

Dawson Regional Planning Commission
 Regular Board Meeting Minutes
 Meeting #17 (2013/2014)
 May 13-15, 2014
 (SOVA Lecture Room, Dawson City)

In Attendance					
<u>Dawson Regional Planning Commission (DRPC)</u> Scott Casselman - Chair Roger Ellis - Member Chester Kelly - Member Will Fellers - Member Debbie Nagano - Member Monica Krieger - Acting Senior Planner Kathy Burden - Planning Technician (Day 2 & 3)	<u>Yukon Land Use Planning Council (YLUPC)</u> Ron Cruikshank – Director Sam Skinner - Senior Land Use Planner	<u>YLUPC Contractors</u> Shawn Francis- S. Francis Consulting Inc. Christiane Boisjoly (Christiane Boisjoly & Associates Inc.) - Meeting Facilitator Joanne Rice (Cabin Fever Office & Event Services) - Recording Secretary	<u>Yukon Government (YG)</u> Gillian McKee – Senior Land Use Planner, EMR <u>Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in (TH)</u> Bill Kendrick – Senior Land and Resources Officer/ Regional Planning Manager <u>Vuntut Gwitchin Government (VGG)</u> Rosa Brown	<u>Delegations by Request</u> Greg Brunner	<u>Observers</u> Sebastian Jones (day 1 & 2) Cynthia Hunt (day 1) Maggie Wright (day 1 & 2) Bill Trerice (days 1-3) Jim Taggart (day 1) Linda Taylor (day 1 & 2) Dan Reynolds (day 2 & 3) (Reynolds Outfitting) John McConnell (day 3) KPMA Lee Whalen (day 2) Maggie Wright (day 2) Darren Taylor (day 2)

Other Acronyms: CE – Cumulative Effects, IMA – Integrated Management Area zone, LDS – Land (Use) Designation System, LMU - Landscape Management Unit, PA – Protected Area zone, SLC – Senior Liaison Committee, TEA – Traditional Economy Area zone, TWG – Technical Working Group, VGG – Vuntut Gwitchin Government, WRFN – White River First Nation, YRC – Yukon River Corridor

Action Items: Status to be updated at next meeting.

Draft minutes prepared by Joanne Rice (Cabin Fever Office & Event Services). Final edits and revisions completed by Monica Krieger, Acting Senior Planner.

The morning of May 13th involved an orientation session, conducted by Ron Cruikshank of the Yukon Land Use Planning Council, for the newest Commission member (Peter Jenkins, appointed 16 April 2014 by Yukon Government). Debbie Nagano also attended as she had only received a partial orientation from YLUPC at the time of her appointment by Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in (May 2013). Ron presented an overview of key Commission documents (Chapter 11 TH Final Agreement, DRPC Terms of Reference, DRPC Policies and Procedures) with an emphasis on the history and purpose of regional planning in the Yukon, as well as the Commission’s mandate and roles and responsibilities of members and staff. This information had recently been provided to the entire Commission as a refresher (April 15-17 meeting package). Monica Krieger, Acting Senior Planner, also reviewed the history of DRPC work to date and the current year’s workplan and budget.

Meeting called to order at 10:47 am by Scott Casselman, Chair.

GROUP SESSION: SETTING THE STAGE FOR A SUCCESSFUL MEETING

Delegations	Action Items
One delegation was requested and approved for this meeting – Greg Brunner (Dawson area resident and trapper).	
Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes	Action Items
Monica stated she has not had time to complete the draft minutes for the March 19-20, 2014 meeting (#15) or to review the draft minutes prepared by Rhoda Merkel for the April 13-15, 2014 meeting (#16). She emphasized the Commission remains short-staffed, and it has been difficult for her and Kathy to complete all the expected tasks as well as prepare for monthly Commission meetings. She has chosen to prioritize work towards the Draft Plan rather than administrative items. The Commission agreed to defer these items until the next meeting.	Monica to complete all draft minutes for Commission review and approval at the next meeting.
Chair’s Report	Action Items
<p>Scott worked with Monica on a letter to the Senior Liaison Committee (sent May 1 following notification of a May 2 SLC meeting). The letter notes the Parties’ submissions on the Plan Alternatives show very divergent positions on many important issues, which puts the Commission in a difficult position for decisions on the Draft Plan. The letter requests a response from the SLC noting how the Parties intend to pursue opportunities for compromise and consensus, and emphasizes the SLC’s role to provide clear policy direction to the Commission. No response has been received to date.</p> <p>He also attended the meeting organized by Sam Skinner (YLUPC) with stakeholder group representatives from the mining sector, to discuss the futuring scenarios for the industry (part of Shawn Francis’ cumulative effects project, to be discussed later on the agenda). The participants also discussed the methodology behind the Structured Decision Making (SDM) evaluation tool used in the Plan Alternatives phase. Scott told them there may be opportunities to further refine this work in terms of interaction between industry and environmental/cultural values, and the Draft Plan could show how that option performs.</p> <p><i>[Monica added these were the same concerns raised by the Klondike Placer Miners Association in their submission during the public review period, as well as in Randy Clarkson’s presentation to the Commission at the March meeting. She clarified the KPMA’s issue was not the data used for the calculations of how each alternative performed, but rather the weighting – e.g. for the highest development zone and a possible scale of 0-4, Sam assigned a zero to ecological values and a four to industrial values. KPMA and others felt this was flawed – just because mining occurs in an area, it doesn’t mean there is zero wildlife habitat. Monica and Sam emphasized the SDM process is designed to show the relative performance of each alternative in comparison to the others, not to be an exact calculation of potential impacts – positive or negative - on the range of values. There could be focus group sessions held to get stakeholder groups’ agreement on the weighting to be used, but they would have to be held with <u>all</u> stakeholder groups and not just the mining sector representatives. Also, there would be no point in doing this until the Commission has made firm decisions on what the zoning system will be for the Draft Plan, as weightings are assigned based on how the zones are defined, i.e. what activities could occur where. Sam said he is not convinced all the additional work would actually help the Commission make upcoming decisions.]</i></p>	
Acting Senior Planner’s Report	Action Items
Monica worked with Scott on the letter to the SLC. She said so far there has been a lack of communication between the SLC and the Commission. Neither Scott nor staff have been invited to attend SLC meetings, and information about what was discussed has come to them from Technical Working Group (TWG) members who have attended. Monica feels this is not appropriate,	

<p>that direction from the SLC should come directly to the Commission in the form of a letter or minutes/notes from the meetings. Since the April 15-17 Commission meeting, she also: participated in two full-day conference calls with TWG to make further progress on the Draft Plan concepts and format/goals for this meeting; worked with Heidi on the audited financial statements and other year-end administrative matters; continued work with Kathy on the Plan Alternatives: What We Heard report; kept up to date on Shawn and Sam’s cumulative effects work; continued communications with stakeholders and public; and prepared the agenda and information package for this meeting.</p>	
<p>Correspondence and Media</p>	<p>Action Items</p>
<p>New correspondence since the last meeting includes two April letters from YG related to Peter Jenkins’ appointment, and the May 1 letter from the Commission to the SLC.</p>	

