

Dawson Regional Planning Commission

Methodology Report

May 2023

A summary of the Dawson Regional Planning Commission's journey to produce the Dawson Region's Recommended Land Use Plan



Dawson Regional
Planning Commission
On The Land We Walk Together • Nān kāk ndā tr'ādāl



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ACRONYMS

CEF	Cumulative Effects Framework
CEWG	Cumulative Effects Working Group
DRPC	Dawson Regional Planning Commission
FNFA	First Nation Final Agreements
ISA	Integrated Stewardship Area
LMU	Land Management Unit
OIC	Order in Council
The Parties	The 'Parties' to the Plan are the Government of Yukon and Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in
RLUP	Regional Land Use Plan
SLC	Senior Liaison Committee
SMA	Special Management Area
TH	Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in
THFA	Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Final Agreement
TWG	Technical Working Group
YESAB	Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board
YG	Government of Yukon
YLUPC	Yukon Land Use Planning Council



SECTION 1 - INTRODUCTION

This methodology report provides background information on some of the methods and processes that the Commission used in the development of the Draft Plan and the Recommended Plan.

The intention of this Methods Report is to:

- Demonstrate how the Commission worked together and with the Parties;
- Provide additional information on some of the technical elements of the planning process;
- Highlight the incorporation of Traditional Knowledge and non-western planning approaches;
- Provide reflection and evaluation of the methods used;
- Give an accurate record of the Commission actions and provide links to additional information and resources.

This report aims to provide transparency for public accountability and to be a useful tool for future planning Commissions and governments embarking on their respective planning processes. It is important to note that this report is not intended to serve as a complete record of all decisions and strategies. The Commission, over the years, has produced a large number of documents and reports, which are accessible on the Dawson Regional Planning Commission website dawson.planyukon.ca. Throughout this report, the reader is encouraged to explore the Dawson Regional Planning Commission (DRPC) website for more information.

HOW TO READ THIS DOCUMENT

This report is not written in a linear fashion. It is organized by topics that the Commission and staff thought would be useful to the reader. As the planning process has spanned over 10 years and there have been many iterations of the different sections and concepts in the plan, a topic-by-topic approach was thought to be the most logical presentation of the information.

BACKGROUND ON THE DAWSON REGIONAL PLAN

The planning process is led by the DRPC, who are local experts who live and work in the Region and hold an immense amount of traditional and local knowledge and a team of dedicated staff.



Image 1 Commission Members and Staff (from left to right) Debbie Nagano, John Flynn, Angie Joseph-Rear, Nicole Percival (staff), Charlotte Luscombe (staff), Jesse Cooke, Alice McCulley, Dan Reynolds. Not pictured: Art Webster (Commission Co-Chair 2019-2020) and former staff Tim Van Hinte, Katie Fraser, and Tim Sellars.

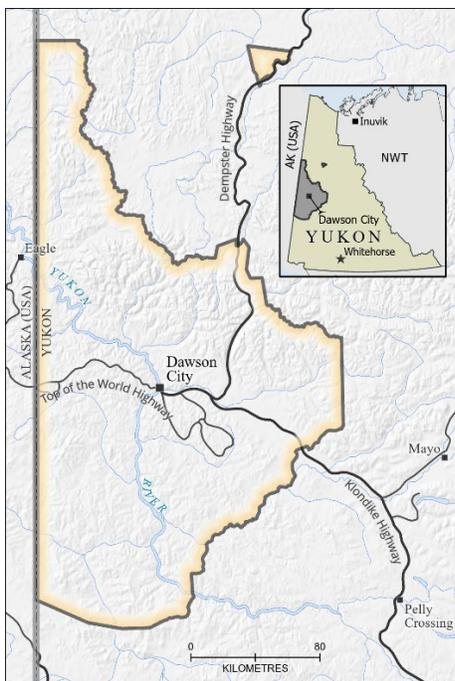


Figure 1 Map of Dawson planning region from Recommended Plan 2022

The Planning Region is roughly 40,000km₂ of land in the Yukon Territory. The planning region falls within the Traditional Territory of three self-governing First Nations: Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation, Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation, and the First Nation of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun.

Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in and the Government of Yukon are the approval bodies for the plan and are referred to as the 'Parties' in this report. The White River First Nation, who is not a self-governing First Nation under a Yukon FNFA (First Nation Final Agreement), has interests in the planning region. To learn more about the Region, the community, and the First Nations who have occupied the Region since time immemorial, refer to Section 2 of the Recommended Plan (2022a) and the Resource Assessment Report (2020c).

Figure 2 is a graphic illustration of the Dawson Commission's journey to producing a Regional Plan for the Dawson Region. You can see in this image that the planning process was first established in 2010 and paused in 2014. The planning process was suspended by the Parties until the legal proceedings relating to the Peel Watershed Planning process were resolved. In this report, this period is referred to as the 'first iteration' or the 'first



Commission'. The 'Commission' that is referred to in this report is the Commission that was re-established in 2019 and is still in existence today. For more information on the history of the planning process and the Dawson Planning Region, please refer to **Section 1** and **Section 2** of the Recommended Plan.

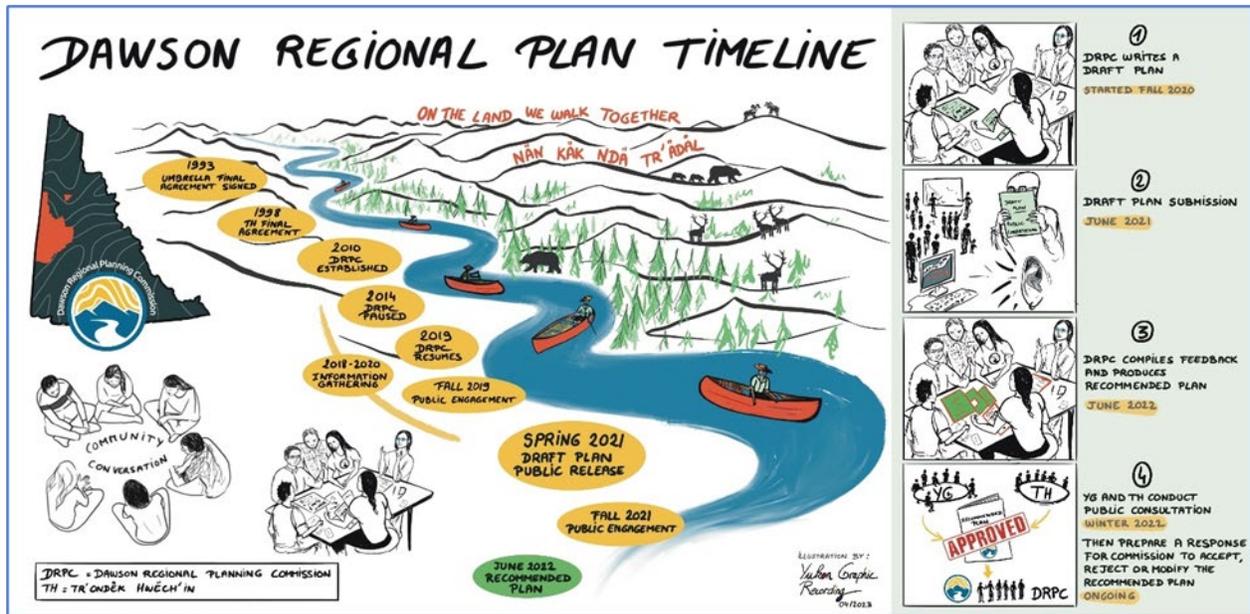


Figure 2 Timeline of Dawson regional planning process

At the time of writing, the Dawson Region Plan is at the 'Recommended Plan' stage. In June 2022 the Commission handed the Recommended Plan to the Parties during a ceremony at the Midnight Dome in Dawson City. The Parties completed their public consultation on the Recommended Plan in December 2022 and a *What We Heard Report* is anticipated to be released in the Spring of 2023. The next stage of the planning process as set out in Chapter 11 of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Final Agreement (THFA) section 11.6 Approval Process for Land Use Plans), is for the Parties to inform the Commission of their decision to approve, reject, or modify the Recommended Plan. If the plan is rejected or modified, the next stage of the process will be for the Commission to produce a Final Recommended Plan. It is unclear at the time of the writing of this report what the timeline is for the next stage. As always, updates will be provided on the DRPC website and social media pages.



SECTION 2 - REGIONAL PLANNING IN THE YUKON

This section will introduce you to the Yukon’s approach to Regional Land Use Planning. Land Use Planning is an important tool for land and resource management, and an introduction to this concept is shown in Figure 3 below.

Introduction to Regional Land Use Planning

What is Land Use Planning?

Land

When we use the term **Land**, we mean all the water, air, plants, animals, natural resources, and natural processes. It includes the surface and subsurface.



Land Use

Land Use means any activity that involves **Land**, and in the Yukon there are many different examples. They include hunting, trapping, fishing, recreation, tourism, mining, and agriculture. It also includes uses like protected areas, parks and ecological preserves.



Land Use Planning

Land Use Planning is a tool we use to try and balance complex environmental, socio-cultural and socio-economic needs. It is values-driven and we use educated judgements to make choices about how to use and share the land. **Land Use Planning** uses many information sources, such as Traditional Knowledge, scientific and social research, and public and stakeholder input.



Why Is Regional Land Use Planning important?

In the Yukon, the UFA outlines the process for Regional Land Use Planning. This is found in Chapter 11. Regional Land Use Planning is important for many reasons, including:



It helps to protect important environmental and cultural values



It recognizes and promotes the values and knowledge of Yukon First Nations



It promotes Sustainable Development



It has an important role to play in First Nation Reconciliation



It will ensure future generations can enjoy the land and its many offerings



It minimizes land use conflicts by clearly stating where activities can occur

Figure 3 Introduction to Regional Land Use Planning



HOW IS LAND USE PLANNING DONE IN THE YUKON?

The Dawson Recommended Plan was developed under Chapter 11 of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Final Agreement (THFA). Chapter 11 sets clear objectives for what land use planning should achieve, who should be involved in the process and how plans should be developed. There are also specific provisions in each First Nation's Final Agreements. The general planning process that was followed for the Dawson Region is set out in Figure 4, and the objectives of Chapter 11 are shown in Figure 5 .

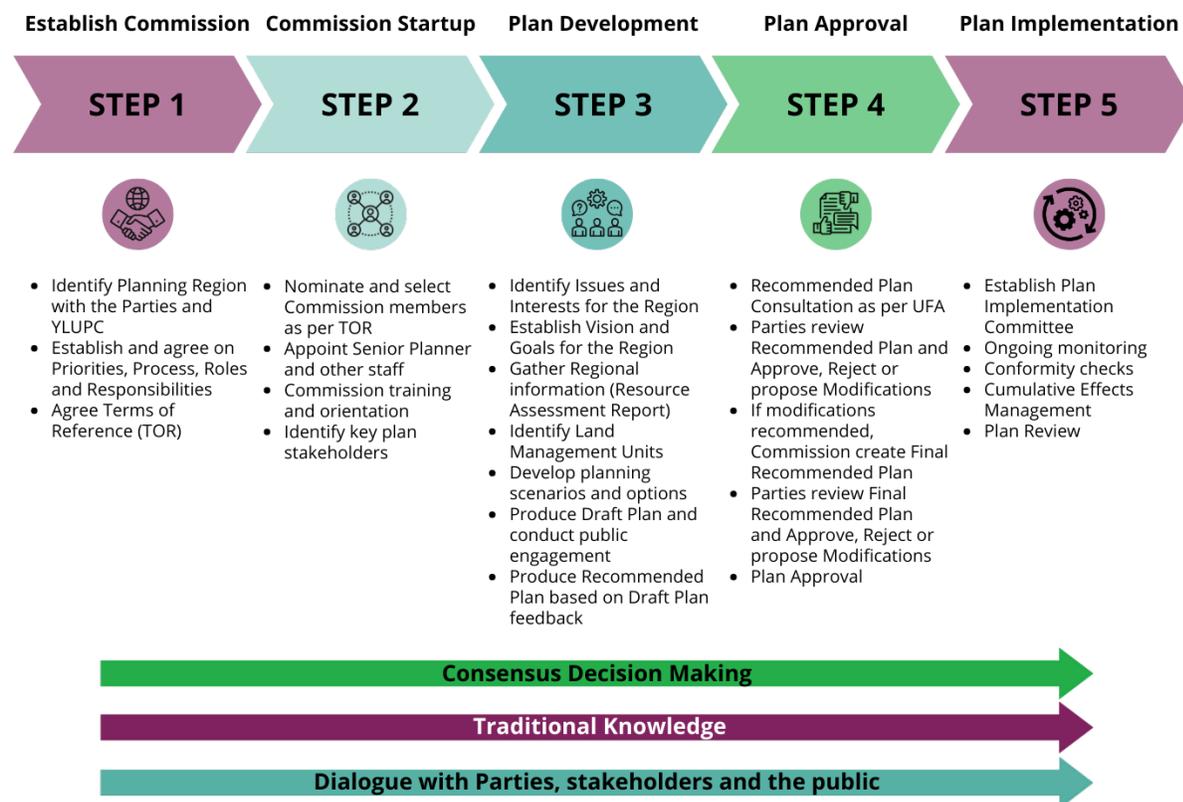


Figure 4 Phases of Regional Planning in the Yukon



*Referenced as 'Yukon Indian People' in the Final Agreements

Figure 5 FNFA Chapter 11 Regional Planning Objectives

Regional Planning Commissions

Regional Plans under Chapter 11 of the First Nation Final Agreements (FNFA) may be developed by Regional Land Use Planning Commissions. These Commission members are nominated by the Parties involved in the plan. In the case of the Dawson region, the Parties (Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in and Government of Yukon) each nominated three individuals who were current or previous long-term residents of the planning region. Section 11.4.5 of the THFA outlines the Commission's responsibilities when developing a Regional Land Use Plan (RLUP).

WHAT DID WE LEARN?

Other FNFA Chapters

It is important to consider the FNFAs in their entirety. An RLUP should be holistic and consider how each chapter relates to a planning region's overall vision. Our considerations included, but were not limited to, the following:

- Chapter 6 – Access
- Chapter 12 – Development Assessment
- Chapter 13 – Heritage
- Chapter 14 – Water Management
- Chapter 16 – Fish and Wildlife
- Chapter 17 – Forest Resources
- Chapter 18 – Non-renewable Resources.



A summary of how the Recommended Plan considers each of these chapters as well as other parts of the THFA is found in Section 1.7 of the Recommended Plan.

Indigenous Planning and Traditional Knowledge

Objectives 3 and 4 of Chapter 11 clearly state that the 'knowledge and experience of Yukon Indian People' should be used during RLUP development. Generally speaking, land use planning in Canada has tended to take a very Western approach and has not given equal consideration to First Nations knowledge and experience. This is something that is changing, but it is acknowledged that there is more work to be done. Some examples of the shift in the nature of planning can be seen in initiatives like the Canadian Institute of Planners Policy on Planning Practice and Reconciliation (CIP 2019), YLUPC Land Relationship Gathering ([YLUPC](#), 2021), and the Federal *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act, 2021*.

The Commission worked closely with Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in staff throughout the planning process to ensure that Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in citizens and other First Nations citizens were comfortable sharing their voices and knowledge with the Commission. For more on this aspect of our planning approach, please see **Section 8 - Public Engagement**.

Expectations of a Commission after the Recommended Plan

Chapter 11 of the THFA advises a Commission:

may monitor the implementation of the approved regional land use plan, in order to monitor compliance with the plan and to assess the need for amendment of the plan (S11.4.5.10).

Chapter 12 also states:

Where YDAB (Yukon Development Assessment Board) or a Designated Office receives a Project application in a region where a regional land use plan is in effect, YDAB or the Designated Office, as the case may be, shall request that the Regional Land Use Planning Commission for the planning region determine whether or not the Project is in conformity with the approved regional land use plan (S12.17.1).

Clarity on implementing Regional Plans would help with the overall planning process. The Dawson RLUP has helped to expedite this, with recommendations for the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board (YESAB), Yukon Land Use Planning Council (YLUPC) and the parties to assess the intersection of their work.



SECTION 3 - ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Commission were supported by four separate groups: the Senior Liaison Committee (SLC), the Technical Working Group (TWG), the Cumulative Effects Working Group (CEWG) and the Yukon Land Use Planning Council (YLUPC). These groups provided support and knowledge that contributed greatly to the Commission’s success.

The table below lays out the composition of each group.

Table 1 Composition of support groups for DRPC

SLC – Senior Liaison Committee	TWG – Technical Working Group
<p>Senior-level guidance and support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government of Yukon • Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in • Na-cho Nyäk Dun (affected First Nation) 	<p>Technical Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government of Yukon (one Dept. Environment, one Department of Energy Mines and Resources) • Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in (two representatives) • Commission staff (Sr Planner Chairs group) • YLUPC (Sr Planner)
CEWG - Cumulative Effects Working Group	YLUPC – Yukon Land Use Planning Council
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government of Yukon • Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in • YLUPC • DRPC <p>*Guidance and direction provided by SLC</p>	<p>YLUPC support is provided by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning Director • Senior Land Use Planner • Senior Indigenous Policy Advisor • Manager of Finance and Administration • Administrative Assistant



The diagram on the next page (Figure 6) provides a brief description of the roles they played and their relationship to the Commission.

The Dawson Regional Planning Commission (DRPC) Terms of Reference (TH&YG 2019) and ongoing guidance from the SLC outline in detail the mandate, composition, operating procedures, and assistance provided to the Commission by the TWG and CEWG. The Terms of Reference (TOR) also outlines the deliverables, timeline, and budget parameters. The TOR is available to view on the Commission website (<https://dawson.planyukon.ca/index.php/the-commission/terms-of-reference>).

The Commission and YLUPC operate under a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) which outlines the relationship between the two organizations. The YLUPC provided an immense amount of support to the Commission as they worked through the planning process. The support included Commission training, technical advice (cumulative effects and GIS mapping), policy and context, providing office space, and administrative and financial support. The institutional knowledge and experience held by YLUPC were instrumental in developing the plans.

Throughout this report, reference is made to 'staff', which refers to the DRPC land use planners and senior planners, and sometimes includes the YLUPC senior planner.

