



Délıne ʔehdzo Got'ıne and Délıne Got'ıne Government's Written Presentation for the Sahtu Renewable Resources Public Listening Session April 25, 2022

1. What is the most effective way to conserve caribou?

- Our Belare Wıle Gots'é ʔekwé – Caribou for All Time – A Délıne Got'ıne Plan of Action is the most effective way to conserve ʔekwé.
- A key point of our Plan and a key for successfully conserving caribou, is that you only take what you need and you do not go searching for what you do not see.
- ʔekwé are not happy with us and they are showing us their unhappiness with their behaviour.
- We can measure success by how much wildlife are looking for us.
- Our spiritual connections are the true source of Dene conservation.
- It is wrong to try to manage or be the boss of each other or other living things. We assume that all living things understand gots'edi k'ə, the behaviour that is required to live well together.
- We need to relearn our culture of hunting and gathering. This is what our Belare Wıle Gots'é ʔekwé – Caribou for All Time – A Délıne Got'ıne Plan of Action is all about.

2. What should people's role be in maintaining healthy relationships between caribou and other wildlife?

- Our Belare Wíle Gots'é ɔ́ekwé – Caribou for All Time – A Déljné Got'jné Plan of Action sets out how we think people should interact with wildlife.
- We need to focus on protecting the land, water and air for wildlife and not worrying about meddling with wildlife's relationships.
- We need to follow the cycle of harvesting – harvest what is available at each season and do not travel to go looking for what is not available. Some months will have more, that is the cycle. If we follow the cycle of harvesting, we do not need to hunt ɔ́ekwé.
- If we do not maintain good relationships with ungulates, they will not be around anymore.
- We have included other species of wildlife in our Plan. We cannot just rely on ɔ́ekwé and hope that they return soon and we cannot just focus on ɔ́ekwé. We need to be harvesting other species of wildlife and teaching each other how to harvest those species and prepare them.
- We need to only harvest the wildlife that is available. For example, we have had a very successful Whitefish harvest and need to do more of this in the future.
- It is important that we pass along our knowledge to younger generations so that they can rely on harvested foods for sustenance and learn our culture and ways of conservation. This will also get more people out on the land.
- We are part of the environment, that is why we are successful harvesters. If the wildlife are not healthy because of damage to the land, water or air, we will be impacted too.

- The history of wildlife regulation in NWT has made a mess of our culture. Now people tell on each other. This spreads poison in our community. We need to focus instead on helping each other. We need to teach each other how to harvest and prepare food. We need to help each other follow the Belare Wíle Gots'é ʔekwé – Caribou for All Time – A Déljné Got'jné Plan of Action. We need to teach those who do not have the skills how to get out on the land and harvest. We need to provide resources to those who need them to get out on the land. We want to thank the Déljné Got'jné Government for providing harvesters with equipment and support to get more people out on the land.
- Harvesting is only one part of being out on the land. There are other positive impacts too. The more people out on the land harvesting, the more information we will have about the status of the land, waters, and animals. Unless we are out on the land, we will not have that data on how things are going. This is how we monitor. This is how we get the information we need to make decisions.
- We really need to focus on helping each other get out on the land. It benefits us all and the wildlife if we are out there more often monitoring, connecting, and healing.
- To heal from the legacy of colonialism, we need a relationship with wildlife.
- The legacy of how wildlife has been regulated in the past has had lasting impacts on both us and wildlife. For example, in the past we were not allowed to harvest migratory birds. This meant that we could no longer gather together to do our ceremonies related to migratory birds or work together to harvest migratory birds. It was difficult to transfer the knowledge about how to properly harvest migratory birds from grandparents to grandchildren. A lot of the skills and knowledge were lost. It is taking a long time for us to relearn them.
- It is a long road for Dene people and wildlife to recover from this past and to heal. Our Belare Wíle Gots'é ʔekwé – Caribou for All Time – A Déljné Got'jné Plan of Action sets out the path we need to take to all heal.

