of sustainability, and the institutional structures that impede change towards sustainability.

The University of Northern British Columbia in Prince George contains Canada's newest accredited planning program. Students enrolled in the Bachelor of Science can major in Environmental Planning, within which they may choose from three areas of concentration: Environmental Resource Planning, Northern Rural and Community Planning, or the Self-directed Theme in Planning. The Environmen-tal

Planning program combines core science requirements with professional planning practice.

### 1A-1D Challenges and Opportunities in Land Use Planning

*Breakout Sessions*

*Wednesday, 10:30-12:00*

*Rooms I-IV*

These breakout sessions are intended to be an opportunity for participants to discuss some of the broader issues surrounding regional land use planning. What are the benefits and drawbacks of land use planning? What are some of the fundamental principles behind planning? What challenges does planning face in the north?

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### Planning After Land Claims: the Yukon

*Wednesday 1:15 pm*

*Room I*

Ron Cruikshank, Director of Planning for the Yukon Land Use Planning Council, will outline the status of land use planning in the Yukon. This process has been defined by the Yukon First Nations Final Agreement and is being put into practice by the Yukon Land Use Planning Council. See the attached notes entitled "Context for Land Use Planning in the Yukon" for some background information.

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## Planning in the North

### *Presentations*

These presentations will give an overview of regional planning occurring in the Yukon's neighbouring jurisdictions of Alaska, BC, and NWT, as well as Nunavut. The presentations will run concurrently in two sessions.

#### **3A. Alaska**

*Thursday 9:00 am, Room I*

Regional land use planning in Alaska has been underway for the past 20 years through the Department of Natural Resources. There are two types of plans: area plans and management plans. Statute requires that plans be completed prior to any sale or lease of state land, except for oil and gas leases and mining claims.

Dick Mylius, Chief of the Resource Assessment and Development Section in the Division of Mining, Land and Water, will speak about land use planning in Alaska.

#### **3B. Nunavut**

*Thursday 9:00 am, Room III*

The Nunavut Land Claims Agreement was signed in 1993 and was the largest aboriginal land claim settlement in Canadian history. The Nunavut Planning Commission was established under this agreement and is mandated to develop land use plans, policies, and objectives that guide resource use and development in the territory.

Luke Coady is the Executive Director of the Nunavut Planning Commission and will speak about land use planning in this vast region.

#### **5A. Northern British Columbia**

*Thursday 1:15-2:15, Room I*

Jim Little, Co-chair of the Fort Nelson Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP) will speak about this land use planning exercise. The region covers 98,000 square

kilometres and is the largest sub-regional plan in BC.

#### **5B. Northwest Territories**

*Thursday 1:15-2:15, Room III*

In the NWT, regional land use planning boards are created upon the settlement of individual first nation land claim agreements. In the Mackenzie Valley, regional land use planning is legislated through the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act (MVRMA). To date, regional planning bodies have been established in the Gwich'in and the Sahtu regions.

Deena Clayton is the land use planner for the Gwich'in Land Use Planning Board. She will speak about this region's land use plan, which borders the Yukon's own North Yukon Planning region.



## The Pre-Planning Phase

*Breakout Sessions*

*Wednesday 2:30-4:00 pm*

These sessions will focus on some of the preliminary work that a planner or planning commission must do before proceeding with the activity of land use planning. The breakout groups are intended to be an open forum where participants will share their experiences and learn from one another. Following the discussion groups, facilitators will summarize the discussion in the plenary.

## 2A. The Plan for the Plan

*Wednesday 2:30-4:00 pm, Room I*

It is common for a land use planning process to begin with a work plan, or a “plan for the plan.” The Regional Planning Commissions in the Yukon are required to have both a General Terms of Reference, which outlines some the requirements of land use planning as defined in the land claim agreement, as well as a Precise Terms of Reference, or a methodology and work plan.

Some key questions to think about for this session are:

- How useful is the exercise of writing a plan for the plan?
- What goes into a plan for a plan? What do you have to think about before planning? What elements of the process can be planned for and what cannot?
- How much continuity is necessary between the plan methodology and the plan writing? How often does the plan for plan need to be reviewed?

## 2B. Buy-in: Gaining Support for Land Use Planning

*Wednesday 2:30-4:00 pm, Room II*

Land use planning is a process that requires information and support from many different agencies, decision-makers, power-holders, and participants. A planning exercise often needs strong and influential champions or sponsors in order to succeed. Gaining buy-in to a planning process is often the key to ensuring political, corporate, and public support before the plan has been undertaken.

Some questions to think about for this session are:

- What are some methods of gaining buy-in from various interest groups such as governments, public, industry, conservationists, particularly in a northern context?

- How does public education play a role in land use planning?
- Can planning present itself as neutral as a way of getting buy-in?

## 2C. The Politics of Planning

*Wednesday 2:30-4:00 pm, Room III*

Regional land use planning in the north is carried out within the public realm. Combined with a high level of political and bureaucratic structure, it tends to be highly politicized process, and is influenced by the political machinery.

This session will seek to explore some of the following questions:

- How does political structure inhibit or benefit land use planning?
- Do land use plans rely on political processes in order to get written and then implemented? Is planning intrinsically political?
- How can a planning process circumvent, mitigate, avoid, or take advantage of the bureaucracy?
- How is planning related to existing power structures?

## 2D. How to Win Friends and Influence People: Communication in Planning

*Wednesday 2:30-4:00 pm, Bennett Post Room*

Establishing communication processes is an important stage in the pre-planning process. This discussion will focus on the need for communication, as well as methods, strategies, and documents relating to good communication, both internally within the planning Commission, and externally with other agencies, stakeholders, the public, and the media.