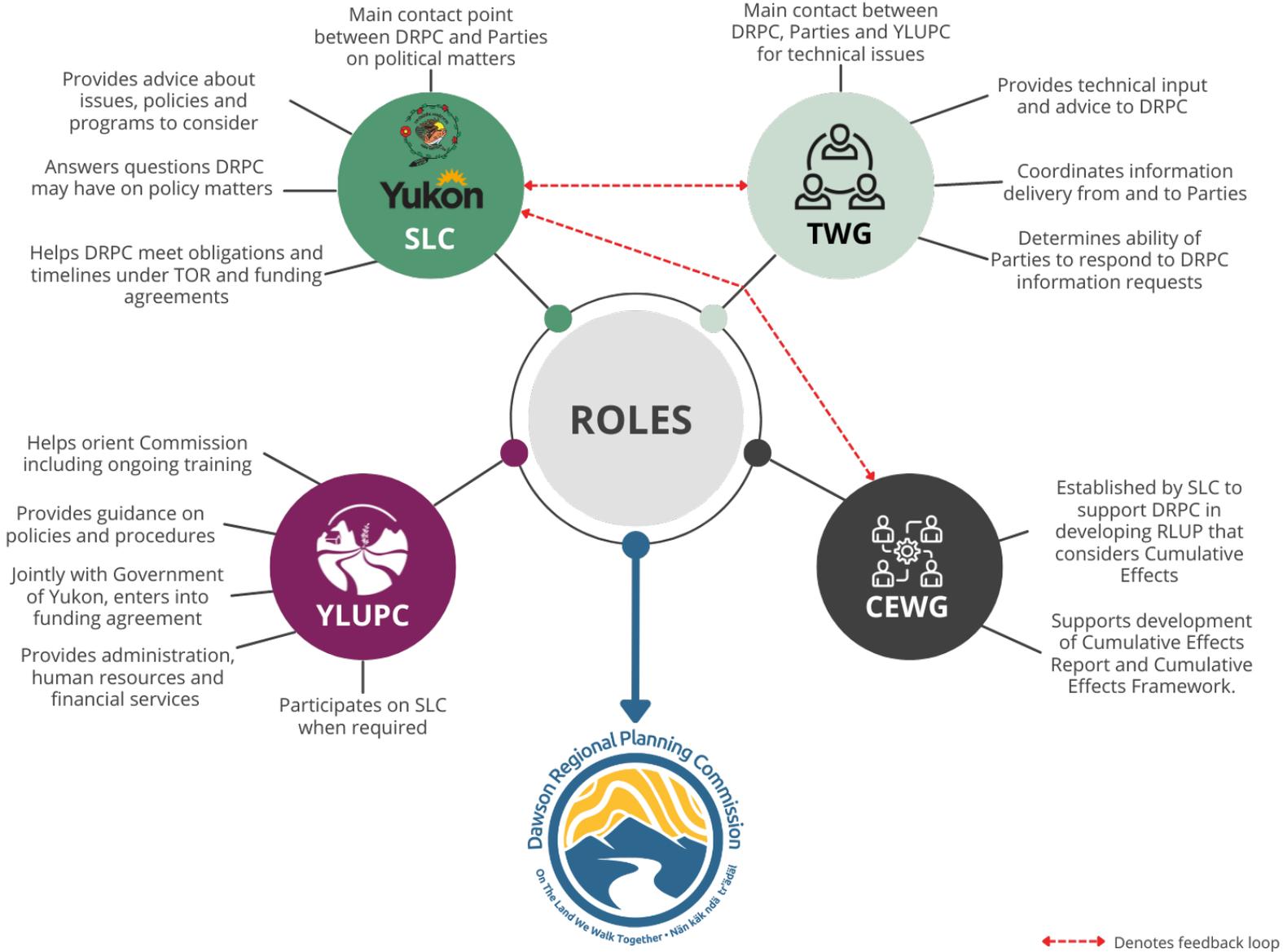


Figure 6 Roles and Responsibilities



SECTION 4 - PLAN FOUNDATIONS

OVERVIEW

In every planning process, an important first step is for a Commission to identify the planning vision, values, issues, and goals. What is it that needs to be achieved or protected? What are the areas of land use conflict? What will be important for future generations?

METHOD & WHAT WORKED WELL

Plan Vision

The Commission has always felt strongly that the Plan is for all people who live, work, and play in the Dawson Region. They wanted all people of the Region to see themselves in the Plan and that we are all stewards of the land whether it be an ancestral responsibility as with the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in and other First Nations, or a community or corporate responsibility. In this spirit, the vision of 'Nän kāk ndä tr'ädäl: On the land we walk together' was established. This is the foundation that guided identifying the issues and interests and creating the goals for the Plan. To read the full vision, see Section 1.2 of the Recommended Plan (2022a).



Image 2 Drafting the Commission's Vision Statement at the Yukon River in Dawson

Issues and Interests Report

The Issues and Interests report is identified as a key foundational planning product in the Terms of Reference (TH&YG 2019). The purpose of the report was to synthesize input the Commission received from the Parties, plan partners, and the public.

- Spring 2019 - the Commission and staff reviewed the report prepared by the previous Commission on planning issues (DRPC 2011).



- June 2019 - the Parties presented their updated Issues and Interests statements to the Commission at a public Commission meeting.
- Fall of 2019 - the Commission commenced its first major public engagement period with the goal of learning what the key issues and interests in the Region were from the public and stakeholders' perspectives. After presenting the Draft Resource Assessment Report (RAR) and Draft Issues and Interests report we asked the public:
"What do you think about the issues and interests we have identified? Which ones resonate with you and what should we consider? Are we missing anything? Are we missing any key information?"



Image 3 Community Conversation at public engagement on Issues and Interests and Resource Assessment Report in Whitehorse, YT Fall 2019

The Issues and Interests Report (2020b) was not intended to be an exhaustive list of all issues and interests in the region, nor did it reflect the Commission's priorities at the time. It was an informational document written to understand the Parties' and the public's priorities, which would then inform the planning process.



The key planning issues that were identified in the Region were:

Ecological Integrity, Conservation and Stewardship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Climate change · Fish and wildlife habitat · Protected and conserved areas
Culture and Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Harvesting rights and activities · Heritage resources and sites · Traditional Economy
Sustainable Economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Access and infrastructure · Agriculture · Community growth and recreation · Cumulative effects · Forestry · Mineral exploration and development and mining operations · Renewable energy · Tourism

Both Issues and Interests reports can be found in the publications section of the DRPC website, along with the Parties' Issues and Interests submissions ([Issues and Interests Reports](#)).

Planning Goals and Objectives

Creating the Goals and Objectives was an iterative process that ebbed and flowed throughout the creation of the Draft Plan and the Recommended Plan. The key to this process was the considerable amount of information received through stakeholder (delegate) presentations; Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in culture and values; and in-person and online community engagement. Generally, as the Commission received and discussed the information they heard at meetings and presentations, staff captured the discussions and articulated some goals and objectives for the Commission's consideration.

The result of this work was the Commission's goals and objectives, which were included in the Draft Plan (2021) for public feedback and finalized in the Recommended Plan (2022a).

The Goals of the Plan are intended to reflect the desired future conditions in the planning region and should be used when monitoring and measuring the plan's success (see Section 1.3 Recommended Plan). The Objectives of the plan are a series of more specific guidance that reflect the Plan Goals and can be used to create measurable actions or objectives to achieve the associated Plan Goal.



WHAT DID WE LEARN?

- It is logical that different government departments will have different priorities and perspectives, however, the departmental approach at the Issues and Interest phase posed some challenges for the Commission due to the conflicting priorities. Upon the Commission's request, the Government of Yukon presented a more unified response to the Draft Plan. This was appreciated and provided a much better level of clarity for the Commission.
- Another learning was that the objectives in the Draft Plan could have been better linked to specific measurable outcomes. After the Draft Plan engagement period, the Commission staff worked closely with the Technical Working Group (TWG) members to workshop the Plan objectives. The exercise undertaken was like a 'stop light' exercise. The TWG members looked at each objective and indicated suggestions for changes based on their technical knowledge. Once the redrafting and reviewing were complete, the Commission staff presented the objectives back to the Commission for approval. The Commission provided some comments and suggestions and approved the objectives with modifications to be included in the Recommended Plan. Establishing a clear template as to what an 'objective' was and how it ought to function in a regional plan is suggested early in the process for future exercises.



SECTION 5 - INFORMATION GATHERING

OVERVIEW

Information gathering for a regional planning process is a considerable task. Identifying the resources in the region, assessing the available data, identifying data gaps, and building relationships to understand traditional knowledge are all necessary to understand the planning region.

This section will outline some of the methods that were used for the initial data collection for the Dawson Region and how it was updated throughout the planning process. **Section 6 - Traditional Knowledge** discusses further how Traditional Knowledge was received by the Commission and how it was considered and applied in the planning process.

METHOD & WHAT WORKED WELL

Initial Data Collection

It is important to note that the vast amount of data collection that the first Commission did between 2010-2014 was a valuable resource for the second Commission.

Local Knowledge

The local knowledge of the community has informed the planning process since the first iteration of the planning commission. In the initial phases of development, two local knowledge-based workshops were held in December 2011 and January 31- February 1, 2012. A report was created by Environment Yukon for the Commission. The knowledge was used to:

- 1) augment scientific data,
- 2) provide information where no scientific data existed, and
- 3) provide a broader perspective on wildlife habitat use.



Image 4 Commission and staff reviewing a flight path in the summer 2019. Both Commissions found opportunities to get out on the land together. This helped to gain perspective and an understanding of the land through experience.

Resource Assessment Report (RAR)

The RAR was first approved by the first Commission in 2013 and was updated and then approved by the second Commission in 2020 (DRPC 2020c). The RAR is described as a foundational planning product in both the 2009 and 2018 TORs (TH&YG 2019). The RAR is intended to describe the natural, human and economic resources in the Region. It is not intended to be an exhaustive description of every resource; it is a snapshot of the current data – including both scientific and traditional values.

The report was updated for the second iteration of the Commission with the assistance of the Technical Working Group (TWG) and the Yukon Land Use Planning Council (YLUPC). YLUPC began the process of updating the RAR by sending a call-out for review to Parties, boards and councils, and some Federal departments. The RAR was then updated to reflect the comments and up-to-date data.

The RAR included the:

- scope of the planning region;
- relevant final agreements, policies, legislation, and best practices; and
- traditional, natural, socio-cultural, and economic value of each resource

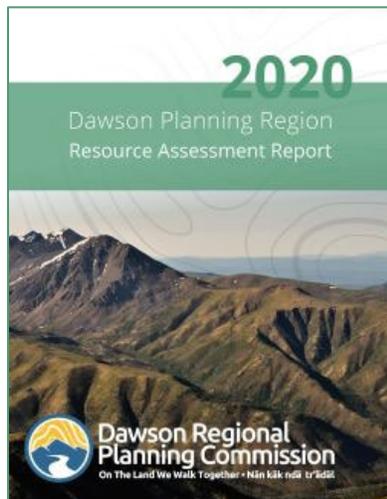


Image 5 Cover page of 2020 RAR

There were 27 maps created for the RAR which illustrated a broad array of information from species-specific habitat to climate change forecasts to mineral potential. The data was largely provided by the Parties with some external data sources. Details of the data sources are indicated at the bottom of each RAR map (see below for link).

The RAR, executive summary, maps, and appendices are available on the DRPC website:

<https://dawson.planyukon.ca/index.php/publications/resource-assessment-report-final-2>

Ongoing Data Collection

It is recognized that the information that informs a planning process should not be static, and thus, as the Commission's work advanced, information sharing between the Commission and the Parties was continuous.

In addition to the two major engagement periods (see **Section 8 Public Engagement**), the Commission received a lot of new information and data over the years. This included, but was not limited to:

- Delegate presentations at public commission meetings (see DRPC website – [Delegate Presentation Material and Minutes](#))
- Continuous party input and updates (for example):
 - [Conservation Priorities Submissions](#)
 - Updated data from YG regional and cumulative effects biologists
- Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Citizen Input ([audio submission](#))
- Academic research submitted by stakeholders.

WHAT DID WE LEARN?

Creating a RAR is a very lengthy process which has its drawbacks and its benefits.

The benefits of such a document are:

- Gaining an understanding of each value/resource from the traditional, ecological, socio-cultural, and economic perspective.
- Identifying existing data and data gaps.
- Consolidating the relevant Final Agreement sections, legislation, regulations, policies and best practices associated with each value/resource, which will in turn inform future planning decisions.



The drawbacks included:

- The time associated with first creating and then updating such a large document.
- The 'static' nature of such a document.



SECTION 6 - TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE

OVERVIEW

Traditional Knowledge (TK) is difficult to explain, it is something that is lived and breathed, a way of life, a way of being. It is something that is interwoven into the entire Plan and all the Commission's processes. Traditional Knowledge is defined in the Recommended Plan (2022) as the "...accumulated body of knowledge, observations, and understandings about the environment, and about the relationship of living beings with one another and the environment, that is rooted in the traditional way of life of First Nations." This broad definition was provided in the Plan, but it is recognized that it does not adequately describe the deeply rooted understanding and application of Traditional Knowledge that we heard from Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in and the other First Nations with overlapping Traditional Territory and interests in the Region. In their submission to the Commission entitled 'We are Dënezhu. The People of this land. We are Tr'ondëk Hwëchin. The people of this river' (2019), Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in stated:

"We have occupied this territory for all time. Our enduring relationship with our land is our heritage. Our stories are written on the land and our place in this world is created, understood and owned through these stories."

It was within this context that the Commission sought to continually incorporate Traditional Knowledge and traditional land management practices into the planning process to meet the objectives of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Final Agreement (THFA), *and because it is who they are*. For more information, please refer to Section 1.8 of the Recommended Plan (2022a).

This section will break down some specific elements of the Recommended Plan and the process whereby Traditional Knowledge was explicitly applied for information and guidance. Some of the ways that Traditional Knowledge was applied in the creation of the Recommended Plan are not necessarily tangible, but with every conversation, submission, and moment of sharing, the Commission and staff gained a better understanding of the First Nation values and laws that would underpin the planning process.

Commission Members

The Commission is comprised of four Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in citizens who collectively have a tremendous amount of Traditional Knowledge and experience. The Commission is especially fortunate to have Elder Angie Joseph-Rear who grounds us by sharing her past



experiences, stories, and language. Collectively the Commission members both First Nation and Non-First Nation hold an incredible amount of knowledge from lifetimes of working and living on the land.

Vision statement

It was important to incorporate the consideration of Traditional Knowledge in the Vision Statement as this was the ‘North Star’ guidance for the Plan and the Process. See **Section 4 Plan Foundations** for more information on the Vision Statement.

THFA Chapter 11 and Traditional Knowledge

Chapter 11 of the THFA provides guidance on how Traditional Knowledge will be used in the planning process.

Final Agreement Section	
11.4.5.5	The Commission Shall use the knowledge and traditional experience of Yukon Indian People, and the knowledge and experience of other residents of the planning region.
11.4.5.6	The Commission shall take into account oral forms of communication and traditional land management practices of Yukon Indian People

*Shared and respectful use of natural resources is guided by the principles of sustainable development, respect for heritage and culture, traditional knowledge and conservation of fish and wildlife conservation of fish and wildlife habitats. Ongoing community stewardship, based on consensus building, will achieve significant and lasting social, economic, and ecological benefits for all Yukoners.
DRPC Vision Statement (2022a).*

METHOD & WHAT WORKED WELL

Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in Land Stewardship Framework

In April 2019, Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in informed the Commission that they were undertaking the Ninänkäk hozo wëk’ätr’ënòhcha (We look after our land): Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in Land Stewardship Framework (LSF). The LSF was a parallel process with the purpose of enabling Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in to ‘take strong stewardship actions over the lands and waters’ in their Traditional Territory. The project sought to collect and record the essence of their way of life “Tr’ëhudè”. The work conducted as a part of the LSF was in part intended to inform the DRPC land use plan process, among many other important initiatives that Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in was undertaking.



Some activities included in the LSF development were:

- Cultural mapping workshop
- Stewards of the Land gatherings
- Dozens of cultural mapping interviews with Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in citizens
- Digitization of old Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in land-use maps
- Wetland workshop with Ducks Unlimited Canada

At this time, the Commission also received the important foundational document *We are Dënezhu* (TH, 2019), which the Commission and staff referred to for guidance often throughout the planning process.

Tr'ëhudè

Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in provided many submissions for the Commission's consideration that resulted from the LSF work. One such document was the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Land Vision (2020a). Central to the Land Vision is the concept of Tr'ëhudè which speaks to the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in way of life and governance. It requires a reciprocal relationship with the land and all living things to ensure the land remains interconnected.

*"The land to us is not an object to be managed, it is a part of our very being.
When the land is healthy, we are healthy."*

(Introduction to Land Vision – Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in 2020a)

The concept of stewardship featured prominently in the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in submissions and was very influential as a foundation for the Plan. The image below is a graphic representing the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Land Vision, it is an evolving project that shows us how to engage with the land through stories, traditional law, and core values that differ from the traditional Western approach. More on how Tr'ëhudè was applied in the Recommended Plan is explained later in this section.

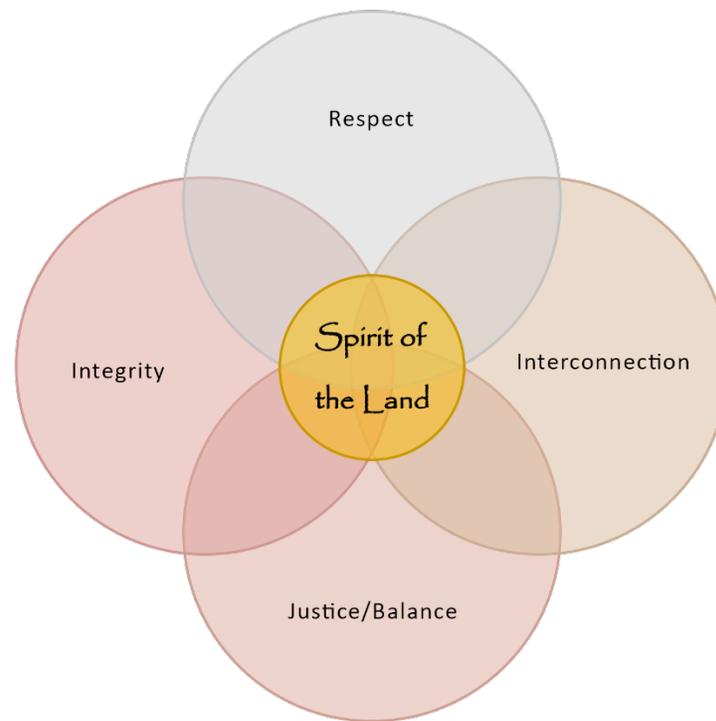


Figure 7 Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Land Vision Source: (Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Government, 2020a)

Land Stewardship Framework Team

Commission staff and the LSF Engagement Coordinator had frequent communication and worked on engagement events and materials together. This working relationship was instrumental in ensuring that the two concurrent projects, although related, were seen as different by Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in citizens. Some projects that Commission staff worked on with the LSF coordinator included: citizen engagement events (i.e. at Nänkäk Chèhòlay (Land of Plenty – R-22), a Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in citizen-focused survey for engagement, coordinating Commission presence at Elders Council, and more.

Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Conservation Priority Submission Documents

The Conservation Priority assessment which was informed by the LSF work was submitted to the Commission for consideration in December 2020 (TH 2020b). This package included a report and a series of maps that were informed by citizen consultation and scientific information about wildlife and ecological values. The conservation priority submission gave the Commission insight as to what Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Government's intentions were for settlement lands, and what areas are culturally and ecologically important in the region. Conservation Priority Assessments can be found on our website. <https://dawson.planyukon.ca/index.php/publications/public-feedback/partyfeedback>



Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Citizen Oral Submission

"Greetings to the Commission. TH had planned to present our thoughts to you in person in February and March this year. As you know, unfortunately, we had to cancel both of those events. It was disappointing as we had planned to share some of our songs and stories and a community feast. That event would have said so much about our values, our culture, and our history. Instead, and to support the process and moving forward, we have recorded some of the people who were willing to speak at the public event."

In February 2020 the Commission was invited to a community feast which was unexpectedly cancelled, and due to COVID the gathering was never able to be rescheduled. This was a very unfortunate turn of events, but TH was able to be creative and provide the Commission with an oral submission with a gathering of Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in citizen voices sharing their stories and values.

Click on the link below to hear this important submission:

<https://dawson.planyukon.ca/index.php/publications/public-feedback/tr-ondek-hwech-in-citizen-input-audio-submission>

How Traditional Knowledge informed the plan elements

Listed below are some examples of direct ways that the Commission and staff linked Traditional Knowledge with plan elements and processes.

Stewardship as a Foundational Principle of the Plan

For Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, stewardship is an ancestral responsibility.

"...premised on a duty to interact with and use the land 'in a good way;' this is central to our identity as a people. We have a deep spiritual connection to the land and water. It is our responsibility to protect our Traditional Territory as a whole, and the land, water, animals and plants that have supported our people for generations. Everything is connected."

(Ninänkäk hozowëk'ätr'ënòhcha - We Take Good Care of Our Land, submission to DRPC (TH 2020b)

In addition, a common sentiment heard from industry partners, non-profits, Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in citizens, the Parties, and the public, was an emphasis on shared responsibility



and respect for the land. It is recognized in the Plan, however, that there is a distinct difference between the practice of ancestral stewardship, as it is understood and practiced by the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, and a broader concept of community stewardship. Ultimately, collective responsibility and actions are needed for the continued health and vitality of the region. Maintaining a strong community connection to the land is achievable through stewardship.

Introduction of Integrated Stewardship Areas

To reinforce the deep connection that First Nations have to the land and to reflect everyone's responsibilities to the land, staff proposed the concept of Integrated Stewardship Areas rather than Integrated Management Areas in the Land Designation System (DRPC 2022a, p.41). This was one small step to introducing indigenous land management practices into the plan. Reframing the 'working landscape' or Integrated Management Areas (as they are known in other regional land use plans in the Yukon), was an attempt to convey the important message that all users of the land must look after the land as best they can. The land is not there to be 'worked' rather it is there to be cared for, and in turn, it will care for us.

Traditional Knowledge and Adaptive Management

In the Recommended Plan, the Commission has explicitly expressed the need for some decisions and research to be informed by Traditional Knowledge. One such instance is Policy Recommendation #1 where the use of Traditional Knowledge and on-the-land experience should be incorporated in a cumulative effects socio-cultural indicator (DRPC 2022a, p. 68). It is expected that the Parties will always apply Traditional Knowledge as appropriate, even when it is not explicitly recommended.

Incorporation of First Nation Languages

Indigenous languages are one way in which Traditional Knowledge is reflected in the Plan. The Commission worked closely with Angie Joseph-Rear and Georgette McLeod (Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Hän language holders) to find appropriate Hän names for as many of the LMUs as possible. In Appendix 2 of the Recommended Plan (2022a) a chart describes each Hän name in the Region and its significance or story. Additionally, Vuntut Gwitchin Government suggested that the area previously known as the "North Yukon Annex" should be named Chuu Tl'it Gwa'an and described as the Miner and Whitestone rivers, headwater watersheds of the Porcupine River. Source waters of the Porcupine River are considered sacred by Vuntut Gwich'in.

Affected First Nations

Although the COVID pandemic created many barriers throughout the planning process, some Commission and staff were still able to meet online and in person with members of the Community in Mayo and in Old Crow. The Commission also met with members of Na-Cho Nyak Dun Chief and Council in October 2021 and with Vuntut Gwitchin Government



Council members and lands staff. Trips were planned to visit Pelly and Beaver Creek, but the restrictions associated with the pandemic made these visits unrealistic at the time.

Any submissions that were received by any of the Affected First Nations or First Nations with interests in the area were considered to a higher standard than other stakeholder groups due to the inherent rights and responsibilities that are held by First Nations on their Traditional Territory under the Constitution and the Yukon Final Agreements.

Land Management Units (LMUs)

LMU boundaries and conservation priorities discussion

During the initial stages of creating the boundaries for the land management units, First Nation Traditional Knowledge and culture featured strongly in the creation and designation of the LMUs. In the values tables for each LMU a Traditional Economy / Traditional Uses value was included where applicable which was provided by the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Technical Working Group (TWG) members. Some of this is captured in the management intent statements and values for each LMU but we have provided some examples below of how the Traditional Knowledge was used in decision-making.

- **LMU 1: Tthetäwndëk (Tatonduk):**
 - Initially there was discussion about breaking this LMU up into smaller units, however the holistic understanding of the area (for example traditional trails) as informed by Traditional Knowledge and use made it hard to justify the separation of the land.
- **LMU 4: Tsey Dëk (Fifteenmile)**
 - Was identified as an important cultural use area and designated as an Special Management Area (SMA) for consideration of an Indigenous Protected and Conserved Area (IPCA). Stories were shared of traditional routes through this area that connects into Tombstone Park and beyond.
- **LMU 17: Nän Dhòhdäl (Upper Indian River Wetlands)**
 - The Commission knows the stories from recent memory of Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in and other First Nations people using the area for harvesting.
- **LMU 16 & 21 (Wëdzey Nähuzhi (Matson Uplands) & Wëdzey Tay (Fortymile Caribou Corridor)** Throughout the process the well-being and persistence of caribou has been of utmost importance. This was told to the Commission through stories and examples of a longstanding relationship between the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in people and the caribou.



LMU Illustrations

The Commission looked for alternative ways of communicating their vision and management intent for the Plan. Each LMU description is accompanied by an illustration which shows some of the important elements or stories associated with the area. The Illustrated Recommended Plan Summary can be found on the DRPC website <https://dawson.planyukon.ca/index.php/publications/recommended-plan>

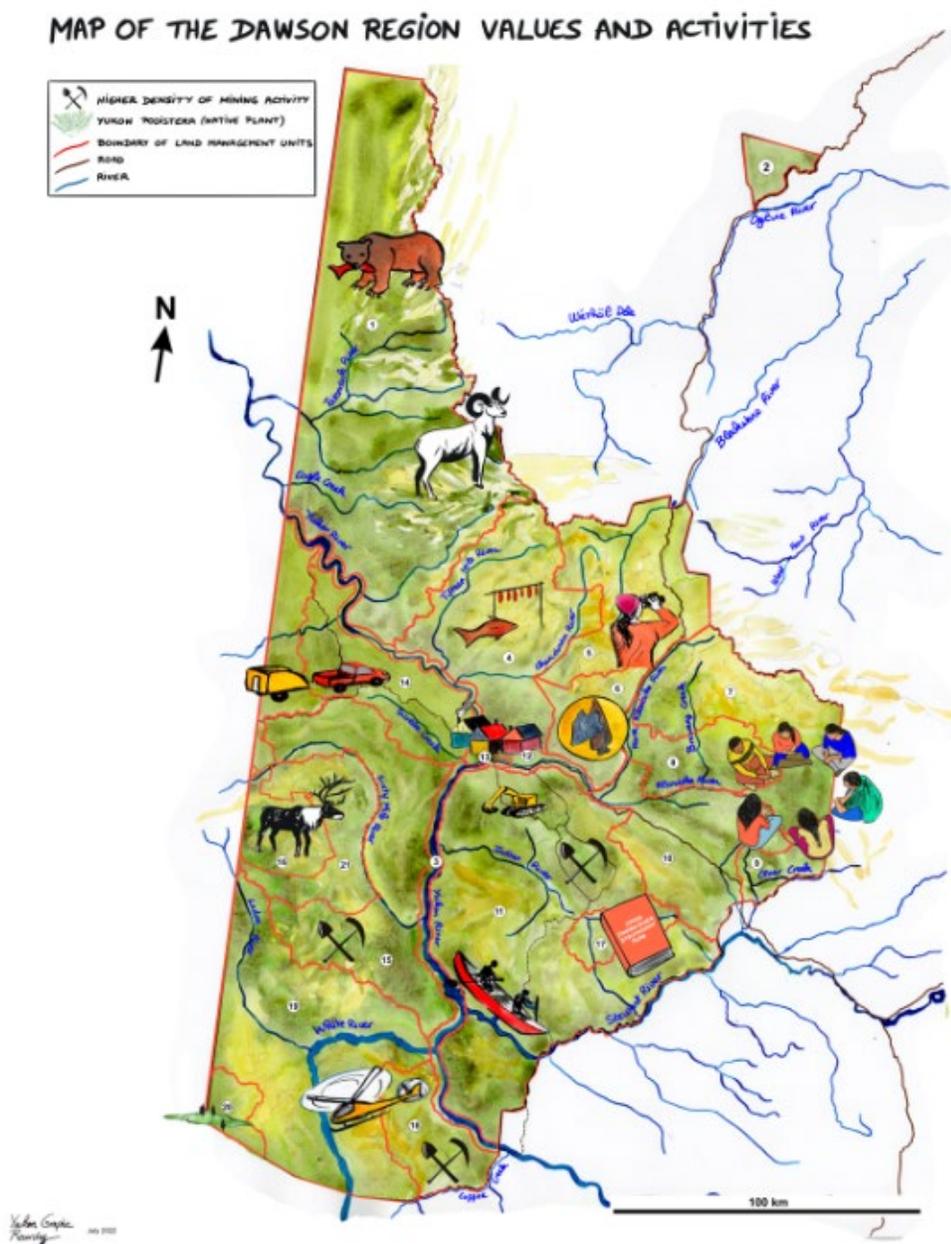


Figure 8 Illustrative values map of the Dawson Region



Tr'ëhudè and stewardship

For each of the 21 LMUs a section was added to the Recommended Plan that considers each LMU through the lens of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Land Vision Tr'ëhudè (see also **Section 9 - From Draft Plan to Recommended Plan**) to see how this was applied in decision-making). It is a space where stories and traditional knowledge of the area, or the values that are held within the area, can be shared. This emphasizes the importance of the land to Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in citizens and respects and upholds their relationship with the land, which is fundamental to their identity, way of life and their ancestral responsibility as caretakers.

WHAT DID WE LEARN?

- More effort was needed at Draft Plan stage to articulate and incorporate Indigenous Knowledge and values into the Plan:
 - The Draft Plan Review by Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in (TH 2021) highlighted the need for this by stating “there was a general lack of reference within the Draft Plan to Traditional Knowledge and traditional land management practices and how they were considered.”
 - One suggestion to the Commission was to ‘add clarity and transparency’ to the Recommended Plan as to where and how these elements were considered.
- **Section 9 - From Draft Plan to Recommended Plan** describes the ‘assessment framework’ that the Commission used to help guide their decision-making at the Recommended Plan stage. This framework included a level of analysis that specifically asked the Commission to consider all decisions through the lens of Tr'ëhudè. This tool ensured greater consideration of an Indigenous perspective.
- Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in citizen engagement
 - A gap was identified during the public engagement process whereby the Commission and Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in technical staff concluded that there was not enough Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in citizen feedback on the Issues and Interests survey that was conducted in the fall of 2019. The LSF Program and Commission staff designed a new survey and LSF engaged with Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in citizens via online surveys, and phone and video interviews in the spring of 2020.



SECTION 7 - WORKING TOGETHER

OVERVIEW

This section will provide an overview of Commission meetings, working sessions, and their decision making processes. It is important to note that the Commission always made informed decisions through consensus. The Commission held regular public meetings and working sessions between April 2019 and May 2022 during the development of the Draft and Recommended Plans. These were facilitated by staff or an external contractor, John Glynn Morris.

METHOD & WHAT WORKED WELL



Image 6 Team building: Commission training session in 2019

Public Meetings

These meetings are an opportunity for the Commission to update the public and stakeholders on the process as well as provide an opportunity for presentations from delegates who have interest in the Dawson region. The meetings were made available to the public through in-person attendance, local radio broadcast, and webinar. Agendas, meeting minutes, and delegate presentation material can be found on the DRPC website.

<https://dawson.planyukon.ca/index.php/meetings>



Working Sessions

Working sessions were held at varying frequencies throughout the years depending on the intensity of work that needed to be done. They were not public meetings. During times of intense work and decision making the Commission would meet one to four times a month. These sessions were often facilitated, and they were used to review work that was completed by staff, discuss options and external communication, and develop their understanding of the planning issues. The Technical Working Group (TWG) was sometimes present at these meetings to provide their technical expertise and to facilitate ongoing communication between the Parties and the Commission.

Facilitation

Many of the Commission meetings and working sessions were facilitated by a contractor. Facilitation was an important and necessary tool and is a core component of consensus decision making which we discuss in the next section.

Consensus Decision Making

What is Consensus Decision-Making and why did we use it?

The Terms of Reference (TOR) describes Consensus Decision Making as follows:

Consensus-based decision-making is a process of arriving at a decision that reflects and relies upon satisfying the interests, values and concerns of the whole group responsible for making the decision (TH&YG 2019).

Instead of a majority vote, groups that work toward consensus want to find solutions that everyone supports, or at least feels comfortable with (Seeds for Change 2020). A diagram showing the process of Consensus Decision Making is shown in Figure 9.

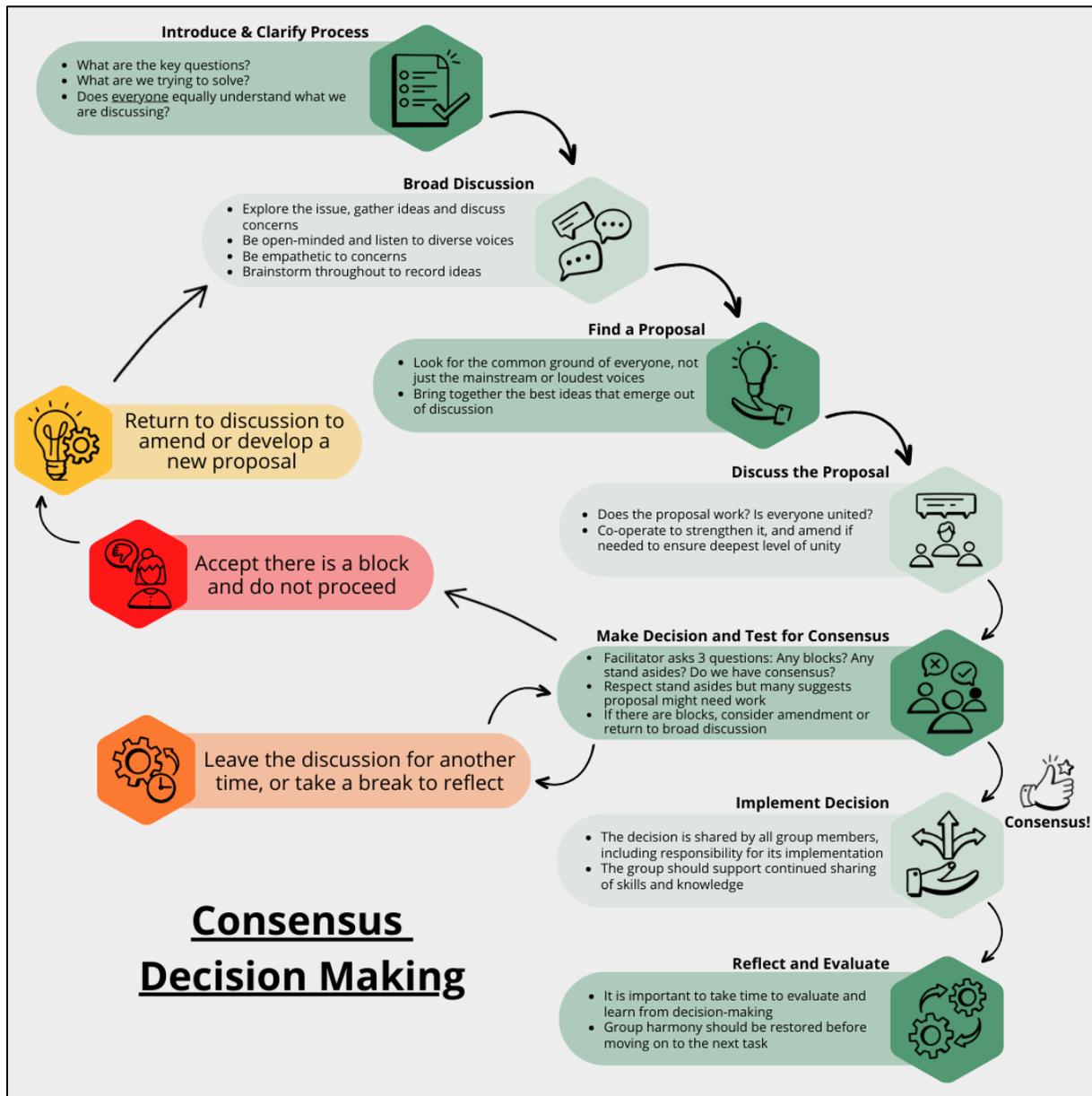


Figure 9 Diagram of Consensus Decision Making

Why Consensus Decision Making?

Firstly, an aspect of the Chapter 11 Land Use Planning Process is to

provide, to the extent practicable, for decisions of the Yukon Land Use Planning Council and the Regional Land Use Planning Commissions to be made by consensus (S11.2.1.11)

The TOR, as previously mentioned, sets the direction and mandate for the Commission and outlines the preferred approach: consensus decision-making.



Secondly, making decisions through consensus relies on trust, respect, inclusivity, and equality. Commitment to these key principles ensured the Commission collectively produced a Recommended Plan that all six members supported and felt reflected their values and aspirations for the Dawson Region.

How did it work in practice?

During each working session, the facilitator and staff used several strategies to help the Commission find consensus. These included:

- exploring many options and solutions;
- determining the underlying issues and interests;
- providing new or additional information to illuminate interests, values, or concerns;
- separating personal conflict from decision-making;
- assessing the level of agreement among members;
- deferring a decision until interests, values, and concerns are addressed;
- re-configuring the issue or question;
- seeking alternative solutions to a problem;
- making incremental decisions rather than addressing large questions all at once; and
- inviting and encouraging independent advisors and experts to facilitate understanding.



Figure 10 Virtual adventures: snapshot of December 2020 online meeting

WHAT DID WE LEARN?

