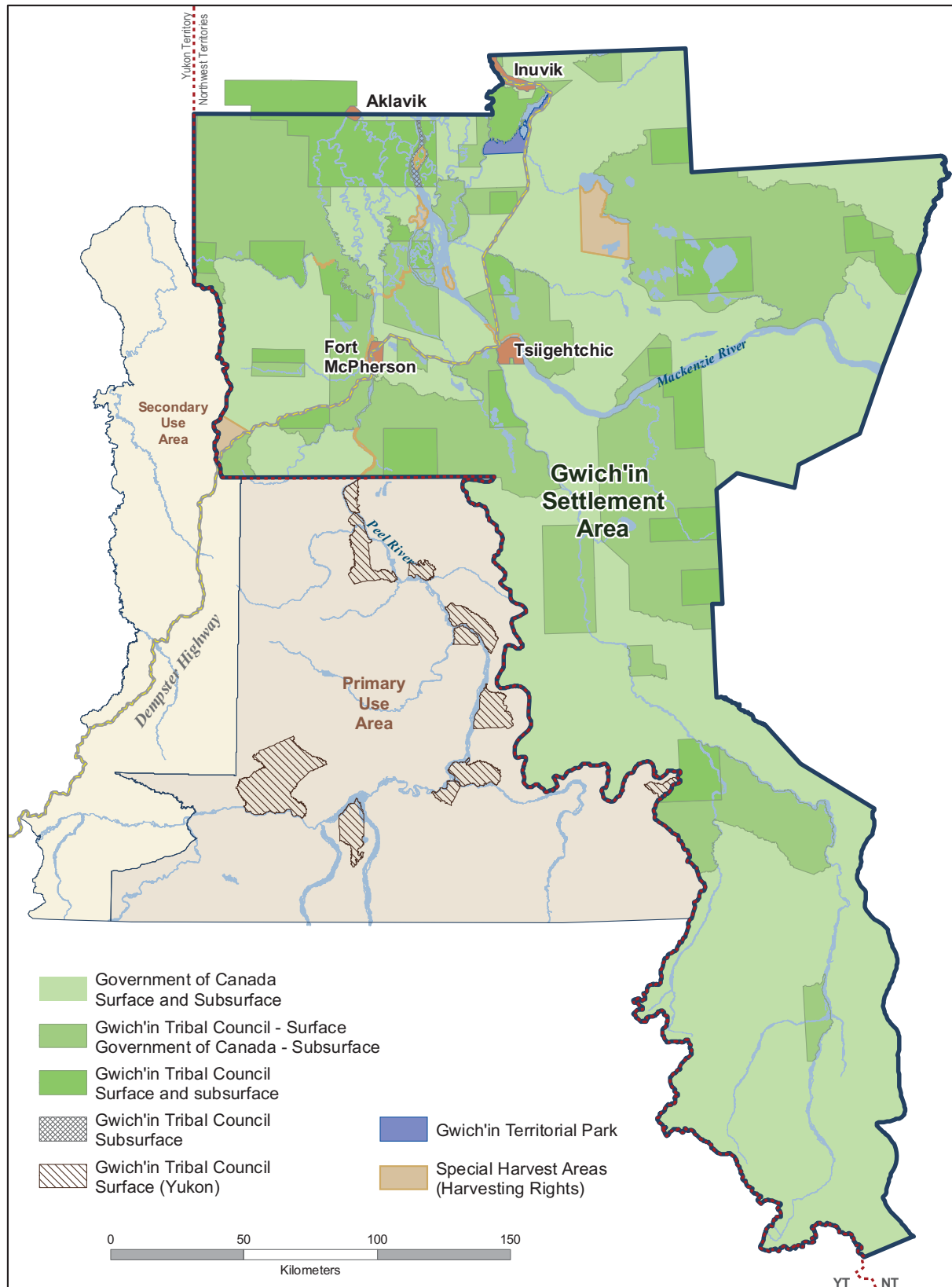


FIGURE 16: GWICH'IN SETTLEMENT LANDS



3.0 Land Ownership, Management and Regulation

3.1 Land Ownership and Management

Within the Gwich'in Settlement Area there are Gwich'in Settlement Lands, Crown lands, Commissioners lands, and Municipal lands (see Figure 16). By far, Gwich'in Settlement Lands and Crown lands make up the majority of the Gwich'in Settlement Area.

3.1.1 *Gwich'in Settlement Lands*

Gwich'in Settlement Lands were established in 1992 through the Gwich'in Land Claim Agreement. The Gwich'in Tribal Council holds subsurface and surface rights for approximately 11% (6,158 km²) of the settlement area, and holds surface rights for approximately 28% (16,264 km²) of the settlement area.¹ The additional parcels owned by the Gwich'in in the Yukon and Inuvialuit Settlement Region are not subject to the Gwich'in Land Use Plan.