Some questions to consider are:

- What are effective methods for communicating, and who are the key organizations to communicate with?

- What is your opinion of some of the conventional communication and consultation methods, such as open houses, surveys, etc?
- Is gossip a sound communication method?
- How does the north/south communication gap affect planning, consultation, approval, and implementation?
- What is the effect of bureaucracy on communication, and on the planning process?



## Issue and Data Gathering Phase

### *Breakout Sessions*

*Thursday Dec. 7, 9:45-11:15 am*

The theme for the morning session is the learning phase of land use planning where issues and information are gathered. These sessions will address techniques and content of this phase.

### **4A. Piling it High: Collecting Information for Land Use Planning**

*Thursday Dec. 7, 10:15-11:30 am*

Collecting information in the north can be a difficult task. Information is often gathered by different agencies for different purposes, and is not centrally located. A land use planning exercise often requires the compilation of information from different sources, ranging from digital data to traditional environmental knowledge. Moreover, the task of collecting information can often seem endless.

Some questions to think about for this session are:

- What are the challenges to data collection in the north—technical, environmental, distance, cost, inter-agency access to data?
- How were GIS systems used to collect or organize data?
- What are the obstacles to sharing information and how is information used as a means of control and power?
- What role should land use planning play in filling data gaps?

### **4B. What's Your Beef? Gathering Issues Statements**

*Thursday Dec. 7, 10:15-11:30 am, Room II*

Issues gathering is the one of the first steps in land use planning and consists of identifying the main concerns and interests in a region. It is an important step in the planning exercise because it sets the tone for the rest of the process, both in terms of who is involved, and what issues are addressed through the land use plan.

This session will consider some of the following questions:

- What constitutes a planning issue and how do you screen issues?
- How are these issues compiled, documented, and organized?
- How does a government present issues, especially if different arms of the government have conflicting agendas in a region, such economic development and protected areas?

### **4C. Sharing the Sandbox: Interagency Coordination**

*Thursday Dec. 7, 10:15-11:30 am, Room III*

Planning is multi-disciplinary by nature. Combined with the north's many NGOs, interest groups, government departments, and Land Claim boards, there is a high need for the planner to coordinate information-sharing

and communication among many organizations.

Consider the following questions for this session:

- How is data shared among organizations?
- How are NGO's included in the discussion?
- How did you as the planner or planning Commission navigate the resource management maze, particularly with regard to information gathering and communication?
- How did you coordinate the various departments of a single government?
- Is it necessary to involve all agencies? Is it possible or desirable not to involve every agency possible? If not, how do you prioritize?

#### **4D No Fixed Address: Conducting Public Participation and Consultation**

*Thursday Dec. 7, 10:15-11:30 am, Room IV*

Public consultation is a requirement of most land use plans and planning activities. There are many issues relating to public consultation, particularly in sparsely populated and remote areas. Moreover, there remain issues about the usefulness of public consultation as it is currently conducted.

The following questions can be considered for this session:

- Who is the public? Residents only? Land users? All interest groups? All Canadians?
- What are some of the techniques, challenges, and results of various public consultation methods? In particular, how is aboriginal participation in the planning process ensured?
- What is the relationship between public education and public consultation?
- Why bother with public participation when the approval bodies have ultimate control over the land use plan?

- How were decisions tracked in your planning experience when public consultation was used as a basis for decision-making?



### **Synthesis and Analysis Phase**

#### ***Breakout Discussions***

***Thursday Dec. 7, 2:30-4:00 pm***

The afternoon will focus on the mysterious phase of planning in which information is synthesized and analyzed into land use decisions. These discussions will focus on some of the various conceptual frame-works that guide this phase.

#### **6A. Regional Zoning the Good, the Bad, and the Ugly**

*Thursday Dec. 7, 2:30-4:00 pm, Room I*

Regional zoning is a way of spatially representing where land use activities should occur. It can provide certainty, and can be used as a guide for development assessment, regulations and licensing. However, zoning remains contentious because of its potential for inflexibility.

Questions for consideration are:

- What are the benefits and drawbacks of zoning?
- Can a land use plan be effective if it doesn't have a spatial component? How does zoning relate to the regulatory process?
- Is zoning useful if not legislated ?
- How much discretion do you give to whom in zoning variance?

- Can a land use plan create regulations?

**6B. All for One and One for All?  
Consensus-building and Community-based Planning Decisions**

*Thursday Dec. 7, 2:30-4:00 pm, Room II*

Consensus-building has become a main-stream management and decision-making strategy, and is a requirement of most planning exercises. Similarly, community-based planning is commonly accepted as standard practice in the planning process. However, these terms are not well defined, and they are practiced with a high degree of variability. This group will discuss the following questions, among others:

- What do these terms mean?
- How does community-based planning relate to other planning methods such as economic development planning and conservation planning?
- How are the spatial aspects of planning addressed through community mapping exercises?
- What is the effect of consensus-building on the planning process and how does it affect decision-making?

**6C. Sustainable Development in Decision-Making**

*Thursday Dec. 7, 2:30-4:00 pm, Room III*

Sustainable development is an oft-used and ill-understood term. This group will discuss how sustainable development is understood as a concept, and how it is implemented practically. How do protected areas, ecosystem management, and wildlife conservation influence decision-making, and how are they integrated with other agendas?

