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***Sahtú Renewable Resources Board highlights strength of community-led planning for effective caribou conservation***



Colville 2020  
Public Listening

**(Sahtú Region, NWT, April 6, 2021)** - The Pehdzo Got'Ine Gots'É Nákedi (Sahtú Renewable Resources Board - SRRB) is releasing the second report on the *Sahtú Ragóga (Hunting Law) and Approaches to Wildlife Harvesting: Colville 2020 Public Listening (Hearing) Report and Reasons for Decision*.

Building on the SRRB's initial report released on October 30, 2020, the second report marks a step in the SRRB's planned five-part "Public Listening" hearing approach adopted by the SRRB to address the central question, **"What is the most effective way to conserve caribou?"**

The second report introduces the SRRB's new policy statement on Hı́dó Gogha Séné́gots'ı́á (Community Conservation Plans). The new policy is shaped by three principles central to Dene and Métis governance, ɔ́sı́ı́ godı́ hé dene ts'ı́ı́ hé (biocultural diversity), ɔ́edets'É K'áokerewe (self-regulation), and godı́ kehtsı́ (ethical space).

The SRRB recognizes the role of Dene ɔ́ɔ́á (translated as law, regulation, or policy) in harvest regulation as well as within the larger co-management system. The SRRB interprets its mandate to include application of conservation principles with regard to both caribou and the harvesting rights, customs and practices of Sahtú Dene and Métis.

"We understand that Dene and Métis communities have their own ways of doing things, and they will continue their caribou conservation planning for future generations," says Acting Chair Camilla Tutcho. "With so many things changing nowadays, Dene ɔ́ɔ́á is our greatest strength. We need to train the youth, since they're our best hope."

The SRRB has also addressed decisions or recommendations from the Colville 2020 Public Listening Session that were varied or set aside by Shane Thompson, Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, in his January 29 response to the SRRB's October report. The SRRB conducted a procedurally fair reconsideration in preparing the second report after receiving comments from Colville Lake, Fort Good Hope, and Norman Wells Renewable Resources Councils.

The report accepts two revised decisions proposed by the Minister, proposes further revisions on seven decisions, and identifies five unresolved issues that require additional dialogue. The SRRB invites the Minister to address these issues via the future Public Listening Sessions planned for 2021-2024.

Minister Thompson has accepted twelve SRRB decisions and recommendations, including measures to strengthen youth voices and Guardian initiatives, support a food security campaign, use Dene names for harvesting areas, and address capacity and funding requirements to support the Sahtú community conservation planning approach.

With four more Public Listening (Hearing) Sessions ahead, the SRRB will continue to examine the evidence around topics of harvest regulation and stewardship responsibility. The SRRB anticipates meaningful discussion and collaboration on these topics and encourages community parties to continue working on conservation planning and Sahtú ragóʔa (hunting law).

The SRRB also understands that for Sahtú Dene and Métis harvesters, and community parties who participated in the Colville 2020 PLS, conservation practices will carry on as they have. For this reason, the SRRB's report concludes with a message to Sahtú communities: "Work on conservation planning and Sahtú ragóʔa (hunting laws) should go ahead. The importance of this work does not change if the Minister agrees or not on a particular issue at this stage. We all want to work toward the responsible harvest and conservation of caribou. If you believe community conservation planning can help, then do not stop your work. The SRRB is listening. Others are watching."

The next Public Listening Session will be co-hosted by the SRRB and Délı̨ne in 2021, and will address caribou predators and competitors.

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