<p>AGENDA TAB 2: ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE</p>	
<p>Review of Financial Statements</p>	<p>Action Items</p>
<p>The financial statements for the 2013-2014 fiscal year (April 1, 2013 to March 31, 2014) were reviewed. There is a \$7,000 surplus that will carry over to the current fiscal year (this was assumed in the current year’s funding proposals).</p> <p>Monica clarified that the four original staff positions from when the Commission started continue to show up on the financial statements – according to Heidi Faulds (YLUPC), you cannot delete these even if they are no longer being used. There is no longer an Administrator (this role was taken over by Heidi in 2012), “Planner 1” is now called Land Use Planner (Monica’s original role), and “GIS Tech” is now called Planning Technician (Kathy’s position, which is also not a student role as originally envisioned).</p> <p>Questions regarding the Senior Planner salary budgeted vs. actual amounts. Monica said it’s a bit confusing because it shows the salary was only budgeted for ~\$70,000. In reality it was more than that, but some was transferred to the “Planner 1” line item when Monica was appointed Acting Senior Planner on December 1st (and so the Planner 1 line shows we spent substantially less than what was budgeted). The auditor will make the final decision where the amounts get recorded. In the new funding agreement this year, Monica’s salary is just shown on the Senior Planner line and there is nothing in Planner 1. Also, there was a large amount paid to Jeff Hamm (previous Senior Planner) upon his resignation in November 2013 – this was accumulated banked (overtime) hours and unused vacation days and was required to be paid out upon his departure, as per the Employment Standards Act and the Commission’s Policies and Procedures. This was not anticipated or budgeted for in the 2013-2014 funding agreement.</p> <p>Monica said it is realistic to assume both she and Kathy will be in the same situation this year – it will be very difficult to avoid overtime (and to take vacation) given the expected workload and when the Commission remains short-staffed. Therefore, in the new 2014-2015 budget she and Heidi prepared (that is now approved and in place starting April 1st), both salaries were doubled in December to coincide with the end of their contracts. The new budget also utilized the revised salary amounts for both positions, based on Commission decisions at the March meeting.</p>	

<p>2014-2015 Workplan/Budget and Funding Agreement – Status Update</p>	<p>Action Items</p>
<p>The Final Recommended Workplan and Budget for April 1, 2014 to December 31, 2014 (prepared and submitted by Monica in February) was approved by YG as written and attached to the official Transfer Payment Funding Agreement (signed by Scott on behalf of the Commission, and by YG Minister Scott Kent). It is now in place and the Commission is expected to meet the timelines for deliverables.</p> <p>Monica reminded the Commission that no comments were received from either YG or YLUPC on the Preliminary Draft (submitted December 2013). Comments and suggested changes from YLUPC on the Final Recommended version were not received until April 3rd (email from Ron to Monica), and no written comments were ever received from YG. Discussion about the current process and timelines for approval of workplans and budgets – Ron said it would be more efficient if YLUPC and YG reviewed drafts and submitted comments to the Commission jointly, rather than separately (i.e. through Council first, then to YG).</p>	
<p>2014-2015 DRPC-YLUPC Memorandum of Understanding – Status Update</p>	<p>Action Items</p>
<p>As noted in previous minutes (December 2013 and January, March and April 2014), an MOU is supposed to be in place between DRPC and YLUPC documenting mutual roles and responsibilities. The 2012-2013 version had never been finalized or signed and it also expired December 31, 2013. The new MOU for this year was to provide details on staff support and additional contract assistance to be provided by YLUPC following resignation of the Commission’s Senior Planner. Ron Cruikshank (YLUPC) provided Monica with a draft of the new MOU on May 8th. She will review it and provide any comments and suggested changes following this meeting.</p>	<p>Monica to provide comments on draft MOU to Ron. Scott to sign MOU once finalized.</p>
<p>Plan Alternatives: What We Heard Report – Status Update</p>	<p>Action Items</p>
<p>Monica said based on direction from the April meeting, she and Kathy have redesigned the middle section of the report, and Kathy has been working to compile key themes and select representative quotes. She reminded the Commission that the large-format document Kathy created with all the feedback organized by topic is the same information the report will contain (although with a bit more analysis), so they are not “missing” anything.</p> <p>The report is close to being done – once Kathy is finished with the new section, Monica will review it and do final edits (hopefully one day this week). They will keep the Commission updated on their progress.</p>	<p>Staff to finalize Plan Alternatives: What We Heard report.</p>
<p>Vice-Chair Selection</p>	<p>Action Items</p>
<p>This item was discussed at the January 10-11, 2014 meeting, and the Commission decision was to defer selection until a full six members were in place again. As per DRPC Policies and Procedures (Section 4.1.4), the Vice-Chair is to be appointed by the Commission through consensus in the event of the Chairperson’s absence, and to fulfill the duties of the Chairperson in absence of the Chair. Monica requested clarification from Ron – is a Vice-Chair selected only when the Chair is not available (and could be someone different each time), as this wording seems to suggest, or is it meant to be a more permanent position? Ron replied that other Commissions have appointed one Vice-Chair on a permanent basis, and that DRPC had previously done this when they appointed the late Steve Taylor.</p>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roads associated with placer claims aren't necessarily detrimental to trapping – in fact they are often helpful for winter access. Also, the activities occur in different seasons so they aren't in conflict. • Placer roads typically aren't well-maintained "highways" like the Brewery Creek road, so they don't create more opportunities for hunting. When new roads were opened up to Madsen Creek and upper 60 Mile, there were concerns it would add to hunting pressure but it didn't because they were generally in poor condition. • The TH submission for Plan Alternatives notes that the northern half of LMU 17 is covered by quartz claims, while the southern half has mostly Category A Settlement Lands. There was a suggestion for splitting it, but this would not be a good idea. A large mine in the northern half would severely impact moose populations, and with recent changes to the 40 Mile caribou herd's movements it could impact them as well. • Mining legislation and regulations overrule everything else. Greg's family is required to get a lease on all their cabins – one was built in 1939 but if a lease wasn't in place YG could burn it down. The lease notes that if the cabin in any way restricts proposed mining activities, his rights will no longer apply (i.e. the lease does not give him rights to the land the cabin sits on). 	
<p>Discussion</p>	<p>Action Items</p>
<p>Scott asked Greg's opinion on making roads private as an option to address hunting pressure, and requiring them to be reclaimed once the intended purpose has been served. Greg replied he is generally in favour of reclaiming roads (e.g. once commercial forest harvesting is completed, to allow regrowth to occur). He would prefer to see more restrictions on hunting when a new area is first opened to development or a new road constructed, with ongoing monitoring and possibly relaxing restrictions over time once it is seen the population is doing OK. He said there was more wildlife in the Dempster area before the highway was built.</p> <p>Peter noted that if there are concerns about overhunting, restrictions like bag limits can be implemented in particular Game Management Zones through existing legislation.</p> <p>Monica updated the Commission about her recent discussions with Helen Slama, YG Fur Industry Specialist. Monica submitted an official form to Helen requesting the contact information of all trapping concession holders in the Dawson region, for the purpose of communication regarding the Dawson planning process (currently the Commission only has contact information for those who submitted comments on the Plan Alternatives, such as Greg). She wanted to draft a form letter to be sent to each one of them, in addition to the letter to the YTA. Helen sent back a list of 36 names and the associated concession number, but no other information. She explained that additional contact details cannot be made available to the public - trappers must give specific permission to have it released. Helen has been trying for the past four years to get a "blanket" written consent from all concession holders, i.e. that they give permission for anyone to contact them directly where a project or activity may affect their trapline, but there are still many who have not replied. Linda Taylor (meeting observer) added that in her work with the Dawson Renewable Resources Council, she has also been promoting this. Trappers she spoke with said they never received any letter or request from Helen, and she thinks it is better to do it locally. She has gotten confirmation from Kirby Meister (Conservation Officer in Dawson) that they will present trappers with the form when they come in to renew their license.</p>	<p>Staff to make best efforts to obtain individual trappers' contact information and send a letter notifying them how to be involved in the DRPC process, in addition to writing the letter to the YTA.</p>