Some questions to think about are:

- What is sustainable development?
- What are methods of implementing sustainability into decision-making?
- Can you incorporate sustainability into decision making without a strong

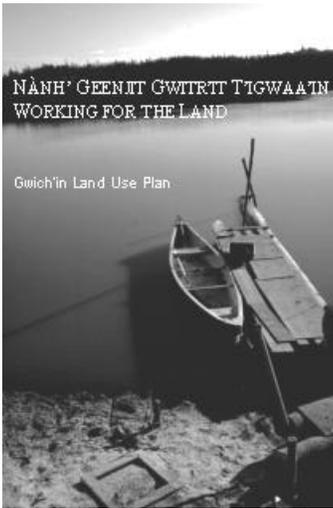
mandate from the government? What is government's view of sustainable development?

**6D. I Don't Make the Rules; I Just Follow Them: Navigating the Regulatory System in Land Use Planning**

*Thursday Dec. 7, 2:30-4:00 pm, Room IV*

The regulatory system is complex. Due to the many jurisdictional levels, regulations often overlap with one another with varying levels of detail. This session seeks to explore such topics as how land use plans consider regulations in zoning, and in specifying intensity of activity. Some additional questions to consider are:

- What legislation was the most influential in creating the land use plan?
- How does CEAA or other impact assessment legislation (e.g. DAP) relate to the land use plan? How does it affect the creation of the land use plan?
- How is your plan affected by having to conform to regulatory system? Are regulations and land use plans ever in conflict?
- Should the regulatory system have to conform to the plan, instead of the other way around?



## Executive Summary Gwich'in Land Use Plan, NWT

*Nành' Geenjit Gwitr'it T'igwaa'in (Working for the Land)*, *Gwich'in Land Use Plan* is the proposed plan for the Gwich'in Settlement Area under the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act. In the Land Use Plan's six year development, the Planning Board consulted extensively with Gwich'in communities and organizations, territorial and federal government departments, industry groups and environmental non-government organizations. The Land Use Plan is based on existing traditional and scientific knowledge about the region.

The Land Use Plan requires the approval of the Gwich'in Tribal Council, the Minister of the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development and the Minister of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. When the plan is approved, and comes into effect, all licenses, permits or other authorizations relating to the use of land, water or the deposit of waste in the Settlement Area must conform to the Land Use Plan, although the Planning Board will also consider exceptions and amendments. The Land Use Plan provides background information and establishes land use zones in the Settlement Area. The Land Use Plan also identifies outstanding environmental issues and recommends actions to be taken by the appropriate agencies in addressing the issues.

### **GWICH'IN LAND USE ZONES**

The Planning Board is proposing an integrated land use plan with a three-tiered zoning system for the Settlement Area, which identifies:

Gwich'in Protected and Heritage Protected Areas

**Uses related to oil and gas development, mineral and aggregate extraction, transportation, waste disposal, communication, power development and commercial renewable resource activities are not permitted (approximately 10% of the Settlement Area)**

### **Gwich'in Special Management Areas**

All land uses are possible as long as conditions outlined in the Land Use Plan are met and approvals through the regulatory system are obtained. The Land Use Plan conditions are designed to protect valued resources identified by communities or other organizations during the planning process (approximately 33% of the Settlement Area)

### **Gwich'in General Use Areas**

All land uses are possible with the necessary approvals from the current regulatory system. The Land Use Plan imposes no conditions for proposed uses and activities in these areas (approximately 57% of the Settlement Area).



## IMPLEMENTATION OF THE LAND USE PLAN

Implementation of the Land Use Plan includes ensuring land use activities conform to the plan, reviewing and considering proposed exceptions and amendments, and addressing recommended actions on environmental issues. During the life of the Land Use Plan, the Planning Board will review its effectiveness in meeting goals and objectives. Five years after the Land Use Plan comes into effect, or at another time agreed to by the signatories, the Planning Board will also conduct a comprehensive review of the Land Use Plan.

## PLANNING BOARD BACKGROUND

Provision for the Gwich'in Land Use Planning Board was made through the Gwich'in Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement in 1992. Soon after the Land Claim was signed, the Planning Board operated as an interim board until it was officially established by the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act in 1998. The Planning Board's mandate is to develop and implement a land use plan for the Gwich'in Settlement Area. In following the principles outlined in the Land Claim and the Mackenzie Valley Act, the Planning Board's goal has been to develop a land use plan that provides for the conservation, development and utilization of land, water and resources. The goal of the Planning Board has also been to develop a land use plan that is particularly devoted to the needs of the Gwich'in, while considering the needs of all Canadians.

## SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

*Summary of the Land and Water Issues Associated with the Gwich'in Settlement Area (October 1994)*

*Plan Options: A Discussion Paper for the Land and Water Managers and Users of the Gwich'in Settlement Area (February 1997)*

*Proposed Community Protected Areas (September 1997)*

*Preliminary Draft Land Use Plan for the Gwich'in Settlement Area (March 1998)*

*Draft Land Use Plan for the Gwich'in Settlement Area (March 1999)*

*The Process of Land Use Planning in the Gwich'in Settlement Area (November 1999)*

*The Process of Land Use Planning in the Gwich'in Settlement Area (November 1999)*

## FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

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 Email: [planner@gwichinplanning.nt.ca](mailto:planner@gwichinplanning.nt.ca)  
 Web: [www.gwichinplanning.nt.ca](http://www.gwichinplanning.nt.ca)



## Sahtu Land Use Planning Board, NWT

The Sahtu Land Use Planning Board is responsible for developing and implementing a land use plan for the Sahtu region of Canada's Northwest Territories.