- We need ENR to do more monitoring in the whole of the Sahtu. And to support us in doing monitoring too.
- Díga
 - Díga are our competitors. They are better hunters than humans and so we do not want to be competitors with them.
 - In general, we stay away from díga. We will trap them if they are being a nuisance on our trap line or if they are in town, but we do not usually seek them out to harvest them.
 - Díga manage their own lives. We should let animals take care of themselves and not interfere. Studies show that culling díga does not help conservation. We need to let nature take care of itself.
 - Díga are an indicator of a healthy ecosystem. When there is a healthy díga population, the rest of the ecosystem is healthy too.
 - We do not want to create problems by meddling with díga. Instead, we are trying to strengthen our spiritual relationships with ɬekwé through prayer and renewing our traditional practices.
 - We assume that other predators have an agreement with ɬekwé like díga do so that we can all live in balance.
 - We do not think that targeting díga populations is going to help the caribou in the long run. ENR needs to consider the impact of climate change and people damaging land and polluting the water on ɬekwé and predators and competitors. Climate change is having huge impacts. Simply culling díga is not going to bring ɬekwé back and instead it may have devastating consequences for díga and the whole ecosystem.
- ɬəjire
 - The history of colonial ɬəjire management teaches us important lesson about the effect of outsiders disrupting the Dene ts'ı́ı, and it takes a long time and a lot of effort to re-establish it.
 - This is one of the reasons it is so important for Dene people to maintain our role as environmental stewards (which must include

Dene ɬəɬa, Dene governance, and knowledge transfer to new generations).

- We are relearning how to butcher ɬəjire and prepare the meat to eat. It has been so long since we harvested and ate ɬəjire and have forgotten how to do it and are not used to the taste of the meat.
- Sahco
 - We need to focus on our relationship with sahcho. Sahcho have value in terms of the environment and ecology.
 - We need to work to prevent encounters with sahcho by avoiding them in the spring and monitoring cabins.

3. Hıdó Gogha Sénégots'ıá (Community Conservation Plan) Process and Components

- We do not need just complaints. We need solutions. Our Belare Wíle Gots'é ɬekwé – Caribou for All Time – A Délıne Got'ıne Plan of Action is a solution.
- Our Plan works. Hunters are sorting themselves out amongst themselves. If there are issues about people not following the rules, it will come out. We can self-regulate. We can make our own decisions and support each other. We can decide where and how to spend money to support our Plan.
- We are seeing indicators that our Plan is working:
 - We do not hear people talking about ɬehdaıla ɬekwé much anymore.
 - People are happy with the harvesting support resources that are being offered, we are not hearing many complaints.
 - People are learning the traditional ways to prepare foods.
 - There is compliance with our Plan – people are harvesting only what is available.
 - Our whitefish harvest has been very successful in recent years. More people are out harvesting, more people are coming along to learn how to harvest and prepare fish. Whitefish are available. We need to be harvesting them and not looking for ɬekwé, which are not around

right now. The success of our whitefish harvest shows how following the cycle of harvesting is so important for our healing and the health of our ecosystem and people.

- Our Dene way is to help people comply by helping people understand what our Plan is all about. The key is hunt what is available and do not go looking for what is not close by.
- We need to support harvesters to harvest available wildlife – that is how we will be successful.
- Harvesters need to talk to each other. This is how we improve our plan. We can react to issues and address if anyone is not following the plan.
- As long as people are not breaking laws, we need to have enforcement by harvesters who use the environment and make their own decisions.
- We are constantly reviewing our Plan and decisions to make sure it is working and to make changes as needed.
- Our Plan is a huge step in the direction of reconciliation with our land and within our communities. Many of our people have given up, succumbing to addictions and despair. We are shining a little light of hope for them.
- We ask that the GNWT formally incorporate community conservation plans (now referred to as Hı́dó Gogha Sénégots'ı́á (HGS)) into the laws and policies of the GNWT. This would be a huge step towards reconciliation and is our only hope of protecting our environment and preserving the Dene way of life in the face of climate change.
- We ask the GNWT to also formally accept our concept of harvesting. We do not want the TAH. We need to look at the whole harvest, over the whole year. The cycle of harvesting is crucial to our Plan's success in protecting ɔ́ekwé and other wildlife now and in the future.

Appendices

1. Bateyko, Darwin. *Evaluating Co-Management in the Sahtu: A Framework for Analysis*. 2003. U of Calgary, Master's Thesis

2. Donihee, John (2018) "Reconciliation: Territorial Wildlife Regimes and the Future of the Northern Wildlife Resources" Paper presented at the Symposium on Environment in the Courtroom: Enforcing Issues in Canadian Wildlife Protection March 2-3, 2018 at U of Calgary
3. Ermine, Willie (2007) "The Ethical Space" 6:1 Indigenous LJ 193
4. Fumoleau, René (2004) *As Long as this Land Shall Last: A History of Treaty 8 and Treaty 11 1870-1939*, U of Calgary Press
5. Pierotti, Raymond (2010) "Sustainability of Natural Populations: Lessons from Indigenous Knowledge" 15: 4 Hum Dimens Wildl 274
6. Wilmers, Christopher et al (2020) "How climate impacts the composition of wolf-killed elk in northern Yellowstone National Park" 2020:89 J Anim Ecol. 1511
7. Graphic summary of Déljné's presentation from the Colville Lake Public Listening Session