LAND DESIGNATION SYSTEM – CUMULATIVE EFFECTS INDICATORS AND LEVELS: STATUS UPDATE	
Overview	Action Items
<p>Shawn Francis (S. Francis Consulting Inc.) provided the Commission with an update on his work with Sam Skinner (YLUPC) to develop potential cumulative effects (CE) indicators and levels for the Dawson planning region. Shawn has been contracted by YLUPC to complete this project - information on the purpose and proposed methodology was provided to the Commission at the April 15-17 meeting.</p> <p>Shawn gave a Power Point presentation (available on DRPC website) that described:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Results of technical sessions (March 2014) with YG staff to develop “futuring” scenarios for four key industries in the region (placer mining, quartz mining, forestry, and oil & gas) • Results of meetings (April-May 2014) with representatives of key stakeholder groups for these industries, to review and provide input on the scenarios • Discussion of methodology for using the scenarios to develop potential CE indicators and levels • Additional work and expected results to be completed for the June meeting <p>Low and high growth scenarios were created for each industry using a 20-year timeframe and the information provided by the “experts”. Tourism was not included (along with some other land use activities) because it does not typically involve major landscape changes or major additions to the CE footprint. An oil & gas scenario was not originally envisioned but was requested by YG. The meetings with stakeholders went well, and there was general agreement with what YG staff had suggested was reasonable or plausible.</p> <p>Shawn emphasized that regional plans are excellent opportunities to look at the big picture, vs. the project-specific world of YESAB. Regional plans can provide broad guidance, which enables the project-specific world to function better. They mapped current surface disturbance and linear density using satellite images and other data. Shawn clarified the difference between surface disturbance (area in km², e.g. size of a harvest area where trees were removed, a gravel pit, or a town site) and linear density (total number of km of long narrow features such as roads, trails or seismic lines and how much space there is between the lines). He said it’s also important to recognize that a linear feature such as a heavily used road can have an impact (zone of influence) well beyond its relative width. All linear density is surface disturbance, but not all surface disturbance is linear density.</p> <p>The Goldfields area has about 4% surface disturbance – this is high by Yukon standards but is quite concentrated. In comparison, southern Alberta where it’s almost all agricultural land is 90-99% surface disturbance, and the oilsands region in northern Alberta is about 50%. For linear density, the oilsands is about 3-4 km/km². The North Yukon Land Use Plan recommended as low as 0-0.2 km/km², which was conservation-oriented and based on the fact it was still a fairly natural landscape. For IMA-IV, the highest development zone, the level was set at 1 km/km². It’s a good idea to keep the units of analysis (i.e. LMUs) a similar size. If LMUs are based on watershed boundaries, you are calculating the % surface disturbance within each watershed.</p> <p>Placer scenarios – 90% of future activity anticipated to take place in same areas currently being mined. The high growth scenario</p>	

assumed ~1.5 times current production (the stakeholder group suggested YG projections were too optimistic)

Quartz scenarios – stakeholder input again led to downgraded projections. The low growth scenario had one new mine (Brewery Creek) and 24 new advanced exploration projects over 20 years. The high growth scenario added Coffee Creek and White Gold mines plus additional exploration projects, which increased the footprint substantially (new all season-roads likely required). Comparison of project footprints: Minto mine is ~600 hectares (ha), Brewery Creek ~500-600 ha, White Gold by completion ~1000-1200 ha, Coffee Creek would be much larger (~2000-2400 ha). Scott added that Casino would be ~8 km long x 3 km wide, or about 50 times larger than Minto.

Forestry scenarios – no changes recommended from the stakeholder meeting. Mark Pedersen (YG Forester) had suggested some “frontier” areas where harvesting could occur in the future. Even in the high growth scenario, the footprint on the landscape remains very low. The model assumes that 25% of the volume harvested (m³/year) would count as disturbance (selective logging), lasting about 15 years. The typical harvest pattern is patch cuts near roads – these appear as yellow (low scenario) and red (high scenario) dots on the map, and each one represents ~300m across.

Oil and gas scenarios – no stakeholder/industry representative was identified, so the information is from YG staff only. This is not a concern, there was consensus that input was sufficient and there is lots of other information (e.g. from North Yukon plan) that can be used. The focus is on Eagle Plains - the low scenario would add very little to current linear features and surface disturbance, with limited exploration (helicopter pads) and a few exploratory wells. The high scenario (3D seismic exploration similar to the recent Northern Cross activity just north of the planning region, covering ~400 km², plus more exploratory wells and a few producing wells) would represent a major change. Some of the activities could take place during the winter or the seismic lines could be narrower, but it would still represent a large amount of activity on the landscape.

Scott asked whether the Northern Cross project figures were based on the total number of kilometers surveyed or the actual disturbance (seismic lines drawn on the map often go through lakes or burned areas on the ground, so there are no new trees cut). Shawn replied the total amount of disturbance was reduced by 75% where it appeared to go through these types of areas – they could go further and review ecological maps if necessary.

For the summary total of projected landscape changes for all industries, they dissolved overlapping features so there is no double-counting. There is the potential for major long-term change in LMU 29 (Coffee Creek) and LMU 26 (Stewart River), but almost all of this is related to development of big mining projects. Areas along the Alaska border could see increasing placer activity, and there could be some oil and gas activity near Eagle Plains. The rest of the region will likely see slower growth.

Reclamation and natural revegetation are also important considerations. The regeneration rate varies for different types of landscapes and types of disturbances. If the future holds about the same amount of activity as today, there will be shifting locations but the overall landscape footprint will stay approximately the same (new disturbances balanced by reclamation of old ones). The total amount of disturbance could actually decrease over time, as the “backlog” of historical disturbance revegetation catches up.

Discussion	Action Items
<p>Peter asked if wildlife trails were considered. Shawn replied these were not mapped. Wildlife trails are important for wildlife movement, but the goal of the CE work is to look at human-caused disturbance (with satellite imagery, you can usually tell whether a linear feature has been used or modified by humans).</p> <p>Will noted that increased placer mining also means more costs for fuel, equipment maintenance, etc. so the prices have to be high enough to justify it (i.e. you can do it at \$2000/ounce but not at \$1000/oz). High prices have allowed miners to work “leaner” ground, but it didn’t actually increase the amount of gold produced. Also, because it is a declining resource there is less gold per km² so you need to mine more km² for the same return (which also increases your footprint on the landscape).</p> <p>Peter asked how reclamation for the purposes of residential or commercial development is considered (e.g. tailings piles leveled and converted to housing development). Shawn said it would be treated as a transition of disturbance – there is no additional footprint but it is also not considered reclaimed. The scale for these situations may be too fine to capture in this model.</p> <p>Bill asked if they had considered an agriculture scenario. Shawn replied no, because most future agricultural development is anticipated to take place in community areas close to the Dawson City townsite.</p> <p>Question: Does the Commission agree that the “futuring” scenarios for these industries are reasonable (i.e. they represent the best available information and expert opinion, and are plausible projections of potential future landscape change in the region)?</p> <p>General agreement that the scenarios were reasonable. Will said there are some areas with high placer potential in the future that are not shown on the map, some of which could occur in the next five years. Peter said he sees more potential for quartz exploration in areas that are simply unknown yet (e.g. Shawn Ryan’s work discovered areas like White Gold that were not even considered before and are now in advanced exploration). Scott and other meeting observers noted it takes a long time for projects to actually become producing mines – the White Gold discovery was exciting and precipitated a lot of staking, but nine years later there is still no proposed mine. Coffee Creek could be determined uneconomical to pursue further, and other projects that also seemed promising could stop if drilling results are not favorable. There is a lot of uncertainty and it is difficult to predict what will happen, but it seems unlikely there would be three producing mines in the region in the near future.</p> <p>Question: Does the Commission feel that the cumulative effects of current and/or potential future land use activities in the region are of concern? If yes, what are the concerns and what might be done about them?</p> <p>Differences of opinion between Commission members on this issue. There are concerns about potential cumulative effects on wildlife and wildlife habitat, particularly the 40 Mile caribou herd who is just now recovering their population and expanding their range back into the Yukon. Also increased activity has the potential to impact heritage resources.</p> <p>Question: Does the Commission want to pursue the use of cumulative effects indicators and levels in the Land Designation System, specifically to differentiate between the IMA zones?</p> <p>Will questioned what it would achieve. There is a risk of making zones so restrictive it will essentially make projects unachievable on the ground, and doing it without defensible backup. If even the high scenarios show that new development will likely balance</p>	<p>Will and Scott to review mapped data for placer and quartz mining scenarios with Shawn and Sam, and add their own expertise.</p>