The Board was established by:

1. The Sahtu Dene and Metis Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement (Section 25.2)
2. The Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act (Part 2)

### The Board members further defined their purpose being:

- To prepare a draft land use plan
- To facilitate people's understanding of the importance of land use planning
- To ensure that the interests of all parties are taken into consideration.

### What is land use planning?

Land Use Planning creates policies that guide how the land and its resources will be used. Planning is directed by the social, cultural, and economic interests of Sahtu beneficiaries, residents, and all Canadians. Both traditional and scientific knowledge are used as a basis for the plan. The plan may include:

- Vision for community development
- Resource and land management strategies
- Cultural and traditional land use areas
- Land use and protected zones
- Monitoring and review processes

Other notable points about the plan include:

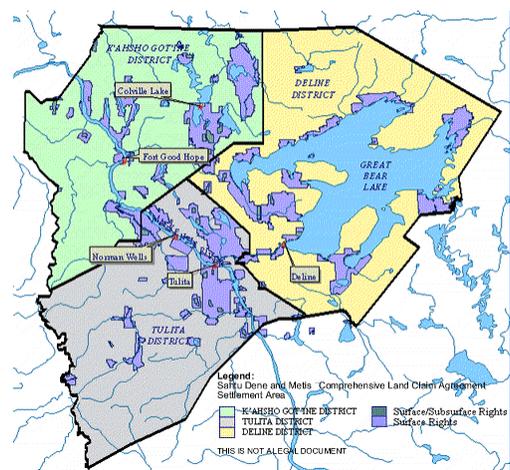
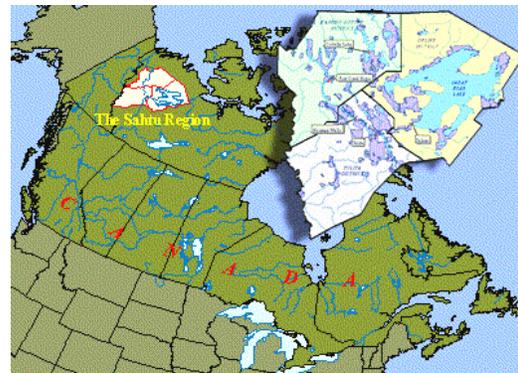
- Section 25.2.9 of the Sahtu Dene and Metis Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement states:

“Upon approval of a land use plan, those authorities with jurisdiction to grant licenses, permits, leases, or interests relating to the use of land and water in the settlement area shall

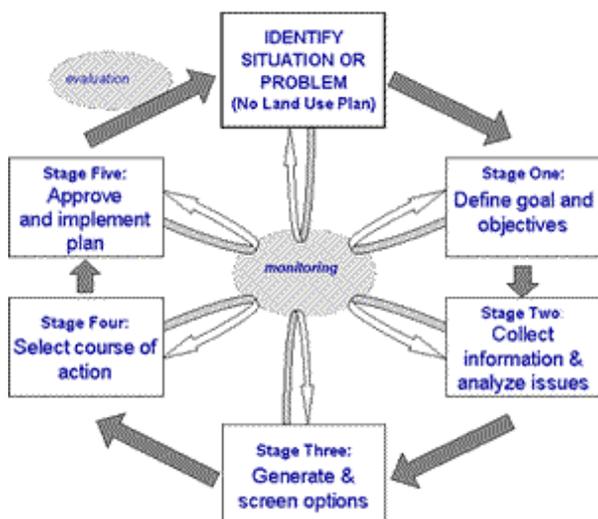
conduct their activities and operations in accordance with the plan.”

- The plan will be reviewed every five years after approval to ensure its relevance and effectiveness in the future.
- The board has the authority to develop procedures regarding plan exceptions and amendments.

### Overview of the Sahtu



To accomplish our task, the Board is following a generalised planning cycle (see below). It strengthened the process by embedding the concepts of participation and consultation in each step or stage of the cycle. The result is an adaptive approach where our activities at each stage are formulated based on our previous experiences and from information learned in the stage itself. Such a participatory action approach will produce a land use plan that meets the needs of all stakeholders



### *Stage One: Goals and Objectives*

To define the goals and objectives of the land use plan we have worked with the Sahtu communities, the resource and tourism industries, as well as environmental groups. In all, over 650 people participated directly in our meetings, workshops, and interviews. Our newsletters, brochure, web site, radio shows, and other media have undoubtedly reached many more individuals.

### *Stage Two: Collect information and Analyse Issues*

Information collection is a key phase of the Sahtu Land Use Planning process. The data collected will provide a basis for the board, the planners, and the stakeholders to develop a picture of the "state of the region". This image will include the states of both the communities' social and economic health, and the regional environment. Only when we have a clear picture of how things are today, can we start thinking about how the future might or should be. The

categories of information that we are collecting are as follows:

- Climate
- Geology / Surficial Geology
- Hydrology
- Soils
- Vegetation
- Wildlife
- Significant Cultural and Natural Sites
- Subsistence or Traditional Land Use
- Commercial Land Use
- Impacts of Previous Development
- Social Indicators
- Management Areas and Jurisdiction

### *Stage Three: Generate and Screen Options*

In cooperation with the Sahtu communities, stakeholders, and our governmental partners, the Board will be investigating and compiling ways to achieve the stated vision.

### *Stage Four: Select Course of Action*

In cooperation with the Sahtu communities, stakeholders, and our governmental partners, the Board will facilitate the selection of an option that best meets the needs of the parties concerned.

