



<b>Agenda Item 3: Landscape Management Units &amp; Land Designation System</b>	
	<b>Action Items</b>
<p><b>LMUs:</b>                      Jeff described a recent TWG meeting to discuss these topics. TWG members agree that the current boundaries, numbering and naming of LMUs are acceptable for exploration of alternatives. Kathy has created a template for LMU descriptions for the draft plan, and Monica has been working on the summary of values for each LMU to help with decisions on potential designations. There are opportunities to add or dissolve boundaries for LMUs (e.g. smaller portions along Yukon River, sub-boundaries around Fishing Branch &amp; Miner River, or two adjacent units that have similar values and end up with the same designation). This would require revisions to the descriptions and recalculating the data in the consequence table. Bill emphasized that LMUs should be consistent with the Dawson Forest Resources Management Plan as much as possible, from an implementation perspective. Jeff said that ecological boundaries such as watersheds are typically used for LMU boundaries, but some ecological boundaries can cross watersheds (e.g. sheep habitat, which is based more on altitude).</p> <p>Options for the Yukon River, and potentially other major rivers such as White and Stewart, include: a) a separate LMU or designated corridor with consistently defined management intent and special considerations along its length - or could separate into two sections, north and south of Dawson; or b) an overlay where any given stretch of river would take on the management intent of the adjacent LMU, with an additional buffer or special considerations for the river. Alternatives could be tested around these concepts.</p> <p>Will asked about the Henderson Corner area and other recommendations in the Klondike Valley land use plan. Jeff said there is a Community Area identified in the LOS that could be used for unorganized subdivision areas like Henderson, Rock Creek, and Bear Creek. The Klondike Valley plan was never formally approved, but Jeff felt that this detailed level of community planning would tax the Commission's resources. Gillian noted that if the City of Dawson has identified a need beyond what can be met with existing lots and subdivisions, the Commission could recommend potential locations and form (planned subdivision or an area within which government would accept spot land applications). The Commission could also identify things to be considered when developing in these areas (e.g. agricultural potential). Sam added this could also be identified in the Special Considerations section for certain LMUs. Bill suggested that additional headings for Seasonal Considerations and Access Considerations should be added to the LMU descriptions.</p> <p>Jeff clarified that the LMU names are based on physical features within units or common terms such as Goldfields. He said there was a comment at the RRC meeting that LMU #10, Coal Creek, should perhaps be renamed the Klondike unit.</p> <p><b>LDS:</b>                      Jeff explained that the categories reflected different management intent. The Major River Corridor could be either a distinct LMU or an overlay. The Multi-Use Corridor would concentrate utility and transportation infrastructure, minimize linear disturbance, and maximize economic efficiency.</p> <p>Gillian reviewed YG comments on Jeff s draft LDS. Main points: desire for consistency with adjacent planning regions (for management clarity and ease of implementation), or if new zones are introduced need to demonstrate clear rationale and distinction in management regime (e.g. what would the difference be between MRC and IMA-L?). The LDS is meant to highlight differences in values between LMUs, describe differences in management intent, and provide direction for land managers. YG is unclear on several aspects of the definitions (e.g. why is residential development excluded in MUC), and the distinctions between “middle” zones (WA, TEZ, IMA-L) are not well defined. Also, Class 1 notifications would not be</p>	<p><b>Monica to add Seasonal Considerations and Access Considerations headings to LMU description template.</b></p>

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restricted to just WA with proposed revisions to Quartz and Placer Mining Acts. The LDS should be simple, descriptive and distinct.

Bill reviewed TH comments on Jeff's draft LDS. Main points: TH feels strongly that Yukon River Corridor should be a distinct LMU and not an overlay, given its unique characteristics and multiple values. Traditional Economy Zone (TEZ) denotes activity and interaction with the land, not the same as the context of WA. Economic activity may be occurring, but not tied to access features beyond trail networks or seasonal roads. The Peel process had major issues surrounding the term "wilderness". CE thresholds, seasonal restrictions/allowances, types of access, distinctions by renewable/non-renewable resource activity, etc. could all be used to distinguish between zones.

