



# Fish and Wildlife Management in Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Traditional Territory

**Porcupine Caribou Annual Harvest  
Meeting**

**February 11, 2014**



# Presentation

- TH Introduction;
- TH Traditional Territory;
- TH Relationship With the Land
- TH Final and Self-Governing; Agreement With Respect to Fish and Wildlife;
- TH Fish and Wildlife Act;
- TH Harvest Management
- TH Relationship With the Porcupine Caribou



TH Culture and Education Camp-First Hunt



# Introduction



- Originally, the Han people were known to live in small groups from Dawson City along the river way to Eagle, Alaska, including close family ties with the people of Tetlin and Tanacross;
- Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in (TH) means People by the river;
- The TH are a Self-Governing First Nation (Athabaskan) whom finalized a modern day treaty in 1998 (recognized as TH Final Agreement), thus allowing TH to establish governmental laws, regulations, policies, manage lands and resources, including subsistence harvest management and harvest management on TH Settlement Lands;
- As with all Yukon Self-Governing First Nations' Final Agreements incorporate collaborative resource management as well as and cooperative development efforts;



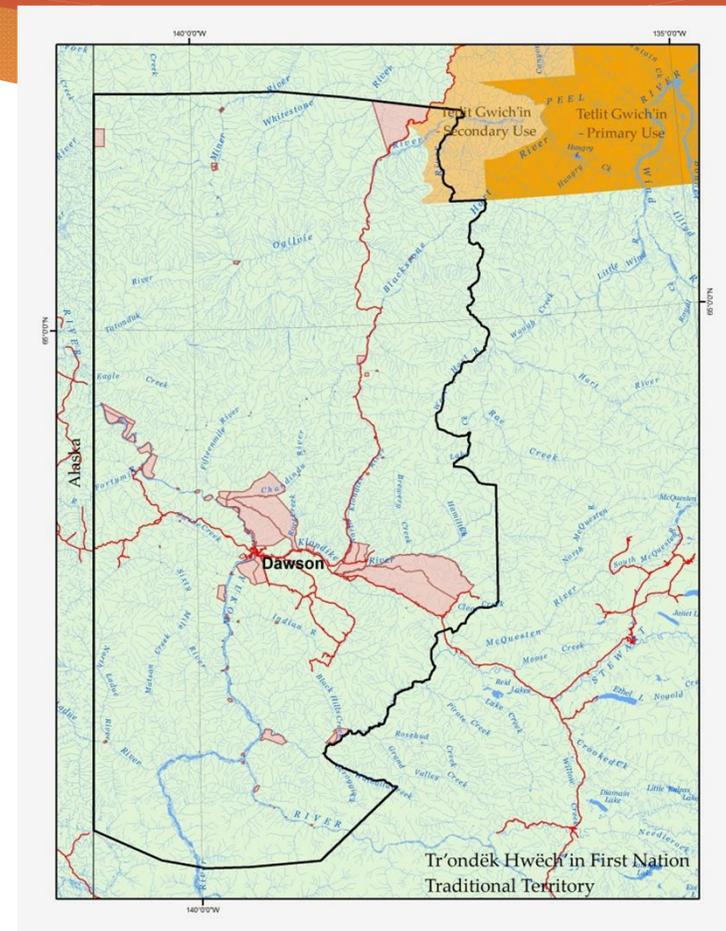
# Introduction cont...

- Although, TH is a young government it has three governing bodies, they include:
  - General Assembly
  - TH Council and
  - Judicial Council;
- Each governing body is designated responsibility through the TH Constitution;
- The TH Council or it's designate is responsible for the over-all management for the **Government**, which include the following departments:
  - Administration
  - Finance and Capital
  - Implementation
  - Human Resources
  - Property Management
  - Natural Resources (Lands & Resources/Fish & Wildlife Branch)
  - Heritage (including Danoja Zho Culture Centre)
  - Community Services (Health & Social/Justice/Education)
  - Child Development Centre.