### *Stage Five: Approval*

The plan must be approved by the:

- Sahtu Secretariat Incorporated
- Territorial Government
- Federal Government

## Planning Regions



## Land Use Planning in Nunavut

### LAND CLAIM OVERVIEW

In 1993, the Governments of Canada and the Northwest Territories and representatives of the Inuit of the central and eastern Arctic signed a historic land claims settlement. The Nunavut Land Claims Agreement (NLCA) was the product of 20 years of hard negotiating and returned to the people of Nunavut control over huge tracts of lands used by Inuit for millenia. Under the agreement, the Inuit consented to give to the Canadian government their aboriginal title to the lands, waters and offshore areas of Nunavut. In return, they are to enjoy the rights and benefits defined in the [Agreement](#). These rights are protected by the Canadian Constitution.

In providing title to the Nunavut Inuit of 350,000 square kilometres of land in the eastern Arctic, the agreement establishes clear rules of ownership and control over land and resources in the new Territory (which has an area of approximately two million square kilometers, or one-fifth of Canada's land mass).

### Features of the Agreement

The Nunavut Land Claims Agreement is one of the most innovative of the "modern day treaties" concluded in Canada. Some of the more outstanding of its 41 articles include the following:

- title to approximately 350,000 square kilometres (136,000 square miles) of land, of which 35,250 square kilometres (14,000 square miles) include mineral rights;
- equal representation of Inuit with government on a new set of wildlife

management, resource management and environmental boards;

- the right to harvest wildlife on lands and waters throughout the Nunavut Settlement Area;
- capital transfer payments of \$1.148 billion, payable to the Inuit over 14 years;
- a \$13 million Training Trust Fund;
- a share of federal government royalties for Nunavut Inuit from oil, gas and mineral development on Crown lands;
- where Inuit own surface title to the land, the right to negotiate with industry for economic and social benefits from non-renewable resource development;
- the right of first refusal on sport and commercial development of renewable resources in the Nunavut Settlement Area;
- the creation of three new federally funded national parks;
- the inclusion of a political accord, that provides for the establishment of the new Territory of Nunavut and through this a form of self-government for the Nunavut Inuit.

### *NUNAVUT PLANNING COMMISSION*

Implementation of the NLCA got underway at the same time as preparations for the new territory of Nunavut ("Our Land" in Inuktitut), the creation of which was assured in the Nunavut Act, a federal statute bargained for concurrently with the NLCA. The Nunavut government, which came into being

on April 1, 1999, represents all residents of the new territory, Inuit and non-Inuit alike.

The Nunavut Planning Commission (NPC) was established under the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement and is responsible for land use planning and aspects of environmental management in the new territory.

NPC's main function is to develop land use plans, policies and objectives that guide resource use and development throughout Nunavut, with an emphasis on protecting and promoting the existing and future well-being of the residents and communities of the Nunavut Settlement Area. It should be noted that the term "land use" also includes water, wildlife and offshore areas.

For the past few years, the NPC has been actively mapping wildlife populations, human use and areas of archaeological significance while examining land use issues. This mapping work combines the invaluable knowledge of the Inuit with the latest computer mapping technology.

Members of the NPC are nominated by Inuit organizations and the governments of Canada and Nunavut.

## **The Nunavut Planning Commission's Work**

One of the most significant parts of the land claims agreement is the creation of new co-management institutions in the Arctic. The Nunavut Planning Commission (NPC) is one of these new institutions. As a land use planning agency, the NPC will help Inuit beneficiaries of the claim, on behalf of all Canadians, ensure the maximum sustainable benefit from land use activities in Nunavut.

### ***Sustainable Development***

Maintaining the balance: The people of Nunavut have stated clearly and consistently over the years that there must be a balance between development and the long-term preservation and conservation of the land, wildlife, and wildlife habitat.

The NPC supports the development of a local and regional economy that provides business and employment opportunities, while maintaining, as far as possible, the traditional lifestyle of the Inuit.

The NPC is working with the territorial and federal governments and other interested parties, including regional wildlife and environmental organizations, to establish broad planning policies, objectives and goals for Nunavut. And it will develop land use plans that guide responsible resource use and sustainable development. Members of the NPC are nominated by Inuit organizations and the governments of Canada and Nunavut. They are accountable to the people of Nunavut for their actions.

Over the next few years, the Planning Commission will examine land use issues throughout the new territory. The identification and mapping of wildlife populations, migratory routes, human use, waste sites, areas of archeological significance, and other significant factors has already begun in most of the NPC's six planning regions ([West Kitikmeot](#), [Central](#), [Kivalliq](#), [North Baffin](#), [South Baffin](#) and [Sanikiluaq](#)), with the ultimate goal of producing a comprehensive land use plan for each.

The NPC is committed not only to visiting all Nunavut communities to gather the sophisticated knowledge of the Inuit, who know every river and ridge, but also to using the latest computer mapping technology (GIS) to produce an infinitely malleable, easily updated series of digitized maps on which to base its land use plans and ensure the long-term sustainability of Nunavut's land, waters, and wildlife.

### ***NPC Planning Regions***

Nunavut is a vast territory encompassing a wide variety of ecosystems, geographies, local hunting and wage economies, natural resources, histories, dialects and opportunities.

To better serve the interests of Nunavut residents and Canadians as a whole, the Nunavut Planning Commission has created six land use planning regions within the territory, and conducts its mapping, land use planning and other activities on a region-by-region basis.



# Fort Nelson Land and Resource Management Plan Summary

## Introduction

In October 1997, the government of British Columbia took another step towards land-use certainty and economic stability by approving the Fort Nelson Land and Resource Management Plan.