Ron noted the North Yukon designations were developed by Shawn Francis (Senior Planner), but were meant to be regionally adaptable (e.g. each region could have IMA zones but with different CE thresholds or indicators). YG's concept of Restricted Use Wilderness Area (RUWA) was new for their proposed Peel plan modifications. Gillian said the RUWA was meant to be something above IMA zones that still recognized the wilderness values, but not a legal protected area. It conveys more restrictions on use (e.g. no new infrastructure along rivers). Sam clarified that IMAs are prescriptive on levels of activity but not types of activity. RUWA or other intermediate zones could be prescriptive (e.g. forestry and outfitting are OK but mining is not, winter roads are OK but not all-season), which would set them apart from the IMAs. Ron said the most important thing to consider is your "vision" for the landscape in the future - zoning it IMA would mean some development would occur, vs. PA would have none. Jeff also noted the Dawson FRMP distinguishes between Forest Resource Management Zone (working landscape) and Hinterland (less accessible or more sensitive, but not designated for its wilderness characteristics). Hinterland areas are not a necessary part of the working landscape when other areas are more accessible and more economically feasible for timber harvest.

Gillian shared a chart prepared by YG Parks showing the spectrum of protected areas in the Yukon. The Commission could identify a potential protected area boundary and make recommendations on the type of protected area, and could also identify other areas like Ladue or Tatonduk that have high conservation values for special consideration but may not need to be a protected area. The Commission is aware of the values on the landscape and shouldn't "water down" recommendations for a conservation focus by being too vague.

Jeff said that CE thresholds reflect acceptable risks to valued resources. The North Yukon thresholds were specific to the taiga landscape, type of activity (potential oil and gas development in Eagle Plains), and type of indicator (linear features - selected because of extensive science identifying the link between linear features and caribou avoidance). He suggested these were not relevant to the Dawson region. In the Indian River, levels of linear disturbance are already past the critical levels, and didn't seem to reflect actual impacts on some valued resources (this most disturbed area also has the highest density moose populations). Ron clarified you can also set thresholds related to managing levels of activity and different land users (i.e. activity thresholds instead of linear disturbance thresholds). For example, how much industrial activity along the Yukon River will change its character enough to impact the wilderness tourism industry? Scott added that this varies- for Europeans, a few miles outside a Yukon community would be considered wilderness, and opinions change about what are acceptable levels. Gillian said that with North Yukon plan implementation, the "clock started" when the plan was approved in terms of measuring change. Recovery also needs to be factored into calculations. For YESAB, the only additions to CE totals are those activities that can't be mitigated through reclamation or other means.

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<p>Jeff raised a recent YESAB application as an example - contaminated soil storage and treatment facility along the Top of the World Highway. In what zone would this be appropriate? The MUC recognizes land uses related to transportation and infrastructure that are not necessarily compatible with other uses like residential development.</p>	