The Gwich'in Tribal Council is the group that oversees Gwich'in rights on Gwich'in Settlement Lands and compensation for the use of Gwich'in Settlement Lands. This work is carried out by the Gwich'in Land Administration department of the Gwich'in Tribal Council. The Gwich'in Tribal Council continues to develop Land and Control Rules which are used to manage Gwich'in Settlement Lands. The Gwich'in Tribal Council may also prepare a land use plan for Gwich'in settlement lands which will be considered by the Planning Board.

3.1.2 *Federal Lands*

The federal government department of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development administers the approximately 61% (34,513 km²) of the Gwich'in Settlement Area that is subsurface and surface Crown land, as well as the subsurface under the 16,264 km² of Gwich'in surface only settlement lands.

3.1.3 *Municipal Lands*

Municipal lands in the Gwich'in Settlement Area are held in fee simple title by a municipality. Although the Gwich'in Land Use Plan does not apply to municipal lands, there are some cross boundary issues that the Planning Board discusses with these groups. These issues include water resources, waste management and transportation.

3.1.4 *Commissioner's Lands*

Commissioner's lands are lands that Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development has given management of to the Government of the Northwest Territories through a block land transfer. These lands may be found both inside and outside of municipal boundaries. There is a small amount of Commissioner's land outside of Inuvik that is subject to the Gwich'in Land Use Plan.

3.2 Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act

The Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act (MVRMA) sets out an integrated system of land and water management throughout the Mackenzie Valley that respects regional aboriginal participation in regulatory processes. It establishes certain boards for this purpose, some of which are provisions of chapter 24 of the Gwich'in Land Claim. These include the Gwich'in Land Use Planning Board, the Gwich'in Land and Water Board, and the Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board. As institutions of public government, the boards regulate all uses of land and water while considering the economic, social and cultural well-being of residents and all Canadians.

The Cumulative Impacts Monitoring Program (CIMP): The MVRMA also identifies the need for a responsible authority to analyze data and other pertinent information for the purpose of monitoring the cumulative impacts. The Northwest Territories CIMP Working Group, which is a partnership among NWT Aboriginal governments, the Government of Canada, and the Government of the Northwest Territories is carrying out the duties of the responsible authority.²

Another mechanism of the system for resource management under the MVRMA is the requirement an Environmental Audit once every five years. These audits provide a review of the regulatory system and report on the state of the environment.

The bulk of the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act was proclaimed on December 22nd, 1998. Part IV of the Act, establishing the Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board, was proclaimed on March 31st, 2000. The MVRMA was amended on March 3, 2006 to reflect the regional boards and process set up under the Ticho Agreement (signed August 2003).

A list of regulatory agencies, authorizations, and legislation that represents the larger regulatory system applicable to the Gwich'in Settlement Area can be found in Appendix C. The Boards of the MVRMA that apply to the GSA are briefly described in following sections of this chapter.



Cyclists touring on the Dempster Highway during maintenance



3.3 Gwich'in Land Use Planning Board

The Gwich'in Land Use Planning Board is responsible for developing and reviewing a Gwich'in Land Use Plan. The Planning Board is also mandated to:

- approve exceptions to the Plan
- propose amendments to the Plan for approval by the signatories - these may be based on applications received by the Board or be Board initiated
- when required, determine whether activities conform with the Plan
- monitor the implementation of the Plan

