

SRRB Déljñę 2021 Public Listening Session (PLS)
Déljñę Got'jñę Government and Déljñę ʔehdzo Got'jñę
FINAL SUBMISSION

PLS Issue 1: What is the most effective way to conserve caribou?

1. Our Belare Wíle Gots'ę ʔekwé – Caribou for All Time – A Déljñę Got'jñę Plan of Action (the “**Déljñę Got'jñę ʔekwé Plan**”) outlines the most effective way to conserve caribou. Years of work have gone into developing and refining this plan so that it sets out the best path forward to conserve caribou. As we said during the Déljñę panel's presentation, as long as we are here, we will continue to work on our plan and follow it. Our wildlife and caribou are very important to us. We urge the SRRB and ENR to re-read our plan, the answers on how to conserve caribou are there.
2. We ask the SRRB to recommend that the GNWT engage in a collaborative process with the SRRB, the Renewable Resources Councils, and governments in the Sahtu to co-develop GNWT legislation and policies that formally recognize and incorporate Community Conservation Plans or Hjdó Gogha Sénégots'ízá (Plans for the Future) (“**CCP/HGS**”) into the wildlife management regime in the Sahtu. Such work would be a step towards reconciliation and healing the wounds from decades of colonial wildlife management.
3. During the PLS, we heard evidence from many people about the devastating impacts of colonial wildlife management (for example, migratory bird harvesting bans and the white people's muskox overharvest and then colonial government's harvest ban). Colonial wildlife management has failed to conserve wildlife and led to unacceptable losses to our culture and traditional knowledge. Now is the time for change. The Tulít'a panel talked about the importance of strengthening our culture and passing it on to future generations. For the health of our environment and ourselves, we need a new approach. As the Fort Good Hope panel said, conservation is an act of reconciliation. Our authority was taken away from us for so long, by giving it back to us and creating a respectful path forward together we can strengthen our culture, heal wounds and work towards reconciliation.
4. We ask the SRRB to provide and to recommend that the GNWT provide capacity support for each Sahtu community to fully implement their CCP/HGS. To be successful, we need adequate and reliable funding and resources to develop and implement the programs outlined in our Déljñę Got'jñę ʔekwé Plan.

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

5. The evidence at the Public Listening Session was clear and consistent. We must respect the balance of nature. As we said during the Déljné panel's presentation, animals have their own way of life and we do too, and we must respect that. We are not the boss of wildlife. Animals make laws for themselves and follow them. Wolves and caribou have an agreement amongst themselves that the wolves can feed on the caribou. That is their agreement. We cannot interfere with them. We should be thankful that animals are their own bosses and take care of themselves.
6. We have wolves when the land is healthy. If we get rid of wolves, we will not get caribou back. It does not work like that. What is on the land is not all for humans. We need to respect animals, their lives and their laws. If we do, we will have a good life and be strong again. We need balance and it is not for humans to interfere with that balance. Look to the Yellowstone example in our written presentation and in Colin Macdonald's presentation. We need wolves and we need balance for the ecosystem to be healthy.
7. We are seasonal harvesters. As set out in our Déljné Got'jné ʔekwé Plan, we need to return to harvesting what is available and not go looking for what is not there. We do not just hunt one species, we hunt several. We are focusing on increasing our fish harvesting and teaching each other harvesting and food preparation methods.
8. Our land is getting warmer. The Norman Wells panel explained that climate change is a much bigger concern for them than the impact of wolves on caribou, and we agree. We are also concerned about the impact of mines on caribou. These are human created problems. As the Fort Good Hope panel said, we need actions to control negative human behaviour not actions to control wildlife.
9. We support Colville Lake's request during their panel's presentation for the SRRB to look at the impact of human created habitat disturbances on caribou (such as industrial development). As was repeated by several panels during the Public Listening Session, humans are competitors and predators too. We need to look at the impacts of human habitat disturbances and how those can be lessened before we start meddling with the balance of nature by manipulating other wildlife competitors and predators, which may have disastrous consequences for the ecosystem.
10. We ask that the SRRB decide that no wolf culling programs should be conducted in the Sahtu at this time. We ask the SRRB to recommend that if ENR is actively considering any wolf culling programs in the Sahtu they must first obtain consent

from each of the Sahtu communities and RRCs before engaging in any wolf culling in the Sahtu. ENR cannot continue a colonial approach to wildlife management. As Colin Macdonald noted in his presentation, ENR does not even know the implications of wolf culling on other species. We know. Our laws and 1000s of years of experience have taught us the importance of respecting animals, their laws, and lives and respecting the balance of nature and to not interfere.

