

**Wolf Conservation and Management Plan Review
Community Meeting Whitehorse**

April 28, 2011

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The following summary sets out key points discussed at a two hour meeting of the Yukon Wolf Conservation and Management Plan Review Committee and the public. Major points or themes were also reviewed by the facilitator in an oral summary at the conclusion of the meeting.

The discussion focused on proposed changes to the 1992 Yukon Wolf Conservation and Management Plan and current issues associated with Yukon wolf conservation and management.

1992 Yukon Wolf Conservation and Management Plan

- This plan took away many of the tools that were previously available for hunters and trappers to manage wolves. Those tools should be reintroduced to the new plan.
- Many of the broad tools being discussed during the community meetings were taken off the table in exchange for aerial control.
- An example of a barrier is that pilots cannot report a sighting of wolves or kills until after 48 hrs.
- Other options should be reintroduced into the plan and aerial control should no longer be considered.

Management context – roles and responsibilities and current conditions

- A management plan needs to be community driven.
- We need to focus more on the positive work that has been done.

- The Inuvialuit and Gwitchin Tribal Council should be consulted. There needs to be an acknowledgement of their lands in the Yukon. Their input to this work is important.
- There needs to be a process for people to provide input who are not having a problem with wolves.
- Some concerns for dogs in recreational areas where there are traps set.
- The RRCs and YG need to work more closely together.
- Everyone needs to work on the basis of consensus. Everyone needs to be walking together or there will be too much fighting.
- There were not many concerns raised about wolves in the city. There do not seem to be problems with wolves in the city. During the meeting in other communities there was so much to say about wolf management. Most of the discussion at the Whitehorse meeting was from community members.
- Appreciate the time the committee took to visit all the communities – it meant a lot.
- Have to manage the entire system including hunting.

Wolf conservation and management – general approach

- Wolves have always been here, but we've taken away the trapping community as part of the cycle. There used to be 60 – 70 percent of community members in northern Yukon out trapping. Now there are only hobby trappers.
- The situation is not the same across the Yukon.
- Wolves are here for a reason and we need to respect that.
- Where wolves have been heavily managed they have rebounded to the same level within a few years.
- Example of someone seeing a bait station near Fish Lake while skiing. Baiting animals in recreation areas so close to town is not appropriate and we should move away from this type of management. Surprised to learn this approach is still legal.
- The problem of too many wolves in some areas needs to be recognized.
- Wolves play an important role in First Nation culture.
- We need to find a balance. When we are over populated by wolves and there are no moose around, wolves need to be more heavily managed. We need to do something about predators including bears and hunters.
- Wolves should be delisted as a big game animal.
- Will not remove all the wolves without aerial control and poison, and people don't want that approach.
- Support of the messages summarized in the facilitator's presentation regarding what was heard in communities. Encouraged by the direction this work is moving towards more moderate approaches.
- We all need to work together. Hunting and trapping are the sustainable economy; concern about what will be left after the mines are finished.
- Community approaches should be targeted in well hunted lakes, rivers, and corridors.

- Consider using the Porcupine Caribou Harvest Management Plan as a model. The plan was created before numbers of the herd were too low. Numbers need to be included in the plan so people know when different sections need to be implemented.
- A program on the peninsula in Alaska was very successful in increasing moose numbers and only 26 wolves were taken.
- Selective, targeted management can work.
- These programs may involve a permitted aerial harvest.
- Local, traditional and scientific knowledge combined should be used in decision making, or this will not work.
- The UFA (16.1.2) refers to enhancing and supporting renewable resource economy. This applies to trappers and outfitters.
- Predators are the largest cause of ungulate deaths.

Management of hunting and trapping of wolves

- Expert trappers should be teaching younger trappers.
- There are so many barriers to trapping.
- Wolves are so hard to catch you never have to worry about taking too many with just hunting and trapping.
- Trappers are very careful to ensure safety of the public, dogs and other animals on their trap sites. Always trying new snares such as break away snares to avoid accidentally catching moose. Sites are well signed and clear.
- Trappers respect the areas they work and would never overharvest.
- In an area near Teslin a local trapper has seen an increase in moose when taking 5 – 6 wolves each year.
- Trappers are always working towards the best, most humane traps. Much work goes on with trappers experimenting with new traps in Yukon. Trappers from across the Yukon share experience and knowledge with one another.
- Wolves can not be hunted in the spring anymore.
- Pilots should be able to report fresh ungulate kill sites so hunters and trappers can remove wolves.
- Trappers are not well organized enough in Yukon to lobby for what they need.
- If wolf management is continued to be done out of the pockets of hunters and trappers, it won't work.
- Barriers need to be removed and people need to be given the opportunity to go harvest wolves.
- We need to listen to our elders and their methods for hunting and trapping wolves.
- It is difficult to get bait.
- Trapping wolves is very hard work, and very expensive work.
- Other animals eat the bait and trappers need to be able to harvest whatever is in the bait station.

- Need to focus wolf and ungulate management at the community scale; this will require major changes in the way we manage trapping right now.
- Need to have access to other furbearers at the same time as trapping wolves.
- Hard to get assistant trappers.

Incentive

- We need an incentive for trappers.
- Hunters and trappers need to be supported. These individuals are the best management tool for conserving wildlife.
- Incentive programs should include funding for individuals to get out and work on the land.

Trapline access

- Trappers need access to unused lines. Don't take traplines away.
- If trappers are not given access to other lines we'll end up needing a large scale intervention again.
- There needs to be a way to get underutilized lines active.
- Focus on family traplines. Allow others to come in and trap, but only wolves.

Management of ungulates

- Example of 16 moose kills was given on Teslin Lake in 2000. Many moose are being taken by wolves in the Teslin area. It is a real concern to people in that community.
- Wolves and humans are competing for the same moose. Wolves are able to hunt moose year round but humans are restricted to a specific season.
- Need to work with YG on ungulate management. This is not about wolves. It's about management.
- Need to distribute hunters.
- An ungulate harvest management plan would be beneficial.
- Want to work towards the maximum sustainable abundance – the most animals that are reasonable to have on the land.
- We want an abundance of moose to share, with the community and with hunters who come from outside the community.
- There is much pressure from Whitehorse hunters.
- Using calf recruitment may be a way to more easily monitor ungulate populations. If people are comfortable with the number of animals on the land, maintain the calf/cow ratio. If there are not enough animals, manage wolves more intensively to increase the calf/cow ratio. May not need an entire census.
- We should be able to distribute our hunting in the Yukon so that we don't need wolf control.

Wolf Human Conflict

- Reports of wolves killing colts and calves. They usually stay away from the adult females.

Conditions for wolf population reduction

- We need to stay away from culling and really going after wolves.
- People don't have an appetite for aerial control. There is great respect for wildlife by all users in Yukon. Don't want to get to Alaska situation of heavy wolf control.
- Millions of dollars went to flight time. The money should be used to support the people like hunters and trappers in wolf reduction efforts.

Other Issues

- Bears take many animals too.