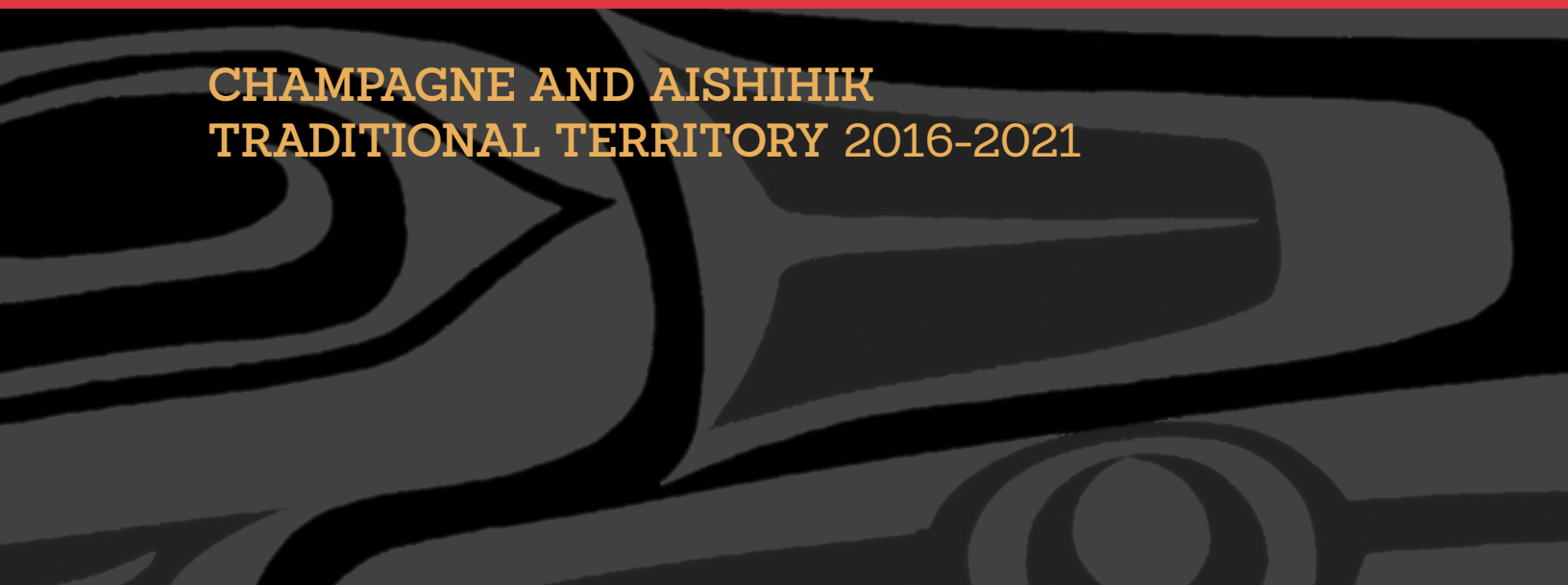




COMMUNITY-BASED FISH AND WILDLIFE WORK PLAN

CHAMPAGNE AND AISHIHIK
TRADITIONAL TERRITORY 2016-2021



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YG photos unless otherwise noted.

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Introduction

Melody McKenzie

WHAT IS THIS PLAN ABOUT?

Community-based fish and wildlife work plans are one way that Yukon government, First Nation governments and renewable resources councils come together to decide the priority fish, wildlife and habitat issues for their area, as well as how – and by whom – these issues will be tackled.

The following community-based work plan is the first developed for the Traditional Territory. It builds on previous work and includes new ideas and issues brought forward by community members, Yukon government (YG), the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations (CAFN), and the Alsek Renewable Resources Council (ARRC).

The Yukon portion of the Champagne and Aishihik Traditional Territory is approximately 29,000 square kilometers in size and located in southwest Yukon. In Yukon, the Traditional Territory is neighbored by Kwanlin Dün, Carcross/Tagish, Little Salmon/Carmacks, Kluane, and White River First Nations Traditional Territories. Although activities described in this work plan only applies to the areas where the Traditional Territories do not overlap, the parties regularly work together on joint fish and wildlife initiatives in overlap areas. The Champagne and Aishihik First Nations Traditional Territory also includes approximately 12,000 square kilometers in northern British Columbia as well as the southwest portion of Kluane National Park and Reserve. Although these areas are not included in the plan, it is recognized that in some cases there is a need to work with other jurisdictions on fish and wildlife management.

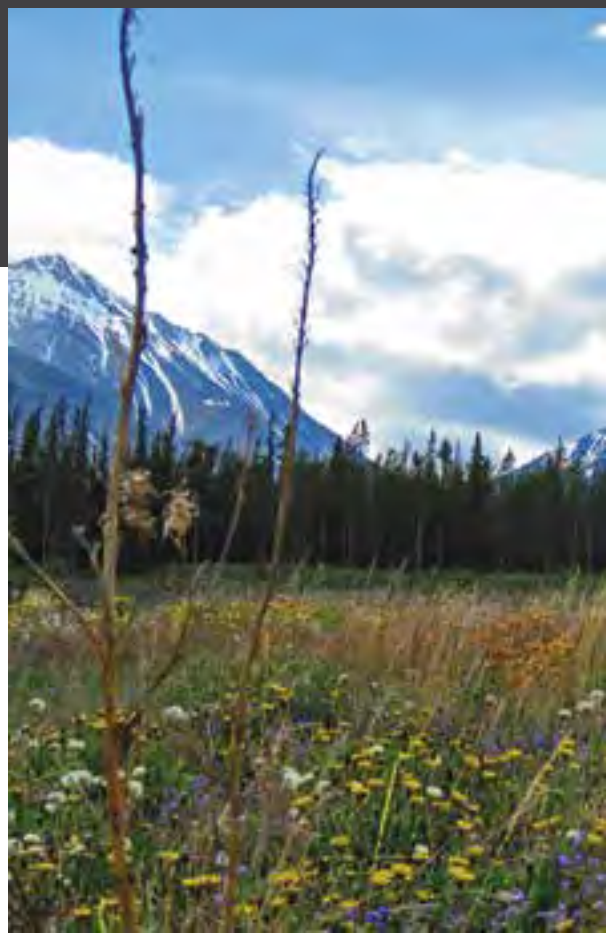
This plan comes after the Alsek Moose Management Plan and the Aishihik Integrated Wildlife Management Plan. There are a variety of other management plans that are currently in place in the Traditional Territory and this work plan is intended to complement those existing plans.



Melody McKenzie



Bill McRoberts



PRIORITIES

The following were identified by the community, Champagne and Aishihik First Nations, the Alsek Renewable Resources Council, and Yukon government as the most important priorities to address in the Traditional Territory over the next five years:

- **Freshwater Fish:** Population recovery of lake trout and burbot.
- **Moose | Kanday:** Population recovery.
- **Sheep | Mbay:** Population monitoring and harvest management.
- **Trapping:** Revitalizing the trapping industry in the Traditional Territory.

Where's Baby Bear?

Brooklyn Miller

Melody McKenzie

MONITORING AND STEWARDSHIP

There are also monitoring and stewardship activities outlined in the work plan for the following species and topics:

- Caribou | Udzi
- Mountain Goats
- Wolves
- Grizzly Bears
- Upland Game Birds
- Wildlife Viewing | Nena Níj
- Water Monitoring
- Off-road Vehicle Management



HOW THE PLAN WAS DEVELOPED

In April 2014, we hosted a community meeting at the Da Kų Cultural Centre. More than 50 community members attended to share their ideas about community-based fish and wildlife management. We also updated participants on recent fish and wildlife work in the region.

