

## 4.5.11 Van Kat Khaii Luk Gwindii: Lakes Around Travaillant Lake Special Management Zone

### Primary Reasons for Special Management Zone

The goal of this Special Management Zone is to protect the fishing and heritage resources around Travaillant Lake. This area is found north of the Mackenzie River and east of the Dempster Highway. The many lakes in this area are used for fishing by the Gwich'in and are considered of high value due to the fish resources including trout, broad and lake whitefish, jackfish, inconnu, burbot, and arctic grayling.<sup>36</sup>

As well there are many cultural and archaeological sites in this general area. Archaeological evidence of Gwichya Gwich'in occupation of the area dates back thousands of years.<sup>37</sup> Many cultural sites such as burial grounds, trails, meeting places, old camps and cabins and sacred places can be found in this Special Management Zone.<sup>38</sup>

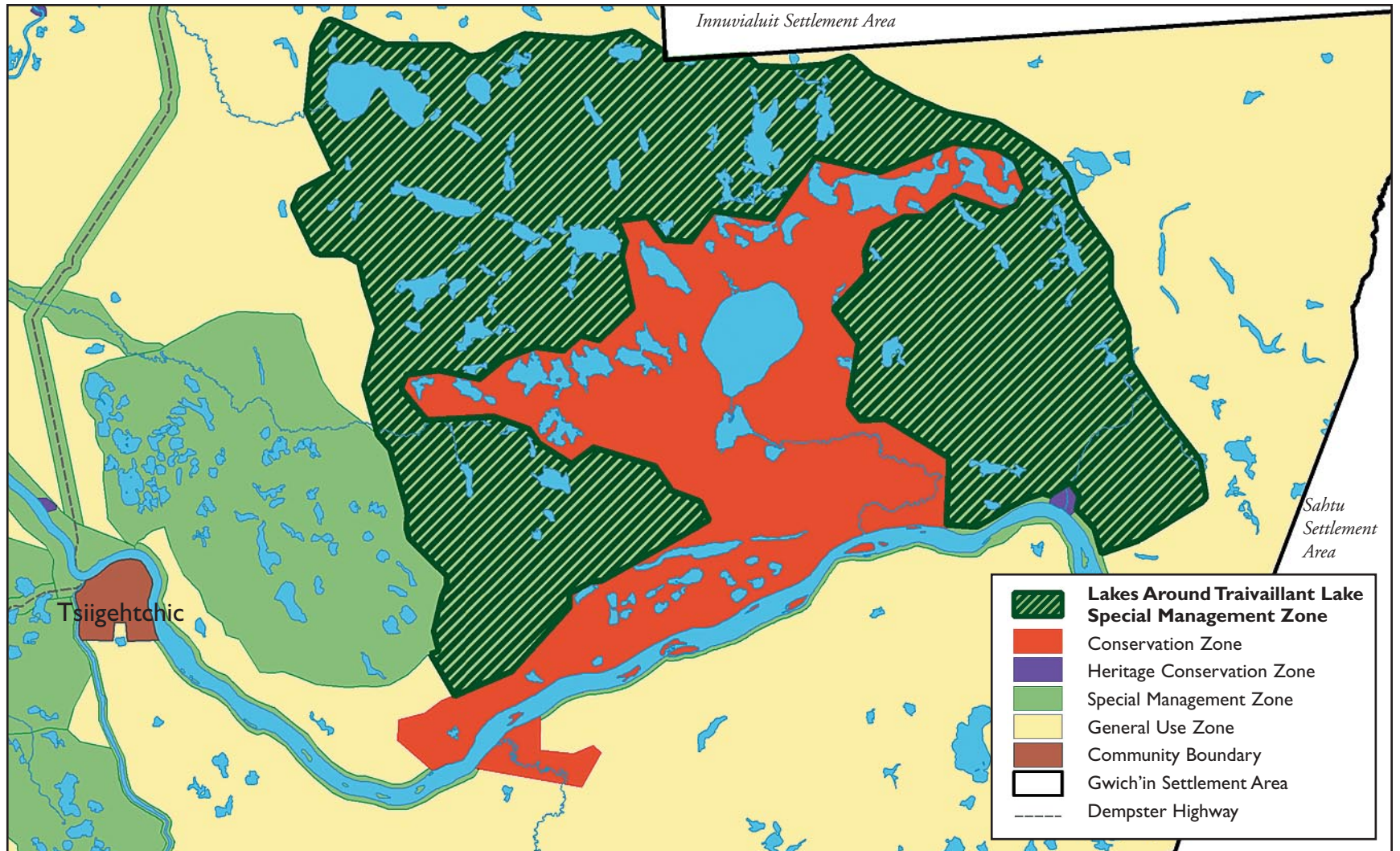
### Conditions for Traditional Fish Harvesting

1. New activities requiring permits, licences or authorizations should not interfere with traditional fish harvesting.
2. Before any activity requiring permits, licences or authorizations takes place the Gwichya Gwich'in Renewable Resource Council, Gwichya Designated Gwich'in Organization, Gwich'in Renewable Resource Board and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans shall be consulted on fish harvesting in the area.

### Conditions for Fish

1. When fish are migrating during peak times in the spring and fall, no new activities requiring permits, licences or authorizations will be allowed in the Lakes Around Travaillant Lake Special Management Zone unless it is demonstrated that no negative impacts on fish habitat will occur. Peak migration times for fish will be established through consultation with the Gwich'in Renewable Resource Board, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and the Gwichya Gwich'in Renewable Resource Council.

Lakes Around Traivaillant Lake Special Management Zone Size: 4,121 km<sup>2</sup> Scale: 1:750,000



### **Conditions for Heritage Resources**

1. Significant heritage resources are known to exist in the area. Applicants for permits, licences and authorizations should be prepared to assess the impact of their proposed activities on known heritage resources in the area and submit a plan for doing so with their applications.
2. Regulatory groups issuing permits, licences or authorizations will work with heritage and community groups on developing conditions for the protection of heritage resources in the area. In this case heritage and community groups refer to the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre, the Gwich'in Social and Cultural Institute and the Gwichya Gwich'in Renewable Resource Council and the Designated Gwich'in Organization.

## 4.5.12 Nagwichoonjik: Mackenzie River Special Management Zone

### Primary Reasons for Special Management Zone

The goal of this Special Management Zone is to protect the resources of the Mackenzie River by applying conditions to activities. The resources identified as needing protection include fish, waterfowl, raptors and heritage. This Special Management Zone is a 500 metre buffer on either side of the Mackenzie River. The Special Management Zone is divided into two sections: 1) Tsiigehtchic to Travaillant River, and 2) Travaillant River to the Gwich'in/Sahtu Border.

Many species of fish migrate on the Mackenzie River and spawn in the smaller rivers and streams along the Mackenzie River. Some of these species include whitefish, jackfish, burbot, trout, perch, walleye, arctic grayling, ciscos, salmon, chub, sucker, sculpin, and arctic lamprey.<sup>39</sup> The Mackenzie River is used for fishing all year round.

The banks of the Mackenzie River near Tsiigehtchic are habitat for raptors. The islands along the Mackenzie River are unique habitat of mature spruce, poplar and willow and support migrating swans and geese in the spring.<sup>40</sup> Waterfowl arrive in early or mid-May and congregate on river islands where open water is available. The open water and exposed shoreline provide the only habitat for feeding, resting and mating during migration. These islands are also used in the fall by waterfowl forced down by bad weather.

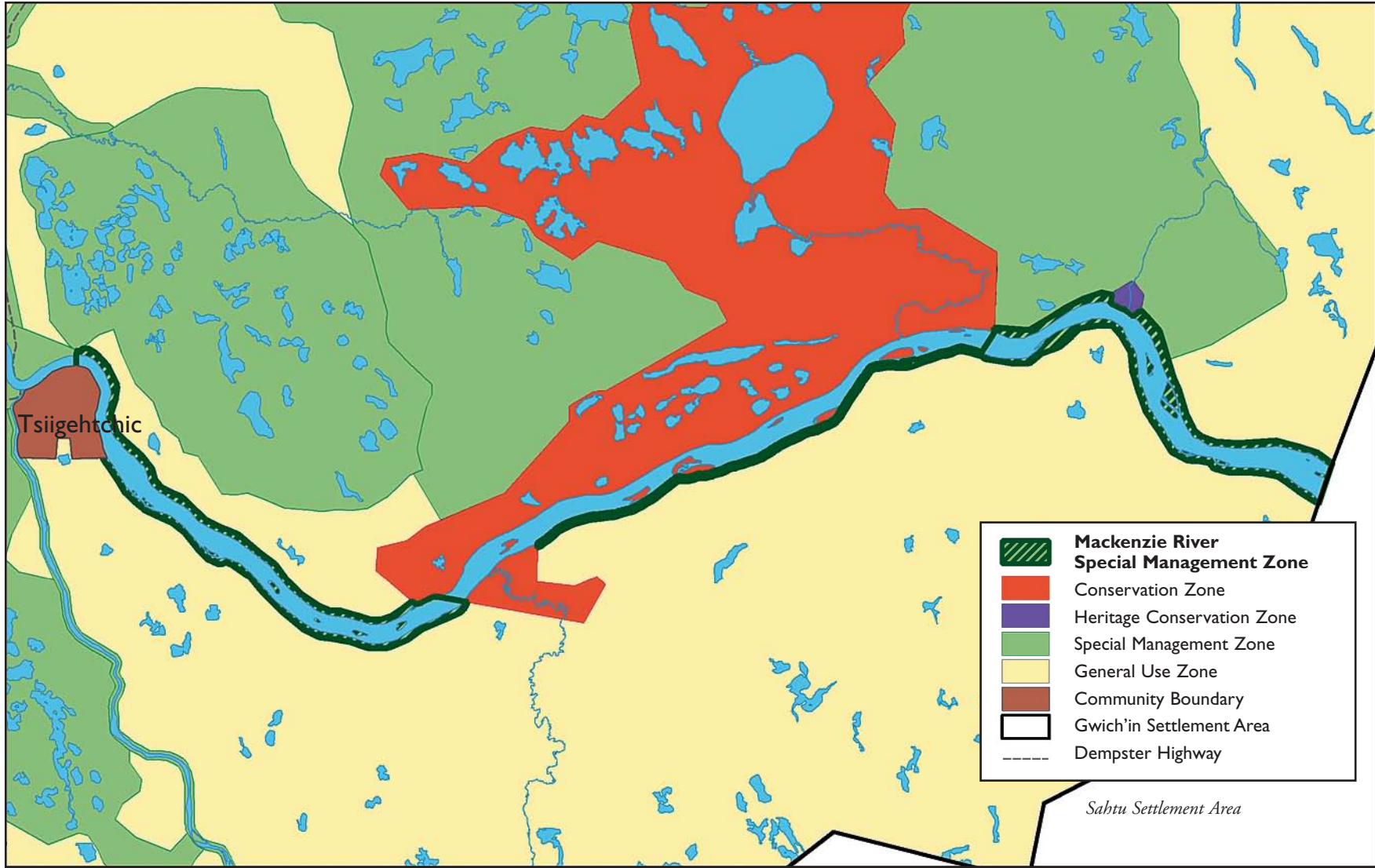
The section of the Mackenzie River between Thunder River and Point Separation at the start of the Mackenzie Delta was named a National Historic Site in 1998. The Mackenzie River is of great importance culturally to the Gwichya Gwich'in of Tsiigehtchic. "As far back as the Gwichya Gwich'in can remember, their traditional lifestyle has been shaped by their close connection to the land and the river".<sup>41</sup> There are many archaeological and cultural sites along the entire Mackenzie River.

