

Yukon Wolf Conservation and Management Plan Review Committee
Meeting of Renewable Resources Councils - Facilitator's Summary
High Country Inn • Whitehorse, Yukon • February 10, 2011

Review Committee

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The following summary sets out key points discussed at a one day meeting of the Yukon Wolf Conservation and Management Plan Review Committee and participating Renewable Resources Councils. Major points or themes were also reviewed by the facilitator in an oral summary at the conclusion of the meeting.

The discussion focused on proposed changes to the 1992 Yukon Wolf Conservation and Management Plan and current issues associated with Yukon wolf conservation and management.

Materials discussed and/or tabled at the meeting

- Diagram of Yukon WCMP review process
- *A Review of Wolf Management Programs in Alaska, Yukon, British Columbia, Alberta and Northwest Territories* (November 2010)
- Summary (PowerPoint) of Russell paper
- *1992 Yukon Wolf Conservation and Management Plan*
- Summary of 1992 Yukon Wolf Conservation and Management Plan
- Mayo RRC submission
- Yukon Wolves (Fact Sheet 1)
- The Status of Wolves (Fact Sheet 2)
- Wolves in the Ecosystem (Fact Sheet 3)

The above materials are available at www.yukonwolfplan.ca.

Human use and appreciation of wolves

- Need for a more “balanced” approach to consumptive and non-consumptive values that apply to wolves. Hunting cultures and values need to be better recognized and protected in the 2011 plan. The 1992 plan recognized the importance of non-consumptive values and much has occurred since then to address them.
- Wolf management as it affects trapping is also about the continuity of the trapping culture and way of life.

Management context – roles and responsibilities and current conditions

- The management context in 2011 is greatly different from that of 1992. The “92 plan was a response to recently completed and proposed wolf reduction programs.
- Recognize the jurisdictional authorities and responsibilities that apply to wildlife management generally and trapping specifically as established in the Yukon Umbrella Final Agreement, First Nations Final Agreements and Self-Government Agreements, with attention to local authorities and responsibilities.
- Need for RRCs to play a stronger role in wolf management consistent with their responsibilities under the Final Agreements.
- A revised plan should be informed by the self-government powers and legislative authorities of Yukon First Nations as they affect wolf management, including consideration of Basic Needs Levels in circumstances of restricted moose harvesting.
- The work of the Southern Lakes Wildlife Coordinating Committee, particularly the Committee’s draft predator recommendations – if available - should inform the revised plan.
- Local people need to be more involved in wolf and moose management.
- Need for a “ balanced” approach to wolf and moose management. Concern was expressed that moose are over-harvested and under-managed; wolves are under-harvested and over-managed. Concern that in some zones moose are over-harvested. More wolves could be taken to restore “balance” in areas where over-harvesting of moose has occurred.
- Need to “balance” hunters expectations of what is a sustainable moose harvests with harvesters needs.
- Need for wolf management to be wholistic in its approach.
- Yukon is a small jurisdiction, with limited government resources and a growing population. Wolf and ungulate management should recognize this.
- Wolf densities vary from region to region and the level of active interest by RRCs in wolf management varies as well.
- We are on the cusp of a human population increase in Yukon which will lead to more issues around wolf-human conflict, access and an increased demand to harvest more moose.

Wolves in Yukon

- There is a long history of wolf management in the Yukon that includes a wide-range of lethal means for reducing wolf populations that have included poisoning, aerial killing, baiting/hunting, sterilization, trapping. Some hold the view that trapping hasn't been very effective to date in wolf management.
- Need to understand that wolves exist in a complex management environment and complex ecosystem. Wolf management involves consideration of other predators (including people) and multiple prey – in other words complex predator/prey systems, climate and habitat. Given what we have learnt about the resilience of wolf populations to reductions, the new plan should focus less on that aspect.

General purposes, goals and principles

- Recognize wolf management for the purposes of species management (management of wolves in the context of their relationship to other predators and prey species, most notably moose, but also caribou and sheep).
- Recognize wolf management for the purposes of harvest management, with special attention to revitalization of trapping, primarily for the purpose of getting people back on the land which should lead to better life styles. (cultural and spiritual link)
- Establish territory-wide goals and principles for wolf management to better ensure an integrated approach throughout the territory and between management authorities and partners.
- Recognize regional differences in the needs and purposes of wolf management, public values and interests across the Yukon.
- The plan should apply a long-term planning horizon.
- In the context of increasing moose numbers through wolf management each community should identify the need for more moose.

Wolf conservation and management – general approach

- Identification of broad enabling measures (a “tool kit”) in a revised plan may provide flexibility to utilize different management approaches on a regional or traditional territory basis in response to different circumstances and needs while respecting territory-wide principles and goals.
- Measures should be effective, responsive, adaptive, flexible and timely.
- Measures should enable both the opportunity and flexibility for RRCs and First Nations to play a key role in wolf management through community-based and traditional territory-based measures. RRCs and FNs are taking this matter seriously. A section in a revised plan should address it.
- See Mayo RRC submission (a copy of the submission is available at www.yukonwolfplan.ca)
- Shift from a perceived “boom/bust”, “all-or-nothing” approach to wolf management in the current plan to one that applies proactive, timely, small-scale, targeted, local measures to achieve modest, localized and “subtle” results. This requires “re-

balancing” the plan to better address the management measures that could be implemented to avoid wolf reduction or control programs that are only measures of “last resort.”

- Current processes for the types of regulations currently in effect are time consuming, reducing the effectiveness of timely management responses to management issues.
- Need for improved information sharing between scientific, local and traditional knowledge holders, between Yukon government, First Nations, RRCs, trappers and outfitters.
- Incorporate local and traditional knowledge into management decisions on an equal basis with scientific knowledge and research.
- Historic wolf , bear and ungulate information should be compiled by YG and shared with FNs and RRCs.
- Establish timely and periodic reviews of the plan and its implementation.
- The 92 plan had a lot of scientific rigor built into decisions making processes. The new plan needs to retain this, while paying more attention to TK and LK.

Management of hunting and trapping of wolves

- Address barriers that discourage participation in trapping and the trapping of wolves, such as the training of trappers, measures to address low participation rates – especially by young adults, access to and sharing of trapping opportunities to harvest wolves on one or more trapping concessions.
- Measures to enhance participation in trapping could include incentives to offset the high costs associated with trapping and the low prices (relative to cost). This is critical if trapping is to be an instrument for wolf management.
- Teslin Tlingit Council has initiated a wolf pelt handling incentive to offset the costs of the hunting and trapping of wolves.

Management of ungulates

- Address requirements for improved ungulate harvest management, with special attention to allocation and the assignment of effective terms and conditions.
- Need to manage harvest of ungulates.
- Measures for community hunters that would provide preferential access to moose in adjacent local hunting areas should be considered. Need to avoid a permit hunt for moose that would exclude local hunters.