<p>out with reclamation, it would be hard to justify.</p> <p>Shawn clarified that cumulative effects (CE) are the things that happen as a result of land use activities. CE indicators are attributes of CE that can be measured (e.g. human footprint or wildlife habitat loss). CE indicator levels are the status of the indicator, and you can set cautionary and critical levels that would trigger some additional action (e.g. how much footprint is allowed in a certain LMU, or is anything done differently when moose populations are below a certain number). They should be viewed as progressive management decision points, not thresholds. The concept of thresholds comes from aquatic toxicity studies, where fish can only handle so many mg/L of a toxic substance before they die, but it is far more challenging to define “break points” with other species.</p> <p>Scott felt it would be more effective at this stage for the Commission to make recommendations for increased monitoring and research, to collect more baseline data and identify indicators that should be tracked over time. There are opportunities during plan reviews to implement additional tools if necessary, and the monitoring data would help provide a better scientific basis for setting levels in the future.</p> <p>Ron noted that cumulative effects can occur at different scales on the landscape. During mineral or oil and gas exploration, drilling programs cover large areas, and it is difficult to predict (geographic uncertainty) where additional activity will take place until the drilling results are analyzed.</p> <p>Monica emphasized that if the high growth scenarios don’t show anything that is of concern to the Commission, then there is likely not a need to implement CE levels at this time (although the Commission could definitely make recommendations for monitoring, as per Scott’s suggestion, in case it became a concern in the future). Even if CE indicator levels are not used to define zones, the “futuring” scenarios are still extremely useful for the Commission’s decision-making.</p>	
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PLAN ALTERNATIVES: SUBMISSIONS FROM THE PARTIES	
Overview	Action Items
<p>Monica reviewed the discussion on this item that took place at the April 15-17 meeting. The SLC met on May 2 and again on May 8 - the purpose was to discuss the key areas of agreement and disagreement between the three Parties, and to identify how they might attempt to work together towards consensus and be able to provide consistent policy direction to the Commission. She reminded the Commission that the SLC members are: Tim Gerberding (TH), Erika Tizya (VGG), Allan Koprowsky (YG Environment) and Shirley Abercrombie (YG-Energy, Mines and Resources).</p> <p>The Commission was not invited to attend these meetings, but the three Technical Working Group (TWG) members did attend (Bill Kendrick-TH, Rosa Brown-VGG, and Gillian McKee-YG). The Commission requested an update on the proceedings. Gillian said the May 2 meeting was a preliminary one; it was the first time they had met in several months. They recognized that the Parties have fundamental differences in their approach to issues, and that this has a bearing on the Commission’s work. They agreed to work to “find a bridge” between their interests, and gave TWG direction to explore what that “middle ground” might look like. One of the main points of contention is where might there be withdrawal of subsurface rights, and why it would be</p>	

<p>required to achieve the goals of the plan. On May 8, TWG brought back some ideas for exploring consensus but it is clear these are challenging issues. A key point from YG's perspective is the importance of building a solid rationale for decisions. Bill added it was a good discussion, but sees that First Nations TWG and SLC representatives at the table have clearer direction whereas the YG representatives always need to take concepts back to the politicians. He also emphasized it is not the SLC's role to tell the Commission what decisions to make, just to provide them with feedback on what would be considered "acceptable" or something they would approve in the final plan.</p> <p>Items of discussion included potential general management direction in the plan about cumulative effects, as well as maintaining a certain amount of boreal forest representation throughout the region. The Dawson Forest Resources Management Plan requires a report out in the next two years on indicators. The Parties could agree that if any huge landscape disturbance came along, there would be adaptive management measures in place. They also talked about potential protected areas and the Traditional Economy Area zone, and the SLC specifically requested more information about how the Yukon River Corridor zone would be defined and whether it might involve more detailed sub-regional planning.</p> <p>Rosa said the SLC is planning to meet again on May 23. VGG feels that the Commission should plan for the river corridor – recommending a subregional plan would require a firm commitment from all Parties (and confirmed funding to implement it). There is already a subregional planning process that was recommended in the North Yukon and Peel plans for the Dempster Corridor, and the Dawson plan is the last "piece" of that area so it should proceed after that.</p> <p>The SLC acknowledges the May 1 letter from the Commission and will be responding.</p>	
<p>Discussion</p>	<p>Action Items</p>
<p>Will emphasized that clear and consistent direction from the Parties (through the SLC) is critical so the Dawson plan doesn't end up like the Peel. The Parties should be helping the Commission make these difficult decisions and come to consensus, not be criticizing them after the fact.</p> <p>Scott suggested that YLUPC could help set up a meeting between the Commission and the SLC. Monica stated the SLC has a Terms of Reference (it is Appendix B to the DRPC TOR) and their roles and responsibilities are clear, including communication with the Commission and their option to invite Commission members and/or staff to attend their meetings. The May 1 letter was meant to get clarification whether the Parties are going to stick hard and fast to the positions stated in their submissions on the Plan Alternatives (on some issues this would mean being completely opposite to other Parties' positions), or whether they are committed to this process and are willing to compromise on some issues (in the interests of helping the Commission create a plan that will actually be approved by everyone).</p> <p>Ron noted that the SLC representatives would not likely have the authority to make these decisions, they have to take the information back to their respective governments. It would be useful for the Commission to get some sense of where the Parties are most "nervous". He also said he has attended Gillian's internal Inter-Departmental Working Group meetings before and feels they are also very useful in bringing those different perspectives together at the table.</p>	<p>Await SLC response to the May 1 letter.</p> <p>Scott and Ron to investigate opportunities for the Commission to meet directly with the SLC.</p>

AGENDA TAB 3: PLANNING TOOLBOX - MANAGEMENT TOOLS AND STRATEGIES	
Overview	Action Items
<p>Monica briefly reviewed the materials that were included in the December 2013 meeting package, including: a “planning toolbox” list of possible management tools and strategies the Commission can use; worksheets for various Land Designation Systems showing the continuum or spectrum of zoning and land management possibilities; and the list of tools and strategies used at the June 2013 stakeholder workshop.</p> <p>The Commission will need to consider all these potential options in their discussions for the remainder of the meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zoning and/or buffers (spatial separation of potentially incompatible land use activities) • Timing windows (temporal separation of activities) • Cumulative effects indicators and levels • General Management Directions for the entire region • Special Management Considerations (LMU-specific) • Best Management Practices • Withdrawal of subsurface rights • Specifying permitted or prohibited resource uses or types of land use activities • Access management • Regulatory amendments • Research and monitoring • Triggers for plan review • Regulatory tools – Class 1 notification, off-road vehicle regulations, special operating areas • Sub-regional planning • Stewardship and other voluntary management approaches • Protected areas • Other adaptive management provisions or recommendations 	

Meeting adjourned for the day at 4:55 pm.

