



April 23, 2025

Bob Head
Manager
Digaa Enterprises Ltd.
FORT PROVIDENCE NT X0E 0L0
bobhead@northwestel.net

Dear Bob Head,

Status of Approval Conditions for the Wildlife Management and Monitoring Plan for Digaa Enterprises Ltd. Timber Harvesting

In a letter dated July 13, 2022, the Department of Environment and Climate Change (ECC), informed Digaa Enterprises Ltd. (Digaa) that they were required under section 95 of the *Wildlife Act* to submit a Wildlife Management and Monitoring Plan (WMMP) for approval by the Minister.

On June 5, 2023 Digaa submitted a WMMP to ECC, and subsequently, a [public review](#)¹ of the document was initiated on August 4, 2023. Digaa submitted their responses to reviewer comments and an updated version of the WMMP to the Online Review System on October 20, 2023.

ECC approved the WMMP on June 24, 2024, with four conditions. Digaa resubmitted their WMMP on March 24, 2025, with changes to address the conditional approval letter. The Department has reviewed the final WMMP and considered the comments on the publicly reviewed version, Digaa's responses to those comments and recommendations, and relevant correspondence.

This letter is to notify Digaa that three out of four approval conditions have been satisfied as outlined in Attachment 1. As per Attachment 1, the outstanding approval condition will need to be addressed by June 30, 2025.

.../2

¹ <https://new.onlinereviewsystem.ca/review/A14F0DCB-DE2F-EE11-B8F0-002248AECD04>

-2-

Please contact Pete Cott, Manager, Habitat and Environment, at (867)767-9237 extension 53125 or by email at pete_cott@gov.nt.ca if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Jenkins".

Robert Jenkins
Deputy Minister
Environment and Climate Change

Attachment

c. Distribution list

Distribution List:

Honourable R.J. Simpson
Premier

Grand Chief Herb Norwegian
Dehcho First Nations

Chief Michael Vandell
Deh Gáh Got'îê First Nation

President Clifford McLeod
Fort Providence Métis Council

Acting President Cheryl Sibbeston
The Métis Association Local 52 – Fort
Simpson, N.W.T.

Chief Kele Antoine
Łíídlų Kúé First Nation

Chief Lloyd Chicot
Ka'a'gee Tu First Nation

Chief Lucille Lafferty
West Point First Nation

Chief Melania Norwegian-Menacho
Jean Marie River (Tthets'éhk'edélí) First
Nation

Chief Dolphus Jumbo
Sambaa K'e First Nation

Chief Jesse Nekenyia-Moses
Pehdzéh Kí First Nation

Chief Elaine Auger
Kátł'odeeche First Nation

President Marc Whitford
North Slave Métis Alliance President

President Garry Bailey
Northwest Territory Métis Nation

President Trevor Beck
Hay River Métis Government Council

Honourable Jay Macdonald
Minister
Environment and Climate Change

Kyla Kakfwi-Scott
Chief of Staff

Dr. Joe Dragon
Senior Envoy to the Government of Canada

John MacDonald
Secretary to Cabinet/Deputy Minister
Executive and Indigenous Affairs

Shawn McCann
Deputy Secretary, Indigenous and
Intergovernmental Affairs
Executive and Indigenous Affairs

Brett Elkin
Assistant Deputy Minister, Wildlife and
Forest Management
Environment and Climate Change

Alison de Pelham
Executive Director
Dehcho First Nations

Greg Nyuli
Executive Director
Deh Gáh Got'îê First Nation

Pearl Leishman
Executive Director
Fort Providence Métis Council

VACANT
Finance Officer
The Métis Association Local 52 – Fort
Simpson, N.W.T.

Derek Squirrel
Executive Director
Łíídlų Kúé First Nation

Ruby Simba
Council Manager
Ka'a'gee Tu First Nation

Wendy Ross
Band Manager
West Point First Nation

Tammy Neal
Interim Senior Administrative Officer
Jean Marie River (Tthets'éhk'edélî) First
Nation

Ruby Jumbo
Band Manager
Sambaa K'e First Nation

Derek Sutherland
Band Manager
Pehdzéh Kí First Nation

Memory Murefu
Chief Executive Officer
Kátł'odeeche First Nation

Peter Redvers
Director of Lands, Resources and
Negotiations
Kátł'odeeche First Nation

Alan Harman Jr.
Vice President
North Slave Métis Alliance

Debra Young
Administrative Assistant
North Slave Métis Alliance

Ursula Vogt
Executive Director
Northwest Territory Métis Nation

Jennifer Larocque
Executive Assistant
Hay River Métis Government Council

John Bartlett
Consultant
JC Bartlett and Associates Ltd.

