

Deh Cho Land Use Planning Committee

Communications Strategy

Introduction

The purpose of this document is to outline the ways in which the Deh Cho Land Use Planning Committee (DCLUPC) will initiate, maintain, and improve communications with other agencies and the public. Clear and meaningful communication is essential to the DCLUPC's ability to fulfill its mandate of making recommendations to government and first nations on land use planning. Moreover, effective communication is essential to any process where dialogue among many parties and the public in general is necessary. This document will outline who those parties are, what the DCLUPC should or would like to communicate to them, and how this can be achieved.

Background

The Deh Cho Land Use Planning Committee was established in 2001 to develop a land and resource management plan for the region. The plan will outline:

- ✓ What types of activities should occur
- ✓ Where activities should take place
- ✓ Terms and conditions to guide land use proposals and development projects

The Land Use Planning Process was set up as part of the Deh Cho Process, under the Interim Measures Agreement. The agreement was signed by the Deh Cho First Nations and the Governments of Canada and the Northwest Territories. The land use plan will include all of the Deh Cho Territory except land within municipal boundaries and the Nahanni National Park Reserve.

Once approved, the land use plan will be legally binding. It will guide future decisions on applications for development, protected areas and other land uses.

The Committee is made up of five people: Herb Norwegian (Chairperson), Peter Cizek, (DCFN representative) Tim Lennie (DCFN representative), Beatrice Lepine (Government of the Northwest Territories representative) and Adrian Boyd (Government of Canada representative).

Next Steps

The Land Use Planning Committee has been very active in letting contracts for research. By spring, 2003 the Committee will have research completed on timber, wildlife and wildlife habitat, oil and gas, mineral, agriculture and tourism potential within the Deh Cho Territory. They will also have information about job creation needs, traditional use and occupancy, and wildlife harvesting.

This information will assist the committee to draft options for land use based on different ways of balancing economic potential with social and ecological considerations. After consultation a

draft plan will be circulated and revised until ready to be approved by the Canadian, Territorial and Deh Cho governments. Once approved, it will be legally binding.

Once a final agreement is signed for the Deh Cho Process, the land use plan will be reviewed and updated very five years.

Communication Goal

This communication strategy was developed to assist the DCLUPC in fulfilling its mandate. The overall goal of this strategy is to ensure pro-active, effective communication with the residents and key planning partners of the Deh Cho to allow them to approve a Deh Cho Land Use Plan which they have been actively involved in developing.

Key Objectives

This goal will be achieved through several communication objectives:

- Provide information in a variety of formats to key planning partners and residents of the Deh Cho about the mandate of the DCLUPC and to demonstrate that this mandate is being fulfilled.
- People in the Deh Cho will be encouraged to contact staff members and know how to contact them to provide feedback during the planning process.
- Residents of the Deh Cho and key planning partners will have access to information and analysis developed during the planning process to increase their participation in consultation phases of the Committee's work.
- A variety of methods will be used to communicate the long-term implications of the land use plan and how it fits into other initiatives, such as the Deh Cho Process, and large and small scale resource developments.

The long term importance of individuals, businesses and organizations participating in the land use planning process will be emphasized.

Key Messages

- The Deh Cho Land Use Planning Committee is committed to developing a land use plan which balances economic, social, environmental and cultural considerations and meets the future needs of Deh Cho residents and other Canadians.
- Everyone interested in how land in the Deh Cho is used in the future has a role to play to ensure that the land use plan considers all perspectives. Aboriginal and non-aboriginal people, organizations, businesses and government all have a role – One Land, One Plan.
- The Land Use Plan will be legally binding and will guide future decision making around resource development, protected areas and other land uses
- The Land Use Plan is a major step toward people in the Deh Cho having control over development and making decisions for themselves about how their land will be used.
- Ongoing updates on our activities, including timing of community visits.

Key Audiences

The Deh Cho Land Use Planning Committee sees three groups of external audiences it needs to communicate with.

The first group consists of the three governments who must approve the plan. Communication and consultation must be ongoing with the Deh Cho First Nations, the Government of the Northwest Territories and the Government of Canada to ensure all are well informed and fully involved in the process so they are prepared to approve the plan when it is complete.

