

ʔełets'ewéhkwę Godı (Living with Wildlife) – Predators and Competitors

Déłjnę 2021 Virtual Public Listening (Hearing) Session

Report and Reasons for Decisions and Recommendations

Submitted to the Honourable Shane Thompson
Minister of Environment and Climate Change
Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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The ʔehdzo Got'ıne Gots'ę Nákedı (Sahtú Renewable Resources Board) is the co-management board established by the *Sahtú Dene and Métis Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement* of 1993 (*SDMCLCA*) as the main instrument of wildlife and wildlife habitat management in the Sahtú region of the Northwest Territories. Our Dene name means “Helpers of the ʔehdzo Got'ıne, the Trap People.” We work together with ʔehdzo got'ıne (renewable resources councils) in the five communities of the Sahtú region to maintain Dene and Métis harvesting traditions and keep the land and animals healthy for future generations.

This report presents the decisions and recommendations of the Board members.
Report Submitted: 2023

ʔelets'ewéhkwe Godı (Living with Wildlife) – Predators and Competitors:
Camilla Tutcho (Acting Chair)
Faye D'Eon-Eggertson and Samuel Haché

Contact Information:

ʔehdzo Got'ıne Gots'ę Nákedı
Sahtú Renewable Resources Board
PO Box 134
Tulıt'a, NT Canada
X0E 0K0
Telephone: 867-588-4040
Fax: 867-588-3324
info@srrb.nt.ca
www.srrb.nt.ca
www.facebook.com/SahtuWildlife



Délıne 2021
Public Listening
Tıch'ádıı hé Gots'edı
Living with Wildlife

ʔehdzo Got'ıne Gots'é Nákedı
PO Box 134, Tulita, NT, X0E 0K0
Phone (867) 588-4040
Fax (867) 588-3324
eas@srrb.nt.ca
www.srrb.nt.ca

Shane Thompson, Minister
Department of Environment and Climate Change
Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories
Box 1320, Yellowknife, NT X1A 2L9
Shane_Thompson@gov.nt.ca

Delivered via email

Re: SRRB Report on Délıne 2021 Public Listening Session: ʔelets'ewéhkwe Godı (Living with Wildlife) – Predators and Competitors, April 25-29, 2022

Dear Minister Thompson:

On behalf of the ʔehdzo Got'ıne Gots'é Nákedı (Sahtú Renewable Resources Board – SRRB), I am writing to inform you that the SRRB has completed the Délıne 2021 Public Listening Session (Délıne 2021 PLS). Attached to this letter are the Report setting out the SRRB's findings, decision, and recommendations from the Délıne 2021 PLS, and the SRRB's policy and guidance that explain the SRRB's approach to Hıdó Gogha Sėnégots'ızá (Planning for the Future – PFF). Hıdó Gogha Sėnégots'ızá (Planning for the Future – PFF) is the SRRB's preferred Dene translation of the concept formerly referred to as community conservation planning.

This letter provides an update on the PLS series, a review of the findings and recommendations from the second PLS on elets'ewéhkwe Godı (Living with Wildlife) – Predators and Competitors, and a review of the feedback the SRRB received on its PFF documents.

Public Listening Session Series: The Second PLS

The Délıne 2021 PLS was the second of the SRRB's series of five planned Public Listening Sessions, which are considered hearings under the Sahtú Dene and Métis Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement (SDMCLCA), and which were planned to address perspectives on the best way to conserve caribou in the Sahtú region.

Each PLS is organized around a theme relating to caribou conservation. The SRRB has or will co-host one PLS in each of the five Sahtú communities. Each PLS is focused on an individual theme related to caribou conservation.

Past public listening sessions focused on:

- Sahtú Ragóʔa (Hunting Law) and Approaches to Wildlife Harvesting – “What is the most effective way to regulate the harvest of caribou?” (Colville Lake, 2020)
- Tłch'ádı́ hé Gots'edı́ (Living with Wildlife): Caribou Predators and Competitors – “What should people’s role be in maintaining healthy relationships between caribou and other wildlife?” (Délı́ne, Virtual, 2021)

Future public listening sessions are expected to focus on:

- Caribou, Wildfires, and Climate Change – “What should people’s role be in addressing climate change impacts in caribou landscapes, including wildfires?”
- Knowledge about Caribou and Landscapes – “How can knowledge and planning support caribou conservation?”
- Caribou and the Mixed Economy – “How can people and caribou live well together?”

In addition to this focus on thematic issues, the SRRB is also using the PLS series to consider community-based caribou conservation, expressed in a governance framework called Hı́dó Gogha Sė́nė́gots'ı́ʔá (Planning for the Future – PFF). Hı́dó Gogha Sė́nė́gots'ı́ʔá is a Dene phrase that describes community-led conservation planning for the future. Hı́dó Gogha Sė́nė́gots'ı́ʔá respects local Dene and Métis knowledge, customs and practices in conservation.

The SRRB expects the five public listening sessions will facilitate community organization, better co-management understanding of Sahtú Dene and Métis knowledge, and hı́dó gogha sė́nė́gots'ı́ʔá (planning for the future) processes and written plans. The SRRB recognizes the importance of making space to give serious consideration to wildlife approaches that can be more effective and more rights-compliant than harvest limits. The SRRB is inviting each Sahtú community to undertake hı́dó gogha sė́nė́gots'ı́ʔá and submit a written plan during the five-part public listening series.

Délı́ne 2021 PLS – ʔelets'ewė́hkwé Godı́ (Living with Wildlife) – Predators and Competitors

The Délı́ne 2021 PLS focused on the question, “What should people’s role be in maintaining healthy relationships between caribou and other wildlife?”

During the Délı́ne 2021 PLS, the SRRB heard evidence from community parties, individuals, and the Government of the Northwest Territories, represented by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. The SRRB assessed this evidence and made a series of findings about caribou, people, caribou predators, and caribou competitors. In particular, the attached report includes the SRRB’s findings about:

- The status of:
 - o The three ecotypes of caribou found in the Sahtú region;
 - o Caribou predators, such as dı́ga (wolf) and sahcho (grizzly bear); and

- o Caribou competitors, such as ʔłts'é (moose) and ʔəjire (muskox);
- The relationship between Sahtú Dene and Métis and:
 - o Caribou, including the importance of caribou to Sahtú Dene and Métis culture;
 - o Caribou competitors, such as ʔłts'é (moose) and ʔəjire (muskox) including Sahtú Dene and Métis use of caribou competitors; and
 - o Caribou predators, such as dįga (wolf) and sahcho (grizzly bear), including Sahtú Dene and Métis beliefs about predators;
- The relationship between the health of caribou populations and the health of predator populations and competitor populations.

From these findings, the SRRB has made recommendations to:

- Facilitate stronger working relationships among co-management partners, including fostering understanding of Dene/Métis ts'ıłı (ways of life), náoweré (knowledge), and ʔeʔa (law) among co-management partners and within communities;
- Increase communities' financial capacity; and
- Recommend additional studies, that incorporate a biocultural approach, to better understand how relationships between caribou and their predators and competitors affect caribou populations.

Délįnę 2021 PLS – Feedback on Hįdó Gogha Sėnégots'įǵá (Planning for the Future – PFF) Policy

During the 2021 PLS, the SRRB circulated and sought feedback from Sahtú communities and from ENR on three documents developing the SRRB's Hįdó Gogha Sėnégots'įǵá (Planning for the Future – PFF) Policy and Guidance, enclosed with this letter:

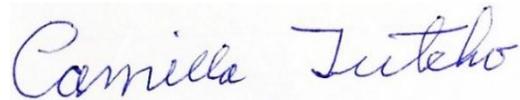
- a Community Conservation Planning Toolkit (January 15, 2021);
- a draft Hįdó Gogha Sėnégots'įǵá (Community Conservation Plan) Process and Components Guide (September 14, 2021); and
- a draft Hįdó Gogha Sėnégots'įǵá (Plan for the Future) Policy & Guide (April 14, 2022).

The Report that accompanies this letter includes parties' submissions about the SRRB's documentation of Hįdó Gogha Sėnégots'įǵá (Planning for the Future – PFF) and about planning more generally. The Report also includes the SRRB's findings and decision about how to improve the Hįdó Gogha Sėnégots'įǵá policy. The Hįdó Gogha Sėnégots'įǵá (Planning for the Future – PFF) Policy and Guidance that accompanies this letter address PFF principles, process, the content of a written PFF plan, and the SRRB's process for reviewing and approving a written PFF plan. The Policy section of this document intended to satisfy the request you made in April 2021 that the SRRB submit its Hįdó Gogha Sėnégots'įǵá (Planning for the Future – PFF) Policy for ministerial approval, while the Guidance is provided for your reference.

While co-management partners are generally supportive of Hı́dó Gogha sénégots'ı́á (planning for the future – PFF), community parties requested a plain language version of the policy and guide. The SRRB seeks to clarify its expectations and how it will review submissions of Hı́dó Gogha sénégots'ı́á (planning for the future – PFF). The SRRB recognizes that there is still work to do, including developing a plain language version of the policy, along with community toolkits to support planning processes.

There is shared concern for the future of caribou. As it fulfils its mandate as the main instrument of wildlife management in the Sahtú region, the SRRB looks forward to working with ENR, other co-management partners, and stakeholders in our continuing and collaborative efforts to find the best, evolving mechanisms to address caribou conservation in the region.

Máhsı,



Camilla Tutcho, Acting Chair

Encl.

ʔelets'ewéhkwé Godı (Living with Wildlife) – Predators and Competitors: Déłıne 2021 Virtual Public Listening (Hearing) Session Report and Reasons for Decisions and Recommendations

Hı́dó Gogha Sénégots'ı́á (Planning for the Future – PFF) Policy and Guidance

Special Dedication

On Friday, October 28, 2022, the SRRB's long-time Executive Director Dr. Deborah "Deb" Simmons passed away after a brave fight against cancer. Deborah was an extraordinary, deeply committed, kind, and compassionate woman who dedicated her life and work to the Sahtú region and especially to our Board.

We would like to share our deepest condolences with the Simmons and Modeste families, and to all those in the Sahtú who were touched by Deb. We continue to mourn with all those who loved her.

The SRRB will remember Deb for the role she played in driving the development of our Board. Deb was hired by the Board in 2012, following work at the Sahtú Land Use Planning Board, Délı̨ę Uranium Team (Dene Náowéré Chets'elə), and Délı̨ę Knowledge Project. In implementing the strategic vision, goals, and objectives of the Board, she remained actively involved in community-collaborative research and conservation planning. She was instrumental to the Board's efforts to account for Dene and Métis law, culture and values about wildlife, leading to the Hı̨dó Gogha Sénégots'ı̨á (Planning for the Future – PFF) and worked tirelessly to align our approach with the guidance we receive from communities in the Sahtú.

The Sahtú Renewable Resources Board is deeply grateful for Deb's contribution. Her legacy lives on in the work that we do, and we will forever remember her dedication to the Sahtú region, its people and to our work at the Board.



Table 1: PLS Topic, Findings, Decisions, and Recommendations

PLS Topic	Findings	Decisions/Recommendations
<p>Topic 1: Conservation Picture: Caribou, People, and Planning</p>	<p>Caribou</p> <p><i>Finding 1.1</i></p> <p>The SRRB finds no new strong competing evidence about the status of t̄odzı (boreal caribou) but notes that it is still listed as threatened under both the territorial and federal Species at Risk Acts and that the GNWT Department of ENR and the SRRB have initiated a process of t̄odzı range planning.</p> <p><i>Finding 1.2</i></p> <p>The SRRB finds that there is no new strong competing evidence about the status of shúhta gōep̄é/shíhta gōed̄e (northern mountain caribou) but notes that they have been listed as a species of special concern under the Species at Risk (NWT) Act in 2021.</p> <p><i>Finding 1.3</i></p> <p>The SRRB finds no strong competing evidence about the status of caribou but notes that ̄ekw̄é/̄əd̄e/n̄ódele (barren-ground caribou) are still listed as threatened under the Species at Risk (NWT) Act and that they are under consideration for listing under the federal Species at Risk Act.</p>	<p>Caribou</p> <p>N/A</p>

	<p>People</p> <p><i>Finding 1.4</i></p> <p>The SRRB finds that GNWT Department of ENR’s submissions provided insufficient evidence to demonstrate how it accounts for Dene/Métis ts’ı̀ı̀ (ways of life), náoweré (knowledge), and ʔeʔa (law) and relationships.</p> <p><i>Finding 1.5</i></p> <p>The SRRB finds that Dene/Métis have a cultural obligation to maintain healthy relationships with caribou and other wildlife, grounded in respect for wildlife and their relationships.</p> <p><i>Finding 1.6</i></p> <p>The SRRB finds that Dene/Métis see themselves as part of the wildlife and believe they have an agreement with other wildlife to co-exist respectfully, central to Dene/Métis ts’ı̀ı̀ (ways of life), náoweré (knowledge), ʔeʔa (law).</p> <p><i>Finding 1.7</i></p> <p>The SRRB finds that community parties have invited ENR and other co-management partners to participate in community camps; ENR, in particular, has shown recognition of the value of such opportunities.</p> <p><i>Finding 1.8</i></p> <p>The SRRB finds that participation in on-the-land activities helps participants to learn about Dene/Métis ts’ı̀ı̀ (ways of life, including relationships with wildlife), náoweré (knowledge), and ʔeʔa (law), and helps promote good working relationships.</p> <p><i>Finding 1.9</i></p> <p>The SRRB finds that it is necessary to preserve Dene/Métis ts’ı̀ı̀ (ways of life), náoweré (knowledge), and ʔeʔa (law) so future generations of Dene/Métis can participate in and express their culture. It is traditionally considered an obligation for elders to preserve Dene/Métis ts’ı̀ı̀ (ways of life), náoweré (knowledge), and ʔeʔa (law) for future generations.</p> <p><i>Finding 1.10</i></p> <p>The SRRB finds that the success of youth participation depends strongly on learning from the</p>	<p>People</p> <p><i>Recommendation 1.1</i></p> <p>The SRRB recommends that communities continue to invite co-management partners to participate in community camps to facilitate opportunities to learn about Dene/Métis ts’ı̀ı̀ (ways of life, including relationships with wildlife), náoweré (knowledge) and ʔeʔa (law), and to foster mutual understanding and relationships.</p> <p><i>Recommendation 1.2</i></p> <p>The SRRB recommends that ENR increase financial resources to facilitate attendance and participation in community camps, including and particularly for ENR personnel working in the Sahtú region to foster mutual understanding and relationships.</p> <p><i>Recommendation 1.3</i></p> <p>The SRRB recommends that both the GNWT and the Federal Government increase their support, including financial resources, to facilitate the cross-generational transfer of Dene/Métis ts’ı̀ı̀ (ways of life), náoweré (knowledge), and ʔeʔa (law).</p>
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	<p>elders about Dene/Métis ts'ı́ı́ (ways of life), náoweré (knowledge), and ʔeʔa (law).</p> <p><i>Finding 1.11</i></p> <p>The SRRB finds that, similar to the findings of the 2016 hearing and 2020 public listening session, communities strongly state the importance of active youth participation to the success of community-led initiatives.</p> <p><i>Finding 1.12</i></p> <p>The SRRB finds that while some support is available from the Government, it is insufficient to provide youth with the opportunities needed to learn from elders about Dene/Métis ts'ı́ı́ (ways of life), náoweré (knowledge), and ʔeʔa (law).</p>	
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<p>Topic 2: Caribou relationships with Predators and Competitors</p>	<p>Predators</p> <p><i>Finding 2.1</i></p> <p>The SRRB finds that dǰga (wolf) populations may be increasing in some parts of the Sahtú region.</p> <p><i>Finding 2.2</i></p> <p>The SRRB finds that Sahtú communities consider dǰga (wolf) and other predators, such as sahcho (grizzly bear), to be spiritually powerful animals that must be treated with respect.</p> <p><i>Finding 2.3</i></p> <p>Diga (wolves) help maintain a healthy ecosystem, but the exact role wolves play is not well documented or understood.</p> <p><i>Finding 2.4</i></p> <p>The SRRB finds that factors such as natural and human-induced disturbances negatively impact caribou, but the full scale of such impacts remains unknown.</p> <p><i>Finding 2.5</i></p> <p>The SRRB finds that certain types of wolf management interventions, including aerial shooting and baiting, are considered to be invasive, harmful, and incongruent with Dene/Métis ts'ı́ı̄ (ways of life), náoweré (knowledge), and ɁeɁa (law).</p> <p><i>Finding 2.6</i></p> <p>The SRRB finds that, at this time, there is insufficient evidence that wolf management measures in the North Slave region are effective in improving caribou population levels.</p> <p>Competitors</p> <p><i>Finding 2.7</i></p> <p>The SRRB finds that populations of Ɂı̄ts'é (moose) and Ɂejire (muskox) have seen recent increases in the Sahtú region.</p> <p><i>Finding 2.8</i></p> <p>The SRRB finds that there are common parasites and diseases that affect caribou, Ɂı̄ts'é (moose) and Ɂejiré (muskox). The increase in Ɂı̄ts'é and Ɂejiré</p>	<p>Predators</p> <p><i>Recommendation 2.1</i></p> <p>The SRRB recommends that further studies that take a biocultural approach and incorporate Dene/Métis ts'ı̄ı̄ (ways of life), náoweré (knowledge), and ɁeɁa (law) and scientific knowledge be undertaken to establish and better understand the impacts of predation on caribou.</p> <p>Competitors</p> <p><i>Recommendation 2.2</i></p> <p>The SRRB recommends that further studies that take a biocultural approach and incorporate Dene/Métis ts'ı̄ı̄ (ways of life), náoweré (knowledge), and ɁeɁa (law) and scientific knowledge be undertaken to establish and better understand the impacts of competition between caribou and Ɂı̄ts'é (moose), Ɂejiré (muskox), and other competitors.</p> <p><i>Recommendation 2.3</i></p> <p>The SRRB recommends that communities, with support from the federal and territorial governments and other co-management partners, invite people from places with ongoing experience of relationships with Ɂejire(muskox) to Sahtú communities to teach skills in harvesting and preparing Ɂejire.</p>
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PLS Topic	Findings	Decisions/Recommendations
	<p>populations increases the potential for new diseases and parasites to enter the region</p> <p><i>Finding 2.9</i></p> <p>Consumption of ʔəjiré (muskox) by Dene/Métis in the Sahtú region is much less common today due to the loss of cultural continuity. The SRRB finds that things like the enforcement of harvest restrictions in the early twentieth century, which were new to indigenous peoples, contributed to the change in people’s relationship with ʔəjiré (muskox), to the point that people lost the skills and knowledge for preparing it, as well as losing the taste for its meat.</p> <p><i>Finding 2.10</i></p> <p>The SRRB finds that the overall relationship between the health of caribou populations and the health of their competitor populations, including ʔəjiré (muskox) and ʔłts’é (moose), is not well established.</p>	

PLS Topic	Findings	Decisions/Recommendations
<p>Topic 3: Hjdó Gogha Sénégots'írá (Planning for the Future – PFF)</p>	<p><i>Finding 3.1</i></p> <p>The SRRB finds that hjdó gogha sénégots'írá (planning for the future – PFF) has widespread general support as a valuable approach to planning a healthy future for the land, water, wildlife, and people. It is recognized for the value and contribution of communities for better conservation outcomes and more effective co-management decisions.</p> <p><i>Finding 3.2</i></p> <p>The SRRB finds that communities need financial and technical support, including community workshops, to assist with understanding and conducting Hjdó Gogha sénégots'írá (planning for the future – PFF). The SRRB should continue providing guidance to communities who want to undertake PFF.</p> <p><i>Finding 3.3</i></p> <p>The SRRB finds that, to date, it has not provided an adequate explanation of its Hjdó Gogha Sénégots'írá (Planning for the Future – PFF) policy. Parties want explanations of PFF to be in plain language.</p> <p><i>Finding 3.4</i></p> <p>The SRRB finds that the 2021 Hjdó Gogha Sénégots'írá (Planning for the Future – PFF) policy statement provided a starting point for a PFF policy, but it did not explain: how PFF or written PFF plans reflect and respect local customs and practice; the SRRB preference for PFF as the priority conservation response in the Sahtú region; the planning process and a written plan; or the SRRB's procedure for reviewing and approving a written PFF plan.</p>	<p><i>Decision 3.1</i></p> <p>After considering the PLS record on this issue, the SRRB is releasing a stand-alone Hjdó Gogha Sénégots'írá (Planning for the Future - PFF) Policy document, titled Hjdó Gogha Sénégots'írá (Planning for the Future – PFF) Policy and Guidance (2023). This policy addresses PFF principles, a PFF process, the content of a written PFF plan, and the SRRB's process for reviewing and approving a written PFF plan.</p>

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Dene Kədə – Glossary

Term	Meaning
ᑲasıı godı́ hé Dene ts'ııı hé	biocultural diversity
ᑲᑲá or ᑲᑲᑲ	law; protocol; code
ᑲᑲᑲ	barren-ground caribou (Dehlá Got'ıne dialect)
ᑲehdaııla ᑲekwé	Bluenose East barren-ground caribou
ᑲehdzo got'ıne	trappers; renewable resources councils
ᑲᑲıre	Muskox
ᑲᑲırekwé	meat (Délıne dialect)
ᑲekwé	barren-ground caribou (Délıne dialect)
ᑲekwé gulı́	the fate of caribou
ᑲekwé hé łue hé	caribou and fish (Délıne dialect)
ᑲekwò	caribou (Tłıchò)
ᑲᑲets'ewéhkwe godı	living with wildlife
ᑲᑲexé ᑲᑲgháıats'eda	Collaborative
ᑲᑲıhtı'é tsetsı	plan document/report
ᑲıts'é	Moose
ᑲᑲ'e k'énadets'ewə	species listed as special concern
Dehlá Got'ıne	End of the treeline people; people of Colville Lake
Délıne	Where the water flows (community name)
Délıne Got'ıne	People of Délıne
Dene	People (Indigenous peoples)
Dene bére	country food
Dene kədə	Dene language spoken by communities of the Sahtú region, known in the <i>NWT Official Languages Act</i> as "North Slavey"
Dene ts'ııı	Dene being, identity, ways of life
dıga	Wolf
Dıga	wolf (Tłıchò)

