

Common Questions and Answers on Land Use Planning in the Deh Cho Territory

Recorded from Information Sessions with Communities and Planning
Partners in the Deh Cho territory (Fall 2003)



DEH CHO LAND USE PLANNING COMMITTEE
One Land One Plan



Ndéh Łéé - Mek'ęę Ats'et' Łéé
Dehcho Ndéhé T'áhagot' gha Sááhniogpáh-ké

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Introduction

The Deh Cho Land Use Planning Committee, the “Committee”, was established in May 2001 under the Deh Cho First Nations Interim Measures Agreement. The purpose of the land use plan is to promote the social, environmental, cultural and economic well being of residents and communities in the Deh Cho territory, having regard to the interests of all Canadians. The Plan shall provide for the conservation, development and utilization of the land, waters and other resources in the Deh Cho territory.

The Committee faced common start-up challenges including recruitment of staff and development of operational workplans, budgets and policies, which delayed initial communications until the spring and summer of 2003. In the spring, we developed a brochure, promotional poster and website to provide basic background info on the Committee and its activities. This was followed by our first annual report and the filming of an introductory video in early summer. In August, the Committee began their first round of information meetings with communities, businesses, government departments and other planning partners in the Deh Cho. The purpose of this initial round of meetings was to:

- Provide the background information first hand,
- Distribute research reports we had completed on various types of land uses, and
- Develop an understanding of key questions, issues and priorities for participants.

While we attempted to answer as many questions as possible during the meetings, we felt it was important to share the most common questions and answers with all planning partners. This document provides a summary of those questions with up-to-date answers. The questions are organized by topic and the report is organized to move from the most general questions about our process to more specific questions on the research completed to date.

Many questions arose during these information sessions about Governance, resource management, community benefits, training and capacity issues related to current and future resource development. While the Committee has a mandate to consider these issues and develop a land use plan that promotes the social, cultural and economic well-being of Deh Cho communities, many of the questions refer to activities outside the scope of our mandate. We have included a table on the next page to compare our core responsibilities with related activities to be completed by other organizations. The Deh Cho Land Use Planning Committee was established to complete the activities in the first column.

In general, the **DCLUPC** is responsible for outlining what types of activities should occur, generally where they should take place, and terms and conditions necessary to guide land use proposals and development projects over time.

Communities, governments, and businesses determine who, when, if and how developments occur.

Table 1. A Comparison of Land Use Planning, Resource Management and Resource Development Activities and Mandates.		
Land Use Planning (DCLUPC)	Resource Management (Governments – Canada, GNWT and DCFNs)	Resource Development (Companies)
Identify critical wildlife habitat	Set harvest quotas and restrictions	Setup a commercial fishing operation or outfitter
Identify employment needs and skill levels; ensure plan meets long-term employment needs	Set conditions for % of northern/aboriginal employment on developments; promote community training and local business development	Create jobs through resource development projects and hire workers as per conditions;
Identify resource potential and lands where it should be developed	Approve permits, licenses and applications to allow development to proceed	Do exploration / detailed assessments and develop the resource
Set guiding principles and development conditions to address issues specific to the Deh Cho	Establish laws, regulations, and general terms and conditions for all types of resource development	Adhere to terms and conditions set out by the governments and as established in the land use plan.
Identify areas of high conservation value; assist communities in securing protection through the land use plan or the Protected Areas Strategy.	Protect sites through the Protected Areas Strategy.	Participate in protected areas initiatives within operating region and provide input on resource assessments within candidate areas.
Develop a regional land use plan for the Deh Cho	Coordinate planning at the NWT level (e.g. Mackenzie Valley which includes 5 settlement regions)	Develop community-based plans (e.g. town-sites, traditional use areas) or sector based plans (e.g. Forest management plans)
Identify areas where the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline and infrastructure could be developed	Approve (or reject) the pipeline	Build and operate the pipeline
Develop land use plan; implement plan	Approve land use plan; implement plan	Develop resources in conformity with land use plan

Deh Cho Process

Many of the questions asked during these meetings were about the Deh Cho Process, the land withdrawals, or other topics best handled by Deh Cho First Nations (DCFN). We attempted to answer these where we could, but for the rest we referred people back to Deh Cho First Nations (DCFN) for appropriate responses. The answers provided here represent the Committee's response to these questions. Please contact DCFN directly for official responses.

Q. What is the Deh Cho Process?

A. The Deh Cho Process is the overall self-governance, lands and resources negotiations process between the Deh Cho First Nations (www.dehchofirstnations.com), the Government of Canada (www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/dehcho/) and the Government of the Northwest Territories. These are typically called “Land Claims” negotiations, but the Deh Cho Process is moving away from the standard land selection model towards a new option called “Shared Stewardship”.