Activities are allowed in this Special Management Zone with the following conditions:

### Conditions for Traditional Fish Harvesting

1. New activities requiring permits, licences or authorizations should not interfere with traditional fish harvesting.
2. Before any activity requiring permits, licences or authorizations takes place the Gwichya Gwich'in Renewable Resource Council, Gwichya Designated Gwich'in Organization, Gwich'in Renewable Resource Board and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans shall be consulted on fish harvesting in the area.

**Mackenzie River Special Management Zone** Size: 367 km<sup>2</sup> Scale: 1:650,000



### **Conditions for Fish**

1. When fish are migrating during peak times in the spring and fall, no new activities requiring permits, licences or authorizations will be allowed in the Mackenzie River Special Management Zone unless it is demonstrated that no negative impacts on fish habitat will occur. Peak migration times for fish will be established through consultation with the Gwich'in Renewable Resource Board, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, and the Gwichya Gwich'in Renewable Resource Council.

### **Conditions for Raptors**

1. Activities should demonstrate that there will be no adverse effects on raptor nesting sites from the beginning of March to the end of August.
2. Raptor nesting sites should be avoided by a minimum of 250 metres.<sup>42</sup>
3. Aircraft should maintain a minimum altitude of 650 metres when flying over areas likely to have nesting raptors.<sup>43</sup> Notices will be distributed to all air companies operating in the GSA.

### **Conditions for Waterfowl**

1. Activities requiring a permit, licence or authorization should demonstrate that there will be no adverse effects on waterfowl nesting and staging sites.

### **Conditions for Heritage Resources**

1. Significant heritage resources are known to exist in the area. Applicants for permits, licences and authorizations should be prepared to assess the impact of their proposed activities on known heritage resources in the area and submit a plan for doing so with their applications.
2. Regulatory groups issuing permits, licences or authorizations will work with heritage and community groups on developing conditions for the protection of heritage resources in the area. In this case heritage and community groups refer to the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre, the Gwich'in Social and Cultural Institute and the Gwichya Gwich'in Renewable Resource Council and the Designated Gwich'in Organization.

### **4.5.13 Tsiigehnjik: Arctic Red River Special Management Zone**

#### **Primary Reasons for Special Management Zone**

The goal of the Arctic Red River Special Management Zone is to protect fish and heritage resources by applying conditions to activities. The Special Management Zone is a one kilometer buffer around the Arctic Red River.

Fish species found on the Arctic Red River include burbot, arctic lamprey, broad and lake whitefish, dace, stickleback, jackfish, arctic grayling, chub, sucker, cisco and walleye.<sup>44</sup> The headwaters of the Arctic Red River provide nursery habitat for arctic grayling, chub, sucker and cisco. Its upstream area is a known spawning area for inconnu and suspected to be for arctic cisco. The Gwichya Gwich'in of Tsiigehtchic harvest fish in the Arctic Red River from May through December.

There are many archaeological and heritage sites along the entire Arctic Red River that the Gwich'in would like to see protected. These archaeological and heritage sites are documented in various reports.<sup>45,46</sup>

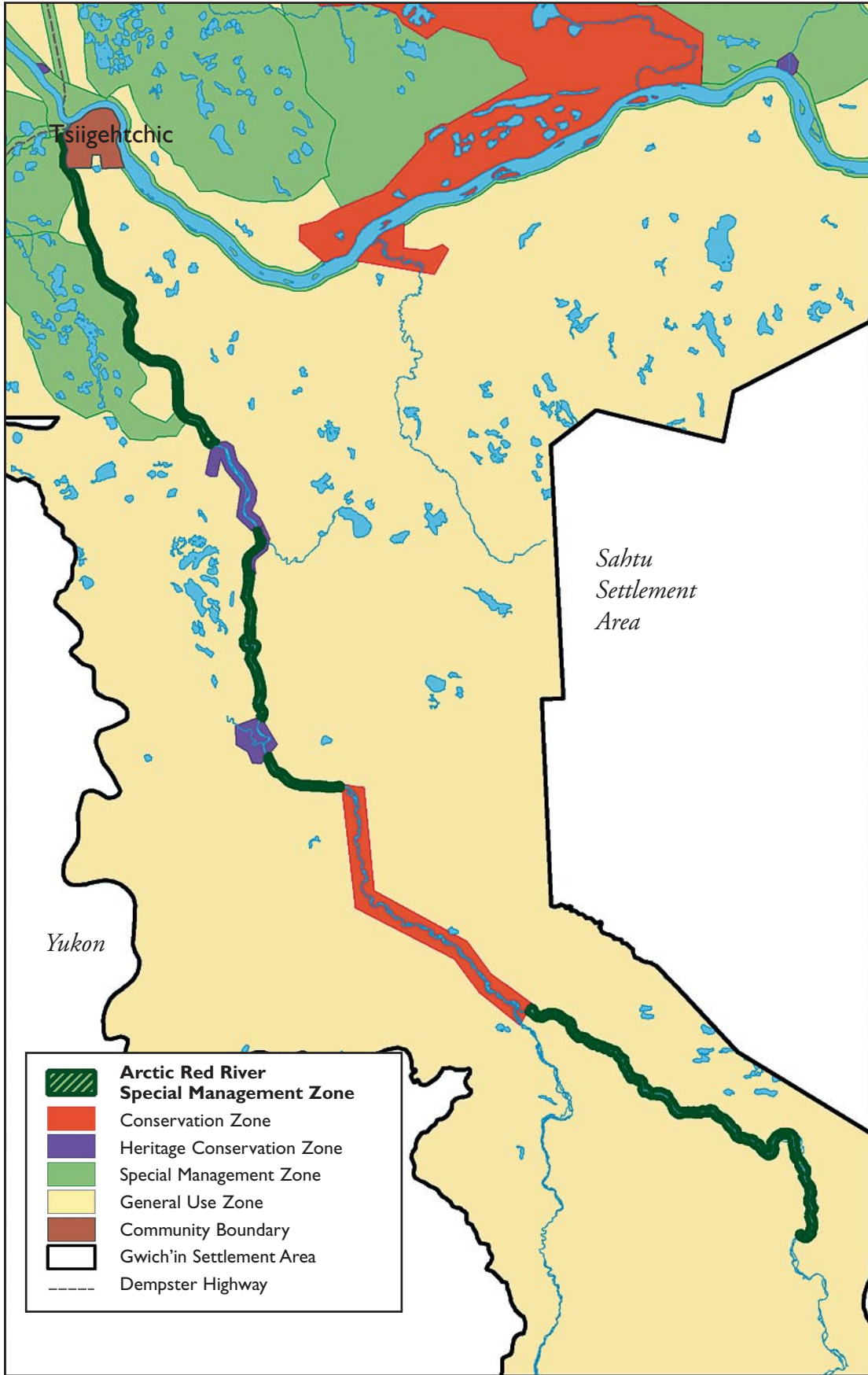
Activities are allowed in this Special Management Zone with the following conditions:

#### **Conditions for Traditional Fish Harvesting**

1. New activities requiring permits, licences or authorizations should not interfere with traditional fish harvesting.
2. Before any activity requiring permits, licences or authorizations takes place the Gwichya Gwich'in Renewable Resource Council, Gwichya Designated Gwich'in Organization, Gwich'in Renewable Resource Board and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans shall be consulted on fish harvesting in the area.

#### **Conditions for Fish**

1. When fish are migrating during peak times in the spring and fall, no new activities requiring permits, licences or authorizations will be allowed in the Arctic Red River Special Management Zone unless it is demonstrated that no negative impacts on fish habitat will occur. Peak migration times for fish will be established through consultation with the Gwich'in Renewable Resource Board, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, and the Gwichya Gwich'in Renewable Resource Council.



### **Conditions for Heritage Resources**

1. Significant heritage resources are known to exist in the area. Applicants for permits, licences and authorizations should be prepared to assess the impact of their proposed activities on known heritage resources in the area and submit a plan for doing so with their applications.
2. Regulatory groups issuing permits, licences or authorizations will work with heritage and community groups on developing conditions for the protection of heritage resources in the area. In this case heritage and community groups refer to the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre, the Gwich'in Social and Cultural Institute and the Gwichya Gwich'in Renewable Resource Council and the Designated Gwich'in Organization.

#### ***4.5.14 Daazraᑭ van k'adh tshik: Swan Lake and Creek Special Management Area***

##### **Primary Reasons for Special Management Zone**

The goal of this Special Management Zone is to protect the fish, heritage and waterfowl resources of the area. The Swan Lake and Creek Area is south of the Dempster Highway and west of the Arctic Red River. The area has many important fishing lakes for the Gwich'in. Swan Creek provides spawning habitat for arctic grayling, sucker and jackfish.<sup>47</sup> The lakes are fished from November to June by the Gwichya Gwich'in. The Swan Lake and Creek Area is also significant for waterfowl in the spring and summer. Ducks, geese and swans nest in the area in the spring.<sup>48</sup>

As the Gwichya Gwich'in have used this area extensively there are many heritage sites associated with the area.<sup>49</sup>