3.4 Gwich'in Land and Water Board

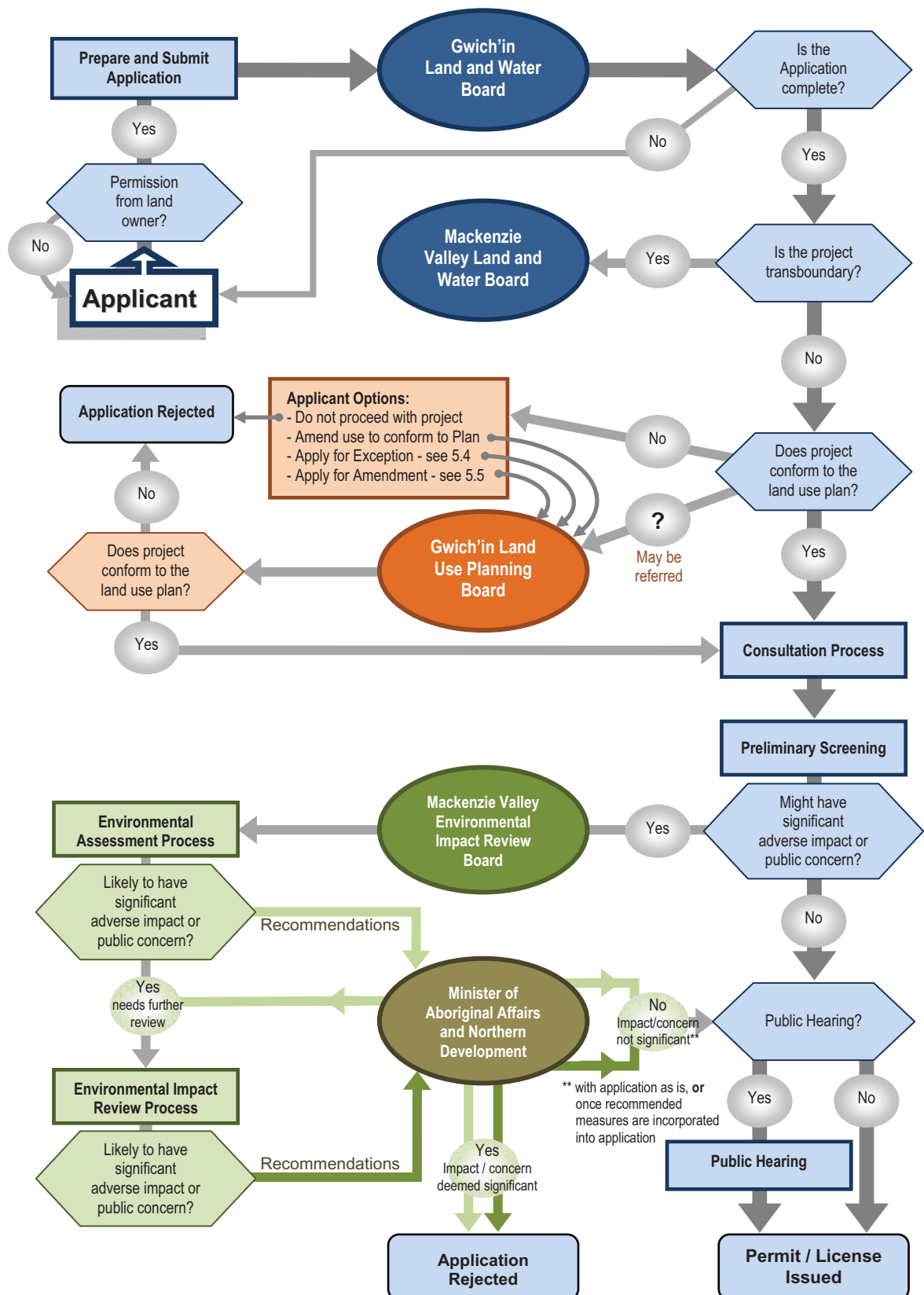
The Gwich'in Land and Water Board is a regional panel of the Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board and is responsible for regulating the use of land and water in the Gwich'in Settlement Area. They have authority to issue, amend, renew, suspend or cancel land use permits and water licences on both government lands (crown land) and Gwich'in Settlement Lands (see Figure 16). Figure 17 presents a diagram that shows the relationship of the Gwich'in Land and Water Board to the other boards of the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act.

3.5 Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board

The Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board is responsible for permitting and licensing development in unsettled land claim areas or that cross regional land claim boundaries. For example, the Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board would become involved in a proposed land use activity that would affect both the Gwich'in Settlement Area and the Sahtu Settlement Area.

The permitting and licensing process is essentially the same as what is presented in Figure 17 for the Gwich'in Land and Water Board.

FIGURE 17: GWICH'IN LAND AND WATER BOARD PROCESS



3.6 Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board

The Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board (Review Board) is responsible for the environmental impact assessment process throughout the Mackenzie Valley. The Review Board has a mandate to consider social, cultural, economic and environmental impacts of proposed developments. The MVRMA provides for three stages of environmental impact assessment that an application submitted to a regulatory authority might have to go through.

Stage One: Preliminary Screening

All development projects must undergo a preliminary screening. When a regulatory authority (such as a land and water board) receives an application for a development project, it coordinates the process for a quick assessment of the potential impacts. If the preliminary screening indicates a project might have significant adverse impacts on the environment or might cause public concern, the application proceeds to stage two for an environmental assessment. If it is decided that it won't, the application continues through the process of the regulatory authority.

In the Gwich'in Settlement Area, a proposed development can also be sent to environmental assessment after preliminary screening by referral from:

- the Mackenzie Valley Environmental Review Board by its own motion,
- the Gwich'in Tribal Council,
- a local government if the development will have an impact within their boundaries, or
- a department or agency of the federal or territorial government.

Stage Two: Environmental Assessment

The Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board conducts this stage. It provides opportunity for public comments and a more thorough study to determine if the proposed development is likely to have significant adverse impacts on the environment, or might cause public concern. The Review Board submits its recommendation to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development. The Minister makes a decision based on the recommendation that would be either:

- the development application may continue through the regulatory process as is,
- a list of specific measures to be incorporated into the development application to address public concern/adverse impacts so that it may continue through the regulatory process,
- the development application should be rejected, or
- the development application needs further review (moves to stage three).

Stage Three: Environmental Impact Review

This is a more focused public review and detailed analysis of the issues raised during the environmental assessment of the proposed development. An independent panel of members appointed by the Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board conducts the environmental review and submits recommendations to the Minister. Members may be Review Board members or non-Review Board members.

Statistically, so far, only 5% of developments in the Mackenzie Valley are referred to environmental assessment, and of those, less 1% goes to an environmental impact review.

3.7 Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board

Created directly by the Gwich'in Land Claim and not through the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act, the Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board (GRRB) is the main group dealing with wildlife, fish and forests in the Gwich'in Settlement Area. Their role is to conduct research and propose policies to protect wildlife and wildlife habitat, as well as Gwich'in harvesting rights on the land. The Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board works closely with Gwich'in community groups such as Renewable Resources Councils when setting priorities, collecting information, and drafting policy documents.

The Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board completed a study of Gwich'in harvesting levels between 1995 and 2004. The study is a requirement of the Gwich'in Claim to provide harvest data that are necessary for calculating the Gwich'in Minimum Need Level and the effective management of wildlife by the GRRB and government.

The Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board is currently working, either independently or with other responsible authorities, to develop or finalise management plans for the following:

- Dall's Sheep
- Forest Resources
- Moose
- Coney (inconnu)
- Grizzly Bear
- Rat River Char
- Porcupine caribou herd
- Cape Bathurst, Bluenose West, and Bluenose East Barren Ground Caribou Herds
- Northern Woodland caribou management plan
- Boreal Woodland caribou recovery strategy

Chapter 3 References

¹ Gwich'in Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement (1992)

² www.nwtcimp.ca, accessed May 2011



Caribou

Lawrence Norbert

4.0 Land Use Plan for the Future: Vision and Land Zoning

4.1 Vision and Approach of the Planning Board

In developing the Gwich'in Land Use Plan, the Planning Board has relied on the Gwich'in Land Claim and input from stakeholders for direction. This direction is expressed in the following vision statement:

“The Planning Board envisions a Gwich'in Land Use Plan where land, water, wildlife and other resources are conserved, developed and used to protect and promote the existing and future well being of the residents and communities of the settlement area, while having regard to the interests of all Canadians.”

Using the vision, the Planning Board sees two main themes for the Land Use Plan:

1) *Balancing Resource Development with Conservation of the Land or Environment*

The Planning Board has the task of balancing resource development with conservation of the land or environment. In working toward a balance, the Planning Board supports the idea of sustainable use for the Gwich'in Settlement Area.

Sustainable use means managing natural resources and the environment in such a way that economic, social and cultural needs are met and ecosystems, ecological processes and natural diversity are maintained. Ecosystems are the combination of plants and animals together with land and water working as a system. Wetlands and forests are examples of ecosystems. Ecological processes are natural actions or events that keep ecosystems working properly. Wetlands filtering contaminants out of water and forest fires, changing old forests to young forests, are examples of ecological processes.

2) *Integrated Approach to Planning*

In order to achieve a balance between resource development and conservation of the land or environment the Planning Board practices an integrated approach to planning. An integrated approach to planning is a basic idea in the Gwich'in Land Claim.

What do we mean by an integrated approach? To integrate something means to bring all parts together. For land use planning an integrated approach means

working together on land issues and finding ways to consider all parts of the environment in planning decisions.

For the Planning Board, using an integrated approach also means respecting different ideas and knowledge in decision making. In all management decisions, traditional, local and scientific knowledge should be considered equally. Getting all people involved in land use and management is the key to an integrated approach. This includes communities, Gwich'in, government, co-management, business and non-government groups. Gwich'in Land Claim groups are trying to use an integrated approach to management in the Gwich'in Settlement Area. The Land Use Plan will play an important role in this integrated approach, including the Regional Plan of Action in chapter 6.

4.2 Land Zoning System

There are many resources the land supplies and many ways land, water and resources can be used. The Planning Board appreciates that using land resources should benefit the people of the Gwich'in Settlement Area and Canada as a whole. For this reason, the Planning Board encourages multiple uses or many uses of the land. Land resources should be used for the maximum gain of the people of the area.

All land uses are important and meet different human needs. There are a number of different potential land uses for the Gwich'in Settlement Area such as transportation, waste disposal, military activities, mining, oil and gas activities, sand and gravel pits, power developments, timber harvest, commercial fisheries, tourism and traditional activities.

Often land uses take place without any concerns being raised. Sometimes different land uses compete for the same resources causing land use conflicts. Other times land uses impact on people living and using the area, or the environment that people depend on. One way to avoid land use conflicts and negative impacts on people or the environment is to identify what land uses should and should not take place in areas before they are proposed. This can be done using a Land Zoning System.

The Land Zoning System describes what is allowed or not allowed in specific areas. This Zoning System has three zones: Gwich'in General Use Zones, Gwich'in Special Management Zones, and Gwich'in Conservation Zones as well as regional conditions that apply to all three zones (see fold out map, page 47). This system promotes multiple or many uses of land, water and resources and controls activities in critical and sensitive environmental and heritage areas. The zoning strives to achieve a balance between conservation of the land and the use of land, water and resources to meet human needs.

Regulatory System: Laws and Regulations

In all Land Zones, laws and regulations have to be followed. For all proposed activities, the appropriate, licenses, permits and authorizations are needed.

4.2.1 *Deciding What Areas Belong in Each Zone*

The best information available has been used to decide what areas should be in each zone. Traditional knowledge and scientific knowledge have been used equally. The Planning Board recognizes people's traditional knowledge about the land including knowledge passed down to them from previous generations. Through the land use planning process communities have identified areas they believe should be protected due to traditional use, cultural heritage, wildlife, fish, forests, water and many other reasons.