Meeting reconvened on May 14th at 9:10am.

OVERVIEW OF “CLUSTERS” FORMAT FOR DISCUSSION, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES	
<p>Monica said this idea came out of numerous TWG discussions since the last meeting. They felt that grouping several Landscape Management Units (LMUs) with similar values and/or land use activities into “clusters” and discussing them as a whole would be a more efficient way to approach decisions, rather than each LMU individually.</p> <p>For each of the eight clusters, the Commission will review:</p>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LMU descriptions prepared by Kathy (key ecological, cultural, and economic values from mapped data + What We Heard submissions) - these will eventually become Section 2 of the Draft Plan • Current and potential future industrial development and land use activities (using the Resource Assessment Report maps and the “futuring” scenarios work) • Overlaps in values and potential land use conflicts • Key issues and questions for consideration (summary sheet prepared for each cluster by Kathy, including any specific feedback received during the Plan Alternatives public review) • How these LMUs were zoned in the five Plan Alternatives and a review of reasons • Options for zoning and other management tools and strategies <p>In the process of these discussions, it is anticipated that the Land Designation System will become further refined. Some LMUs may be discussed in more than one cluster.</p> <p>The overall goal is consensus on key decisions required for the Draft Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What zones will you use and how will you define them? • What will you zone each of the 30 LMUs and why (what is the rationale for your decision)? • What General Management Directions will you apply to the entire region? • Are there additional Special Management Considerations that you feel are necessary for individual LMUs? <p>Christiane will facilitate the discussions, with staff and TWG assistance where required. Christiane said it seemed to her the four main things to keep in mind were wildlife, heritage resources, potential opportunities, and potential challenges as well as the overall management intent for the area.</p>	
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CLUSTER #1: East of Yukon River (LMUs 19, 20, 25 and 26)	
Overview	Action Items
<p>These LMUs contain several Settlement Land parcels, many of which are locations of traditional camps and important for heritage resources (e.g. Hän migration route). The moose population is quite healthy, and the 40 Mile caribou herd recently started migrating across the Yukon River to LMUs 19 and 20. Many other wildlife species occur here, including many important for trapping, and there are some fish-bearing streams as well as salmon in the major rivers. Wetland areas along the Stewart and Indian Rivers are important for migratory birds, and there may be small pockets of sheep in the southern part of LMU 26 (west side of Yukon River).</p> <p>There is agricultural potential along the Stewart River (which is also important for hunting access), and LMUs 19 and 20 have good forestry potential. This cluster contains the White Gold area and other high potential areas for mineral resource development, with possible access routes into LMU 26 from the Stewart River or Yukon River. It is also a projected key area for future placer mining. Tourism opportunities are mostly focused on Bonanza Creek, Dredge #4, and other sites associated with the Goldfields as well as the river corridors.</p>	

<p>This is the portion of the region with the highest amounts of surface disturbance, but there are still healthy moose populations. Reclamation is occurring on a continuous basis, except on the old dredge tailings (which are important for tourism as is). The area is covered by placer claims, but most of the impact has been there for years already.</p> <p>In the five Plan Alternatives, the Commission zoned LMUs 20 and 25 IMA-IV (highest development) in all. LMU 26 had a bit more variation, recognizing there are unique features in LMU 26 (e.g. intact old growth forest) and it has been noted as a high priority for conservation interests (potential benchmark protected area) but it was still zoned IMA. LMU 19 was given a wide range of zones, from IMA-III to Protected Area.</p>	
<p>Discussion</p>	<p>Action Items</p>
<p>Some concerns about potential impacts of new access (particularly adjacent to the Yukon River), although others felt there is already an extensive permitting process and existing legislation to deal with these concerns. Increased access may increase hunting pressure (or decrease it in other areas). Considerations for private access (e.g. gated mine roads), where the road is used only for the purpose of transporting goods and people to/from site, and permission is required from the road owner. Discussion about whether the Commission could recommend designated access routes (e.g. to avoid certain areas with key wildlife habitat), encourage the use of existing access routes rather than building new ones, or make recommendations about the construction and decommissioning of roads. It was recognized that road building is not the Commission's expertise or mandate, but other Commissions have recommended General Management Directions and given LMU-specific direction in regards to access management.</p> <p>Debbie stated there should be more monitoring of moose and caribou populations, as well as harvest levels for moose (and 40 Mile caribou, if it is ever opened to hunting again on the Yukon side). This will be especially important if new access is developed, and more moose monitoring should focus on cows and calves. Also there should be some concept of when restrictions on harvest levels might eventually be needed (how much is too much?).</p> <p>Debbie feels there should be more efforts by YG to inform the community about wildlife population status and monitoring programs, and to get community input. Trappers also shouldn't have to go on the YESAB website to find out about projects which could impact their livelihoods, they should be notified directly by YG.</p> <p>Discussion about potential to divide LMU 26 into two, with the western section remaining a higher development area (recognizing existing claims) and the eastern portion with higher conservation interests and unique/special landscape features could be zoned differently.</p> <p>Discussion about the need for consistency in zoning systems between planning regions. General agreement that simpler is better – examples were provided such as the Dawson Forest Resources Management Plan, Atlin Taku Land Use Plan, and Gwich'in Settlement Area land use plan which use very simple systems (two or three zones). When zoning, need to consider the <u>management intent</u> – what are you trying to achieve, and how many different zones do you need to accomplish it? Bill noted that seasonality could also be used to distinguish between different IMA zones (i.e. IMA-IV would have no special seasonal considerations, IMA-III winter considerations, IMA-II summer considerations, IMA-I year-round considerations).</p>	

Decisions	Action Items
<p>General agreement that the overall intent for these LMUs is to maintain economic activity (placer and hard rock mining, tourism, trapping). However, there is a need to be cautious regarding wildlife populations and there are some special considerations such as heritage resources and unique ecological features.</p> <p>Special management consideration for the Hän migration route should apply to all four LMUs in this cluster (as well as LMU 30). The northern portion of LMU 19 has numerous TH Settlement Land parcels and important river corridors, but also high potential for future placer operations. General agreement it would be zoned IMA but with considerations for these things.</p> <p>General agreement that LMUs 20, 25 and 26 would be zoned IMA.</p>	

CLUSTER #2: Yukon River Corridor (LMU 30)	
Overview	Action Items
<p>The Yukon River is a multi-use corridor that flows through almost the entire planning region, and has multiple values year-round. It overlaps many Wildlife Key Areas (including wetlands which are rare in the planning region), has high heritage value (documented and potential resources), is part of the Hän migration route and Dawson to Tetlin migration route (both identified in the TH Final Agreement), is a major transportation corridor for industrial and recreational purposes (as well as subsistence harvesting), borders on numerous trapping and outfitting concessions, has agricultural potential (including hemp!) on benches and islands, has potential for timber harvesting (as well as non-timber forest products such as mushrooms and medicinal plants), and is very important for tourism. Concerns about declining salmon stocks (even First Nations have scaled back or stopped their subsistence harvest, which has cultural implications), and potential declines in water quality if too much activity is permitted.</p> <p>The area of this LMU as currently drawn is 919 km², including 196 km² of TH Settlement Land. Summer is the busiest season for river activity: canoeing, fishing, barging equipment and supplies, etc. The peak of the tourist season is from spring break-up to late September/early October. Most of hunting activity along river is in the fall, and trappers use the river for access in the winter.</p> <p>In the Plan Alternatives, the Yukon River Corridor (YRC) was both its own LMU and a separately defined zone in the Land Use Designation System. Some of the feedback submissions suggested the corridor boundary should be redefined, and others questioned why the Yukon River required its own zone instead of using an overlay concept like the Peel's Major River Corridor and applying it to all rivers. Review of reasons why YRC became its own zone – the Yukon River is substantially different than other rivers in the region, both in terms of activities and management intent; potential for sub-regional planning; zone could be used in other planning regions to the south; and so that people using the river wouldn't be passing through multiple different zones (consistency along the entire length).</p>	
Discussion	Action Items
<p>For many locations along the river such as mineral claims, it is cheaper to access them by barge (or ice bridge in winter) than to</p>	<p>Gillian to research</p>

build a new road. However, using an existing road is generally cheaper than barging. Scott added that potential barge supply for new mining operations could be reasonable, but only to an advanced exploration stage. Once in production, mining operations would definitely require road and/or air access.