The locally-developed LRMP ensures greater security for workers and industries while protecting the most important natural areas within the LRMP boundaries. The primary focus of the plan is to provide direction and assurance for resource development to continue while recognizing, accommodating and protecting important environmental values in the area.

The Fort Nelson LRMP is the largest sub-regional plan of its kind in British Columbia, covering 98,000 square kilometres (9.8 million hectares) in northeast B.C., an area larger than New Brunswick. It brought together a large and diverse group of local people who were willing to participate in interest-based negotiations which recognize that respect and consideration for all viewpoints is the only route to a successful plan. The planning team was able to arrive at solutions which provide a balance between environmental concerns, community needs and economic values.

## The Planning Area

The Fort Nelson LRMP covers approximately 10 per cent of the province (the boundaries of the Fort Nelson Forest District and a portion of the Bulkley-Cassiar Forest District, known as the Kechika addition). The Fort Nelson-Liard Regional District is within the planning area which includes the Town of Fort Nelson and the settlements of Prophet River, Toad River, Muncho Lake and Coal River.

The planning area is bounded on the south by the Fort St. John Forest District, on the west by the Cassiar-Stikine area and the Rocky Mountains, on the east by the Alberta border, and on the north by the Yukon/Northwest Territories border. The topography forms a gradient of increasing relief from east to west. The area encompasses parts of the Alberta plateau, the Rocky Mountain Foothills,

the Liard Plateau, the Liard Plain, the Kechika River Valley and a portion of the Cassiar Mountains.

The economy of the area is dominated by forestry, oil and gas, public sector incomes, and tourism. Based on 1994 figures, about 5,500 people live within the plan area. The area supports less than one per cent of the total provincial workforce, generating \$60 million in after-tax personal income (1991 figures) for its residents.

**A portion of the planning area overlaps with the Muskwa-Kechika (pronounced musk-quah ke-chee-kah) Area, also known as Dena Kéyih (pronounced den-ah key-ah) or "people's land" to the Kaska Dena First Nation. The Muskwa-Kechika Area, covering more than 4.4 million hectares, is a remote and relatively undeveloped area of bountiful resources with very little access. It supports nationally and internationally significant wildlife populations of large mammals including Stone's sheep, grizzly, moose, elk, and caribou. Beneath the mountains and valleys, there is a well defined potential for globally significant accumulations of natural gas and mineral resources. Portions of this area have high timber values. The remote and inaccessible nature of the area is the largest factor that has restricted exploration of subsurface resources, yet it is this same wilderness character that is of greatest value to managing and preserving wildlife and habitat systems.**

## The Planning Table

Since 1993, a group of people from the Fort Nelson area has been working on a Land and Resource Management Plan for their area. The planning table includes members of the general public, a wide selection of interest groups and government agency representatives all of whom live, work or have an interest in how Crown lands and resources are managed in the planning area.

### *First Nations*

**There are five First Nations who traditionally reside within the Fort Nelson LRMP area: the Fort Nelson Indian Band, Dene Tsa'a Tse K'Nai First Nation of Prophet River, Fort Liard Indian Band, Kaska Dena of the Lower Post First Nation and Dene Tha' First Nation. A portion of the land base covered by Treaty 8 with local First Nations overlaps with the Fort Nelson LRMP area.**

The Fort Nelson planning table encouraged local First Nations to participate in the LRMP process. While First Nations chose not to have formal representation at the planning table, they were kept apprised of the LRMP progress through personal contacts, formal communications and monthly information packages. Once the planning table reached consensus, members visited the local First Nations communities to present the LRMP recommendations to First Nations living in the plan area. Strategies to protect known First Nations archaeological, cultural and heritage values were endorsed by all of the LRMP participants.

**The approved Fort Nelson LRMP will form the basis of the provincial government's interest at treaty negotiations. The Fort Nelson LRMP is without prejudice to aboriginal rights, treaty rights, and ongoing and/or future treaty negotiations. The Province of British Columbia is committed to avoiding the infringement of treaty rights and aboriginal rights in areas where resource management activities are proposed. Government agencies will consult with First Nations to determine the nature and extent of treaty and aboriginal rights and if government decisions will infringe on those rights.**

### **Kaska Dena Letter of Understanding**

The Kaska Dena First Nation and the Province of British Columbia have negotiated a Letter of Understanding (LOU) which establishes a government-to-government relationship between the Kaska Dena Council and British Columbia and sets out the relationship between them with respect to the planning and management of lands and resources within the First Nation's traditional territories that are covered by the Fort Nelson LRMP. Those traditional lands that fall within the Muskwa-Kechika are called Dena Kéyih, which means "people's land" in the Kaska Dena

language. This LOU ensures that the Kaska Dena and British Columbia will work cooperatively to achieve the land use planning objectives established in the Fort Nelson LRMP. It will also ensure a meaningful and respectful role for the Kaska Dena as the LRMP is implemented.

### **Plan Highlights**

#### *Resource Management Zones:*

The planning area is divided into resource management zones based on resource values, existing economic activity and environmentally important areas. Generally, industrial activity is permitted in all RMZs with the exception of protected areas. While resource development, including access, may be limited or restricted in some RMZs, the Fort Nelson LRMP provides appropriate strategic direction for more detailed planning to support responsible resource development in the vast majority of the planning area.

