



Interim Land Withdrawal in the Dawson Planning Region

On March 12, 2021, the Government of Yukon announced that certain lands within the Dawson planning region have been temporarily withdrawn from mineral staking.

“The Dawson Regional Planning Commission is encouraged by the decision made by Government of Yukon to take this initial step of temporarily withdrawing some of the lands in the planning region,” said Commission Chair Debbie Nagano.

“These areas were based in part on lands identified by the Commission as having high conservation values and we support this move to recognize and protect some key areas within the region during the planning process,” Nagano added.

The planning process for the Dawson region was initiated in 2011 with the establishment of the Dawson Regional Planning Commission. The Commission operated until 2014, when legal proceedings regarding the Peel Watershed began. The process was suspended until those legal proceedings were resolved.

In 2018, Yukon and Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in governments resumed the process and re-established a new Commission in early 2019.

In February 2020, the Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in government requested the Commission to recommend the immediate withdrawal of lands in the Dawson planning region from mineral staking until the Dawson Regional Land Use Plan has been approved.

“The members determined that since the Commission is an independent body, it should not have a role in issuing any decisions regarding interim land withdrawals,” said Nagano. “However, our members agreed that the Commission could recommend candidate conservation lands to be considered for interim withdrawal.”

“While the interim withdrawal does not include all the high value conservation areas identified by the Commission, this is a good first step,” she said.

The Commission advised the Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in and Yukon governments that decisions on any potential interim land withdrawals should be the responsibility of those two Parties and encouraged both to work together to quickly resolve the matter and find common ground.

Earlier this year, the Commission provided the Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in and Yukon governments with the first part of the Draft Plan to assist them in their discussions on potential interim land withdrawals. This initial partial submission consisted of the draft

land use designation system and conservation areas for consideration in the planning region. It was submitted to the Parties in confidence in February 2021.

The Commission plans to deliver the full Draft Plan submission with all remaining draft recommendations to the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in and Yukon governments and the public later this spring.

The Commission will launch a comprehensive public engagement process on the Draft Plan after its release.

“We are looking forward to this next phase of the planning journey and listening to ideas and comments on this initial Draft Plan,” said Nagano. “We will be asking people to evaluate the ideas and options in the Draft Plan to ensure we balance present and future values, and we will seriously consider that feedback.”

The Commission will consider all public input on the initial Draft Plan before it submits a Recommended Plan.

More information about how and when people can participate in the public engagement process will be made available this spring.

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