

Comments on Dawson Regional Land Use Plan

Let me start this off by giving you a quick profile of myself and my knowledge background. My name is Daniel Reynolds and I have been living in the Dawson area since 1970. I currently own Reynolds Outfitting Ltd which is a second generation business that we have owned and operated since 1967. It is Outfitting concession #1 and takes in almost the entire northern half of the Dawson Regional planning area. I have spent the better part of the last 40 plus years hiking and flying throughout this region. I also hold trapping concession #4 which is located in the heart of my outfitting concession. My residence is 1 Km up the Dempster Hwy and I own 2 parcels of land, one being 150 acres of Agricultural. I grow all the hay for Dawson residents who own horses and need to buy feed and have done so for over 20 years now.

By now you should be getting a bit of a sense of the many hats that I wear. Currently they include president of the Yukon Outfitters Association, Co - Chair of the DDRRC and member for the past 9 years, want to be farmer and also an active trapper. To compliment all this I have been a bush pilot since 1978 and currently hold a commercial aircraft charter licence and have over 10,000 hours of flying time.

Sorry to trouble you with all this history but my knowledge would fall under the heading of Traditional Knowledge since I was not schooled in the classroom but rather on the land. Without knowing my background it would be hard to place a value on the Traditional Knowledge that I have accumulated over the years.

I have been conducting wildlife surveys for the past 20 years in order to properly manage and support my outfitting business. Through this I have gained a lot of knowledge of wildlife population dynamics and distribution. A lot of this information has been passed on to the Regional biologist in Dawson with hopes that this information can be used to help better manage the wildlife and habitat that they need to survive.

It is easy to look at things with a black and white approach and too often people have this tendency. For instance, if you want to protect an area from being negatively impacted by mining for example, our first instinct is to shut it down, stopping this activity from occurring thus eliminating the threat. What people tend to forget is that most times too much of any one thing can cause negative effects. All things have thresholds and I see this as being the key to sustainable management; too much mining can be harmful just as too much hunting, trapping or eco tourism. We have hunting and trapping seasons for a reason; they are used often as successful management tools. I feel that this process should be used right across the board with all activities that have the potential to permanently harm wildlife or the habitat they need to survive.

I do not feel that creating zones like the ones listed in your draft plan are a good way to ensure that everything is managed properly. They can be used to identify

priorities in certain areas but it all comes down to the tools that you have to ensure that all things are properly managed on a sustainable level. We need to keep all the pieces intact at the end of the day if our goal is protect what we have. In zones identified as high mineral value and low wildlife and habitat importance will still most likely contain a few key wildlife areas. You still need the tools in these zones in order to ensure that these areas are not destroyed along with the wildlife that needs them to survive. These areas are just as important and a key piece of the larger picture as areas that are high wildlife zones. The opposite can also be applied as there is no reason that we should not consider allowing all activities including mining in or around key wildlife habitats as long as it stays within the thresholds of sustainable management.

I will admit that my love for nature runs strong through my veins but I am also a business man and like our modern technologies. My heart says protect it all but how hypocritical would that be as I would still want to run my business in the middle of all the protected areas?

I have seen first hand wildlife populations go through their natural life cycles and have documented two major die-offs in Dall sheep populations and thus gaining insight into the circumstances that cause such a thing to occur. This knowledge reveals the weakness and vulnerable periods and can be used to develop the tools needed to ensure that any type of human activity that could drastically influence the health and survivability of a wildlife population is regulated.

For example, I have learned from my observations and surveys that there are certain times of the year which Dall sheep populations are very susceptible to die-offs and the slightest change is the difference between life and death. Apply this knowledge to sustainable management and during critical times do not allow activities that will likely help contribute to die-offs in wildlife populations. This is where you get past this black or white system and allow sustainable management to take over. Certain times of the year in key habitat areas it is simply a no go for all activities that will harm wildlife populations. While the rest of the year it could be allowed on a sustainable level if it no longer threatens populations.

This process can be applied to all our renewable resources; you just need the proper tools in order to achieve sustainable management.

I hope that you will consider this broader approach to sustainable management throughout the entire Dawson region. This type of approach would not exclude certain activities from ever happening throughout most of the region thus helping avoid conflicts between different interest groups. The tools are the key and in order to have the proper tools, regulations need to be changed. I am not a big fan of Best Management Practices and would encourage this Commission to push for needed regulation changes and the use of existing ones to ensure sustainable management throughout the Dawson Land Planning area. The last thing I would hate to see is this plan only be a recommendation document that sits on a shelf

and collects dust. I think that we all have a chance at doing something good for our future with this Land Use Plan. Acts and regulations are the ruling bottom line at the end of the day and is what any government is required to follow; recommendation documents do not have a good track record of being followed.

Sincerely,

Dan Reynolds