The planning area can be divided into four broad categories:

- **Enhanced Resource Development** (3.68 million hectares or 37 per cent of the LRMP area) This category is made up of resource management zones where investments in resource development are encouraged. This category gives direction to manage land for oil and gas, mineral and timber development, while maintaining the recreation, agriculture and tourism resources along the highway corridor.
- **General Resource Management** (2.29 million hectares or 23 per cent of the LRMP area) This zone allows for a wide range of resource uses and activities, such as oil and gas exploration and development, mining, forestry, tourism, wildlife and recreation. The general resource management zone also covers major river corridors. This sub-category was identified to highlight the management of important values within the river corridors such as archaeological, cultural, heritage, recreational, scenic, timber and energy.

- **Special Management** (2.8 million hectares or 28 per cent of the LRMP area) Resource development is permitted but must consider and address all significant values identified, such as fish and wildlife habitat, wilderness and backcountry recreation, tourism and visual quality, major river corridors and community water supply. Most of this zone is within the Muskwa-Kechika. Some areas within this zone contain substantial concentrations of extractive resources, the exploration and development of which may be of significant social and economic benefit to the province.
- **Protected Areas** (954,000 hectares or 10 per cent of the LRMP area) In all, 21 new areas, varying in size from 60 to almost 636,000 hectares, will be protected or upgraded as protected areas under the Fort Nelson LRMP. Some of the areas protect viable, representative examples of the natural diversity of the province; others protect outstanding special natural, recreational and cultural features. All sizes listed are approximate.
  1. *Andy Bailey Area* - 215 hectares; located southeast of Fort Nelson off the Alaska Highway, an existing recreation area with a campsite, boat launch and picnic area.
  2. *Dall River Old Growth* - 640 hectares; white spruce old growth forest, adjacent to the Denetiah protected area.
  3. *Denetiah* - 97,600 hectares; this area is a component of a large intact predator-prey system. It has provincially significant wildlife values including moose, caribou, Stone's sheep, mountain goats, wolves and grizzly bears. Recreational activities in this area include big game hunting, fishing, canoeing, rafting, wildlife viewing and hiking. Special features of this area are the Dall and Denetiah Lakes, with the intact Denetiah watershed and the historic Davie Trail from Fort Ware to Lower Post. The area also has historical value and is currently used by the Kaska Dena First Nation. An opportunity for future access to resources beyond the protected area will be provided.
  4. *Goguka Creek* - 380 hectares; located south of Fort Nelson off the Alaska Highway, this area will protect an example of Chamaedaphne bog and pitcher plant.
  5. *Grayling Hot Springs* - 1,410 hectares; located in the northwest portion of the planning area, contains a complex of nationally significant hot springs.
  6. *Hay River* - 2,000 hectares; an outstanding example of river meadows with associated wildlife values, historical use by wood bison and First Nations people.
  7. *Horneline Creek* - 300 hectares; significant mineral lick for the mountain goat population, ecosection representation of Kechika Mountains.
  8. *Jackpine Remnant* - 160 hectares; ecosection representation of the Fort Nelson Lowlands, accessible via resource roads.
  9. *Klua Lakes* - 28,270 hectares; located in the southern part of the LRMP area a few kilometres east of the Alaska Highway, this protected area provides habitat for trumpeter swans, peregrine falcons, mountain goats, grizzly bear, ungulates, fur bearers, as well as a diversity of fish species. The area has recreational sport fishing values, historic and current use by local First Nations and significant cultural value including an historic commercial fishery site, a native village abandoned after World War Two, native pack trails, an old wagon trail and a spiritual site.
  10. *Kotcho Lake Village Site* - 60 hectares; located east of Fort Nelson, ecosection representation of the Etsho Plateau. The area has high First Nations values.
  11. *Liard River Corridor* - 90,450 hectares; the Liard River Corridor is located

- adjacent to the Liard Hot Springs Provincial Park northwest of Fort Nelson. Special features in the area include archaeological sites, fossils, old growth spruce, significant grizzly habitat, a wood bison population and significant cultural and heritage values related to traditional native activities and fur trading dating back to the early 1800s. Recreational values along the river are high with opportunities for hunting, wildlife viewing, fishing and caving. Very limited road access.
12. *Maxhamish Lake* - 27,800 hectares; this area is located in the northern part of the plan area close to the B.C./ Northwest Territories border. The lake has sandy beaches and the potential to be a popular recreation area. Wildlife values are high due to waterfowl, pike, walleye, cisco and spottail shiner. This area has significant historic and current use by local First Nations who refer to Maxhamish Lake as Sandy Lake. No road access at this point but a proposed road route will be identified in the park management plan.
  13. *Northern Rocky Mountains* - 645,000 hectares; this is the largest of all protected areas in the Muskwa-Kechika Area and one of the largest in B.C. The northern part of the area runs along the Alaska Highway but road access is restricted to maintain its natural state. Spectacular geological formations, escarpments and chevron folds can be found on Sleeping Chief Mountain, Mount Sylvia and Mount Mary Henry. Other features include significant wetlands, areas of old growth forests and a high density and diversity of large mammal species. The area has historic value and is currently used by First Nations.
  14. *Portage Brule Rapids* - 1,000 hectares; located northwest of Fort Nelson south of the Alaska Highway, this area contains hot springs and unique vegetation.
  15. *Prophet River Hot Springs* - 80 hectares; this area offers ecosystem representation of the Eastern Muskwa Ranges, significant value for First Nations.
  16. *Prophet River* - 80 hectares; ecosystem representation of the Fort Nelson Lowlands, a 36-unit campsite on the banks of the Prophet River is currently managed as a recreation area by BC Parks.
  17. *Scatter River Old Growth* - 1,140 hectares; located northwest of Fort Nelson, protects white spruce old growth forest.
  18. *Smith River Falls/Fort Halkett* - 240 hectares; the old site of Fort Halkett is located at the mouth of the Smith River on the Alaska Highway, has a large two-step waterfall, 35 metres in height.
  19. *Thinatea* - 19,600 hectares; this area is located in the northeast corner of the plan area near the confluence of Thinatea Creek and Petitot River and east of Fort Nelson. The area has a high capability rating for trumpeter swans, and is also important for moose and other waterfowl. The Thinatea is significant for food and medicinal values for First Nations. The word Thinatea means "where the giants laid down" in the traditional language of the Fort Nelson Indian Band.
  20. *Toad River Hot Springs* - 400 hectares; located east of Fort Nelson and along the Alaska Highway, regionally significant hot springs, excellent wildlife viewing, hiking and First Nations values.
  21. *Wokkpash* - 37,300 hectares; this existing Recreation Area located west of Fort Nelson has attained international significance due to its unique geographical features including: the Wokkpash Gorge which has hoodoos up to 30 metres in height along its five-kilometre length; Forlorn Gorge, a narrow cleft 150 metres deep and 25 metres wide; Fusillier Glacier; and Stepped Lakes. The Wokkpash is a traditional use area for First Nations.