Q. How does land use planning fit into the overall Deh Cho Process?

A. Land Use Planning is one component of the Deh Cho Process. The Deh Cho Land Use Planning Committee was established in May 2001 with the signing of the Deh Cho First Nations Interim Measures Agreement. Land Use Planning is expected to be completed in the next few years to assist overall negotiations in the Deh Cho Process.

Q. Once this plan is done, will it be managed by the Deh Cho people or the Mackenzie Valley boards?

A. Until such time as a Deh Cho Final Agreement is reached, the Mackenzie Valley boards will implement the land use plan. The Deh Cho Final Agreement will spell out who manages what and address things like governance and management authority for lands and resources. Currently, the Deh Cho Process is moving towards a Deh Cho Public Government, one that represents both aboriginal and non-aboriginal people. This new Deh Cho government will govern the lands and resources in the Deh Cho territory. The Deh Cho First Nations are putting forth the idea of a Deh Cho Resource Management Authority that would oversee implementation of the land use plan and manage land and resource development.

Q. What will happen to communities like Enterprise within the Deh Cho after the Deh Cho process is established?

A. That is a question that has to go directly to Deh Cho First Nations. DCFN has said they are headed towards a public government but what that public government will look like, nobody knows yet.

Q. Is the planning Committee a part of Deh Cho First Nations?

A. We were established under the Deh Cho Process but we are not a part of DCFN; we operate parallel to them. We are a public planning office with input from all three governments (DCFN, GNWT, GC (Government of Canada)). All three governments have to approve the plan at the end so it needs to meet everyone’s needs.

Traditional Knowledge

Q. Will the plan include the Deh Cho First Nations traditional land use mapping project information?

A. Yes, but because it is confidential we don’t show it. DCFN owns and controls the information and we are only provided the results of the analysis and only for internal use. Very small scale maps are shown in DCFN’s technical report at

www.dehchofirstnations.com/press/docs/04_03_22_land_use_paper_norwegian_and_cizek.pdf

Q. Where is the TK information that was collected already?

A. All community mapping that has been done by DCFN has been summarized into a final Traditional Use and Occupancy Map showing areas of low, moderate, high and very high use. Some information from the 1970s Dene Mapping Project was also included where DCFN communities had not completed mapping. We only get the summary map because we are a public planning office. DCFN completed the mapping with over 300 harvesters and Deh Cho First Nations maintains control over the maps and protects confidentiality. We do not have the base data and cannot show the summary map we have been given.

Q. Who is the owner of this information and who is it the property of?

A. All information is owned by the individuals and you will always have that information. The information collected and mapped from you is retained by the Deh Cho First Nations. Petr Cizek and Herb Norwegian have spent 7 years pulling together all the different mapping to show areas of traditional use.

Q. Do you touch on the traditional water use?

A. Fishing spots and methods were included in the traditional use mapping DCFN did. If you are referring to other water uses you would have to ask DCFN.

Q. Why are First Nations uncomfortable with sharing traditional use data?

A: There are multiple reasons.

- Some areas are sacred and are considered deeply personal.
- Traditional knowledge has become a continued source of revenue for communities as new developments are required to include traditional knowledge in their assessment reports.
- There is also a concern over misuse of data. Not everyone has mapped their traditional use. Areas shown having low use may be considered “open season” for development when in fact, the area just hasn’t been mapped yet. Thus it is best if the information is mapped to deal with the specific region of each development.
- In other cases, they don’t want to share the information as it includes the location of valuable resources for the local community such as traditional medicines that they don’t want harvested or destroyed. It’s the same reason authorities do not give specific locations of archeological sites, nest sites of rare birds, etc.
- Finally, TK is held by the individual and considered to be proprietary so is protected as such by planning boards. Data composites (where individual data is included with other data) may be mapped/displayed but individual components must be respected and protected, not lost and exploited through unauthorized distribution.

In our case, the Deh Cho First Nations holds the information and we are only permitted to see the results of the analysis. We do not have access to the raw data unless special permission is obtained. All requests for the information are directed to DCFN. We use the summary information, but do not display, print or distribute it outside of DCFN communities.

Transboundary and Community Overlap Issues

Q. What are you doing about overlap with neighbouring land claims and traditional use areas of Deh Cho First Nations people that extend beyond the planning area boundaries?

A. Deh Cho First Nations is dealing with overlap issues. In our planning process, we can only plan for land use inside the existing planning boundary. This was set for us through the Deh Cho Process and is written in the Interim Measures Agreement that DCFN signed. Our boundary is set until such time as all parties (DCFN, GNWT, and GC) agree to revise it.

Q. If you are not dealing with land uses outside the IMA boundaries why do your maps extend beyond this?

A. That is due to the study areas of the research. It also allows us to view our planning in the context of the surrounding areas and land uses and to plan complementary land uses where appropriate.