The second group includes other planning partners the Committee must consult with who are affected by land use planning in the Deh Cho territory. These would include companies involved in resource development (oil and gas, minerals, forestry, agriculture), local businesses, tourism operators, non-government organizations, business organizations (e.g. Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers, Chamber of Commerce), other government departments not directly involved in the land use planning approval process, etc. This is a broad category encompassing many sectors and audience types.

Consultation is defined as

- (a) "...providing, to the party to be consulted:
- (i) Notice of the matter in sufficient form and detail to allow the party to prepare its views on the matter;
 - (ii) A reasonable period for the party to prepare those views; and
 - (iii) An opportunity to present those views to the party having the power or duty to consult; and
- (b) Considering, fully and impartially, the views so presented (Deh Cho Interim Measures Agreement, 2001).

The third group consists of audiences who need information to be able to support our activities. This would include Deh Cho residents, organizations such as friendship centres, educators, etc. The Committee would use general mainstream media (TV, radio, newspapers) to inform the public about our mandate and activities, accomplishments, major announcements, and important events. Contact information will be widely distributed for those who would like to learn more or provide input into our process.

Strategic Challenges and Considerations

- Communication with businesses, individuals, government and organizations must be as inclusive as possible
- Community leaders can influence community member involvement and support and therefore must be aware of the importance of the land use planning process and its future impact
- The land use planning process must compete for attention with several other political, economic, social and environmental initiatives and issues currently happening in the Deh Cho region. Regional and national attention on a Mackenzie Valley Pipeline could provide an opportunity to promote the land use planning process to a wider audience.
- Communications must be timed to encourage participation in consultations
- People must be aware of progress during the planning process so they do not feel they have been left out of the loop and are being presented with a draft plan that they have not had the chance to be part of developing.

- Communicating with planning partners and the public will be most successful if mainstream media communications are considered as an integral part of other Committee activities. This requires ongoing commitment of the Committee members and staff.
- The use of radio and television can help to reach broader audiences because of the long tradition and importance of oral communication in the north.
- South Slavey language radio programs at the territorial and local levels can be utilized to reach Deh Cho residents, especially elders.

Communications Approaches

- Consistent messages will be delivered by all staff and committee members.
- Focus on the need to balance social and economic interests and importance of land use planning for future development.
- Emphasize importance of participation by individuals, communities, businesses, government and other planning partners in the Deh Cho territory.
- The Committee will provide ongoing updates of activities and ensure information is timed to coincide with community visits.

Communications Strategy

Different forms of communication target different groups so a range of media and strategies will need to be employed to ensure an effective communication strategy. There are a number of ways of categorizing media:

Oral vs. Written: The Committee recognizes the importance of oral communication traditions in the Deh Cho territory and will ensure all important information is communicated orally in an effective and timely manner. That said, there are many more options available for printed materials and the Committee will make full use of all these media types.

Electronic vs. Print: While email and websites have certainly made communication easier for many people, not everyone has access to this service. Furthermore, large documents may be slow to download and many people still prefer to read a printed copy of information. The Deh Cho Land Use Planning Committee will post all reports and communications materials on their website for immediate communication, but will make printed copies of all key reports and information available for those who do not have access to the internet, or who simply prefer a hardcopy. Since television and radio are also electronic media to which almost everyone has access, they remain a key way of disseminating information to a wide variety of audiences in a timely manner.

In-person Presentations vs. Self-Education: Despite the preparation and distribution of many communication materials, people may not be accessing the information. Either they don't know that the information is available, or they don't want any more information as they don't want to get involved in any more initiatives. In-person presentations are often required when key information needs to reach people. This is also ideal when the material being presented is difficult or technical as the audience has an immediate opportunity to ask questions and respond to the information. Presentations also provide an immediate measure of the interest in your communication materials as you can count how many people show up. Outside of community visits, one can also think of planning forums, conferences and workshops as in-person presentations. Presentations require more preparation and are more expensive but

should be done at key stages in the communication process when important information needs to be disseminated.