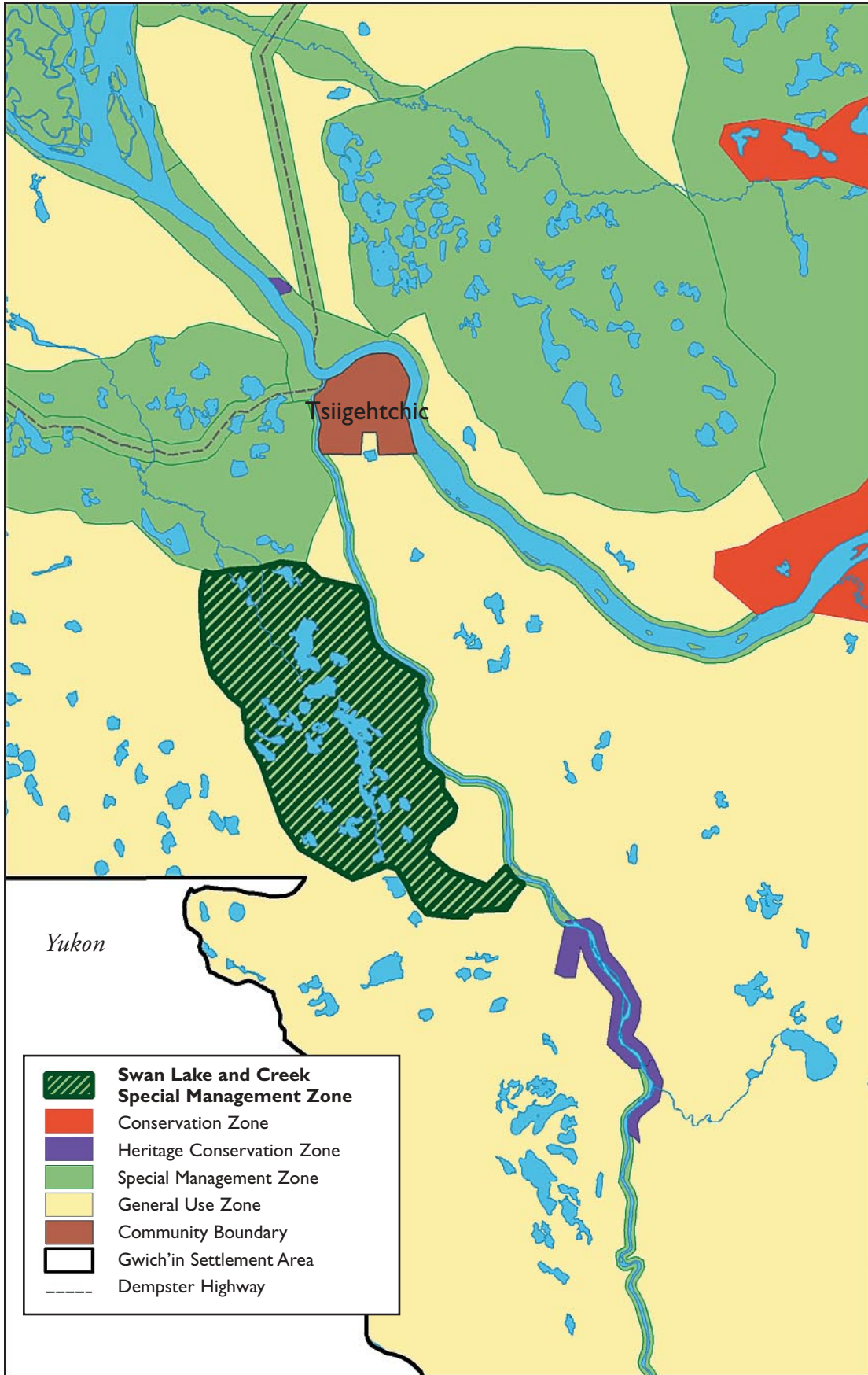
The following are conditions to protect the resources of Swan Lake and Creek:

##### **Conditions for Traditional Fish Harvesting**

1. New activities requiring permits, licences or authorizations should not interfere with traditional fish harvesting.
2. Before any activity requiring permits, licences or authorizations takes place the Gwichya Gwich'in Renewable Resource Council, Gwichya Designated Gwich'in Organization, Gwich'in Renewable Resource Board and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans shall be consulted on fish harvesting in the area.

##### **Conditions for Fish**

1. When fish are migrating during peak times in the spring and fall, no new activities requiring permits, licences or authorizations will be allowed in the Arctic Red River Special Management Zone unless it is demonstrated that no negative impacts on fish habitat will occur. Peak migration times for fish will be established through consultation with the Gwich'in Renewable Resource Board, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, and the Gwichya Gwich'in Renewable Resource Council.



### **Conditions for Waterfowl**

1. Activities requiring a permit, licence or authorization should demonstrate that there will be no adverse effects on waterfowl nesting and staging sites.
2. Any known waterfowl nesting and staging sites discovered during activities, at any time of year, should be avoided by a minimum of 250 metres.<sup>50</sup>
3. Aircraft should maintain a minimum altitude of 650 metres when flying over this Special Management Zone in June, July and August.<sup>51</sup> Notices will be distributed to all air companies operating in the GSA.

### **Conditions for Heritage Resources**

1. Significant heritage resources are known to exist in the area. Applicants for permits, licences and authorizations should be prepared to assess the impact of their proposed activities on known heritage resources in the area and submit a plan for doing so with their applications.
2. Regulatory groups issuing permits, licences or authorizations will work with heritage and community groups on developing conditions for the protection of heritage resources in the area. In this case heritage and community groups refer to the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre, the Gwich'in Social and Cultural Institute and the Gwichya Gwich'in Renewable Resource Council and the Designated Gwich'in Organization.

## **4.5.15 Tsiigehtshik Gwit' lit: Headwaters of the Arctic Red River Special Management Zone**

### **Primary Reasons for Special Management Zone**

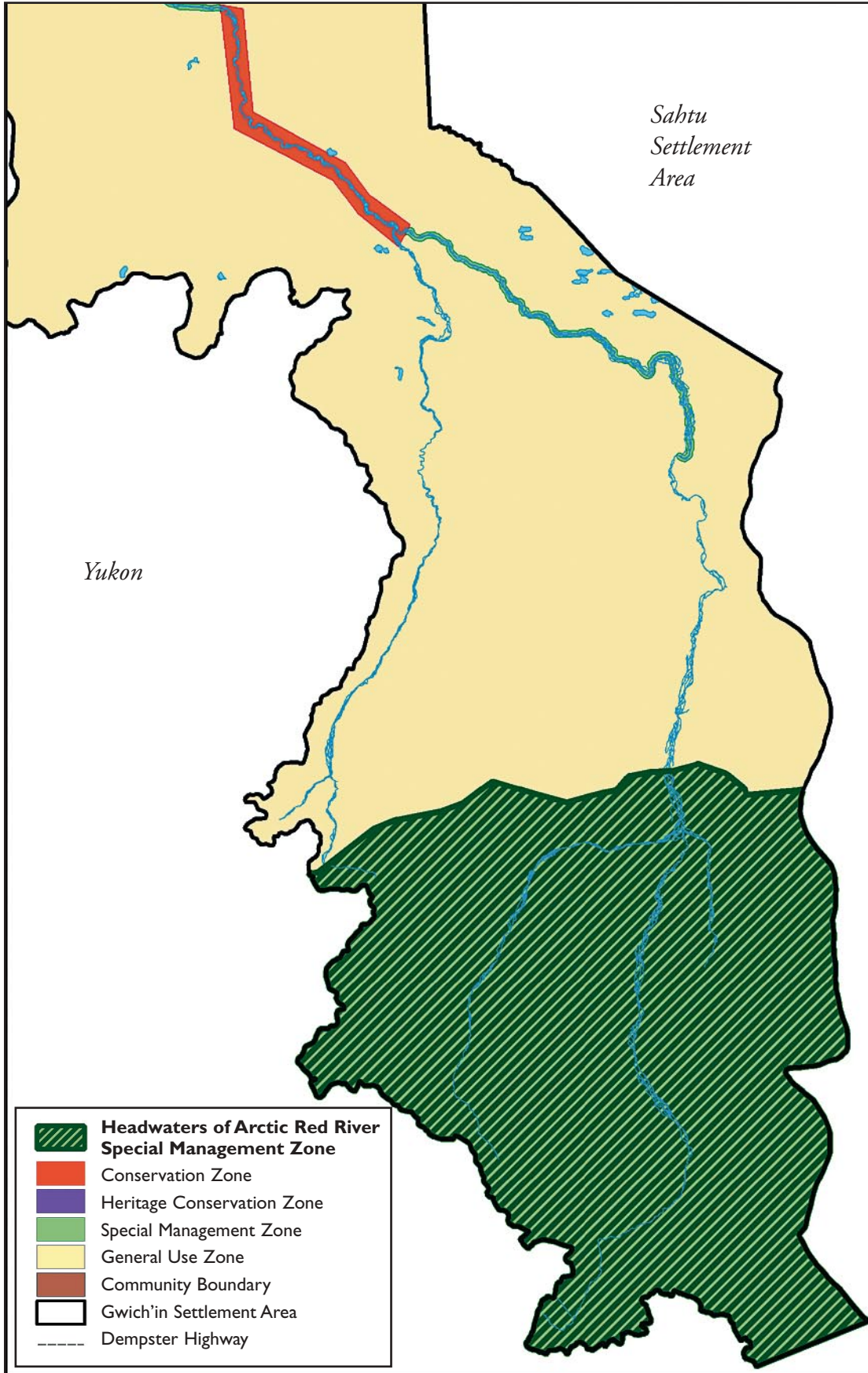
The Gwichya Gwich'in wish to maintain the high water quality of the Arctic Red River. The goal of this Special Management Zone is for the non-degradation or maintenance of the high water quality of the Arctic Red River.<sup>52</sup>

The Headwaters of the Arctic Red River is a large area in the southern part of the Gwich'in Settlement Area, in the Mackenzie Mountains. The Mackenzie Mountains are rugged with imposing peaks, and many non-vegetated slopes. Small glaciers flow from the highest peaks. As this a headwaters area, it plays an important role in maintaining the quality of water in the Arctic Red River. The Arctic Red River and the many fish, forest, wildlife and heritage resources associated with it are of great importance to the Gwichya Gwich'in of Tsiigehtchic.

The following condition is applied to activities in the Special Management Zone:

### **Condition for Water Quality**

1. No new activities requiring permits, licences or authorizations will be allowed until it is demonstrated that water quality, quantity and rate of flow will remain substantially unaltered.<sup>53</sup>



## 4.5.16 *Transportation Special Management Zone*

### **Primary Reasons for Special Management Zone**

The goal of this Transportation Special Management Zone is to allow for activities within a two km wide buffer along the Dempster Highway (1,000 metres on either side of the Highway), while protecting the resource values of the area. Most activities within this buffer will be related to transportation. The Dempster Highway is the most northern highway in North America and provides the Gwich'in Settlement Area with year round access to the south (except for small periods of time during river freeze up and break up). Maintaining the highway is a high priority for the residents and communities in the Gwich'in Settlement Area.

The resources of concern along the Dempster Highway vary depending on location. One common resource along the highway is tourism. Many visitors to the Gwich'in Settlement Area travel on the Dempster Highway and enjoy activities along the Highway. Other resources found along the Dempster Highway are Porcupine caribou, waterfowl, fish, and raptors.