There are excellent opportunities for recreation such as hiking, camping, wildlife viewing, fishing, horseback riding and hunting.

The new protected areas will be managed primarily for their conservation, recreation and cultural values, consistent with the Protected Areas Strategy, and incorporating the specific recommendations from the Fort Nelson LRMP table. Logging, mining, oil and gas exploration and development will not be permitted. However, directional drilling for petroleum and natural gas from the outside perimeter boundary under the Thinatea, Goguka Creek, Hay River and Jackpine Remnant protected areas will be allowed. Existing and traditional uses of the land within protected areas will continue. These uses include trapping, hunting, fishing, guide outfitting and limited livestock grazing. Designation of these areas, along with existing protected areas, increases the total amount of protected area in the Fort Nelson LRMP area to 1.06 million hectares or 11.4 per cent.

#### **Present and Future Economy**

As part of the planning process, an independent assessment of the social, environmental and economic impacts of the LRMP was prepared. It found that no existing jobs are expected to be lost as a result of the plan in the short term. The Fort Nelson LRMP provides a balanced mix of development and protection to ensure continued prosperity for the region across all sectors.

*Forestry:* Forty per cent of the Fort Nelson planning area economy is driven by the forest sector, accounting for approximately 800 jobs. No risks to existing jobs in forestry are expected from implementation of the LRMP, and long term stability is expected in this sector.

*Oil and Gas Sector:* The planning area's oil and gas reserves are highly significant with employment in this sector accounting for 10% to 20% of the local economy (approximately 350 local jobs) on a relatively permanent basis. In addition, the oil and gas industry employs many others for seasonal work. While some reserves are depleting, there is highly promising, but lightly explored land in the Northern Foothills and Muskwa-Kechika Area which will increase total production over time.

*Mining:* With no major metal mines operating or under review at this time, the sector's current activity involves exploration projects and small

scale mining of sand and gravel. Current employment in this sector is estimated at 25 to 30 local residents. Non-resident employment in mining generally exceeds the employment of local residents. No existing local jobs are expected to be lost in this sector as a result of the Fort Nelson LRMP.

*Tourism, Guide-Outfitting and Wilderness Recreation:* The Fort Nelson planning area is experiencing growth in tourism and outdoor recreation, accounting for about 10 per cent of the local economy. More growth is expected with the new protected areas providing wilderness settings and greater certainty to the area's commercial backcountry industry.

#### **Implementation of the Fort Nelson LRMP**

The Fort Nelson LRMP is a cooperative step along the road to ensuring everyone - workers, communities, environmentalists and industry - has a direct say over how Crown land and resources will be managed in their area. Implementation of the Fort Nelson LRMP will mean positive change: fundamental long-term change necessary to ensure community stability, secure jobs for all sectors and a healthy environment.

**Now that government has approved it, the Fort Nelson LRMP will be implemented by government agencies including the provincial ministries of Environment, Lands and Parks; Employment and Investment; and Forests. The approved plan will guide a wide variety of resource management programs and activities, such as forest development, oil and gas development, recreation, guide outfitting, agriculture, fish and wildlife. The term of the LRMP will be 10 years with a review to begin in 2005 (year 8). To maintain local involvement in the management of the area's lands and resources, a working group of the Fort Nelson LRMP table will work together with government agencies to monitor how well the plan is being implemented on the ground.**

#### **Strategic Land Use Planning in British Columbia**

In the early 1990s, the Province of British Columbia recognized the need for fundamental change in its approach to land use planning. A strategic land use planning process for all Crown

land in the province was established with the objective of ensuring a sustainable future for the province's environment, economy and communities.

Land use plans are developed primarily by local people who rely on the land and its resources in their daily lives. Planning tables are made up of representatives from industry, conservation, recreation, government (provincial, local and federal), First Nations and other public interests working together in a process of shared decision making.

Land use plans provide economic and social stability for communities by ensuring continued access to and management of natural resources, and conservation of the environment through a balance of land use designations ranging from full protection and special management to more intensive resource development and settlement areas.

Land use plans have been approved and are now being implemented for Vancouver Island, Cariboo-Chilcotin, Kootenay-Boundary, Kamloops, Kispiox, Vanderhoof, Bulkley, Fort St. John and Fort Nelson. Twelve land and resource management planning processes continue. In all, land use planning in B.C. now extends to more than 80 per cent of the province.