- Having a strong focus on relationship building and team dynamics from the beginning created a strong, cohesive Commission that operated with the utmost respect for each other's knowledge and experience.
- A confident and experienced facilitator had a very positive contribution. He ensured that members were given equal opportunities to speak.



- While not always perfect, the use of video conferencing technology enabled more members of the public to engage with the Commission's work and to navigate the uncertain time of the pandemic in 2020-2022. It also enabled delegates to join meetings from other locations, providing the Commission with more information and ideas (e.g. existing policies, data, regulations, etc.).
- Consensus decision-making relies on adequate information and knowledge. While the Commission were able to make decisions, they at times felt constrained by the limited options they had available to them from the Parties.
- COVID-19 made in-person meetings very difficult, and when travel to Yukon communities from Whitehorse was constrained, it limited the staff's ability to facilitate sessions in person. It was determined that the Commission had to meet in person where possible so that they could have open discussions in an environment they all felt comfortable in.



SECTION 8 - PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

OVERVIEW

In Yukon, the regional land use planning process is outlined under Chapter 11 of the Umbrella Final Agreement (UFA). Public engagement is required in the development of a regional land use plan, (see Section 11.2.1.8 of the THFA and Section 11.4.5.3 of the UFA). The Commission held two major engagement periods during the Draft Plan and Recommended Plan development.

- 2019 Engagement - October 2019 - June 2020
- 2021 Engagement - June - November 2021

METHOD & WHAT WORKED WELL

This is a brief summary of the engagement activities during the two engagement periods. For more details on the methods and results please refer to the engagement reports that can be found on the DRPC website.

<https://dawson.planyukon.ca/index.php/publications/public-feedback>

Engagement Objectives	
2019 Engagement (October 2019-June 2020)	2021 Engagement (June 2021-November 2021)
<p>The objective of this engagement was to host face-to-face and online engagement activities to understand experiences, values, and needs that would inform the development of the Draft Plan. Key objectives included:</p> <p>To raise awareness and understanding of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning in the Dawson region • Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats • Connections between individual and community economic, environmental and sociocultural values. <p>To seek feedback, ideas, and validation from the public on the Commission’s Draft Issues and Interests Report and Draft Resource Assessment Report (RAR).</p>	<p>As a part of the Draft Plan feedback phase, the Commission’s main goal for this engagement process was to inform Recommended Plan development.</p> <p>This Draft Plan was the Commission’s best attempt at balancing cultural, economic and environmental values with an eye to their vision: On The Land We Walk Together / Nän Käk Ndä Tr’ädäl. Thus, public engagement activities focused on the following, overarching question:</p> <p>Thinking of community needs today and future generation needs tomorrow, are we on track?</p>

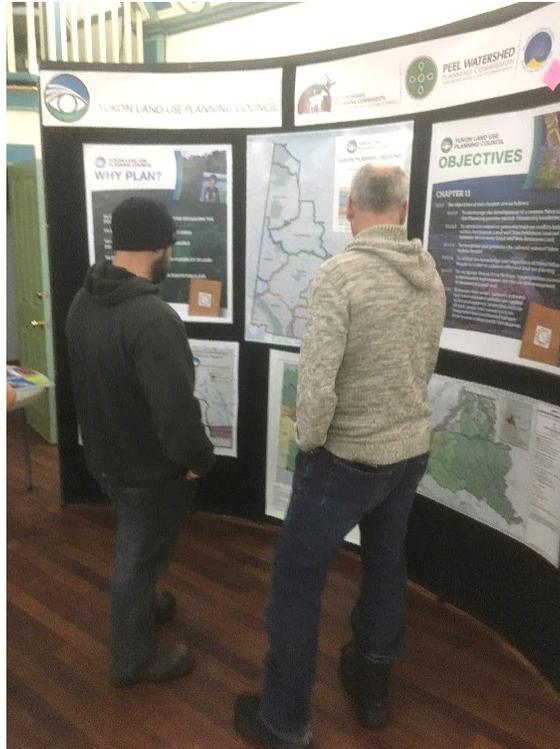


Image 7 Talking about the regional planning at the DRPC 2019 Engagement

How we reached out

A variety of methods were used to ensure as many members of the public and plan partners were accommodated as possible. Plan partners include governments (other than the 'Parties'), non-government organizations, industry groups, citizen groups, industry, and others.

Seasonal activities and workflow were considered and accommodated for as best as possible (i.e. mining, harvesting, and cultural activities). A variety of methods were used that included but were not limited to:

- Community meetings:
 - open houses, tea circles, community conversations in Dawson City, Mayo, Old Crow and Whitehorse. Commission members and staff were present.
- Engagement website <https://engagedawson.planyukon.ca/>:
 - online survey, poll, idea-generating tool, links to DRPC website/materials.
- Plan partner presentations at Commission meetings.
- Public submissions:
 - public and stakeholders were encouraged to connect via letter, email, phone and in person at both the Dawson and Whitehorse Commission offices.
- Targeted surveys
 - Targeted surveys were created for Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in citizens, youth, and the general public.



- Advertising:
 - events and website were advertised on Facebook, local news (print and radio), posters and mail-outs in Whitehorse and Dawson, local media outlets, and targeted emails to stakeholder organizations.
- Public workshops:
 - Topic-specific workshops in Dawson and online to discuss the topics of wetlands, conservation zones, and future planning areas. Workshops were not technical and open to everyone, and discussion was encouraged.
- Technical workshops:
 - Topic-specific workshops were held in Whitehorse and Dawson on cumulative effects and wetlands. These were not open to the public, but summaries were made available on the DRPC website.
- Meetings:
 - over 40 were held with a range of stakeholders, including Plan Partners and Affected First Nations.
- Social media:
 - Website updates and Facebook.
- Pop-ups:
 - Blackboard and pop-up engagement events were held to engage the Dawson community.
- Site tours:
 - Goldfields tour for Commission and staff put on by the Klondike Placer Mining Association.

Results

Overall, the engagement efforts were considered a great success by the Commission and staff. The Commission and staff were grateful for how engaged and respectful the Community and Yukoners were in throughout the process. The Commission received hundreds of responses through letters, emails, and surveys and directly engaged with over one hundred participants at in person events. For more statistics on the engagement response, please refer to the Engagement Reports on the DRPC website (listed at end of section).



Image 8 Cover pages of Commission reports depicting the flow of information (DRPC 2020a & 2022c).



Using specialist qualitative research analysis software (Dedoose [2019] and Atlas Ti [2021]), staff reviewed each submission line-by-line and coded responses against topics. Coding allowed staff to ‘label’ quotations and helped them identify themes and relationships. For transparency with the Parties, the Commission staff shared all coding results with the Technical Working Group including the list of codes and the results of all coded data.

This feedback was then presented to the Commission during working sessions and was a fundamental part of the decision-making process. See **Section 9 – From Draft Plan to Recommended Plan** for more on the development of the Recommended Plan.

Recognizing the interconnectedness between all of the issues that were identified throughout the process was necessary to produce a balanced plan that was truly representative of the community as a whole.

WHAT DID WE LEARN?

Engagement challenges:

- Building trust with the public and creating spaces where everyone could feel comfortable expressing their concerns was a priority for the Commission. In the beginning of the process there was the sentiment expressed by some members of public that decisions relating to the Regional Planning Process were ‘already decided’ by ‘government’ and that their opinion/concerns will not matter. The Commission recognized this as a challenge and addressed it numerous times in the public meetings by reassuring the public that the Commission was an independent body and they wanted everyone to ‘see themselves in the plan’.
- Great care was taken in preparing for the engagement events to respect the Community and to ensure that the conversations remained respectful and non-divisive, even during times of disagreement.
- There were opportunities for people to contribute to the process multiple times through different methods, and there were no restrictions on how many online surveys could be submitted from a single IP address.
- Gaps in participation from some sectors of the community were identified. The Commission worked to reach these groups through targeted engagement in the spring of 2020.
- COVID-19 added additional challenges to the planning and format of public engagement events.



Engagement Results Reference

Links to reports:

-In Your Words Report on Issues and Interests Engagement 2019 (DRPC 2020a):

<https://dawson.planyukon.ca/index.php/publications/public-feedback/in-your-words-report-feb-2020/in-your-words-report-on-issues-and-interests-engagement-2019>

-In Your Words Draft Plan Engagement June 2021-November 2021 (DRPC 2022c):

<https://dawson.planyukon.ca/index.php/publications/public-feedback/in-your-words-report-feb-2020/in-your-words-report-on-draft-plan-engagement-june-2021-nov-2021>



SECTION 9 - FROM DRAFT PLAN TO RECOMMENDED PLAN OVERVIEW

FROM DRAFT PLAN TO RECOMMENDED PLAN

Our Approach

For each Section of the Draft Plan, we...



REVIEWED DRAFT PLAN FEEDBACK

We read every response we received and staff organized it into different themes. This helped us figure out if we were on the right track, or needed to review Draft Plan elements.

FOCUSED ON OUR VISION

Our priority was our Vision, **Nān kāk ndā tr'ādāl (On the land we walk together)**. This reminded us that it is all our responsibility to act as stewards of the land to protect its values for future generations.



REVIEWED PLANNING PRINCIPLES

We looked at the key ideas we used to inform the Draft Plan, including Stewardship, Adaptive Management and the Precautionary Principle. We also reviewed our ecological, socio-cultural and socio-economic goals.

CONSIDERED SCENARIOS AND VALUES

For each topic, we thought about what we wanted to achieve, and recommendations we could make to deliver them. To help, we worked with Tr'ondék Hwēch'in, Government of Yukon and plan partners.



DEVELOPED OPTIONS PAPERS

Using all of the above, our staff developed options for us to review. These papers included public feedback, new research, Party positions, and new considerations for each section of the Draft Plan.

HELD WORKING SESSIONS & DISCUSSIONS

All decisions were made after extensive discussions at working sessions. These were facilitated by staff and Jan external contractor who we have worked with since 2019. Our discussions either ended in a decision or we gave staff direction to further refine an idea.



REACHED A CONSENSUS DECISION

Every decision we made was reached by consensus. This means we talked things through until we had a solution that we were all happy with. The Recommended Plan is a result of all our experience.





The release of a Draft Plan was a key milestone that was reached on June 15th, 2021. Following a successful public engagement campaign (see **Section 8 - Public Engagement**), the Commission began to develop the Recommended Plan. The outcomes of public engagement highlighted many parts of the Draft Plan that needed reviewing.



Image 9 Recommended Plan hand over ceremony June 2022

The changes to the Plan fit into four main categories:

1. Fundamental Changes

These changes were topics that were highlighted as needing better representation and integration throughout the entire plan. There were three topics identified: Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in culture and values, and First Nation Traditional Knowledge; alignment with the Umbrella Final Agreement; and climate change.

2. Major Changes

These changes were often areas that we specifically sought assistance from the public on and included: special management areas, access to minerals, wetlands, major river corridors, sub-regional planning, and cumulative effects for example.

3. LMU Boundaries and Designations

In some instances, the feedback we received gave alternatives to the boundaries and designations that we proposed in the Draft Plan. This was very useful information that helped to shape the final map and assign designations that made the most sense for the



values and use in the areas. Each LMU was re-considered through mapping exercises and presentations of alternatives.

4. Minor Changes

Minor changes consisted of mainly grammatical and formatting changes.

In order to navigate these changes, the Commission had to look to its **Foundational Concepts and Principles, Evaluate the Draft Plan Feedback**, and utilize some key **Decision-Making Tools**. A change tracking spreadsheet was developed and filled in with the recommendations of the staff and the decisions made by the Commission.

METHOD & WHAT WORKED WELL

Foundational Concepts and Principles

Our Vision

In the early planning stages, the Commission established a clear vision for the Dawson Region:

Nän kāk ndä tr'ädäl (On the land we walk together)

This is underpinned by three statements: For the Region, For the Process, and For the Plan (see Section 1.2 of the Recommended Plan for more detail). This vision is achieved through the whole community cooperating, working together, and sharing information.

When developing the Recommended Plan, the Planning Commission followed this philosophy. The Commission listened to the planning partners that represented a wide range of interests. They deeply considered the interconnectedness of the people and values of the Region and how to develop a plan that is inclusive of everyone.

Planning Principles

Throughout the planning and decision-making process, the Commission and staff applied four key planning principles to guide their work. These are described in more depth in the Recommended Plan:

- Sustainable development,
- Stewardship,
- The precautionary principle, and
- Adaptive management.

Evaluate the Draft Plan Feedback: Assessment Framework

In December 2021 the Commission and the Yukon Land Use Planning Council contracted Vector Research to help develop a Structured Assessment Framework (Appendix 1). The intention of this framework was to help guide the decision-making process to ensure consistent process and diligent decision-making.



The Framework first considered the evolution of research approaches used in the Yukon that involve qualitative data analysis or data that is not necessarily 'countable'. The research approaches* that were presented to the Commission were:

A. Quantitative Data (numbers): if you can't measure it, it doesn't count.
B. Qualitative Adaptation (words): measuring qualitative input to make it count.
C. Qualitative / Relational (words and stories): understanding connections between people and the land.

**It is important to note that there were opportunities to apply all types of data analysis throughout the planning process. In some instances, considering quantitative data was an extremely important element of the decision-making process, for example when analyzing surface and linear disturbance in an LMU, or looking at the number of claims in an LMU.*

The type C research was a good approach for the Commission during their discussions because it provided a broader perspective and considered context, like time and space. This was important when considering the Commission's vision and values- consideration of future generations, and past uses of the land. It also helped them to consider input that came in the form of audio recordings, stories, and discussions with Elders and youth.

Using this framework to assist decision-making also helped to apply the guidance from the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in submissions and the concept of Tr'ëhudè (TH 2020a, 2020b, 2019).

The Framework provided the Commission with six steps.

Step 1. Log all input received during the 21 June to 1 November feedback period.

Step 2. Post submissions to the Dawson Regional Planning Commission website (as appropriate).

Step 3. Assemble input received into formats suitable for analysis.

Step 4. Undertake analysis of quantitative aspects of survey input with descriptive statistics.

Step 5. Undertake thematic analysis of qualitative input according to various lenses:

- comprehensiveness of respondent voices;
- relationality and Tr'ëhudè; and,
- generational time horizon.

Step 6. Integrate the results of the analysis in steps 4 and 5 above into the Recommended Dawson Regional Land Use Plan.

Further details on the Framework can be found in the Appendix of this report.



Evaluate the Draft Plan Feedback: Coding Results

To effectively digest the large amount of data (letters, surveys, workshop notes, discussions, etc.) that were received during the public engagement period the Commission and staff decided to use a qualitative analysis software program called Atlas.ti to code and organize the information. Most simply, it is a way of labeling and organizing data to identify different themes and relationships. The steps to the coding were as follows:

- All the input was uploaded into Atlas.ti and organized it into groups which were based on where the input came from.
- Staff then created a series of 80+ codes, for example, 'caribou', 'agriculture', 'climate change', or 'exploration', and created location-specific codes for each LMU.
- Each code was defined/described.
- Coding validation: Staff conducted a test to standardize the coding.

Once all of the submissions were read and coded line-by-line, staff were then able to run queries to find common themes and to easily pull up topics which would then feed into the options papers to be presented to the Commission (see **'options papers'** below).

For example, if the Commission wanted to know what Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in citizens said about the importance of salmon in LMU 4 Tsey dëk (Fifteenmile), staff would be able to provide the Commission with this information quite easily. This approach proved very useful throughout the Recommended Plan writing process.

Recognizing that there are drawbacks to analyzing data in this way, staff also read and summarized submissions from stakeholders in their entirety to ensure that the spirit of the submission was considered. Some responses, such as submissions from the Parties and affected First Nations, were coded but were also considered more fulsomely throughout the writing process. The coding data and methodology was shared with the Parties as it was developed.

Key Decision-Making Tools

We used five main decision-making tools to help get from the Draft Plan to the Recommended Plan. These tools were:

- 1. Options papers**
- 2. Facilitated working sessions**
- 3. Working groups and experts**
- 4. ALCES modeling and satellite data**
- 5. Consensus decision-making**

1. Options Papers

Options papers were created for each topic that was presented to the Commission. This was the main tool that we used to guide the Commission during our facilitated discussions.



The options papers followed the following format:

Introduction: Brief overview of the topic

What the Draft Plan says: Overview of the direction in the Draft Plan. This would include relevant background information that has evolved since the release of the draft plan and Draft Plan recommendations.

What did we hear during the engagement? Staff summarized the feedback that was coded in Atlas.ti and organized it by Parties, Affected First Nations, and public and stakeholder feedback.

Options: Generally, there was always three options presented to the Commission that was informed by the feedback and additional research.

Other Considerations: Additional information that may be relevant to the decision-making process, for example, the impending release of a policy.

Conclusion and next steps: Notes on the discussion were taken and the Commission's decision was recorded. Often the decision would be a variation of an option or in the event that consensus could not be reached, staff would take the new direction to develop new options for a future meeting.

2. Facilitated Working Sessions

The Commission enlisted John Glynn-Morris to facilitate most working sessions. The use of a facilitator was reserved for intensive sessions that required a lot of decision-making and/or for topics that garnered polarized feedback from the public, stakeholders, and Parties. Some examples of topics that warranted a facilitated discussion were: cumulative effects (and indicator thresholds), Special Management Area designation, and wetlands.

A worksheet was developed to walk the Commission through each decision (see Appendix 1). The worksheet itself did not prove to be the right tool for the Commission to use, but there were some helpful lenses/questions that came from the worksheet that continued to be utilized. Revisiting these lenses was especially useful during difficult conversations and decisions.

The objective of the lenses was to explore questions like:

- Our (the Commission's) Vision and Principles
 - Is this decision in line with the vision for the region and planning principles?
- Minimizing land use conflict
 - Minimizing conflict requires clarity. Will land users know if their activity can go ahead or not?
- Reasonable and achievable
 - Can this option be reasonably implemented?



- Integrated resource management
 - How are ecosystem integrity, culture and community, and economic activity impacted?
- Sustainable Development
 - How does the decision apply to sustainable development? Can it be improved?
- Relationality & Tr'ëhudè
 - To what extent does this decision connect to people and the land? And does it recognize and promote the cultural values of Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in and other First Nation peoples?
 - What stories can we tell/have we heard of this activity or place in the Region?
- Generational
 - To what extent does this decision consider future generations?

3. Working Groups and Experts

Throughout the planning process, the Commission had the invaluable support of intergovernmental working groups such as the Technical Working Group (TWG) and the Cumulative Effects Working Group (CEWG) (see **Section 3 - Roles and Responsibilities** to learn more about Roles and Responsibilities). The Commission also at times called upon other experts and representatives from governments and organizations who held deep knowledge about a particular topic in the region. For instance, after some intensive working sessions about wetlands/mining/reclamation, the Commission invited members of Ducks Unlimited Canada and the Klondike Placer Miners Association (KPMA) to join a meeting to answer questions and provide some more clarity on the issue.