The following are conditions to be applied within the buffer area for three distinct sections of the Dempster Highway:

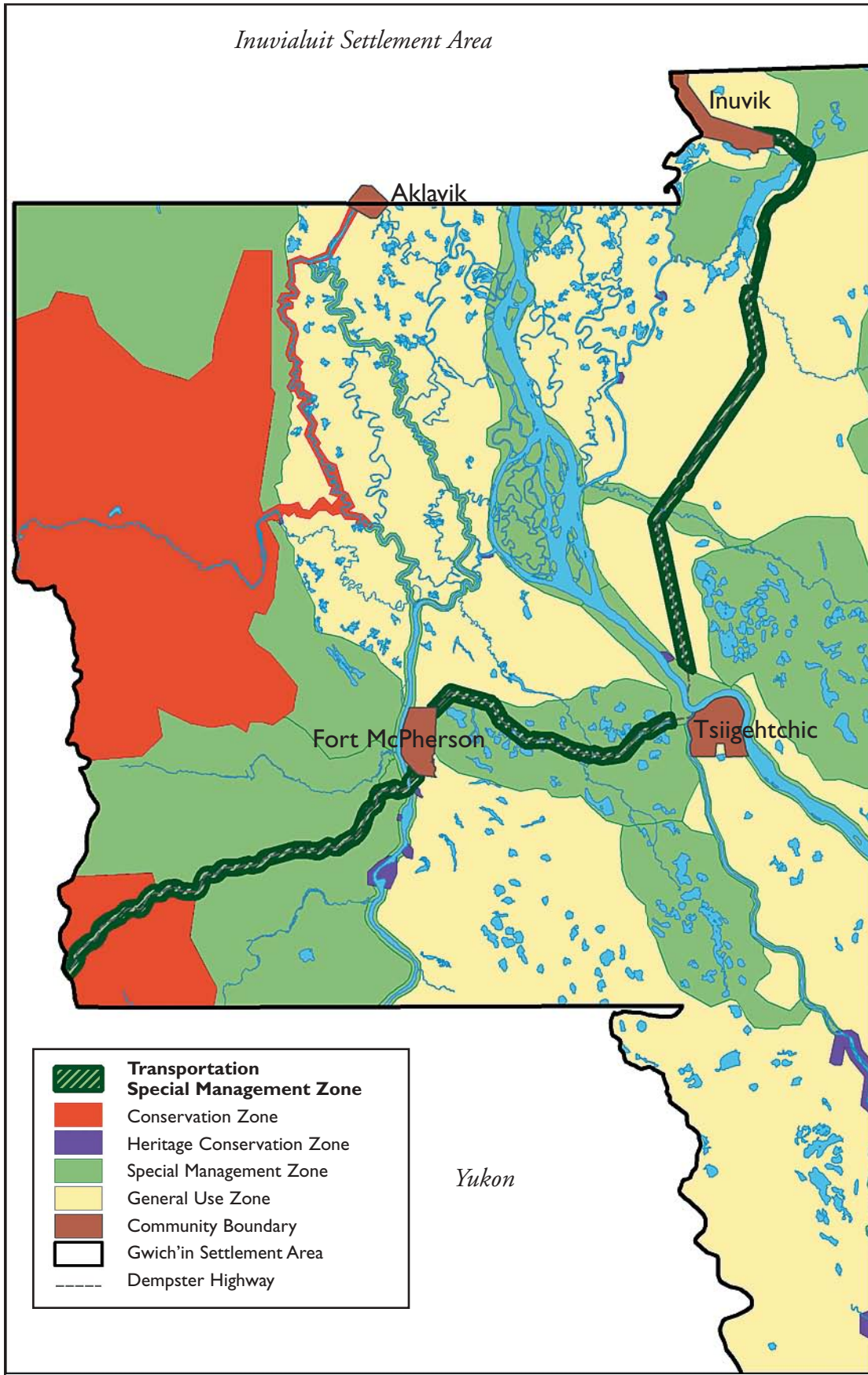
### ***Dempster Highway: Yukon/NWT Border to Peel River (tourism, Porcupine caribou)***

#### **Condition to Protect Tourism Value**

1. Any new activities requiring permits, licences or authorizations taking place within the 2 km buffer along the Dempster Highway, not related to maintenance, construction and operations on the existing right-of-way, should not be visible from the highway.

#### **Conditions for Porcupine Caribou**

1. Activities requiring a permit, license or authorization will not block or cause substantial diversion to migrating Porcupine caribou. Activities that may interfere with migration will cease until the migration has passed. The Planning Board recommends that monitors be used to assess the presence of migrating caribou within proposed activity sites.<sup>54</sup>
2. Activities at any time of the year will not alter the Porcupine caribou migration habitat in a way that will prevent caribou from using the migration corridor in the future.



## ***Dempster Highway: Peel River to Mackenzie River (tourism, waterfowl)***

### **Conditions to Protect Tourism Value**

1. Any new activities requiring permits, licences or authorizations taking place within the 2 km buffer along the Dempster Highway, not related to maintenance, construction and operations on the existing right-of-way, should not be visible from the highway.

### **Conditions for Waterfowl**

1. Activities requiring a permit, licence or authorization should demonstrate that there will be no adverse effects on waterfowl nesting and staging sites.
2. Any known waterfowl nesting and staging sites discovered during activities, at any other time of the year, should be avoided by a minimum of 250 metres.<sup>55</sup>
3. Aircraft should maintain a minimum altitude of 650 metres when flying over this Special Management Zone in June, July and August.<sup>56</sup> Notices will be distributed to all air companies operating in the GSA.

## ***Dempster Highway: Mackenzie River to Inuvik (tourism, peregrine falcons and other raptors)***

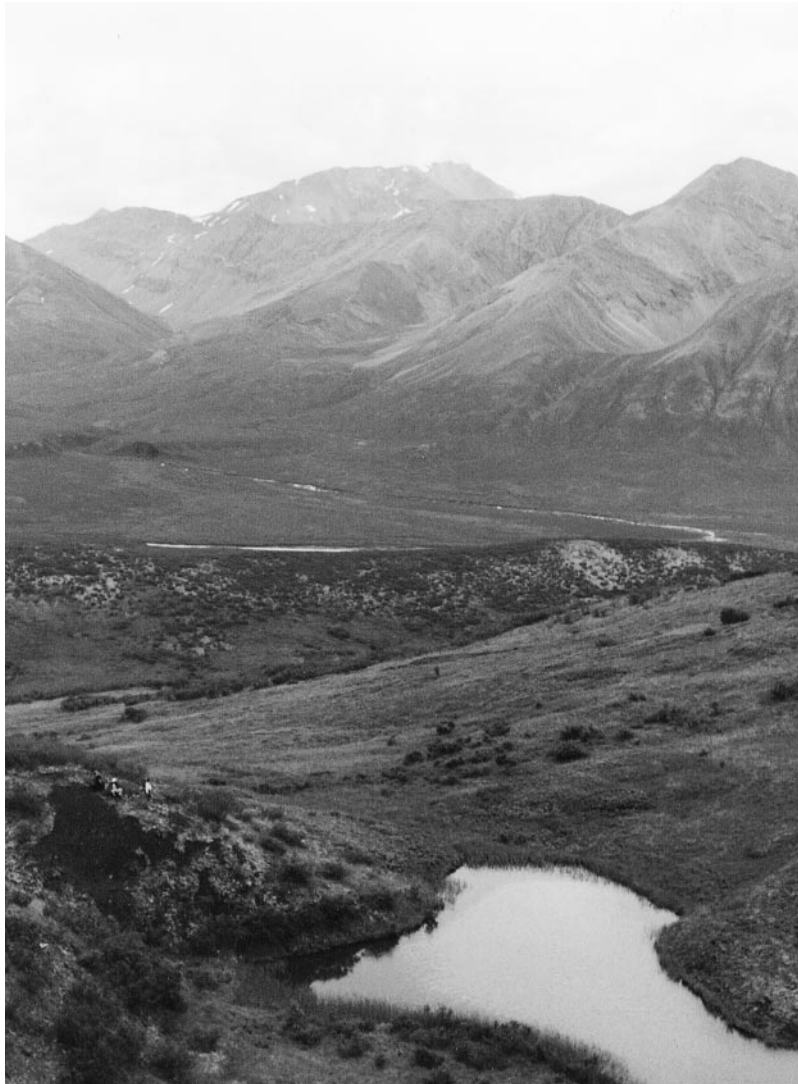
### **Conditions to Protect Tourism Value**

1. Any new activities requiring permits, licences or authorizations taking place within the 2 km buffer along the Dempster Highway, not related to maintenance, construction and operations on the existing right-of-way, should not be visible from the highway.

### **Conditions for Peregrine Falcons and other Raptors**

1. Activities should demonstrate that there will be no adverse effects on raptor nesting sites from the beginning of March to the end of August.
2. Raptor nesting sites should be avoided by a minimum of 250 metres.<sup>57</sup>
3. Aircraft should maintain a minimum altitude of 650 metres when flying over areas likely to have nesting raptors.<sup>58</sup>

## 4.6 Lands in Gwich'in Conservation Zones / Gwich'in Heritage Conservation Zones



Gwich'in Land Use Planning Board

In the Land Use Plan, approximately 10% of the Gwich'in Settlement Area is allocated to the Gwich'in Conservation Zone. Gwich'in Conservation Zones are of extra special value to residents and communities of the Gwich'in Settlement Area. The community perspective on these areas comes from experience on the land and traditional knowledge.

The Gwich'in Conservation Zones were identified primarily in two ways:

1. Areas that communities proposed as candidates for year-round protection; and
2. Areas scientific-based groups proposed as requiring year round protection.

The original areas proposed by communities for year round protection were analyzed by the Planning Board using scientific information and resource development information. Changes made by the Planning Board to the boundaries and status of the original proposed protected areas by communities were based on all available sources of information.

For the Land Use Plan, the Planning Board has identified four Gwich'in Conservation Zones. These four Gwich'in Conservation Zones represent:

- i) core areas communities would like to see protected based on a variety of values ranging from current and historical use, heritage resources, wildlife, fish, forests, vegetation and water resources;
- ii) core areas the scientific community would like to see protected based on critical wildlife habitat and populations, outstanding heritage sites, unique land features and ecological processes;
- iii) five out of the six ecoregions of the Gwich'in Settlement Area; and
- iv) areas that do not unreasonably limit the ability of resource development to occur in the Gwich'in Settlement Area.

In addition to the four Gwich'in Conservation Zones, there are also an additional 13 small Gwich'in Heritage Conservation Zones. These are areas of outstanding historical or cultural significance in the Gwich'in Settlement Area. These areas have the same status as Gwich'in Conservation Zones and were identified through community consultation and with the assistance of the Gwich'in Social and Cultural Institute.

The four Gwich'in Conservation Zones are:

- A. **Ddhah zhit han** (Rat)  
**Eneekaii han** (Husky)  
**Chii gwaazraii** (Black Mountain)
- B. **Dachan dha'aii njik/Vitreekwaa viteetshik** (James Creek/Vittrekwa River)
- C. **Kharii luk, Nagwichoonyik/Dachan choo gehnjik** (Travaillant Lake, Mackenzie/Tree River)
- D. **Tsiigehnjik** (Arctic Red River)

The thirteen Gwich'in Heritage Conservation Zones are:

- H01. **Nichitsii dininlee** (Big Rock)
- H02. **Lenaidlaai** (Earl's Place)
- H03. **Vihtr'ii tshik** (Thunder River)
- H04. **Teetshik goghaa** (Old Arctic Red River)
- H05. **Eltyin choo chihvyaah k'yit** (Jackfish Creek)
- H06. **Martin Zheh** (Martin House)
- H07. **Hehnyuu deet'yah tshik** (Bernard Creek)
- H08. **Tr'ih zhit tagwehdii** (Destruction City)
- H09. **Nagwichoonyik tshik** (Mouth of the Peel)
- H10. **Nataiinlaai** (8 mile)
- H11. **Shildii** (Shiltee Rock)
- H12. **Dèeddhoo gòonlii** (Many Scrapers)
- H13. **Tl'oondih**



Ron Cruikshank

## **Ddhah zhit han Eneekaii han Chii gwaazraii**

### **Primary Reasons for Conservation Zone**

- Spawning and nursing, migration habitat for dolly varden charr.
- Lambing and rutting habitat for Dall's sheep.
- Porcupine caribou migration corridor.