The river also provides access to the uplands for various activities. TH has expressed concerns that mineral claims are being staked right down to the river's edge, with no intention of mining but to enable creation of access without additional permitting requirements. Suggestion: the Commission could recommend that any new access in this LMU would require a permit under the Territorial Land Use Act and regulations. Bill emphasized the difference is that the Territorial Land Use regulations, like the Forest Resources Act, takes into account other values (mining rights do not automatically prevail) and provides an opportunity for public review and comment. Several members questioned the advantage this would have over the existing system – a placer operation requiring a road would likely be a Class 3 operation, subject to a YESAB screening anyway.

Noted that tourism potential on the river depends highly on the “wilderness” experience – people want to see wildlife and remote places where there isn't a lot of industrial activity. They are also interested in historical sites (many of which were traditional First Nations camps), and a large majority of tourists coming to the Dawson region come because they want to see the Gold Rush history and are interested in modern mining. Discussion that not all tourism is “benign” – the Yukon Queen riverboat was an example of inappropriate tourism activity that had major impacts on the local ecosystem.

Most of the land along the river is zoned Forest Resource Management Zone, and specific Timber Harvest Plans need to be developed prior to any harvesting taking place.

Discussion about agriculture potential – mostly on islands, but a very narrow window for supply (difficult economics for successful operations). There are growing numbers of people who want to live outside of town, and pursuing agriculture is one of the easiest ways to get land title. Productive river soils make the Dawson region one of the highest agriculture potential areas in the whole Yukon. There are concerns about livestock diseases and wildlife populations, as well as the use of pesticides and runoff.

The Commission could identify specific locations along the river where additional mitigation measures should be taken, where certain activities such as agriculture should take place, where access points should occur, etc. Some felt this may be too detailed to undertake in a regional planning exercise, while others felt it could be done fairly easily (and should be, rather than deferring it to sub-regional plan with unclear timelines and funding to implement it). TH has emphasized that if the Commission is going to recommend sub-regional planning, they will expect interim measures in place (including a staking withdrawal) until that process was completed.

Discussion about how the river corridor is currently defined – generally uses the boreal low ecosystem boundary, and to a maximum of 3 km on each side of the centerline of the river (6 km total). The corridor boundaries should capture where the values lie – the current line captures the floodplain environment and riparian areas, but doesn't really incorporate viewscape considerations (i.e. where the river comes up against a steep cliff, the line stops). Viewscape can be defined as anything you can see when you're travelling on the river.

potential for screening and permitting barge landings and roads (associated with mineral claims) within the YRC through the Territorial Land Use Regulations rather than the Mining Land Use Regulations, and provide Commission with additional information.

<p>Discussion about the importance of floodplains (ecological values, wetlands and other riparian habitat, campsites, etc.) but defining the river corridor this way misses raptor/sheep habitat and viewscape considerations for tourism. Will suggested that if the floodplain was the edge of LMU 30, Special Management Considerations could just be noted for all LMUs that border the river (e.g. to ensure protection of raptor and sheep habitat on the adjacent ridges plus riparian habitat at the shoreline).</p> <p>Peter said the riparian zone is already defined in Fisheries and Oceans Canada regulations as a 30m setback from the historical high water mark, and any boundary the Commission creates should be consistent with this legislation. He felt a set distance was better than defining it using the floodplain, and was concerned that pushing the boundary further back could impact economic development opportunities (depending on what kinds of restrictions the YRC zone ends up having, and/or if it is recommended for subregional planning with an interim staking withdrawal). Also, numerous regulations are already in place through the placer regime to protect riparian habitat.</p> <p>Shawn said that further reductions to the corridor width would reduce its functionality as its own LMU. It is currently a visible, easily identifiable corridor with an intact valley system of riparian habitat, banks and cliffs. If there are concerns about defining it this way, it would be better just as an overlay. Will added that it has to be defined one way or the other – either the floodplain (valley bottom) or a set distance. A valley bottom with a limit isn't a valley bottom.</p> <p>Sam noted that both the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society and Wildlife Conservation Society Canada submissions on the Plan Alternatives suggested that a set distance from center line of river is not ideal (3 km may not be sufficient to include sheep habitat up a steep slope of a tributary, so would be better to use a continuous viewscape, i.e. ridge top to ridge top). The management plan for the 30 Mile section of the Yukon River (north of Whitehorse) has some good ideas for how to do this, i.e. identified viewpoints and visual features that you can see from the river.</p> <p>Advantages of using the valley bottom: distinct ecoregion, good justification, readily identifiable on the ground, and ease of mapping. Viewscapes and wildlife habitat considerations could be dealt with in Special Management Considerations, and existing legal rights would be grandfathered.</p> <p>Using a fixed corridor width is theoretically easy to define, but it wouldn't catch some channels and the river varies in width along its length (the entire corridor would have to be fairly wide to capture these widest spots).</p> <p>YG does not generally support the concept of a separate YRC zone – they suggest it could be zoned IMA with special considerations, or the Commission could use a Major River Corridor overlay for all rivers in the region (these would make the plan more consistent with other planning regions). If the Commission wants to pursue the idea, they will have to provide solid rationale.</p>	
<p>Decisions</p>	<p>Action Items</p>
<p>Draft Plan should note goal to maintain healthy salmon populations (and/or improve from current conditions) and to maintain water quality and quantity (reference wording in TH Final Agreement).</p>	<p>Sam to refine the LMU 30 boundary by using a smoother line</p>

<p>Draft Plan should incorporate Best Management Practices, specific details on potential land use conflicts (locations and values), and recommendations for solutions (including additional research, monitoring, or improvements to regulatory regime) into each LMU description rather than more generalized sections on these topics.</p> <p>Agreement that the YRC would remain a separate LMU, with its boundaries defined using the valley bottom. General agreement that for now, the YRC will remain a separate zone pending further discussions.</p> <p>Draft Plan should include General Management Directions that any proposed projects in the YRC shall consider viewscape values, critical wildlife habitat, and heritage resources potential.</p>	<p>and following the valley bottom. Present revised version to the Commission at next meeting.</p> <p>Draft Plan should have refined Yukon River Corridor using a smoother line that roughly follows the top break of steep slopes over the river (generally high viewshed and some ecological values) or the valley bottom where there were no steep slopes.</p>
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Sam Skinner (YLUPC) gave a short presentation on his work during the Plan Alternatives phase, which used a computer program called Marxan to identify where key ecological values, cultural values, and industrial values occur within the planning region and where they overlap (potential conflict areas). He tried a number of different configurations and changing variables throughout the region, and kept getting consistent results on the overlap areas. These are noted in the cluster discussions that follow.

Shawn Francis, who was attending the meeting to provide an update on his contract for the cumulative effects project, was asked by the Commission (and agreed) to help Christiane facilitate the remaining discussions on Day 3, based on his experience as the Senior Planner for the North Yukon regional plan.