Term	Meaning
godı kehtsı	fair consideration or coming together of diverse perspectives
gokw'ı ʔekwé	barren-ground caribou, often referred to as ʔekwéwá, or simply ʔekwé (Délıne dialect)
gots'edı k'ə	practices; ways of life
gow'ı ʔədə	barren-ground caribou, often referred to as simply ʔədə (K'áhsho Got'ıne and Dehlá Got'ıne dialect)
hıdó gogha sénégots'ıá	planning for the future
K'áhsho Got'ıne	Big arrow people; people of Fort Good Hope
ı́lak'óonɔ xae kúhyə wıle ade gha sóonı	species listed as threatened
máhsı (cho)	thank you (very much)
náoweré	knowledge (Délıne dialect)
Nę K'édı Ke	Keepers of the Land; guardians
Neregha	north shore of Great Bear Lake
Nıo Nę P'ęné	backbone of the mountains
Nódele	barren-ground caribou (Shúhtaot'ıne dialect)
nógha	Wolverine
ragóʔa	hunting law
Sahcho	grizzly bear
Sahtú	Bear Lake; Great Bear Lake
Sahtú gotıch'ádıı	wildlife of the Sahtú region
shıhta gɔʔədé	mountain caribou (Dehlá Got'ıne dialect)
shúhta goʔepé	mountain caribou (Shúhtaot'ıne dialect)
tıch'ádıı	Wildlife
tɔdzı	boreal caribou
Ts'ıduweh ʔədə ʔeʔa	Ancient Caribou Law
Tulıt'a	Where the rivers meet (community name)

List of Acronyms

ACCWM	Advisory Committee for Corporation on Wildlife Management
BAFN	Behdzı Adha First Nation
BNE	Bluenose East
BNW	Bluenose West
COSEWIC	Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada
DG	Dehlá Got'ıne
DGG	Délıne Got'ıne Government
DRRC	Délıne Renewable Resources Council
ENR	Environment and Natural Resources
FGHRC	Fort Good Hope Renewable Resources Council
GNWT	Government of Northwest Territories
IRs	Information Requests
NWRRC	Norman Wells Renewable Resources Council
NWT	Northwest Territories
PLS	Public Listening Session
RRC	Renewable Resources Council
SARC	Species At Risk Committee
SDMCLCA	Sahtú Dene and Métis Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement
SSI	Sahtú Secretariat Incorporated
SYN	Sahtú Youth Network
TG	Tıchq Government
WRRB	Wek'èezhı Renewable Resources Board

Introduction

This report documents the findings, recommendations, and decision of ʔehdzo Got'ıne ʔots'ę Nákedı (Sahtú Renewable Resources Board – SRRB), based on the evidence provided during the Délıne 2021 Public Listening Session (PLS). Co-hosted by the SRRB and Délıne (including the Délıne Got'ıne Government and Délıne ʔehdzo Got'ıne [Renewable Resources Council]) on April 25-29, 2022, the session focused on the question:

“What should people’s role be in maintaining healthy relationships between caribou and other wildlife?”

This was the second of five public listening sessions, which together comprised a five-part proceeding to answer the question:

“What are the most effective ways to conserve caribou?”

The first PLS, co-hosted by the SRRB and the Colville Lake Renewable Resources Council (RRC), was held on January 21-23, 2020, in Colville Lake.¹ Délıne 2021, like Colville 2020, addressed all three caribou ecotypes that inhabit or travel through the Sahtú region: ʔekwé/ʔədə/nódele (barren-ground caribou), shúhta goʔepé (northern mountain caribou), and tódzi (boreal caribou).

The Délıne 2021 PLS also considered and facilitated SRRB engagement with the parties on the content and form of a Hıdó Gogha Sénégots'ıá (Planning for the Future – PFF) Policy and Guide, which is the SRRB’s effort to advance reconciliation in caribou conservation, an issue at the core of Sahtú Dene and Métis cultural identity.

The SRRB strives to implement the right of Sahtú Dene and Métis to participate in decision-making about wildlife and landscapes.² In its five-year strategic plan and the design of the public listening series on caribou conservation, the SRRB has concentrated on learning about and improving co-management in the Sahtú. The SRRB understands that the rights of Sahtú Dene and Métis to participate in co-management do not end with attending public listening sessions, but include direct and meaningful participation in decision-making concerning wildlife harvesting and management. (SDMCLCA, s. 1.1.1(f)) Through the five-part public listening series, the SRRB is addressing Sahtú Dene and Métis participation in making and implementing decisions

¹ Sahtú Renewable Resources Board (ʔehdzo Got'ıne ʔots'ę Nákedı), *Sahtú Ragóʔa (Hunting Law) and Approaches to Wildlife Harvesting: Report on the Colville 2020 Public Listening (Hearing) Session* (Tulı́'a, NT: SRRB, October 2020), available on the SRRB [Public Registry](#) for Colville 2020 Public Listening Session.

²Canada, *Sahtú Dene and Métis Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement Volume 1* (Canada, September 6, 1993).

about wildlife and landscapes under the *Sahtú Dene and Métis Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement (SDMCLCA)*.

The Délı̨ne 2021 PLS and the pre-session teleconferences and workshops were held on virtual platforms to follow COVID-19 public health orders and protocols in place in the Northwest Territories (NWT) at the time. This was the first time the SRRB held a listening session on a virtual platform. Community parties joined the public listening through “party bubbles” where local coordinators helped facilitate the Délı̨ne 2021 PLS. As part of its effort to enhance participation, especially for elders, the SRRB provided two channels for simultaneous translation in Sahtú Dene and Tłı̨chų languages. In preparation for Délı̨ne 2021 PLS, SRRB staff contributed to community capacity in planning for the future and participation in the public listening sessions through regional teleconferences and workshops.

As a decision-maker and the main instrument of wildlife management in the Sahtú region, the SRRB makes findings of fact based on the best available evidence, including Indigenous knowledge, community knowledge and practice, and scientific knowledge. These findings of fact, support the SRRB’s decisions and recommendations. This report documents the SRRB’s approach to the entire Délı̨ne 2021 PLS.

The report is structured into seven sections, including:

- Background and overview;
- Procedural history;
- Public listening session issues addressed;
- Key Issues, Part I: Conservation Picture and Caribou Relationships with Predators and Competitors
 - Evidence received;
 - Summary of arguments from parties;
 - Summary and analysis of parties’ evidence and arguments;
 - Summary of findings, decisions, and recommendations;
- Key Issues, Part II: Hı̨dó Gogha Sė́nė́gots’ı́á (Planning for the Future)
 - Summary of evidence and arguments from parties;
 - Analysis, findings, decisions, and recommendations;
 - Next Steps and Ongoing Work
- Conclusion and statement on the next step of the public listening session series.

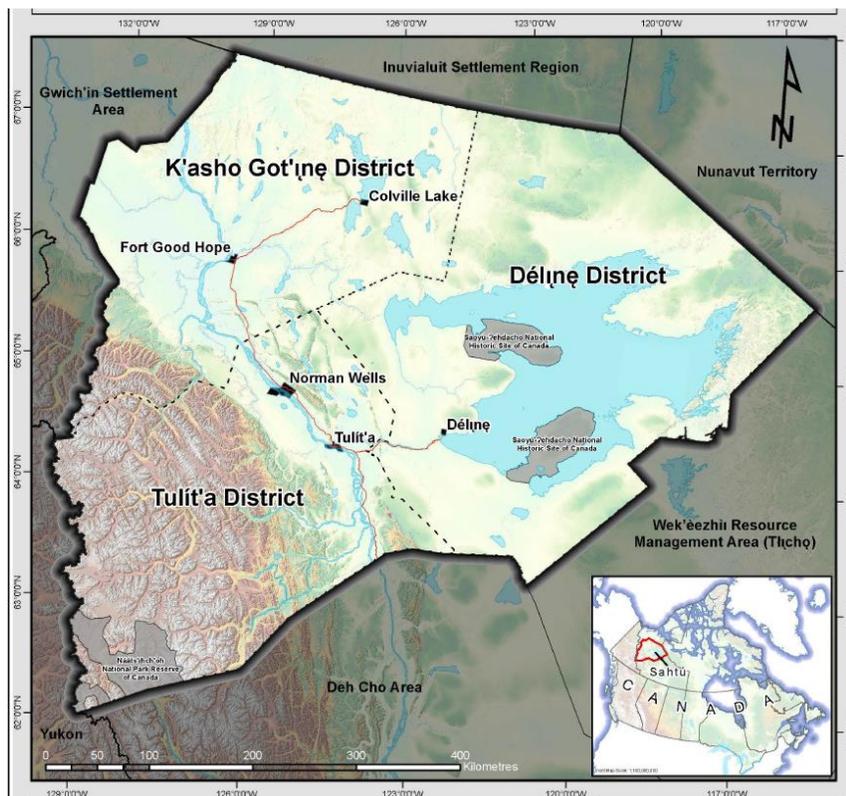
Background and Overview

The SRRB’s Jurisdiction

The SRRB is a co-management body responsible for wildlife, habitat, and harvesting in the Sahtú Settlement Area (SSA) (Figure 1). The *SDMCLCA* grants the SRRB specific

powers outlined in chapter 13 (“Wildlife Harvesting and Management”) and chapter 14 (“Forestry”). These powers include the following:

- The power to hold hearings;³
- The power to make rules respecting the conduct of hearings;⁴
- The power to establish policies and propose regulations in respect of harvesting of wildlife by any person, including any class of persons;⁵ and
- The power to review any matter concerning wildlife management as referred to by the Government of Canada or the Government of Northwest Territories (GNWT).⁶



The *SDMCLCA* also grants the SRRB the “discretion to advise the Minister or government of any matter relating to wildlife or wildlife habitat at any time, whether or not the Minister or government has requested advice.”⁷

³ *SDMCLCA*, supra note 2, s 13.8.21.

⁴ *Ibid*, s 13.8.18.

⁵ *Ibid*, s 13.8.23(a).

⁶ *Ibid*, s 13.8.23(h).

⁷ *Ibid*, s 13.8.36(a).

The SRRB's exercise of these powers is guided by the objectives found in chapters 1 and 13 of the *SDMCLCA*, including:

- Respecting the ways of life and the harvesting and wildlife management customs and practices of Sahtú Dene and Métis;⁸
- Involving Dene and Métis land claim participants in a direct and meaningful manner in planning and decision-making about wildlife harvesting and management;⁹ and
- protecting and conserving wildlife and wildlife habitats for present and future generations.¹⁰

When the SRRB exercises its power to hold hearings, it does so as the main instrument of wildlife management in the Sahtú region. In this role, the SRRB is responsible for compiling and assessing the available evidence and legal arguments brought forward by the parties. Based on this assessment, the SRRB makes findings of fact. The SRRB's findings form the basis of its subsequent recommendations and decisions. When the SRRB makes recommendations, it requires action from the GNWT or other parties with which it shares co-management duties. When the SRRB makes a decision, it exercises areas of exclusive authority, such as in the approval of plans for the management and protection of particular wildlife species. The Minister is responsible for rejecting, accepting or varying decisions and plans approved by the Board.

The *SDMCLCA* provides the SRRB with authority to hold hearings “where the Board is satisfied that such a hearing is desirable.”¹¹ The SRRB is exercising its authority to hold a series of public listening sessions. The SRRB uses the term “public listening session” instead of hearing to maximize Sahtú community participation in this process and address concerns raised during previous hearings in the Sahtú region. Listening sessions are intended to denote active acknowledgment of the full range of evidence presented.

Public Listening Session Series

The Déljñę 2021 PLS is the second session of the five-part public listening series, which, together, constitute a Sahtú-wide proceeding on emerging caribou conservation issues for wildlife management in the Sahtú region, addressing the question, “What is the most effective way to conserve caribou?”

Prior proceedings include:

- The 2007 ɾəðə (Bluenose West barren-ground caribou) hearing in Fort Good Hope;

⁸ *Ibid*, s 13.1.1(d).

⁹ *Ibid*, s 13.1.1(e).

¹⁰ *Ibid*, s 1.1.1(h).

¹¹ *Ibid*, s 13.8.21(a).

- The 2016 hearing on ʔehdaɣla ʔekwé (Bluenose East barren-ground caribou) in Délıne; and
- The 2020 public listening on Sahtú ragóʔa (hunting law) and approaches to wildlife harvesting in Colville Lake.

The SRRB conceived of the Public Listening Sessions on Caribou Conservation after the 2016 hearing in Délıne where the *Belare Wıle Gots'é ʔekwé – Caribou for All Time* plan was approved by the SRRB and accepted by the Minister.¹² The SRRB concluded that a herd-by-herd total allowable harvest approach made it difficult to consider wider-scale issues that are fundamentally tied to caribou conservation. Restricting rights-holder harvesting is only one piece of the issue. The SRRB conceived of Public Listening Sessions on Caribou Conservation as a way to address wider-scale issues related to caribou conservation.

The current five-part series began in April 2019, following the SRRB's response to conservation concerns about the three caribou ecotypes that inhabit or travel through the Sahtú region. These concerns included the evidence regarding the low status of ʔekwé (Bluenose East barren-ground caribou – BNE), Colville Lake's concerns about ʔədə (Bluenose West barren-ground caribou – BNW) in their traditional territory, the threatened status of ʔɔdzi (boreal caribou), and the consideration of shúhta goʔepé (mountain caribou) as a species of special concern in the NWT.

Given this evidence and concerns, the SRRB decided that there was sufficient conservation concern to trigger hearings based on its powers and mandates under section 13.8.21 of the *SDMCLCA*.

Following the conclusion of Colville 2020, the SRRB and Délıne (Délıne Got'ıne Government and Renewable Resources Council) issued a joint announcement of the Délıne 2021 PLS along with Round 1 Information Requests and a timeline for the session. The Délıne 2021 PLS addressed the central question:

“What should people’s role be in maintaining healthy relationships between caribou and other wildlife?”

This involved learning about people's relationships with caribou and caribou's predators and competitors.

The public listening series also provides a mechanism for developing a regional approach to community-led planning for caribou conservation. Hıdó gogha sénégots'ıʔá is a Dene phrase that describes community-led conservation planning for the future. The SRRB modified the English translation of this Dene phrase from community conservation planning to plan for the future to reflect and emphasize the planning process at the core

¹² Letter from Minister for ENR to Sahtú Renewable Resources Board (ʔehdzo Got'ıne Gots'é Nákedı), February 22, 2017, available on the SRRB Public Registry

of h̄́dó gogha s̄́n̄́égots'í́á and to improve the English translation of this key concept. Accounting for and properly reflecting Dene terminology is important for the SRRB's work, implementation of the *SDMCLCA*, and reconciliation in wildlife conservation. While this report primarily uses h̄́dó gogha s̄́n̄́égots'í́á or planning for the future, there are some instances where community conservation planning appears because that term was used in a presentation or argument.

In order to solicit feedback on its approach to H̄́dó Gogha S̄́n̄́égots'í́á (Planning for the Future – PFF), the SRRB added consideration of its H̄́dó Gogha S̄́n̄́égots'í́á (Planning for the Future – PFF) Policy and Guide to the agenda and notice for the Dél̄́n̄́ę 2021 PLS. In light of an ongoing judicial review, the SRRB did not consider deferred issues from Colville 2020 PLS at the Dél̄́n̄́ę 2021 PLS.¹³

The ongoing global COVID-19 pandemic made it challenging to hold in-person sessions, so the Dél̄́n̄́ę 2021 Public Listening Session and the SRRB's pre-session engagement with the communities was held on a virtual platform (Zoom). Community panels had the opportunity to join the session through community bubbles set up by local coordinators to reduce the anticipated technical and capacity challenges posed by holding events on virtual platforms. The virtual session allowed parties to make presentations and arguments and comment on presentations by other parties.

Participation

A broad range of registered parties participated in the five-day public listening session, including the five communities of the Sahtú region and the GNWT Department Environment and Natural Resources (ENR), referred to as ENR, among others, as well as members of the general public (see [Appendix 1](#) for a complete list of participating parties and attendees).

Presentations

During the proceedings, the SRRB received oral submissions from Colville Lake, Dél̄́n̄́ę, Norman Wells, Fort Good Hope, and Tulít'a community panels, as well as ENR, two independent parties (Anne-Marie Jackson and Lucy Jackson), and the Tł̄́ch̄́ Government. Based on the consensus with the parties, the SRRB allocated 30 minutes each for the presentation of evidence by the Sahtú community parties and 15 minutes to the other registered parties, including the Tł̄́ch̄́ Government and the two independent parties. However, Dél̄́n̄́ę was given an hour for their presentation due to its position as host of the 2021 session. Similarly, ENR was given an hour for presentation due to the amount of evidence to be provided.

¹³ Colville Lake Renewable Resources Council, Behdzi Ahda First Nation, and Ayoni Keh Land Corporation v. the Government of the Northwest Territories, as represented by the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, Court File S-1-CV-2021-000144. The SRRB and the Inuvialuit Game Council intervened. A ruling is expected after this report is released.

Order of Presentations

1. Délıne Panel
2. Colville Lake Panel
3. Fort Good Hope Panel
4. Tulıt'a Panel
5. Norman Wells Panel
6. Tłıchq Government
7. GNWT Environment and Natural Resources
8. SRRB (Technical Advisors Janet Winbourne and Colin Macdonald)

The SRRB has the authority to call its own witnesses, both under the *SDMCLCA* and the SRRB's *Rules for Hearings*.¹⁴ Accordingly, there were two separate presentations by the SRRB's science advisor, Colin Macdonald, and the SRRB's Indigenous knowledge research advisor, Janet Winbourne. Technical advisors are recognized as experts in the field, are retained on a fixed fee, and are given editorial autonomy over their evidence and conclusions.

Registered parties were allowed to ask questions after each presentation, which the presenters answered. The parties also had a chance to comment on each presentation and provide closing remarks during the final day of the proceeding. The closing remarks allowed the parties to reply to any evidence they heard during the public listening.

In addition to oral evidence, parties could provide written responses to three rounds of information requests and submit draft plans and plan components before the public listening session. They could also submit final written arguments after the proceedings.

The graphic recordings of the presentations and other oral submissions can be found in [appendix 2](#). Graphic recordings are real-time visual capturing of meeting proceedings. The procedural guidance in accordance with the SRRB's *Rules for Hearings* (2019) is also found in [appendix 3](#).

Following the Colville 2020 Public Listening Session, the SRRB decided that youth will be invited to play meaningful roles in the entire process for future sessions. The Sahtú Youth Network (SYN) registered as a party to the Délıne 2021 Public Listening Session. However, it did not make written or oral submissions.

Milestones and Timelines

The original timeline for the 2021 Délıne Public Listening Session was delayed by the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, community-specific responses, and NWT public

¹⁴ *SDMCLCA*, supra note 2, s 13.8.19, and SRRB, *Rules for Hearings* (October 23, 2019), 12.7.

health orders. Déljñę 2021 PLS was held on April 25-29, 2022. The following milestones and timelines from 2020 to 2022 marked the hearing proceeding. Documentation associated with these events is posted on the SRRB’s public registry¹⁵.

Table 2: Déljñę 2021 Virtual Public Listening Session Timelines

Year/Dates	Activity(ies)/Action(s)
2020	
December 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Notice of hearing along with Round 1 Information Requests
December 16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Teleconference 1 hosted by the SRRB ● Circulated Checklist for Community Plans
2021	
January 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Deadline to register as a party ● Posting of Indigenous knowledge/science toolkit ● Circulated Harvest Regulation Planning Toolkit
January 20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Deadline for responses to Round 1 Information Requests ● Nę K’ę Dene Ts’ııı - Living Well on the Land Forum to prepare for planning hosted by the SRRB
January 27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Issuance of Round 2 Information Requests
February 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Suspension of proceeding
July 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Resumption of proceeding ● Invitation for submissions on Community Conservation Plan components
August 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Teleconference 2 hosted by the SRRB
September 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Circulated draft of Hıđó Gogha Sęnęgots’ıřá (Community Conservation Plan) Process and Components Guide
October 20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Deadline for responses to Round 2 Information Requests
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Nę K’ę Dene Ts’ııı Forum meeting to prepare for a regional planning workshop hosted by the SRRB

¹⁵ Public Registry for the Déljñę 2021 Public Listening Session, online: <https://www.srrb.nt.ca/about-us/public-hearing/deline-2021-public-listening#registry..>

Year/Dates	Activity(ies)/Action(s)
November 1-3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional planning workshop for community panels hosted by the SRRB
November 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final deadline for submission of draft plans Deadline for comment on Hı́dó Gogha Sė́nė́gots'ı́ńá (Community Conservation Plan) Process and Components Guide
December 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issuance of Round 3 Information Requests
December 17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notice of issues and deferred issues, procedural guidance, and agenda
2022	
January 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suspension and postponement of proceeding
March 16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resumption of proceeding
April 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deadline for responses to all information requests (including outstanding responses to Rounds 1 and 2, and responses to Round 3)
April 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summary of responses to Round 3 Information Requests Issuance of revised procedural guidance Circulated draft of Hı́dó Gogha Sė́nė́gots'ı́ńá (Plan for the Future) Policy and Guide (v2)
April 22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teleconference 3 hosted by the SRRB Deadline for written and/or slide presentations
April 25-29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dė́łıńė 2021 Virtual ʔełets'ewė́hkwé Godı́ (Public Listening Session)
May 20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deadline for final written arguments
June 27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confidential motion filed by Colville Lake

Key Issues Addressed at the Dė́łıńė 2021 Public Listening Session

The Dė́łıńė 2021 PLS focused on the question:

“What should people’s role be in maintaining healthy relationships between caribou and other wildlife?”