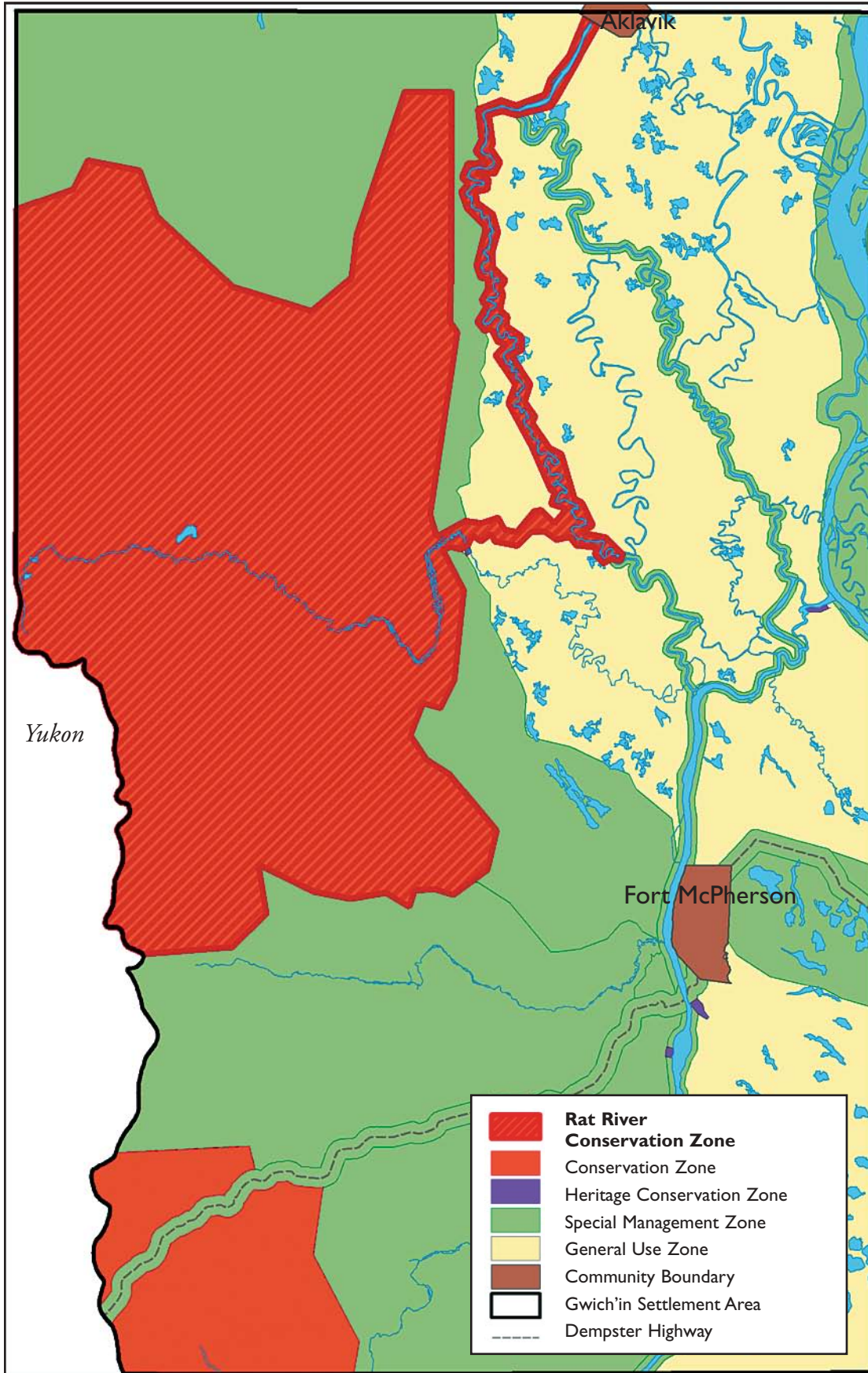
### **Location and Boundary**

The Rat, Husky, Black Mountain Area (2,877 km<sup>2</sup>) is found primarily in the Richardson Mountains between the communities of Fort McPherson and Aklavik. The boundary includes the Rat River Watershed, Black Mountain, and the Husky Channel in the Mackenzie Delta. This Gwich'in Conservation Zone is within three ecoregions: the British-Richardson Mountains (Richardson Mountains), the Peel River Plateau and the Mackenzie Delta.

### **More Information on Reasons for Conservation**

#### *Environment*

The dolly varden charr are a highly valuable but small population of fish. The population is being monitored closely by the Gwich'in Renewable Resource Board and Department of Fisheries and Oceans because there are concerns that the charr population may be in decline. The charr rely on a variety of habitats. The majority of the charr spawn and overwinter in the spring-fed fish holes of Fish Creek, a tributary of the Rat River in the Richardson Mountains. Charr then migrate in the spring on the Rat River to the Husky Channel of the Mackenzie Delta to feed in the Beaufort Sea.<sup>59</sup> The charr return upstream in August and early September, via the Husky channel, to their overwintering and spawning habitat.<sup>60</sup>



The Husky Channel is within the Mackenzie Delta. The Delta is a significant area for furbearers, waterfowl and other migratory birds as well as fish species.<sup>61</sup> Delta channels like the Husky contain many fish species including broad and lake whitefish, inconnu, trout, burbot, jackfish, chum salmon and charr.<sup>62</sup>

The Rat River watershed in general is significant for fish and wildlife including furbearers, moose, peregrine falcons, grizzly bears, Porcupine caribou and Dall's sheep.<sup>63</sup> Dall's sheep lamb and rut primarily within the Rat River watershed and in the Black Mountain area. The Department of Renewable Resources has identified the Rat River/Black Mountain Area as a Wildlife Area of Special Interest for Dall's sheep. Porcupine caribou migrate through the Rat River and Black Mountain areas in the spring, winter and fall.<sup>64</sup>

### *Traditional Use and Cultural Significance*

The Rat, Husky and Black Mountain areas are used year round by Gwich'in for fishing, hunting, trapping and berry picking. There are numerous fish camps along the Husky Channel used by Gwich'in from Fort McPherson and Aklavik for summer and fall fishing. The main fish species taken are whitefish as well as inconnu, charr, burbot, lake whitefish, arctic cisco and jackfish.<sup>65</sup> The main channels of the Mackenzie Delta in general are all used by the Gwich'in for fishing and waterfowl hunting.

There are many cultural and archaeological sites significant to the Gwich'in on the Husky Channel and in the Rat River/Black Mountain area.<sup>66</sup> One of the significant sites is a caribou corral near Horn Lake.<sup>67</sup>

Through the Gwich'in Renewable Resource Board's traditional knowledge project, the Rat River Watershed has been identified as significant for charr as well as inconnu, muskrat, moose and Porcupine caribou. The Mackenzie Delta in general has been identified through the project as significant for swans, geese, ducks, black bears, moose and grizzly bears.

### *Resource Development Potential*

There are minor mineral occurrences of copper and gypsum in the Richardson Mountains. At this time there is no evidence that it is economical to develop these resources. There is also potential for oil reserves along the Eskimo and Trevor Faults, within the Rat River Watershed.<sup>68</sup> The fault bisects the Rat River Watershed near the mouth of the Rat River. No oil and gas pipeline corridors are planned through the Rat River – Black Mountain area. A gravel deposit has been identified along Stoney Creek within the southern portion of the Rat River Watershed. There is also the potential for sport hunting in this area, particularly for Dall's Sheep.

### **Planning Board Decision Making**

The Rat, Husky, Black Mountain Conservation Zone protects a variety of linked habitats for many wildlife species and for Gwich'in cultural and traditional values. The Rat River Watershed, the Black Mountain area and the Husky Channel all ranked very high in the Planning Board's review of the Proposed Community Protected Areas. Within the Mackenzie Delta the Husky Channel stood out as significant for fishing, trapping, hunting, and as wildlife and fish habitat.

The Planning Board through this conservation zone boundary recognizes the importance of the Mackenzie Delta and the Richardson Mountains while protecting the habitat of critical wildlife and fish species including dolly varden charr, Dall's sheep, grizzly bear and Porcupine caribou. The Planning Board in making this decision considered the strong support of the communities of Fort McPherson and Aklavik for protection of the Rat River Watershed, the Husky Channel and Black Mountain.

The resource development potential of the area for oil and gas in this instance does not outweigh the cultural and environmental values of the area for the Gwich'in and residents of the area in general.

### **Expected Land Uses within the Rat, Husky, Black Mountain Conservation Zone**

Traditional activities are expected to continue in the Rat, Husky, Black Mountain Conservation Zone. Due to wildlife resources in this area there may be the possibility for sport hunting or other related tourism activities. The Planning Board will consider an exception to the Land Use Plan for sport hunting or other activities proposed by a Gwich'in community group. One condition for this type of exception would be written support from the Teet'it Gwich'in Renewable Resource Council and Designated Gwich'in Organization, the Ehdiitat Gwich'in Renewable Resource Council and Designated Gwich'in Organization, the Gwich'in Tribal Council, the Gwich'in Renewable Resource Board and the Gwich'in Land and Water board.



GNWT – RWED

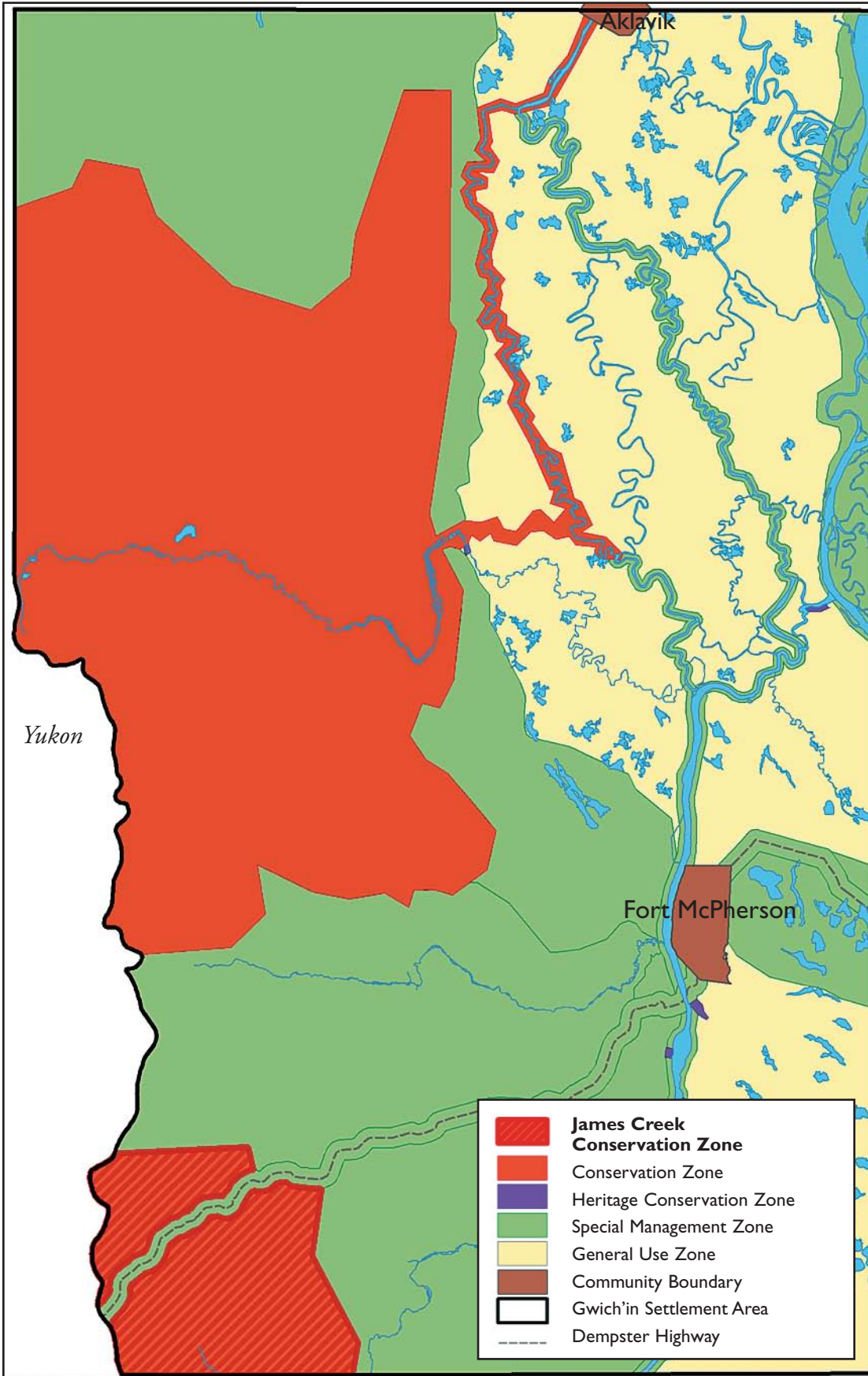
**Dachan  
dha'aai jik/  
Vitreekwaa  
viteetshik**

