

**Comments on the Deh Cho Land Use Planning Committee's  
First Working Draft Land Use Map,  
Terms and Policy Recommendations  
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**Ducks Unlimited Canada**  
CANADA'S CONSERVATION COMPANY

Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC) has had an opportunity to review the Deh Cho Land Use Planning Committee's first Working Draft Land Use Map, Terms and Policy Recommendations. DUC would like to thank the committee for the opportunity to provide input into this first working draft. We also applaud the committee and the Dehcho people for the conservation minded approach to the daunting task of sustainable resource management in this land use plan. Overall, we are pleased with the working draft and have only a few comments at this time.

We are impressed to see that 50% of the Dehcho is protected within Conservation Zones (CZ) and another 23% in Special Management Zones (SMZ). Within many of these zones, we are pleased to see that important wetland and waterbird values are identified in their zone objectives and would like to see these areas remain protected. We are also pleased with the connectivity between most of the conservation zones. Specific comments are listed below including those directed at specific areas within the Dehcho (Figure 1). Some of the comments are based on DUC's 2003 breeding and staging reconnaissance surveys conducted in the south western Deh Cho.

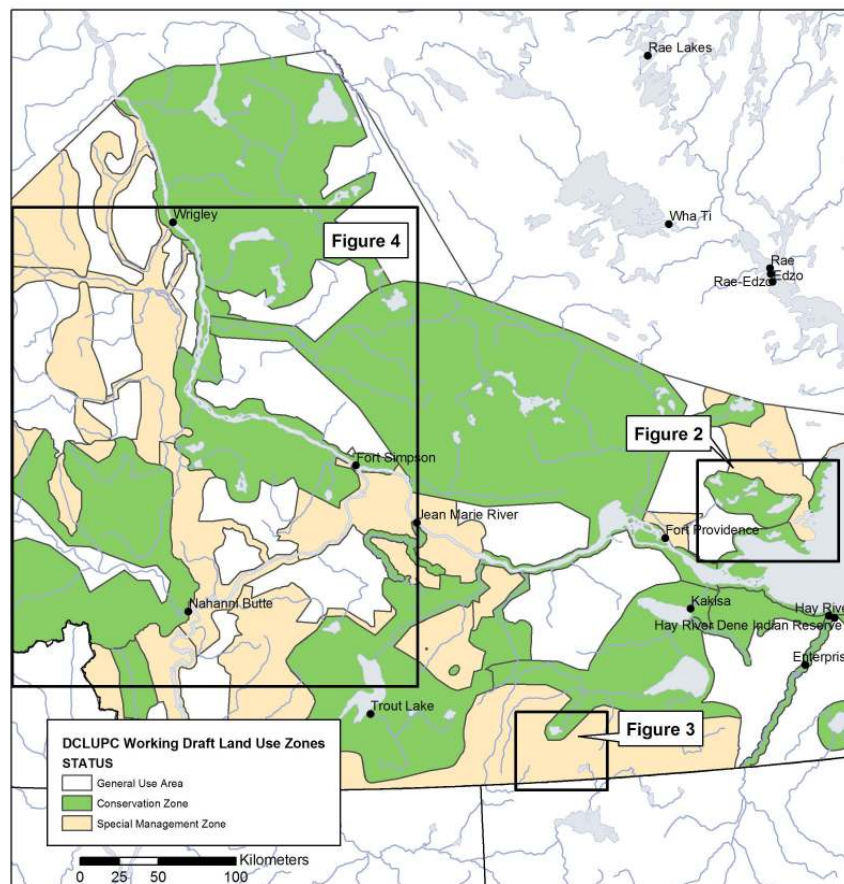


Figure 1: The Deh Cho Land Use Planning Committee's first working draft land use map with figure references to DUC's comments in the written submission to the committee.