The SRRB facilitated information requests and received oral and written submissions from parties on:

- Conservation picture: The status of caribou, people, and planning;

- Caribou relationships with predators (including dįga/wolf); and
- Caribou relationships with competitors (including ʔıts'ė/moose and ʔəjıre/muskox). (See Fig. 2)

The evidence, arguments, findings, and recommendations for these issues are found in Key Issues, Part I, of this report.

The Déljıne 2021 PLS also considered the SRRB's Hıdó Gogha Sėnégots'ıʔá (Planning for the Future – PFF) Policy and Guide. Prior to the 2021 PLS, the SRRB issued three rounds of information requests to solicit feedback on the documents used to develop Hıdó Gogha Sėnégots'ıʔá (Planning for the Future – PFF):

- Harvest Regulation Planning Toolkit (January 15, 2021);
- Hıdó Gogha Sėnégots'ıʔá (Community Conservation Plan) Process and Components Guide (September 14, 2021); and
- Hıdó Gogha Sėnégots'ıʔá (Plan for the Future) Policy and Guide (v2) (April 14, 2022) (See Fig. 2)

The submissions, arguments, findings, decision, and recommendations about the Hıdó Gogha Sėnégots'ıʔá (Planning for the Future) Policy are found in Key Issues, Part II, of this report.

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, which made it challenging to engage the parties, and the ongoing judicial review regarding issues from Colville 2020 PLS, the SRRB did not consider the deferred issues from the Colville 2020 PLS in the Déljıne 2021 PLS:

- Stewardship roles in caribou conservation;
- ʔehdzo got'ıne (renewable resources council – RRC) mandate and powers under s. 13.9 of the SDMCLCA; and
- Harvester residency and education requirements for harvesters in the Sahtú region.

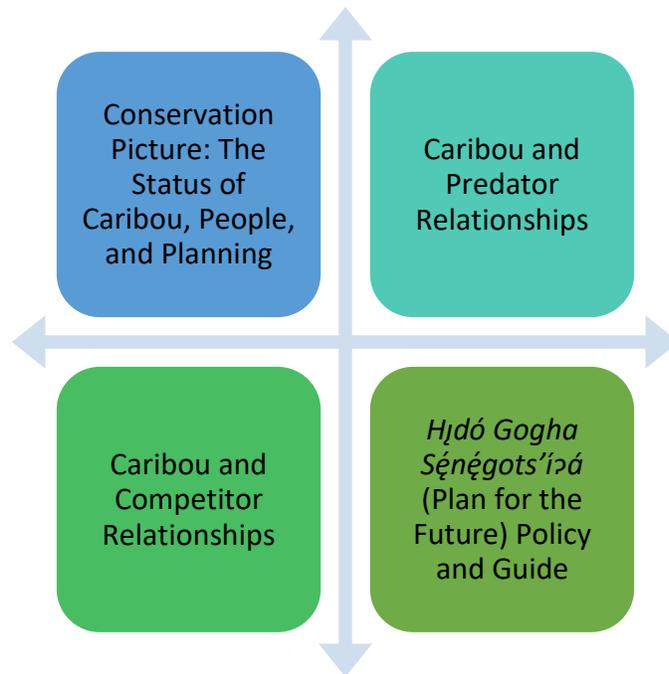


Figure 2: Dėlįņę 2021 PLS Issues

Evidence Received

A list of the evidence the Board relied on is available in the appendices to this report, and, subject to redactions for confidentiality, the entire evidentiary record can be found on the SRRB’s public registry for the Dėlįņę 2021 PLS.

As contemplated in the SRRB’s Rules for Hearing (2019), parties have the right to make motions. On June 27, 2022, Colville Lake brought a motion to treat certain traditional knowledge information disclosed during public listening as confidential. The Board circulated a redacted version of the confidential motion and invited submissions from all parties. After receiving one submission in support of the motion, the Board granted the motion on October 31, 2022. The order and notice to the public are available on the SRRB’s registry. The record for the Dėlįņę 2021 PLS was closed on January 2, 2023.

Key Issues, Part I – Conservation Picture and Caribou Relationships with Predators and Competitors

Conservation Picture: The Status of Caribou, People, and Planning

During the Dėlįņę 2021 PLS, the SRRB received evidence about the status of caribou, people’s relationships with caribou, and planning.

The English term “caribou” is used for simplicity to encompass all caribou ecotypes in the Sahtú region because Dene terminology is very specific to individual ecotypes.¹⁶ At the same time, Dene names do not distinguish between herds but are based on the understanding that “caribou are caribou.”¹⁷ The “Status of Caribou” section explains the terminology for different caribou ecotypes.

Status of Caribou

The SRRB received evidence on the status of the three caribou ecotypes that live in and travel through the Sahtú: ʔekwé/nódele/ʔədə (barren-ground caribou), ʔdzı (boreal caribou), and shúhta goʔepé (mountain caribou). The SRRB understands from the presented evidence that there are no notable changes in the scientific evidence from ENR about the three caribou ecotypes since the 2020 PLS.

ʔekwé/ʔədə/Nódele (Barren-ground Caribou)

Barren-ground caribou primarily travel through the Délıne and K’áhsho Got’ıne Districts in the Sahtú.¹⁸ Three terms refer to barren-ground caribou in the Sahtú, reflecting the three main dialects of the region. K’áhsho Got’ıne of Fort Good Hope and Dehlá Got’ıne of Colville refer to barren-ground caribou as ʔədə (or gow’ı ʔədə), while Shúhtaot’ıne (Mountain Dene) and Délıne Got’ıne refer to this ecotype as nódele and ʔekwé (or gokw’ı ʔekwé, or ʔekwéwá), respectively. Délıne Got’ıne further distinguishes between ʔehdaıla ʔekwé (Caribou Point, or Bluenose East barren-ground caribou) and Neregha ʔekwé (North Shore, or Bluenose West barren-ground caribou).¹⁹ The BNE and BNW are two of the three barren-ground caribou herds that are understood to travel through the Sahtú region.²⁰

The SRRB understands that the barren-ground caribou are under consideration for federal listing as a species at risk. They are listed as ı́lak’óonq xae kúhye wı́le ade gha sóonı (threatened) in the Northwest Territories under the *Species at Risk (NWT) Act*.

According to the evidence presented by ENR, Bluenose East barren-ground caribou has declined dramatically from 120,000 animals in 2010 to approximately 19,000 in 2018, a

¹⁶ Sahtú Renewable Resources Board (ʔehdzo Got’ıne Gots’é Nákedı), *Sahtú Ragóʔa (Hunting Law) and Approaches to Wildlife Harvesting: Report on the Colville 2020 Public Listening (Hearing) Session*, supra note 1.

¹⁷ Advisory Committee for Cooperation on Wildlife Management, *Taking Care of Caribou, The Cape Bathurst, Bluenose-West, and Bluenose-East barren-ground Caribou Herds Management Plan* (Yellowknife, NT: ACCWM, November 2014), available on the SRRB [Public Registry](#) for Colville 2020 Public Listening Session.

¹⁸ GNWT, *ENR Submissions to the SRRB: Colville 2020 Public Listening Session* (January 17, 2020), available on the SRRB [Public Registry](#) for the Colville 2020 Public Listening Session.

¹⁹ *Déıı ne Got’ı ne, Belare Wı́le Gots’é ʔekwé – Caribou for All Time*, (November 22, 2021) at page 9

²⁰ Advisory Committee for Cooperation on Wildlife Management, *Taking Care of Caribou: The Cape Bathurst, Bluenose-West, and Bluenose-East barren-ground Caribou Herds Management Plan*, supra note 20.

drop of about 78%. ENR's 2020 composition surveys of Bluenose East estimate a calf-to-cow ratio of 41.8:100 in March and ratios of 46.9 and 51.7 per 100 cows in July and October, respectively, suggesting little calf mortality between July and October. Another survey in March 2021 estimated 38 calves for every 100 cows, which is a moderate/good ratio. The 2021 herd estimate suggests that the population of the herd has stabilized, and calf-cow and bull-cow ratios have improved.

Unlike Colville Lake's evidence showing that barren-ground caribou populations are in good shape, Délı̄në and Tłı̄chų Government presented evidence indicating barren-ground caribou have not been available and could not be seen around as they used to in the past, suggesting a decline in the population. According to Délı̄në's written submission to the SRRB,

ʔehdaı̄la ʔekwé are not around anymore. Most hunters have accepted that ʔekwé is not available in our area.

In a written submission, the Dene Nation also referred to an unofficial report from communities about decreased barren-ground caribou in the Sahtú.²¹

Although ENR data suggests some stabilization in barren-ground caribou numbers, particularly in 2021, the evidence from both ENR and Sahtú communities demonstrates that there continues to be concerns about the availability of barren-ground caribou in the region. This is consistent with the evidence discussed in the Colville Lake 2020 PLS report in which both Advisory Committee for Corporation on Wildlife Management (ACCWM) and Délı̄në agreed with the 2019 annual assessment that ʔehdaı̄la ʔekwé (Bluenose East barren-ground caribou) population numbers are low and decreasing.²²

Shúhta Goʔepé (Mountain Caribou)

Shúhta goʔepé (mountain caribou) is a distinct population of woodland caribou with a range that includes the mountain areas of the Tulı̄'ta and K'áhsho Got'ı̄në Districts in the Sahtú. Shúhta goʔepé is listed as bek'e k'énadets'ewə (a species of special concern) both federally and by the NWT under the *Species at Risk (NWT) Act*.²³ In addition, both

²¹ Dene Nation, *Responses to Information Requests Round 1: Délı̄në 2021 Public Listening Session* (January 21, 2021), available on the SRRB [Public Registry](#) for the Délı̄në 2021 Public Listening Session.

²² Ibid, supra note 1, paragraph 32.

²³ Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT), "Northern Mountain Caribou" (Yellowknife, NT: GNWT Environment and Natural Resources, n.d.), available at [Public Registry](https://www.enr.gov.nt.ca/en/services/northern-mountain-caribou#:~:text=Northern%20mountain%20caribou%20were%20listed,caribou%20was%20released%20in%202012, and GNWT, ENR Responses to Information Requests Round 2: Délı̄në 2021 Public Listening Session (October 15, 2021), available on the SRRB <a href=) for the Délı̄në 2021 Public Listening Session.

the written and oral submissions indicate that shúhta goʔepé has not been available, as reflected in this quote from Tulít'a:

...the mountain caribou, the last time I saw them come here, maybe due to the high line of deep snow, they probably didn't come back into the country of the special landscape they use for their winter ground. So, I saw a bit of change there. And the other parts, we did see some. But in terms of numbers, that's not what I expected. We thought there could be more. – Leon Andrew, Shúhtaot'ıne Elder, Tulít'a Paneł²⁴

Tulít'a also expressed concerns about the need for the conservation of shúhta goʔepé, as reflected in another quotation by Leon Andrew:

What's becoming of our trails of the mountain caribou? Does the caribou follow it anymore? We have to question ourselves on those things. If we see something wrong, it has to be something wrong, and we have to question that. I know it's hard to answer, but that's the way of life. It's our livelihood. If something changes, we have to question it. And I feel very strongly about the mountain caribou. And I still think, with everybody's help, we can somehow find a way to conserve them.²⁵

Community conservation concerns have given rise to the Nío Ne P'ene – Trails of the Mountain Caribou plan jointly developed by the Tulít'a and Norman Wells ʔehdzo Got'ıne (Renewable Resources Councils) and Tu Łidlini (Ross River) Dena Council.²⁶ It should be noted that although Leon Andrew is a staff member of the SRRB, he attended the proceeding in a personal capacity as a member of the Tulít'a panel.

Tɔdzı (Boreal Caribou)

Tɔdzı (boreal caribou) is another distinct woodland caribou population in the Sahtú. Tɔdzı range throughout the Mackenzie River Valley, bridging the three Sahtú districts between the foothills of the Mackenzie Mountains and the edge of the treeline to the east of Great

²⁴ Sahtú Renewable Resources Board (ʔehdzo Got'ıne Gots'ę Nákedı), *Déłıne 2021 Public Listening Session: ʔelets'ewéhkwe Godı (Living with Wildlife) - Predators and Competitors Transcript* (SRRB, May 2021), 254, available on the SRRB [Public Registry](#) for the Déłıne 2021 Public Listening Session.

²⁵ Sahtú Renewable Resources Board (ʔehdzo Got'ıne Gots'ę Nákedı), *Déłıne 2021 Public Listening Session: ʔelets'ewéhkwe Godı (Living with Wildlife) - Predators and Competitors Transcript* (SRRB, May 2021), 447, available on the SRRB [Public Registry](#) for the Déłıne 2021 Public Listening Session.

²⁶ Nío Ne P'ene Working Group, *Nío Ne P'ene Begháre Shúhta Goʔepe' Narehá / Trails of the Mountain Caribou Plan* (Nío Ne P'ene Working Group, June 2019), available on the SRRB [Public Registry](#) for the Colville 2020 Public Listening Session.

Bear Lake.²⁷ Ṯdzı has been listed federally and territorially as ł́lak'ónq̱ xae kúhyə wíle ade gha sóq̱nı̱ threatened species.²⁸

According to the evidence submitted ENR, ṯdzı need about 65% of their habitat left undisturbed for their population to be healthy. The Sahtú Ṯdzı Nene Plan (Boreal Caribou Range Plan), which is in the early stages of development, aims to identify the best way to maintain healthy relationships between ṯdzı, ʔıts'é (moose), and dı́ga (wolves) by managing landscape changes in a way that ensures there is always enough undisturbed habitat available to ṯdzı. The plan will be developed in partnership with Sahtú communities, ENR, and the SRRB, using community knowledge, Indigenous knowledge, and scientific knowledge.²⁹

In their submissions, Norman Wells and Fort Good Hope report seeing more ṯdzı recently than usual, suggesting the population has been increasing. For example:

We have noticed there seems to be a lot of ṯdzı, more than usual. This might be because there's less disturbance than usual and less industrial activity. – Lisa McDonald, Norman Wells Panel³⁰

We think there may actually be an increase in the boreal caribou population in this area. We've noticed an increase in herds east of Fort Good Hope and west of Fort Good Hope. – Daniel Jackson, Fort Good Hope Panel³¹

The Dene Nation also submitted evidence that ṯdzı populations are stable, as is their critical habitat. Although the Dene Nation admitted their lack of involvement in observations of caribou, they reported unofficial comments from the communities indicating that the drastic reduction of barren-ground caribou populations has warranted hunting restrictions to protect them, which has resulted in increased hunting pressure on ṯdzı.

Status of People's Relationship with Caribou

The SRRB understands that there is strong community concern about the health of people's relationships with caribou. This concern is reflected in Dene s̱eʔa (law), which considers it disrespectful to talk about caribou, as reflected in this quotation by the

²⁷ GNWT, *ENR Submissions to the SRRB: Colville 2020 Public Listening Session*, supra note 22.

²⁸ See the section entitled "Protection and Recovery" for the NWT and federal status listings at www.nwt-species-at-risk.ca/species/boreal-caribou.

²⁹ GNWT, *ENR Submissions to the SRRB: Déłıne 2021 Public Listening Session* (SRRB, April 2021), available on the SRRB [Public Registry](#) for the Déłıne 2021 Public Listening Session.

³⁰ Sahtú Renewable Resources Board (ʔehdzo Got'ıne Gots'ę Nákedı), *Déłıne 2021 Public Listening Session: ʔelets'ewéhkwe Godı (Living with Wildlife) - Predators and Competitors Transcript*, supra note 28 at 141.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 183.

president of the Tulít'a Renewable Resources Council during the 2021 public listening session:

So as a young person, they taught me. So, they taught me well. When they talk about caribou, this animal, don't talk too much about it. It's true. – Gordon Yakeleya, Tulít'a Panel³²

Another elder on the Tulít'a panel reiterated why it is disrespectful to talk about the caribou:

Caribou, when we talk about caribou, caribou has got its own mind and will travel wherever they want to go. And so, we can't talk about it, not to the extreme we're doing. – Fred Andrew, Tulít'a Panel³³

As established during the Colville Lake 2020 Public Listening Sessions, this reinforces a regional consensus among the Sahtú communities that the inclusion of Dene/ Métis ts'ı́ı́ (ways of life), náoweré (knowledge), and ʔeʔa (law) is necessary to achieving caribou conservation.³⁴

Despite being asked to provide information about the status of people's relationship with caribou in the first round of information requests, ENR specifically deferred to the communities. However, ENR provided evidence about how caribou conservation affected people in the Sahtú region and how the GNWT monitors the people's role in conservation. ENR submitted that it is responsible for stewardship and management of wildlife and wildlife habitats in the NWT, which is exercised through a co-management regime directly involving Indigenous governments and organizations in wildlife management. ENR stated that the *Wildlife Act* creates a solid foundation for cooperative management and that people are a part of the overall approach to collaborative wildlife management and conservation.

The evidence shows that ENR recognizes that caribou is an ecologically important species across northern Canada and central to the way of life of Indigenous peoples across the Northwest Territories. ENR's submissions indicate awareness that subsistence harvesting continues to be a very important part of many communities' cultural, social, and spiritual well-being. Many caribou plans, including management plans, reference this relationship and include related objectives. ENR's submission further indicates that the department relies on the co-management process to hear from people and communities about the effects of management actions taken to support herd recovery in times of decline, including actions to reduce human impacts on the caribou. In addition,

³² *Ibid.*, 226.

³³ *Ibid.*, 232.

³⁴ Sahtú Renewable Resources Board (ʔehdzo Got'ı́nɛ Gots'é Nákedı), *Sahtú Ragóʔa (Hunting Law) and Approaches to Wildlife Harvesting: Report on the Colville 2020 Public Listening (Hearing) Session*, supra note 1 at 8.

ENR reported that it develops management and monitoring actions and legislation based on input, consultation, and recommendations from communities and renewable resources boards and that any infringement of the harvesting rights of Indigenous peoples must be justified based on a conservation, public health, or public safety concern.

However, the communities' evidence shows that ENR's conservation approaches contradict Dene/Métis' approaches and their relationships with the environment. According to Colville Lake's submissions to the SRRB:

As Dene, we see ourselves as part of the natural environment - we don't see ourselves as an 'invasive species.' But we have learned that Western cultures look at the world differently. Western cultures believe that people are separate from the rest of nature and that it is right for people to try to change it. This is the first and most fundamental conflict between the Dene concept of conservation and modern, Western conservation institutions like the GNWT.

Additionally, several community parties emphasized that current conservation approaches reflect a colonial worldview and that the definition of conservation in the *SDMCLCA* conflicts with Dene/Métis knowledge systems, practices, and ways of life, as reflected in the following quote from Déljñę's submissions:

The history and institutions of colonial conservation and how the term has been redefined through that history is encapsulated in the land claim definition, and it does conflict with Dene knowledge systems, practices, and Dene ts'ı̄ı̄ (ways of life). Thus, the concept of conservation as it has been historically defined does indeed infringe upon our collective Indigenous rights.

The community parties provided extensive evidence about Dene/Métis ts'ı̄ı̄ (ways of life), learning from and supporting one another, and the impacts of COVID-19 on people. The evidence also included the importance of Dene/Métis ts'ı̄ı̄ included Dene béré (country food) systems, Dene kədə (language), and respect for Dene/Métis ɤɤa (law). The SRRB understands that Dene ɤɤá prioritizes respecting wildlife and not being the boss of wildlife. The SRRB also notes an apparent consensus among the communities that is respecting wildlife includes respecting boundaries regarding how wildlife and people should live, reflecting the priority placed on people's responsibilities in their relationships with caribou and other wildlife. The communities' consensus also emphasized the need to respect Dene/Métis ts'ı̄ı̄ and ɤɤa, which have been carried out for thousands of years, as reflected in this quotation by a Tulít'a panelist:

As Aboriginal people, who we grew up on the – from the elders, the elders help us with their knowledge, and that’s how we grew up. – David Etchinelle, Tulit’a Panel³⁵

The SRRB understands the need to share knowledge from generation to generation. As indicated by Fort Good Hope, one way of preserving Dene/Métis ts’ı́ı́ is for Dene/Métis to be allowed to practice their ways of life without restrictions, as such restrictions can affect the preservation and continuity of Dene/Métis ts’ı́ı́. This is shown in this quotation by Danny Masuzumi, a member of the Fort Good Hope panel:

So, if we let the government impose these rules upon us, I feel that we’re gonna lose our traditional way of life on how we can pass on these traditional ways to our younger generation.³⁶

In addition to the concerns expressed by several parties regarding the loss of Dene/Métis ts’ı́ı́ (ways of life) and náoweré (knowledge) related to Dene kədə (language) and access to Dene béré (country food), the parties, particularly Coville Lake and Délı́ne, also emphasized the need to support youth to learn from their leaders and ensure the transfer of knowledge to young people. As expressed in community submissions, this is how knowledge has been transferred from generation to generation. According to Colville Lake:

Our culture is built around the relationship that we have with the land and the animals. We have histories that tell us how to – how our ancient laws were made and many stories about why it is important to follow our ancient laws. We learned these laws from our elders, and we have a responsibility to pass them on to our children. – David Codzi, Colville Lake Panel³⁷

Another comment from Délı́ne reinforced this:

... we can’t lose our way; our children have to know. If they don’t know, then they don’t like it. And this ʔerı́htı́’é tsetsı́ we have made of our history is like the sun shines lighting up our ʔerı́htı́’é tsetsı́, our gots’edı́ k’ə. – Walter Behza, Délı́ne Panel and ʔq̄hda K’aowe Ke³⁸

Community parties indicated that youth learning opportunities had been provided through youth camps and other on-the-land programs that promote youth leadership and build relationships between the elders and the youth.