11. The best way to monitor what is happening on the land is by being out there. We need to help each other get out onto the land. We need to encourage our people to talk to each other and share what they are observing. We cannot depend on ENR to tell us what is happening on our land. As Indigenous people, we live on the land and know what we are talking about. We need to encourage more and more people to get out on the land and talk to each other. This is how we should monitor what is happening with wildlife.
12. Many panels raised concerns about the invasive monitoring techniques that ENR is using to monitor wildlife. We ask the SRRB to recommend that ENR only use non-invasive wildlife monitoring methods in the Sahtu, such as adequately funding communities to conduct effective on the ground monitoring (no more collars, no more flights to count animals). Where the GNWT does collect collar information, the GNWT must treat this information as strictly confidential and not share caribou location information with anyone outside of those that must know the information at the GNWT.

PLS Issue #3: Hjdó Gogha Sėnégots'įá (Plans for the Future) Component Guide and Policy

13. The Hjdó Gogha Sėnégots'įá (Plans for the Future) Component Guide and Policy ("**HGS Guide and Policy**") is very detailed. We think that the document would be more helpful if it was written in plain language, was shorter, and had more visual aids.
14. We ask the SRRB host workshops in each of the communities on the HGS Guide and Policy so that we can better understand the elements of the guide and policy and then we will be able to share our feedback. We ask that these workshops include simpler and plain language materials, visual aids, and translation be provided.
15. We want to work with the SRRB on the HGS Guide and Policy to confirm how existing CCP/HGSs will be reviewed and evaluated by the SRRB as they are refined and amended over time. CCP/HGSs are living documents and are designed to evolve. We want to better understand how the SRRB sees our evolving Déljñę Got'įñę ʔekwė Plan interacting with the HGS Guide and Policy.

Once we have a better understanding, we can provide more detailed feedback on the HGS Guide and Policy.

Answers to Questions from the Public Listening Session

16. At the PLS, ENR asked us for an update on the Déljné Got'jné Government's approval of our Déljné Got'jné ʔekwé Plan. We said that we would provide a more detailed response in our final argument:

The 2019 version of our Déljné Got'jné ʔekwé Plan was approved by the Déljné K'aowədó Kə, Déljné ʔehdzo Got'jné (Renewable Resources Council) and Dene Gha Gok'ə Réhkw'I in fall 2021.

In advance of the Déljné 2021 Public Listening Session, our ʔekwé Working Group added to the 2019 version of the Déljné Got'jné ʔekwé Plan in the fall of 2021. Our ʔekwé Working Group includes knowledge holders and representatives from the Déljné ʔehdzo Got'jné, Déljné Got'jné Government (DGG), ʔəhdakə K'aowə Kə, and Tsá Túé Biosphere Reserve. Our ʔekwé Working Group made the following changes to the 2019 version of the Déljné Got'jné ʔekwé Plan in 2021:

- a) A new ʔəʔa: ʔəleghá ts'eredı (sharing, giving);
- b) An explanation that náts'əjú (healing, reconciliation, reconnecting with land/environment) is an overarching principle of this plan;
- c) More information on competitors and predators in the ʔededáhk'ə program area;
- d) More information about governance, jurisdiction, and working with others in the ʔedets'ə K'áokerewe program area; and
- e) A summary of implementation work to date in the "Learning as We Go" section.

(The changes are highlighted in yellow in the 2021 Déljné Got'jné ʔekwé Plan.)

While these changes were made by the ʔekwé Working Group, the DGG has not yet formally supported those edits because of covid related meeting restrictions and a heavy agenda given our upcoming election. When the DGG does formally support the 2021 version of the Déljné Got'jné ʔekwé Plan, we will notify the ENR and the SRRB.

17. The SRRB asked us if there are any conditions under which we may want to hunt wolves over and above what we traditionally do and we said we would include an answer in our final submission:

If there is a safety issue with a wolf coming into the community, then we would consider harvesting the wolf. But we need to consider the best way to conduct the harvest so that the harvest follows our 7e7a.