An example of how DRPC worked with intergovernmental working groups was a “traffic signal” exercise to help with decisions about the plan recommendations for policy, research, and activities. The TWG representatives from the Parties provided feedback as to the quality of the Draft Plan recommendation using a ‘red’, ‘amber’, or ‘green’ signal, and offered suggestions for improvements or comments on how the recommendation would work in future implementation. This provided a valuable way to assess the feasibility of each recommendation.

4. Alces Modelling and Satellite Data

The Commission worked closely with the CEWG to understand the best available information on surface disturbance and linear feature density to help inform their decisions about continued development in the Region. This technical exercise was important to help the Commission and staff understand the current and possible levels of disturbance on the landscape. Please refer to **Section 13 - Cumulative Effects** for a more detailed description of what this exercise is and how it was used to inform decisions about development on the land.



5. Consensus Decision Making

All the Recommendations in the Regional Plan were made by consensus decision. This means all members of the Commission participated in the discussion and together developed and agreed on what they felt was best for the Dawson Region. Consensus decision-making is an inclusive process, for more information on how it was used by the Commission see **Section 7 - Working Together**.

Once the Commission discussed the topic and made a final decision, staff took this direction and redrafted the relevant sections of the Recommended Plan. These decisions were then subsequently reviewed once more at the next working session. Every section was reviewed and signed off by the Commission before being added to the Recommended Plan.

WHAT DID WE LEARN?

- The 'options papers' approach to decision-making worked very well for the Commission. It was the most thorough way to navigate the large amount of feedback that we received on the Draft Plan in a methodical way. Presenting the Commission with options enabled the meeting facilitator to keep the discussion flowing efficiently. This approach also highlighted where gaps in knowledge were for additional input into the decision-making process.
- Trying to apply a strict structured decision-making framework to all decisions was not entirely the right approach. With some adjustments, many elements from the assessment framework continued to help ground the conversation and to root the decision process in the values, goals and objectives of the Commission.



SECTION 10 - LAND MANAGEMENT UNITS (LMUs)

OVERVIEW

The Dawson Planning Region has been divided into discrete areas of land. Consistent with other Yukon regional land use plans, these are called Landscape Management Units (LMUs). Each LMU has a distinct management intent which translates to differences in how they are designated for land use. These differences often dictate how the LMUs are delineated.

As much as possible, the boundaries of each LMU follow an existing natural (e.g., watershed, major river), or man-made (e.g., highway, Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in land selections) boundary. Where applicable, LMU boundaries have been delineated to be consistent with adjacent regional land use plans.

METHOD & WHAT WORKED WELL

Work on developing the Land Management Units (LMUs) was iterative. The boundaries shifted throughout time as the Commissions went through their respective processes. The following section touches on the three main phases of LMU development, the previous Commission (2011-2014), the Draft Plan development and the Recommended Plan development.

Previous Commission

The first round of planning in the Dawson Region (2010-2014) ended just before a draft plan was produced. That Commission wanted to reduce the number of management boundaries and so delineated their preliminary LMUs in the central and southern parts of the region using the boundaries of the Landscape Units of the Dawson Forest Resources Management Plan (2013). They delineated northern LMUs and LMUs in the White River drainage by watershed boundaries. A Yukon River Corridor LMU subdivided LMUs along the Yukon River. The boundary for this corridor was manually delineated either along topographic breaks parallel to the river or an approximate 1.5 km buffer from the river, whichever was closest to the river.

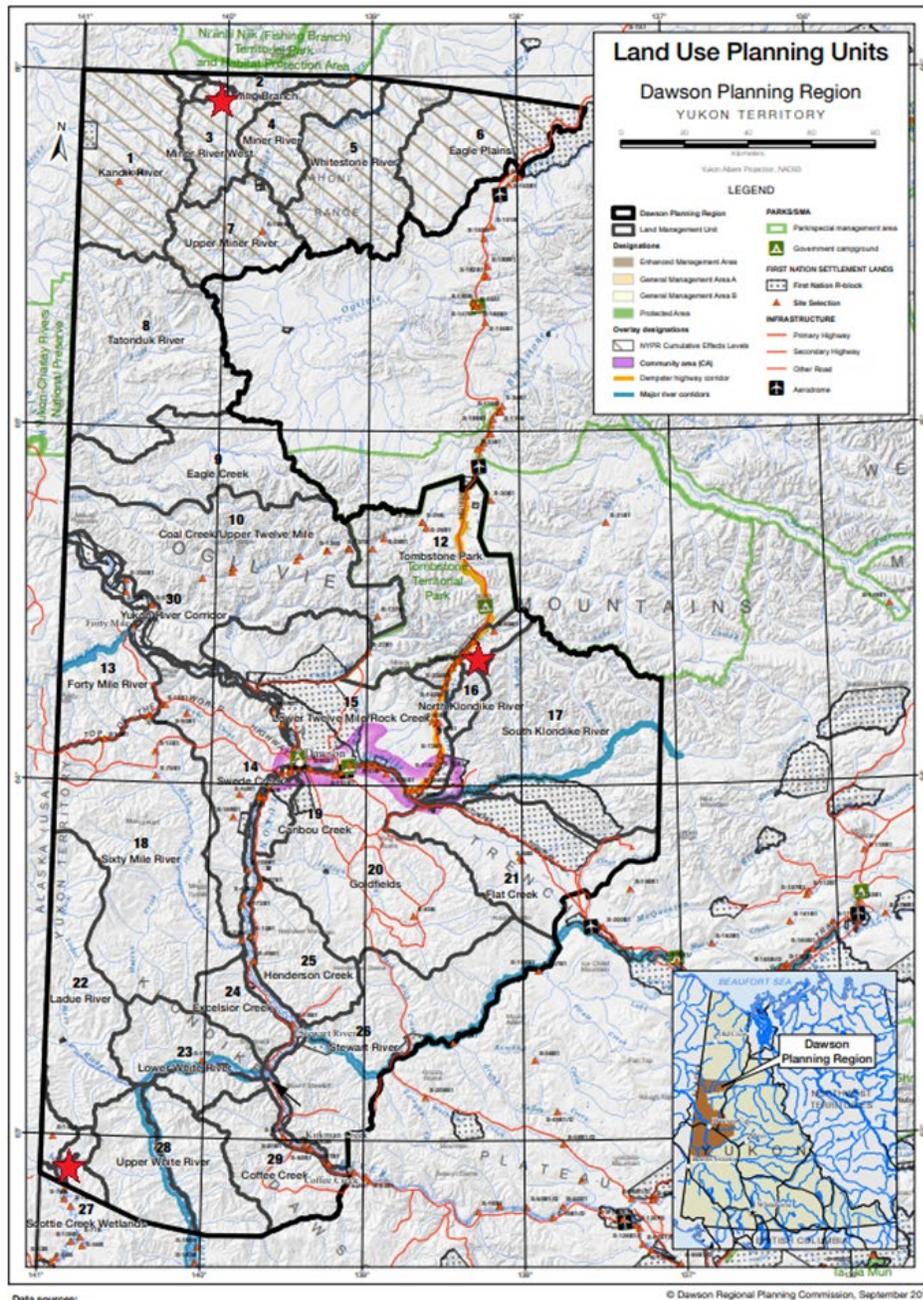


Figure 11 An early (unpublished) LMU map from the first Dawson Commission showing preliminary LMUs. The red stars indicate areas where boundaries were still being worked out.

LMU boundary discussions for three areas took the most attention of that Commission (see stars in Figure 11). They considered several options for each of these areas; these options were based on sub-watershed and ecological boundaries.

Draft Plan Development

When Dawson regional planning restarted in 2019, the regional boundary had changed to match an administrative boundary agreed to by Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation and Tr'ondëk



Hwëch'in Governments. This meant that much of the overlapping Vuntut Gwitchin Traditional Territories comprising most of the Miner and Whitestone watersheds were removed. This led to the unusual case of a piece of the region being separated from the rest. The smaller piece corresponded to the surveyed boundaries of settlement land block TH R-49A. This became LMU 2 Eagle Plains - Ch'ëzhän wëch'èl in the Draft Plan and Horseshoe in the subsequent Recommended Plan.

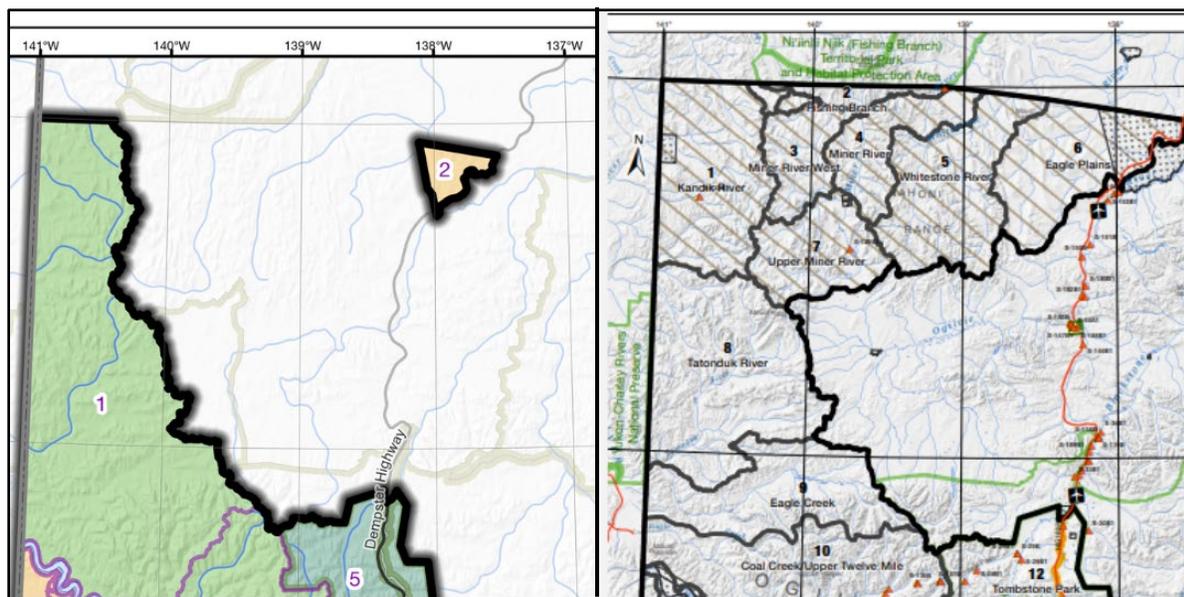


Image 10 Side by side images of the northern portion of the planning region from first iteration of the Commission 2014 (right) and current Commission Recommended Plan map (2022) (left). The areas comprising most of the Miner and Whitestone watersheds were removed and LMU 2 Horseshoe remains.

Early in their process, the new (current) Commission were presented with products of the previous commission, including their preliminary LMUs (November 2019). These were the starting point for iterative refinements of LMUs for the Draft Plan. Over the next several months, the Commission with input from the Technical Working Group (TWG), focused on general areas of the region and considered:

- Watershed boundaries are often appropriate.
- Amalgamating previous LMUs.
- Making Tombstone Park its own LMU.
- Areas of high mineral potential and high habitat value.
- Whether or not certain values could be addressed by the plan without delineating an LMU around them, e.g., Indian River and Scottie Creek Wetlands.
- The Coffee Gold site was a unique hot spot for quartz exploration and mining.
- How to delineate the Klondike Valley unit, considering past planning, city limits, Sunnydale and Moosehide, disturbance and residential areas.



- Large settlement land blocks that are geographically close with consistent management direction should be considered within the same LMU.
- Recent Fortymile Caribou herd movement and habitat models that showed concentrated movement and value in the Matson Highlands and the ridges extending north towards the Yukon River.
- Recently updated range map of the Hart River Herd showed the generalized range for this herd. The boundary between LMUs 7 & 8 were “inspired” by this general line, but followed a mix of features on the ground: ridgelines, streams, confluences with straight lines between peaks and/or confluences when crossing valley bottoms.
- Simplifying the Yukon River Corridor boundary to one kilometer on either side of the river measured from the high-water mark.

Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in Traditional Knowledge and culture featured strongly in the design of many LMUs. Some of this was captured in the management intent statements and values for each LMU, but the examples below of how the knowledge was used in decision making for specific Draft Plan LMUs:

LMU 1: Tthetäwndëk/Tatonduk: Looking at this area with an indigenous perspective made it very difficult to separate values and therefore break up the area further. The Commission also found that the ancestral trails through here are important today for connecting youth with traditional and cultural values.

LMU 4: Tsey dëk (Fifteenmile) was identified as an important cultural use area. Stories were shared of traditional routes through this area that connect into Tombstone Park and beyond.

LMU 16 & 23: Wëdzey Nähuzhi (Matson Uplands & Wëdzey Tay (Fortymile Caribou Corridor))

Throughout the process TH have identified the well-being and persistence of caribou as being of utmost importance. This guidance, in addition to the accumulated knowledge on the Commission, and discussions with western wildlife biologists resulted in LMUs in the Draft Plan that attempted to try to ensure that important caribou habitat persists.

The Draft Plan used an innovative approach to maximize the conservation of higher-elevation caribou corridors in LMU 23 by recommending more rigorous management directions in high-elevation areas. More specifically, areas above 700 m above sea level to the north of the Top of the World Highway and above 1000 meters above sea level to the south of the Top of the World Highway would be zoned “Integrated Stewardship Area 1” rather than 2.

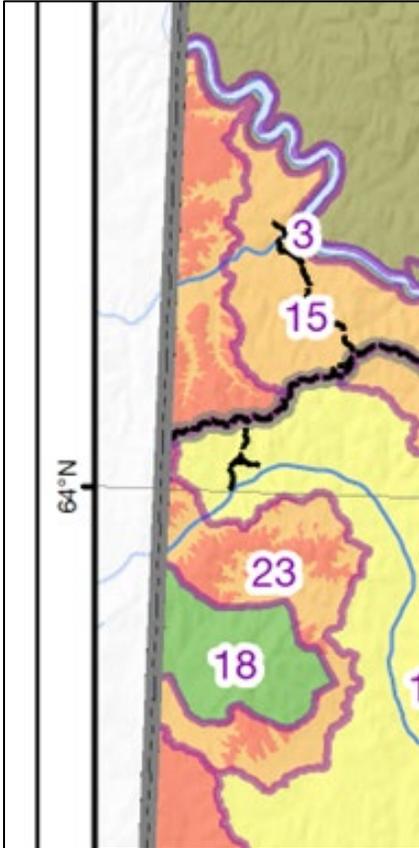


Image 11 Clip of Draft Plan 2021 LMU map (Section 5) showing LMU 23 Caribou Corridor's split Land Use Designation by elevation. The ridge tops are the darker pink (ISA 1) and the lower elevation areas are orange (ISA 2)

With about eight months before the Draft Plan was due, the Parties and the Commission agreed that special management areas to be recommended for withdrawal should be under an interim withdrawal when the Draft Plan is released and not after. Furthermore, the Government of Yukon said that they would need four months to get withdrawals issued through an Orders-In-Council (OICs). To achieve these timelines, the Commission released a confidential "Module 1" to the Parties in January 2021. It had a focus on draft candidate conservation areas (and LMUs) and the draft land use designation system. The full Draft Plan, including both Modules 1 and 2 was released publicly in June 2021 (DRPC 2021). Building on learnings from implementing the Peel Watershed Plan, the LMUs released in both modules included brief text descriptions of the boundaries and the features they were intended to follow. Nonetheless, it took Government of Yukon's geomatics and legal teams most of the intervening time to issue the required OICs in time for the public release of the Draft Plan. More information on the 'Modular Approach' is described in **Section 11 - Special Management Areas**.



RECOMMENDED PLAN DEVELOPMENT

Difficulties in establishing the interim withdrawals led to a series of meetings among technical leads of the Parties, DRPC and YLUPC. Several issues were identified with how the boundaries were delineated, including:

- The use of out-of-date spatial data.
- The use of nebulous and perhaps subjective boundaries, for example the range of a caribou herd.
- The use of smaller/broader scale data when larger scale data is available.
- The use of other sources of watershed boundaries when National Hydrological Network (NHN) boundaries exist.
- The use of “dirty” data leading to minor gaps, spurs and other artifacts
- Inconsistent choice of line sources.
- Drawing overly complex boundaries when straight lines, nearby surveyed/legally-defined lines, or geographic features captured by standard CanVec base mapping would be sufficient at a regional scale.
- The use of elevation-based boundaries (e.g. the sub-LMU boundaries with Draft LMU 23 Caribou Corridor).

This feedback was summarized in a guideline that was used to refine the boundaries of the LMUs for the Recommended Plan. Examples¹ of these types of more technical boundary edits are shown with yellow stars in the following figure, and include:

- Matching of the northern boundary of LMU 16 Wëdzey Nähuzhi (Matson Uplands) to the boundaries of existing mineral claims.
- Matching of the western boundary of LMU 21 Wëdzey Tay (Fortymile Caribou Corridor) to the watercourse of the Sixty Mile River.
- Smoothing of the Scottie Creek LMU so that a spurious “spur” was removed.

Spatial data for the LMUs was also produced and distributed with improved rigour. They were developed and distributed in the now standard File Geodatabase format rather than the dated Shapefile format. This allowed more detailed explanations of the LMU boundaries to be included.

More substantive changes were made to LMU boundaries based on feedback and rethinking of the Draft Plan. Examples of these types of more planning-related boundary edits are shown with red stars in Figure 12, and include:

¹ LMU numbers below are from the Recommended Plan



- The extension of the eastern extent of the southern boundary of LMU 7 Wehtr'e (Antimony) south to meet LMU 9 Clear Creek: this was to include important habitat for the Clear Planning Creek Caribou Herd into LMU 7 Wehtr'e (Antimony) which already had a caribou-focused management intent.
- Southern expansion of LMU 10 Tintina Trench across the Klondike Highway to address conservation interests there.

