

“What We Heard”

Public Open House

Location: Midnight Sun Complex, Community Hall – Inuvik, NT

Date: March 3, 2015

Time: 7:00pm to 9:00pm

The session was attended by twelve (12) members of the public and began with an introduction by the facilitator. A representative from the GWNT – Department of Lands then gave a short presentation on the Recreational Land Management Framework explaining “where are we, how we got here, where we are going and how you can help”. After the presentation the facilitator led the group discussion through five (5) questions to help draw out local issues and ideas. Feedback from the session is organized by question.

The Future – In 10 years what should recreational cabin development/use look like?

- In the future, it would be nice if there was access to outdoor recreational opportunities for people without cabins. Access would include locations for:
 - Boat launches
 - Trail heads
 - On the land campsites, that are informal and not within a park
 - Designated canoe routes.
- Areas identified for outdoor recreational opportunities are designated for communal use and are off limits for recreational leases.
- Processes for getting recreational leases are clear and it is not difficult to apply for a lease.
- It is important that any further recreational leasing is done in a sustainable way.
- Carrying capacity is determined to help set the maximum number of cabins that can be developed on a particular lake. For lakes and areas with a high demand for cabins, management plans should be developed before recreational leases are issued.

Rules and Responsibilities – What kind of rules and responsibilities should be established?

- A designated day use area at Airport Lake should be developed with amenities, including washrooms, picnic tables, and garbage cans to help discourage people from littering and causing damage.
- There should be proper inspections and enforced consequences for actions and activities that are harmful for to the environment.
- Leases should include terms and conditions that make leaseholders accountable for actions that may cause environmental damage.

- There should be a call-in hotline to report poor behavior, but regular inspections should also occur on a consistent schedule. If costs are too high to inspect annually, a self-inspection process can be set-up to help the Lands Department maintain consistent inspections.
- There should be clear rules that apply to everyone, no one is exempt.
- Proper policing should be happening to help avoid destructive behaviour. Participants felt that people are more likely to participate in bad behaviour if they don't think they will get caught.
- Airport Lake is a big part of the recreation land management in Inuvik – participants asked what is being done to manage this area, and wanted to know if there solutions being discussed. Representative from the Lands Department explained that there is a process underway to deal with the cabins on Airport Lake and that the process is happening in parallel with the development of the Recreational Land Management Framework.

New Areas for Cabin Development – What should be considered when planning new areas?

- Participants identified that they like the way cabins are on Airport Lake. Cabins can be close together, but are far enough apart that you don't hear your neighbor.
- It was suggested new area development, when there is a demand, should start with larger lots with more separation. As demand increases, there can be "infill".
- Mixed development was suggested. here can be some lakes where density is higher, such as those with road access or those are close to town, but others should have lower densities of cabin development. This gives people the opportunity to choose their own level of comfort and isolation from neighbours.
- Informal day use and overnight camping areas should be mapped using local knowledge and kept available for the general public. No cabins should be developed on these locations.

New Lease Allocation – What is the fairest way?

- When a lease is applied for participants felt those with existing leases within a certain area should be notified. For example all lease holders within 5 km should be notified of the lease application.
- Participants felt the lease time-frames should be indeterminate, and should the lease holder pass away, the lease can be transferred to the family.
- When issuing new leases in areas not in high demand or not being used for anything else - leases should be issued on a first come first serve basis.
- Establish a sustainable threshold for the number of leases that the natural environment can handle - once the limit for the number of leases is met then no more leases should be issued.
- Maintain areas that are always open and accessible for public use.
- Participants would like to have the option to acquire fee simple title of a leased lot.

Future Lease Fees – Should all cabin lots be priced the same or should it vary? What should be considered?

- Participants noted they would like consistent fees that are the same for all GNWT leases.

Other Comments

- Most of the participants had a specific interest in Airport Lake. A number of people who came to the meeting were expecting to talk about what will happen to existing cabin owners at the lake. Those present that had cabins on the lake were wondering if they would be getting leases or if they would be expected to remove their cabins. One person indicated that they had heard that anyone who is not Aboriginal would have to remove their cabins.
- The Regional Superintendent of Lands informed participants that a working group has been established to tackle the issues at Airport Lake and that they are working to establish a solution. The working group includes representatives from the Department of Lands (regional and headquarters) a representative from the Town and the Gwich'in Tribal Council.

Meeting ended at approximately 8:50pm.