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ᐃᐃᐃᐃᐃᐃ 2024 Public Listening Session – Climate, Wildfire and Caribou

INFORMATION REQUEST 1 SUBMISSION

Colville Lake Renewable Resources Council

Ayoni Keh Land Corporation

Behdzi Ahda” First Nation

(collectively, “Dehlá Got’ine”)

Information Request (IR) #1

Process Issues

At the outset of this Listening Session, the Dehlá Got'íne wish to discuss process.

It is now well understood that colonial forms of conservation and modern western conservation institutions conflict with Indigenous knowledge systems and practices, and infringe upon our collective rights as Indigenous peoples. This is a fundamentally important issue for all Parties to understand and address, as it is a fundamental tension in the co-management relationship under our modern Treaty, the *Sahtu Dene and Metis Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement*.

Long before we entered into the Treaty, we maintained these relationships in accordance with our ts'íduweh ʔeʔá (ancient laws). These laws must be followed in order for Dehlá Got'íne and the animals to maintain a good relationship. We know that there will be significant ecological, social and economic consequences if we do not maintain these relationships.

From our perspective, these consequences are now visible. The wildfires, floods and other disasters that occurred in 2022 and 2023 are warning signs that we must all take notice of. We believe that trying to control what happens with climate, with caribou, or with fire is foolish.

Instead, we must try to understand our proper role. We need to find the right balance between what we can do as human beings, and what we cannot do. Our ʔeʔá says that we have responsibilities to ensure that our people are safe, that our people take only what they need, and that our people respect all of our relationships.

Our ʔeʔá also says that we should not talk about things over which we have no control. We have previously tried to explain these rules in relation to caribou. Our Elders are concerned that some of what we are now seeing on the land is a consequence of people engaging in discussions about things that should not be discussed. The same rules apply to weather, climate and fire. Humans cannot control these things. We may influence them, but they will be what they are. We can not tell them how to behave.

Dehlá Got'íne Responses to IR

1. We wish to be clear about what Dehlá Got'íne are prepared to discuss. Many of the questions being asked in the Information Request are about things that we should not talk about. It is not that we don't have observations to share, as we are land users, and we listen carefully to the observations of our community members. We all pay very careful attention to what is happening to wildlife, to fires, and the weather because it directly affects us, but we don't wish to speculate about why this is happening. Those are all things that we must live with.
2. Dehlá Got'íne are prepared to talk about issues we can control. We can control how we behave on the land, and how our communities can be better prepared for the changes that are beyond our control. But we are going to uphold our ʔeʔá, and share our knowledge in accordance with what our ʔeʔá permits.
3. Dehlá Got'íne also note that we have significant disagreements with the GNWT about the roles and responsibilities of the Renewable Resource Councils. The GNWT is appealing a court decision upholding those responsibilities. We are concerned that until those questions are resolved, proper discussions about the roles and responsibilities of the Treaty partners cannot occur. The view of the GNWT appears to be that we are only there to be told what to do by their Minister. We do not agree with that approach. We want to properly implement the Treaty, and to see the RRCs play the role that the Treaty says they should have. We believe that these issues should also be discussed in this Listening Session.

Respectfully,



Dehlá Got'íne