### **Primary Reasons for Conservation Zone**

- James Creek is the headwaters area for the Vittrekwa River.
- Spawning and nursery area for dolly varden charr on the Vittrekwa River.
- Porcupine Caribou migration corridor.
- Primary Hunting Area for Porcupine Caribou.
- Source of Drinking Water for many people from Fort McPherson and Tsiigehtchic.
- Scenic Area of Tourism Value along the Dempster Highway.

### **Location and Boundary**

The James Creek/Vittrekwa River Conservation Zone (432 km<sup>2</sup>) is found adjacent to the NWT/Yukon border and is divided into two sections by the Dempster Highway. One section is north of the Dempster Highway and the other section is south of the highway. A two kilometer buffer (1,000 m each side) exists along the Dempster Highway for transportation related activities. This buffer falls outside the conservation area boundary.



The conservation area boundary includes all of the James Creek watershed and the portion of the Vittrekwa River in the Northwest Territories. The James Creek/Vittrekwa River Conservation Zone is within the ecoregion called the British-Richardson Mountains (Richardson Mountains).

### **More Information on Reasons for Conservation**

#### *Environment*

James Creek is the headwaters area for the Vittrekwa River. It has recently been confirmed by the Gwich'in Renewable Resource Board that the Vittrekwa River is a spawning and nursery area for dolly varden charr. Dolly varden charr are a highly valued local fish species.

The James Creek/Vittrekwa River Conservation Zone is sensitive habitat for grizzly bears in all seasons and significant habitat for furbearers in the winter.<sup>69</sup> Porcupine Caribou migrate through James Creek/Vittrekwa River area in the fall, winter, and spring.<sup>70</sup>

#### *Traditional Use and Cultural Significance*

James Creek is the most important area in the Gwich'in Settlement Area for Porcupine caribou hunting. Gwich'in people from all communities particularly Fort McPherson, hunt caribou in this area. The James Creek/Vittrekwa River Area has historically been used and is still used by the Teetl'it Gwich'in of Fort McPherson for hunting and trapping. James Creek is documented as a historical caribou hunting area.<sup>71</sup>

James Creek is also an important site for fresh drinking water for the community of Fort McPherson. People from Tsiigehtchic also obtain drinking water from James Creek.

#### *Resource Development Potential*

As the Dempster Highway bisects James Creek there is already a level of development within the area. The Department of Transportation has expressed an interest in sand, gravel and rock material along the Dempster Highway through the James Creek Area.

### **Planning Board Decision Making**

The Planning Board focused on the value of this area for all Gwich'in as a caribou hunting location and as a spawning area for dolly varden charr when identifying it as a Gwich'in Conservation Zone. The James Creek watershed boundary is significant as many Gwich'in use James Creek as a source of drinking water.

Due to the area's value for caribou hunting and clean water there is strong community support, from Fort McPherson in particular, for protection of James Creek. James Creek and the Vittrekwa River areas did not rank as high as some other areas in the Planning Board's analysis of the Proposed Community Protected Areas, but these areas ranked highest for current Gwich'in harvesting. The James Creek Area also scored high for resource development potential because of the Dempster Highway. To deal with potential development, the James Creek/Vittrekwa River Conservation Zone is divided into two areas with a transportation corridor in between to accommodate activities such as sand, gravel and rock extraction.

### **Expected Land Uses within the James Creek/Vittrekwa River Conservation Zone**

Traditional activities are expected to continue in the James Creek/Vittrekwa River Conservation Zone. As the area is accessible from the Dempster Highway there may be the possibility for intensive tourism activities. Commercial renewable resource activities proposed by a Gwich'in community group will be considered for an exception to the Gwich'in Land Use Plan by the Planning Board. One condition for this type of exception would be written support from the Teet'it Gwich'in Renewable Resource Council and Designated Gwich'in Organization, the Gwich'in Tribal Council, the Gwich'in Renewable Resource Board, and the Gwich'in Land and Water Board.



## **Khaii luk, Nagwichoonjik Dachan choo gehnjik**

### **Primary Reasons for Conservation Zone**

- Headwaters area for the Travaillant, Kugaluk and Anderson Rivers
- Wintering Area for the Bluenose Caribou
- Significant Waterfowl Habitat on Travaillant Lake and River, and Mackenzie River
- Significant migration corridor for fish species on Mackenzie River
- Unique whitefish population in Travaillant Lake
- Significant Forest Resources up Tree River
- Culturally Significant for Gwich'in
- Current Harvesting Area for Gwich'in (fish, furbearers, caribou, waterfowl, moose)
- Protection for portion of the Mackenzie River National Historic Site
- Important fishing lakes in the area

### **Location**

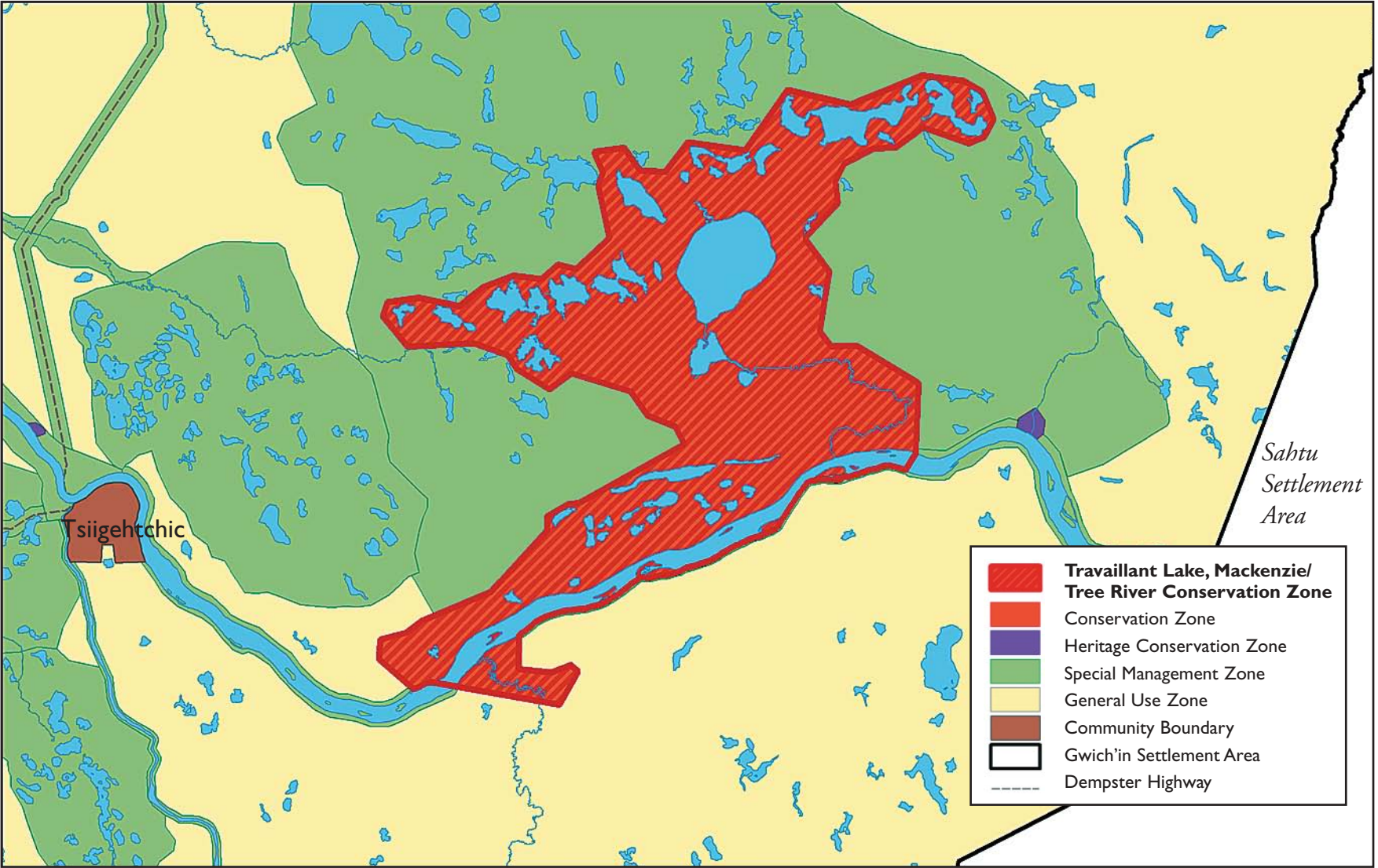
The Travaillant Lake, Mackenzie/Tree River – Gwich'in Conservation Zone is found primarily along the north side of the Mackenzie River. It is east of the Dempster Highway, centred around Travaillant Lake Area itself. The Conservation Zone is approximately 2275 km<sup>2</sup> in size. The Travaillant Lake, Mackenzie/Tree River area is found within two ecoregions: Great Bear Lake Plain and Fort McPherson Plain.

### **More Information on Reasons for Conservation**

#### *Environment*

The Travaillant Lake Area is a headwaters area for the Kugaluk and Anderson Rivers flowing northeast to the Arctic Ocean, and the Travaillant River flowing south into the Mackenzie River.