Q. Does each community have a specific area of influence in this process?

A. Land Use Planning is done at a regional scale – at this time we are not focusing in on specific communities but the whole Deh Cho. We will be talking to communities individually and asking them to provide input on areas they are knowledgeable about, but it's our job to integrate those into an overall regional plan.

Community Training, Capacity and Benefits

Many questions arose during these meetings about community benefits, training and capacity issues. These activities are beyond our mandate. Please see the table on p. 2 for a review of our responsibilities. We are including the questions/comments for reference but have not provided further response.

Q. How do you build capacity in communities to handle these issues (e.g. resource development and planning)? A lot of this work should be completed in house. Communities need to learn the technology.

Q. Are you involved in developing impact benefit agreements?

Q. We need to understand the socio-economic impacts of development to prepare ourselves to take part. We need expertise to move us from a government-based economy to a resource-based economy. Industry has the expertise and the numbers and we don't. How is your committee addressing these issues and training our people to take advantage of the resource development opportunities coming?

Q. What about royalties and impact benefit agreements?

Q. We need to agree on the conditions on the pipeline and tourism and other developments. How do the trappers get compensated?

Land Withdrawals

In April 2003, Deh Cho First Nations and the Government of Canada agreed to a series of land withdrawals in the Deh Cho territory as agreed to in the IMA. These lands are meant to protect important ecological and cultural sites for a period of 5 years to allow time for the Deh Cho Process and Land Use Planning to be completed. The withdrawn lands can include both surface and subsurface rights, or subsurface rights only (i.e. the surface can be developed). The Deh Cho Land Use Planning Committee was not involved in the negotiation of land withdrawals but we are responsible for revising them over the next five years through the land use planning process.

Q. What are land withdrawals?

A. Land withdrawals are lands withdrawn from development by a Federal Order-in-Council under the Territorial Lands Act. Withdrawn lands cannot be staked (mineral staking) or disposed of by the Government of Canada for 5 years. No new oil and gas rights can be issued on sub-surface withdrawn lands.

Q. Do the land withdrawals prohibit all development for 5 years?

A. The Interim Measures Agreement states that within land withdrawals, existing rights are maintained (s. 19), new quarrying is allowed for essential community construction and where no other sources exist (s. 20), and there are no access restrictions (s. 23). No new developments are permitted within land withdrawals unless they fall under one of those sections.

Q. What percent of the land is withdrawn?

A. Around 33% of the land was withdrawn. If you include Edehzhie and Nahanni it adds up to almost 50% protected. All of the subsurface is withdrawn but in some areas, the surface was not withdrawn to allow for forestry development.

Q. Does that include the area around Wrigley?

A. The area around Wrigley has not been withdrawn yet (Pehdzeh Ki Deh) as it is too early in the PAS process.

Q. How were the interim land withdrawals selected?

A. The information came from the traditional land use and occupancy mapping project and known wildlife data. It was the basis for determining critical lands for protection. Some information on forestry potential was available and was used to identify areas where the surface should be left open.

Q. What if we wanted to change the land withdrawals before the five years are up?

A. Land Use Planning will revise the land withdrawals so any concerns about the withdrawals should be brought forward during our meetings so the revised withdrawal boundaries meet community needs. The Land Use Planning process excludes municipal areas so community-based land use decisions (e.g. new housing developments) are not affected by what we do as long as they are within municipal boundaries. The lands were withdrawn in August 2003 so the 5-year period started then.

Q. You have the land withdrawals but DCFN is currently working on opening up lands for new exploration licenses. How does this impact your land use planning process?

A. You are referring to the Interim Resource Development Agreement (IRDA) that DCFN and Canada recently signed. This agreement says that parcels will be opened up for oil and gas exploration in the Deh Cho, and the Deh Cho would receive a portion of the royalties. We are not apart of that process. The selection of parcels is up to DCFN; we are a separate committee. As with other existing licenses and permits, we will add those new exploration parcels to our database and incorporate them into our plan as existing 3rd party dispositions. All existing uses are grandfathered when our plan is approved – we only affect those land uses starting after our plan comes into effect.

Q. How do the land withdrawals affect the MGP pipeline?

A. The surface lands along the pipeline route have not been withdrawn (the area where the surface has been left open does not necessarily imply DCFN consent for a pipeline).

Land Use Planning and Protected Areas

Q. What is the difference between withdrawing lands from development through a land use plan vs. through the Protected Areas Strategy (PAS)?