There are instances where each of these forms of communication is the most appropriate. The following table outlines the communication method, the nature of information presented, the primary audience and the action required to use it. The DCLUPC will use all of these methods in its communication strategy.

Method	Nature of Information	Primary Audience	Actions
News Release	Significant events in land use planning process	General Public, community members	Draft news release for distribution to newspapers and radio stations when significant events arise
Newspaper Articles	General and specific information about land use planning process and issues	General Public	Write article - submit when relevant issues arise
Brochure	General DCLUPC information	General Public, community members	Revise brochure annually or as needed
Newsletter	Recent DCLUPC activities, updates on the Committee, information about land use planning	Public, other planning boards, government, First Nations, other planning partners	Newsletter of 4-8 pages to be produced quarterly
Starter Kit / Land Use Planning Manual	Information about the Committee, and writing a land use plan (methods)	Communities, chiefs, residents, schools	To be developed for the Kakisa Assembly
Annual Report	Financial audits, general information about preceding year	Public, Parties, First Nations	Annual report will be prepared immediately after financial audit is complete.
Fact Sheets and Support Documents / Issue Papers	Information about specific issues in the land use planning process	Parties, public, planning partners, other planning jurisdictions	Fact sheets will be drafted by staff, approved by Board, and distributed through mail-outs or fax.
Written Correspondence	Formal communication	Parties, other organizations and agencies	Written paper correspondence will be the official and formal means of communication from the DCLUPC to other organizations.
Posters	Information about the planning process	General assemblies, trade shows, exhibitions, community presentations	Posters will be used as part of the display booth.
Photographs	Photographs will depict aspects of the planning process, different types of land use, show importance of land use planning	Public	Photographs will be used in all publications, except media releases.
Open Board Meetings	Current issues and work, excluding personnel issues, financial issues, and issues the Board wants to discuss in confidence	Parties, other agencies, members of the public	Remain amenable to observers and specify on agenda what is to be confidential.

Mission Statement	Broad, philosophical goals for the DCLUPC	Public, other agencies, internal	Board will create a vision statement to reflect the goals and objectives and the DCLUPC, and guide its work.
Workshops	Specific planning issues	Parties, First Nations (Chiefs, Elders, harvesters), depending on the issue	Hold workshops as needed.
Presentations at General Assemblies	Information about DCLUPC in general, the planning process, updates on activities and community visits.	Deh Cho First Nations	General assemblies will be attended by staff and Board members as required.
Community Meetings	Specific planning issues	Communities	DCLUPC will attend meetings that are relevant to its activities, only upon invitation from the community
Meetings with other planning boards	Northern planning information, workshops on specific aspects of land use planning.	Regional planning boards	Annual meetings will provide the opportunity to address issues common to all boards.
Open House	Create a presence in the community, distribute general information, and generate goodwill towards DCLUPC.	Communities, residents	Open house will be held as required to mark important changes in DCLUPC
Display Boards	Present general DCLUPC information, and specific issues.	Public, First Nations, interested agencies, schools	Staff and Board will stay informed about, and express interest in display opportunities.
Audio Visual Communications	Maps, visual information, public presentation materials	Workshop participants, public presentations, meetings	Attempt to incorporate visual material into its public presentations to make them more interesting and effective.
Website	Updates on Committee and activities, information about the Committee, report and map distribution	Public, researchers, interested groups, schools	Maintain monthly updates and setup an FTP site for report and map distribution.
Email	Working communication with parties and other interested organizations, casual enquiries, semi-formal communication.	Staff of Parties and other organizations, between Board members and staff	Continue to use email to communicate at the working level. Email will not be considered formal communication.
Interpretation	Key public presentations and key informant interviews with elders	South Slavey language speakers	Seek interpretation services for important public meetings.
Media Relations Strategy	Important DCLUPC events	Public, interested groups	Hold media briefings as required to update activities or highlight major events. Develop media kit and guidelines. Monitor the media for DCLUPC coverage.