Meeting adjourned for the day at 5:05 pm.

Meeting reconvened on May 15th at 9:10 am.

<p>CLUSTER #3: West of Yukon River (LMUs 13, 14, 18, 22 and 24)</p>	
<p>Overview</p>	<p>Action Items</p>
<p>Commission reviewed key values in these LMUs using the two-page summaries prepared by Kathy, based on the maps and data from the Resource Assessment Report. Clarification that the placer potential map shows some streams labeled as “special concern” or “special consideration” – these usually refer to salmon spawning streams, but can also be designated that way for</p>	

<p>cultural reasons. Also, the map showing unique and special landscape features has points labeled “local knowledge” – these were identified in YG workshops with community members and land users as important (the lines have been “blurred” – exact locations and details on what special feature is there are not made public due to concerns about how the information will be used).</p> <p>Will noted that the southwest edge of LMU 24 is winter and summer sheep habitat, at the mouth of the White River. The QV project may be in this LMU (possibly LMU 23), which would require access if a mine ever develops. Chester said that marmots were not included in the list of wildlife species for LMU 13, but there are lots along the Top of the World Highway. Kathy explained that the information on the summaries comes from the RAR maps – there are no Wildlife Key Areas shown for marmots or any other small mammals.</p> <p>All the LMUs in this cluster have similar values and types of land use activities. There is potential for more quartz and placer mining as well as forestry, its remoteness and mostly seasonal (summer) access remains a limiting factor; tourism is currently focused on the scenic Top of the World Highway and 40 Mile areas (TH would like to see more people visiting the 40 Mile townsite), as well as the Yukon River, but there are opportunities for future expansion; trapping occurs throughout this cluster, as do other harvesting activities. LMU 22 is unique from the others in this cluster with its wetland areas, which are connected to the Scottie Creek wetland complex just to the south of the planning region. Scott Herron (Canadian Wildlife Service, Environment Canada) had previously told the Commission that area was being considered as a Special Management Area in the White River First Nation negotiations.</p> <p>LMU 14 was zoned Traditional Economy Area (TEA) in one of the Plan Alternatives. Its proximity to Dawson and number of TH Settlement Land parcels makes it especially important for community wellness programs and cultural pursuits, as well as subsistence harvesting activities and potential for renewable resource development (e.g. agriculture, tourism, forestry – high value timber that is easily accessible). However, there is a large block of quartz claims in the northern part of the LMU and a number of other smaller blocks. This LMU surrounds West Dawson/Sunnydale, so there is the potential for more residential subdivision development, and this area is important as a viewscape from the Dome and the south side of town. There is potential the Top of the World Highway could become an all-season road someday, which would create many new opportunities and challenges.</p> <p>LMU 13 was ranked second highest in the region by YG Environment staff for important wildlife habitat (moose, caribou). It has more traditional use areas and important heritage resources (40 Mile River and townsite), and is also important for mineral resource development.</p> <p>Sam showed the results of the Marxan analysis for this cluster. There is a lot of overlap between ecological, cultural, and industrial values in the Swede Creek and 60 Mile areas. There is a wetland complex (rare in the planning region) in the north Ladue River area and some other unique features, and it is considered a biodiversity “hotspot”. In the scenarios work done by him and Shawn, the Ladue River area was also identified as a place where mining could potentially expand in the future. Gillian said her internal YG working group has also been using mapping programs where Wildlife Key Areas are layered with placer and quartz claims to see where overlaps occur.</p>	
<p>Discussion</p>	<p>Action Items</p>

The Forty Mile caribou herd is still recovering, and uses this area for winter habitat (seasonality generally avoids conflict with placer and quartz mining activities which occur in the summer). Moose calving in springtime usually occurs in forested areas, sometimes at higher elevations (avoiding conflict with placer miners in valley bottoms) but can happen anywhere. Most concerns about bears are related to human-bear conflicts, particularly around camps. Major river corridors are important for birds and fish (need to maintain good water quality and adequate flow), although most streams show low habitat suitability for salmon. Very little work has been done in the 60 Mile area to document heritage resources, but it is considered to have high potential.

The Commission discussed other activities and values and when/where they would occur in this area, to help identify recommendations needed to reduce or eliminate potential land use conflicts. However, it was noted the reality is not quite so simple – there are trans-boundary issues (caribou, salmon, 40 Mile River, and Yukon River can all be impacted on the Alaska side). Also, mining activity may only occur in the summer but it can cause damage to winter habitat (e.g. damaging lichen or removing trees) for animals like caribou or marten. Shawn noted it takes about 40-60 years for lichen to regrow after a fire, and can be even longer regeneration time after human activities. Sam added that Mike Sutor (regional biologist) says surface disturbance and habitat removal is a major issue for caribou, with linear features causing less impact to populations. For moose, it appears to be the opposite (hunting pressure). Forest fires definitely affect the amount of available caribou habitat, usually at a much larger scale than human-caused disturbance. These things together can have an additive effect, especially when a large portion of the planning region has already burned so is not great caribou habitat. Also, there are other kinds of disturbance such as aircraft noise.

The few wetlands in the region tend to be along floodplains, which is also where much placer mining activity takes place. Reclamation activities often recreate wetlands, but do they serve all the same functions as the original (water filtration, wildlife habitat, etc.)? Sebastian Jones (meeting observer) noted that the Yukon has no legislation or regulations dealing specifically with wetlands. They are considered during YESAB project assessments, but the land use plan could suggest improvements. Shawn and Sam noted that Kirstie Simpson (YG) is currently researching reclamation rates in the North Yukon for old seismic lines (different widths, methods of construction, reclamation practices, and habitat types mean different rates of regeneration to functional habitat), and similar work could be done for wetlands. Will added that better mapping of wetlands is needed – not all wetlands are of equal ecological value (difference between a low-lying swamp with stagnant water and a functional, high productivity wetland with hydrological connections).

Discussion of access routes to mineral claims – LMU 18 via barge landing at mouth of 60 Mile and a short road, also roads off Top of the World highway; LMU 14 mostly by old woodcutting roads; winter trails to many placer claims within 60 Mile; Madsen Creek road; old Cat trails. Most road infrastructure is not currently all-season (the scenarios assume some upgrading would take place). Possibility of access from Casino Road to Kaminak properties at Coffee Creek, which would open up possibilities for White Gold and QV projects to go ahead. LMU 22 is relatively unexplored. There is an old airstrip and a road from Snag to the SW corner, some old winter Cat trails, and a rough summer road from Madsen Creek to the northern portion. Hunters typically come upriver by boat.

Debbie said her main concern is preventing “spaghetti access”, with roads all over the place and without considering their cumulative effects (especially on caribou). Shawn noted that even if cumulative effects aren’t a big concern now, they could be in the future and things could happen differently than their scenarios predicted. Best way to deal with this is implement research

Staff and TWG to research more information for the Commission on the effectiveness of reclamation of placer operations to functional wetlands.

Staff/TWG/Shawn to provide more information for the Commission about the research being conducted on reclamation of seismic lines in the North Yukon region.