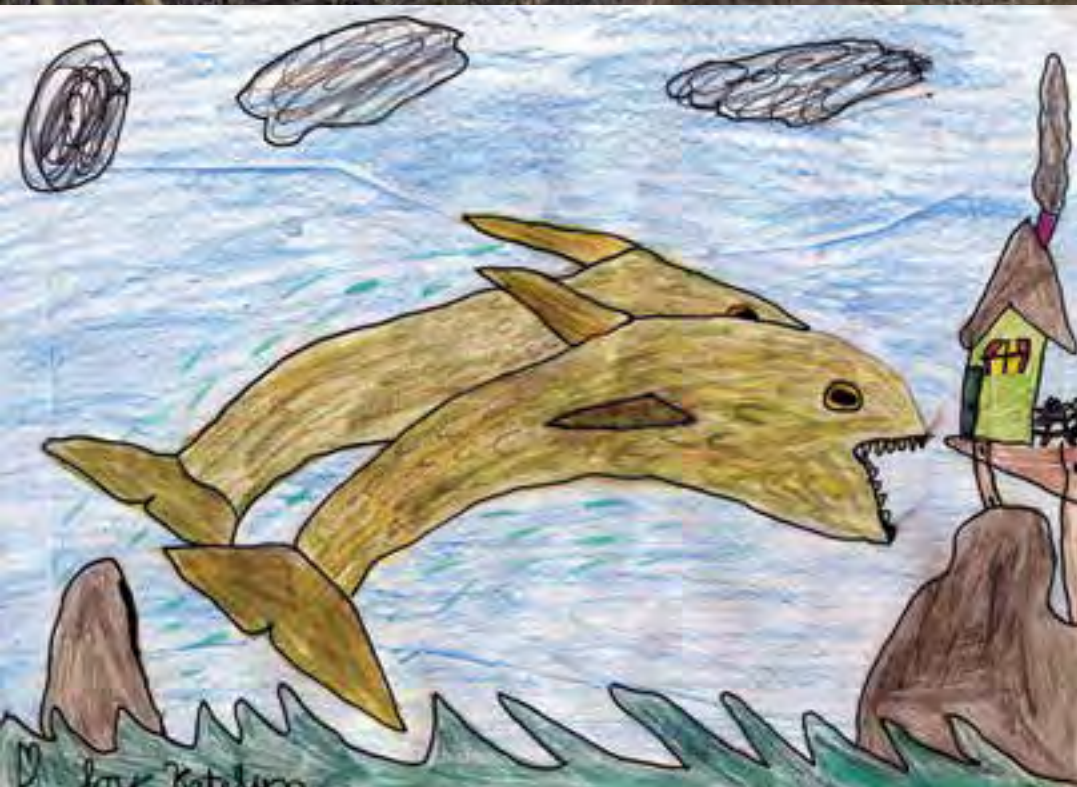
In the spring of 2014, we circulated questionnaires to all the residents of the Champagne and Aishihik Traditional Territory. The questionnaire was the first step in gathering current community views and ideas on fish and wildlife management. We received 72 detailed responses about current concerns about fish and wildlife in the Champagne and Aishihik Traditional Territory.

In November 2014, we hosted two open houses in Champagne and Haines Junction to report back what we heard from the community.

Through a series of three workshops held in Haines Junction during the spring of 2015, the parties discussed and reviewed the information collected and developed a direction for the work plan.

The work plan was drafted by the parties and then presented to the community in the summer of 2017.





Katelyn Hirsch

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The planning team would like to thank the many community members who shared their knowledge and wisdom through the planning process.

In particular, we would like to acknowledge the community members who participated in community meetings and open houses, and who took the time to respond to the written survey. We hope this work plan reflects your interests and we look forward to your continued support of this work in the coming months and years.

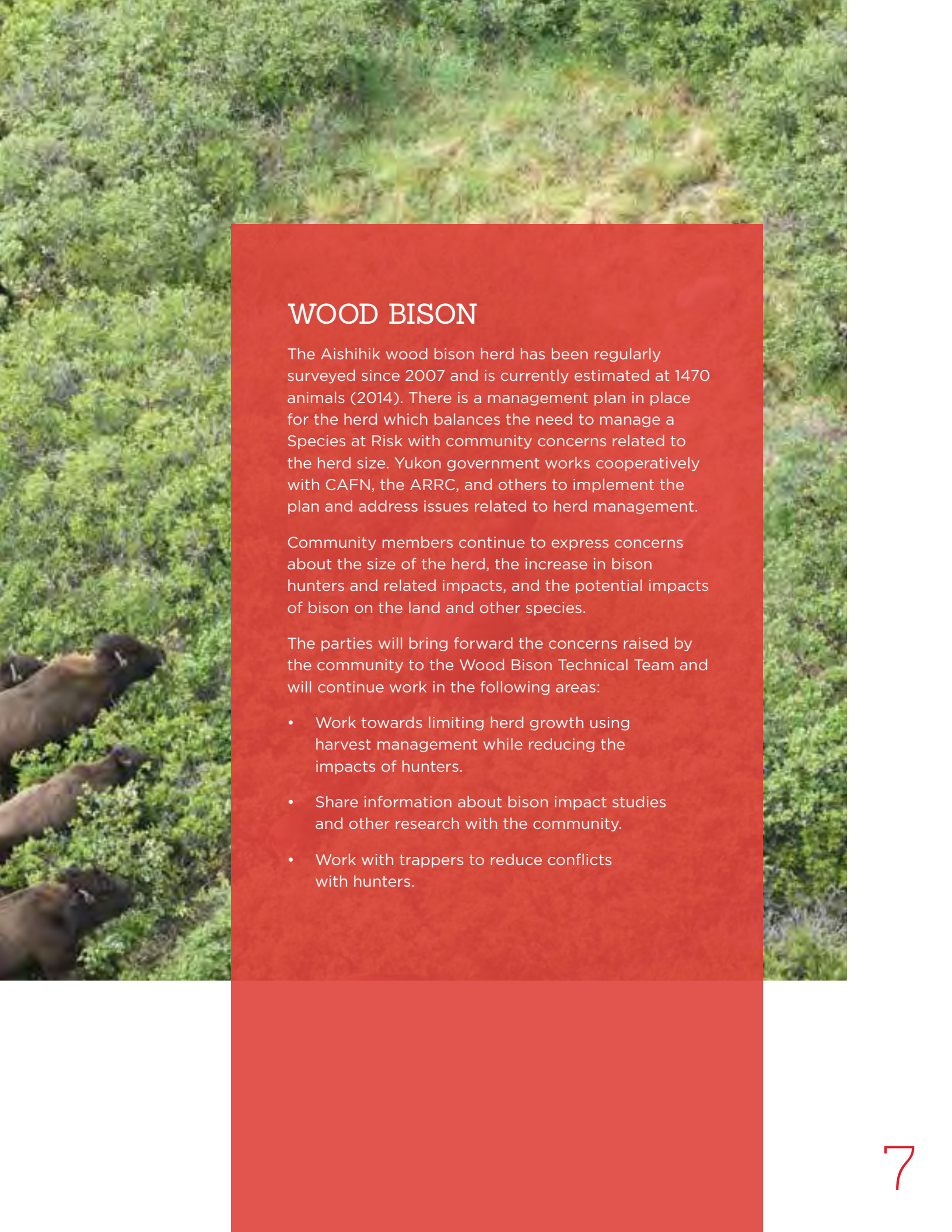
The planning team would like to extend a special thanks to the youth from the community who submitted artwork to be included in the plan.

Finally, we are grateful for Champagne and Aishihik First Nations Heritage Department for providing Southern Tutchone translations and sharing photographs to be used in the plan.



Other Topics

This work plan is not intended to duplicate other ongoing work in the region. Concerns related to the Aishihik wood bison herd, salmon, and the Dezadeash lake fishery that were raised and discussed by the community and the parties are summarized briefly here but will be addressed through other planning initiatives.