- **Conservation Zone 16 - Falaise Lake Wetland Complex:**

The main body of the Conservation Zone (CZ) does well to capture the wetlands where DUC documented relatively high waterbird presence compared to other areas surveyed in the south western Dehcho during breeding and staging surveys conducted in 2003. We found that Prairie Lake had high waterfowl presence during breeding and staging surveys and Sulphur Bay had high numbers of waterfowl during staging (Figure 1). We recommend that CZ 16 remain for its waterfowl conservation values and is possibly expanded to connect with conservation zones 17 and 11 to include Prairie Lake and Sulphur Bay area. In this area, the most common species we observed was Scaup but we also observed relatively large numbers of Ruddy Ducks, Blue-winged Teal, Redhead and American Coots compared to other areas DUC has surveyed in the Dehcho and the Northwest Territories. This is likely because for these species, their breeding range does not extend much further north in the Territory, which also increases the value of this area for its waterbird habitat values.

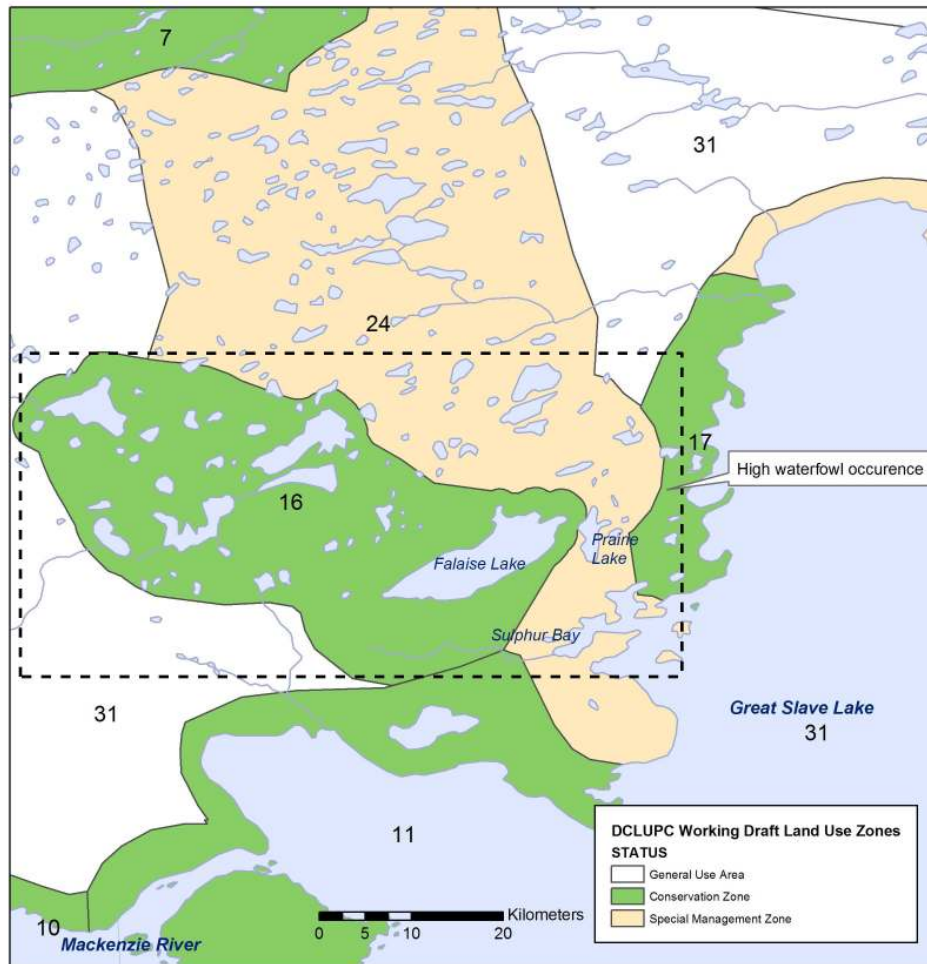


Figure 2: The Falaise Lake area where DUC observed relatively high presence of waterbirds during breeding and staging reconnaissance surveys conducted in 2003.