A. A land use plan is flexible, but a protected area is permanent. In a protected area most land uses except traditional use are prohibited, unless specifically permitted under the special management plan for the park. Protected areas are permanent, though the management plans often have a 10 or 15 year revision cycle. Because protected areas are permanent, they require a full assessment of oil and gas and mineral potential to be done before the site is approved. Land Use Plans are revised every 5 years and have amendment and exception clauses that can be used in the interim to deal with changing conditions. A Land Use Plan would not provide long-term protection to an area but could be used as a method of providing medium-term protection while research is done or issues are sorted out which would allow longer-term decisions to be made. The land use plan can be used to protect a resource (e.g. a certain wildlife species) by setting special conditions for an area but still allow development. Land Use Planning and the PAS are parallel initiatives and we work together. We currently have two candidate sites in the Deh Cho going through the PAS and as long as those are progressing well, we would respect the decisions being made by the working groups.

Q. Who is involved in setting up protected areas in the NWT?

A. PAS is a community driven process - communities initiate the proposal to have a site considered. However, it is a multi-stakeholder process that moves it forward. The Edehzhie working group includes Ducks Unlimited, World Wildlife Fund, GNWT and Federal Government agencies (Parks, Oil and Gas, Mining, Canadian Wildlife Service), oil and gas industry, First Nations, etc. There is extensive involvement from all relevant sectors to ensure a successful process.

Q. Is the Pehdzeh Ki Deh area withdrawn like Edehzhie? What about the Nahanni National Park Reserve?

A. Pehdzeh Ki Deh has not yet been withdrawn. Nahanni National Park Reserve has been a protected area since the 1970s and no development is allowed there.

Q. What happens with Nahanni National Park Reserve?

A. DCFN and Parks Canada have formed a consensus management team to develop a new park management plan and work together on park expansion. The Committee does not have jurisdiction within the current park boundaries but we do have jurisdiction over the expansion area until such time as the park boundary is revised. However, as with the other protected area candidate sites, we recognize park expansion as a parallel process and will work to ensure our plans are harmonized.

Q. How do the plans to extend Nahanni National Park Reserve affect the mines?

A. There is a lot of interest in the expansion from people all across Canada. There is a joint Deh Cho/Parks Canada group working on the expansion issues. Currently, the withdrawn lands in the expansion area have avoided the mine sites (Prairie Creek and Cantung).

Committee Structure/Operations

Q. Who sits on the Committee?

A. The Committee consists of 2 DCFN representatives, 1 GNWT representative and 1 Government of Canada representative. Our Chairman is Herb Norwegian and he was chosen by consensus by the other 4 board members. We are funded by the Federal Government as laid out in Appendix 2 of the Interim Measures Agreement.

Q. What is the voting structure for the Deh Cho Land Use Planning Committee?

A. Each member has a vote; the chairman votes only to break a tie.

Q. When did the committee start up?

A. The committee was established through the Interim Measures Agreement signed in May 2001. Board members were selected and began meeting in February 2002 and the first staff member was hired in August 2002. Other staff were hired that fall and research began in December 2002.

Q. What is the Committee's overall budget?

A: Approximately \$800,000 per year for 4 years.

Q. When and where does the committee meet?

A. The committee meets once a month and our meetings are open to the public. They are mostly at our office in Fort Providence but now and then we hold them in other communities to give others a chance to participate and see what we do.

Planning Process and Implementation

Q. How long will this process take?

A. Our initial workplan was to have a completed approved plan by March 31, 2005. Due to long delays in Committee establishment and staffing we have asked for a 1 year extension until March 31, 2006.

Q. Is there any funding available for each community to set up their own land use plan?

A. There is no funding within our budget to do that right now. The request would have to go to DCFN leadership and then back to negotiations. However, each community will be asked to make land use decisions within their own areas to feed into the regional plan so there will be a fair degree of community involvement in this process. It is meant to be driven by community decisions.

Q. How do you determine what goes where? If people disagree on how land should be used what happens?

A. First we talk to communities and planning partners individually to get their initial thoughts, and then where there's conflict we'll bring them together to work out differences.

Q. Who gets to make the recommendations and political decisions?

A. The Committee makes a recommendation to DCFN, the GNWT and Government of Canada. The final decision needs to be made jointly by these 3 parties.

Q. What are land use options?

A. We are aiming to provide 5 land use options, which are 5 separate views of what the final land use map will look like. They will range from pro-conservation to pro-development in focus. The idea is to present the full range of viewpoints and define the scope of what is possible. Each option will be run through our Economic Development Model to assess the costs and benefits of each option. We will be presenting these options to communities, planning partners and government for review and discussion. They will be revised a few times until a final land use map can be agreed to, then the land use plan will be developed based on the final map. This process was laid out for us in the Interim Measures Agreement.

Q. How do you incorporate community plans and other regional plans (e.g. transportation and utilities)?

A. We do not plan for municipal areas so we would not be attempting to incorporate municipal plans in any way unless a specific issue arose (e.g. expansion of municipal boundaries). None of our communities have any smaller sub regional plans for their traditional use areas at this time but if at some point those are developed we would work with them to ensure our plans are consistent and compatible. Other infrastructure type plans would be reviewed in the course of our planning process and we are consulting with appropriate government bodies to ensure we are capturing all the necessary information.