<p>and monitoring programs to track changes over time. Definitely could use more research on rates of reclamation (and effectiveness) for different habitat types and land use activities.</p>	
<p>Decisions</p>	<p>Action Items</p>
<p>Potential recommendations in Draft Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional research on reclamation of wetlands in northern environments • Better mapping and inventory of wetlands in the region, including identification of productivity and overall significance, focusing on areas where future development is most likely (e.g. North Ladue) • Minimize disturbance to lichen through access management and possibly fire management recommendations (e.g. designating key lichen areas a high priority for fire suppression) and monitor status. Elevation considerations are also a possibility (lichen generally occurs at higher elevations in 40 Mile caribou herd range). • Access management recommendations: use existing features as much as possible, off-road vehicle regulations • Ways to manage potential increased hunting pressure from new road development or upgrading existing roads (e.g. private roads, hunting limitations) <p>Recommendations in the Draft Plan, including Special Management Considerations for individual LMUs, should use wording other than “protect” – e.g. “manage”, or “maintain region in a condition that can support sustainable caribou populations”.</p> <p>General agreement that LMUs 13, 18, and 24 would be zoned IMA but LMU 13 may have more special considerations.</p> <p>LMU 22 should have Special Management Considerations related to wetlands and associated biodiversity.</p>	

<p>CLUSTER #4: Tatonduk to Tombstone and Dempster Highway (LMUs 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 15 and 16)</p>	
<p>Overview</p>	<p>Action Items</p>
<p>This cluster of LMUs contains Tombstone Territorial Park and surrounding areas, as well as the Dempster Highway corridor. TH raised a number of concerns in their Plan Alternatives feedback submission regarding the proposed zoning, and emphasized the vital importance of this part of the region to their culture and heritage (particularly LMUs 11, 15 and 16). There are significant placer deposits in this cluster, as well as forestry potential and important habitat for a variety of fish and wildlife species.</p> <p>Dan Reynolds (meeting observer) spoke to the Commission about his extensive knowledge of the area, in particular LMU 9 where his outfitting concession is located. He considers himself and other outfitters to be the “gatekeepers” against illegal hunting occurring along the Alaska border. It is in their best interest to maintain healthy wildlife populations, and they realize that YG Environment doesn’t have the resources to effectively monitor and enforce such a vast region. Charges that have been laid have come from information provided by outfitters. He noted that LMU 9 contains the highest concentration of sheep habitat in the region (including critical lambing areas) and the highest density of mineral licks in the region, as well as very good moose and habitat and high density grizzly bear habitat. Grizzly bears come to the area for the salmon, then return back to the mountains. The primary economic activity in LMU 9 is guided outfitting, and it is important to maintain the values on which that business is</p>	

<p>based.</p> <p>In the Plan Alternatives, LMU 9 was zoned slightly higher development than LMU 8 because the Commission recognized there is oil and gas potential in the northern part, and significant mineral potential. LMUs 8 and 9 have many other similar values, and are both part of the Tatonduk River watershed. LMU 8 is also adjacent to the Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve on the Alaska side.</p> <p>LMU 10 contains key habitat areas for Porcupine caribou (north) and 40 Mile caribou (south), as well as a number of other wildlife species. Several streams in the LMU are classified as high suitability for fish habitat, and there are several locations where rare plants have been identified. There is relatively little interest for mineral claims (although there are some noted mineral occurrences in the west and south), and some potential for forest harvesting operations.</p> <p>LMU 11 contains important caribou, moose, sheep, and raptor habitat as well as salmon spawning areas (15 Mile River). There are numerous heritage resources such as the Yukon Ditch and Moosehide trail as well as other archaeological sites and traditional camps, and it is expected to be an important part of the proposed World Heritage Site designation’s tourism marketing potential (cultural landscapes). It also contains the highest percentage of Settlement Land of all LMUs, 140-year old trees, importance for trapping and outfitting concessions, and agriculture potential.</p>	
<p>Discussion</p>	<p>Action Items</p>
<p>Debbie said that key salmon spawning rivers such as Coal Creek and Eagle Creek should be protected, and that the Commission should recommend habitat protection measures that go beyond what the Yukon Placer Authorization specifies (i.e. not just maintain habitat but enhance it, given the declining salmon stocks). Peter noted that Coal Creek used to be an active coal mine with rail cars running down to the river.</p> <p>TH feels strongly that an IMA designation for LMU 11 is not appropriate. Existing rights on quartz claims would be grandfathered. Discussion about whether different values in this LMU conflict spatially – Scott suggested the LMU could essentially be split in half, with most of the high ecological and cultural values occurring in the south and industrial values in the north. Other values occur throughout the LMU such as trapping, outfitting, tourism potential, and traditional uses. Discussion about the purpose of Tombstone Park and the original proposed boundary, which was a much larger area.</p> <p>Discussion about the TEA zone and feedback received during the Plan Alternatives review period. There was a lot of negative feedback, mostly related to the interim withdrawal of subsurface rights and confusion about the intent of the zone (some people thought TH would have the same management authority as on Category A Settlement Land). Bill emphasized that the TEA zone was to ensure areas important to TH culture and heritage were maintained, but also to promote renewable resource activities and economic development.</p> <p>Shawn suggested there could be smaller TEA areas identified within certain LMUs, rather than zoning the entire LMU as TEA. The more site-specific TEA areas could have special provisions to ensure those key values are maintained, such as discussed earlier for the Yukon River (e.g. any new access would be permitted through Territorial Land Use Regulations).</p>	<p>Sam to prepare a map showing what a split LMU 11 might look like, as well as other LMUs for which the Commission has discussed this option (to provide more zoning flexibility), for further consideration at the next meeting.</p>

Decisions	Action Items
<p>Potential General Management Direction and/or LMU-specific Special Management Considerations in Draft Plan for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salmon spawning streams such as Coal Creek • Critical sheep habitat (LMUs 8 and 9) • Raptor habitat in river valleys • Caribou habitat • Access management measures <p>Additional consideration will be given to Shawn’s suggestion of smaller, site-specific areas that could be zoned TEA to address potential land use conflicts, rather than entire LMUs.</p> <p>If TEA zone continues to contain provisions for interim staking withdrawal, needs to have some kind of “guarantee” that it will be removed at that time and not stay in place indefinitely.</p>	

NEXT STEPS	
Discussion	Action Items
<p>Since there was insufficient time to discuss the remainder of the clusters listed on the agenda, they are deferred to the next meeting:</p> <p>CLUSTER #5: Tatonduk, Miner and Whitestone River Watersheds (LMUs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8) CLUSTER #6: South Klondike, Flat Creek, and Stewart River (LMUs 17, 21 and 26) CLUSTER #7: White River and Ladue River (LMUs 22, 23, 27 and 28) CLUSTER #8: Yukon River and White River (LMUs 24, 26 and 29)</p> <p>Monica reviewed work to be completed by her and Kathy (with TWG input and assistance) between now and next month’s meeting. She emphasized that consensus on the zones to be used in the Draft Plan is a critical decision still needed from the Commission. How many zones will be used? How will they be defined? Decisions on what to zone each LMU and the rationale can then occur. She noted that their approved workplan and budget had the Draft Plan released to the public by mid-June. This is obviously not possible anymore, but if the June meeting results in all key decisions it shouldn’t delay the overall schedule too much. It has been difficult for staff to write any substantial portions of the Draft Plan without this direction from the Commission.</p> <p>The Commission will have a booth at the Dawson City Gold Show for the next two days (May 16-17). Monica, Roger and Chester will be in attendance throughout. Scott will also attend on the morning of May 16.</p>	<p>Staff to continue work on all sections of the draft Draft Plan (based on results of this meeting and with further TWG input). Updated information to be presented at the next meeting.</p>

The next regular Commission meeting is scheduled for June 10-12 in Dawson.

Christiane asked the Commission to provide their thoughts on the meeting format and facilitation, as well as suggestions for improvement for their next meeting, by filling out a feedback form.

Meeting adjourned at 4:55 pm.

Approval of Minutes of Regular Board Meeting #17 (May 13-15, 2014)

By Motion #5 at Regular Board Meeting #20 (December 17, 2014)



Sara Wray Enns – Planning Technician

December 22, 2014

Date



Scott Casselman – Chair

December 22, 2014

Date