Community information is supported many times by scientific studies. Scientific

Mackenzie Delta Beaufort Sea Land Use Planning Commission



information is being collected on a continuing basis. All available information on renewable and non-renewable resources was used in zoning areas. In general, more information exists for renewable resources like wildlife than non-renewable resources like minerals. The Planning Board encourages government groups to keep collecting scientific

information in all areas. The Planning Board will re-evaluate its zoning of areas based on new information as it is collected.

4.2.2 *Activities that are Exempt from the Zoning Rules*

- 1) Existing activities in the Gwich'in Settlement Area will be allowed including development arising from rights existing at the time of Plan approval, even if the activities are not in keeping with the land zones. These existing uses will be allowed to continue as non-conforming activities.
- 2) Renewal of permits, licences and authorizations for existing activities will be allowed.
- 3) Low impact recreational and tourism activities such as hiking and canoeing that do not require any type of permit, licence or authorization are allowed.
- 4) Traditional activities protected by the Gwich'in Land Claim are allowed.
- 5) Where an emergency threatens life, property or the environment, a person may carry out any land use that is necessary to cope with the emergency. If the activity is not in keeping with the land use zoning, the Planning Board requests that a written report describing the operation be submitted as soon as possible.

4.3 Using the Gwich'in Land Use Plan

Prospective land users, and any person or group having an interest or concern about a land use, are encouraged to look at the Land Use Plan to see for themselves whether or not a land use is allowed according to the Land Use Plan (see figure 18). The zoning system and maps provided in the Land Use Plan should enable anyone to make a clear determination as to whether a use is allowed.

The nature of the zoning can help identify some potential issues for proponents to consider when planning a development project and preparing applications to regulatory authorities. For example, if a proposed development is in a special management zone with conditions for fish, the proponent should investigate and specifically identify potential impacts of their project on fish to include in regulatory applications. A proponent might find that after consulting with the Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board and the department of Fisheries and Oceans there is an issue with limited information for the proposed site. To insure a complete application, and therefore a smooth regulatory process, a proponent might wish to provide for a habitat survey.

If requested, the Planning Board can make the decision on whether an activity is allowed or not according to the Land Use Plan (see section 5.3). For any activity that is not allowed, the Planning Board may grant an exception or propose an amendment to allow the activity to go ahead. The exception and amendment processes are described in sections 5.4 and 5.5, respectively.