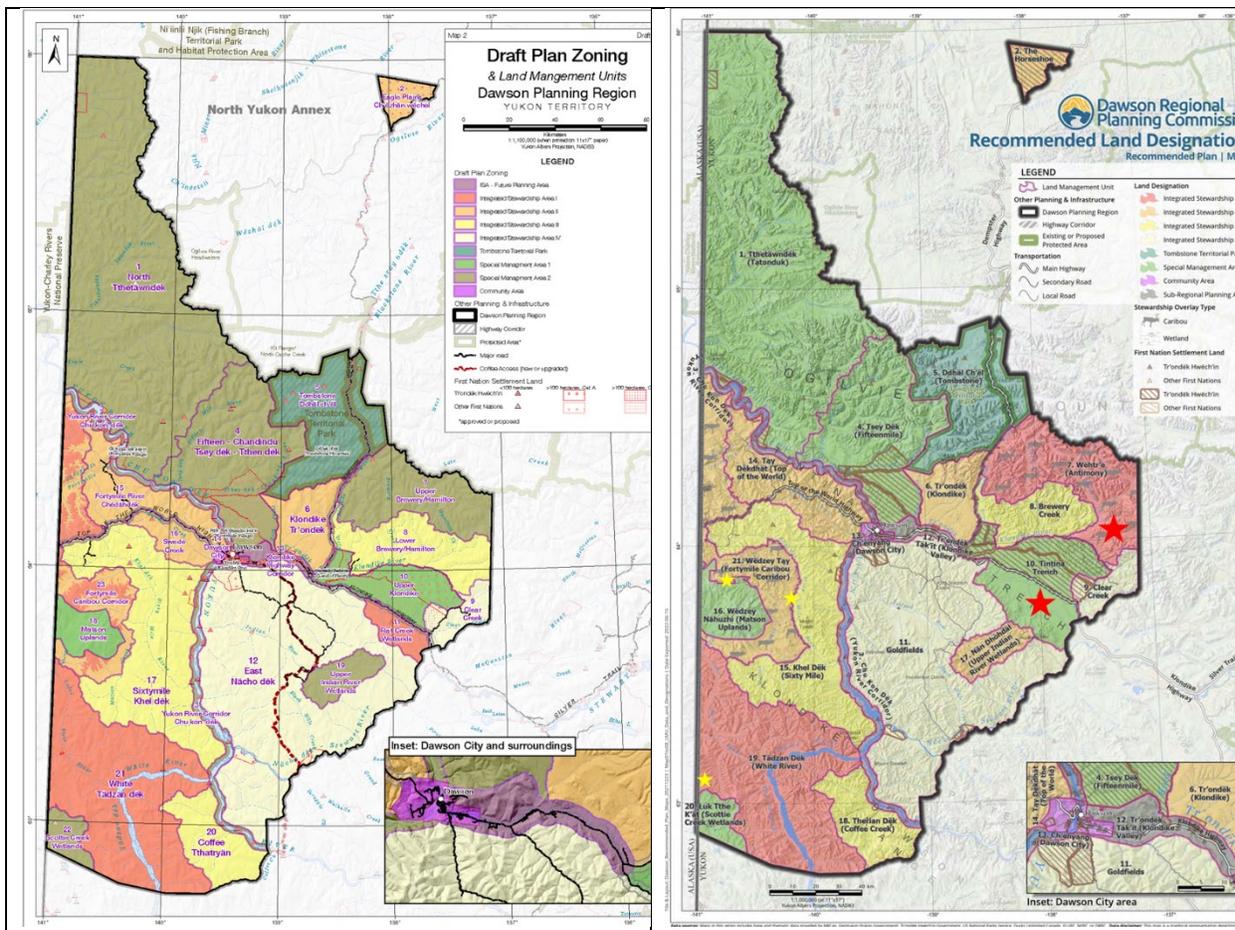


Figure 12 Map 2 from the Draft Plan (left) and Recommended Plan (right). They both show LMUs with purple boundaries. Draft Plan LMUs shaded as green or olive were released first to the Parties in “Module 1”. Red stars show examples of substantive planning-related boundary edits, while yellow stars show examples of more technical boundary edits.

WHAT DID WE LEARN?

- Increased technical rigour in the drawing of LMU boundaries, especially for LMUs that will require and order-in-council, will assist future management and planning processes..
- Detailed explanations of the LMU boundaries should be included in the attributes of LMUs in the map files.



- LMU boundaries should be developed, when possible and appropriate, using the following current data sources:
 - Surveyed features (e.g., land selections, mineral claims).
 - CanVec water polygons at 1:50,000 scale (or a consistent buffer distance from them).
 - CanVec water and road lines at 1:50,000 scale (or a consistent buffer distance from them).
 - National Hydro Network (NHN) work units/watersheds: these work units are relatively coarse and don't show smaller sub-basins. Watershed boundaries derived from a digital elevation model (DEM) may offer better resolution in some areas but unfortunately may not be acceptable for referencing in legal descriptions.
 - Heights of land – not a specific data source but using CANVEC contours or DEM (digital elevation model) and minimal line segments might achieve a simple legal description.
- A strictly elevation based LMU boundary was not widely supported.
- A modular approach to developing regional plans is an effective way to use all available time to write the plan, while allowing the Parties enough time to implement Order-In-Councils/land withdrawals prior to public release.

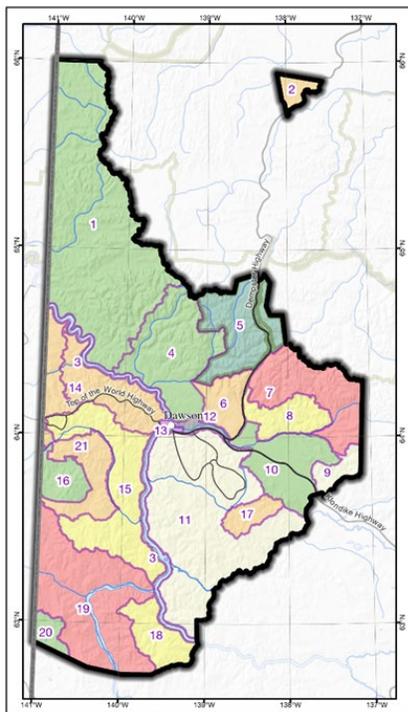


Figure 13 Map showing the Recommended Plan's 21 LMUs. The different colours indicate the Land Designations (Special Management Areas, and Integrated Stewardship Areas 1-4).



SECTION 11 - SPECIAL MANAGEMENT AREAS (SMA)

OVERVIEW

A Special Management Area (SMA) is a conservation area identified and established within a Traditional Territory of a Yukon First Nation under Chapter 10 of a First Nation Final Agreement (FNFA) that includes both settlement land and public land. **Section 3.2.2** of the Recommended Plan provides further details about SMAs generally and **Section 6** provides specific recommended direction for SMA management. This section seeks to explain some of the steps and processes that the Commission used to make decisions about SMAs and how the SMAs evolved from Draft Plan to Recommended Plan.

METHOD & WHAT WORKED WELL

Draft Plan

Rather than formalized targets for conservation, the Commission had identified priority criteria for the identification of candidate conservation areas (see section 1.6.2.5 Priority Criteria for Candidate Conservation Areas in the Draft Plan, 2021). These priorities were.

- Fish and wildlife habitat
- Water
- Wetlands
- Ecosystem representation
- Landscape connectivity
- Heritage, social and cultural values
- Heritage resources and sites
- Harvesting rights and activities.

The Commission made decisions about identifying SMA 1 and SMA 2 candidate areas by considering the above priorities with the available information for the region. The Commission did not use software with data inputs to determine the candidate conservation areas for the Draft Plan (i.e. for example [Marxan](#)). The information that informed the decisions at the Draft Plan stage were traditional and local knowledge, the Resource Assessment Report (2020c), public input from engagement sessions, conservation priority assessments from the Parties, Technical Working Group (TWG), and other data sources including submissions from stakeholders and academic literature.

The Commission went through facilitated exercises that involved mapping, discussion, and decisions through consensus to finalize the SMA 1 and SMA 2 areas that were to be included in the Draft Plan.

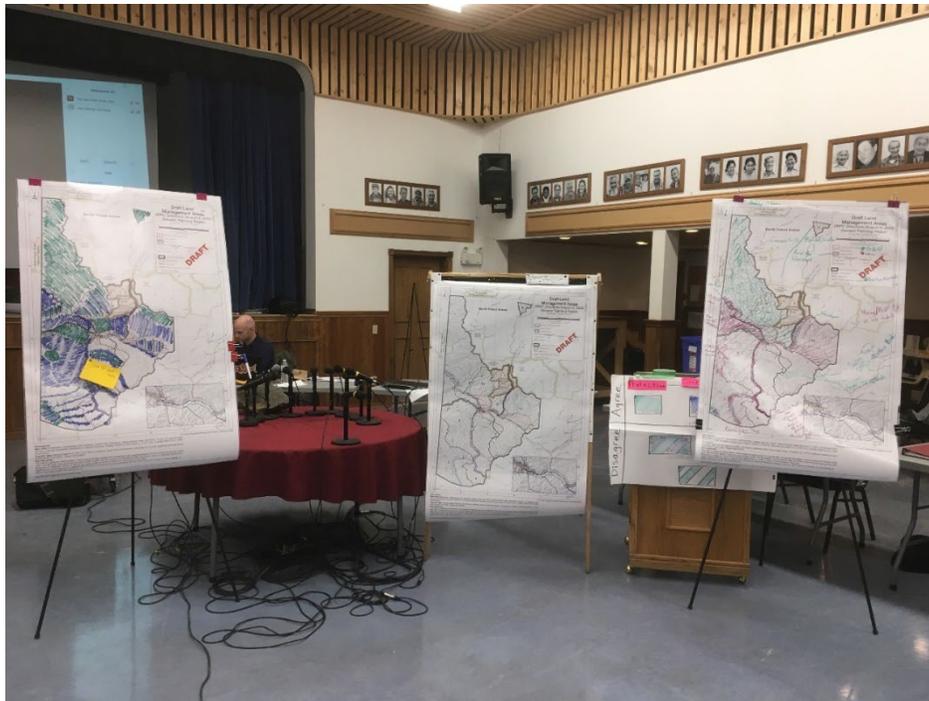


Image 12 Commission participated in a facilitated SMA mapping exercise October 2020

Special Management Area Categories 1 & 2

The purpose of the Land Use Designation System was to describe the management intent of each Land Management Unit (LMU). The Special Management Area designation or 'zone' was broken into two categories SMA 1 and SMA 2. These are described in full in the Draft Plan Section 3.2.1, but ultimately, they were both areas of high conservation value and a recommendation for permanent or interim withdrawal of mineral staking. The main difference is that SMA 2 was not intended to be legally designated as a protected area at the time of the Draft Plan (see 'What did we learn?' section below). The Commission put a 'call-out' box in the Draft plan specifically asking for feedback on this land designation.

Special Management Area II

Given what is stated above regarding the Commission's intent for the SMA II land designation, we would like to engage with the community and plan partners to hear your thoughts on this land designation.

How do you feel we should approach these areas in the Recommended Plan?

Share your thoughts with us...

Visit our [Engage Dawson](#) website to let us know what you think.

Image 13 'call-out' box from p.30 of DRPC Draft Plan (2021)



The general consensus from the Draft Plan feedback was that SMA 2 category did not work. Many people and organizations were concerned that the SMA 2 designation did not offer enough protection and therefore it was not an effective tool to achieve protection objectives. Many people also found that they lacked clarity and were confusing. See the *DRPC In Your Words Report (DRPC 2022c)* for further discussion.

After the Draft Plan engagement, the Commission decided that they would do away with the SMA 2 category and sought to find a different solution for the Recommended Plan for the high conservation priority areas.

Recommended Plan

Through using the **key decision-making tools** described in **Section 9 – From Draft Plan to Recommended Plan** of this report the Commission considered all the LMUs again. The Commission spent many hours in working sessions analyzing each LMU and reconsidering its designation. Decisions were made to either change existing SMA 2 LMUs to a single category Special Management Area (SMA) or to allocate it as an Integrated Stewardship Area (ISA). In some instances, a new ‘stewardship overlay’ was applied to an LMU to highlight a specific value. See table below for a summary of the changes that were made.

Stewardship Areas

In some instances where an LMU had a high ecological value, but was designated as an ISA, the Commission decided to ‘overlay’ a stewardship area status on it rather than recommend it be an SMA [LMU 7: Wehtr’e (Antimony), LMU 17: Nän Dhòhdäl (Upper Indian River Wetlands), and LMU 21 Wëdzy Tay (Fortymile Caribou Corridor)]. The rationale for this decision was to signal that the LMU has a high ecological value (wetlands or caribou) and that a higher standard of care/management must be taken if development is to proceed in the area. See the direction set out in Section 6 of the Recommended Plan for each LMU, and Section 3.2.4.



Table 2 Table showing land designations for SMA 1 and SMA 2 from Draft Plan to Recommended Plan

Draft Plan	Designation	Recommended Plan	Designation
LMU 5: North	SMA 2	LMU 1: Tthetäwndëk (Tatonduk)	SMA
LMU 3:Yukon River - Chu Kon Dëk	SMA 2	LMU 3: Chu Kon Dëk (Yukon River Corridor)	Future Planning Area
LMU 4: Fifteen/chandindu – tsey dëk/tthen dëk	SMA 2	LMU 4: Tsey Dëk (Fifteenmile)	SMA
LMU 5: Tombstone	n/a	LMU 5: Ddhäl Ch’ël (Tombstone)	SMA
LMU 7: Upper Brewery/Hamilton	SMA 2	LMU 7: Wehtr’e (Antimony)	ISA 1 *Caribou Stewardship Area
LMU 10: Upper Klondike	SMA 1	LMU 9: Tintina Trench <i>(Commission combined LMU 10 and LMU 11: Flat Creek Wetlands)</i>	SMA
LMU 18: Matson Uplands	SMA 1	LMU 16: Wëdzey Nähuzhi (Matson Uplands)	SMA
LMU 19:Upper Indian River Wetlands	SMA 2	LMU 17: Nän Dhòhdäl (Upper Indian River Wetlands)	ISA 2* Wetland Stewardship Area
LMU 22: Scottie Creek Wetlands	SMA 2	LMU 20: Łuk Tthe K’ät (Scottie Creek Wetlands)	SMA



Interim Withdrawals

Draft Plan

Figure 14 Excerpt from OIC for Dawson Region (O.I.C. 2022/160)

ORDER PROHIBITING ENTRY ON CERTAIN LANDS IN YUKON (RECOMMENDED DAWSON REGIONAL LAND USE PLAN)	
1	Purpose
	The purpose of this Order is to prohibit entry on lands within the areas described in Schedule 1 and shown in Schedule 2, being areas within the Dawson Planning Region, because
(a)	the described and shown lands are based on areas that are identified in the Recommended Dawson Regional Land Use Plan as conservation areas; or
(b)	prohibiting entry on the described and shown lands is required to implement the recommendation in the Plan that the lands be protected from the locating of claims or the prospecting or mining of minerals during the planning period.

The topic of interim withdrawals is a discussion that happens at a government-to-government level. The decision to make withdrawals is not a Commission decision, however, the Commission understood that they could make recommendations for areas that should be permanently or temporarily (interim) withdrawn from further mineral or oil and gas staking. Experience from the Peel Watershed planning process raised the concern of 'nuisance staking' or a rush of mineral staking in an area that might be a good candidate for protection. Ahead of the Draft Plan being released, it was important to the Commission that the areas being recommended for some sort of protection be shielded from the potential of a staking rush. There was no guarantee that these recommended areas (SMA 1 and SMA 2) would be withdrawn from mineral staking,

however, to accommodate the time needed for discussions between the Parties and the time related to creating the Order in Council (O.I.C), the Commission developed a modular approach to the Draft Plan delivery that consisted of two parts: Module 1 and Module 2.

Module 1: Consisted of the Draft Land Use Designation System and candidate areas for conservation/protection. This module was delivered in January 2021.

Module 2: Consisted of all remaining chapters of the Draft Plan. The full plan was delivered June 2021.

Recommended Plan

For each LMU in Section 6 of the Recommended Plan, Special Management Directions are set out which includes the Commissions recommendations for withdrawals of placer or quartz staking or oil and gas dispositions. While decisions are being made about the Parties' decisions to accept, modify, or reject the Recommended Plan, the Yukon Government renewed the existing interim withdrawals (with some changes to the LMU boundaries) and added or omitted additional withdrawals by O.I.C.



Specific details of the withdrawals pertaining to the Dawson Region can be found on the Government of Yukon website. <https://laws.yukon.ca/cms/index-of-regulations.html?view=article&id=204:index-of-regulations-q>

WHAT DID WE LEARN?

- The creation of the SMA 2 category was in part due to the Commission feeling like there was a lack of land management ‘tools’ available to them at the Draft Plan stage. The experience of the management of Tombstone Territorial Park, and the resulting ‘overuse’ was expressed by some Commission members and members of the community. The allocation of a SMA 2 category was an attempt to highlight the need for protection but without ‘painting a green target’ on the map that might lead to overuse of an area.
- Initially there was uncertainty among the Commission and staff surrounding the issue of existing claims and concerns surrounding ‘expropriation’ of claims, and whether claims can exist in a legislatively protected area. There are a variety of tools under Yukon legislation that provide varying levels of conservation and protection for areas identified as ecologically and culturally important. In addition, there was the option of an Indigenous Protected and Conserved Area, which had not been fully explored and understood by the Parties and Commission at the time of Draft Plan writing.



SECTION 12 - SUB-REGIONAL PLANNING AREAS

OVERVIEW

The Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Final Agreement (THFA) Section 11.8 sets direction for Sub-regional and District Land Use Plans. The Recommended Plan identifies three areas for sub-regional planning or 'Future Planning Areas' that should be jointly planned by the Parties: The Dempster Highway Corridor (Section 5.4.3.1.1), LMU 3- Chu Kon Dëk (Yukon River Corridor), and LMU 12 Tr'ondëk Täk'it (Klondike Valley). Rationale for each sub-region is explained in Section 7.4 of the Recommended Plan.

METHOD AND WHAT WORKED WELL

Dempster Highway Corridor

In the Terms of Reference (TH&YG 2019) the Commission were advised to recommend sub-regional planning for the Dempster Highway Corridor to be in line with Recommendation #10 of the Peel Watershed Regional Land Use Plan. It was understood by the Commission that the Parties wished to undertake sub-regional planning for the corridor once regional planning was complete for the regions containing the Dempster Highway. The Draft Plan and Recommended Plan provide some key issues and interests for the Parties' consideration but did not provide specific direction for the future planning.

LMU 3- Chu Kon Dëk (Yukon River Corridor)

At the Draft Plan stage this area was identified for sub-regional planning and continued to be a priority for sub-regional planning at the Recommended Plan stage. As a major river corridor, its importance to the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, the community, the territory, and the international community cannot be overstated. Section 6.3 of the Recommended Plan highlights the management and Tr'ëhudè statements, along with the values, rationale, and a three phased approach to the management of the corridor. The Commission provided recommendations for interim measures, and priorities for sub-regional planning. The Commission recognized that the territorial and cultural implications of planning this LMU exceeded what they could respectfully achieve within the scope of a regional plan. During the extensive public engagement, the Commission heard that water and salmon were incredibly important values, and thus they recommended this LMU be prioritized for planning and for it to be a sub-regional plan under Chapter 11 of the THFA.

LMU 12 Tr'ondëk Täk'it (Klondike Valley)

The Klondike Valley future planning area was designated as such due to its multi-use characteristics. This is demonstrated by the LMU illustration for this LMU. The area experiences a multitude of uses that differ significantly seasonally.

