
TRAPPING

Concern

What is the legal difference between subsistence and commercial?

Section 16.4.5 of the Umbrella Final Agreement states that, “Yukon Indian People shall have the right to give, trade, barter or sell to any person any Non-Edible By-Product of Fish and Wildlife that is obtained from the Harvesting of Furbearers...” This section refers to section 16.4.2 which covers Subsistence Harvesting on Settlement Land or on Crown Land to which they (Yukon Indian People) have right of access. These and related statements create confusion when viewed in terms of trapping for “Commercial Purposes” which requires a Yukon government trapping license and follows Yukon government trapping regulations. Such distinctions get more complicated when it comes to requiring that trappers take the five-day trapping course required for all first time Yukon trappers.

Solution Determine definition of commercial harvest.

A better mutual understanding about commercial trapping is required for both Yukon government and VGFN to regulate this industry effectively. This would be based on a definition of commercial harvesting that would address all the references in the UFA.

Actions

Responsible parties, Time line

VGFN/YG
NYRRC
2001/02

Meet to explore meaning of commercial trapping activity and need for trapping license.

The Yukon government and VGFN will set up a meeting to discuss this matter. Such a meeting will require some prior preparation in terms of interpreting the VGFN Final Agreement. The object of the meeting would be to establish when a VGFN citizen needs to acquire a Yukon government trapping license and when this is not required. This exercise may serve to enlighten both Yukon government and other First Nation governments as well. [2001-NY-AI-29]

Concern

Can't tell where fur is harvested from.

The entire VGFN traditional territory is designated as a “Group Trapping Area” for VGFN beneficiaries except for one Registered Trapping Concession in the south end along the Dempster Highway. Fur record forms document individual traplines where the fur comes from and these are used by the Yukon government to monitor fur harvesting according to the number of animals and the area where they are taken. In the case of a group trapline the specific area cannot be identified, therefore there is no means of monitoring the amount of fur coming from a particular part of VGFN traditional territory. Thus over-harvesting in certain areas will not be apparent and also reports of over-harvesting in VGFN traditional territory cannot be verified.

Solution Record location of fur harvests in Vuntut Gwitchin traditional territory.

A system of recording the number and location of trapped furbearers needs to be implemented in VGFN traditional territory to ensure that overharvesting does not occur.

continued...

Actions

Responsible parties, Time line

VGFN/YG
2001/02

Look into tracking fur harvest by sub-units in group trapline.

One approach to narrowing down the location of fur harvest information would be to divide VGFN into subunits which could be referred to by the trapper on the fur export permit and used by the Yukon government to track the harvests. This subdivision of VGFN traditional territory would be worked out between VGFN and the Yukon government. The Yukon government would annually report the summarized information to VGFN. [2001-NY-AI-30]

VGFN/YG
2001/02

Include fur harvest in harvest monitoring.

The VGFN harvest monitoring program has the capacity to record a variety of information that the Yukon government system cannot. This could include fur harvests and could encompass fur taken for both commercial and subsistence purposes. Given that VGFN determines who may trap on the Category 1 trapline (VGFN determines from those eligible under the *Wildlife Act* and trapping regulations who may trap and these may include beneficiaries, other Yukon Indian people or other Yukon residents), VGFN could obtain a complete record of all fur taken. The challenge of the VGFN harvest monitoring system will be in recording the information and providing for efficient retrieval. [2001-NY-AI-31]

*Dick Nukon scraping
a beaver skin*