³⁵ Sahtú Renewable Resources Board (ʔehdzo Got’ı́ne Gots’é Nákedı́), *Délı́ne 2021 Public Listening Session: ʔelets’ewéhkwe Godı́ (Living with Wildlife) - Predators and Competitors Transcript*, supra note 28 at 118.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 221.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 84.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 50.

Community parties agreed and provided extensive submissions on the importance of working together, learning from one another, and helping one another. Several parties spoke about the need for inter-community meetings to exchange information, share stories, and promote good working relationships between communities while also respecting local differences. Community parties also acknowledged the importance of working together and promoting good relationships with ENR. They submitted that working together can contribute to keeping Dene/Métis history and stories for future generations:

... we have to start working well together. And so that's how we can carry on. And so, we can't lose our stories and our history. – Hyacinth Kochon, Colville Lake Panel³⁹

Finally, there was evidence from all community parties regarding the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the relationship between people and caribou. This includes the challenges of going on the land and concerns about food security, reflecting the need to prioritize Dene béré (country food). Despite the challenges, the SRRB heard that the pandemic provided people an opportunity for spiritual growth and engaging in cultural activities by going on the land.

Status of Community Planning

The SRRB received submissions from community parties regarding community-led conservation planning as part of h̄dó gogha sénégots'íá (planning for the future – PFF) in the Sahtú region. Community parties provided evidence of the current status of their planning work, capacity, and other challenges, as well as the need to promote working relationships with the GNWT and other communities.

Colville Lake

Colville Lake indicated that the *Dehlá Got'ine ʔədə Plan* and *Ts'jduweh ʔədə ʔeʔá* were being updated and will be re-submitted to the SRRB.⁴⁰

Déline

The 2019 version of the *Belare Wile Gots'é ʔekwé* plan was revised for approval from Déline K'aowədó Kə (Main Council) and Dene Gha Gok'ə Réhkw'l (Beneficiaries Board).⁴¹ The main changes included a new ʔeʔa (law) on ʔełeghá ts'eredı (sharing); an explanation that náts'əjú (healing, reconciliation, reconnecting with land/environment) is an overarching principle of the plan; a summary of implementation work to date; more

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 428.

⁴⁰ Dehlá Got'ine, *Information Requests Round 2: Déline 2021 Public Listening Session* (October 15, 2021), available on the SRRB [Public Registry](#) for the Déline 2021 Public Listening Session.

⁴¹ Déline Got'ine Government and Déline ʔehdzo Got'ine (Renewable Resources Council), *Responses to Round 2 Information Requests: Déline 2021 Public Listening Session* (October 15, 2021), available on the SRRB [Public Registry](#) for the Déline 2021 Public Listening Session.

information on competitors and predators; and additional information about governance, jurisdiction, and working with others. The ʔekwé Working Group proposed changes that the Délı̨ne Goʔı̨ne Government (DGG) has not yet formally supported due to COVID-19 restrictions and upcoming DGG leadership elections.

Norman Wells

As part of its preparations for the 2021 public listening session, Norman Wells submitted two plan components for consideration to the SRRB regarding caribou's relationship with predators and competitors, particularly for t̨dzı̨ (boreal caribou) conservation. The Board welcomes these steps as communities continue to make important progress on planning. They have also done work on the Nı̨o Nę P'ę̨ne planning process by addressing key hot topics in shúhta goʔepé (mountain caribou) conservation and have started working on a harvest regulation plan.⁴²

Tulıt'a and Fort Good Hope

Tulıt'a and Fort Good Hope have not yet developed their community plans and are working on the process. Fort Good Hope has established an ʔədə Working Group to undertake planning work and has provided healthy country planning training to two people in the working group. Fort Good Hope intends to develop a comprehensive caribou plan focusing on animals, land, and water, working closely with all interested residents, including young people and leadership organizations. The key priorities of the Fort Good Hope plan include: addressing climate change concerns; developing strategies for supporting the resurgence of K'áhsho Goʔı̨ne culture, language, traditions, values, and knowledge; maintaining the existing stewardship approach and defining what should happen on the land; and practicing Indigenous rights.

Planning Process and Capacity

Despite the effort and progress made by the parties, the SRRB also noted community concerns about challenges that impede planning work in the Sahtú. Hı̨dó gogha sę̨nęgots'ı̨á (planning for the future) uses a process that is defined by the community. Communities expressed concerns about institutional challenges and limited financial capacity undermining their ability to undertake community-led planning and co-management implementation. Institutional challenges include a lack of recognition in policy and regulatory frameworks of community authority and insufficient two-way information sharing with the GNWT, while financial challenges include unclear funding guidelines and year-to-year funding models.

The SRRB also heard concerns from community parties about the impacts of the global COVID-19 pandemic on planning work. The SRRB heard that the pandemic made it

⁴² Norman Wells Renewable Resources Council, *Plan Submissions: Délı̨ne 2021 Public Listening Session* (April 26, 2022), available on the SRRB [Public Registry](#) for the Délı̨ne 2021 Public Listening Session.

challenging for Délı̨nę to schedule meetings with ENR on the implementation of the *Belare Wı̨le Gots'ę ǰekwę* plan and to prepare a contribution agreement for implementation work. The SRRB also heard that the pandemic made it impossible for Fort Good Hope's ǰədə Working Group to meet.

Caribou Relationships with Predators (including dǰga/wolf) and any Proposed Management Measures

The SRRB received several pieces of evidence regarding caribou's relationships with predators, including dǰga (wolf). The SRRB heard both Indigenous and scientific knowledge evidence regarding caribou relationships with predators, predation impacts, and predator control management actions.

Predation

Indigenous Knowledge Evidence

There is an apparent consensus from the communities' submissions that people see a lot of dǰga (wolf) and that the dǰga population may be increasing:

Some feedback that we got was that wolf numbers have noticeably increased along with pack sizes. There is a really large, noticeably pronounced number of wolves around our traditional hunting areas. There is an increase in seeing more lone wolves coming into camp areas and the town of Norman Wells as opposed to seeing packs. In the past, we have seen packs in Norman Wells, but for the last couple of years, it's only been loners that have been noticeable. Wolves were seen in the foothills tracks following moose but not as noticeable in the valleys where there were more caribou. – Lisa MacDonald, Normal Well Panel⁴³

We see lots of wolves. All of our harvesters talk about their trips along the river and into the fish lakes and woods last fall and summer. And I've also been down to my cabin, which is 60 miles – 60 kilometers north of Fort Good Hope, and wolves are everywhere. A few of the hunters that also made their trips noticed that. –Daniel Jackson, Fort Good Hope Panel⁴⁴

However, despite the evidence of an increased dǰga population and that of other predators, there is a consensus among all the Sahtú communities that Dene/Métis náoweré (knowledge) acknowledges that dǰga are part of the ecosystem and contribute to its balance. The SRRB understands that in Dene/Métis náoweré, all things are interconnected, living and non-living, and play an important role in maintaining balance –

⁴³ Sahtú Renewable Resources Board (ǰehdzo Got'ı̨nę Gots'ę Nákedı), *Délı̨nę 2021 Public Listening Session: ǰelęts'ewéhkwe ǰodı (Living with Wildlife) - Predators and Competitors Transcript*, supra note 28 at 291-2.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 142.

including humans. Sahtú elders emphasize the importance of mutual respect and a responsibility to care for each other and the environment.⁴⁵ In Dene/Métis ɣeɣa (law), animals have their own spirit and autonomy. The SRRB also heard that complex stories bring together different parts of Dene náoweré and ɣeɣa, such as “ɣekwé Gulí” (The Fate of Caribou), which tells about a meeting and agreement between ɣekwé (caribou) and dǵga:

We all have the same – telling the same story, all of us. And we need to – we know that caribou knows. Caribou, the wolves they, have an agreement... Wolves talk about... and so, he told the caribou that is something that we're on – the wolves told the caribou to go, and caribou told the wolves that, no, we're here for the people. We feed the people. So, they had a meeting, and the caribou said, we're not going away; we're here for the people. So, he gathered – they gathered all the animals and had the meeting. And – caribou – and the wolves said, you're not going to – we're gonna shut you down. Wolves told the caribou. So, the wolf said what all that he wanted to say, and the caribou said, yes, you're right, maybe you're right. But animals on this land, on this earth, we're here for the people. We feed the people. We're the meat for the people. We're not going to ruin anything or do any damage to this earth. We come back every year just for the people. You can't shut us down, the caribou told the wolf. The people that eat the meat, they all – as animals, we're animals for the people so that they can eat and live on us. You're a wolf, but you need us too, he told them. As long as this land shall last, we're going to be coming back here. You can't shut us down, the caribou told the wolf. So that's how Aboriginal people live on the land. – Elder Alfred Taneton, Délǵne Panel⁴⁶

The elders share a powerful story that has been passed from generation. These stories helped us prepare for this presentation. The barren-ground caribou wanted to come this way from the barren lands, but the wolves stopped them and wouldn't let them pass. The wolf leader and the caribou leader spoke to each other, and the caribou leader explained that the wolf had to let the caribou pass because of the people. The K'áhsho Got'ǵne Dene people need the caribou just as the wolf needs the caribou to survive. The wolf leader understood this and let the caribou pass. In this way, the

⁴⁵ Janet Winbourne, *Traditional and Community Knowledge Literature Review for the 2021 SRRB Public Listening: Tǵch'ádǵ hé Gots'edǵ – Living with Wildlife: Caribou Predators and Competitors* (SRRB, January 2021), available on the SRRB [Public Registry](#) for the Délǵne 2021 Public Listening Session.

⁴⁶ Sahtú Renewable Resources Board (ɣehdzo Got'ǵne Gots'é Nákedǵ), *Délǵne 2021 Public Listening Session: ɣelets'ewéhkwe Godǵ (Living with Wildlife) - Predators and Competitors Transcript*, supra note 28 at 400.

animals respect each other and understand that they need to survive. – Daniel Jackson, Fort Good Hope Panel⁴⁷

The SRRB understands that this story reflects a worldview in which relationships and sharing between people and ɬich'ádíi (wildlife) are key for the survival of people and caribou and that this is relevant to Dene/Métis approaches to protecting caribou.⁴⁸

Sahtú communities also indicate that in Dene/Métis náoweré (knowledge), animals like dǵga, sahcho (grizzly bear), and nǵgha (wolverine) are spiritually powerful animals that must be treated with respect and that there can be dire consequences if they are not treated respectfully. The evidence from the SRRB's Indigenous knowledge research advisor indicates that in the past, spiritual teachers were often “mystically tied” to different parts of the environment; some individuals or families had special ties to the caribou, some to the dǵga (wolf), some to the northern lights, and some to the willow. The evidence provided by the SRRB's Indigenous knowledge research advisor also described stories of family members getting sick or hurt if animals like dǵga and sahcho are disrespected.⁴⁹ According to the submissions from Fort Good Hope, dǵga notice when they are disrespected, which has negative consequences.

While acknowledging that dǵga prey on caribou, numerous Sahtú Dene and Métis knowledge holders noted that dǵga tend to take the sick, wounded, or old caribou. As “doctors” of the herd, they serve a practical function in keeping the herds healthy. This helps keep the caribou alive and ensures that the ecosystem is balanced, providing a correlation between dǵga and the caribou population:

It's a natural cycle of life. Dǵga takes the sick, old, and/or injured, not the healthy caribou. It's a natural relationship and a natural cycle that should not be interfered with. I don't believe we have all the proper answers or proper scientific information to make suggestions or implement plans that would try to rectify a situation that we have no business taking part. – Lisa McDonald, Norman Wells Panel.⁵⁰

All of the animals are in balance together. There are lots of wolves now, but when they have less prey, they will start to starve, and when that happens, they eat each other. The wolves are weak – the stronger ones eat the weak wolves, and that's the way the pack survives through it. It's known, and in time there will be more wolves again once they have more prey. These are

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 186.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 89.

⁴⁹ Janet Winbourne, *Traditional and Community Knowledge Literature Review for the 2021 SRRB Public Listening: ɬich'ádíi hé Gots'edi – Living with Wildlife: Caribou Predators and Competitors*.

⁵⁰ Sahtú Renewable Resources Board (ʔehdzo Got'ɬne Gots'é Nákedı), *Délɬne 2021 Public Listening Session: ʔelets'ewéhkwe Godı (Living with Wildlife) - Predators and Competitors Transcript*, supra note 28 at 145.

the cycles and the balance that the animals have. The wolves are important to the health of the caribou herd because they eat the weak and sickly ones. But wolves look after themselves also. If they are starving, they will become serious – will become serious, and they will eat other caribou or their calves. The wolf doesn't only eat the caribou. It will eat whatever it can find. – Daniel Jackson, Fort Good Hope Panel⁵¹

This evidence was corroborated by the SRRB's Indigenous knowledge research advisor with additional evidence from both Sahtú and Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in knowledge holders regarding the role of wolves in keeping the ecosystem healthy.⁵²

The evidence from some communities, particularly Fort Good Hope, provided different evidence regarding earlier evidence by the ENR that dǰga feed on ʔəjire (muskoxen):

We don't see the wolves killing the muskoxen. We've asked our elders, and some of our elders have told us there is something in the hair in muskoxen, that there's something in there like sand. When the wolf bites, wolves bite into it doesn't like it, so they leave the muskox alone. – Daniel Jackson, Fort Good Hope Panel⁵³

Scientific Evidence

The scientific evidence from ENR and the SRRB's science advisor indicates that predation affects caribou behavior and mortality. According to the presented evidence, some predators take caribou only during the calving period and some only during the spring to fall period (e.g., grizzly bears). However, wolf predation on caribou occurs with all age classes of caribou, and the rates may vary by season.⁵⁴

The scientific evidence further indicates that wolves are the main predators of caribou. According to the evidence submitted by the SRRB's science advisor, a single wolf can eat 23 to 29 caribou annually on average.⁵⁵ ENR's scientific analysis of stomach contents of harvested wolves in some parts of NWT – mainly within the North Slave Wolf Harvest Incentive Areas – showed barren-ground caribou as the main diet, accounting for about 98% and 87% of caribou stomach contents in 2020 and 2021 analyses, respectively.⁵⁶

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 184.

⁵² Janet Winbourne, *Traditional and Community Knowledge Literature Review for the 2021 SRRB Public Listening: Tǰch'ádí hé Gots'edí – Living with Wildlife: Caribou Predators and Competitors*, supra note 49 at 7.

⁵³ Sahtú Renewable Resources Board (ʔehdzo Got'Inę Gots'ę Nákedı), *DéjInę 2021 Public Listening Session: ʔefets'ewéhkwe Godı (Living with Wildlife) - Predators and Competitors Transcript*, supra note 28 at 183.

⁵⁴ Colin Macdonald, *Tǰch'ádí hé Gots'edí – Living with Wildlife: Caribou Predators and Competitors: Science Review of Predation and Competition in Caribou in the Sahtú* (SRRB, January 2021), available on the SRRB [Public Registry](#) for the DéjInę 2021 Public Listening Session.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ GNWT, *ENR Submissions to the SRRB: DéjInę 2021 Public Listening Session*, supra note 32.

ENR adds that in other parts of the NWT, there was evidence of a wide range of food items, including boreal caribou, muskoxen, and moose, to mention but a few:

There is evidence that muskoxen are being eaten [by] wolves. Me and Richard Popko actually went out last year, and we found two separate instances of muskoxen being killed and eaten by wolves. So, there is evidence for that. – Kevin Chan, GNWT Department of ENR⁵⁷

The evidence received from ENR also identifies two main types of wolves in the NWT and Sahtú region: boreal and migratory tundra. Boreal wolves live in forests and mountains and sometimes near communities. These wolves have year-round home territories where they live, travel, hunt, breed, and raise pups. They hunt various species, depending mainly on nonmigratory prey like moose and boreal and mountain caribou. Wolves and boreal caribou are also part of a complex predator-prey system that includes moose, muskoxen, barren-ground caribou and grizzly bears, black bears, lynx, and other prey species. While boreal wolves prey primarily on moose, they could also be an important predator of boreal caribou when there is an opportunity. In addition, changes in the numbers of prey species like moose can impact the predation rates of boreal caribou.⁵⁸

Migratory tundra wolves prey primarily on barren-ground caribou and follow them on their annual migrations. They do not have regular territories during most of the year but are thought to den and raise their pups in the same area year after year. Since migratory wolves with pups are unable to move too far from their den, this makes it possible for caribou to distance themselves from these wolves. In late summer, pups are generally able to keep up with adults.⁵⁹

Evidence from ENR also identifies other predators, including grizzly bears, black bears, wolverines, lynxes, and golden eagles.⁶⁰ However, according to the SRRB's science advisor, wolves and bears are the main predators.⁶¹

Finally, the SRRB received scientific evidence from ENR that predation influences caribou's movements and habitat selection as they try to minimize the risk of exposure to wolves and other predators.

⁵⁷ Sahtú Renewable Resources Board (ʔehdzo Got'ıne ʔots'ę Nákedı), *Déıne 2021 Public Listening Session: ʔelets'ewéhkwe ʔodı (Living with Wildlife) - Predators and Competitors Transcript*, supra note 28 at 336.

⁵⁸ Sahtú Renewable Resources Board (ʔehdzo Got'ıne ʔots'ę Nákedı), *Déıne 2021 Public Listening Session: ʔelets'ewéhkwe ʔodı (Living with Wildlife) - Predators and Competitors Transcript*, supra note 28 at 291-2.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 288-9.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 355.

⁶¹ Colin Macdonald, *Tjch'ádı hé ʔots'edı – Living with Wildlife: Caribou Predators and Competitors: Science Review of Predation and Competition in Caribou in the Sahtú*, supra note 58.

Wolf Management Measures

Indigenous Knowledge Evidence

Although ENR does not have a wolf management program in the Sahtú, the community parties submitted several pieces of evidence explaining why wolf management measures, including aerial shooting and baiting, should not be implemented in the region. First, there is a consensus among the communities that Dene/Métis náoweré (knowledge) teaches about the need not to interfere in wildlife relationships or the natural balance but to leave animals alone and allow nature to take its course:

Our elders and other community members met last year; we talked about this and said that we shouldn't do anything to interfere with the animals. We talked about this some more this week, and everyone agrees that the animals need to be left alone. The elders feel this very strongly, and when we speak to younger harvesters, we hear mostly that they agree and know we need to listen to the wisdom of the elders. This is important for the health and well-being of all living things, not just animals but people. If we treat the caribou and other animals, the wolves and bears, poorly, then they will know there will be consequences. – Daniel Jackson, Fort Good Hope Panel⁶²

You know, it's – my dad used to always say, you know, nowadays, you look at how they cull, you know, killing off wolves, and my dad used to always say there's a balance. Nature knows what she's doing. And she's looking after it. When people – human beings interfere by doing whatever it is, they have to do to try to make it all right, they screw everything up. My dad says the balance goes off; it's not the same. – Margaret McDonald, Normal Wells Panel⁶³

The SRRB heard that the natural balance means that dǵga (wolf) and caribou populations go through cycles. According to elder John Cotchilly, dǵga will die when the pack is overpopulated:

This is the last day we're talking, so we talk about many things. Talk about caribou, wolf, but the wolf is over there. Wherever it is, we can't do anything with it. It has its own way. It doesn't live our way. It doesn't get food sent to it. It wants to live too. A long time ago, for many years, when a wolf becomes overpopulated, it dies in its own way. We don't -if it's all overpopulated, illness and disease come upon them. It's not like us. It has to work hard to

⁶² Sahtú Renewable Resources Board (ʔehdzo Got'ıne ʔots'ę Nákedı), *Délıne 2021 Public Listening Session: ʔelets'ewéhkwe ʔodı (Living with Wildlife) - Predators and Competitors Transcript*, supra note 28 at 185.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 111.

*feed itself. That's how it eats. And so, we have to help the wolf. We have to support it. And that's what I wanted to tell you.*⁶⁴

The SRRB also understands that there is a consensus along the communities that wildlife is not to blame for what happens within the ecosystem since everything takes care of itself. In other words, dǰga cannot be blamed for what they are and how they were created:

Because we're strong believers in not blaming one animal or another. We're not in the business of blaming any species. Whenever government touches something, one thing or another gets off; you know, it goes off. You know, you start doing a wolf kill, then some of our caribou start getting sick and what not, so. There are a lot of examples that have happened over the years due to Yellowstone; you look at other areas that the government tried to make changes. You can't really change what God created. So, we just want to make sure that it is clear. – Joseph Kochon, Colville Lake Panel⁶⁵

The SRRB heard from all the community parties that wolf management measures, particularly aerial shooting, do not guarantee that the caribou population will increase. According to the evidence from Norman Wells and Ann-Marie Jackson, wolf control measures are also short-term solutions that require substantial resources for implementation and long-term monitoring. Besides, dǰga (wolf) populations quickly rebound once a management program ends due to migration from surrounding areas and high reproductive rates. Finally, there is consensus from all the community parties that the current wolf management measures in other regions, such as baiting and aerial shooting, are disrespectful, inhumane, and harmful not just to dǰga but also to other wildlife. The SRRB understands that there is a further consensus among the community parties that control measures creates hardships for dǰga and can reshape the whole ecosystem, which has serious repercussions.