<b>Agenda Item 4.0 Plan Alternatives</b>	
<b>4.1 Evaluation of Plan Alternatives</b>	<b>Action Items</b>
<p>Jeff reviewed the Commission's individual work on creating alternatives at the September meeting (two each for a total of 10), based on a preliminary discussion of the LDS, plus the addition of the four alternatives created by Tim Wilson's group at the June stakeholder workshop. The number of alternatives needs to be reduced - e.g. alternatives that are outperformed by all other candidates across all evaluation criteria would be the first to go. Ideally the Commission should have 2 to 5 alternatives to be able to make distinctions but still represent a good range of possibilities.</p> <p>Bill asked whether the Commission could make recommendations on aircraft disturbance, beyond noting the Best Management Practices for flying in sheep and caribou country. Rosa noted that the Peel plan did recommend coordinated aircraft management, while acknowledging that airspace is federal jurisdiction.</p>	
<b>4.2 Refinement of Evaluation Framework</b>	
<p>The SDM Excel spreadsheet is a proprietary product from Compass Resource Management Ltd. that the Commission now has permission to use. Sam has populated it with data from maps and some scaling generalizations for calculation purposes (e.g. IMA-H contributes 100% to oil &amp; gas potential, IMA-M 75%, etc.). These are relative quantities to help make decisions, not specific performance metrics. Protected Areas are considered to meet 100% of conservation objectives, with IMA-H at zero on the other end. The reverse is true for economic objectives.</p> <p>The SDM process is transparent, decision making criteria are exposed, and clear consequences of choices (trade-offs) can be seen. The size of the consequence table needs to be reduced to about 20 or less, to speak more directly to values. The Commission needs to eliminate some evaluation criteria (EC) and some alternatives. Will noted that some evaluation criteria are only specific to certain LMUs (e.g. 40 Mile caribou), and perhaps caribou should be the indicator (all herds together). Scott said that EC which perform relatively the same across all alternatives could be eliminated because they don't help distinguish between them. Sam added that two or more EC that seem to move together could also be reduced/combined into one (e.g. could combine the six rare landscape features EC into an index). The point is to simplify to help describe and show the differences between alternatives, and to best represent the diversity of values and considerations in the region. The spreadsheet allows you to set what level of difference is considered significant. EC with high levels of uncertainty would also be good candidates for elimination. Eliminated criteria (and alternatives) are still there in the spreadsheet, we just turn those rows or columns on and off for viewing. This keeps the decision making process transparent as you can show it to others.</p> <p>Commission and TWG discussed current evaluation criteria and eliminated several seen to be less useful for decision making. Also, the major headings of Economic/Ecological/Cultural EC are meant to ensure a broad range of values are being considered, but the headings will disappear in presentation (e.g. trapping could be considered under all three).</p>	

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<p>A key point raised is that the calculations are based on the current LDS and how it is defined. For example, Bill noted that only those trapping concessions included in PA, WA or IMA-L are considered "protected". However, placer mining is a seasonal activity (summer only) so there could still be opportunities for trapping (winter) even in an IMA-H zone. Also, for heritage routes identified in the Final Agreement, ideally it is preferable to have these located in high conservation zones. However, some are routes to traditional economic activities and harvesting opportunities. Sam suggested there could be a merged Heritage Value EC, similar to the rare landscape features index.</p>	

## Day Two

<b>Agenda Item 4.0 Plan Alternatives</b>	
<b>4.2 Refinement of Evaluation Framework (continued)</b>	<b>Action Items</b>
<p>Commission and TWG continued discussion of evaluation criteria and alternatives. Clarification that Tombstone Park is within the planning region, contributes to values and economic opportunities, and should have its own LMU number. It is already designated a Protected Area, but the Commission could make recommendations re: enlargement.</p> <p>Suggestion that the Commission should clearly define its criteria, guiding principles or rationale for designating higher levels of protection in some LMUs (e.g. salmon spawning habitat, headwaters of streams).</p>	<p><b>Create LMU # for Tombstone Territorial Park.</b></p>

The Commission attended a lunchtime presentation at Yukon College by Dr. Fiona Schmiegelow on "Conservation in the Matrix". Important points:

- The conservation matrix model focuses on maintaining natural processes and ecological functions at the landscape level, instead of managing to critical levels.
- Careful access management is key to a good land use plan.
- Ecological benchmarks are reference sites or control sites for understanding the dynamics of natural ecosystems, and their response to human activities. Ideal benchmark areas are intact (relatively unaltered by human activity); representative of variation within natural systems; hydrologically connected; and sufficiently large to maintain key ecological processes (2-3 times larger than the largest disturbance process- in boreal forests this is fire, so a benchmark area would be about 10% of the planning region). They require a high level of protection. Most existing protected areas were established for different reasons or don't meet the size and intactness criteria to serve as benchmarks.
- Site-specific protected areas can capture values not well represented in benchmark areas (e.g. areas of cultural significance, locations of rare plant species), and can have varying levels of protection.
- Active management zones have incremental implementation and effectiveness monitoring. This reduces uncertainty over time and enables flexibility.
- Examples of plans and processes using benchmarks and conservation matrix model: NWT Protected Areas Strategy, Far North Act (Ontario), Plan Nord (Quebec), Canadian Boreal Forest Agreement, Muskwa-Kechika Management Plan (BC), Landscape Conservation Cooperatives (Northwest Boreal), etc.
- Protected areas as climate change refugia - part of species core distribution now that will likely remain even with future climate change