**Travaillant Lake, Mackenzie/Tree River Conservation Zone** Size: 2,275 km<sup>2</sup> Scale: 1:750,000



The Bluenose caribou herd migrates into the Travaillant Lake Area in the winter. Travaillant Lake Area is significant habitat for furbearers including bears.<sup>72</sup> The mainstem of the Mackenzie River is also significant for river otters and moose.<sup>73</sup>

Travaillant Lake, Mackenzie/Tree River area is sensitive waterfowl habitat in the spring and fall.<sup>74</sup> The southern edge of Travaillant Lake has high concentrations of breeding and moulting waterfowl in the spring, and is a spring and fall staging area.<sup>75</sup> The islands along the Mackenzie River between Tsiigehtchic and Fort Good Hope are unique habitat of mature spruce, poplar and willow supporting migrating swans and geese in the spring. Waterfowl arrive in early or mid-May and congregate on river islands where open water is available.<sup>76</sup> The open water and exposed shoreline provide the only habitat for feeding, resting and mating during migration.<sup>77</sup> These islands are also used in the fall by waterfowl forced down by bad weather.

Travaillant Lake sustains its own population of whitefish, as well as having whitefish migrate in and out of the lake.<sup>78</sup> Trout, broad and lake whitefish are fished on Travaillant Lake all year around. Many species of fish migrate on the Mackenzie River and spawn in the smaller rivers and streams along the Mackenzie River. Some of the many fish species include whitefish, jackfish, inconnu, burbot, trout, walleye, arctic grayling, and salmon.<sup>79</sup> Arctic grayling and burbot spawn just upstream from the mouth of Tree River.<sup>80</sup>

### **Traditional Use and Cultural Significance**

There are many heritage and archaeological sites in the Travaillant Lake, Mackenzie/Tree River area.<sup>81</sup> Archaeological evidence of Gwichya Gwich'in occupation of the area dates back thousands of years, and therefore the area contains many cultural sites such as burial grounds, trails, old camps and sacred places.<sup>82</sup>

The Travaillant Lake, Mackenzie/Tree River area is of critical importance to the people of Tsiigehtchic. The area is used for fishing all year round. Fishing areas include many lakes like Travaillant, Andrew, Tregnantchiez and Deep Lakes as well as the Mackenzie River. It is a hunting area for moose and caribou and a good trapping area for marten, beaver, muskrat, otter, mink, lynx, wolverine, fox and wolf. Many of these species are identified through the Gwich'in Renewable Resource Board's traditional knowledge project.

The section of the Mackenzie River between Thunder River and Point Separation, at the start of the Mackenzie Delta, is the Nagwichoonjik National Historic Site. The Mackenzie River is of great importance culturally to the Gwichya Gwich'in of Tsiigehtchic. "As far back as the Gwichya Gwich'in can remember, their traditional lifestyle has been shaped by their close connection to the land and the river".<sup>83</sup> The Gwich'in Social and Cultural Institute strongly support the protection of the National Historic Site.

## **Resource Development Potential**

There are a number of development opportunities in the Travaillant Lake, Mackenzie/Tree River Gwich'in Conservation Zone. There are proposed routings for the Mackenzie Highway extension and oil and gas pipelines through the area. There are numerous sand and gravel deposits west of Travaillant Lake.

The area is also within the geological formation called the Interior Platform. This formation, that encompasses the majority of the Gwich'in Settlement Area, shows a potential for oil and gas reserves.<sup>84</sup> One small section of an oil and gas exploration licence overlaps with the Travaillant Lake, Mackenzie/Tree River Gwich'in Conservation Zone. While this interest is covered by the provisions of section 4.2.3, the Planning Board encourages the proponent and regulatory authorities to consult with the Planning Board to minimize any impact in this area.

The Mackenzie River itself is a transportation corridor for barges and other smaller boats.

## **Planning Board Decision Making**

There are many reasons why the Planning Board has chosen the Travaillant Lake, Mackenzie/Tree River area as a Gwich'in Conservation Zone. The primary reason is the overwhelming support by the Gwichya Gwich'in of Tsiigehtchic for the strongest protection measures possible for this area. There is strong community support for this conservation area based on cultural and environmental values. In the Planning Board's ranking of the proposed community protected areas, based on environmental and cultural values, the Travaillant Lake, Mackenzie/Tree River area came in the top five areas.

The conservation area boundary includes key wildlife areas. Waterfowl habitat is protected by including Travaillant Lake and River, as well as a section of the Mackenzie River in the boundary. Fish resources are considered by including many fish lakes and a portion of the Mackenzie River. The boundary for the conservation area follows, where possible, watershed boundaries.

Four significant heritage sites are included within the conservation area boundary: North Travaillant Lake (Teeląu), South Travaillant Lake (Teedhaa), Mouth of Travaillant River and Mouth of Tree River. These sites were used historically and are still used today as camp sites. In the summer and fall, people would gather in these areas mainly to fish. There are cabins and stages around these sites. The Travaillant Lake, Mackenzie/Tree River area boundary takes in the trails most often used by the Gwich'in for traditional uses.

However, the conservation zone boundary overlaps with the proposed Mackenzie Highway extension route and oil and gas pipeline routes.<sup>85</sup> The route for the Mackenzie Highway extension is outlined in the Gwich'in Land Claim. The Planning Board acknowledges the Mackenzie Highway extension route and allows it as a land use through the Travaillant, Mackenzie/Tree River Gwich'in Conservation Zone. There is also the possibility that an oil or gas pipeline will be proposed during the five year life of the Plan. The Planning Board will consider, with all other appropriate groups, a proposed pipeline corridor through the Conservation Zone. If the proposed pipeline corridor is through a Gwich'in Conservation Zone, the Planning Board will approve it as a permitted use, provided it meets the conditions outlined in Section 4.2.4. The preference of the Planning Board would be a pipeline corridor that is aligned with the proposed Mackenzie Highway extension route. As well, the Planning Board will continue to allow transportation uses to occur on the Mackenzie River.

## **Expected Land Uses within the Travaillant Lake, Mackenzie River/Tree River Conservation Zone**

Traditional activities are expected to continue in the Mackenzie River/Tree River Conservation Zone.

The proposed Mackenzie Highway extension may be proposed as a possible development activity in the next five years. The alignment of the Mackenzie Highway extension is outlined in the Gwich'in Land Claim. When the highway route is finalized, an amendment to the Plan will be required. The Planning Board will also allow all types of transportation activities on the Mackenzie River. These include transportation activities related to oil and gas development, sand, gravel and crushed rock extraction, as well as highway and pipeline development as long as:

- a) water quantity, water quality and the rate of flow of water are substantially unaltered; and
- b) there are no adverse impacts on the river bed below the Mackenzie River, on the Mackenzie River islands, or the Mackenzie River shoreline.



**Tsiigehnjik**

Ron Cruikshank

### **Primary Reasons for Conservation Zone**

- spawning grounds for inconnu
- protection for heritage resources

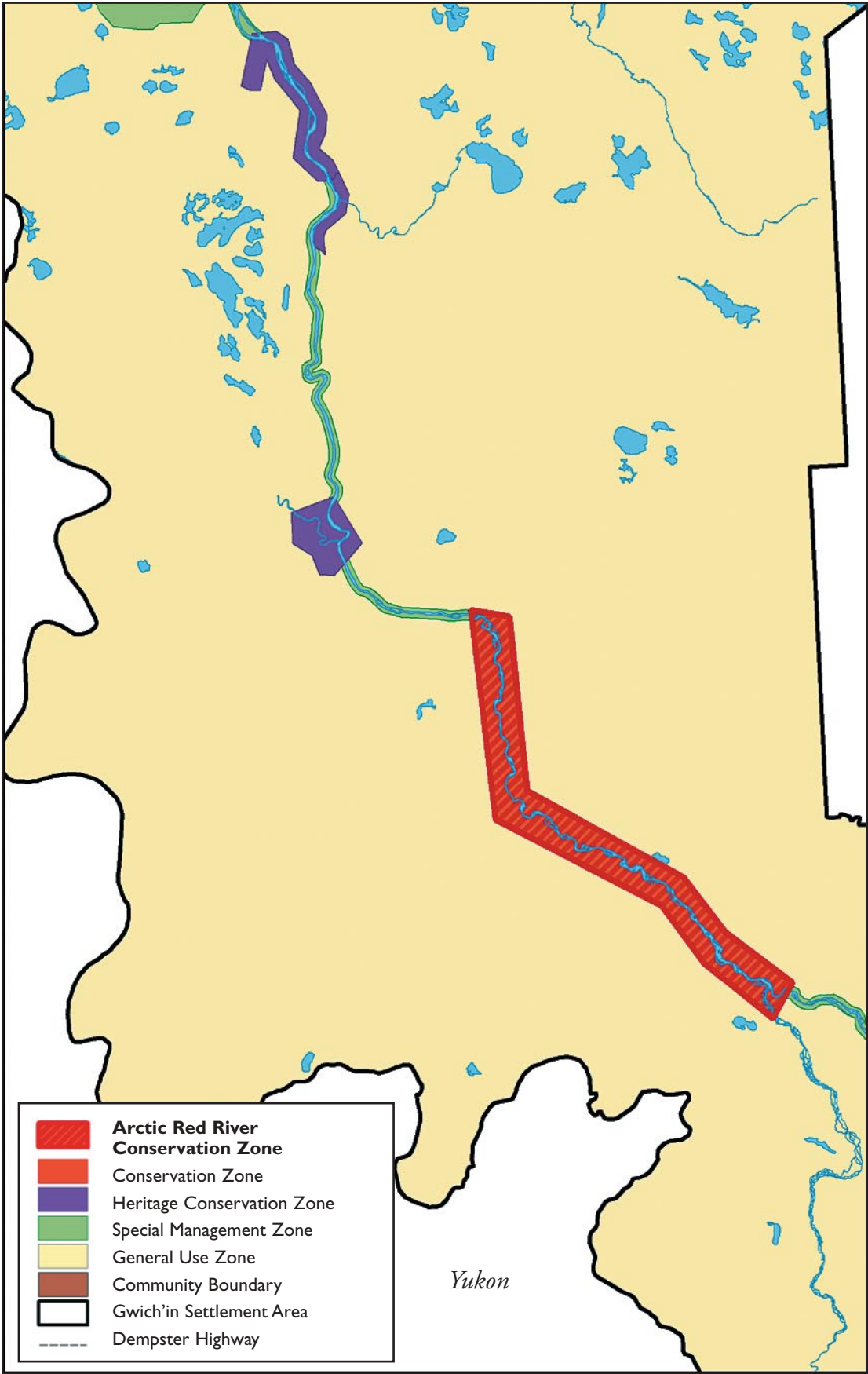
### **Location**

This Gwich'in Conservation Zone (194 km<sup>2</sup>) is in the upper section of the Arctic Red River. The Arctic Red River spawning area is found within the Fort McPherson Plain ecoregion.

### **More Information on Reasons for Conservation**

#### *Environment*

The Department of Fisheries and Oceans has recently documented this site as a spawning area for inconnu.<sup>86</sup> The gravel beds of this area provide inconnu with critical spawning habitat.