Scientific Evidence

The SRRB received several pieces of evidence from scientific sources regarding wolf management measures and why those measures can be important for recovering the caribou population.

ENR submitted that it has no plans to implement wolf management measures in the Sahtú region and would not consider any enhanced measures unless there was a continued decline of caribou and support from Sahtú communities and the SRRB.⁶⁶ However, a wolf management program is currently being implemented in another part of the NWT, mainly

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 425.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 298.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 291.

in the North Slave Region, from 2021-2024.⁶⁷ Evidence from ENR and Tłıchq Government indicates that the wolf management actions were a response to community concerns about the number of tundra migratory wolves on the landscape and their impact on barren-ground caribou. The actions include enhanced support for wolf harvesters and the traditional economy, including training and harvesting incentives and monitoring activities to assess and evaluate the program. The wolf management program aims to sufficiently reduce wolf predation on the Bathurst and Bluenose East herds. The hope is that this will increase calf and adult caribou survival rates and contribute to the stabilization and recovery of both herds.⁶⁸

The diga [wolf] harvest program was essentially a last resort for us, something that we needed to do to ensure that we were helping the recovery of caribou. There are not as many people out on the land as there used to be, and in presentations throughout the week, this has even been stated. People aren't out on the land as much as they used to be. And we're finding that because people aren't out there like they used to be, there are more sightings of diga through our ʔekwò [caribou] harvest monitoring program, which is focused in the MacKay Lake area. We steered this program, monitoring the harvest of ʔekwò in that area, and monitors have been saying that there have been diga throughout that area, and they are seen in large numbers. – Stephanie Behrens, Tłıchq Government⁶⁹

Although the Wek'èezhii Renewable Resources Board (WRRB) recommended no aerial removals, ENR has allowed aerial removals when the harvest of wolves does not meet the intended target number in a given season. There were no aerial removals in 2021.

Evidence from ENR indicates that it takes many years and much effort to remove enough wolves to generate a response in caribou populations, which makes it challenging to determine the impacts of the wolf management program within that short period:

The wolf management program was put forward as a five-year program. We knew from experience in other jurisdictions, and the research that we had made those responses in caribou populations may or may not be seen after that time period. It takes many years and a lot of effort to remove wolves to generate a response in caribou populations. So while we compile the information every year [and], we write a report on the program and submit

⁶⁷ GNWT, *ENR Responses to Information Requests Round 2: Délıne 2021 Public Listening Session*, supra note 26.

⁶⁸ Colin Macdonald, *Tłch'ádı́ hé Gots'edı́ – Living with Wildlife: Caribou Predators and Competitors: Science Review of Predation and Competition in Caribou in the Sahtú*, supra note 58.

⁶⁹ Sahtú Renewable Resources Board (ʔehdzo Got'ıne Gots'é Nákedı), *Délıne 2021 Public Listening Session: ʔelets'ewéhkwe Godı (Living with Wildlife) - Predators and Competitors Transcript*, supra note 28 at 387.

it to our co-management partners; we expect not to see a response in the caribou until after five years of the program. Even after that time period, though, wolves are just one part of the picture of the things that are impacting populations. So, it will be challenging to determine whether the wolf removal program had an impact. Lastly, I would add that in our annual reviews and our five-year review; we will do that together with Tłıchǝ Government and Wek'èezhii Renewable Resources Board, and other interested Indigenous governments so that we can go over the information and understand it together to determine how helpful it's been. – Karin Clark, GNWT Department of ENR⁷⁰

ENR also indicated that because many factors, including environmental conditions, biting insect severity, disease, anthropogenic disturbance, and caribou harvesting, influence barren-ground caribou populations, it is challenging to determine how much wolf reduction contributes to rates of reproduction and the size of the caribou population. ENR uses computer models to explore how caribou populations respond to different factors, such as wolf removal and environmental factors. ENR indicated that this modeling is at an early stage. However, following the five-year implementation of the wolf removal program, ENR will use these models to analyze and assess whether the management program contributed to meeting caribou recovery objectives.⁷¹

Additionally, evidence from SRRB's science advisor shows no consensus in the scientific literature on the effectiveness of wolf management measures. Studies indicate that successful wolf culls have usually been accompanied by variables such as reduced caribou harvesting, long-term wolf removal, and mild winters that reduce caribou mortality and have been conducted in areas with disturbed habitats, such as seismic lines, where caribou have difficulty avoiding predators.⁷²

Caribou Relationships with Competitors (including ɶǝjire/muskox) and any Proposed Management Measures

In the NWT, ɶǝjire (muskox) and ɶıts'é (moose) are potential competitors to caribou. They are often found in the same areas and can consume similar resources. The SRRB received Indigenous knowledge and scientific information evidence that competitors, mainly ɶǝjire, pose a threat to caribou in the Sahtú region. Submissions also documented some of the management actions against competitors. Evidence from ENR reveals that scientific studies on caribou interactions with competitors are occurring in some areas,

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 338.

⁷¹ GNWT, *ENR Responses to Information Requests Round 2: Délıne 2021 Public Listening Session*, supra note 26 at 11.

⁷² Colin Macdonald, *Tłıch'ádıı hé Gots'edıı – Living with Wildlife: Caribou Predators and Competitors: Science Review of Predation and Competition in Caribou in the Sahtú*, supra note 58.

such as the Porcupine caribou range on the Yukon North Slope and the northern Richardson Mountains.

Competition

Indigenous Knowledge Evidence on Caribou-Competitor Interactions

Community evidence shows that competitor populations, particularly ʔłts'é (moose) and ʔəjire (muskox), are abundant in the Sahtú. There appears to be community consensus that people have seen more ʔəjire and ʔłts'é recently than in the past. Evidence from Déljñę suggests the increase in competitor populations, particularly ʔəjire, is a result of less hunting of the species, partly due to the ban placed on it in the early 1900s.

Although evidence by the SRRB's Indigenous knowledge research advisor on ʔəjire-caribou interactions shows that NWT communities have diverse views about ʔəjire and caribou, the evidence submitted by Sahtú community parties indicates that ʔəjire and caribou compete for space and food and that caribou avoid the presence of ʔəjire. First, there is an apparent consensus among community parties that caribou and ʔəjire compete for food and space. ʔəjire move into caribou areas to occupy their space and eat all their food. Furthermore, according to the evidence from all the community parties and SRRB's Indigenous knowledge research advisor, ʔəjire destroy caribou food. The feeding habit of ʔəjire tends to dislodge some plants at the root or cause damage to the delicate caribou lichen. The SRRB understands that the presence of ʔəjire can force the caribou to change their migrating routes due to food shortages or habitat intrusion.

Community parties indicated that caribou are sometimes threatened and irritated by the presence of ʔəjire. ʔəjire can stress caribou because they look similar to sahcho (grizzly bears) from a distance. The presence of ʔəjire in the caribou's space can also attract predators that can prey on caribou. With the barren-ground caribou's strong sense of smell and the powerful scent of ʔəjire, the caribou feel uncomfortable with the presence of ʔəjire and tend to avoid them. Caribou may also avoid ʔəjire because of their noise, pointed and potentially harmful antlers, and ability to transmit parasites to caribou. Caribou can, therefore, alter their travel routes because of ʔəjire.

Unlike the boreal caribou, ENR provided little scientific information about the relationships between moose and northern mountain caribou in the Sahtú. However, ENR provided information from some Indigenous and community knowledge holders indicating that there may be a relationship between ʔłts'é (moose) and shúhta goʔepé (northern mountain caribou) where changes in the number of ʔłts'é in an area can affect the number of caribou killed by dǵga (wolves). The SRRB heard that ʔłts'é and shúhta goʔepé (northern mountain caribou) are part of a predator-prey system that includes Dall's sheep, mountain goats, dǵga, grizzly bears, black bears, wolverines, and lynx in the Mackenzie Mountains. Dǵga in the mountain range depends mainly on ʔłts'é for food, only preying on tǔdzı when they get the chance. When ʔłts'é numbers increase, so do dǵga numbers and

pack sizes. More dǵga could mean it is more likely that dǵga will prey on shúhta goǵepé (northern mountain caribou).

Finally, evidence from both the SRRB's science and Indigenous knowledge research advisors indicates complex interactions between ǵǵjire, caribou, and their shared predators. For example, according to the Indigenous knowledge sources cited by the SRRB's Indigenous knowledge research advisor, ǵǵjire serve as alternative prey for dǵga (wolves) in the absence of caribou, which sustains the pack, keeping dǵga numbers high until the caribou population has been restored.

Scientific Evidence on Caribou-Muskox Interactions

ENR's submissions described the measures the Canadian government imposed between 1917 and 1924 to protect muskoxen. These measures were taken because, in the early 1900s, muskoxen had largely disappeared from the NWT, with only a small population remaining in the north of Great Bear Lake. The population began to increase in the early 1960s. By the 1970s, the population was estimated to be in the hundreds.

ENR submissions further add that muskoxen are currently located throughout the Arctic Islands and in many mainland areas. Muskoxen were brought into Alaska from Greenland in 1970 as part of a reintroduction effort on the North Slope. Those populations have spread eastward into Canada, towards the northern Richardson Mountains and along the Yukon border in the Mackenzie Mountains. Near the Mackenzie River, muskoxen are found along the coast east into Nunavut and south to Tulít'a. There seems to be a gap in the population east of Great Bear Lake, but this may be because this area is remote and difficult to survey.

According to ENR, the most recent muskox survey conducted in the Sahtú in 2021 shows the groups of muskoxen observed ranged in size from 1-2 individuals to 60 individuals. Although there was a small number of reports of muskoxen west of the Mackenzie River and south of the Great Bear River, these are rare, and there are no indications that muskox populations have been established there due to crossing these rivers. A 2020 survey did not observe any muskoxen in these areas.

ENR's 2020 and 2021 muskox surveys estimate that within the combined survey area, there were about 5800 muskoxen, but the uncertainty in the estimate suggests there could be anywhere from 3400 to 9900 adult muskoxen. The results indicate that the muskox population in the Sahtú is abundant and likely stable.

Despite the abundant population, ENR's surveys observed roughly one calf for every 20 adult muskoxen counted (calf percentage of around 5%). This was low compared to what was observed in 1997 and 2018 on the East Arm of Great Slave Lake. The SRRB understands that while a low calf percentage does not necessarily imply a declining population, it suggests that the population may not respond well to predation, harvest, or disease increases.

ENR's submissions indicate no comprehensive scientific study on caribou-muskoxen interactions in the Sahtú. However, a study of caribou and muskoxen collar locations on the Yukon North Slope between 2016 and 2019 suggested that muskoxen and caribou have limited interaction during the summer and minimal overlap in the type of habitat selected by each species. While caribou preferred mid-elevations, muskoxen preferred either low or high-elevation habitats and strongly avoided the tussock habitat commonly used by caribou. Previous scientific studies in other areas showed variations of interactions between muskoxen and caribou regarding food and habitats.

Disease is one factor that can affect muskoxen populations. While outfitters in the Sahtú have not reported signs of sickness or disease in the muskox populations surrounding Great Bear Lake, in 2020/21, two disease-related muskox deaths were reported by the communities of Tulít'a and Fort Good Hope, and two other reported muskox deaths are suspected to be related to diseases. Climate change is expected to impact the distribution and frequency of diseases and parasites in muskox populations in the Sahtú, including new diseases from southern regions.

Given the presence of diseases and parasites and the likelihood of new diseases, ENR has collaborated with the University of Calgary to monitor and track muskox health in the Sahtú and identify diseases of importance to wildlife and people using sample kits from harvesters. Although sampling is not mandatory, the ENR reimburses harvesters for submitting completed sample kits.

Like the Indigenous knowledge evidence, scientific evidence from the SRRB's science advisor identifies complex interactions between muskox and caribou, known as "apparent competition." According to the evidence, one species might support a predator population, which then also prey on a second species. For instance, the availability of muskoxen as the primary prey for wolves can affect nearby caribou herds. In the southern portion of the northern mountain caribou range in Canada, for instance, "apparent competition" between caribou and other prey species (e.g., moose) occurs indirectly because they share a common predator (wolf).⁷³

ENR co-manages and controls the muskox population through harvest management and monitoring. Given the apparently stable muskox populations with limited conservation concerns, harvest has been permitted for Aboriginal, resident, and non-resident hunters. Sahtú participants and general hunting licence holders are allowed to harvest muskoxen between August 1 and April 15 each year, with no restrictions on the number of animals harvested. Tags are available to resident and non-resident hunting license holders under a quota system.

⁷³ Colin Macdonald, *Tjch'ádí hé Gots'edí – Living with Wildlife: Caribou Predators and Competitors: Science Review of Predation and Competition in Caribou in the Sahtú*, supra note 58.

Scientific Evidence on Caribou-Moose Interactions

The SRRB also received scientific evidence from ENR, which identifies moose as another important competitor of boreal caribou. ENR's evidence shows that while moose are found almost everywhere in the NWT, they are most common along the Mackenzie River valley and alpine valleys of the Mackenzie Mountains in the Sahtú. Community members from Tulít'a, Norman Wells, Fort Good Hope, and Colville Lake have reported seeing more Ɂłts'é (moose) than they have in the past. This was corroborated by muskox surveys conducted from 2020-2021, which observed 121 moose in 2021 compared to 28 in 1997.

Evidence provided by ENR also indicated that the Ɂłts'é (moose) population in the Sahtú region is growing. Using the calf-to-cow ratio as a measure of moose population health, eight moose surveys conducted in the Sahtú between 1984 and 2001 showed, on average, 62.5 calves were observed per 100 cows. Between 1999 and 2017, non-resident hunters in the Mackenzie Mountains observed an average of about 37.5 calves for every 100 cows. The data from the eight moose surveys and non-resident hunter observations indicate approximately equal bull-cow ratios, which suggests a healthy moose population in the Sahtú.

Scientific studies from southern Canada, where moose and wolf densities are much higher than those found in the NWT, show that moose contribute to increasing numbers of wolves and the cycle of apparent competition. Unlike boreal caribou, moose prefer younger leafy forests, meaning that fire and other disturbances can lead to an increased moose population. A larger moose population can support more wolves which then prey on caribou, who are also more vulnerable because of the disturbed habitats.

The ENR evidence further reveals that since boreal caribou need about 65% of their habitat left undisturbed for their populations to be healthy, keeping the majority of the landscape undisturbed is the preferred approach (this has necessitated the development of the Sahtú Tɔdzı Nene Plan/Boreal Caribou Range Plan as presented earlier). However, the process of returning young disturbed forests to the old-growth habitats for caribou takes many years.

As with muskoxen, ENR co-manages the moose population through harvest management and monitoring. Since moose are an essential source of food and clothing in the Sahtú, ENR does not currently have restrictions on the season or number of animals for hunting in the region for Sahtú participants. While general hunting license holders can also hunt moose unrestricted, they are restricted from hunting in special harvesting areas. Resident and non-resident license holders can hunt moose with restrictions on the season and the number of animals.

Impacts of Other Disturbances on Caribou

The SRRB received several pieces of evidence from all parties regarding the impacts of natural and human disturbances and the need to investigate these impacts on the three

caribou ecotypes that live in and travel through the Sahtú. The SRRB understands that there is a consensus among all the parties that the disturbance of caribou from natural and human activities usually influences caribou behaviour and energy use, which can affect the health of caribou. The SRRB also understands that these disturbances from multiple sources and over a long period can have cumulative effects on caribou health.

Scientific studies compiled and presented by SRRB's science advisor suggest that factors such as habitat loss from climate change, fires, and weather have been largely ignored and not monitored. These factors have extensive impacts on caribou habitats. Landscape disturbance increases the number of predators in caribou habitats (primarily because disturbed landscapes tend to support more alternative prey) and the risk of caribou being killed by predators.⁷⁴

Similar to the scientific studies, there is a consensus among all the community parties that climate change, wildfire, resource exploration, development, and the activities of outfitters are some of the disturbances with significant impacts on caribou and need to be studied. Community submissions indicated that some disturbances, such as climate change and wildfires, affect caribou habitats and make caribou more vulnerable to predation. Other disturbances, such as mining, resource extraction, and road construction, affect bodies of water. They also discharge chemicals and emit noise that negatively affect caribou:

There are many threats to the future of caribou and wildlife in general, such as the changing environment from climate change, wildfires, changing weather, the introduction of new invasive species, et cetera; poor hunting practices, harvesting of mega bulls, taking too many cows, overharvesting of caribou and other wildlife, no awareness and respect for Dene/Métis hunting laws. There's been increased motorized access, noise, and disturbance at some traditional hunting areas, and a lack of implementation regarding overlap issues. – Lisa MacDonald, Normal Wells Panel⁷⁵

The government sure likes to boast about what the mines are doing for the North, interviews, pouring money into training, educating, and promoting mining all around, but... they never like to share the impacts of the herds, all the caribou herds, from the beginning of the mining – the diamond mining until now. It started off small. In the last 20 years, grew massively. I don't know how many square feet or hectares, but it must be a lot. And anyone could tell it has impacted the caribou herds greatly. I'd like to see a timeline

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ Sahtú Renewable Resources Board (ʔehdzo Got'ıne Gots'ę Nákedı), *Déłıne 2021 Public Listening Session: ʔelets'ewéhkwe Godı (Living with Wildlife) - Predators and Competitors Transcript*, supra note 28 at 139.

of a presentation of the beginning of the diamond mines up until now, the growth of it, the expansion, and the manpower, just to get a glimpse and start sharing about the impacts on the herds, on the land, on the wildlife. Again, nobody likes to talk about it, but hopefully, someone will take the initiative to get a timeline sorted out because it needs to be mentioned. It needs to be talked about. – Anne Marie Jackson, Fort Good Hope⁷⁶

Party Arguments

In addition to the evidence, the parties provided oral and written arguments to support their position on what should be considered in the SRRB's decision on caribou's relationships with wildlife, mainly predators and competitors. Aside from the arguments made before and during the public listening session, four parties – Colville Lake, Délı̄ne, Fort Good Hope, and ENR – also submitted final written arguments to the SRRB. A complete list of the written arguments has been posted in the SRRB Public Registry. Similar to the evidence section, the parties' arguments have been categorized based on the main issues of the 2021 PLS.

Summary of Colville Lake's (Dehlá Got'ı̄ne) Arguments

Conservation Picture

Wildlife

Dehlá Got'ı̄ne argues that their Dene culture is built around relationships with the land and the animals, contrary to the western concept of conservation. There is a fundamental conflict between Dene approaches and western conservation institutions like the GNWT. Accordingly, Dehlá Got'ı̄ne maintains that the western science that the government relies on is inaccurate and incomplete because it often conflicts with what they know based on thousands of years of knowledge they acquired from being on the land and maintaining relationships with wildlife.

In addition, Dehlá Got'ı̄ne have histories and stories about how their laws were made and the need to follow their ancient laws, which they have learned from their elders. Dene laws, carried from their ancestors, require that people's roles and relationships with the land and the animals are best sustained by relying on Dene laws and practices. They also argue that Dene laws and practices require humans to leave things alone without interference. This means that humans should not interfere in the lives of wildlife or assume to know more than them to decide or intervene on their behalf.

People

Dehlá Got'ı̄ne calls for the need to respect their way of life, which forms their governing system and has been carried on for thousands of years. They argue that in order to achieve co-management, there is the need for ENR to understand Dene ways of life and

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 370.

treat them as partners to reach a consensus. This means recognizing the Dene way of life, respecting the community's knowledge, and working with Dene laws and traditions. To ensure that this is achieved, Dehlá Got'ıne seeks the following from GNWT:

- Being on the land with them to learn and understand their ways, including how they take care of the land and wildlife; and
- Work with the community as co-managers and partners in achieving consensus instead of treating Dehlá Got'ıne as the problem.

Caribou Relationships with Predators and Competitors

Dehlá Got'ıne argues that Dene laws and practices require humans to leave things alone without interference. This means that humans should not interfere in the lives of wildlife. Humans should also not assume to know more than the animals to decide or intervene on their behalf. Dehlá Got'ıne further adds that activities, such as mineral exploration and other industrial activities, significantly affect the caribou and its relationships with other wildlife. The GNWT and the SRRB can regulate these activities, so they operate in a manner that is more respectful to the caribou and other animals. In addition, any proposed funds that have been earmarked for wolf management programs should be channeled to support the development of community conservation plans or on-the-land programs to monitor and maintain respectful relationships between people, the land, and other animals.

Based on this argument, Dehlá Got'ıne requests that the SRRB:

- Rejects proposals to interfere in the relationship between wolves and caribou, including any proposals for the introduction of a wolf cull program into the Sahtú region;
- Introduces measures to protect the calving grounds of caribou and other sensitive habitats from human disturbance, including mineral exploration; and
- Examines the direct and cumulative impacts of industrial activities on caribou and other species so that management interventions can be focused on habitat protection and other measures to mitigate such effects instead of focusing management interventions on Indigenous harvesters and wolves.