- **Conservation Zone 21 – Cameron Hills, Blackstone, Arrowhead Rivers:**

During our 2003 staging survey, we observed large numbers of waterbirds, mostly diving ducks like Scaup and Ring-necked Ducks, in the Silt Lake Complex south of Dog Face Lake (Figure 2). Of the over 7000 waterbirds we observed on 9 lakes in the area, mostly diving ducks, almost 3000 were observed on Silt Lake alone. There is no mention of conservation of wetland or waterfowl values in the zone objectives and we would recommend that this be included.

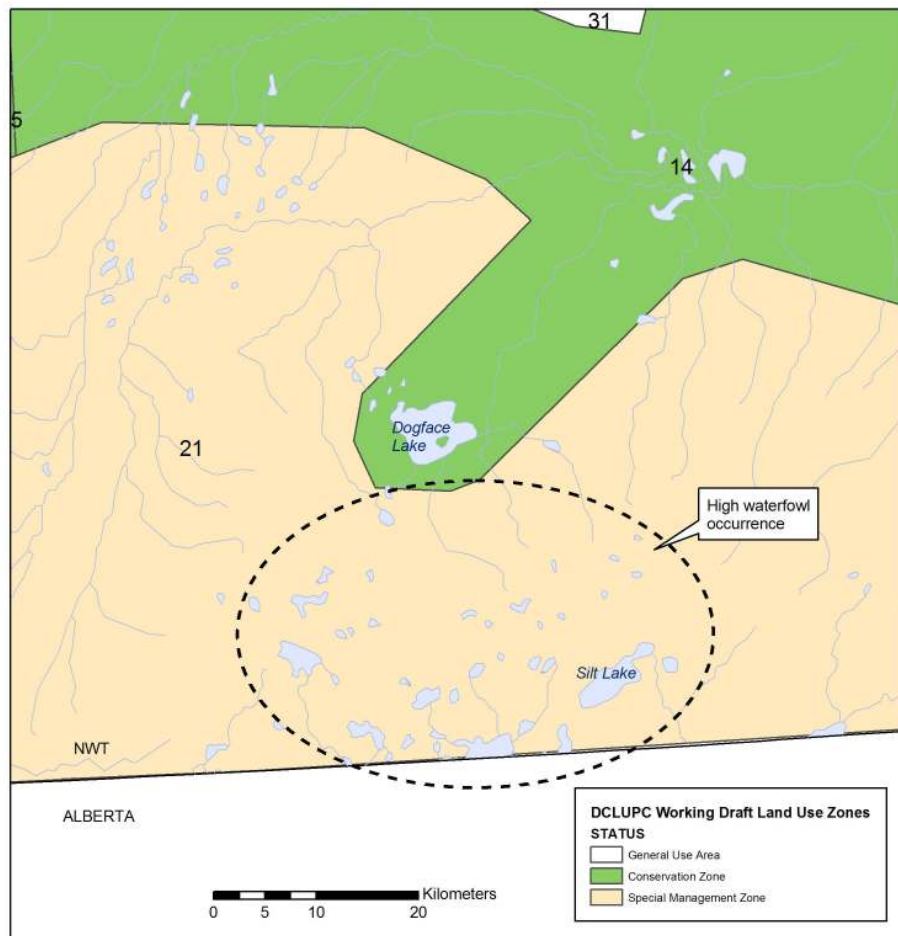


Figure 3: The Silt Lake complex where DUC observed relatively large number of staging waterbirds compared to other areas surveyed in the Dehcho in 2003.

- **Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS) Area 43 – Important Trumpeter Swan nesting area:**

The CWS has identified Area 43 as a key migratory bird terrestrial habitat site for the Northwest Territories (Alexander et al. 1991) (Figure 3) for having important Trumpeter Swan nesting areas. Some of this area is protected within Nahanni National Park and CZ 6, although this is not stated in the zone objectives. A portion falls within Special Management Zone (SMZ) 27 where these values are identified in the zone objectives, but a large portion of the area appears to fall within SMZ 20 and 26 where there is no mention of these values in the zone descriptions. We recommend these values be identified in all relevant zone descriptions.