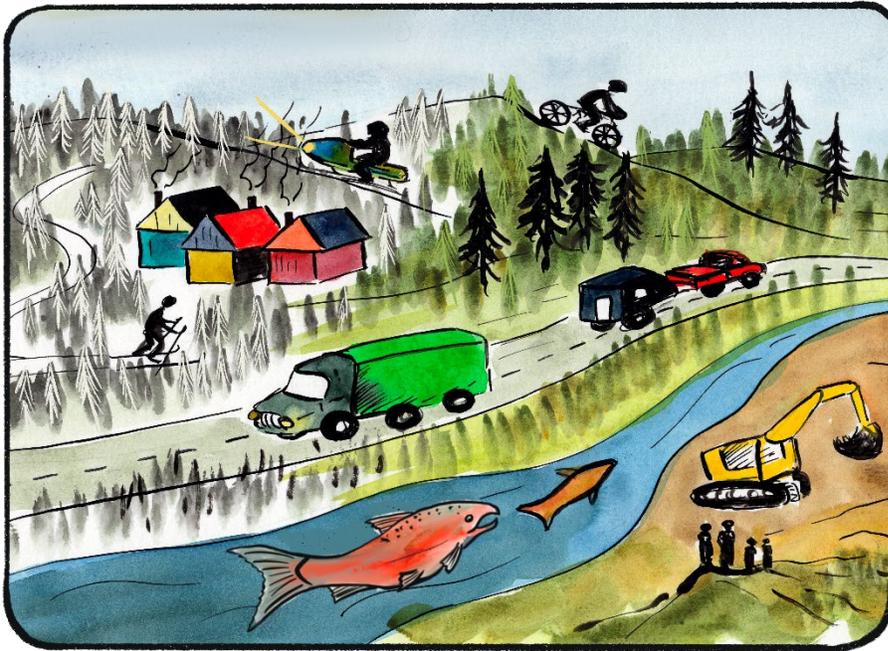


Image 14 Illustration of multiple uses within LMU 12 Tr'ondëk Täk'it (Klondike Valley)

The Commission felt that the scale of detail that is required to plan this area to ensure that the land use conflicts are minimized would require additional community consultation. Similarly, to the Chu Kon Dëk (Yukon River Corridor) LMU 3, the Commission provided intent and Trëhude statements, values, and management direction which is intended to be in place until sub-regional planning occurs.

WHAT DID WE LEARN?

- The regional planning process is lengthy and likewise the sub-regional planning processes will take some time to complete. In the Recommended Plan the Commission provided as much management direction as possible based on the best available information and what they heard during consultation to guide the management of Future Planning Areas until sub-regional planning can be completed.
- The Klondike Valley had very different characteristics than the other LMUs in the Region. It was decided that this LMU would not be included in the Cumulative Effects Framework as the existing level of surface disturbance and linear feature density indicators far exceeded the other LMUs in the region. In the case of the Klondike Valley other cumulative effects indicators may be more appropriate.



SECTION 13 - CUMULATIVE EFFECTS

OVERVIEW

Both the North Yukon and the Peel Watershed regional plans addressed cumulative effects (CE) with similar cumulative effects frameworks. The primary planning issue in the North Yukon was to balance oil and gas activity with caribou habitat. It used best available information on industrial development scenarios as well as federal caribou habitat guidelines to determine mitigative actions most able to maintain caribou habitat as well as its cumulative effects framework. The northern and western portions of the Peel Watershed region had a similar planning context, and so that plan adopted the North Yukon approach with few changes. The Dawson Region is much more economically active and diverse than the previous two regions.

When the first attempt at regional planning happened there (2010-2014), a “cumulative effects” report was drafted which attempted to forecast disturbances from four industries: oil and gas, forestry, placer mining (and exploration) and quartz (or hardrock) mining (and exploration). It used simple approaches to model development and resulting disturbances and did not attempt to link disturbances to effects on regional ecological (e.g., caribou) and socio-economic (e.g., harvesting) values. For this reason, this report would be better considered a “cumulative disturbance” report rather than a “cumulative effects” report.

When regional planning resumed in 2019, a new Commission was formed. Their new Terms of Reference specified that they update the 2014 draft cumulative effects report. The following year, the Parties requested the formation of an external “Cumulative Effects Working Group” (CEWG) to help the Commission develop concepts to address cumulative effects in the Dawson Region and write a cumulative effects report. This working group, comprised of technical experts and liaisons from Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in, the Government of Yukon (YG), Yukon Land Use Planning Council (YLUPC), and DRPC. Over the next three years, this working group developed CE concepts for consideration by the Commission.

In the fall of 2022, the Dawson Regional Planning Commission endorsed the report “Exploring the Cumulative Effects of Future Land Use in the Dawson Planning Region” (available on the [DRPC website](#)) written by several members of the CEWG with input from a diverse group of experts in Yukon mining, wildlife and cumulative effects (DRPC 2022b). That report is referred to in this section as the “CE Report” and, with the Recommended Plan, is a wealth of CE concepts, technical methodology, findings, and recommendations; this section will only summarise the methods described in that report and will focus instead on how information from that process and other sources was communicated to the DRPC and how they were used to build parts of the Draft and Recommended Plans. Keep in mind that, like the overall planning process, this process was iterative and often did not happen in a linear fashion.



The building of the Cumulative Effects Framework in the Recommended Plan was truly a collaborative effort. The framework developed incrementally and iteratively with CE concepts, ideas and options being presented to the DRPC at workshops and meetings, discussions with the Commission, and decisions by the Commission.

For more detailed information on the Cumulative Effects Framework see Section 3.6 and Section 4.0 of the Recommended Plan and visit the DRPC website to access the report *Exploring the Cumulative Effects of Future Land Use in the Dawson Planning Region (2022b)*

<https://dawson.planyukon.ca/index.php/publications/recommended-plan>

METHOD & WHAT WORKED WELL

Scenario Analysis of Surface Disturbance

A key part of the CE Report is the scenario analysis of surface disturbance. Within this analysis, various plausible descriptions of future land uses were used to understand the potential patterns of future disturbance on the landscape. We used software expressly designed for this purpose ([ALCES](#), 2017) to carry out these scenario analyses. We started developing these analyses early in the process to satisfy the requirements of the Commission's terms of reference.

We used scenario analysis to forecast high and low growth of the mining sectors (quartz and placer mining and mineral exploration) as these are the main drivers of human activity and landscape change in the Dawson planning area. We interviewed quartz mining and placer mining experts in Yukon Government to find out how we could estimate the extent and rough location of industrial activity from 2020-2040. These details were put into ALCES to build plausible scenarios on top of maps of existing disturbances. The placer and quartz scenarios were evaluated separately during their development, but their results were pooled together prior to being considered by the Commission and others.

At the beginning of the project, we used best available, but dated, disturbance maps mostly from 2010. From these maps, ALCES generated draft results showing how much linear and surface disturbance could be expected in each of the Draft Plan's Land Management Units (LMUs) under high and low scenarios for four moments in time or 'timeslices': 2010 (baseline), 2020 (extrapolated current condition), 2030, and 2040. Some of these interim results are shown below (Figure 15, Figure 16, Figure 17) and are examples of some of the ways results were communicated to the Commission.

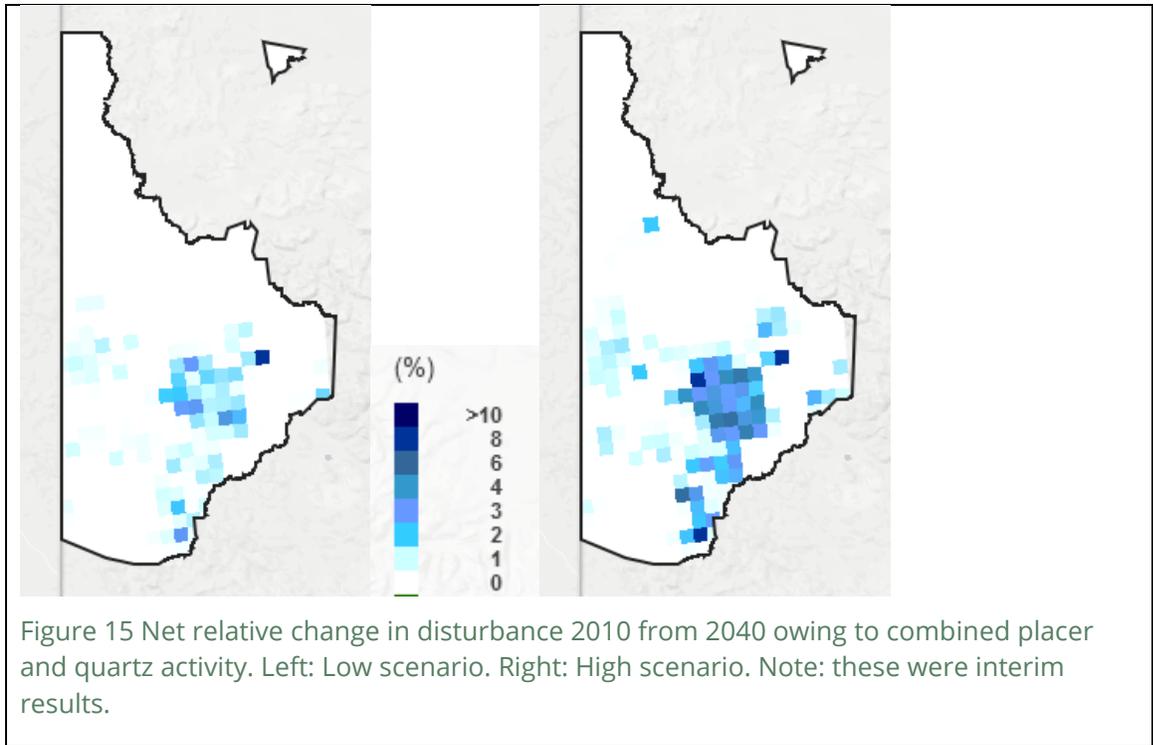


Figure 15 Net relative change in disturbance 2010 from 2040 owing to combined placer and quartz activity. Left: Low scenario. Right: High scenario. Note: these were interim results.

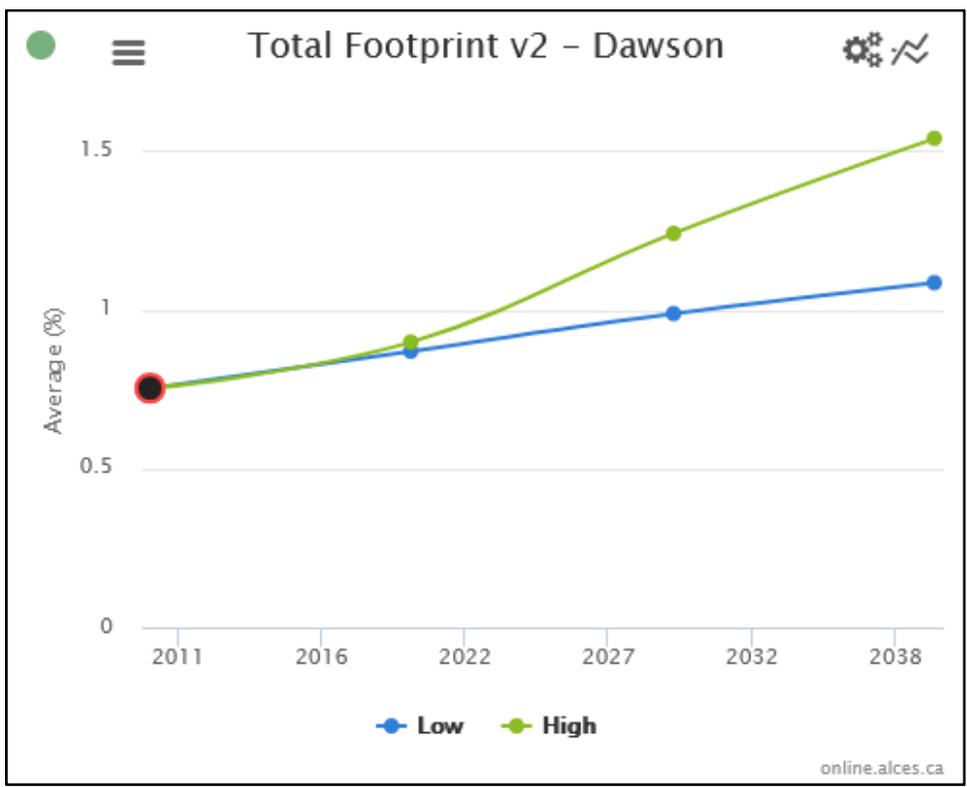


Figure 16 Net change in surface disturbance from 2010 to 2040 owing to combined placer and quartz activity. Note: these were interim results.

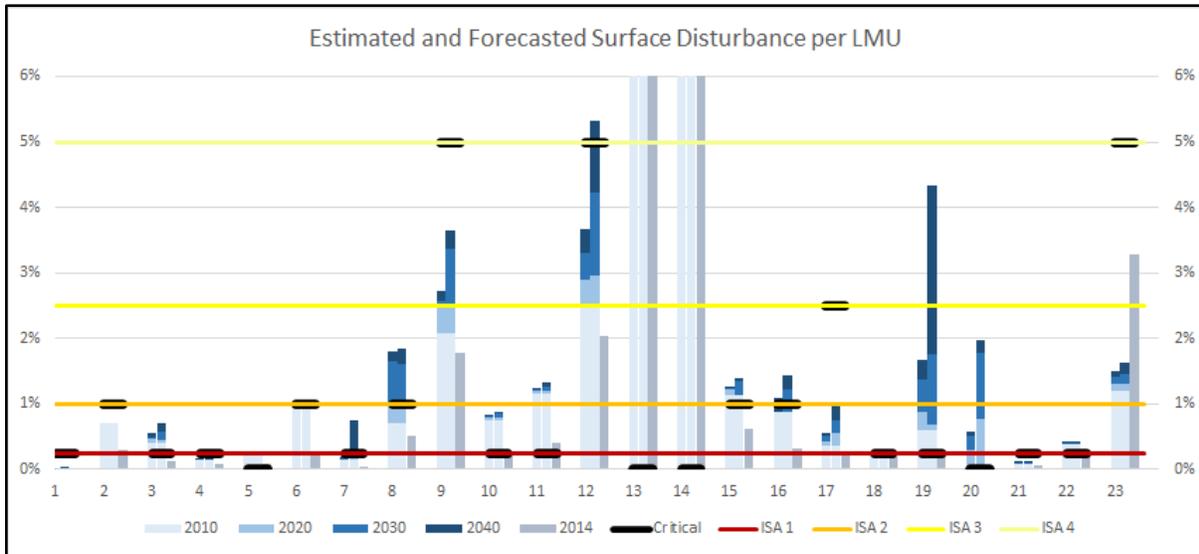


Figure 17 Net change in surface disturbance from 2010 to 2040 owing to combined placer and quartz activity per LMU. Note: these were interim results.

To help the Commission and public visualize disturbance levels, they were shown images from the region and elsewhere. For example, they were shown hexagons of satellite photos of various parts of the Dawson landscape overlaid with disturbance mapping as in Figure 18 below.

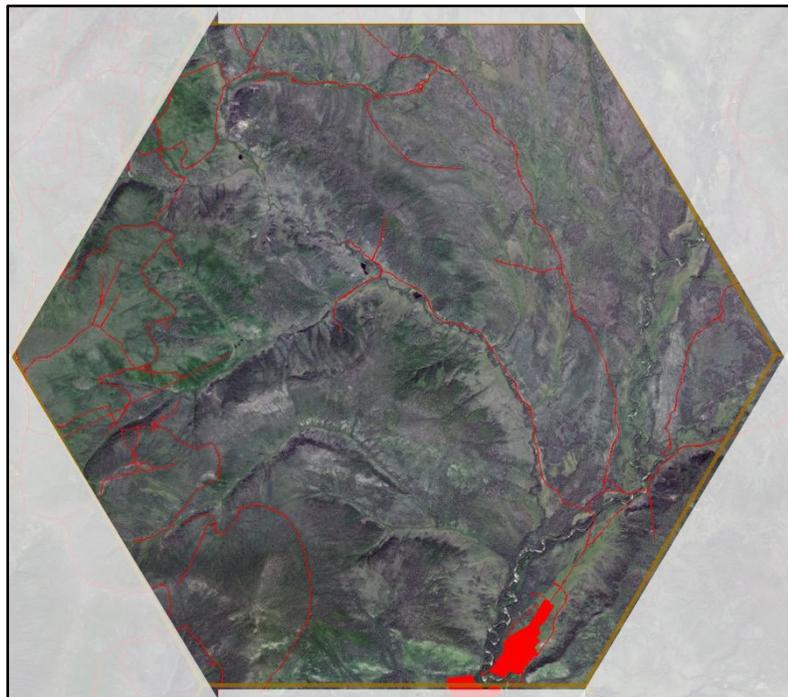


Figure 18 A hexagon representing a patch of the Dawson landscape with 1% disturbance, shown in red. There are 10km between opposite points of the hexagon.



Leading up to the Recommended Plan, YG provided updated disturbance data interpreted from SPOT imagery (1.5m pixel size) captured in 2020. These data were used to update all scenarios yielding three time slices: 2020 (current baseline), 2030 and 2040.

Values

The work described above assessed the cumulative *disturbance* in the Dawson region over the next 20 years. A cumulative effects assessment needs to consider *effects* of human activities on regional *values* in the past, present and potential future. With the help of the CEWG, the DRPC used their plan goals to focus on key values. They also explored if these values may vary across the region, and therefore if their indicators (and/or management thresholds) should vary geographically (Figure 19 below).