Summary of Délıne's (Délıne Got'ıne Government and Délıne ʔehdzo Got'ıne) Arguments

Conservation Picture

Wildlife

Délıne argues that there is a relationship between people and wildlife that ensures that balance is always achieved. This relationship guides how each should be protected. They further state that wildlife will always be available without depletion if the community is allowed to use its own laws, ways, and knowledge to conserve wildlife, just like how it

was done in the past. Délı̨ne believes that for a long time, their conservation authority has been taken away from them, and by giving it back and creating a respectful path forward together, they can strengthen their culture, heal wounds, and work towards reconciliation.

People

Délı̨ne's argument is grounded in their belief that Dene ways of life have always guided their approaches to doing things, and these have been carried on from the past. This is what makes them Dene. They further add that they have a responsibility as Dene to ensure that their ways of life are protected and carried on to future generations. The only way to achieve this is to keep practicing them.

In recognition of what other community parties have presented, Délı̨ne contends that colonial wildlife management has failed to conserve wildlife and led to unacceptable losses to their culture and traditional knowledge. Délı̨ne also argues that, while the GNWT has consistently made laws for them, they have their own laws which have been carried from the past, and that is how they have been able to survive. Therefore, Délı̨ne requests the following:

- That Dene ways of life, laws, and knowledge are at the forefront of co-management and conservation measures.

Caribou Relationships with Predators and Competitors

Délı̨ne argues that animals can take care of themselves, including making and following their own laws. Thus, the balance of nature should be respected with no interference in wildlife relationships. According to Délı̨ne's argument, wolves and caribou have an agreement that allows the wolves to feed on caribou. This agreement should be respected. In addition, the availability of wolves indicates that the land is healthy. Getting rid of wolves does not guarantee the recovery of caribou. This is further evidence of the need for no interference. Furthermore, Délı̨ne agrees with the evidence from the other parties that natural and human disturbances such as climate change and mining have more adverse impacts on caribou than wolf predation. Given these arguments, the Délı̨ne Got'ı̨ne Government and Délı̨ne ʔehdzo Got'ı̨ne request the SRRB to:

- Look at the impact of human-created habitat disturbances on caribou and how those can be lessened before meddling with the balance of nature, which may have disastrous consequences for the ecosystem;
- Decide that no wolf management programs should be conducted in the Sahtú at this time. The SRRB should also recommend that if ENR is actively considering any wolf management programs in the Sahtú, they must first obtain consent from each of the Sahtú communities and renewable resources councils; and

- Recommend that ENR only use non-invasive wildlife monitoring methods in the Sahtú, such as adequately funding communities to conduct effective on-the-ground monitoring.

Summary of Fort Good Hope's (Deshįta Got'įneę) Arguments

Conservation Picture

Wildlife

Deshįta Got'įneę argues that, as Dene, they have a relationship with wildlife, which gives them the responsibility to respect them. Given that this relationship with wildlife cannot be understood by non-Dene, the Deshįta Got'įneę seeks the following:

- The GNWT of Department of ENR must respect their rights to be at the forefront of wildlife management as enshrined in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP), which Canada has adopted.

People

Deshįta Got'įneę argues that they have Dene ways of life, which were given to them by their ancestors. They have a responsibility to transfer their ways to future generations. Allowing the GNWT to continue imposing laws on them, particularly laws that affect their relationships with wildlife, can contribute to losing their ways of life and impact their ability to pass their ways on to the younger generations. According to Deshįta Got'įneę, a traditional conservation plan is their right to self-determination. Therefore, Deshįta Got'įneę seeks the following:

- The SRRB and the GNWT will encourage traditional conversation plans to ensure that their Dene ways of life are protected; and
- The Government of Canada, GNWT, SSI, and SRRB will create and fund opportunities for Sahtú communities to work together outside the formal hearing process.

Caribou Relationships with Predators and Competitors

According to Deshįta Got'įneę, Dene knowledge, and ęęę (law) require that all the animals – ęęę (barren-ground caribou), ęęę (muskox), dįga (wolf), tędzı (boreal caribou), sahshe (grizzly bear), shįhta gęęę (mountain caribou) – are to be respected, including their ways, relationships, and natural cycles. They state that animals live in balance, and they maintain this balance through interactions. Given this, Deshįta Got'įneę argues that until a plan is developed, the animals need to be left alone without any interference. However, where interferences such as harvest wolf programs are to be implemented, they should be community-based rather than implemented top-down by ENR. Deshįta Got'įneę is interested to know and learn about the wolf harvesting program in the Tįęęę region, including the success of the program, how success will be measured, and the efficacy of the methods used for the program. Deshįta Got'įneę, therefore, seeks the following:

- The development of a more robust, more transparent way of measuring the success of the wolf harvesting program and learning about its efficacy as it proceeds. This should be led by Tłı̨çq̓ Government, WRRB, and GNWT.

Summary of Norman Wells' (Renewable Resources Council) Arguments

Conservation Picture

Wildlife

Norman Wells argues that their relationship with caribou is place-based, implying that the communities are traditionally responsible for stewardship in their established harvest areas. They have responsibility for the overall health of caribou and other wildlife, and also the health and protection of the land, keeping, honoring, and renewing the importance of harvest traditions for future generations. Given that t̥dzı (boreal caribou) has been listed as threatened in the Northwest Territories, there is a need to pay attention to the knowledge gaps regarding the specific relationship between t̥dzı abundance, habitat distribution, and predation. They also contend that carefully managing habitat disturbance is critical to maintaining a healthy and sustainable population for future generations.

People

Norman Wells explains conservation from an Indigenous perspective is that they live it, respect it and understand their position as caretakers, not owners of the land, water, air, or animals. As caretakers, they seek the following:

- To improve relationships between the communities and ENR through working together, respect, and transparency;
- More incentives and encouragement to promote local involvement from Indigenous and non-Indigenous land users as they are the eyes and the ears on the land and can contribute valuable information; and
- The establishment of a long-term community-based biodiversity monitoring program with adequate support funding. This can provide viable results and could be used for future research programs, as well as assisting and collaborating with other regions, governments, and non-governmental agencies. Indigenous and community knowledge must be at the forefront in creating a curriculum for all aspects of the community-based biodiversity monitoring program.

Caribou Relationships with Predators and Competitors

Like the other community parties, Norman Wells argues in favor of non-interference in wildlife relationships. They maintain that caribou's relationship with other wildlife, including wolves and muskoxen, constitutes a natural cycle. To maintain ecosystem balance, these animals should be allowed to exist without interference. Their argument also notes that there is insufficient baseline information, particularly from previous (wolf)

management programs, to warrant interference in the natural cycle. They stress the need to respect wildlife and allow the cycle to continue since nature knows best. Given this argument, the Norman Wells Renewable Resources Council seeks the following from the SRRB and GNWT Department of ENR:

- Additional research to understand wildlife relationships, particularly between caribou and muskoxen. Studies should also focus on the impacts of other factors, such as resources extraction and climate change on caribou;
- Non-invasive means of monitoring wildlife and gathering information data, such as cameras and sound recorders. Methods that can contribute to gathering on a much larger scale should be encouraged; and
- The need to provide more incentives and encouragement to promote local involvement from Indigenous and non-indigenous land users.

Summary of Tulít'a's (Renewable Resources Council) Arguments

Conservation Picture

Wildlife

Tulít'a's arguments about the conservation picture are based on respect for wildlife and their relationships, particularly with people – something their grandfathers have carried for thousands of years. They argue that their ancestors cautioned them against talking about wildlife and required them to leave wildlife alone without any interference.

People

Similar to the other community parties, Tulít'a argues that they have laws and are guided by such laws, which were developed by the elders and have been with them for several years. Given this, they are responsible for maintaining those laws by transferring them to future generations.

Caribou Relationships with Predators and Competitors

Similar to the other Sahtú communities, Tulít'a argues against any interference in wildlife relationships. They further state that invasive monitoring tends to scatter wildlife, affecting their availability. Moreover, other factors such as climate change, wildfire, and industrial disturbances have dire impacts on wildlife, particularly caribou. Tulít'a argues for the need to pay attention to these factors rather than blaming predators. For instance, wildfires not only lead to a reduction in wildlife populations but also changes in their movements and locations. In light of the evidence and arguments presented, Tulít'a seeks the following from SRRB's decisions and recommendations:

- Indigenous-led monitoring characterized by their ways of life and knowledge;
- The participation of ENR decision-makers, such as the minister, in future proceedings to promote dialogue and good working relationships;
- Initiation of additional studies to understand the impacts of other factors such as climate change, wildfires, and industrial disturbances on caribou population

decline. This is particularly important for the discussions of future proceedings on the impacts of these factors;

- ENR to spend time and do on-the-land observations with the communities to understand their ways of life and to gain an accurate picture of the impacts of disturbances on wildlife instead of relying on “helicopter” monitoring; and
- A good working relationship between all parties, particularly between the community parties and the GNWT.

Summary of Independent Parties’ Arguments

Anne-Marie Jackson

Anne-Marie Jackson submits that Indigenous conservation methods, which predate current conservation measures, should be used in the Sahtú region. Anne-Marie Jackson further adds that the current conservation measures, particularly wolf management programs, are not only short-term approaches to caribou recovery but also create an imbalance in the natural system. For instance, according to the evidence, removing apex predators such as the wolf can collapse the ecosystem, including predator-prey relationships. Given this, Anne-Marie Jackson seeks the following from the PLS decisions and recommendations:

- An investigation into the impacts of human activities on wildlife, habitats, and the environment since humans are the worse predators;
- The design of long-term conservation plans or measures with the inclusion of Dene people, knowledge, and inputs; and
- Providing the community with the same resources and capacity support to promote Dene-led conservation approaches and research. The long-standing relationship of Dene with wildlife can guide conservation methods and create the needed solutions that reflect Dene ways of life.

Lucy Jackson

Lucy Jackson calls for the need not to blame predators such as the wolf for caribou decline. Lucy Jackson further argues against any predator control measures that seek to get rid of the wolf, given its importance as a spiritually powerful animal. Finally, Lucy Jackson stresses that there have been destructions from the past, which are still happening, resulting from the impacts of development activities. These disturbances severely affect the caribou population and need to be studied to understand these impacts rather than blaming predators.

Summary of GNWT Department of ENR’s Arguments

Although ENR is not seeking specific decisions from the SRRB, its argument reinforces the written submissions already provided to the SRRB and are currently on the SRRB’s public registry. Pursuant to the issues addressed during the 2021 public listening, ENR outlined its understanding of the interactions between caribou in the Sahtú and three

wildlife species that have important relationships with caribou—muskoxen, moose, and wolves—using Indigenous, community, and scientific knowledge compiled for status reports, recovery and management actions, and research projects.

With respect to competitors' relationships with caribou, ENR maintains that while there is generally a healthy muskox population, some cases of disease and parasites have been detected. Given this, ENR looks forward to information from harvesters regarding their observations to monitor and manage the muskox population.

ENR further maintains that, unlike the muskox population, which has increased, the moose population in the Sahtú is stable. While moose interactions with caribou have not yet been established in the Sahtú, research results in other areas of Canada, including the southern NWT, suggest that increasing moose populations can affect boreal caribou populations by contributing to increased wolf population, which in turn increases predation on boreal caribou. To support and maintain healthy relationships between moose, wolves, and caribou is to ensure that there is always enough undisturbed habitat available to boreal caribou, which led to the development of the *Sahtú Todzi Nene Plan (Boreal Caribou Range Plan)*.

Regarding wolf predation, ENR submits that although it has no plans to implement enhanced wolf management actions in the Sahtú region, it supports local wolf harvesters and the traditional economy that is harvesting wolves in the region. However, in some situations where caribou have declined to very low levels and wolf predation is considered a contributing factor, management actions to reduce the number of wolves may be needed to support caribou conservation and recovery. Given this, ENR indicated that it would consider additional actions, following discussions with Sahtú communities and the SRRB, if there were further significant declines in caribou numbers.

With respect to the relationship between people and wildlife, ENR submits that people can support a healthy relationship by monitoring changes, harvesting at sustainable levels, and learning from research being done in other areas. Concerning wolves, ENR noted that harvesting is one of the main tools available to manage the relationship between caribou and wolves, although ENR did not propose any decision or recommend any additional wolf management measures in the Sahtú region.⁷⁷

Finally, ENR reiterates that it looks forward to working collaboratively with Sahtú communities and the SRRB on monitoring and managing caribou and their predators and competitors within the Sahtú region. ENR adds that it works closely with the SRRB, communities, and harvesters to ensure the wise stewardship and management of wildlife and wildlife habitats in the Sahtú Settlement Area.

⁷⁷ Government of the Northwest Territories, *Tłch'ádı́ hé Gots'edı́ – Living with Wildlife: Caribou Predators and Competitors, Submission to the 2021 Délinę Public Listening Session (April 2022)*, 39.

Analysis, Findings, Decisions, and Recommendations

At the 2016 Bluenose East Ɂekwé hearing, community parties called for the SRRB to include Ɂasíł godí hé Dene ts'ıłı hé (biocultural diversity) in decision-making. As indicated in the Colville Lake 2020 PLS report, the biocultural approach considers the interdependence of caribou population health and Dene/Métis land-based ways of life and the implications for planning. The SRRB recognized that biocultural approaches are vital to Sahtú gotıch'ádıı (wildlife) management. In addition to enshrining a biocultural approach as a principle of hıdó gogha sénégots'ızá (planning for the future), the SRRB considered biocultural approaches when analyzing and evaluating competing or conflicting evidence. In line with its biocultural approach, when assessing competing evidence, the SRRB accords additional weight to evidence that takes into account biocultural impacts.

The SRRB makes findings of fact after weighing and analyzing the parties' evidence and arguments. When assessing competing pieces of evidence, the SRRB considers whether the evidence is relevant and believable and whether the source of the evidence is reliable. The SRRB's findings form the basis of its recommendations and decisions. When the SRRB makes recommendations, it requires action by the GNWT or other co-management partners. When the SRRB makes a decision, it exercises powers granted to it under Chapter 13 of the *SDMCLCA*.

Conservation Picture: Status of Caribou, People, and Planning

Caribou

The SRRB finds no competing evidence regarding the statuses of ıdızı (boreal caribou) and shúhta gogepé (mountain caribou). Although shúhta gogepé populations are generally thought to be stable, the SRRB notes concerns about population declines or displacement, which warranted their listing as a species of special concern in the NWT in July 2021. Based on conservation concerns, the NWT Conference of Management Authorities is currently developing a long-term management plan for northern mountain caribou.

Finding 1.1

The SRRB finds no strong competing evidence about the status of ıdızı (boreal caribou) but notes that it is still listed as threatened under both the territorial and federal Species at Risk Acts and that the GNWT Department of ENR and the SRRB have initiated a process of ıdızı range planning.

Finding 1.2

The SRRB finds that there is no new strong competing evidence about the status of shúhta gogepé/shıhta gogedə (northern mountain caribou) but notes that they

were listed as a species of special concern under the Species at Risk (NWT) Act in 2021.

The evidence shows that there are still conservation concerns for Ɂekwé/Ɂədə/nódele (barren-ground caribou). Although Colville Lake noted that barren-ground caribou are in good shape based on their harvesting experience, the SRRB agrees with the weight of evidence submitted by Délıne, Dene Nation, and Tłıchq Government that the availability of barren-ground caribou remains a concern. The SRRB understands that despite ENR's evidence of stabilized population for the barren-ground caribou, particularly the Bluenose East, there is conservation concern for the barren-ground caribou based on the evidence regarding their numbers.

Finding 1.3

The SRRB finds no strong competing evidence about the status of caribou but notes that Ɂekwé/Ɂədə/nódele (barren-ground caribou) are still listed as threatened under the Species at Risk (NWT) Act and that they are under consideration for listing under the federal Species at Risk Act.

People

SRRB finds that the GNWT develops management and monitoring actions and legislation based on input, consultation, and recommendations from communities and renewable resources boards and that any infringement of the harvesting rights of Indigenous peoples is justified based on a conservation, public health, or public safety concern. The finding also shows that cultural conflicts between the Dene/Métis ts'ııı (ways of life) and current approaches to conservation which has negative impacts on the spiritual relationship Dene and Métis have with wildlife. The SRRB is of the view that ENR's evidence of how to account for Dene/Métis ts'ııı, náoweré (knowledge), and ɁeɁa (law), and relationships are insufficient.

Finding 1.4

The SRRB finds that GNWT Department of ENR's submissions provided insufficient evidence to demonstrate how it accounts for Dene/Métis ts'ııı (ways of life), náoweré (knowledge), and ɁeɁa (law) and relationships.

The SRRB understands that in Dene/Métis náoweré (knowledge), all things are not just interconnected but also play crucial roles in maintaining balance. This balance requires everyone to have independent roles within the ecosystem, including people. The SRRB also understands that there is a spiritual connection between people and wildlife, such that disrespecting wildlife negatively impacts their availability.

Finding 1.5

The SRRB finds that Dene/Métis have a cultural obligation to maintain healthy relationships with caribou and other wildlife, grounded on respect for wildlife and their relationships.

Finding 1.6

The SRRB finds that Dene/Métis see themselves as part of the wildlife and believe they have an agreement with other wildlife to co-exist respectfully, central to Dene/Métis ts'ı́ı́ (ways of life), náoweré (knowledge), ɾeɾa (law).

The SRRB agrees that respectful relationships can be created and established if there is an appreciation of biocultural approaches to decision-making, which includes recognizing that Dene/Métis ts'ı́ı́ (ways of life), náoweré (knowledge), and traditions have been practiced and part of the communities for time immemorial. The SRRB understands that the communities are committed to promoting good relationships through ɾełexé ɾeghálats'eda (working together) among themselves and with co-management partners.

Finding 1.7

The SRRB finds that community parties have invited the GNWT Department of ENR and other co-management partners to participate in community camps; the GNWT Department of ENR, in particular, has recognized the value of such opportunities.

Finding 1.8

The SRRB finds that is participation in on-the-land activities helps people who attend them to learn about Dene/Métis ts'ı́ı́ (ways of life, including relationships with wildlife), náoweré (knowledge), and ɾeɾa (law), and helps promote good working relationships.

Recommendation 1.1

The SRRB recommends that communities continue to invite co-management partners to participate in community camps to facilitate opportunities to learn about Dene/Métis ts'ı́ı́ (ways of life, including relationships with wildlife), náoweré (knowledge) and ɾeɾa (law), and to foster mutual understanding and relationships.

Recommendation 1.2

The SRRB recommends that ENR to increases financial resources to facilitate attendance and participation in community camps, including and particularly for ENR personnel working in the Sahtú region to foster mutual understanding and relationships.

The SRRB recognizes that some measures exist to support youth in carrying out Dene/Métis ts'įłį but understands that additional support is necessary.

Finding 1.9

The SRRB finds that it is necessary to preserve Dene/Métis ts'įłį (ways of life), náoweré (knowledge), and ʔeʔa (law) so future generations of Dene/Métis can participate in and express their culture. It is traditionally considered an obligation for elders to preserve Dene/Métis ts'įłį (ways of life), náoweré (knowledge), and ʔeʔa (law) for future generations.

Finding 1.10

The SRRB finds that the success of youth participation depends strongly on learning from the elders about Dene/Métis ts'įłį (ways of life), náoweré (knowledge), and ʔeʔa (law).

Finding 1.11

The SRRB finds that, similar to the findings of the 2016 hearing and 2020 public listening session, communities strongly state the importance of active youth participation to the success of community-led initiatives.

Finding 1.12

The SRRB finds that while some support is available to the government, it is insufficient to provide youth with opportunities to learn from elders about Dene/Métis ts'įłį (ways of life), náoweré (knowledge), and ʔeʔa (law).

Pursuant to the recommendations of the 2020 Colville Lake Public Listening Session, the SRRB understands that programs, including guardians and Ne K'édíke (Keepers of the Land), have been initiated and implemented to support the youth in learning Dene/Métis ts'įłį, náoweré, and ʔeʔa. However, the SRRB understands that more financial support is needed to enhance youth leadership in community-led initiatives, including hįdó gogha sęnégots'įʔá (planning for the future) and community preparations for public listening sessions. The SRRB understands that the additional support is necessary and could be vital to the transfer of Dene/Métis ts'įłį, náoweré, and ʔeʔa to the youth.

Recommendation 1.3

The SRRB recommends that both the GNWT and the Federal Government increase their support, including financial resources, to facilitate the cross-generational transfer of Dene/Métis ts'įłį (ways of life), náoweré (knowledge), and ʔeʔa (law).

Caribou Relationships with Predators (including dǰga/wolves) and Any Proposed Management Measures

Status of Predators, including Dǰga/Wolves

The Board understands that while the boreal dǰga (wolves) have preferences for nonmigratory prey like ʔıts'é (moose) and boreal and mountain caribou, tundra dǰga feed primarily on barren-ground caribou.

Finding 2.1

The SRRB finds that dǰga (wolf) populations may be increasing in some parts of the Sahtú region.

Caribou-Predator Relationships

The SRRB recognizes that, for Sahtú Dene, dǰga (wolves) and sahcho (grizzly bears) are spiritually powerful animals and that disrespecting them can cause problems. The SRRB also notes that treating dǰga (wolf) with respect means not engaging in programs or programs that are inhumane and, therefore, disrespectful to the target species and other wildlife. Respect for dǰga (wolf) also includes respecting the agreement that allows dǰga to feed on caribou.

Finding 2.2

The SRRB finds that the Sahtú communities consider the dǰga (wolf) and other predators, such as grizzly bears, to be spiritually powerful animals that must be treated with respect.