Q. In regards to your mandate, what kind of thresholds or conditions can you include and how?

A. We will be able to set broad conditions and recommendations for different land uses. Detailed conditions are left to the regulatory boards.

Q. What sort of authority will the final plan have? Will it fall under the MVRMA?

A. At this time, it falls under the MVRMA and it may be implemented by the Mackenzie Valley boards through binding direction from the Minister of DIAND. All new applications will have to conform to the plan. Any new or revised land withdrawals will be implemented through the Territorial Lands Act.

Q. What happens after the final agreement is signed?

A. The land use plan will be revised to ensure it is consistent with the final terms of the final agreement. The final agreement will include legislation that makes the land use plan legally binding. All new developments will have to conform to the land use plan. The land use plan will be revised every five years to ensure it is up-to-date and continues to reflect regional priorities.

Participation & Consultations in Planning

Q. How are you going to handle the communities of Hay River and Enterprise?

A. The plan has no jurisdiction within municipal boundaries so we have no direct effect on these communities. However, they are still within the Deh Cho and are affected (especially economically) by land use decisions made outside their community boundaries. They are included in all our communications and research (especially the socio-demographic forecast and economic modelling) and we provide the same opportunities for participation to them as to everyone else. The same goes for other communities with hamlet, village or other community governments. As non-DCFN government organizations, they are represented through the GNWT on our Committee.

Q. Who is invited to consultations?

A. We initially hold meeting with communities individually, then move on to businesses, industry and other interests, then end with relevant government departments. As we get further along, we will hold larger forums to bring all these parties together to make final decisions. As per our mandate, our first priority is to promote the social, cultural and economic well being of residents and communities, but we will have address the interests and priorities of other planning partners if the plan is to approved and implemented. A balanced approach is crucial as the final plan must answer to diverse objectives.

Q. Are you planning on consulting with exploration companies and developers?

A. Yes, they will be part of the consultations.

Q. Is there any chance that the negotiating team or DCFN representatives and the Deh Cho Land Use Planning Committee will travel together on consultations?

A. We will consider the suggestion but we are presenting different information and do not want our meetings on land use planning to turn into discussions on the Deh Cho Process. We need our consultations to focus on planning issues and getting suggestions for how the land should be used.

Regulatory Process

A number of questions were asked by both communities and other planning partners about how the land use plan will fit into the current regulatory process. The plan is not meant to develop a whole new set of regulatory procedures for the Deh Cho region so we must be consistent with existing laws and regulations. It will be managed under the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act until the Deh Cho Final Agreement is signed. The Final Agreement may set out new legislation that changes how the land use plan is implemented and establish a new regulatory procedure for this area. The land use plan would be revised at that time to be consistent with these new terms.

Q. Is it fair to say that the Crown issues licenses and ultimately has the final say?

A. What we are looking at is Deh Cho specific terms and conditions that will have to be applied by regulatory authorities when granting new licenses. If a new license is granted under the approved land use plan, it would have to conform to these new conditions.

Q. How will the plan's cumulative effects section affect current operations in the region? For example, where we have existing operations but wish to expand them, will we be subject to these new conditions set out in the land use plan?

A. The land use plan will only affect new licenses and permits issued after the plan is approved. Existing operations will not be affected but new additions to those current operations would have to conform to the plan. We will be basing all requirements on proper literature reviews of cumulative effects research, and will consider industry standards, best practices, and encouraging things like road sharing agreements to minimize access. You will be involved and consulted in the development of these terms and conditions throughout our planning process. There will be several rounds of

consultations before the plan is approved at which to bring forward specific concerns and discuss the research and assumptions used to develop the final thresholds.

Q. Do you have any members on the Deh Cho panel for the Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board (MVLWB)?

A. No – that’s a DCFN responsibility. We stay in touch with the Deh Cho First Nations Resource Management Coordinator to know what’s happening in that area.

Q. In the Deh Cho territory, do the developers have to turn the lands back to their original state?

A. On current developments, reclamation requirements are spelled out in licenses and in environmental regulations. If the standards are not being met, then that is something the community can raise with the appropriate regulatory bodies.

Land Uses and Planning Issues

This section includes questions on various land uses either raised by Committee members or participants of our information sessions. It also includes detailed questions on the research reports completed to date.

Traditional Use

Q. You talk about minerals and oil and gas but you do not mention people. People are part of the land as well.

A. People were incorporated in the traditional land use mapping project. Traditional use is always protected and allowed everywhere and will be recognized in the land use plan. Most of the people today live in municipal boundaries. Our plan excludes municipal boundaries and issues. What we are trying to show are the other land uses that must be considered. We have to determine where these other uses should occur. Traditional use can occur everywhere.