Blustery winter day along the Dempster Highway

Lawrence Norbert

FIGURE 18: USING THE GWICH'IN LAND USE PLAN

A simplified reference for the Land Use Zoning System

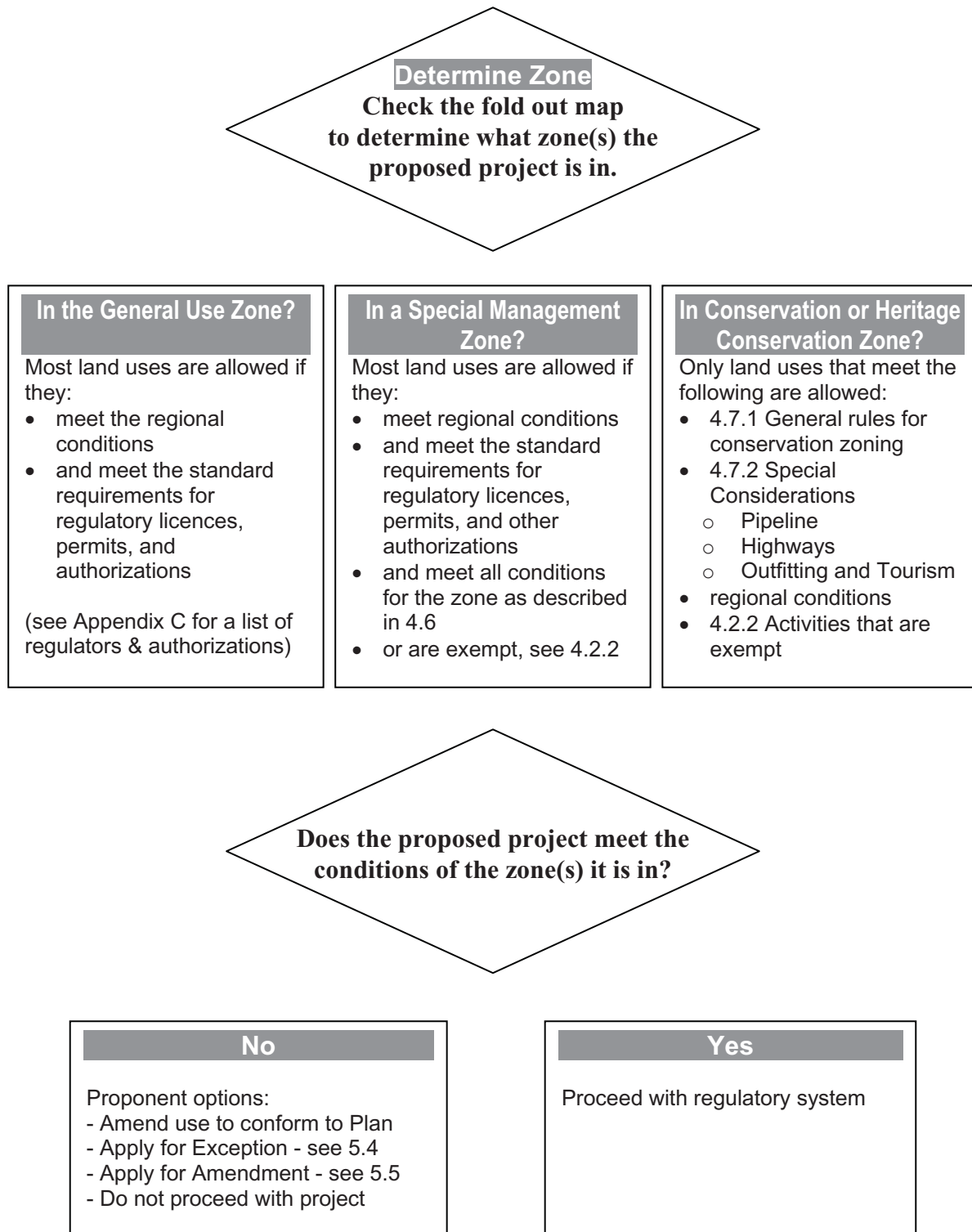
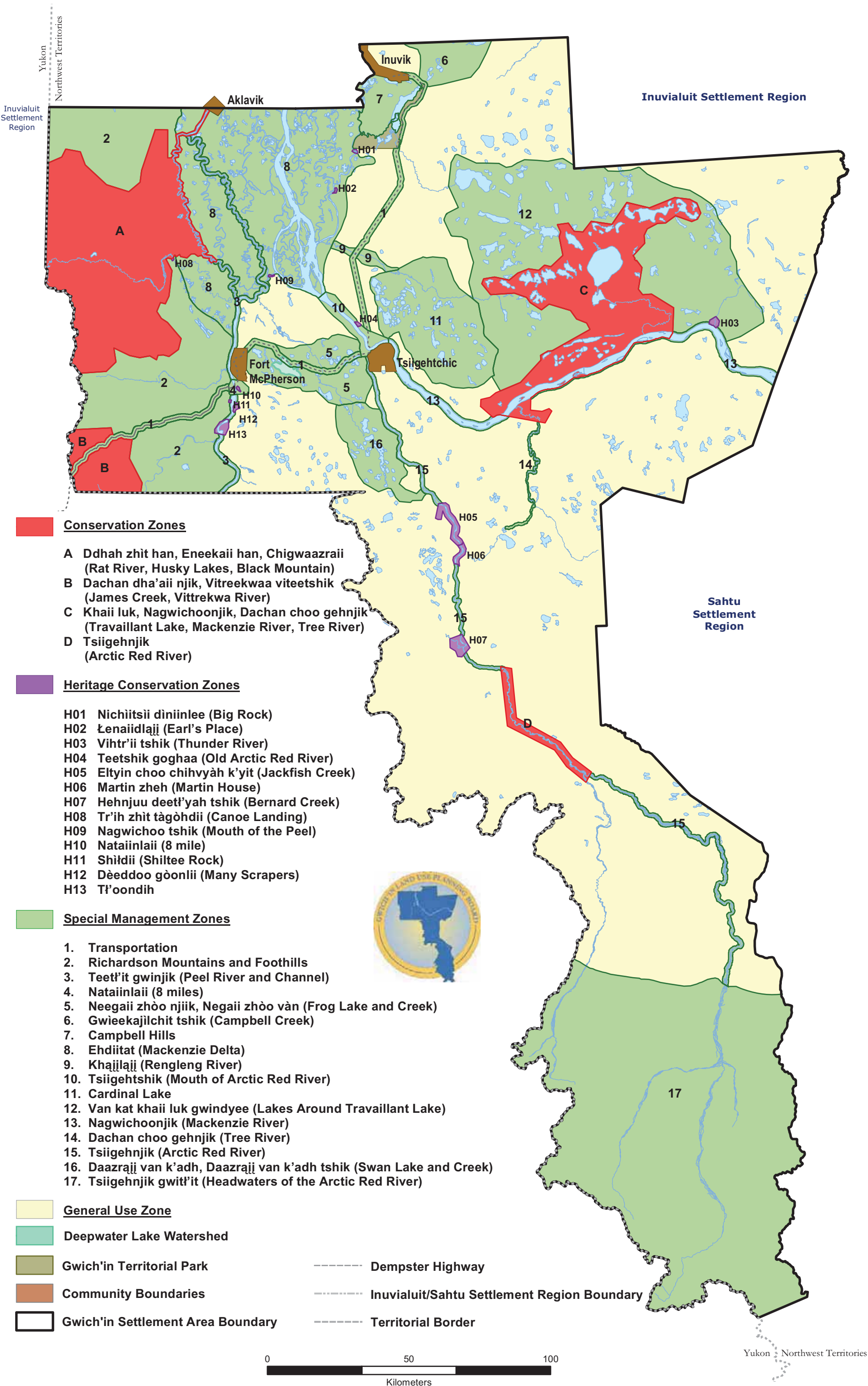


FIGURE 19: FOLD OUT MAP OF GWICH'IN LAND USE PLAN ZONES



4.4 Regional Conditions that Apply in All Zones

Regional conditions are a significant change from the 2003 version of the Gwich'in Land Use Plan which did not have any. The following conditions apply throughout the Gwich'in Settlement Area.