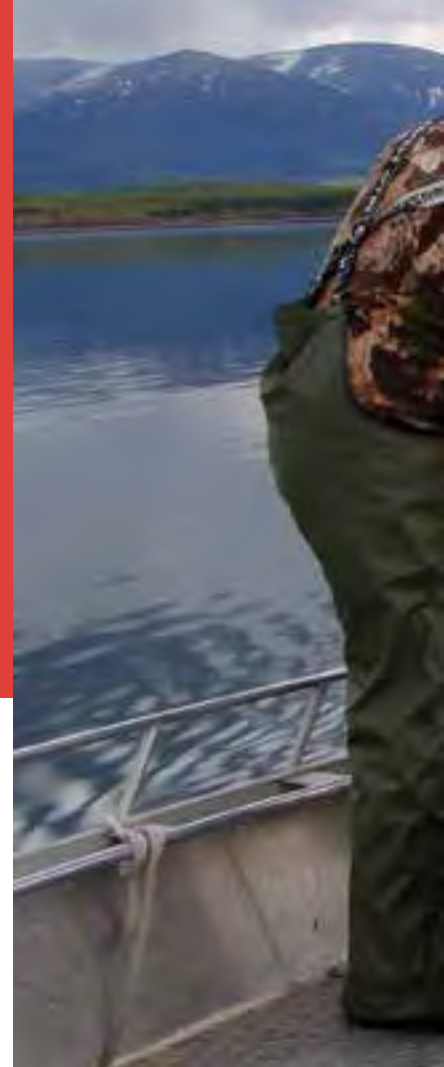
WOOD BISON

The Aishihik wood bison herd has been regularly surveyed since 2007 and is currently estimated at 1470 animals (2014). There is a management plan in place for the herd which balances the need to manage a Species at Risk with community concerns related to the herd size. Yukon government works cooperatively with CAFN, the ARRC, and others to implement the plan and address issues related to herd management.

Community members continue to express concerns about the size of the herd, the increase in bison hunters and related impacts, and the potential impacts of bison on the land and other species.

The parties will bring forward the concerns raised by the community to the Wood Bison Technical Team and will continue work in the following areas:

- Work towards limiting herd growth using harvest management while reducing the impacts of hunters.
- Share information about bison impact studies and other research with the community.
- Work with trappers to reduce conflicts with hunters.



SALMON

Salmon populations are important to the Champagne and Aishihik citizens, and to other Yukoners.

Many community members raised concerns over low numbers of salmon at Klukshu and Shāwshe. As the management of salmon stocks and fisheries is a federal responsibility, salmon will not be addressed in this work plan.

The Yukon Salmon Sub-Committee is a public advisory body established under the Umbrella Final Agreement. The committee is a forum for public involvement in all aspects of the management of salmon stocks and fisheries and provides recommendations to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and First Nation governments. There is interest by CAFN and the ARRC to work together to rebuild the population in the Alsek River drainage by expanding on the considerable work and experience on the Yukon River.

- The Alsek Renewable Resources Council will continue to bring forward concerns and interests from the community to the Yukon Salmon Sub-Committee.



DEZADEASH LAKE | Tat'l'at Mān

The parties began work on a management plan for Dezadeash Lake more than 15 years ago. The lake is an important fishing area for community members and non-residents.

A range of priorities are identified in the plan including the status of fish populations; sustainability of harvest; fish health and contaminants; water and fish habitat; and education and outreach. Considerable work has been completed at Dezadeash Lake recently including a Summer Profundal Index Netting (SPIN) and an angler harvest survey.

One outstanding issue includes concerns about fishing lake trout when they are temperature stressed and congregated in easily accessible, cold-water bays. CAFN submitted a regulation change proposal in 2015 to close fishing at Tower Bay on Dezadeash Lake between July 1st and August 15th. This proposal was accepted with the provision that complementary closures will be implemented to limit subsistence and licensed harvest. These closures will be reviewed for effectiveness and compliance five years after they are implemented. The parties also identified other approaches to addressing the concerns including better understanding fishing practices in the bays, and increasing education and enforcement.

- Following the outcome of the regulation change process, the parties will work to complete the Dezadeash Lake Management Plan.



Communicating and Sharing Information

The value of working towards strong communications and information sharing between the parties and with the community was a recurring theme during planning.

Improving communications and information sharing is intended to encourage the parties to share knowledge and resources, and work in a coordinated fashion towards common fish and wildlife management objectives.

The following outlines specific guidance for improving communication and information sharing. Additional activities are also included in the sections that follow.



Keona Sheardown

BETWEEN THE PARTIES

- Collaboratively share information and ensure all parties are made aware of relevant fish and wildlife management issues.
- Invite Yukon government biologists and others to share information on current management challenges.

WITH THE COMMUNITY

- Involve all parties in community outreach and information sharing.
- Clarify the intended audience for communications and always strive to meet the needs of the audience when considering format, delivery, etc.
- Communicate frequently about work being done in the region, including regular monitoring, special research and projects, and relevant past work.
- Use existing tools and explore new ways to communicate with the public, including newsletters, meetings, social media, etc.
- Involve the community in work activities where practical.



Freshwater Fish

The health and status of freshwater fish is a high priority in the Traditional Territory. The most important lakes for fishing include: Aishihik, Dezadeash, Kloo, Kusawa, and Pine. Kathleen Lake is an important fishing lake located in Kluane National Park and Reserve and is not addressed in this management plan.

The region provides valuable fishing opportunities for many Yukoners. Local people appreciate and value the opportunity to gather together to fish at nearby lakes. Fish are an important subsistence food for Champagne and Aishihik citizens and the cultural connection to lakes and fishing remains strong. Throughout the year camps and family gatherings are focused, in part, on traditional fishing opportunities.

Recent results show low fish numbers in some lakes in the region and this is cause for concern. Roads and campgrounds have made some lakes more accessible than others and as a result some populations have been overharvested. There is a need to share information with the public and users about fish biology, reasons for population declines and recovery rates, as well as ways anglers can help depleted populations recover.



As it is believed that the main cause of low fish numbers is overharvest, there are some new regulations and permit requirements in place to allow wild stocks to rebuild. These changes cause concerns about harvest opportunities and moving fishing pressure to other lakes in the Traditional Territory.

As well, there are some concerns about the overall health of some lakes and the potential impact of lake health on fish species declines. Particular concerns for lake health has been raised for Kloo and Pine Lake. There is an interest to explore other options for understanding lake health and working towards supporting research that may provide insight into community concerns about overall lake health and fish population declines.

In 2010 Environment Yukon launched an awareness campaign about aquatic invasive species. Signs are being placed at boat launches at Kathleen River and in government campgrounds reminding people to check, drain, and clean their boats when moving between lakes.

Live release fishing in Yukon is promoted as a management tool by releasing the larger fish to allow them to spawn, and keeping the smaller fish for food. There may be a need to monitor in areas where there are concerns that fish are being snagged. Snagging is catching or attempting to catch a fish with a hook in any manner other than by inducing it to take the hook in its mouth. Community members have ongoing concerns about potential impacts of live release fishing on fish in the Traditional Territory, as it is inconsistent with First Nation values.



Pine Lake | Si Mān

WHAT ARE THE ISSUES?

Pine Lake is very important to the community of Haines Junction. It is located 6 km east of Haines Junction along the Alaska Highway and is a central gathering place for community members. The lake is relatively small and shallow, with road access, boat launches and has a popular government campground. In recent years declines in lake trout and burbot populations in Pine Lake have caused concern.

The Pine Lake Management Plan was developed by the Village of Haines Junction and Champagne and Aishihik First Nations in 1986 and submitted to Yukon government. The intent of the plan was to protect traditional land use activities and recreational interests while maintaining the environmental quality of Pine Lake for future generations.



Lake Trout | Mbet

Lake trout catch rates at Pine Lake have declined significantly in recent years as shown through angler harvest surveys in 1990, 2002, and 2009. Angler harvest surveys found that lake trout fishing effort has increased and success has decreased over time. Subsistence harvest information has not been collected.

The first Summer Profundal Index Netting (SPIN) survey, in 2010, caught very few lake trout, suggesting a very small population. Previous netting surveys in 1993, 2001 and 2006, using a different method, indicated consistently low lake trout abundance.

To address the depleted lake trout population, a new territorial regulation was put in place (2015) requiring all lake trout in Pine Lake to be released. Signs will be posted at the lake to educate users on the new regulation.

There is also federal regulation change underway, which would require only single barbless hooks on Pine Lake. In the meantime, anglers are being asked to use single barbless hooks. Communicating concerns about low trout numbers and changes in the regulations is a priority. The need and timing for additional monitoring of lake trout at Pine Lake will be revisited at the work plan review.