Heather Sayine-Crawford
Director, Wildlife Management
Environment and Climate Change

Leslie Wiltzen
Superintendent, Wildlife and Forest
Management, South Slave Region
Environment and Climate Change

Laurie Nadia
Superintendent, Dehcho Region
Environment and Climate Change

Attachment

Status of Approval Conditions for the Wildlife Management and Monitoring Plan for Digaa Enterprises Ltd. Timber Harvesting

The Minister of Environment and Climate Change (ECC) approved the Digaa Enterprises Ltd. (Digaa) Wildlife Management and Monitoring Plan (WMMP) version 4.0 (dated October 19, 2023) on June 24, 2024 with four conditions.

Requirement for a WMMP

Under section 95(1) of the *Wildlife Act*, a developer may be required to prepare a WMMP for approval by the Minister of ECC, and to adhere to the approved plan if the Minister is satisfied that the proposed development is likely to:

- a) result in a significant disturbance to big game or other prescribed wildlife;*
- b) substantially alter, damage or destroy habitat;*
- c) pose a threat of serious harm to wildlife or habitat; or*
- d) significantly contribute to cumulative impacts on a large number of big game or on habitat.*

The [WMMP Process and Content Guidelines](#)² describe the factors that were considered by the Minister in determining whether a WMMP would be required for Digaa's proposed timber harvest operations proposed under Land Use Permit MV2022W0006. On July 13, 2022, a letter was sent to Digaa providing the determination that a WMMP was required for this development.

WMMP Timeline

ECC received Version 2.0 of the WMMP (dated May 26, 2023) and initiated a [public review](#)³ of the document through the Online Review System (ORS) of the Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board on August 4, 2023. A notification about the review was sent via the ORS to a distribution list including Indigenous governments and Indigenous organizations, relevant government agencies, and regulatory boards to inform them of the review process.

The original deadline for public comments of September 8, 2023 was extended to September 29, 2023 due to the evacuations caused by wildfires in the southern Northwest Territories. Through the online review process, comments were submitted by the Government of Northwest Territories (GNWT).

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² <https://www.gov.nt.ca/ecc/en/wildlife-management-and-monitoring-plan-wmmp-process-and-content-guidelines>

³ <https://new.onlinereviewsystem.ca/review/A14F0DCB-DE2F-EE11-B8F0-002248AECD04>

ECC relies on regulatory processes to help fulfill the Crown's duty to consult and has taken these processes into account in assessing the adequacy of consultation and accommodation for the approval of the WMMP.

The ORS website for the public review of the WMMP included a disclaimer that "*The Crown relies on the Board's process as the primary means to fulfill its duty to consult with Indigenous Peoples and, if appropriate, accommodate potential adverse impacts to asserted or established Aboriginal and/or Treaty rights resulting from any decisions by the federal government, territorial government, or Board in relation to this review item*", and encouraging Indigenous governments and Indigenous organizations to "*identify any potential adverse impacts to your asserted or established Aboriginal and/or Treaty rights with respect to this review item*". No review comments on the WMMP were provided by Indigenous governments or Indigenous organizations through the public review process.

Deh Gáh Got'îê First Nation and Fort Providence Métis Council both provided letters of support to Digaa on June 20, 2023, stating that they supported the WMMP. Digaa provided copies of these letters to ECC on June 26, 2023.

On April 16, 2024 ECC sent a letter to potentially affected Indigenous governments and Indigenous organizations notifying them that consultation on its pending decision about whether to approve the WMMP was closed.

On June 24, 2024, the Minister of ECC approved the WMMP with four conditions. Digaa submitted a revised Tier 1 WMMP on March 21, 2025, which reflected changes requested in the conditional approval letter.

Specific comments on the status of the WMMP approval conditions are as follows:

Approval Condition 1: *Digaa shall add an appendix to the WMMP that describes a procedure for using regularly updated boreal caribou collar location maps provided by ECC to trigger mitigation measures such as delayed start-up of project activities or suspension of activities when current collared boreal caribou overlap with pre-defined cautionary zones around areas of active timber harvesting operations. As part of this procedure, Digaa will need to update ECC on a regular basis about where operations are currently occurring or planned to occur.*

This condition was partially addressed.