Q. What if a fire takes place in the harvesting and culture areas where Dene people use the land? Is there a clause or something that if an area is burned or destroyed by an Act of God, another parcel of land be occupied?

A. You are talking about traditional use. Traditional use is guaranteed and is not prohibited anywhere. It is your right to go anywhere, anytime based on Dene law (i.e. consent from other community members may be required to relocate a trap line). What we’re trying to show with the traditional use mapping is areas where you’ve had a lot of use. You may want to consider protecting some of these areas and limiting other uses there to ensure they are always kept in their natural state. However, you are not limited to those areas in the future. So if an area you are using burns down, you’ll have to go somewhere else for a while but you can just go there – you don’t need to change the plan to do that. But, if it’s not a protected area, then there might be other land uses

taking place there (e.g. oil and gas, mineral extraction) that could potentially make the area unsuitable for traditional uses.

Q. With the land and oil and gas exploration that is happening soon what will happen to the traditional land use areas?

A. We need to map out what areas you want protected and where you want to develop resources. If you want to protect them then we can do that as part of the land use planning process. We can also place terms and conditions on other land uses to protect cultural and ecological areas while allowing development to proceed.

Q. Will there be further assessments done on archeologically sites?

A. Nothing is planned at this time. Our GIS has the most up to date data from the Prince of Wales Museum in Yellowknife.

Wildlife

Q. What are considered furbearers in the EBA report?

A. Mink and your smaller furbearers. The larger animals (e.g. lynx, wolverine, etc.) were covered under the carnivore section.

Q. Are you putting collars on the caribou to study them?

A. We do not put collars on the caribou. That kind of wildlife research is an RWED responsibility

Q. Is there any attempt to correlate habitat suitability? Have there been habitat studies at the GNWT level?

A. No. We don't really have the time or resources to do habitat assessments for key species. GNWT has only done habitat suitability modelling for woodland caribou in the Deh Cho. We're holding a wildlife workshop to fill the gaps with traditional knowledge and biologists' expertise rather than doing predictive modeling.

Timber

Q. What date is the base timber information from?

A. The timber report was completed using a mix of data. It includes the 1991 National Forest Inventory, 8 small inventories completed in the 1970s and '80s, a pipeline corridor vegetation inventory from the 1970s, and more recent 1:20,000 GNWT forest inventories completed in the 1990s.

Q. What types of forestry uses were assessed in your timber report?

A. We only looked at saw log potential.

Q. No timber analysis has been done in the Deh Cho region yet. How did you calculate potential?

A. The contractor used a mix of baseline data including a Canada wide inventory, Mackenzie Valley vegetation mapping, and incorporated some detailed inventory data for the small areas where they have been completed (8 detailed inventories available for the Deh Cho). Then they subtracted burned areas, non-productive forest areas, and those areas with no nearby access. The report was not looking at timber supply (i.e. no volume calculations). Instead, the purpose of the report was to identify the location of timber stands that met the saw log criteria for species, site class and age class.

Q. Will you eventually look at non-timber values in forests?

A. Some of these would be incorporated in the traditional use data set (e.g. harvesting berries or medicinal plants). No further research is planned at this point.

Oil and Gas

Q. Do we know how much oil and gas is in the Deh Cho area?

A. C.S. Lord estimated volumes of discovered and undiscovered gas in their report on Oil and Gas Potential. Based on current price estimates (see www.energyshop.com), we can calculate the current value of gas volumes. Discovered gas is estimated at 69 billion cubic meters worth \$13.8 billion at 20 cents/cubic meter. Undiscovered gas is estimated at 31 billion cubic meters worth \$6.2 billion at 20 cents/cubic meter.

Q. Have you done any economic analysis on the oil and gas assessments?

A. We haven't had anything done to date but would like to see it done at some point on both oil and gas and minerals.

Mackenzie Valley Pipeline

Q. What is your committee doing about the pipeline? Are you using existing research from the Mackenzie Gas Project?

A. The current routing of the pipeline corridor is on the maps. The specific routing of the pipeline still needs to be approved by regulatory agencies. We will be dealing with more detailed pipeline planning such as camps, barge landings and waste management. They are just starting their research so there isn't much available for us to include in our own research yet. It is also limited in scope and would not provide us with Deh Cho wide information.

Q. Are you looking at the long-term effects of the pipeline on the oil and gas industry and other things as a result of access, infrastructure, tie-ins, etc.?

A. We would expect that is something the project proponents or government would be doing as part of their assessments. Once such research has been done, we'll certainly review it and take it into consideration in developing the land use plan. The plan will determine which areas might be available for further oil and gas development.

Minerals

Q. What about emeralds? The Deh Cho has a report about emeralds that was done about 10 years ago.

A. Emeralds are associated with a mineral called Pegmatite. There is some potential for pegmatite in the western tip of the Deh Cho.