Some members of the community have expressed interest in stocking Pine Lake. There are concerns among the parties about the risks of stocking Pine Lake - which is part of an open lake system. When stocking open systems there are concerns about the transfer of disease and parasites, the introduction of aquatic invasive species, and genetic implications. In general, stocking can be expensive, has the potential to detract from existing monitoring programs, and can create unrealistic expectations among anglers. As well, Yukoners place a high value on wild fish in open lake systems. While acknowledging these concerns, there is still interest from the community to continue to discuss options related to stocking open systems such as Pine Lake.



Burbot | Kwätsu

A burbot mark-recapture study was completed in 2012 and results showed lower numbers than expected. Set line permits are no longer being issued for Pine Lake, although burbot caught with standard angling gear may be kept. YG is currently conducting a review of burbot management and recovery across North America. There is a need to share information about burbot declines with the public and to determine an approach for addressing it in Yukon. The need and timing for additional burbot monitoring at Pine Lake will be revisited at the work plan review.

Arctic Grayling | T'àwa

There is a low abundance of Arctic grayling at Pine Lake. Reductions in catch numbers of grayling is thought to be related to fish passage issues and culvert modifications on Pine Creek made in the 1970s. Recent improvements to the Pine Creek culvert may help Arctic grayling numbers increase. There is a need to assess the current state of the culvert and determine if additional work is needed.

In recent years inconsistency in regulations related to Arctic grayling were noted. In 2003 there was a regulation change proposal submitted by the ARRC and YG to change the catch and possession limits for Arctic Grayling at Pine Lake until the stock showed significant recovery. Although the regulation change was recommended by the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board and accepted by the Minister the regulation change was not made due to an administrative oversight. At present, there is a need to determine if the 2003 regulation is still relevant and revisit if needed.



Alia Drummond

Overall Lake Health and Fish Habitat

There have been concerns expressed about the general health of Pine Lake and an interest in exploring options for monitoring water quality. In particular, concerns have been raised about water quality around cottage lots and near the boat launch. As well, there are some concerns about permafrost melt on the north side of the lake. Water monitoring work should be linked with other initiatives in the region.

Through discussions on options for addressing declining fish populations there is agreement to work towards better understanding existing fish habitat at Pine Lake.

Keeping People Connected to the Lake

It is important that community members feel connected to the lake when harvest restrictions are in place. Sharing information about conservation concerns and communicating actions being taken to address issues may help. Displacement of harvest restrictions on other fisheries will be monitored through continued angler surveys (creel surveys) in the region. As well, continuing to host community events at the lake and promoting alternate harvest options (e.g. pike, whitefish) may help to maintain community connections with the area.

PINE LAKE OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES 2016-2021

Objectives	Proposed Activities	Who?	Priority
Rebuild lake trout, burbot, and Arctic grayling populations at Pine Lake	Continue to communicate with the public about low lake trout numbers in Pine Lake and why the new regulations are in place (e.g. community newsletters, educational and wildlife viewing events, etc.)	All	High
	Determine subsistence harvest levels on Pine Lake and work with CAFN to reduce incidental trout harvest during whitefish netting.	CAFN/YG	Medium
	Explore options for water quality monitoring at Pine Lake. Water quality monitoring initiatives should consider regional monitoring priorities and past monitoring work, and should include other agencies for funding and collaboration.	All	Medium
	Work towards better understanding of existing fish habitat at Pine Lake.	YG	Medium
	Continue to discuss options related to stocking open systems such as Pine Lake.	All	Medium
	Revisit the need and timing for additional lake trout and burbot monitoring at Pine Lake during the work plan review.	All	Medium
	Investigate historical patterns of Arctic grayling abundance in Pine Lake, and determine if recent fish passage improvements resulted in population recovery.	YG	Medium
Maintain community connections to the lake	Continue to host community events at Pine Lake.	ARRC/CAFN	Medium
	Promote focused harvest efforts and respectful use on alternate fish species like pike and whitefish.	All	High



Piper Wirth





Kloo Lake | K'ùà

WHAT ARE THE ISSUES?

Kloo Lake is located 30 km north-west of Haines Junction along the Alaska Highway. It is a small, shallow lake that is accessible by vehicle. Historically the majority of angling pressure at the lake was focused on burbot and fish were caught during the winter using baited set-lines. Set-lines are not currently being permitted on Kloo Lake due to low burbot population estimates in October 2014. There is also at least one commercial operator who regularly guides anglers on the lake in the summer, primarily targeting pike.

The burbot population size was estimated using a mark-recapture study in 2014 and results indicate burbot numbers in Kloo Lake are very low. Set line holders were informed about the survey results and during the winter of 2014 were asked to voluntarily refrain from harvesting burbot at Kloo Lake. As of April 2015 set line permits are no longer being issued for Kloo Lake. There is a need to share information about burbot biology, low burbot numbers, restrictions, and next steps with the public.

It is recognized that low burbot numbers are most likely due to overharvest and managing harvest is the most effective way to rebuild the population. However, concerns about the overall health of the lake and the potential impact of lake health on species declines have been expressed. In particular, community members have noticed stagnant (black) water at the lake and have concerns about potential impacts of permafrost melt, contaminants in fish (specifically lake trout), and sedimentation. There is an interest in exploring options for water quality monitoring and collecting fish to be tested by the Animal Health Unit.

There were also discussions about collecting local and traditional knowledge from community members and users to better understand historical trends related to lake health and fish populations at Kloo Lake.

KLOO LAKE OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES 2016-2021

Objectives	Proposed Activities	Who?	Priority
Rebuild burbot population at Kloo Lake.	Use harvest management tools to rebuild burbot populations at Kloo Lake while exploring other concerns (e.g. water quality).	YG	High
	Develop and implement a communication plan to advise the public about low burbot numbers, biology, restrictions and next steps.	All	Medium
	Explore options for water quality monitoring at Kloo Lake. Water quality monitoring initiatives should consider regional monitoring priorities and past monitoring work, and should engage other agencies for funding and collaboration	All	Medium
	Conduct local and traditional knowledge interviews on lake health and fish populations at Kloo Lake.	All	Medium
	Gather existing historical information from Kloo Lake to document the considerable work that has been done in the area to help inform future work.	ARRC/ CAFN	Medium





Aishihik Lake | Äshèyi Mān

WHAT ARE THE ISSUES?

Aishihik Lake is an important traditional lake for Champagne and Aishihik citizens. The lake is long, narrow and deep, and can also be very windy. It is located about 45 km from the Alaska Highway along the Aishihik road. The lake has boat launches and a government campground, and it is used for hydro generation storage.

The lake is thought to have a relatively low density of large bodied lake trout. Results from a small-mesh netting survey conducted in 2006 indicate a low lake trout catch compared to other lakes of similar size.

The numbers of people fishing on the lake has fluctuated over the years. More people seem to be fishing at the south end of the lake and ice fishing has become more popular. There has also been a noticeable increase in people fishing on the north end of the lake, and concerns have been raised regarding the impact of this on fish populations.

Angler harvest surveys were conducted during the summer in 1991, 2001, and 2006. Recreational harvest is low and there are above average success rates with moderate angling effort.

Angler harvest surveys capture only a portion of total harvest, as fall and winter recreational harvest, and year-round subsistence harvest are not included. Collection of more comprehensive harvest information, including harvest during the fall and winter, and subsistence harvest, would provide a more useful total harvest estimate against which to examine sustainability. YG is currently working on developing a winter survey method for Yukon lakes which may eventually be used at Aishihik Lake.

The lake is a reservoir for hydro generation. Yukon Energy Corporation has a monitoring program in effect to address any concerns about potential impacts on fish or their habitat as a condition of their authorization under the *Fisheries Act*.

As well some community members have noted concerns about parasites on fish from the lake.

AISHIHIK LAKE OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES 2016-2021

Objectives	Proposed Activities	Who?	Priority
Ensure lake trout and lake whitefish populations at Aishihik Lake are healthy	Conduct a SPIN survey to assess the lake trout and lake whitefish populations.	YG	High
	Conduct an angler harvest survey to estimate current harvest pressure.	YG	Medium
	Investigate methods to collect and incorporate subsistence harvest into the estimate of overall harvest.	CAFN	Medium
	Yukon government is investigating approaches to winter harvest survey methods for Yukon Lakes. Once developed these methods could be used at Aishihik Lake.	YG	Low



Kusawa Lake | Nakḥ Mān

WHAT ARE THE ISSUES?