4.4.1 Water Quality and Quantity

1. New activities requiring permits, licences or authorizations will not be allowed until it is demonstrated that water quality, quantity and rate of flow will remain substantially unaltered. For projects with greater risk of negative impacts on water, proponents should be prepared to establish a monitoring program that will determine a baseline and measure potential changes.

Guidance for determining if an application for a proposed project demonstrates the activity will leave water quality, quantity and rate of flow “substantially unaltered”

After hearing many concerns from community members about the quality and quantity of water, the Board has made this a regional condition. Given a lack of baseline data and the absence of water standards it was not possible for the Board to draft more prescriptive conditions. The intent of this condition is to have regulatory authorities set site specific terms and conditions for development authorisations using a strict precautionary approach.

The wording of this condition is based on the following section of the Gwich'in Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement (GCLCA):

19.1.8 Subject to legislation in respect of the use of water:

- a) *the Gwich'in have the right to have waters which are on or flow through or are adjacent to Gwich'in lands remain substantially unaltered as to quality, quantity, and rate of flow when such waters are on or flow through or are adjacent to Gwich'in lands; and*
- b) *the Gwich'in shall not use water so as to substantially alter the quality, quantity, and rate of flow of waters which are on or flow through or are adjacent to Gwich'in lands.*

The Planning Board has confidence that conformance to this condition can be evaluated using these factors:

- By the level of concern expressed by Gwich'in participants who will have expectations as to what clause 19.1.8 means,
- Traditional knowledge with respect to the probability of environmental damage or the significance of any environmental damage, and
- Scientific opinions with respect to the probability of environmental damage or the significance of any environmental damage.

The processes of the regulatory system are already designed give measure to each factor. The Planning Board suggests an appropriate determination of conformance, even though somewhat subjective, can be made by applying the precautionary principle when decisions are made as to whether:

- the development application may continue through the regulatory process as is,
- a list of specific measures to be incorporated into the development application to address public concern/adverse impacts so that it may continue through the regulatory process,
- the development application should be rejected, or
- the development application needs further review.

At the earliest, a determination of conformity will be made from the results of the preliminary screening.

The Planning Board endorses the approach outlined in the *Water and Effluent Quality Management Policy*¹ by the land and water boards of the Mackenzie Valley. The objectives and principles of the water boards' policy should lead to the eventual development of specific water quality and effluent standards that provide a measurable definition of 'substantially unaltered' to meet the expectations of Gwich'in participants related to clause 19.1.8 (GCLCA).

4.4.2 Reclamation Using Native Species of Plants

1. All reclamation plans that require re-vegetation must incorporate the use of species of plants that are native to the Gwich'in Settlement Area.

The intent of this condition is to minimize the introduction of invasive plant species into the relatively pristine wilderness of the GSA.

4.4.3 Boreal and Northern Mountain Woodland Caribou

1. Proponents requiring a permit, licence or authorization shall demonstrate that the proposed activities will not disturb woodland caribou during calving season or have adverse effects on important habitat.

This is a generalised term for woodland caribou until the Boreal Caribou Management Plan is developed by the GNWT. The Gwich'in Land Use Planning Board recommends that regulatory authorities work with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and the Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board to set specific conditions for woodland caribou, as needed, on projects. Conditions should be developed using the precautionary principle to protect woodland caribou and their habitat as much as possible

4.4.4 Pit Management Plans for Granular Resources

1. All new pits for granular resources shall have pit management plans. As part of developing a pit management plan, the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre and the Gwich'in Social and Cultural Institute must be consulted to determine whether an archaeological assessment is required.

The Planning Board leaves it up to the land managers (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development and the Gwich'in Tribal Council) as to whether they or a proponent will prepare a pit management plan for a proposed site. The Planning Board offers the following template to suggest best practices for content and structure of a pit management plan²:

Section	Content
Title page	Name of land manager/proponent, name of pit/site, location of site, plan date
Table of contents	
Introduction	Brief description of document purpose
Site analysis	Description of the proposed site, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Location (with map/aerial photo) ▪ Jurisdictional/property boundaries ▪ Topography ▪ Geology ▪ Soil and vegetation ▪ Surface and ground water ▪ Permafrost ▪ Fish/wildlife habitat ▪ Areas of historical or environmental significance ▪ Existing access roads ▪ Existing disturbances
Resource analysis	Feasibility analysis of the proposed extraction operation, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assessment of the resource demand and needs of end users ▪ Constraints ▪ Scale and duration of the operation ▪ Impact on the environment ▪ Financial viability ▪ Risk assessment ▪ Interests of stakeholders or partners
Proposed operations	Description of proposed development and operational activities, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Road or access requirements ▪ Water management ▪ Operating schedule ▪ Traffic control plan ▪ Processing plan ▪ Stockpile plan ▪ Storage and disposal (woody debris, fuel, garbage, etc.), ▪ Ongoing monitoring
Proposed remediation	Description of proposed remediation activities, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Future use ▪ Clean-up ▪ Site stabilization ▪ Re-vegetation ▪ Monitoring
Communication plan	Description of how information will be communicated to stakeholders, employees, contractors, regulators, etc., as part of the implementation of pit management