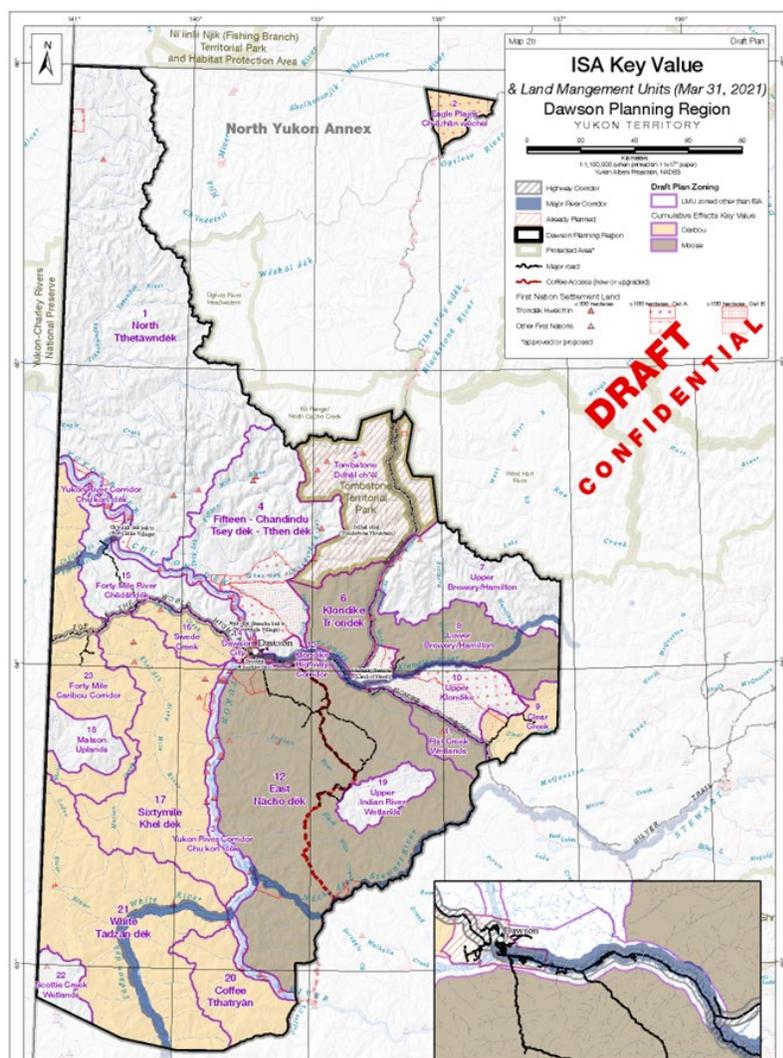


Figure 19 LMUs from an early draft of the Draft Plan (March 2021). LMUs are themed by their cumulative effects key value (caribou in orange and moose in brown). This map was created from an exercise on linking CE indicators to regional values but was ultimately not used for the Cumulative Effects Framework in the Recommended Plan.

The Commission recognised that there are many values in the Dawson Region but focused their attention on the ecological value of caribou, the socio-cultural value of harvest, socio-economic value of wellbeing, and the economic value of mining. The CEWG also helped the DRPC consider values-based reclamation.

Linking Values to Indicators

The CEWG came up with lists of potential indicators that could be used to measure and assess the condition of the values, infer impacts on them, and if necessary, trigger new management action. The CEWG and the Commission evaluated the practicality and relevance of each. The Commission recognized that most needed more data and research and therefore



focussed on two indicators of caribou habitat (and other values) that have sufficient data and understanding in the Yukon: surface disturbance and linear feature density. Unlike the North Yukon and Peel Watershed plans, it was decided that the surface area of linear features would not contribute to the overall surface disturbance indicator. This is because the satellite imagery typically used to map disturbances cannot reliably be used to determine the width of linear features. The width of linear features is necessary to calculate their surface area.

The Commission was interested in using ALCES to explore how caribou habitat or populations could be affected by cumulative disturbance. Such modelled interactions would better inform their selection of management thresholds. CEWG worked with wildlife and modelling experts to adapt recently developed Fortymile caribou herd habitat use models so they could be brought into ALCES. Unfortunately, the habitat use models were linked to mineral claims and not disturbance and so they could not be linked to the disturbance scenarios in ALCES.

In the absence of explicit linking of values and modelled disturbances, the CEWG showed the Commission several maps of with disturbances modelled to 2040 overlaid by caribou range use maps (Figure 20, below).

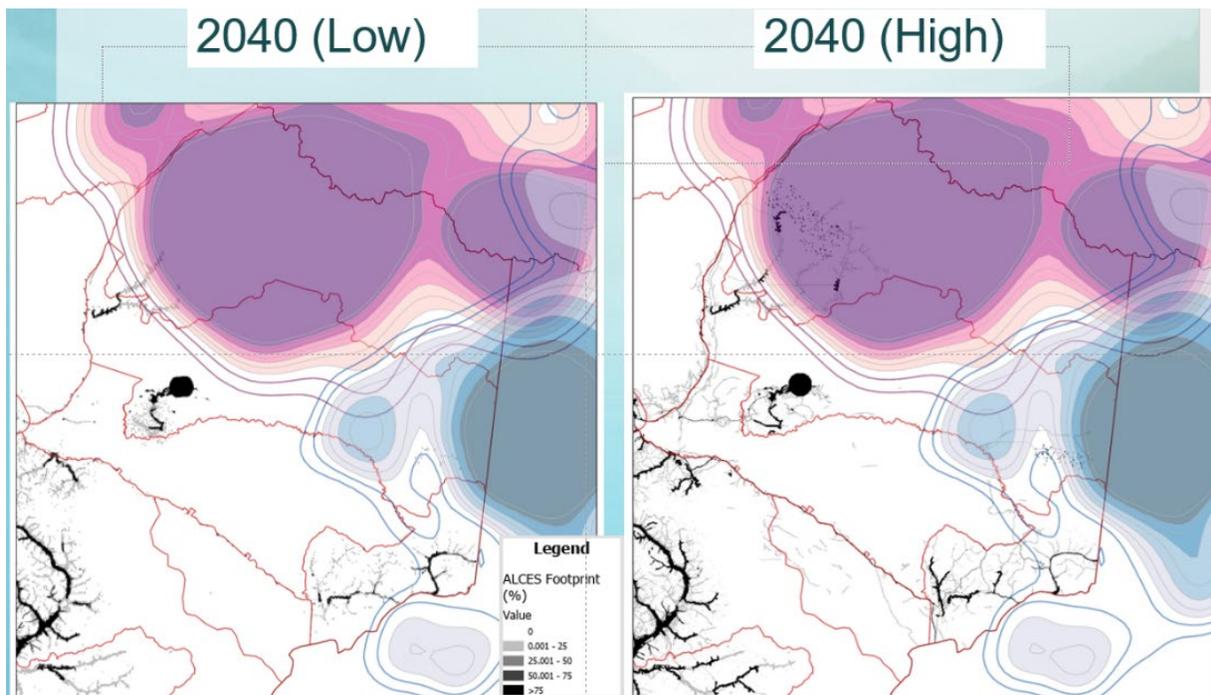


Figure 20 Northern Mountain Caribou herds range use maps and modeled disturbances. Maps like this were shown to the Commission by the regional biologist.

Thresholds

The Commission's decisions about management thresholds were iterative and informed by the surface disturbance data, the high and low scenarios (placer and quartz combined),



local and traditional knowledge held by the commission, input from public, stakeholders and Parties (on the Draft Plan and from a cumulative effects workshop), and academic literature relating to select values (caribou and moose), as discussed above. Decisions were not informed by modelled effects of disturbances on values. For most LMUs, the Commission set thresholds so that there was enough disturbance “room” to accommodate some continued development, with the amount of “room” based on all the considerations above.

Engagement on the Cumulative Effects Framework

The Commission recognized that there were unanswered questions regarding the cumulative effects framework (CEF) in the Draft Plan and therefore included some focussed questions to the readers. A similar approach was used by the North Yukon Planning Commission in their Draft Plan. These questions were also included in the on-line survey and on the Commission’s website.

The Draft Plan asked questions around the theme of “What counts as disturbed and as recovered?”

The Plan also suggested research of other possible indicators. Feedback was compiled with all the Draft Plan feedback in the *In Your Words Report: Draft Regional Land Use Plan Engagement & Feedback (DRPC 2022c)*.

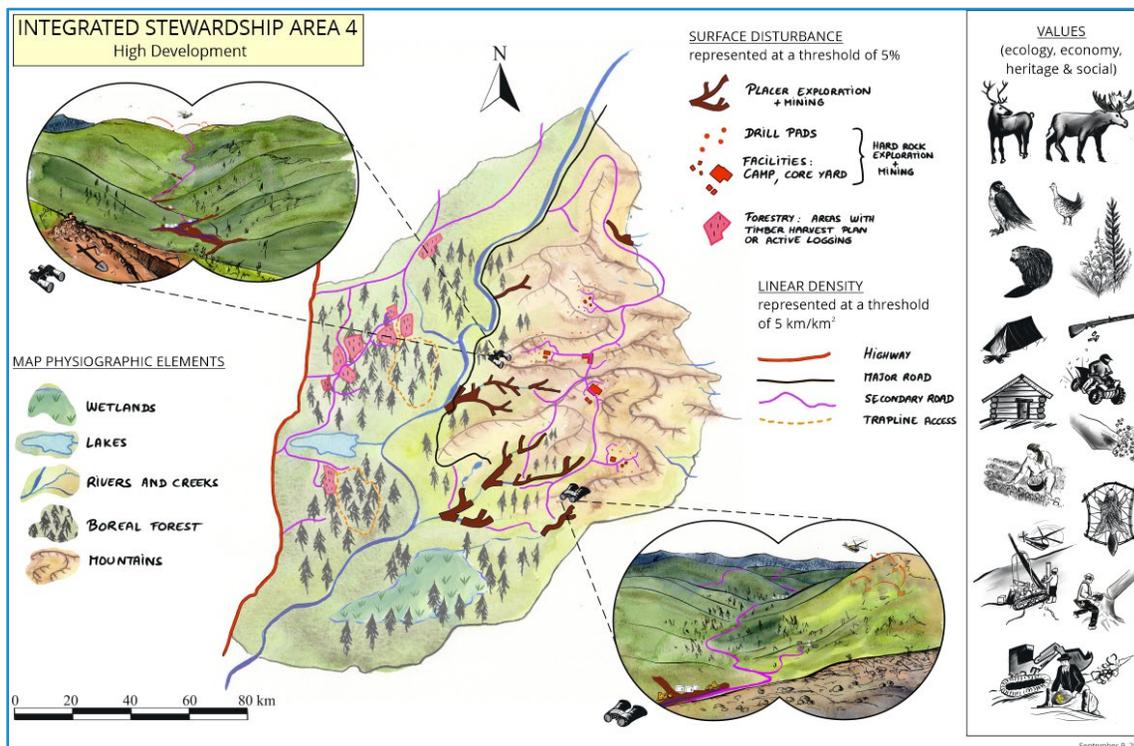


Figure 21 An example of an illustration used to convey values, and disturbances from several angles. This illustration shows a hypothetical Land Management Unit zoned as Integrated Stewardship Area 4 (high development).



Cumulative Effects Framework Workshop (fall 2021)

One of the many activities during Commission's public engagement on their Draft Plan was hosting a two-day facilitated workshop focussed on how cumulative effects were addressed in the Draft Plan, and how the plan could be improved. Over twenty people with an interest in cumulative effects in the Dawson Region attended the workshop, including planning staff of the DRPC & YLUPC, experts from Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in and YG, representatives from industry and environmental organizations, representatives from other boards and an independent researcher.

After an initial discussion of the context and content of the Draft Plan, there were break-out groups that had focused discussions on:

- management objectives (caribou, moose, salmon, water, others);
- indicators: linking to values, challenges and opportunities;
- management tools specific to caribou, moose, water; and
- roles – current and potential.

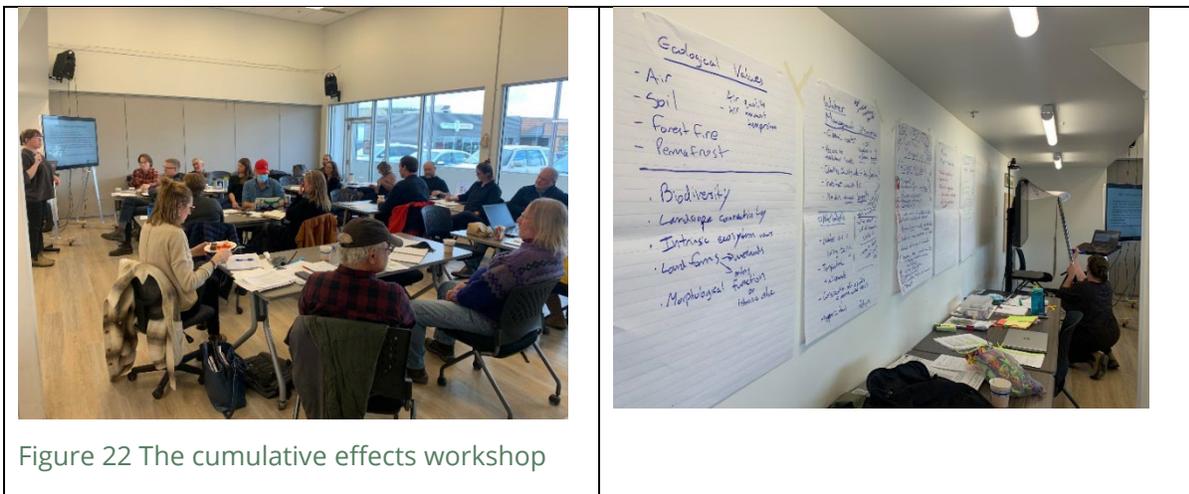


Figure 22 The cumulative effects workshop

Though the aim of the workshop was to have focused discussions, there were a few short presentations and some posters that communicated related concepts. One poster included illustrations that communicated complex concepts in a very relatable way, see Figure 21.

Other Draft Plan Engagement Events

The Commission hosted many events where they consulted on their Draft Plan (August – mid-November 2020). Cumulative effects concepts were discussed at most of these events.

Putting it all together in the Recommended Plan

Following the Draft Plan consultation, the Commission staff summarised input they received that pertained to all aspects of the Cumulative Effects Framework. Then the Commission, with their staff and the CEWG, went through the feedback and attempted to improve on the Draft Plan by better addressing the following in their Recommended Plan:



1. Defining what measures are undertaken when precautionary, cautionary, and critical thresholds are exceeded.
2. Selecting the indicators
 - o Considering additional cumulative effects indicators (e.g., water quality, socio-cultural, economic).
3. Indicator levels
 - o Adjusting the levels of the surface disturbance threshold by LMU or by Integrated Stewardship Area (ISA) class.
 - o Adjusting the levels of the linear density thresholds by LMU or by ISA class.
 - o Linking the indicators to objectives and values.
4. Measurement
 - o Defining when land can be considered reclaimed, restored and recovered.
 - o Determining whether natural disturbances should be considered in the framework.

Not all the topics above were able to be included in the Recommended Plan.

Cumulative Effects Communication Supporting the Recommended Plan

In addition to the descriptive text in the Draft and Recommended Plans and the CE Report, CE concepts and questions were communicated to the public in several ways. Illustrations like that in Figure 21 were included in the Recommended Plan. The Plan was also published in two other less technical formats. Both the *Illustrated Summary* and the *Summary* provide illustrations depicting the vision for each Land Management Unit – these typically graphically show elements of cumulative effects or disturbance. See Figure 23 for an example.



Figure 23 An example of an illustration used to convey the Commission's vision for an LMU, in this case LMU 15 Khel Dëk (Sixty Mile). It shows regional values and activities like caribou, time on land, placer mining and transportation, and invites the viewer to think about cumulative effects.



Cumulative Effects Webpages

Shortly after the Recommended Plan was published, the Commission (with the YLUPC) developed several webpages designed make the cumulative effects framework more accessible. Key cumulative effects concepts from the Recommended Plan were compiled into one webpage: dawson.planyukon.ca/index.php/the-dawson-region/r lup/rlup-cef. Definitions, descriptions, examples and tables were provided in as plain language as possible. One difference from the Recommended Plan was that current and threshold amounts of the two indicators were shown in what we called “on the ground” units that we hoped were more understandable for project-level decisions. Instead of conveying linear disturbance levels as a density (*i.e.*, km/km²), they are shown as outright distances (*i.e.*, km), something we hoped more people would relate to. Similarly, surface disturbance was shown by area (*i.e.*, km²), rather than percentage of area. Another table showed the results of the disturbance scenarios (at year 2040) in relative amounts.

An interactive GIS/map was also published (<https://dawson.planyukon.ca/index.php/the-dawson-region/interactive-map-article>) that allowed users to pan and zoom around the Region and click on each LMU. This clicking brought the user to a page showing Plan visions directions for the LMU (including an image similar to the one above) and cumulative effects indicators and thresholds for that LMU. Unlike the Recommended Plan, this page showed an estimate of how much “room” was left under the cautionary threshold. These pages were meant to be a demonstration of an information portal that could be used by proponents, assessors and regulators when considering plan conformity.

WHAT DID WE LEARN?

The development of the cumulative effects concepts in the Recommended Plan was long and complex, with several learnings along the way.

- **Early Start:** A cumulative effects report and disturbance data were not provided to the Commission until after they produced their Draft Plan. This was due to the significant amount of time and effort it takes to assess and model cumulative effects (and disturbance). Because planning is iterative and because commissions are independent and may identify priorities and focal values somewhat independently, it may be unreasonable to present regional cumulative effects reports to commissions without any of their input. However, a cumulative effects working group may be established ahead of a commission to develop disturbance scenarios and lay much of the groundwork for a Cumulative Effects Framework (CEF).
- **Terms of References:** The terms of reference for the Commission asked them to review and endorse a cumulative effects report, which was also listed in the terms of reference as one of their products. A possible solution to this could be that future commission terms of reference should not ask commissions to produce cumulative effects assessments but could ask that a CEF be included in their plans.



- Conversely, the terms of reference for a cumulative effects working group should clearly define required outcomes and specify as clearly as possible the regional values to be considered.
- **ALCES:** ALCES is a powerful tool for defensibly forecasting disturbance and effects. However, it is complicated and difficult to use. Yukon Government purchased an ALCES license for this project that included significant contractor support from the provider. Yukon Government was also able to share access to ALCES with commission staff. This model was key to getting results and communicating them.
- Future planning processes should consider using ALCES; however, it may overcomplicate processes for regions with simple and predictable planning issues.
- Where possible, studies on regional values (in the case of Dawson, the Fortymile Caribou Herd) should be designed to integrate with disturbance scenarios being developed in ALCES. This way, ALCES can be fully used to provide cumulative *effects analyses* rather than cumulative *disturbance scenarios*.

There were also several successes while cumulative effects concepts were being developed.

- **Disturbance scenarios:** The disturbance scenarios developed using ALCES provided the Commission with a defensible range of future disturbance levels under a status quo regulatory regime (e.g., no regional plan). This gave the Commission a starting point for their determination of socially acceptable levels of change.
- **Visual communication:** Visual aids were used for much of the process to communicate concepts to the Commission and to the public and plan partners.
- **Website:** New concepts and threshold levels for each LMU were communicated with dedicated webpages.
- **Cumulative Effects Working Group:** A working group with knowledgeable representatives from each Party (and the Commission and YLUPC) allowed for a broader range of perspectives and expertise to shape the Cumulative Effects Framework. It also improved communication and understanding of concepts to each Party, hopefully improving their buy-in.
- **Independent review:** The YLUPC contracted Stantec Architecture Ltd. to provide an independent review of the Recommended Plan. George Hegmann, a preeminent Canadian expert in cumulative effects, was on Stantec's review committee. The review found that, like CEFs in general, the CEF in the Recommended Plan would take resources and effort to implement and would require refinement over time. It went on to state:

The CEF reflects the most advanced design of such an initiative in Canada...



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