Q. Will you be doing any research on sand or gravel resources?

A. The Committee has contacted the Department of Transportation for their files on these resources. We do not anticipate collecting new information beyond that.

Tourism

Q. Why wouldn't the whole of Nahanni Park be included as very high potential for tourism?

A. Tourists stick to the river corridor with limited hiking. It is difficult to access the rest of the park.

Q. Does the tourism map include existing sites only (e.g. current usage) or possible new areas as well?

A. It includes a mix of existing sites and those thought to have future potential based on interviews conducted as part of the research.

Agriculture

Q. Is agriculture something that you are considering (extensive operations)?

A. We have completed some research into the agricultural potential of the region and the current extent of agriculture. Although there is moderate potential from a soil/climate perspective, it is mostly small scale and mostly occurring within municipal boundaries where we do not have jurisdiction. There are currently a number of economical and political barriers to widespread agriculture development in the NWT. It is being included in our analysis but is a relatively minor land use as compared to some of the other uses we are considering.

Water Uses

Q. The Deh Cho boundary includes 1/3 of Great Slave Lake. What happens with the fishing? What sort of water issues will you look at?

A. We plan for future use of the water resources and would set general water guidelines like maintaining water quality and flow and ensuring adequate protection of fish spawning areas. Management of fish stocks (e.g. harvest quotas and mesh sizes) and dealing with issues like water contamination would fall to existing government bodies.

Q. Was hydro electricity ever looked at?

A. Not at this point.

Access and Transportation

Q. What are your plans for access management?

A. We'd look at things like road-sharing agreements; figuring out total access needs for an area, not just for one company and having companies work together to identify the best routes; building one road that meets everyone's needs and not separate roads at separate specs. We will also look at road densities as an important indicator for cumulative effects management in the region.

Q. Would transportation corridors be addressed in this process?

A. Yes, we would need to understand future plans for transportation corridors and make sure we have up to date GIS files as roads and infrastructure are important considerations in resource development and conservation decisions.

Environmental Issues

Q. What if we find some areas that are contaminated or destroyed? What will your committee do about it?

A. Our committee does not deal with existing development, environmental contamination, etc. We have no authority or mandate to deal with current contamination issues. If you find sites that are destroyed or contaminated you should notify the government (DCFN, GNWT or Federal depending on the problem) so they ensure it gets cleaned up.

Q. What are you doing on climate change?

A. Climate change is a long term thing. We have a planning horizon of 20 years only. Climate change tends to be much longer term than that so for the most part, we consider it outside the scope of what we can realistically deal with at this time. One thing we might be looking at is the risk of melting permafrost. We may consider establishing buffers or setbacks from riverbanks that are at risk of slumping.

Cumulative Effects

Q. Are you going to work on Cumulative effects?

A. We are doing some of that research ourselves and some through contractors. We intend to implement cumulative effects management through the land use plan by using landscape thresholds and indicators. There will be a chapter on this in the plan.

Q. What type of information are you looking into for cumulative effects and thresholds?

A. We are looking at habitat fragmentation, road/trail densities, etc. This will be done through a literature review, gathering the most recent research applicable to the region. We are looking at the research done in NE BC and northern Alberta as a reference for the types of things we need to focus on, and the key species (e.g. woodland caribou) will most likely be the same.

Q. Your plan is limited by your boundary, but cumulative effects problems often extend or originate outside that boundary. How do you address that?

A. We only have jurisdiction within our plan area so cannot tell another area how to manage their land. But we do participate in larger forums and discussions on cumulative effects so we can work together with neighbouring jurisdictions to address transboundary issues.

Research Questions

Q. Has all resource information been collected?

A: We've identified some additional research required to fill in gaps in the existing information we have but we have no plans at this time to initiate research in new topics. However, new information is always welcome and will be added wherever possible. At the very least it will be included for the next revision cycle.

Q. Are these reports available to everyone?

A. We are distributing copies of CDs to everyone at our meetings and consultations. We are also placing copies of all the reports on our website for people to download.

Q. Who did the research for you?

A. Timber Potential and the Socio-demographic research was done by PacTeam out of Edmonton; Wildlife research was done by EBA Engineering out of Yellowknife; Tourism Potential was done by Deh Cho Environmental out of Fort Simpson; Oil and Gas and Mineral Potential was done by C.S. Lord Geosciences (the Federal/Territorial research body); the Economic Development Assessment Model was done by Roy Ellis out of Yellowknife; the Mineral Priority Areas work was done by Brian Eddy of Ottawa (a subcontractor on the original mineral potential research); and the Cumulative Effects work was done by Salmo Consulting out of Calgary.

Q. How much of the research is new information?

A. All the reports are new but are based on literature reviews of existing data. No new field work was done.

Q. Were the contractor reports peer reviewed?

A. Our oil and gas and mineral reports were done by CS Lord, which has its own peer review process. The other reports were not peer reviewed but we do distribute them widely and ask our planning partners to review them and report any concerns to us.