4.4.5 *Species at Risk*

1. Proponents requiring a permit, licence or authorization shall demonstrate that the proposed activities will not have significant adverse effects on species of wildlife, fish, birds, amphibians and plants listed in the federal and territorial Species at Risk Acts.
2. Regulatory Authorities should require proponents to conduct a rare plant survey for their project area if it is within an area of glacial refugia (areas not covered by glaciers in the last ice age have greater potential for rare plants or plant communities).
3. Proponents are asked to report any sightings of plants listed in the federal and territorial Species at Risk Acts and sightings of amphibians to nwtsoer@gov.nt.ca.

The Gwich'in Land Use Planning Board recommends that prior to applying for authorizations, proponents consult with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board, and local Gwich'in Renewable Resources Councils to obtain a current and complete list of species at risk that could be in the vicinity of the proposed project. This is the best way for a proponent to identify any issues and appropriate mitigation measures for the proposed land use to include in applications.

4.4.6 *Development and Exploration of Uranium*

1. Development or exploration of uranium will not be allowed in the Gwich'in Settlement Area for the five year period between the approval of this version of the Gwich'in Land Use Plan and its next review.

The Gwich'in Tribal Council has advised the Planning Board that it does not support the development or exploration of uranium at this time. They are not alone in Canada with their concern about this industry. At least two provinces have banned uranium mining, British Columbia in 2008³ and Nova Scotia in 2009⁴. Uranium projects in Nunuvut are facing significant public concern and communities are calling for more discussion and policy on the issue.⁵

The Gwich'in Tribal Council has not yet determined whether this restriction on uranium exploration and development should be permanent. If the communities and Gwich'in Tribal Council have confidence that adequate policy has been developed to address concerns about potential impacts and regulate these activities, this restriction could be removed. The Planning Board would implement this change by amending the Plan.

The Uranium and the North - A Technical Workshop that was held in Yellowknife in 2007 is a good template for where to start on this issue.

Workshop participants identified some issues and ‘next steps’ that need to be followed up on. The Planning Board recommends a similar workshop be held in the region to build community awareness and begin developing a regional policy for Uranium.

4.4.7 *Coal Bed Methane and Shale Gas Exploration and Development*

1. Exploration for and development of coal bed methane and shale gas reserves will not be allowed in the Gwich’in Settlement Area for the five year period between the approval of this version of the Gwich’in Land Use Plan and its next review.

The Gwich’in Tribal Council has advised the Planning Board that it does not support the development or exploration of coal bed methane and shale gas reserves at this time. Once the communities and Gwich’in Tribal Council have confidence that adequate policy and legislation have been developed to address impacts and regulate these activities, this restriction could be removed. The Board would implement this change by amending the Plan.

The main concerns are with water policy. Water that is used to fracture shale to release gas at a well can contain chemicals and additives that should not enter water systems (such as streams, aquifers, etc.).⁶ There is a lack of regulations in the Northwest Territories as discussed in condition 4.4.1 for water quality and quantity.

4.4.8 *Sumps*

1. The use of sumps for the disposal of drilling waste and grey water is not an acceptable method of waste disposal. Proponents should explore alternative methodologies for managing waste in the planning stages of projects.

The Board has heard from the communities that they are concerned about pollutants that might leak from sumps, especially if the integrity of the sump is lost over time. These concerns partly stem from melting permafrost which has been associated with climate change. The Gwich’in Tribal Council has already responded to these concerns by implementing a policy of not allowing sumps on Gwich’in private lands. The Planning Board has added this condition to extend this precautionary approach to all lands in the settlement area that are subject to the Plan.

The Planning Board may consider exceptions or an amendment to this condition if suitable methodology or technology is identified that demonstrates there will not be any contamination from a proposed sump, short term or long term.

4.5 Lands in Gwich'in General Use Zones

Gwich'in General Use Zones are areas that were identified as having the least potential for conflicts between multiple land uses. As such, they require the least amount of policy. Most land uses are possible as long as the regional conditions in section 4.4 are met and approvals through the regulatory system are obtained.

There are many provisions for the management of resources through the regulatory system. Before regulatory groups issue permits, licences or authorizations there is a review process for applications and generally other groups like communities and Gwich'in organizations are consulted. Through the review process, terms and conditions are developed for the protection of resources. These terms and conditions become part of the permit, licence, or authorization. If terms and conditions are not met, regulatory groups usually have the ability to suspend the permit, licence, or authorization.

Approximately 47% of the Gwich'in Settlement Area is allocated to the Gwich'in General Use Zone.