Kusawa is one of the largest lakes in the region and is located in the traditional territories of Champagne and Aishihik and Carcross/Tagish First Nations. It was an important traditional gathering place and a management plan for the area is in the final approval stages to designate the lake and the surrounding area as a natural environment park.

Today, Kusawa Lake is a popular destination for camping, canoeing, boating, hiking, angling, and hunting. It is accessible by the Kusawa Lake road, 80 km west of Whitehorse along the Alaska Highway. There is a government campground at the lake and a boat launch. There are cottages and cabins in the area as well and some year-round residents.

Kusawa Lake has been surveyed regularly to estimate harvest pressure and to estimate lake trout population size.



Angler harvest surveys were completed in 1990, 2001, 2006, and 2014. Results show increasing effort by anglers, giving Kusawa Lake a higher than average angling effort, compared to other large, accessible lakes in Yukon. Success in catching lake trout has decreased over time, and in 2014 fell below the Yukon average.

Population monitoring has shown a higher than average relative abundance of lake trout, but with fewer large trout than would be expected compared to lakes of similar size and productivity elsewhere in the territory.

The lake trout population is considered healthy; however the harvest is thought to be near the sustainable limit. The lake is currently managed as General Waters and there is some interest in changing the classification to Conservation Waters. This would reduce the catch limit and protect the large, breeding lake trout.



KUSAWA LAKE OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES 2016-2021

Objectives	Proposed Activities	Who?	Priority
Maintain a healthy lake trout population at Kusawa Lake.	Finalize SPIN and creel survey reports and share with the parties and the public.	YG	Medium
	Explore changing the classification of Kusawa Lake to Conservation Waters.	YG	High



Emerald Lake

WHAT ARE THE ISSUES?

Emerald Lake is located 30 km north-west of Haines Junction along the Alaska Highway. It is a small, shallow lake that is accessible by vehicle. The majority of angling pressure at the lake is focused on burbot and fish are caught during the winter using baited set lines. There is also some pike fishing occurring.

YG works with the Yukon Fish and Game Association to stock lakes for additional fishing opportunities near Yukon communities. Stocked lakes in closed water systems offer good fishing opportunities and take angling pressure off slow-growing wild fish species like lake trout.

Emerald Lake has previously been identified as a good option within the Traditional Territory for stocking. The lake is located just north of Christmas Bay on Kluane Lake at approximately 9 km along the Cultus Bay Road. Emerald Lake is a small and calm, and a closed system. It is relatively close to the community and easily accessible for families and new anglers.

Between 1991 and 1998 Emerald Lake was stocked with rainbow trout. At the time, there were concerns raised by some community members about the lake stocking because they felt there was not enough community input prior to stocking, and there were concerns about increased use of the area. Most community members were in support of the project but the ARRC indicated they did not support stocking at the time because of the concerns and the last stocking occurred in 1998.



There is a renewed interest in stocking Emerald Lake. Determining if there is local support for stocking will be necessary before moving forward. Emerald Lake is adjacent to CAFN Settlement Lands. Consultation and agreement from CAFN would be required for a project like this to go ahead. An Environmental assessment would also be required.

Protecting the environment is an important factor in considering future stocking of Emerald Lake. This can be accomplished if users pack out their own garbage, build campfires in existing fire circles burning only dead wood, safely managing all fires, use existing roads and trails, and bury human waste.

Other lakes in the Traditional Territory may also provide opportunities for establishing new public stocked lakes. Work has been done to identify other candidate lakes in the past and that work could be revisited.

EMERALD LAKE OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES 2016-2021

Objectives	Proposed Activities	Who?	Priority
Provide additional fishing opportunities to relieve some pressure off wild fish species.	Agreement from CAFN is required before a stocking program could be considered in Emerald Lake. Consult Champagne and Aishihik citizens who may be affected by a stocking program to address their concerns about increased use of the area.	CAFN	Medium
	Determine if there is community support for stocking Emerald Lake with fish.	ARRC	Medium
	Investigate stewardship opportunities at Emerald Lake through existing programs to address the need to have additional support in the area to ensure the wilderness value of the area is maintained, existing roads and trails are used, and improper disposal of waste is not an issue.	ARRC/ CAFN	Medium
	Investigate options for other candidate stocked lakes in the Traditional Territory.	All	Medium



Moose | Kanday

WHAT ARE THE ISSUES?

The Alsek Moose Management Area includes Zone 7 west of Kusuwa Lake. Moose in the Alsek Valley and in other areas in the Traditional Territory have declined from historic levels.

Moose surveys have been conducted in most of the Traditional Territory since the early 1990s. In the 2008 Alsek area survey moose abundance was at or near the historic low. Harvest in certain areas is facilitated by access close to Haines Junction and along the Haines road south of Dezadeash Lake. Based on this information, as well as local and traditional knowledge, recovering the moose population in the Traditional Territory and in Zone 7 in particular is a priority.

In November 2015 a joint moose survey was conducted in the Alsek area of Yukon and British Columbia which included portions of Tatshenshihi. The Tatshenshini-Alsek Provincial Park and Kluane National Park showed an increase in total moose numbers from 2008. This increase is mostly the result of several relatively good recruitment years where calf and yearling numbers were higher than usual. Adult bull and particularly adult cow numbers have remained below historic levels. The average 5-year recorded harvest rates for all users are at sustainable limits in Game Management Zone 7 west.



Strong collaboration between the parties, and involvement by neighboring jurisdictions (e.g. British Columbia and Kluane National Park and Reserve), is critical for success in this work.

Harvest management, and maintaining total harvest at or below sustainable limits, is an essential component to moose recovery. There are a range of specific challenges that should be considered through harvest management. For example, the CAFN Wildlife Harvest Regulation prohibits the harvest of cow moose by any citizen and seeking compliance of this regulation has been a challenge. Additional issues that need to be addressed through harvest planning include: the granting of permission for other First Nations to harvest in the Traditional Territory, additional educational opportunities regarding ethical harvesting practices, subsistence harvest during certain periods of the year that may focus on cow harvest, increasing the accuracy of recorded harvest information, and ensuring harvest is not concentrated in the same area.

The support and cooperation of local families and the community on harvest management is important. Maintaining ties between community members and traditional harvesting areas needs to be considered.

