

“What We Heard”

Public Open House

Location: Community Hall – Fort Simpson, NT

Date: February 3, 2015

Time: 7:00pm to 8:45pm

The session was attended by eight (8) members of the public and began with introductions by the facilitator and representatives from the GNWT Department of Lands (GNWT- DoL), including a brief description of each person’s background and their role in the development of a Recreational Land Management Framework (RLMF). Following introductions, a representative from the GNWT-DoL gave a short presentation on the RLMF focusing on “where we are, how we got here, where are we going and how can you help”. After the presentation the facilitator lead the group discussion through five (5) questions to help draw out local issues and ideas. Feedback was received largely from 2 to 3 people. The session started at approximately 7:15pm and lasted till 8:45pm without a break. Approximately 3 people stopped in before the formal portion of the evenings to ask questions and reviewed the material provided by the GNWT.

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

- Traditional land use areas are important for the local First Nation people. If the GNWT will be issuing or allocating any recreational leases, it should be coordinated to with the local First Nations so it avoids the important traditional land use areas.
- There should be clear communication with affected parties when issuing new leases. Affected parties could include:
 - Local band and its members
 - Any potential neighbours in the area of the proposed recreational lease.

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

- Respect who is where and what they are up to. The First Nations people have a relationship with the land that other people do not. When developing rules for allocating recreational leases this needs to be considered and applied.
- All parties must talk to each other – communication is important. If there is a proposed lease the band must be informed as should individuals who have existing cabins neighbouring the lease.
- When determining locations or boundaries for possible new recreational lease development – don’t push the First Nations aside- they were the First people here and have a long history with land use in the area.

- Environmental protection is important. (holders of) Recreational Land leases should be held accountable and must follow the rules.
- Unauthorized recreational land use is not a significant issue around the Village of Fort Simpson
- The local Band and local people are discouraging unauthorized use informally. The community is small and people know each other.
- If people come across unauthorized use, they often report this to the Band. If there is evidence of environmental damage the band will report this to the GNWT, Department of Environment and Natural Resources (ENR).

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

- In-depth consideration and identification of the traditional land use areas must be done before the GNWT identifies any new areas recreational leases. It will be important that traditional areas are protected for First Nation use.
- There should be a limit to the size of cabin that can be constructed on a recreational lease. Smaller cabins are preferred.
- Important natural features such as reservoirs should be avoided for development.
- New recreational leases should be in areas with minimal environmental disturbance.

New Lease Allocation – What is the fairest way?

- It is preferred that new leases are not issued without a clear process that is endorsed and adopted by the First Nations.
- If new recreational leases are given out the GNWT should receive feedback from the local Bands, Métis organizations and neighbouring cabin owners.
- Whenever a new lease is allocated, there should be a conversation with traditional users first.
- It was stated clearly by one participant that leases are not wanted – people are not comfortable with the idea of a lease.

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

- Participants did not provide their thoughts on considerations for future lease fees.

Parking Lot Items – Additional comments that fell outside the parameters of the discussion

- Historically, during the Nelson Commission, the Elders representing the Dehcho people made it clear they did not want to be corralled (put on reserves). This needs to be considered and respected.
- What about other types of Leases (Commercial or Industrial), will the process for those be reviewed and updated as well?
- Dehcho Process is still happening – how can we think about leasing land if that is still unsettled?
- Treaty Rights and the relationship with the Dehcho First Nations and the Federal/Territorial governments are still evolving in Dehcho Region.
- There are certain protocols you must follow (Interim Measures Agreement)