Q. Are you using the research for the Mackenzie Valley from the earlier environmental assessment? There is also a gap analysis being done currently.

A. We will look at the new data once it is available. We are using some old data from the 1970s research like wildlife and vegetation, but not all of it is appropriate, it is not easily accessible or in digital format and it doesn't cover the whole Deh Cho region.

Q. What is the protection mechanism for new information? What is the incentive for business interests to give information about new potential, for example?

A. Confidentiality agreements can be discussed, or holders of new information can choose to withhold that information if it cannot openly be placed in the public domain. Currently all the information we have gathered (other than traditional knowledge) has been publicly available and we distribute it widely.

Socio-Demographic Forecast

Q. Is labour force participation calculated using full time or part time employment? Do they consider someone as a full time trapper to be employed?

A. It includes both full and part time employment. It only looks at those people working in the wage-earning labour force. Traditional forms of employment (hunting, trapping) are not included in either employment numbers or unemployment numbers as they are not actively looking for work. They are outside the labour force. Around 55% of the total Deh Cho population is in the labour force. Those outside the labour force would include, children, seniors, homemakers, and full time harvesters.

Q. Does the report look at both indirect and direct job creation?

A. Yes it does.

Q. Where did the population data come from?

A. The numbers came from Statistics Canada (www.statcan.ca) and GNWT Statistics (www.stats.gov.nt.ca).

Q. The population estimates in small communities are not accurate because a few families coming or going can have a huge % change on overall size.

A. The information that has gone into the Socio-Demographic report was done community by community and comes from the best available stats (territorial and federal). We recognize the problems in dealing with stats from small communities, which is why we tend to keep a regional focus wherever possible.

Q. What is the purpose of the socio-demographic research in land use planning?

A. It is meant to give us projections of future population, education and skill levels so we can ensure our final land use plan creates the right kind of opportunities required by the people who live here. The socio-demographic data fits into our economic development assessment model and will look into all resource sectors and identify what jobs and business opportunities there are. From a sustainable development perspective, we are using our modeling to determine the appropriate pace of development and we could recommend a phased approach to oil and gas calls for nomination. We are looking at being pro-active in the area of sustainable development.

Economic Development Assessment Model

Q. Does the economic model represent only aboriginal people?

A. No the economic assessment model represents everyone.

Q. Why is the economic model regional rather than community-based?

A. Data availability is too scarce in small communities to be able to calculate community-based results. When assessing the overall economic implications of a land use option, the results are calculated for the region as a whole. That said, we can run various before and after scenarios and calculate the impact of a single development by turning that development on or off and running the model again. We can then make certain assumptions about which community would benefit most due to proximity, labour and services availability, etc.

Q. When you are looking at a mine or forestry operation, can you plug in the amount of workers and the scale of the operation?

A. The EDA is based on a combination of an input/output model and a demographic model. We have some specific projects modeled (e.g. mines or oil and gas development areas) and the rest are default parameters for each resource sector. We also have some generic developments modeled (e.g. large mine, tourism, etc.) to play with future development scenarios. With each of these, we get outputs like GDP, tax revenues, money flowing into the economy and jobs. It's a predictive model with lots of assumptions but good for a discussion of priorities and costs and benefits of land use decisions.

Q. How does it taken into consideration the effects on a small community? There are indirect effects. Mines increase traffic and communities on a main traffic route will be more impacted.

A. We include indirect effects and ripple effects in the model of large developments. However, none of the predictions are going to be dead on. They are based on many assumptions and we use the results as a basis for discussion on probable effects. The results predict impacts over 20 years.

Q. When you develop the economic assessment model will you bring the information back to the economic development officers in each community?

A. Yes, communities and planning partners will be asked to validate the information we have.

Q. Why can't we have steel manufacturing here? Why can't we build a refinery here?

A. We do not have secondary industries built into the economic model at this time but it can be added down the road if there is a desire to look at this.

Q. You can plan development spatially but also over time (the pace of development or long-term sustainability). Are you going to take this into account in your economic modeling?

A. Yes, we will look at the locations, level and pace of development.

Q. Is there going to be any time to quantify and test the model's predictions?

A. The initial analysis will provide a good test of the accuracy of the model as we are simplifying analysis to compare options. We expect we will need to refine some of the input data or analysis at various times. We believe it will be a process of continuous improvement and we would like participation from the various resource sectors to help us validate the results and refine the data as required to provide good, credible analysis. That said, it's a 20 year model and we are making general predictions for comparative purposes only. It is not expected to do detailed assessments of each industry, but rather facilitate discussions about priorities and overall job and revenue needs.

Q. Was subsistence use included in the economic model?

A. Yes, we are building subsistence harvesting and traditional economies into the model.