

WCS Additional Notes:

You can share the attached slides that I will discuss, but I will need to modify them later in the week. Although you can pass on to the Commission three main points below that I will cover:

1. Climate work. These projections attached, specifically for the Dawson planning region, showing how habitats are likely to shift as a result of climate change. Note that these habitat changes would not necessarily be quick shifts but the climate driving them will shift this fast. These are projection models but may be useful for the selection of LMUs for climate adaptation (e.g., areas with least projected change; resilient and potential refugial areas).
2. The large river corridors (Yukon, Stewart, White - but especially the Yukon). These corridors combine at least 4 sets of values each of which is high with respect to other parts of the planning region and each of which must be respected to some extent: biodiversity (key valley bottom, wetland, and cliff habitats for numerous species - among highest concentration of species diversity in YT); provisioning through harvest (big game, furbearers, fish); human recreation and culture (indigenous camps, river tripping, visitor camping); access to natural resource extraction (barge/ferry access to road heads at beach landings). Such a land unit with very high, diverse, and potentially competing values, has not been addressed by previous Commissions (North Yukon or Peel). The closest has been the Dempster Corridor - set aside as its own LMU in Peel. There seem to be alternative approaches: (i) indulge in detailed zoning within the corridor(s) to maintain each of these values in spatially defined LMUs (finalized within the Dawson Plan itself); (ii) declare a large, corridor-long, SMA (LMU) within which the detailed planning could be worked out in a management planning exercise when a legal designation is agreed on - e.g. a HPA (i.e. Plan implementation and beyond); (iii) the use of management overlays, which do not necessarily delineate a separate LMU for the corridors, but impose a management overlay above and beyond what the LMU prescribes. This may be useful for the White and Stewart rivers. These 'potential tools' may be established in accordance with the terms of Chapter 10 "Special Management Areas" in the UFA.
3. Landscape connectivity from the south to the north and back. The main large-scale connectivity issue in this region is ability of organisms to move from higher elevation areas to south of Stewart and especially Yukon Rivers to the Ogilvie Mtns (and back). Species of concern - caribou (40-mile herd), bears, wolverine - because these are easily thwarted or displaced by human intrusion. Plan needs to provide some protection for key corridors; connectivity right now is generally good. Best empirical data would be 40-mile herd telemetry identifying main movement routes, and local knowledge of travel routes.