



# Briefing Note

22 August 2013

## The Issue

What is the role of the Tehdzo Got'Inę Gots'ę Nákedı (Sahtú Renewable Resources Board, “the Board”) in commenting on development applications? This briefing note outlines how we understand our responsibilities.

## Our Land Claim Mandate

The Tehdzo Got'Inę Gots'ę Nákedı is the “main instrument of wildlife management” in the Sahtú Region. Objectives that guide us in commenting on development applications are in Chapter 13, the “Wildlife Harvesting and Management” section of the land claim.

**13.1.1(a)** to protect for the future the right of participants to gather, hunt, trap and fish throughout the settlement area at all seasons of the year;

**13.1.1(b)** to conserve and protect wildlife and wildlife habitat and to apply conservation principles and practices through planning and management;

**13.1.1 (e)** to involve participants in a direct and meaningful manner in the planning and management of wildlife and wildlife habitat;

**13.1.1 (f)** to integrate planning and management of wildlife and wildlife habitat with the planning and management of all types of land and water use in order to protect wildlife and wildlife habitat.

## Stepping Into Our Role

### The Board and Shale Oil Exploration in the Sahtú

The Sahtú has experienced an exploration boom since 13 shale oil leases were awarded in 2011 and 2012. There has been a lot of concern about impacts to wildlife and wildlife habitat. The exploration boom has exposed the Board’s responsibility to provide meaningful input in environmental assessments.

When licensing and permitting applications are submitted and deemed complete, the Sahtú Land and Water Board (SLWB) has 42 days to make a decision on whether to issue a permit/license or request more information. The Board must be prepared to respond quickly and with the best available knowledge. Our knowledge comes from expert consultants in traditional knowledge and science.

Last fall the Board commissioned a report entitled *Role of the SRRB in Environmental Assessment: Reflections and Recommendations*. The report analyzed how the Board can best respond to industry applications.

The Board works to provide specific recommendations related to our mandate in wildlife management. It is important that these can be enforced through terms and conditions of the program. For example, the Board might recommend alternate routes or alternate methods to do the work that have less impact on wildlife and wildlife habitat. They might recommend using “best practices” that have been demonstrated elsewhere.

## Making a Difference

The Board has made a difference with some of our recommendations and suggestions over the past year. Here are some examples:

- Increased sampling frequency in groundwater and surface water monitoring plan.
- Use of tracers in fracking fluids, which would be traced back to fracking fluids in case of any groundwater contamination.
- Use of the Alberta Environment Standard for Baseline Water Testing for Coalbed Methane operations in the groundwater and surface water monitoring plans.

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