# TH Traditional Territory

- Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Traditional Territory (THTT) includes 63,946 Km<sup>2</sup> (35,466 Mile<sup>2</sup>);
- 2,590 sq. Km (1,000 Sq. Miles) belong to Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, the largest private land owner within THTT;
- The THTT resides within the mid Northern part of the Yukon Territory;
- The THTT expands from the western Alaska Border, on into the Northern Taiga all the way up near Eagles Plains, from there heading Southeast to Clear Creek on the Klondike Highway and heading Southwest through the Klondike Plateau, crossing the Stewart, Pelly, Yukon and White rivers and back Westerly towards the Alaska Border.





# Tr'ondëk Hwëch'ins' Relationship With the land

- Like many Aboriginal groups, our ancestors were nomadic within a large range of land homestead, today known as the THTT;
- Travel was based on harvesting food such as caribou, moose, fresh water fish, small game, birds, salmon and vegetation;
- There are four different groups of caribou that migrate within THTT, many years ago, they were relied upon to feed the people;
- This still applies today, with the Porcupine Caribou, Clear Creek Caribou, Hart River Caribou (conservation concern) and the Fortymile Caribou (Recovery program);
- The relationship between TH and the caribou, as well as other species such as already mentioned are based on a culture, tradition and lifestyle that has been passed down through millennia;
- When a part of our biodiversity loses balance, our people may lose a part of our culture, part of our tradition and or lifestyle, leaving us with the possibility of an unhealthy balance.





# TH Final and Self-Government Agreements With Respect to Fish and Wildlife

- The TH Self-Government Agreement out-lines the process for programs and services as well as out-lines the process for developing justice and allows the Yukon First Nations to establish laws and regulations;
- Chapter 16 of the Final Agreement out-lines fish and wildlife management within the Yukon Territory and specific provision for the respected First Nation, for example; ie, *TH assigns to the Tetlit Gwich'in in the right of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in to consent to the harvest for Subsistence, in the Primary Use Area, by a Yukon Indian Person other than a Tr'ondek Huch'in.*
- Chapter 16 responsibilities
- Chapter 16 Objectives
- Fish and Wildlife Management
- Collaborative and cooperative efforts with other Boards and Committees
- Over-lap responsibilities
- Trapping Concessions responsibilities
- Land Use Planning
- Forest Plans
- YESAA-Land use environmental assessment.



# TH Fish and Wildlife Act

- TH is a Self-Governing First Nation with a land claim agreement and through their Self-Government Agreement, have the ability to establish their own legislation;
- In 2007, TH established their own Fish and Wildlife Act.





# TH Fish and Wildlife Act cont...

- This act provides TH with full authority to manage and administer subsistence harvest in TH Traditional Territory, along with managing license hunting on TH Settlement Lands;
- Establishing the responsibility of managing subsistence harvesting in THTT is not something new, TH has been doing this since the signing of it's Final Agreement, in July 1998.



# Harvest Management

- Harvest Management within THTT is a significant responsibility;
- There are various levels of management for harvest;
- It all depends on the species being harvested, there are three international species (PC, FMC & Salmon), the rest is through local management, unless there's a species of concern requiring conservation;
- As part of managing harvest, TH may collaborate with other governments and organizations to develop cooperative process/ plans etc. to management harvest, such as the Porcupine Caribou Herd.



# Harvest Management cont....

## *Communication :*

- TH continues to keep the TH Council, TH Government and Citizens informed of Harvest Management for certain species;
- Additionally, we share communication material developed by others;
- We're involved with education programs; ie, First Fish, First Hunt and First Trapper;
- As well, any harvest limitations requires significant consultation with TH Elders Council, Citizens, TH Council and General Assembly prior to harvest management changes.



