

“What We Heard”

Public Open House

Location: Heritage Hotel Room – Norman Wells, NT

Date: March 2, 2015

Time: 7:00pm to 9:00 pm

The session was attended by one (1) member of the public and began with an introduction by the facilitator. An informal discussion was held between the participant and representatives from the Lands Department. A representative from the Department of Lands provided a brief overview of the Recreational Land Management Framework and provided context for the purpose of the meeting. The facilitator guided the conversation 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?

- There appears to be more Aboriginal people building cabins for recreational use, not traditional use (hunting and trapping).
- Limited Recreational Leases have been applied for in the Sahtu region. There was one recreational lease, but it took a long time to process because no one knew the process. Clear process for allocating leases is important.
- People travel to different locations at different times of the year. It is not uncommon to have more than one cabin. For example, a person could have a cabin in one location that is used in the fall for hunting moose, and another cabin in a different location because it is a good spot for fishing in the summer.

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

- There is limited demand for recreational leases around Norman Wells. The lack of road infrastructure and the proximity to the Mackenzie River make access difficult. Only one side of the River is accessible by land. Travel on the other side is expensive and usually requires chartering a helicopter or plane. Most of the cabins/camps that do exist are along the Mackenzie River, this is the easiest place to access.
- The town boundary is very large - demand for recreational leases outside of this area will be limited because it is difficult to access land beyond.
- The only place for easy access is along the Mackenzie River, some of the creeks west of the town, and small lakes north of the town (e.g. Heart Lake). It may be useful to pre-plan these areas for possible recreational leasing. But other areas, not necessary to pre-establish leases.
- Small lakes should be limited to only one cabin; larger lakes can have more cabins.
- Designate areas close to town for recreational leases and set guidelines for density.
- There is a lot of travel and movement between Norman Wells and Tulita along the Mackenzie. There could be some demand for cabins along there.

- The development of the Canol Trail as a park could improve access and increase demand for cabins along the trail. If this happens, the cabins in proximity to the trail should be spread out.
- Lease tenure should be for more than three to five years - they should be a minimum of 10 years. A three to five year lease isn't long enough. It can take up to 5 years to build a cabin in remote locations. People need some assurance that you will have your lease for long periods of time.

New Lease Allocation – What is the fairest way?

- When a moratorium on Recreational Leases was set (because of the issues in Yellowknife) people in the Sahtu applied for Hunting and Fishing leases instead. Although these leases are considered different, they are actually recreational leases. Special issues in Yellowknife should not affect the ability to obtain a lease in other regions where the issue isn't the same. (Do not put a territorial wide moratorium if it isn't necessary).
- One size fits all for the entire Territory would be good, but it is not probable that this could work. The few people that are looking for cabins leases in the Sahtu should not have to jump through hoops to obtain these cabins.
- There should be different policies for allocating lease in areas where there are no land claims.
- When issuing new leases, the Lands Department should consult with people who have existing leases in the area. This could be a better option than setting spacing requirements. Some people may be ok with having cabins closer (especially if cabin owners are friends and family).

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

- Most of the unauthorized users (squatters) are Aboriginal people, but this doesn't really bother anyone as the cabins are few and far between.
- Recreational vehicles can be a problem in the Sahtu. Improper use or over-use can lead to a lot of environmental damage. An example was provided of a Hunting/Fishing Lodge that used quads to move people and equipment from a float base to the main lodge site. Too much traffic damaged the terrain and caused significant erosion on one of the hills.
- There has been some issue with people inappropriately using existing cabins. For survival purposes it is important to keep cabins accessible. But is there a method for keeping people accountable if they vandalize or steal items from the cabin?

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

- Harmonization of lease fees means that leases will probably cost more money. Why should remote people with remote cabin leases pay the same fee as people with road access and other services? Lease fees should be different, especially if someone has to pay a significant amount of money to access the cabin (i.e. Over \$1,000 to charter a plane or helicopter to access cabin).
- Lease fees should cover infrastructure needed to access. For example if a parking lot is required or a dock, this should be covered in the fees.

Meeting ended at approximately 9:00pm.