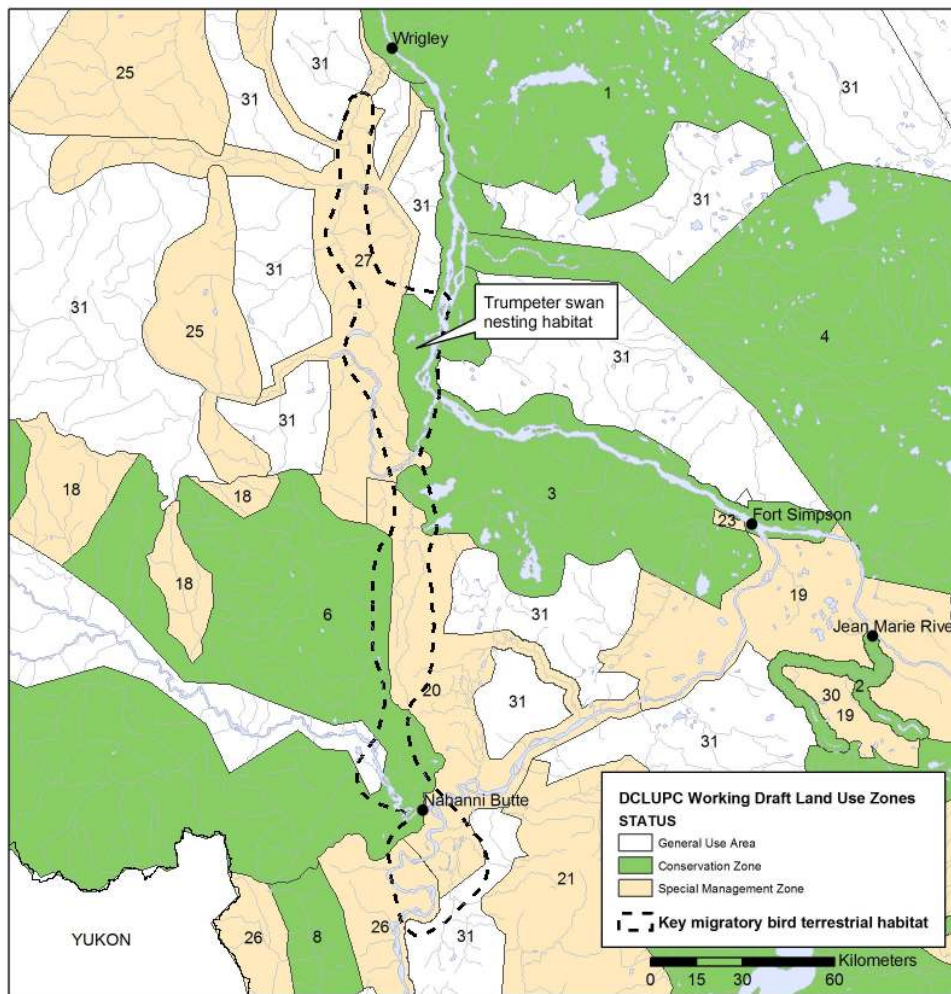


Figure 4: Area 43 documented by the Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS) as having important nesting habitat for Trumpeter Swans.

- **Table 9. Seasonal Restrictions**

Table 9 in the working draft information package does not include seasonal restrictions for migratory birds and waterfowl other than for migration. For waterfowl, we would recommend that Table 9 include May and June for breeding season, June and July for birthing season, and March to May and August to September for migration.

- **Table 7. Description of Terms**

For the term Seasonal Restriction in Table 7, we would like the term description to convey that we realize there are specific times when helicopters may be needed around wetlands such as research and monitoring of wildlife. Otherwise low level helicopter activity and disturbance of wetland habitat should be avoided.