- Need to develop comprehensive monitoring strategy to establish baseline conditions and track changes over time (stewardship opportunities, investment by governments, learning from a network of monitoring sites and not just individual projects)
- Ecological thresholds are very difficult to determine until you're past them. Management thresholds are social constraints based on perceptions of risk. Risk tolerances and acceptable levels of change vary by person, organization, etc. Thresholds are often interpreted as "manage up to" levels, and often become management prescriptions rather than what they're intended to be (estimations of how systems will respond to landscape change).
- Benchmarks can help identify "tipping points", and serve as a reference for how the system is "supposed to be" (also helps with restoration objectives for other impacted areas).
- Best management practices are easy to recommend, but there is typically little or no monitoring afterwards to determine effectiveness after implementation.
- Transparency is key - need to show rationale for how decisions were made, what information was used, etc. to enable people to draw their own conclusions. Also important is interest-based negotiation and finding common ground.
- Fiona's students at the college have completed a project that attempted to identify candidate benchmark areas for all planning regions in the Yukon.
- The Yukon should have big picture, strategic level land use planning (Yukon-wide) occurring at the same time as regional and community- based planning. This would better address transboundary and trans-region processes such as hydrology, migrating fish and wildlife, etc.

Upon return to the meeting, Jeff noted that the Dawson planning region has two distinct landscape types: taiga and boreal, so would need to establish two benchmark areas with adaptive management everywhere else. The BEACONS project is specific to the boreal landscape, nothing similar has been developed for the taiga.

<b>Agenda Item 4.0 Plan Alternatives</b>	
<b>4.3 Candidate Alternatives for Next Round</b>	<b>Action Items</b>
<p>Commission members were directed to "choose" one of their two alternatives or create a new one, utilizing the same LDS as before. There was some discussion about color scheme for the LDS - Kathy had prepared some sample color swatches for the Commission's consideration, attempting to move away from the typical red/green scheme and its connotations (i.e. green is good, red is bad).</p> <p>The Commission narrowed down its selection of alternatives to five.</p>	

<b>Agenda Item 5: Workplan and Schedule of Meetings</b>	
	<b>Action Items</b>
<p>This item was not discussed due to other topics being given priority during the time remaining in the meeting.</p>	

<b>Agenda Item 6.0 Administration</b>	
<b>6.1 Office Lease</b>	<b>Action Items</b>
<p>The current lease for the Commission's office in Dawson expires December 31, 2013. The landlords have expressed a desire for a minimum 6-month lease.</p> <p>Given that the Commission's current approved workplan and budget only extends to March 31, 2014 and available funding beyond this point is unclear, it will be difficult for the Commission to commit to another long-term lease agreement.</p>	<p><b>Jeff/Monica to arrange a new six month lease (Jan 1 to June 30, 2014), with option to extend further if budget allows.</b></p>
<b>6.2 Staff Contracts</b>	
<p><i>In camera personnel discussion.</i></p> <p>The Commission discussed the resignation of Jeff Hamm, Senior Planner (one month notice given October 30, 2013) as well as options available to them. The Commission met with Monica Krieger, Land Use Planner to discuss her qualifications and the possibility of becoming Acting Senior Planner, particularly to enable continued financial and administration functions of the Commission. Monica agreed she would be willing to consider this on an interim basis, and the Commission will have further discussions on options and make required decisions at the December meeting. The Commission's Policies &amp; Procedures Manual is not clear on the process required to appoint someone in an Acting capacity for staff positions.</p>	<p>Scott and Monica to have further discussions with Ron Cruikshank (YLUPC) on policies and proper procedures to appoint Monica as Acting Senior Planner, effective as soon as possible following Jeff's last day (November 30, 2013).</p>

<b>Adjournment</b>	
The meeting was adjourned at 5:30PM.	

<b>Approval of Minutes of Regular Board Meeting #12 (November 13 &amp; 14, 2013)</b>		
By Motion #2 at Regular Board Meeting #13 (December 17 & 19, 2013)		
		
Chair	Acting Senior Planner	Date: December 17, 2013