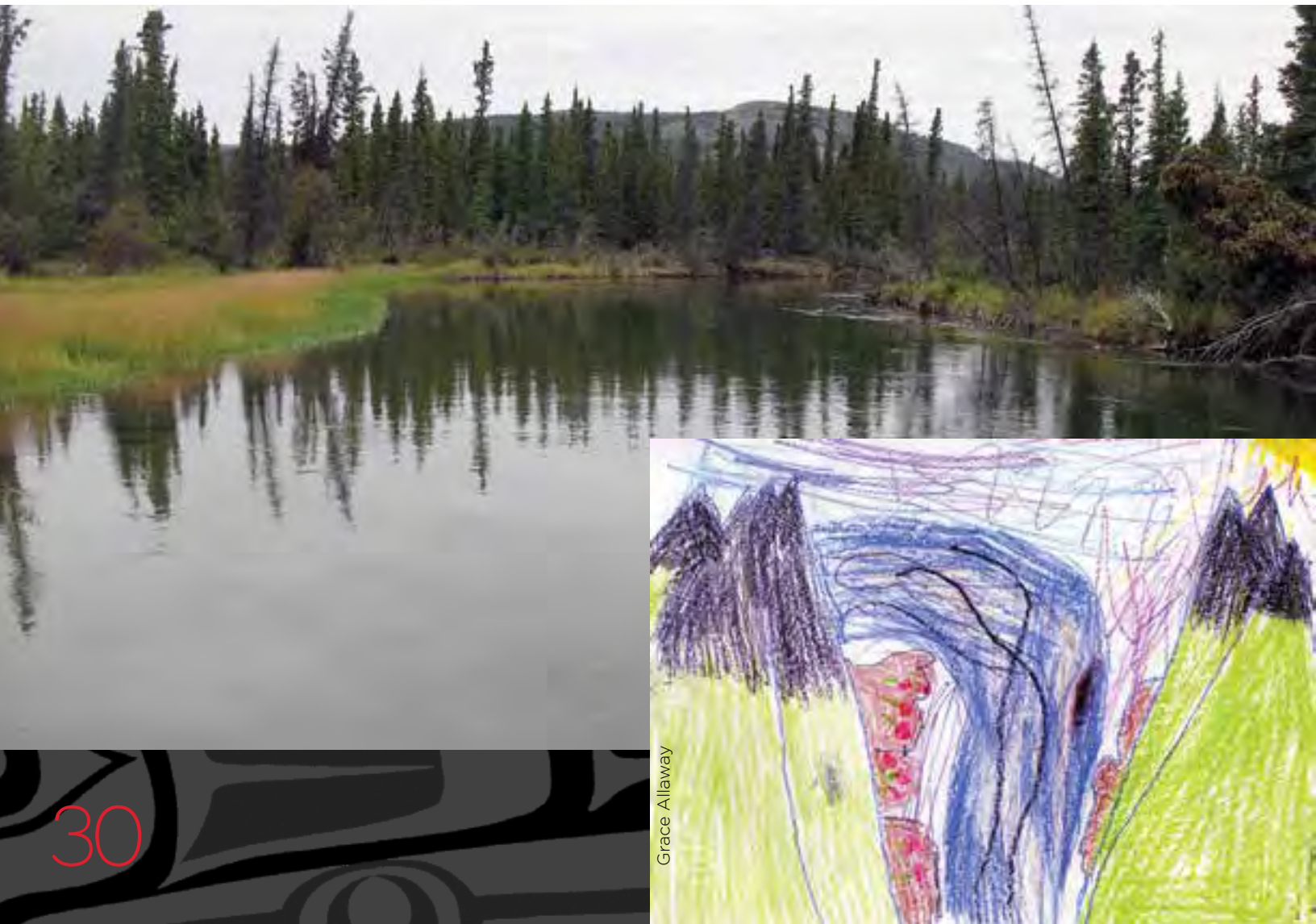
There are several Outfitting Concessions operated within the Traditional Territory and have quotas for moose. YG, the ARRC, and the outfitters each have a role in the discussions to determine quota allocation and term. The ARRC has expressed concerns about its role in the process and there is an interest in working on ways to engage more effectively.

There is an interest in exploring wolf harvest to support moose recovery as described in the Yukon Wolf Conservation and Management Plan (2012). There is also an interest from the community to discuss how the changes to the vegetation in the Traditional Territory that people notice (e.g. fire suppression, spruce beetle infestation, etc.), and how predation by grizzly bears, may be affecting moose populations. At the same time, it is important to understand natural density and distribution of moose populations of the area.

Finally, education and outreach is required to garner support for moose recovery in the community, in particular among youth. Education should focus on:

- **Building Support for Moose Recovery:** Sharing details about the current situation, range of work in progress to recover moose, sharing successes, and building momentum.
- **Moose Harvest Management:** Limited harvest opportunities, cow harvest regulations, appealing to people to harvest less, reducing meat waste, and alternative meat sources.

Options for sharing the above information may include adding a moose page to the ARRC website, newsletters, public meetings, and social media.



MOOSE OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES 2016-2021

Objectives	Proposed Activities	Who?	Priority
Work cooperatively to recover moose populations in the portion of Game Management Zone 7 west of Kusawa Lake for future generations of people	Develop a moose harvest management plan for the portion of Game Management Zone 7 west of Kusawa Lake to ensure total harvest remains at or below sustainable levels that include all users and addresses cow harvest. The plan will address potential increased hunting pressure in other areas and the need to monitor harvest throughout the Traditional Territory.	CAFN/ YG	High
	The parties will work together to monitor harvest pressure in other areas within traditional territory as a result of shifting harvest patterns from the decline and limitations in Game Management Zone 7 of the Alsek Range.	YG/ CAFN	High
	Guided by the <i>Yukon Wolf Conservation and Management Plan</i> (2012), explore options for increased wolf trapping to help depressed moose populations.	CAFN/ YG	High
	Continue to monitor moose populations and explore new survey methods using science and local knowledge.	All	High
	If harvest opportunities are limited, ensure community members remain connected with traditional hunting areas.	CAFN/ ARRC	Medium
	Develop education and outreach focused on the community and hunters to raise awareness of moose recovery efforts, sharing successes and challenges, and alternate sources of meat.	All	High
	Meet to discuss community concerns about potential effects of landscape change (e.g. fire, spruce beetles, etc.) on moose and how predation may be limiting moose populations. Engage others (e.g. Kluane National Park and Reserve, Yukon College, other researchers, etc.) as appropriate.	All	Medium
	YG and the ARRC should meet and discuss the outfitter quota review process with particular emphasis on ways the ARRC could engage more effectively.	YG/RRC	Medium
	Work collaboratively with the Government of British Columbia on moose recovery.	All	High
	Meet regularly (e.g. annually) to evaluate the moose recovery program and continue discussions on next steps.	All	High



Thinhorn Sheep

WHAT ARE THE ISSUES?

Thinhorn sheep are an important subsistence species for Champagne and Aishihik citizens and a valued harvest opportunity for Yukoners.

The Ruby Range sheep population was in decline between the 1970s to the 1990s, and has since begun to stabilize. In 2009, 395 sheep were counted during late winter monitoring to the north of the Dezadeash Range and north of Alaska Highway from Kloo Lake to Division Mountain. In 2015 Environment Yukon led a sheep survey in Game Management Zone 7 and southern Game Management Zone 5 to assess the sustainability of sheep harvest. Results are expected in 2016. In Kluane National Park and Reserve, sheep are monitored by Parks Canada.

There are ongoing concerns from local people about the status of sheep in the region as some historical ranges are no longer occupied by sheep. The animals are sensitive to disturbance, and it is unknown if these populations have declined as a result of harvest or other factors, or if they have moved to other areas. Better understanding how sheep are using the Traditional Territory may help us interpret these changes.



Work has been done to address community concerns about competition between sheep and bison that may lead to sheep moving out of historic ranges. A recent study indicates there is low to moderate potential for competition between sheep and bison. Communicating these results to the community may help to alleviate concerns.

The proliferation of ORV trails into sheep ranges throughout the Traditional Territory is a concern. The community is concerned that increased use of existing trails and expanding trail networks may lead to disturbance and displacement of sheep from traditional ranges and/or unsustainable rates of harvest. There is an interest in documenting trail networks and limiting the expansion of trails in sheep ranges. Continuing to update Wildlife Key Areas for sheep – in particular important winter ranges – will help mitigate impacts of access and disturbance. Ground based monitoring using camera traps can provide useful information about Wildlife Key Areas like mineral licks.

There is some interest in understanding if habitat is limiting for sheep in the Traditional Territory. Changes to some sheep habitats have been observed (e.g. the mineral lick at Kusawa has been grown over by vegetation). As well, changes to land cover resulting from fire suppression, spruce beetle infestation, ice storms, and natural encroachment of vegetation have been observed and may impact sheep habitat. Determining if habitat is limiting for sheep and understanding the potential for prescribed burning to enhance sheep range conditions would address this concern.

Finally, with closures and limits to sheep harvest east of Kusawa Lake and in the Miners Range, there are concerns about the movement of harvest pressure to other areas like the Sifton Range. There is an interest in reviewing sheep harvest throughout the Traditional Territory in light of shifting harvest pressure. Understanding how other jurisdictions have addressed similar concerns may be helpful in this work.