Communication Training	Communication technologies, communication techniques (e.g. group facilitation, public presentation methods and skills)	Staff and Board	DCLUPC will encourage training for staff and Board, where available.
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Languages

All communications will be developed in English. Where practical, communications materials will be translated into South Slavey. There are some instances where this is not an effective strategy. For instance, the Committee has decided not to translate its website due to a combination of difficulties in working with the Dene font in digital media and the fact that non-English speaking individuals do not regularly surf the internet for information. Other media such as radio or television programs are better suited to targeting South Slavey speakers.

The Committee is also committed to the development of plain language summaries and communications materials wherever possible. Some reports will be rather technical by their very nature and such reports are required to properly convey technical information. However, plain language summaries will be developed and distributed for the non-technical audiences so that those groups or individuals may understand and participate in the discussions around these issues.

Immediate Priorities

Since the Deh Cho Land Use Planning Committee is just starting its process and initiating communication, its first priority is to flood the media to raise general awareness about its presence, mandate and activities. It will achieve this through the production and distribution of a number of introductory materials:

- Website
- Brochure
- Newsletter
- Mass mail-out flyers (ad mail)
- Posters
- Promotional items featuring the logo and contact information
- Office sign
- Video
- Radio broadcasts and cassette recordings of an introductory talk (e.g. reading the brochure over the radio)
- Initial media coverage in newspapers
- South Slavey radio interviews
- Television news coverage
- Production and broadcast of a Public Service Announcement/Anik Info spot on CBC TV

Secondly, DCLUPC needs to inform the communities, the general public and its planning partners about its on-going activities and provide detailed information related to its research and planning activities. This will involve more technical information. The Committee plans to accomplish this through the following methods:

- Place reports on the Committee's website

- Distribute reports or plain language summaries to all governments and planning partners
- Provide summary information in the newsletters as “issue” stories
- Make use of trade publications to inform business planning partners of the release of new information, planned workshops or presentations geared to them
- Make presentations to communities and planning partners to discuss the detailed information (PowerPoint, posters)
- Follow up with radio or cassette recorded discussions of the material to provide oral access to information
- Make use of newspaper, radio and TV announcements to announce community presentations, open houses, etc, where technical information will be presented and discussed.

The Committee will take advantage of community forums, school programs and professional venues such as conferences to share information about the Committee’s activities and disseminate information. Promotional items, business cards, brochures and posters should be available for use and distribution for such occasions. The DCLUPC will also maintain an open door policy in the office and invite community members or anyone passing through to come in and talk with us. Visits should be actively encouraged for schools and other educational programs. The office should be kept neat and professional looking at all times to allow for such visits. Staff should be prepared to talk about and demonstrate the current work occurring on site and be able to address basic questions.

Evaluation

DCLUPC will review the Communication Strategy annually or as required. The evaluation team should consist of both staff and Board members. The primary method of evaluation will be to systematically address each point in the Communications strategy. Using perceptual and statistical information, the team will determine the successes, shortcomings, and areas needing change in the communication activities of the DCLUPC. The team must also prioritize communication activities for the future.

In conducting this evaluation, the following factors will be useful:

- Number of publications (newsletter, annual report, fact sheets etc.) that were completed in comparison to number projected.
- Frequency of enquiries, formal and informal, on the subject of land use planning and DCLUPC activities.
- Frequency that DCLUPC is mentioned in the media and factual accuracy of coverage.
- Accuracy, ease, and general effectiveness of various communication methods at the working level (e.g. e-mail, telephone), particularly in areas of data transfer, personal communication with the parties, and seeking clarity on issues.
- Change in response time from parties, faster or slower.
- Effectiveness of public presentation material: speeches, display boards, audio visual presentations. This will be done by providing written evaluation forms or asking people for their comments at the end of presentations.
- Reliability and accuracy of communication technology (e.g. e-mail, telephones, fax, photocopier in good condition).
- Number of special events involving DCLUPC, particularly where land use planning is a focus (e.g. open houses, workshops).

- Amount of training received or needed (e.g. staff proficiency at communication, both personal and technological).
- Numbers of participants at community consultation meetings, open houses or other DCLUPC events.
- Quantity of people/organizations providing feedback and quality of feedback (i.e. is it informed?).
- Number of organizations or individuals who express support for the planning process or products produced (e.g. band council resolutions, letters to the editor, declarations or statements of support in public forums).