The SRRB understands that predators such as dǰga (wolf) ensure a healthy ecosystem by getting rid of the sick, wounded, or old caribou – keeping the herds healthy as “doctors.” The SRRB also understands that there is an agreement between the dǰga (wolf) and caribou to ensure a balance within the ecosystem. However, the SRRB notes that both community parties and ENR noted that it is not clear what exact ecological role that digga (wolves) play in contributing to the balance of the ecosystem, especially given other variables, such as natural and human-induced disturbances. The SRRB anticipates addressing the impact of natural and human-induced disturbances on caribou in a future PLS.

Finding 2.3

Diga (wolves) help maintain a healthy ecosystem, but the exact role wolves play is not well documented or understood.

Finding 2.4

The SRRB finds that factors such as natural and human-induced disturbances negatively impact caribou, but the full scale of such impacts remains unknown.

The SRRB also notes that Dene and Métis consider some wolf intervention measures to be inhumane, disrespectful, and harmful, with a tendency to have negative impacts not only on dǵga (wolf) packs but also on other wildlife. The findings show that intervention measures such as aerial shooting and baiting are not only invasive to dǵga (wolves) but also conflict with Dene/Métis ts'ǵǵ (ways of life), náoweré (knowledge), and ʔeʔa (law).

Finding 2.5

The SRRB finds that certain types of wolf management interventions, including aerial shooting and baiting, are considered to be invasive, harmful, and incongruent with Dene/Métis ts'ǵǵ (ways of life), náoweré (knowledge), and ʔeʔa (law).

Again, the SRRB notes that the wolf management program being implemented in the North Slave region has not been evaluated to establish a correlation between such control measures and growth in the caribou population. While a few studies have examined the impacts of predator (wolf) control measures on caribou, these are still inconclusive. The SRRB confirms that enhanced predator (wolf) intervention programs are not being proposed or implemented in the Sahtú region.

Finding 2.6

The SRRB finds that, at this time, there is insufficient evidence that wolf management measures in the North Slave region are effective in improving caribou population levels.

Recommendation 2.1

The SRRB recommends that further studies that take a biocultural approach and incorporate Dene/Métis ts'ǵǵ (ways of life), náoweré (knowledge), and ʔeʔa (law) and scientific knowledge be undertaken to establish and better understand the impacts of predation on caribou.

Caribou Relationships with Competitors (including ʔǵjire/muskoxen)

Status of Muskoxen and Moose

In addition to the status of caribou and predators such as dǵga (wolves), the SRRB received several pieces of evidence regarding competitors, including ʔǵjire (muskoxen) and ʔǵts'é (moose), that live in and travel through the Sahtú. The evidence reveals that ʔǵts'é populations are healthy and abundant, and people have seen more ʔǵts'é recently in the Sahtú than in the past. Similar to ʔǵts'é, the SRRB finds that ʔǵjire has an abundant population in the region, with group observations going up to 60 individuals. The SRRB notes concern that some common parasites and diseases affect caribou, ʔǵts'é, and ʔǵjire, with new diseases and species possibly coming into the region due to the influence of climate change.

Finding 2.7

The SRRB finds that populations of ʔʔts'é (moose) and ʔəjire (muskox) have seen recent increases in the Sahtú region.

Finding 2.8

The SRRB finds There are common parasites and diseases that affect caribou, ʔʔts'é (moose) and ʔəjire (muskox). The increase in ʔʔts'é (moose) and ʔəjire (muskoxen) populations increases the potential for new diseases and parasites to enter the region.

Although the SRRB notes that not all communities consider ʔəjire as a vital part of Dene béré, others call for the need to increase ʔəjire harvesting as an alternative food, particularly during the decline of the caribou population. Despite the loss of cultural continuity regarding Sahtú Dene/Métis harvesting and consumption of ʔəjire, some community parties are interested in learning about other Indigenous communities' socio-cultural and commercial experiences regarding ʔəjire.

Finding 2.9

Consumption of ʔəjiré (muskox) by Dene/Métis in the Sahtú region is much less common today due to the loss of cultural continuity. The SRRB finds that things like the enforcement of harvest restrictions in the early twentieth century, which were new to indigenous peoples, contributed to the change in people's relationship with ʔəjiré (muskox), to the point that people lost the skills and knowledge for preparing it, as well as losing the taste for its meat.

Recommendation 2.2

The SRRB recommends that further studies that take a biocultural approach and incorporate Dene/Métis ts'ı̄łı̄ (ways of life), náoweré (knowledge), and ʔeʔa (law) and scientific knowledge be undertaken to establish and better understand the impacts of competition between caribou and ʔʔts'é (moose), ʔəjiré (muskox), and other competitors.

Recommendation 2.3

The SRRB recommends that communities, with support from the federal and territorial governments and other co-management partners, invite people from places with ongoing experience of relationships with ʔəjire (muskox) to Sahtú communities to teach skills in harvesting and preparing ʔəjire.

Caribou-Competitor Relationships

The evidence demonstrates that ʔʔts'é (moose) and ʔəjire (muskox) are the main competitors of caribou. However, the SRRB understands that despite the variations in competition between caribou and their competitors, the level of competition among these species is still not fully known. The SRRB also notes a lack of consensus regarding caribou-ʔəjire interactions. The SRRB, therefore, considers it important for future studies to look into caribou-competitors' relationships.

Finding 2.10

The SRRB finds that the overall relationship between the health of caribou populations and the health of their competitor populations, including ʔəjiré (muskox) and ʔʔts'é (moose), is not well established.

Key Issues, Part II – H̱dó Gogha S̱négots'íʔá (Planning for the Future)

Over the six years since the 2016 Bluenose East ʔekw̱é hearing in Déḻṉę, the SRRB has been developing the concept, process, and content of a community-led conservation planning approach for the Sahtú region. H̱dó gogha s̱négots'íʔá, the term the SRRB is adopting for this approach to planning, is a Dene phrase which translates as “planning for the future.” H̱dó gogha s̱négots'íʔá is a Sahtú-specific approach which was inspired by the healthy country planning model developed by Australian Indigenous people.⁷⁸

The SRRB approach to ẖdó gogha s̱négots'íʔá also draws upon other NWT planning processes, including:

- Advisory Committee for Cooperation on Wildlife Management (ACCWM), *Taking Care of Caribou: Cape Bathurst, Bluenose-West, and Bluenose-East Barren-Ground Caribou Herds Management Plan* (2014), and in particular, the “Hot Topics”;
- GNWT’s A Framework for Boreal Caribou Range Planning (2019); and
- the federal management plan for mountain caribou.

The SRRB has intentionally adapted its approach to its role as the main instrument of wildlife and landscape management in the Sahtú Settlement Area by recognizing and supporting ẖdó gogha s̱négots'íʔá (planning for the future – PFF) as a means to more fully achieve the objectives of the *SDMCLCA*. The *SDMCLCA* envisions a conservation system that is aligned with the customs and practices of Dene and Métis participants, and supports their meaningful participation in wildlife planning and co-management. H̱dó

⁷⁸ See Colville 2020 Public Listening (Hearing) Session Report and Reasons for Decision, October 30, 2020 at page 96. For background on the Healthy Country Planning approach, see <http://www.ccnetwork.com/resource/healthy-country-planning/>

gogha sénégots'íʔá is a process for reconciliation in wildlife conservation. It involves cross-cultural, on the land, and youth-centered approaches; community governance; and supports training, leadership development, and economic opportunities for Sahtú participants. Furthermore, it requires decision-makers such as the SRRB to work closely with harvesters, community leadership organizations, and community members (including youth) in the Sahtú region and beyond to ensure better conservation outcomes and more effective co-management decisions. Government, including staff and Minister, must also be sensitive to community buy-in and the right of Sahtú Dene and Métis to meaningfully participate in decision making concerning wildlife, habitat, conservation and land use.

Hı́dó gogha sénégots'íʔá has evolved with contributions about longstanding and ongoing Dene and Métis practices in stewardship, and with guidance from the Sahtú communities. These traditional and modern day customs cannot be separated from the Sahtú Dene and Métis relationship with the land or the wildlife.

Like other community-based planning models, hı́dó gogha sénégots'íʔá is a process that can result in a written plan. A written plan can guide and address conservation activities. A written plan can facilitate communication and understanding with others. A written plan can also be a way to recognize and support the work that needs to be done, including formal review and approval by decision-makers under the co-management framework defined by the *SDMCLCA*. Decision-makers in this case include local governance bodies, the SRRB, and ultimately the Minister, who may accept, reject, or vary any decision of the SRRB. SRRB's decisions on PFF are subject to Ministerial approval.

To date, Sahtú communities have developed three conservation-focused plans for the future:

- Déłı́ne's *Belare Wı́le Gots'é ʔekwé – Caribou for All Time* plan (2016);
- Colville Lake's *Dehlá Got'ı́ne ʔədə Plan and Ts'ı́duweh ʔədə ʔeʔá* (2020); and
- the *Nı́o Ne P'ęne Begháre Shúhta Goʔepé Nareh'á – Trails of the Mountain Caribou* plan developed through a partnership of Tulıt'a, Norman Wells, and neighbouring Tu Łidlini (Ross River, Yukon Territory).

In preparation for the Colville Lake 2020 and Déłı́ne 2021 Public Listening Sessions, SRRB staff supported community activities related to hı́dó gogha sénégots'íʔá. In information requests prior to the Déłı́ne 2021 PLS, the SRRB also invited feedback on three PFF documents, including:

- Harvest Regulation Planning Toolkit (January 15, 2021);
- Hı́dó Gogha Sénégots'íʔá (Community Conservation Plan) Process and Components Guide (September 14, 2021); and
- Hı́dó Gogha Sénégots'íʔá (Plan for the Future) Policy and Guide (v2) (April 14, 2022).

During the Déljñę 2021 PLS, parties provided feedback on the SRRB's documents and on community-led conservation planning more generally.

Summary of Evidence and Arguments from Parties

Colville Lake

Dehlá Got'jñe supports the SRRB's efforts to work with the communities to develop and implement the hįdó gogha sęńęgots'įńá (planning for the future) process. Dehlá Got'jñe also appreciates the SRRB's recognition of community differences in their approach to planning for the future. Dehlá Got'jñe raised concerns that choices made in a process should be respected, even if government thinks it should be done differently. Dehlá Got'jñe explained that local renewable resources councils do not have the same resources, such as staffing and funding, as ENR, making it difficult to implement their mandates and fully participate in decision-making. Dehlá Got'jñe proposed:

- Management resources from ENR that may otherwise be allocated to wolf management programs be directed towards the development of community conservation plans and on-the-land monitoring activities; and
- The GNWT should keep a good working relationship with the communities by respecting, recognizing, and working with Dene laws and practices.

Déljñę

Déljñę explained that their *Belare Wile Gots'ę ńekwę – Caribou for All Time* plan has taken years of work to develop and refine, and it represents the best path to conserve caribou. They argued that their plan will continue to ensure effective caribou conservation. Déljñę pointed out that past colonial measures for wildlife conservation have not been successful, and those measures had adverse impacts on Sahtú Dene culture and traditional knowledge. This justifies considering a new approach that draws on Dene authority. The community proposed:

- That the GNWT engage in a collaborative process with the SRRB, the renewable resources councils, and governments in the Sahtú to co-develop GNWT legislation and policies that formally recognize and incorporate community conservation plans into the wildlife management regime in the Sahtú. Amending the law would be a step toward reconciliation and healing wounds from decades of colonial wildlife management;
- That the GNWT provide capacity support for Sahtú communities to undertake and implement hįdó gogha sęńęgots'įńá (planning for the future). To be successful, Déljñę needs adequate and reliable funding resources to develop and implement programs outlined in the Déljñę Got'jñę ńekwę Plan;
- That the SRRB re-write the PFF policy and guide in plain language, making it shorter with more visual aids;

- Host workshops in each community on the planning for the future approach using simple, plain language materials, visual aids, and translation so communities can better understand the process and provide feedback; and
- Confirm how existing plans like the Délı̨ne Got'ı̨ne ʔekwé Plan will be reviewed and evaluated by the SRRB according to the PFF policy, especially as they are refined and amended over time because community plans are living documents designed to evolve.

Norman Wells

Norman Wells said that Indigenous people need to proactively plan for a healthy future for the land, water, wildlife, and people because it is much more efficient and cost-effective to responsibly conserve land now than it is to restore it in the future. This is aligned with hı́dó gogha séné́gots'ı́á (planning for the future). Norman Wells commented that the current procedural guidance for hı́dó gogha séné́gots'ı́á (planning for the future) is extensive and could be overwhelming. Norman Wells proposed:

- That the procedural guidance for PFF should be in plain language, with minimal terminology; and
- That there should be training or workshops to explain to people about community conservation planning in the region.

Fort Good Hope

Deshı́ta Got'ı̨ne believes that there is agreement from Sahtú communities that Dene cultural values, knowledge, and law are in conflict with western approaches and notions of wildlife management. They said community-led plans will help carry on Dene values. Deshı́ta Got'ı̨ne support planning work that has been led by Délı̨ne Got'ı̨ne Government and Behdzı́ Adha First Nation. Deshı́ta Got'ı̨ne is committed to developing a comprehensive community conservation plan rooted in Indigenous knowledge and law, focusing on the animals, land, and water. This planning process, intended to be effective, iterative, transparent, and inclusive, will be complementary to and congruent with the management plan of the Ts'udé Nı́lı́né Tuyeta Indigenous Protected Area. Deshı́ta Got'ı̨ne proposed:

- Support from government for the development of community conservation plans and implementation through policy, regulation, and financial aid;
- That the government and the Sahtú Secretariat Inc. recognize the development of community caribou planning and other community stewardship planning, followed by implementation of these plans, as a core way to implement the *SDMCLCA*; and
- Financial support to enable engagement within each Sahtú community and between communities. The renewable resources councils in each community should also be adequately funded to implement their mandate as defined within

the *SDMCLCA*, recognizing that enabling the councils will allow community-led stewardship rooted in Dene law.

Tulit'a

Tulit'a expressed a desire to better understand the planning for the future approach, including the policy and guide, to ensure participation in the community-led planning process. Tulit'a proposed financial resource support to allow the renewable resources council (RRC) to carry out its mandate effectively. This support could also help hire RRC staff, who currently work part-time, for full-time positions.

ENR

The SRRB received ENR feedback on the Harvest Regulation Planning Toolkit in response to Round 2 Information Requests.⁷⁹ The SRRB adapted the policy in response to this feedback, including the Minister's review and decision on a written plan approved by the SRRB. ENR did not make further submissions on the draft policy and guide or the status of planning for the future in the region, but reiterated its general support for the approach:

ENR remains supportive of community conservation plans. These plans can be a valuable part of overall wildlife and harvest management. Community conservation plans contribute to broader management planning and processes that include communities and co-management partners across a caribou herd's range. Through continued discussions and sharing of information, we can learn from everyone's perspective, and we will be able to make wise decisions to support caribou conservation so that we have healthy herds for the future. – Heather Sayine-Crawford, ENR⁸⁰

Analysis, Findings, and Decision

After listening carefully to rights-holders, staff from ENR, and other parties during a number of hearings about the *hı́dó gogha sénégot's'ı́zá* (planning for the future) approach, including the *Déłı́neę 2021 PLS* which gave parties the opportunity to comment on the SRRB's PFF documents, the SRRB understands that there are continued expressions of support from *all* parties for *hı́dó gogha sénégot's'ı́zá* (planning for the future). The SRRB continues to see *hı́dó gogha sénégot's'ı́zá* as a valuable conservation approach that provides a structure for local and Indigenous knowledge, customs, and practices to be

⁷⁹GNWT, *ENR Responses to Information Requests Round 2: Déłı́neę 2021 Public Listening Session*, supra note 26 at 17.

⁸⁰ Sahtú Renewable Resources Board (ʔehdzo Got'ı́neę Gots'é Nákedı), *Déłı́neę 2021 Public Listening Session: ʔelets'ewéhkwe Godı (Living with Wildlife) - Predators and Competitors Transcript*, supra note 28 at 449.

incorporated into and reflected in wildlife decision-making, as well as addressing the Sahtú Dene and Metis relationship with the land.⁸¹

Finding 3.1

The SRRB finds that Hı́dó gogha sénégots'ı́á (planning for the future – PFF) has widespread general support as a valuable approach to planning a healthy future for the land, water, wildlife, and people. It is recognized for the value and contribution of communities for better conservation outcomes and more effective co-management decisions.

The SRRB finds that while the communities remain supportive of this approach for caribou conservation, the proposed guidelines are complex and communities have limited capacity to undertake the planning work. During the Délı́neę 2021 proceedings, the SRRB listened to community parties call for additional resources to implement PFF. Additional resources would support communities to express their ways of life while they document plans that incorporate historical and contemporary Indigenous knowledge, practice and customs into wildlife conservation for present and future generations. There appears to be consensus that communities are best-placed to explain their traditional and current reliance on wildlife, which forms a key basis for wildlife management. However, expressions of support for hı́dó gogha sénégots'ı́á that do not recognize or address funding or technical capacity issues have limited positive impact. Financial and technical resources should be consistent and ongoing if communities are going to fulfill their own wildlife governance mandates, including implementing powers and functions set out in the SDMCLCA.

Finding 3.2

The SRRB finds that communities need financial and technical support, including community workshops, to assist with understanding and conducting hı́dó gogha sénégots'ı́á (planning for the future – PFF). The SRRB should continue providing guidance to communities who want to undertake PFF.

The SRRB provided different forms of PFF documentation for review during the Délı́neę 2021 proceedings.⁸² The SRRB understands there has been confusion about hı́dó gogha sénégots'ı́á as an approach, and the SRRB acknowledges requests for plain language explanations.

⁸¹ SDMCLCA, supra note 2, s. 1.1.1(f).

⁸² These Included: *Checklist for Community Plans* (December 16, 2020), *Harvest Regulation Planning Toolkit* (January 15, 2021), *PLS Resumption Notice* (July 7, 2021), draft *Hı́dó Gogha Sénégots'ı́á (Community Conservation Plan) Process and Components Guide* (September 14, 2021), *Procedural Guidance* and revised draft *Hı́dó Gogha Sénégots'ı́á (Plan for the Future) Policy and Guide* (April 14, 2022).

Finding 3.3

The SRRB finds, to date, the SRRB has not provided adequate explanation of its Hı́dó Gogha Sė́nė́gots'ı́rń́ (Planning for the Future – PFF) Policy. Parties want explanations of PFF to be in plain language.

In March 2021, the SRRB provided an initial statement of its policy on hı́dó gogha sė́nė́gots'ı́rń́:

hı́dó gogha sė́nė́gots'ı́rń́ (community conservation plans – CCP) are viable conservation approaches that can be more effective, more rights-compliant and more community-led, and should be considered before and in place of total allowable harvest limits which are only to be used when required and to the extent necessary.⁸³

The SRRB's Hı́dó Gogha Sė́nė́gots'ı́rń́ (Planning for the Future – PFF) Policy is centred on three interdependent principles that remain unchanged since the March 2021 policy statement:

1. **ŕası́ıı Godı́ hé Dene Ts'ıııı hé (Biocultural Diversity)** - Dene expect decisions that affect them to account for ŕası́ıı dodı́ hé Dene ts'ıııı hé (all living things and Dene ways of being).
2. **ŕedets'ė́ K'áokerewe (Self-Regulation)** - In Dene ŕeŕa (law) people and wildlife are called upon to respect each other's autonomy as a basis for social cohesion and survival in a harsh environment through ŕedets'ė́ k'áots'erewe (self-regulation).
3. **Godı́ Kehtsı́ (Ethical Space)** - Dene and Métis participation in conservation efforts with government depends on godı́ kehtsı́ (fair consideration or coming together of diverse perspectives, or ethical space), including science and Indigenous knowledge through ŕeı́exé ŕeghálats'eda (collaborative) systems of accountability.

The SRRB listened to parties during the Délı́nė́ 2021 proceedings to better understand how Hı́dó Gogha Sė́nė́gots'ı́rń́ (Planning for the Future – PFF) Policy can be presented to fit wildlife co-management in the Sahtú.

Finding 3.4

The SRRB finds that the 2021 Hı́dó Gogha Sė́nė́gots'ı́rń́ (Planning for the Future – PFF) policy statement provided a starting point for a PFF policy, but it did not explain: how PFF or written PFF plans reflect and respect local customs and practice; the SRRB preference for PFF as the priority conservation response in the

⁸³ SRRB, *Sahtú Ragóŕa (Hunting Law) and Approaches to Wildlife Harvesting: Second Report on the Colville 2020 Public Listening (Hearing) Session* supra note 16 at 10.

Sahtú region; the planning process and a written plan; or the SRRB's procedure for reviewing and approving a written PFF plan.

Decision 3.1

After considering the PLS record on this issue, the SRRB is releasing a stand-alone Hı́dó Gogha Sė́nė́gots'ı́ńá (Planning for the Future - PFF) Policy document, titled Hı́dó Gogha Sė́nė́gots'ı́ńá (Planning for the Future – PFF) Policy and Guidance (2023). This policy addresses PFF principles, a PFF process, the content of a written PFF plan, and the SRRB's process for reviewing and approving a written PFF plan.

The SRRB expects that its Hı́dó Gogha Sė́nė́gots'ı́ńá (Planning for the Future – PFF) Policy will govern the development and implementation of SRRB guidance for communities.