THINHORN SHEEP OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES 2016-2021

Objectives	Proposed Activities	Who?	Priority
Carefully manage sheep habitat	Work to better understand how sheep are using ranges in the Traditional Territory.	YG	Medium
	Communicate the results of the 2012 study which looked at the potential for competition between sheep and bison to the public.	YG	High
	Document trail networks in sheep ranges.	YG/CAFN	Medium
	Use existing tools to limit the expansion of trail networks in sheep ranges and explore new tools for managing ORVs.	All	High
	Update Wildlife Key Areas for sheep, in particular important winter ranges.	YG	Medium
	Determine if habitat is limiting for sheep in the Traditional Territory and determine the potential value in enhancing range conditions and availability.	YG	Medium
Ensure sheep harvest in the Traditional Territory is sustainable	In light of shifting harvest pressure, review sheep harvest by all users in the traditional territory, and in Game Management Zone 7 in particular, and continue to record First Nation harvest of sheep in the Traditional Territory.	YG/CAFN	High
	Explore how other jurisdictions have addressed shifting sheep harvest pressure as a result of closures.	YG	Medium
	Finalize sheep survey reports and share with the parties and the public.	YG	Medium





Valerie Drummond

Trapping

WHAT ARE THE ISSUES?

Trapping is an important traditional pursuit in the region. In more recent years it has become difficult to make a living from trapping and there is an interest in the community to provide support for trappers. There are some lessons and successes learned in other Yukon communities that may be helpful in this regard.

Focusing more attention on the trapping industry is one way of providing support. There is an interest in providing more educational opportunities for trappers and promoting the value of the trapping lifestyle through harvest camps, involving youth, developing trapping skills, etc. As well, a range of incentives are available to trappers and it is important they are aware of existing programs. Including this information in the trapper training course may be an effective way to share this information with trappers. As well encouraging local members to use fur in local projects may help support the industry.



Champagne and Aishihik First Nations

There is interest in hosting annual trapping events in Haines Junction. The event would focus on teaching tanning, connecting trappers with buyers, raise interest in using pelts and furs in the community, etc. This idea has been discussed in the past and there are concerns that such an event may reduce the effectiveness of the Dawson Fur Show. A new event in Haines Junction would need to consider this concern.

There is an interest in increasing the awareness and appreciation of trapping in the community and with other people who are using the land. Presentations in the school and at the annual career day, the General Assembly, and other events are good opportunities for demonstrations.

Similar challenges of trapline management exist throughout Yukon. There are trappers in the community who are not able to get access to traplines. It is important for the parties to continue to work together on issues related to trapline administration.

Finally, there is a need to reduce conflicts near traplines. There continues to be break-ins at trapper cabins in the Traditional Territory. CAFN and YG have been working together with trappers on this issue. Some trappers have installed cameras to monitor their cabins. As well, educating trail users about reducing conflicts may be helpful. Continued work in this area is important.

TRAPPING OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES 2016-2021

Objectives	Proposed Activities	Who?	Priority
Support trapping as a traditional lifestyle and increase the use and activity on trapline in the Traditional Territory.	Share information about existing incentives and discounts with trappers. Consider including trapper incentives and discounts in the trapper training course.	YG/ CAFN/ ARRC	Medium
	Work to increase the support for trappers in the community and to lessen the cost of pursuing a trapping lifestyle through connecting trappers with buyers, helping to increase tanning skills, facilitating use of fur by community members, and exploring incentives for trappers.	CAFN	Medium
	Consider hosting a trapping event in the community.	CAFN/ ARRC	Medium
	Work to educate the community, youth, other users and stakeholders on the benefits of trapping to increase awareness and appreciation.	CAFN/ ARRC	Medium
	Continue to work with trappers to help reduce break-ins at cabins and reduce conflicts on trails near traplines.	YG/CAFN	High

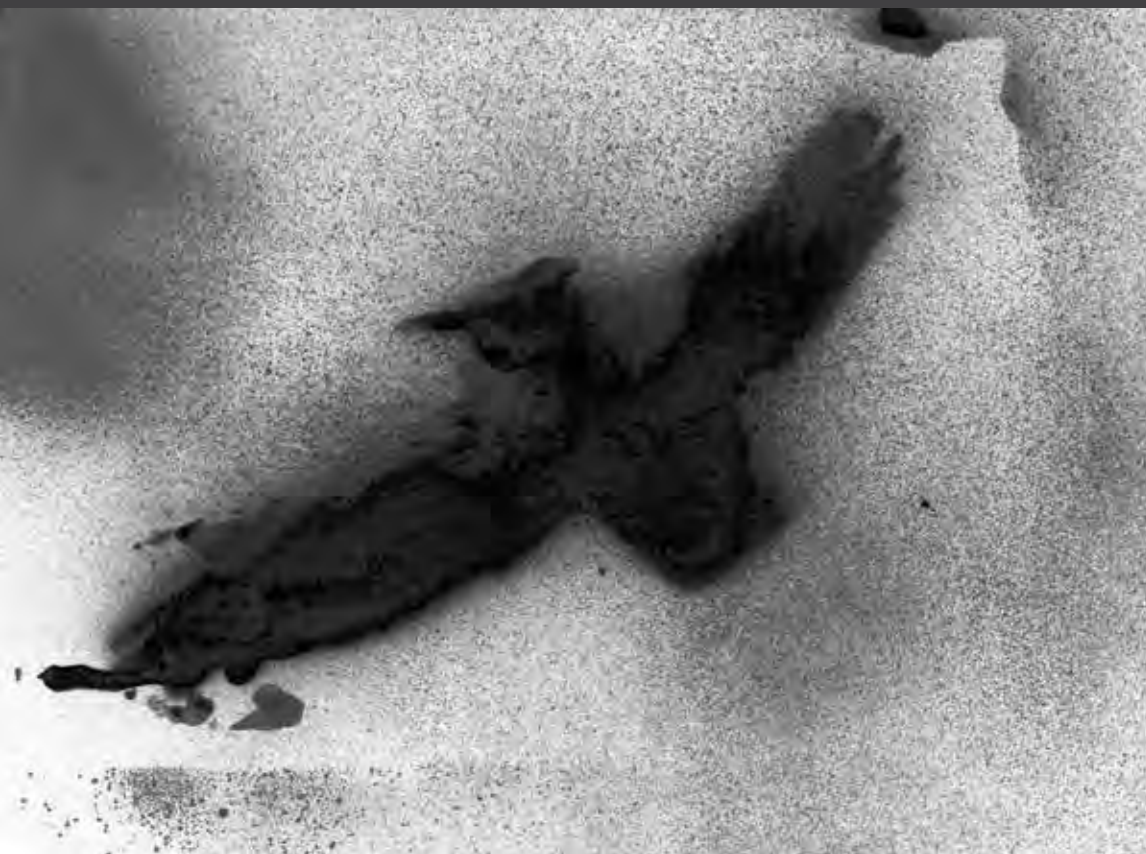
Champagne and Aishihik First Nations

Credit





Champagne and Aishihik First Nations



Anyu Jim



Monitoring and Stewardship

CARIBOU

The Aishihik caribou herd was the focus of a recovery program in the 1990s. Community members noticed a decline in the herd in the 1980s and this led to the development of a recovery plan with a target of 2000 animals.

The herd has continued to grow since the recovery program. A survey in 1997 indicated the herd had grown to 1150. In 2007, during a fall composition survey, 1475 animals were counted. In 2009 there were 2044 animals estimated in the herd.

The herd has been monitored using annual composition counts for many years. Because the herd is considered stable, focus will shift to other Yukon herds that have not been monitored or that have other management concerns. A census survey is not anticipated in the life of this plan.

The Aishihik caribou herd is important to the community and criteria should be established as to when to re-assess the population status of the herd.



MOUNTAIN GOATS

Information about the status of mountain goat populations in Yukon is limited. In 2007 Environment Yukon worked with the Government of British Columbia to estimate the number of goats between Haines Junction and Atlin. There were 331 goats counted in total, and only 21 goats were seen west of Kusawa Lake.

Another survey was completed in 2010 in the Kusawa area which includes four subzones bordering the southern end of Kusawa Lake. Ten goats were counted in the area and 18 goats were counted in British Columbia. This area has been closed to harvest since 2002 and there continues to be no potential for sustainable goat harvest in the area. There are approximately 600 adult goats in Kluane National Park and Reserve, which is 35-40% of the entire Yukon population.