### *Traditional Use and Cultural Significance*

There are three outstanding heritage sites within the Arctic Red River Conservation Zone:

- Teetshik gwichoo (Weldon Creek),
- Jùuk'an (on the Arctic Red River near the Forks), and
- Łudl̥aıı (the Forks – Cranswick and Arctic Red River)

Teetshik gwichoo is at the mouth Weldon Creek at the Arctic Red River. People coming from the mountains stopped at Teetshik gwichoo to make moose skin boats.<sup>87</sup> Jùuk'an refers to a spot on the Arctic Red River that is often “smoking”. Smoke can be seen rising from the land and the smell of sulphur is noticeable. Łudl̥aıı is where the Cranswick and the Arctic Red River meet. This is one of the most picturesque and colourful places on the Arctic Red River. There are high eroding black shale cliffs with splashes of red, orange, green, purple and yellow sediments. Elders explain that people climbed up into the mountains from the forks through an old time trail between the two rivers.<sup>88</sup>

### *Resource Development Potential*

There is some potential that non-renewable resources like gravel, as well as oil and gas exist in this general area. However, the Planning Board knows of no development interests in this area.

### **Planning Board Decision Making**

As a general policy, the Planning Board is protecting spawning areas in the Gwich'in Settlement Area. Fish are an important resource in the Gwich'in Settlement Area meriting protection. Spawning habitat in particular is critical in fish life cycles therefore these sites should be protected.

As well the Planning Board is protecting significant heritage sites in the Gwich'in Settlement Area.

### **Expected Land Uses within the Arctic Red River Spawning Ground**

There are few land uses expected in this area. There may be some traditional activities such as hunting and trapping in this area.

## Background Information for each Gwich'in Heritage Conservation Zone

### Nichìitsı̀ dìniinlee

#### *Big Rock (H01)*

This place refers to three massive rocks along the East Channel of the Mackenzie River just south of Campbell Hills.<sup>89</sup> These rocks are considered to be the same type of rock found in the Campbell Hills. The Gwichya Gwich'in gathered at Dìniinlee in the summer and had fish camps around Dìniinlee. People arrived at Dìniinlee in early June to fish and stayed until August. In the early 1900s several people stayed in this area year round because it was a good area for hunting furbearers in the winter and muskrat and waterfowl in the spring.

### Łenaidłau

#### *Earl's Place (H02)*

There used to be a small town at this site in the 1920s and 1930s. This site refers to where Rudolph Channel and the East Channel of the Mackenzie River meet and flow together.<sup>90</sup> Many cabins were built in this area. There was also a trading post run by Billy Phillips (Tommy Wright's grandfather) and his wife Jane Enoch Phillips.<sup>91</sup> Billy Phillips' trading post was popular because it meant people did not have to travel to Aklavik or Tsiigehtchic for supplies.

### Vihtr'ii tshik

#### *Thunder River (H03)*

Vihtr'ii tshik is a very important site for the Gwichya Gwich'in. The Gwichya Gwich'in used to travel up the Mackenzie River to this site to find stones for making arrowheads, scrapers and flint.<sup>92</sup> These tools were absolutely necessary. The Vihtr'ii tshik site was where people found stones and made tools. According to custom, people would acknowledge the importance of the site by leaving a small item as a token of gratitude in place of the stone that had been removed.<sup>93</sup>

## Teetshik goghaa

### *Old Arctic Red River (H04)*

Teetshik goghaa is the old town site for Tsiigehtchic. It is about 10 kilometres down river from Tsiigehtchic on the Mackenzie River. People used to arrive at Teetshik goghaa in the spring and stay about a month.<sup>94</sup> After the long winter people would enjoy each others company and have many feasts and dances. The Roman Catholic Church built a small mission at this site. As it was a very windy spot, the mission and town site was moved to its present location.

## Eltyin choo chihvyàh k'yit

### *Jackfish Creek (H05)*

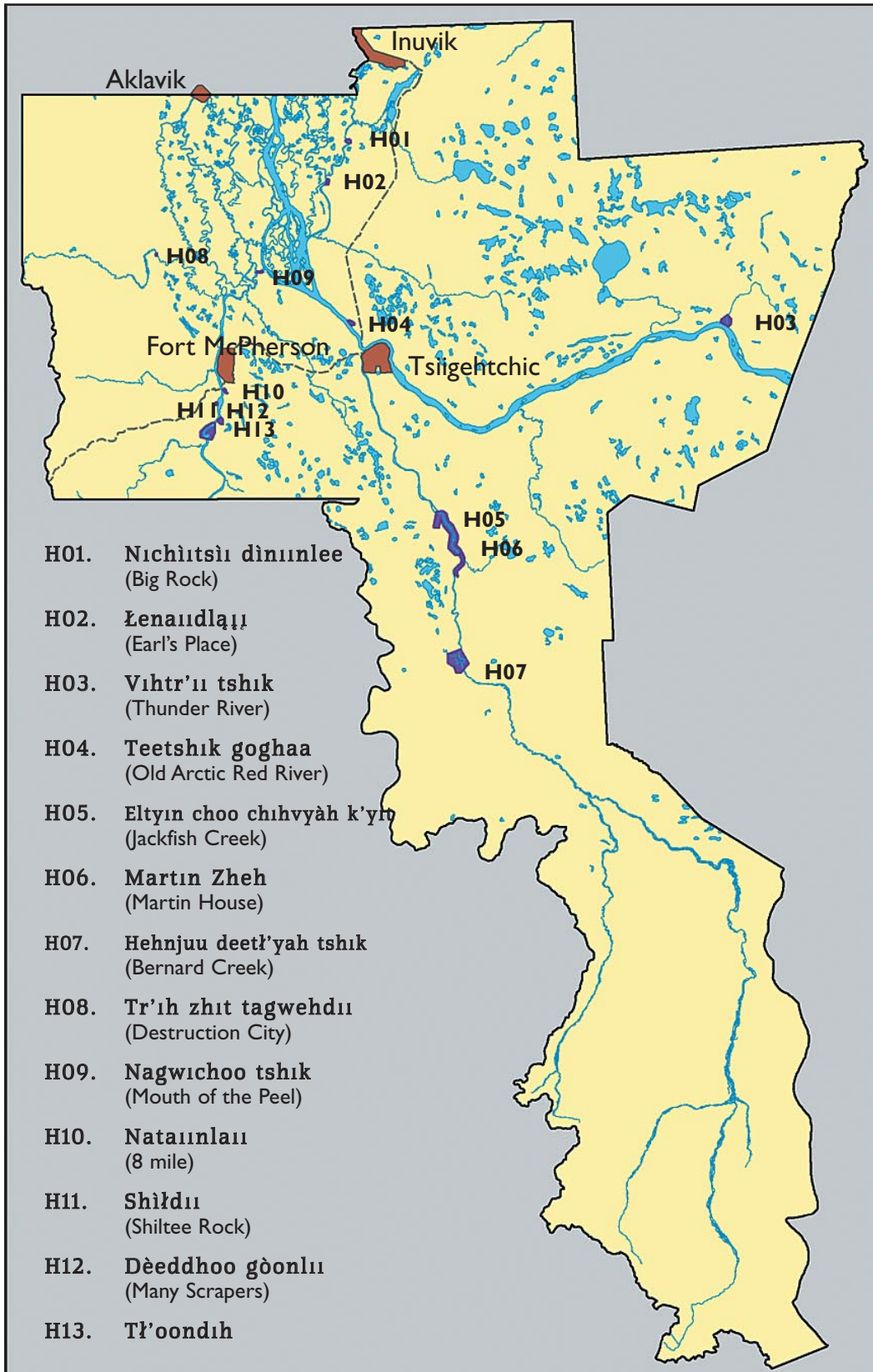
Eltyin choo chihvyah k'yit refers to the mouth of Jackfish Creek on the Arctic Red River. People coming from the mountains in their moose skin boats would stop at the mouth of the creek to fish jackfish.<sup>95</sup> Whitefish and jackfish run out of the creek in the spring. There used to be a number of cabins at this site. The creek is also significant for its forest. There are many large, old white spruce trees along the banks of the creek.

## Martin Zheh

### *Martin House (H06)*

Martin Zheh is named after a trapper who lived on the east side of the river in a cabin in the 1920s.<sup>96</sup> There were many other cabins in this vicinity and many people referred to Martin Zheh as a town. Trapping was good in this area particularly for marten.

Included in the boundaries of the Martin Zheh Heritage Conservation Zone is Nehtruh tshì'. It is described as a miniature badlands.<sup>97</sup> Elders tell a story of a giant wolverine that came out of a nearby lake and then burrowed itself underneath the ground breaking up the hill in this area. Elders who know of this place are still cautious around the site because the giant wolverine is considered wicked and will kill any person it encounters.



## Hehnjuu deet'yah tshik

### *Bernard Creek (H07)*

This is one of the most important heritage sites along the Arctic Red River.<sup>98</sup> In the 1900s, this was the site of a small town and a trading post. Many cabins and tents existed on both sides of the creek. People used to travel from the mountains to buy



Ron Cruikshank

*Bernard Creek*

supplies. A major trail to the mountains begins at Hehnjuu deet'yah tshik.

At present there is one cabin standing at Hehnjuu deet'yah tshik.

## Tr'ih zhit tagwehdu

### *Destruction City (H08)*

This site is approximately 40 km up the Rat River. Many people congregated in this area during the Yukon Gold Rush. Prospectors overwintered at Tr'ih zhit tagwehdu. The name means “that’s as far as you can go with boat”. At this point on the river, the water gets very shallow and the Gwich'in used to leave their canoes at this site and walk into the mountains to hunt.<sup>99</sup> The site got its English name “Destruction City” because this was the spot where people could no longer continue on their journey across the mountains to the Yukon by boat.

## Nagwichoo tshik

### *Mouth of the Peel (H09)*

Nagwichoo tshik refers to a village site upstream from the mouth of the Peel River.<sup>100</sup> The mouth of the Peel River was a traditional summer fishing spot for the Teet'it Gwich'in. People would fish herring in July and whitefish in August. Some people stayed year round at Nagwichoo tshik. In the summer, steam boats used to stop at the village site.

## Nataiinlaii

8 mile (H10)

Nataiinlaii refers to a creek that flows into the Peel River. The site is just south of the current ferry crossing on the Peel River. Nataiinlaii was a place where many wars were fought with the Inuvialuit.<sup>101</sup> It was also a place where there were many fish camps and cabins. Today the site is still used for fishing in the summer.

## Shildii

Shiltee Rock (H11)

Shildii is a sacred site on the Peel River about 18 km above Fort McPherson. There are many legends and stories connected to Shildii. One interpretation of the stories is that Shildii represents ‘the fossilized remains of two brothers who were turned into stone when their younger sister inadvertently violated a taboo imposed on her at puberty’.<sup>102</sup>

## Dèeddhoo gòonlii

Many Scrapers (H12)

Dèeddhoo gòonlii chi refers to a hill up the Peel River from Shildii. It is a companion site to Shildii and many of the stories about Shildii mention this hill. Dèeddhoo gòonlii means “many scrapers”. It got this name from the flat stones that you find on this hill that can be used to scrape skins.<sup>103</sup>

## Tł’oondih

(H13)

Tł’oondih is found 32 km up the Peel River from Fort McPherson. There have been many camps and cabins at Tł’oondih over the years. Old Vittrekwa and old Brian Francis both had cabins here.<sup>104</sup> Today there is a healing camp at Tł’oondih.

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- <sup>6</sup> Gwich'in Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement. 1992. Volume 1, Section 19.1.8(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.
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- <sup>52</sup> Nondegradation refers to protective measures given to waters that have higher water quality than the levels of water quality required through standard regulations.
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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.

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