Next Steps and Ongoing Work

The SRRB expects that its staff, along with co-management partners from ENR and communities, will work to define specific required content in each chapter of the plans. SRRB staff will continue to develop toolkits and resources to ensure that communities have the support and guidance that is needed to undertake these planning processes while ensuring that the plans remain community-led. The Board expects that its staff will host an in-person workshop in 2023, and prior to the next Public Listening Session, to share and discuss the content of these supporting documents for the *Hı́dó Gogha Sė́nė́gots'ı́ńá (Planning for the Future - PFF) Policy*.

The SRRB will continue supporting PFF activities, when and where invited, so written plans can be submitted for public consideration, review and approval. Caribou has been the focal point of planning so far, but these plans may become broader and more holistic, particularly in light of the individual themes of the next PLS in the PLS series. The SRRB recognizes that hı́dó gogha sė́nė́gots'ı́ńá is connected to food security planning, the stewardship of other wildlife and wildlife landscapes, cultural expression, language, and ultimately, Sahtú Dene/Métis ts'ı́lı́ (ways of life). In order to be effective, the SRRB expects that the scope and content of hı́dó gogha sė́nė́gots'ı́ńá will continue to evolve through the five-part public listening series as the planning work progresses and aware that the landscape is constantly changing.

Future work must also ensure that all Sahtú communities have sufficient resources and capacity to complete the planning process, prepare a written plan, submit the written plan to the SRRB and to follow up implementation of their plan. The SRRB will continue to facilitate access to resources and tools to support communities as they go through the planning process to develop a written plan. These inputs help advance work already done to date and support planning capacity within Sahtú communities during the planning process.

Based on the Board's work since 2016, including the findings in this Hearing Report from the 2021 Délıne Public Listening Session and the Hı́dó Gogha Sénégots'ı́á (Planning for the Future - PFF) Policy and Guidance, the SRRB understands that there is more work to be completed relating to hı́dó gogha sénégots'ı́á. This is an iterative process that depends on working closely with Sahtú communities and ENR, and the SRRB's policy and supporting guidance will evolve as we continue learning. Implementing the SDMCLCA is not finished. Reconciliation requires ongoing work. Addressing the harms of colonialism is a process that is unlikely to be fully satisfied by a comprehensive land claim, a piece of legislation or regulation. The SRRB's work on hı́dó Gogha sénégots'ı́á (planning for the future – PFF), and achieving the SDMCLCA objectives, depends on a wider, more sophisticated understanding of Indigenous customs and practices for wildlife conservation, the landscape, and Sahtú people. The implementation of honourable promises in the land claim leaves us much work to do, together.

The SRRB looks forward to working with the parties to support the implementation of hı́dó gogha sénégots'ı́á in the Sahtú settlement area.

Conclusion and Statement on PLS Series Going Forward

The Délıne 2021 Public Listening Session, the second of the five-part public listening series, constitutes a public hearing under the SDMCLCA and is part of the SRRB's efforts to dialogue with stakeholders and co-management partners on emerging caribou conservation issues and community-led conservation planning processes for wildlife in the Sahtú region. The key issues in this public listening session include:

- Conservation picture involving the status of caribou, people, and planning;
- Caribou relationships with predators and any proposed management measures;
- Caribou relationships with competitors and any proposed management measures; and
- Hı́dó Gogha Sénégots'ı́á (Planning for the Future – PFF) Policy.

The SRRB has made a number of findings, recommendations, and decisions that will inform the future public listening sessions. The three remaining themes of the five-part hearing series include:

- Knowledge about Caribou and Landscapes;
- Wildfires and Climate Change; and
- Caribou and the Mixed Economy.

The SRRB looks forward to working with the parties as the PLS series continues.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Parties

The parties who were granted standing in the Délı̄nę 2021 Virtual Public Listening Session are on the registry (Rules 8.5, 8.6). For each Sahtú community, parties were grouped as a single panel on the agenda.

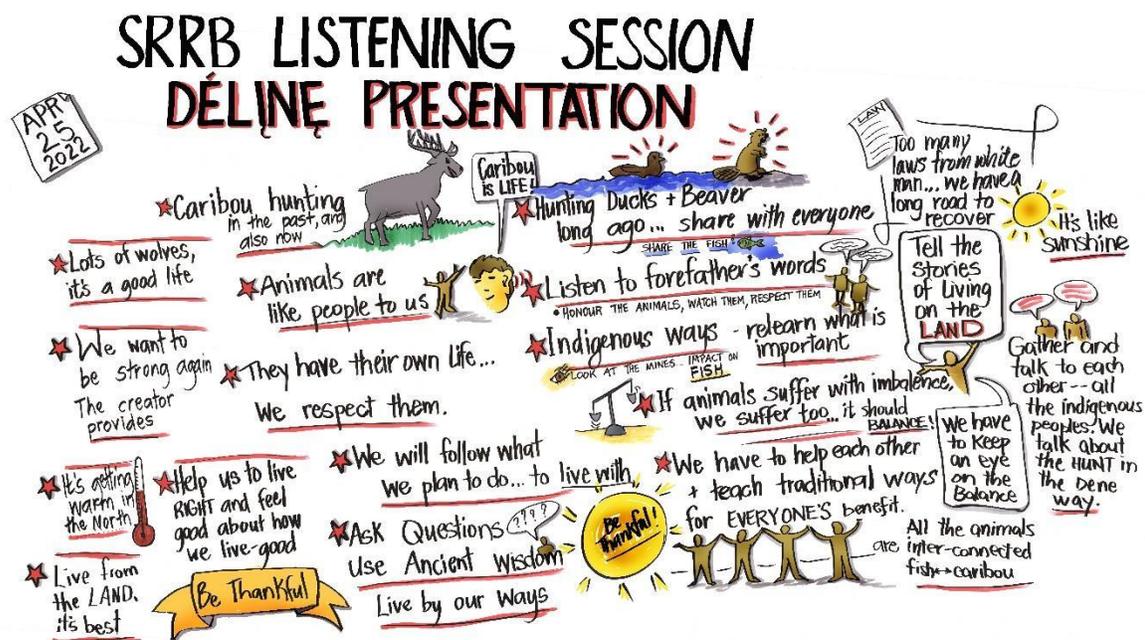
Sahtú Community Parties	
Parties	Panelist
Délı̄nę Panel: Délı̄nę Got'ı̄nę Government, Délı̄nę ʔehdzo Got'ı̄nę (Renewable Resources Council)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Alfred Taneton ● Alphonse Takazo ● Andrew John Kenny ● Betty Takazo ● Dolphus Baton ● Ed Reeves ● Frederick Kenny

Sahtú Community Parties	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● George Baptiste ● Hughie Ferdinand ● Leon Modeste ● Marion Mackeinzo ● Paul Modeste ● Walter Bezha
Colville Lake Panel: Ayoni Keh Land Corporation, Behdzi Ahda First Nation, Colville Lake Renewable Resources Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Chief Wilfred Kochon ● David Codzi ● Joseph Kochon ● Richard Kochon ● Tyson Kochon
Fort Good Hope Panel: Fort Good Hope Deshįta Got'įnęke (Renewable Resources Council)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Daniel Jackson ● Edward Kelly ● George Barnaby ● Joe Orlas ● Leon Taureau ● Michel Lafferty ● Thomas Manuel
Norman Wells Panel: Norman Wells Renewable Resources Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Jaryd Mcdonald ● Jasmine Plummer ● Lisa Mcdonald ● Margaret Mcdonald
Tulít'a Panel: Community organizational parties unspecified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Chief Frank Andrew ● David Etchinelle ● Frederick Andrew ● Gordon Yakeleya ● Joe Horassi ● Jonathan Yakeleya

Sahtú Community Parties	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Richard Mccauley ● Robert Horassi ● Rocky Norwegian ● Roy Horassi ● William Andrew
Other Parties	
Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Government of the Northwest Territories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Brett Elkin ● Christine Glowach ● Heather Sayine-Crawford ● James Hodson ● Jan Adamczewski ● Karin Clark ● Kevin Chan ● Maria Ciancio ● Norman Boose
Tłıchq̓ Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Benjamin Pia ● Colby Grosco ● Eddie Erasmus ● Janelle Nitsiza ● Joseph Judas ● Joseph Moosenose ● Louie Zoe ● Stephanie Behrens
Independent parties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Anne-Marie Jackson ● Lucy Jackson
Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society NWT Chapter (CPAWS-NWT)	
Dene Nation	

Sahtú Community Parties	
Indigenous Leadership Initiative	
Inuvialuit Joint Secretariat and Inuvialuit Game Council	
Kugluktuk Angoniatit Association	
Łutsël K'é Dene First Nation	
Sahtú Youth Network	

Appendix 2: Summaries of Presentations and Graphic Recordings Délįnę



PUBLIC LISTENING SESSION COLVILLE LAKE

APR 26 2022

OUR CULTURE IS SHAPED BY OUR RELATIONSHIP TO THE WILDLIFE-LAND+ANIMALS

OUR SURVIVAL IS ON THE LAND!

WORK FOR THE FUTURE GENERATIONS

OUR LAWS + KNOWLEDGE ARE IMPORTANT

... PASSED ON FROM OUR ANCESTORS

SINCE ANCIENT TIMES, WE HAVE LIVED HERE

RESPECT OUR HARVESTING AUTHORITY

WE HAVE SURVIVED FOR ALL THE YEARS

WE LEARN FROM ELDERS

WE PASS THIS ON TO THE NEXT GENERATION

THE SYSTEM IS BROKEN

RESPECT US + WORK TOGETHER!

INDUSTRIAL ACTIVITIES? NEED TO BE QUESTIONED

RESPECT OUR WAY OF LIFE!

MINISTER DOESN'T ACCEPT OUR ANSWERS... WE ARE NOT WANTING COLONIALISM

AS DENE WE KNOW TO LET THINGS BE

SOME DON'T BELIEVE WE CAN MANAGE OUR OWN HARVEST... WE COULD!

WE WANT TO MANAGE ON OUR OWN BASED ON OUR OWN TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE

WE ARE STUCK IN SYSTEMS WE DON'T BELIEVE IN

LACK OF RESOURCES...

WE SUPPORT SRRB... COMMUNITY PLANS CAN! OUR ABILITY TO SELF GOVERN MUST BE RESPECTED

THEY'RE NOT THE BOSS OF US!

HUNTING IS IMPORTANT TO US

WESTERN SCIENCE INTERFERES WITH NATURE... WE ARE NATURE, NOT SEPARATE FROM IT

WE SUPPORT SRRB... COMMUNITY PLANS CAN! OUR ABILITY TO SELF GOVERN MUST BE RESPECTED

RESPECT INDIGENOUS WAYS!

GNWT DOESN'T TRY TO UNDERSTAND US

ENR NEEDS TO SPEND TIME WITH US ON OUR LAND BEFORE THEY CAN UNDERSTAND OUR CULTURE

EVERY SPECIES HAS A ROLE... WATCH + OBSERVE

POLES IN CO-MANAGEMENT

PROVE EFFECTIVENESS OF QUOTAS + TAGS

TREATY RIGHTS WE ARE REASONABLE

ONLY TAKE WHAT WE NEED

PUBLIC LISTENING SESSION FORT GOOD HOPE

APR 27 2022

CARIBOU NUMBERS CYCLE THROUGH UPS AND DOWNS

HARVEST LESS WHEN NUMBERS ARE LOW

WOLF + GRIZZLY NUMBERS ARE HIGH

WOLVES HUNT LIKE US

LOTS OF MUSKOXEN NOW TOO... AN INCREASE FROM THE PAST

MOOSE POPULATION HAS INCREASED

RESPECT THE ANIMALS

DENE PEOPLE ARE EQUAL TO THE ANIMALS

SELF SUFFICIENCY IS IMPORTANT

PEOPLE + ANIMALS ARE NOT DIFFERENT

WOLF CULLING DOESN'T RESPECT OUR WAYS

ANIMALS NEED TO BE LEFT ALONE

WOLF ONLY EATS WHAT IT NEEDS

IT'S OUR RIGHT!

LIVING OUR TRADITIONS IS RECONCILIATION

LISTEN TO THE ELDERS' WISDOM

ANCIENT STORIES PASSED DOWN

HARVESTING IN SECRET OR GET CHARGED IN THE PAST

WOLF + GRIZZLY NUMBERS ARE HIGH

WOLVES HUNT LIKE US

LOTS OF MUSKOXEN NOW TOO... AN INCREASE FROM THE PAST

MOOSE POPULATION HAS INCREASED

RESPECT THE ANIMALS

DENE PEOPLE ARE EQUAL TO THE ANIMALS

SELF SUFFICIENCY IS IMPORTANT

PEOPLE + ANIMALS ARE NOT DIFFERENT

WOLF CULLING DOESN'T RESPECT OUR WAYS

ANIMALS NEED TO BE LEFT ALONE

WOLF ONLY EATS WHAT IT NEEDS

IT'S OUR RIGHT!

LIVING OUR TRADITIONS IS RECONCILIATION

LISTEN TO THE ELDERS' WISDOM

ANCIENT STORIES PASSED DOWN

BALANCE NATURE

WOLVES HUNT LIKE US

MAKE DECISIONS BY WORKING TOGETHER + RESPECT TRADITIONAL WAYS

NATURE CYCLES AND BALANCES OUT

WOLF ONLY EATS WHAT IT NEEDS

IT'S OUR RIGHT!

LIVING OUR TRADITIONS IS RECONCILIATION

LISTEN TO THE ELDERS' WISDOM

ANCIENT STORIES PASSED DOWN

COLLARS + SURVEYS STRESS THE ANIMALS

WATCH THAT HELICOPTER SURVEYS DON'T DISRUPT ANIMALS

INTERGENERATIONAL RELATIONS HAVE DIMINISHED

LEAVE THE CARIBOU LEADERS

LOOK AFTER CARIBOU TRAILS

WE MUST LIVE UP TO OUR TRADITIONS

Appendix 3: Procedural Guidance

The SRRB's *Rules for Hearings* (2019) apply, with necessary modifications for the Virtual PLS format being used for the Délįnę 2021 Virtual PLS (Rules 3.4-3.8). This procedural guidance supplements the SRRB's existing procedural guidance for the PLS, including:

- December 1, 2020, PLS Notice
- July 7, 2021, Resumption Notice
- December 17, 2021, Notice including Procedural Guidance

Issues and Presentations

The issues for the Délįnę 2021 Virtual PLS are as follows:

- **Issues for all five PLS:** What is the most effective way to conserve caribou?
- **Central issue for Délįnę 2021 PLS** - What should people's role be in maintaining healthy relationships between caribou and other wildlife?
- **New issue for Délįnę 2021 PLS:** Hı́dó Gogha Sė́négots'ı́zá (Plan for the Future) Policy and Guide.

The SRRB will expect parties to attend the PLS prepared to present, discuss and consider approaches to these issues. The SRRB is prepared to receive written presentations and oral submissions at the Délįnę 2021 Virtual PLS (Rule 10.5). The SRRB anticipates receiving submissions from parties on:

- The status of caribou, people, and planning
- Caribou relationships with predators (including dı́ga/wolf) and any proposed management measures
- Caribou relationships with competitors (including ęjıre/muskoxen) and any proposed management measures
- Hı́dó Gogha Sė́négots'ı́zá (Plan for the Future) Policy & Guide

Order in PLS

The SRRB will be responsible for the procedure during the PLS, with a Chair and a Facilitator. The Délįnę 2021 Virtual PLS will proceed according to the Agenda in the December 17, 2021, PLS Notice, with a slight modification to the order of presentations. The Agenda follows the Schedule in the Rules for Hearings, with modifications to items eight, nine, and ten for the PLS format to allow multiple presentations and final reply by all parties. Presentations will be followed by questions or comments from parties in the order listed below. The presenter will have an opportunity to respond to questions. Comments may be addressed in the presenter's concluding remarks at the end of the question/comment period.

- Délįnę Panel
- Colville Lake Panel

- Fort Good Hope Panel
- Norman Wells Panel
- Tulít'a Panel
- GNWT Environment and Natural Resources
- Other Parties (order to be determined)
- SRRB Board/Staff/Advisors

Parties will have the opportunity to make closing remarks before the end of the PLS. The SRRB intends this opportunity to allow for parties to reply to any of the evidence they have heard during the PLS. Final written arguments are due two weeks after the close of the PLS, on May 16, 2022.

Streaming and Recording

The SRRB convenes proceedings that are open to the public. The Délı̄nę 2021 Virtual PLS will be using internet communications to facilitate the proceeding. The SRRB and parties will be on Zoom, with some attending via community hubs while others may connect directly. The SRRB will make a feed of the PLS available on Facebook Livestream for public viewing. Any chat functions in these platforms will be monitored and moderated for appropriate conduct.

For those attending the Délı̄nę 2021 Virtual PLS, your attending this public proceeding with advance notice of broadcasting is your consent to be filmed and recorded by the SRRB. The SRRB is authorizing a live broadcast of the PLS only. Rebroadcasting is only permitted with the SRRB's consent.

COVID Safety Planning

We ask local “bubble” coordinators to provide appropriate measures and protocols for COVID-19 risks. All parties are asked to make smart decisions for themselves, their families and community members. Physical distancing, disinfecting, and mask use is still recommended in indoor gatherings.

Hı́dó Gogha Sė́nė́gots'ı́á (Planning for the Future) Policy & Guide

The SRRB provided a draft *Hı́dó Gogha Sė́nė́gots'ı́á (Community Conservation Plan) Process and Components Guide* to the Parties and the public for review and comment on September 14, 2021. The SRRB received some comments that were helpful in preparing a revised document. In addition, the SRRB has further developed its Hı́dó Gogha Sė́nė́gots'ı́á policy to certainty on the process for approval of plans and plan components. The updated *Hı́dó Gogha Sė́nė́gots'ı́á (Plan for the Future) Policy & Guide* brings together the policy and guide as a single document. The SRRB asks Parties to review this document in preparing written and oral submissions for the April 25-29 PLS.

PLS Submissions

The SRRB reminds all parties that all submissions for the Déljñę 2021 Virtual PLS are available on the SRRB's public registry (www.srrb.nt.ca). Documents in the registry will be considered evidence and subject to the SRRB's assessment, along with oral submissions during the PLS. If parties intend to rely on a document in the PLS, it should be filed by April 22, the same deadline for written and/or slide presentations (Rules 10.1, 12.5).

Toolkits and Technical Advisors

The SRRB engaged an Indigenous Knowledge Advisor (Janet Winbourne) and a Science Advisor (Colin Macdonald) to gather evidence relevant to the issues raised in the Déljñę 2021 Virtual PLS. The Indigenous Knowledge and Science Toolkits were entered in the public registry on January 16, 2021 for parties to review. The Advisors will also present oral evidence at the PLS.

Agenda for the Déljñę 2021 Virtual PLS

The SRRB provided Procedural Guidance and an Agenda on December 17, 2021. The Procedural Guidance remains valid and unchanged. The agenda has been updated with revised dates.

It is still expected that participants will gather in community bubbles each day at 9:00 am so that technical issues can be addressed and the proceeding can start promptly at 9:30 am. The schedule provides for two-hour sessions each morning and afternoon, with a lunch break. If needed, there will be other health breaks during each day. Breaks will be called where there are suitable opportunities in the agenda.

Monday, April 25

9:00 Community bubble gathering, Party preparations, and technical checks

9:30 Opening prayer

Chair and Déljñę Co-Host Opening Comments

Introductions

Review of Public Listening Agenda and Procedures

Acknowledgement of Written Submissions

Overview of key terminology and concepts

Presentation by Déljñę Panel (1 hour)

Parties' Questions/Comments (15 min. each)

Closing prayer

Tuesday, April 26

9:00 Community bubble gathering, Party preparations, and technical checks

9:30 Opening prayer

Agenda, key terminology and concepts

Presentations by Sahtú communities (30 min. each)

Parties' Questions/Comments (15 min. each)

- Colville Lake Panel
- Fort Good Hope Panel

Closing prayer

Wednesday, April 27

9:00 Community bubble gathering, Party preparations, and technical checks

9:30 Opening prayer

Agenda, key terminology and concepts

Presentations by Sahtú communities (30 min. each)

Parties' Questions/Comments (15 min. each)

- Norman Wells Panel
- Tulít'a Panel

Closing prayer

Thursday, April 28

9:00 Community bubble gathering, Party preparations, and technical checks

9:30 Opening prayer

Agenda, key terminology and concepts

Presentation by NWT Environment & Natural Resources (1 hour)

Parties' Questions/Comments (15 min. each)

Presentations on Indigenous Knowledge and Science Toolkits (Janet Winbourne and Colin Macdonald) (1 hour); Parties' Questions (15 min. each)

Closing prayer

Friday, April 29

9:00 Community bubble gathering, Party preparations, and technical checks

9:30 Opening prayer

Agenda, key terminology and concepts

Presentations by visiting Parties and the public

Closing remarks by the Panels/Parties

SRRB Closing Comments

Closing prayer

Modified Order of Events (from Schedule I, SRRB Rules for Hearings)

Schedule I: Order of Events at a Public Hearing of the ǂehdzo Got'ıneǂ Gots'ę Nákedı
(Sahtú Renewable Resources Board)

Opening Prayer

Opening Remarks by Chairperson

Introduction of Board Members, Board Staff and Technical Consultants

Introduction of the Parties

Review of Agenda for the Hearing

Preliminary and Procedural Matters (if any)

Acknowledgement of Written Submissions

Presentations from Parties

Questions and Comments from Parties on Presentations (repeated for each presentation)

Comments from the Public

Closing Remarks

Adjournment of the Hearing

Closing Prayer