Yukon and British Columbia share mountain goat populations along their common border in the Champagne and Aishihik Traditional Territory. Cooperation between YG and the Government of British Columbia is important for the successful management of these populations.

WOLVES

The wolf population in the Traditional Territory is generally considered stable and healthy. Wolves are considered an integral part of the ecosystem. Much work has been done to study wolves in Yukon, and in the Aishihik area in particular.

The Yukon Wolf Conservation and Management Plan (2012) provides a territory-wide strategy for managing wolves. Any work or initiatives focused on wolves in the territory must follow this plan.

Wolves prey on moose, caribou, sheep and other ungulates. In some areas of the Traditional Territory there is an interest in exploring the trapping and hunting of wolves in areas where moose numbers are low.



BEARS

Reducing conflicts between bears and humans in Haines Junction and other communities remains important for all the parties. A bear hazard assessment was completed in 2011 with recommendations on how to reduce conflicts between humans and bears in Haines Junction and at the Kathleen Lake campground. The main sources of bear attractants in Haines Junction include soapberry, garbage, and hanging meat. Although there are less conflicts at the Kathleen Lake campground, attractants such as grey water, soapberry, and cleaning fish need to be considered.

There is an interest in reviewing the hazard assessment to determine the next steps for implementation. There is also an interest in developing a similar assessment for the other communities in the Traditional Territory.

Under certain conditions grizzly bear predation, in conjunction with predation from other large carnivores (e.g., wolves and black bears), may limit moose and caribou populations.

The Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board and YG are in the process of developing a Grizzly Bear Conservation and Management Plan for Yukon.



Credit (ARRC Photo)

UPLAND GAME BIRDS

The diversity of upland game birds in the region is high compared to other jurisdictions in North America and in the Traditional Territory willow ptarmigan (K'àmba) and spruce grouse are an important food source for community members.

There is currently no systematic monitoring of upland game birds and a general lack of information on population trends. Interest in small game licenses has decreased, and the reported harvest of some grouse species has declined by more than half in recent years. Ptarmigan and grouse are widely distributed and access for harvest is relatively localized so it is unlikely that current harvest would play a role in large scale reductions. However, hunting can reduce local populations, particularly when the birds are at a cyclic low.

Harvest pressure is known to be focused in specific, accessible areas in the Traditional Territory and there have been concerns raised in the past about this harvest. Improved harvest reporting and a better understanding harvest at these locations would provide the community a broader picture of harvest rates in relation to bird populations.

BIODIVERSITY

The Traditional Territory has rich regional biodiversity and contains some of the highest densities of Canadian endemism (native species found nowhere else in the world).

For instance, the Ruby Range and St. Elias Mountain ecosystems contain some of the highest densities of globally rare species (mostly plants and insects that are Critically Imperilled to Vulnerable) in Canada. Two thirds of Yukon's species at risk (23 of 36) occur within the Traditional Territory. The Yukon Conservation Data Centre gathers information on over 100 species of plants and a similar number of animals including the Kluane tiger moth and Yukon grasshopper, many of which are found in this region. Of particular interest to the community is Yukon draba, a small, herbaceous plant, which is endemic to the Traditional Territory and was assessed in 2011 as a species at risk.



Kaila Miller





WILDLIFE VIEWING | Nena Níi

Two key principles of Yukon government's wildlife viewing strategy include promoting stewardship of Yukon's wildlife and important habitats, and encouraging respect for traditional, subsistence, and harvest values.

Interpretation at Kluane National Park and Reserve often addresses larger management issues in the Traditional Territory beyond park boundaries. YG and other community partners also offer events for local people and visitors to share viewing opportunities and to bring awareness to important local issues.

Future wildlife viewing events in the Traditional Territory may be focused on advancing important wildlife conservation messages. For example, programs would likely highlight moose and fish recovery. YG has hosted a weekend viewing event in Haines Junction that would benefit from collaboration with community partners.

Finally, there is a need to provide education to the general public on safe bear viewing at Klukshu and Shāwshe.

WATER MONITORING

YG has a Yukon Water Strategy and Action Plan (2014) in place for Yukon and CAFN is in the process of developing a strategy for the Traditional Territory. These documents recognize the need for a comprehensive approach for addressing water issues and management, including sustaining water quality and quantity and addressing climate change.

There is an interest in developing a water monitoring program for the Traditional Territory that addresses specific concerns identified in important fishing lakes (i.e. Pine and Kloo lakes), as well as concerns about the impact of climate change on water. There is a need to determine what information to collect, what information is available, and how the information would be shared. Developing partnerships with others and secure funding for this work must be considered. Exploring options for engaging local people to assist with data collection and linking the program to the Yukon-wide community water monitoring initiative is also important.



Valerie Drummond

OFF-ROAD VEHICLE MANAGEMENT

Some members of the community have expressed concerns about the increase in off-road vehicle (ORV) use in the Traditional Territory, and the potential impacts of their use on wildlife and habitat. ORVs are being used with greater frequency for recreation and for harvesting, and there is an interest in exploring options for managing ORV use, particularly in environmentally sensitive areas.

YG is currently developing ORV regulations for public land to better manage and protect sensitive areas from potential damage caused by ORVs and time for areas to recover after damage has taken place. CAFN and the ARRC have participated in these discussions. CAFN is also developing a policy to manage ORV use on traditional trails on Settlement Land to help prevent widening and overuse of these trails.

Finally, it is important to continue to educate the public on responsible use of ORVs in the backcountry.

MONITORING AND STEWARDSHIP OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES 2016-2021

Objective	Proposed Activities	Who?	Priority
Ensure the Aishihik caribou herd remains stable	During the mid-term work plan review, the parties will review local knowledge on the Aishihik caribou herd and determine the need to re-assess the herd.	All	Medium
Reduce the number of bear-human conflicts in communities in the Champagne and Aishihik Traditional Territory	Review the bear hazard assessment for Haines Junction and identify next steps in implementation.	All	Medium
	Consider conducting a hazard assessment for the remaining Champagne and Aishihik Traditional Territory communities.	All	Low
	Promote education on safe bear viewing in areas where there is a high risk of conflicts (e.g. Klukshu and Shāwshe).	All	Low
	Hold a community meeting to review options for mitigating conflicts, using the bear hazard assessment as a template.	All	Medium
Ensure the local harvest of upland game birds is sustainable	Host a workshop with the parties to review upland game bird management in the Traditional Territory and discuss options for addressing concerns related to upland game bird harvest.	All	Low
	Educate hunters on species identification and ethical issues related to upland game bird harvest including harvest reporting.	All	Low
Promote wildlife viewing events and activities in the Traditional Territory	Work with the Wildlife Viewing Program to provide input into wildlife viewing events in the region.	ARRC/ CAFN	Low
Explore options for water quality monitoring in the Traditional Territory	Meet with Water Resources Branch and other interested parties to discuss the possibilities of developing a water monitoring program for the Traditional Territory which respects the YG and CAFN water strategies and considers a community monitoring component.	All	Low
	Work with Water Resources Branch to monitor water quality at Pine and Kloo lakes to address concerns brought forward by the community.	All	Low
Participate in the development of ORV regulations under the <i>Territorial Lands (Yukon) Act</i> to ensure new regulations address ORV management needs in the Traditional Territory.	Participate in the development of the ORV regulations under the <i>Territorial Lands (Yukon) Act</i> that will address the impact of off-road vehicles in environmentally sensitive areas.	CAFN/ ARRC	Medium
	Work together to identify local areas where there are priority concerns about the potential impacts caused by ORVs.	All	Low



What is Next?

This plan is intended to be a record of fish and wildlife issues in the Champagne and Aishihik Traditional Territory and a description of proposed, cooperative approaches for addressing these issues.

Over the next five years, the parties will focus their efforts on trying to address as many of the priority issues as they can under their existing budgets.

However, changes can occur and new priorities can emerge. Recognizing this, the parties will review this plan in 2018-19 to check in on what work has been completed and, if they agree, identify any new developments that need to be addressed. A final plan review will be completed in 2020-21 and at that time the parties will begin work towards a new plan.

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