ECC appreciates the work that has gone into the revisions to the WMMP based on this condition. As laid out in the new Caribou Monitoring Procedure (Appendix 3) of the WMMP, ECC understands that Digaa will normally operate when the ground is frozen. However, on page 33 of the WMMP in Appendix 3, it is noted under 'procedure' that "Although there may be occasional operations during snow free months, such as those that are immediately adjacent to existing Highway 1 or 3, Digaa Enterprises Ltd (Digaa) intends to conduct annual operations between November 1 and April 15 of each year to correspond with the less sensitive periods for caribou." Since it is possible that you may be operating during the sensitive calving/post-calving season, there needs to be planned mitigations for this period.

ECC would like to clarify that the two most sensitive periods for boreal caribou are late winter and calving/post-calving when movement rates are lowest and energy reserves are low and snow conditions impede movement or cows are calving ([2012 Status Report and Assessment of Boreal Caribou in the NWT](#)⁴ and [2022 Status Report and Reassessment of Boreal Caribou in the NWT](#)⁵). Later, on page 33, within Appendix 3 of Digaa's WMMP, under 'Caribou Seasonal Periods' it is noted that "There are two key period of medium risk that overlap Digaa operations when boreal caribou should receive additional protection...". Specific examples where it is documented that the two most sensitive periods for boreal caribou are late winter and calving/post-calving include the [Framework for Boreal Caribou Range Planning](#)⁶ (page 47), the [Interim Wek'èezhìi Boreal Caribou Range Plan](#)⁷ (page 9), the draft [Guidelines for Exploration and Development Projects in Boreal Caribou Habitat in the NWT](#)⁸ (page 20), and [Appendix C of Pine Point Mining Ltd.'s WMMP](#)⁹ (Version 2.2; page 81).

To satisfy this Approval Condition, ECC requires Digaa to amend the WMMP further, adding a row to Table 1 within Appendix 3 – Caribou Monitoring Procedure to add mitigations during the calving/post-calving period.

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⁴ https://www.nwtspeciesatrisk.ca/sites/species/files/boreal_caribou_nwt_status_report_dec_2012_3.pdf

⁵ https://www.nwtspeciesatrisk.ca/sites/species/files/boreal_caribou_status_report_final_23may2022.pdf

⁶ <https://www.gov.nt.ca/ecc/en/framework-boreal-caribou-range-planning-cadre-de-planification-de-laire-de-repartition-du-caribou>

⁷ <https://www.gov.nt.ca/ecc/en/interim-wekeezhii-boreal-caribou-range-plan-plan-provisoire-pour-laire-de-repartition-du-caribou>

⁸ https://www.gov.nt.ca/ecc/sites/ecc/files/resources/nwt_caribou_guidelines_bilingual_feb24_final_2_2_0.pdf

⁹ https://www.gov.nt.ca/ecc/sites/ecc/files/resources/pine_point_wildlife_management_and_monitoring_plan_v2.2.pdf

Approval Condition 2: *Digaa shall submit its PHEAs to ECC Wildlife Management Division annually for review at least 60 days prior to the start-up of each winter's timber harvest operations.*

This condition was satisfactory addressed. On page 23, Digaa added that PHEAs will be sent to ECC Wildlife Management Wildlife Division by September 1 of each year of operations.

Approval Condition 3: *Digaa shall amend Section 3.4 of the WMMP to include the following items in its annual WMMP reports:*

- *Sightings of wildlife or wildlife features (dens, nests, hibernacula, etc.) recorded during PHEAs and timber harvest operations.*
- *Records of training provided to staff and contractors related to the WMMP.*
- *A summary of adaptive management Metrics, any Action Leve exceedances, and adaptive Management Responses implemented as per Table 5-1 of the WMMP.*

This condition was satisfactorily addressed. Digaa amended Section 3.4 of the WMMP to include the items listed in this condition.

Approval Condition 4: *Digaa shall submit annual WMMP reports by June 30 of each year to the following ECC contacts:*

- *Heather Sayine-Crawford (Heather_Sayne-Crawford@gov.nt.ca)*
- *Ashley McLaren (Ashley_McLaren@gov.nt.ca)*
- *Kathleen Groenewegen (Kathleen_Groenewegen@gov.nt.ca)*
- *Angela Marie (Angela_Marie@gov.nt.ca)*
- *WMMP@gov.nt.ca*

This condition was satisfactorily addressed. Digaa amended Section 3.4 of the WMMP to submit annual WMMP reports by June 30 to each of the ECC contacts listed in this condition.

Decision Summary

The Minister of ECC confirms that Approval Conditions 2, 3 and 4 of the WMMP for Digaa Enterprises Ltd. Timber Harvesting have been met. Approval Condition 1 remains outstanding. ECC looks forward to a new version of the WMMP that ensures the outstanding Approval Condition is met by June 30, 2025. The final approved version of the WMMP will be posted to ECC's WMMP webpage.