# Harvest Management cont...

## *Education:*

- For the past 19 years, TH has been educating our youth on the respectful harvesting of the PC through TH's very successful program, known as "First Hunt";
- Eighteen years ago, TH Citizens knew that teaching the Youth about the caribou was the bases to developing hunters with the understanding of respectful, traditional, modern and safe hunting methods for harvesting of food;
- Since 1994, TH has held a camp every year up the Dempster Highway;
- Today, our youth and Citizens go out onto the land and harvest food by using the practices they've learned from the First Hunt camp;
- TH Leaders, Citizens, Elders and other members of the Dawson Community strongly support this program to ensure that respectful practices of taking food from the land will continue for generations to come;
- Education is a key responsibility for managing subsistence harvesting in TH Traditional Territory.



# Harvest Management cont...

## Harvest Data Collection:

- Annually, TH collects big game harvest;
- Harvest data is divided by the various caribou harvest, moose and sheep;
- Big game harvest is for TH purposes only, which is shared with others if required, through various plans;
- In addition, TH collects salmon harvest;
- TH shares salmon harvest with DFO as it's one of the indicators considered when addressing harvest management for salmon, as well is included in Chapter 16.

## TH Porcupine Caribou Harvest By TH Citizens

2012/2013	1

# Porcupine Caribou Harvest Management Plan

- \* In April 2010, along with all user communities of the;
- \* Porcupine Caribou (PC) Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in (TH) signed onto the PC Harvest Management Plan;
- \* By signing the Plan, Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Government agreed to a number of responsibilities for managing the harvest activities of TH Citizens.



# Administering the PC Caribou Harvest in THTT

## *Communication :*

TH continues to keep the TH Council, TH Government and Citizens informed of the PC Harvest Management Plan and any new up-dates;

Additionally, communication material developed by PCMB, magnets, stickers continue to be shared and continues to be very well received by members of the community;

Due to the lack of PC migrating further North in THTT this year's, communication has not been aggressive.

# Administering the PC Harvest in THTT cont...

## **Harvest Data Collection:**

For the past 6 years there has been very few or no Porcupine Caribou in THTT;

As a result of the low numbers of PC migration, conservation by Citizens were clearly demonstrated and continues this year as well;

This has resulted in extremely low harvesting counts;

31 Citizens were interviewed; in which no caribou were harvested;

Data has submitted to PCMB and PCTC.

# Administering the PC Harvest in THTT cont....

## **Monitoring and Enforcement:**

- For the past three years TH has been monitoring harvesting activities on the Dempster Highway;
- Monitoring program only ran from August to the end of September in 2013, the monitoring was focused on harvesting within THTT mainly at the North end to the Border and the Horseshoe area, as TH has a large R-Block in the area;
- TH is scheduling a public review with TH Citizens on draft regulations and amendments to the TH Fish and Wildlife Act.

# TH Relationship with the Porcupine Caribou

- \* Like many Aboriginal groups, our ancestors were nomadic within a large range of land today known as the THTT;
  - \* Their travel was based on harvesting food such as caribou, moose, fresh water fish, small game, birds and salmon;
  - \* Although there are four different groups of caribou that migrate within THTT, they were all relied upon to feed the people;
  - \* This still applies today, when the Porcupine Caribou are within range, the TH people continue to harvest the Porcupine Caribou;
  - \* The relationship between TH and the caribou, as well as other species is based on a culture, tradition and lifestyle that has been passed down from millennia;
  - \* When a part of our biodiversity loses balance, our people may lose a part of our culture, part of our tradition and lifestyle;
  - \* The Porcupine Caribou has been and still is today a part of the echo-system which maintains the culture, tradition and lifestyle of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in.
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# NEXT STEPS

- Continue discussions with Vuntut Gwitchin Government and First Nation of Nacho Nyäk Dun regarding the YFN Native User Agreement;
- Up-date TH procedures and develop a smoother process to meet the deadlines;
- More communications on the “Dempster Highway Best Practices”.

# Recommendations

**Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in continues to recommend:**

- Management remains in the Green Zone based on the past year's indicators.

# Acknowledgements

- TH would like to acknowledge the management conducted by each respective Party and their community for continuing to work towards the success of the PC Harvest Management Plan.



First Hunt 2012

# Questions

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