

Yukon *Wildlife Act* and Fisheries Regulation Change PROPOSAL FORM

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Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board

409 Black Street

Whitehorse, YT Y1A SP7

PROPOSAL TITLE: Prohibit Roadside Trophy Hunting of Grizzly Bear in the Southern Lakes

SUBMITTED BY: Carcross Tagish Renewable Resources Council

1. What change are you proposing?

Explain in detail what you are proposing and identify the issue you believe needs to be addressed. If possible, identify which regulation this proposal would change.

Proposed Regulation Change:

Prohibit hunting of Grizzly bears within 100 m along the Alaska Highway from the McIntook River Bridge to Jakes Corner, the Tagish Road, the Atlin Road to the B.C. border and the South Klondike Highway from the Carcross Corner to the B.C. Border.

The issue of roadside hunting of Grizzly bears is easily the single most important and sensitive and emotional public wildlife issue that the CTRRC has dealt with. Public meetings hosted by the CTRRC on this issue and Grizzly bear management in Tagish in 2014 and again in 2019 were attended by 50-60 individuals on a weekday evening after very controversial killings of habituated (not tame!) and well behaved Grizzly bears by thoughtless hunters that had provided months of wildlife viewing enjoyment for 100's and 1,000's of Yukoners including children travelling on school buses. It is clear that the public in the Southern Lakes care very deeply about this matter. In an area like the Southern Lakes where wildlife populations and habitats are under continuous siege and threat from land use and development and where public support is critical if species like Grizzly bears, moose and caribou are to survive on the landscape over the long term the RRC and other management agencies and governments need to listen what the broader public has to say!!! Under Yukon First Nation Final Agreements the management boards, councils and government agencies like Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board and Renewable Resource Councils have a mandate and responsibility to consider nonconsumptive and economic and commercial public use of wildlife like wildlife viewing as well as broader ecological and ecosystem requirements. When CTRRC submitted/supported this proposal in 2014 the response of the YFWMB was that such a regulation could not be implemented on a regional basis and should be Yukon wide and deferred any action on this until a territorial Grizzly bear management plan could be developed. Now after 4+ years of planning process the planners concluded that the plan could not deal with the issue of roadside Grizzly bear hunting and that this was a regional issue and should be considered at that level.

2. Why is this change required?

Please provide strong rationale for your proposed change, indicate if this change is urgent or time sensitive, and outline who or what would be affected by this change.

Grizzly bears are a species at risk in Canada including the Yukon and are classified as a species of special concern under federal Species at Risk legislation. They have been largely extirpated from their extensive historic distribution in North America and significant populations are now limited to B.C., Yukon and Alaska. As a dominant long lived predator species with very low birth and reproductive rates and very large home ranges and habitat requirements Grizzly bears are very sensitive to overharvesting and habitat disturbance and connectivity caused by such developments as roads, mining, agriculture and residential development such as is occurring on a broad scale in the Southern Lakes. With much of this development comes conflicts with humans and human activity and problems with many attractants including garbage, livestock, pets and pet food, gardens and increasing non licenced defense of life and property kills and relocations of problem Grizzly bears with an uncertain future that represent a conservation concern and uncertainty for the existence of this species on the landscape in the Southern Lakes area. Any legal licenced hunting and kills of Grizzly bears while relatively small represent an additional stress for this species aside for the obvious moral and ethical concerns and any semblance of "fair chase" of hunting habituated Grizzly bears along highways and roadsides. While the population impact of 3 known roadside trophy Grizzly bear kills by licenced hunters over a decade or so may be relatively small, the impact of the loss of these 3 bears on the ability of large numbers of Yukoners to view and experience and enjoy Grizzly bears in their natural environment was high.

This regulation will allow 100's and 1000's of Southern Lake residents, other Yukoners, visitors and tourists to experience the enjoyment of seeing a live Grizzly bear in a natural environment should be be fortunate enough to have another habituated roadside bear appear on the landscape. This regulation would also deprive a trophy hunter every few years with an opportunity for an easy kill by getting out of a vehicle and stepping off the highway to harvest a bear that has been habituated to traffic and humans.

3. Please provide adequate information (such as relevant knowledge, research, and experience) to support the proposed change.

Adequate information includes scientific, local, and/or traditional knowledge. Please indicate sources for this knowledge, where possible.

According to 1400 respondents to a survey conducted by the YFWMB on the Grizzly bear management and conservation 75 percent of Yukoners did not support roadside hunting of Grizzly bears and the majority of respondents or 45% did not support any hunting of Grizzly bears.

The biology and life history and status of Grizzly bears in Canada is well documented in scientific studies and reports including status reports for the species as part of the SARA and COSEWIC listing process which are generally available on websites and need not be elaborated on here.

This proposal is currently limited to roads and highways within the CTRRC mandate area in the Southern Lakes which is the CTFN Traditional Territory. This proposal will be shared for comment and input with all the affected First Nations and RRC's in the Southern Lakes and the geographical area can be amended depending on the input that is received. It will be a topic of discussion at the On the Land Gathering that CTRRC will be hosting during June 7-9/19 where all the potentially affected First Nations and RRC's will be invited to participate.

While there is little or no information of any recent or current roadside harvesting of Grizzly bears by First Nation in the Southern Lakes, this proposed prohibition would in no way limit or impede any such subsistence harvesting rights.

This proposal is supported by the majority of or all 8 CTRRC members including YG and CTFN First Nation appointees. CTRRC has hosted 2 meetings on Grizzly bear management in 2014 and 2019 that were attended by about 50-60 members of the public where roadside hunting was the dominant topic. CTRRC also hosted 4 public community meetings in March/19 on fish and wildlife issues where roadside hunting of Grizzly bears was raised and discussed. CTRRC has been approached by TRTFN Lands and Resources staff and has their support for a prohibition on roadside hunting of Grizzly bears as it applies this this First Nations Traditional Territory in the Yukon. It has also been discussed with CTFN Lands and Resources staff and these discussions are ongoing. CTRRC has also been approached by a number of public interest groups regarding this proposals who have provided input and comment and who may also submit their own proposals on Grizzly bear hunting and management.

According to data presented by the YFWMB and YG in a review of roadside bear hunting in 2013, a total of 26 Grizzly bears were harvested annually by Yukon resident hunters with 17 of these kills occurring in GMS adjacent to roads. A followup survey of hunters who harvested Grizzly Bears in these GMS in 2011 – 2012 with roads found that 2 were harvested within 0-30 m of the highway right of way, 7 or the majority within 1000 – 3000 m and 5 more than 1000 m from a road or highway. This would indicate that a prohibition of Grizzly bear hunting within 100 m of highways in the Southern Lakes would have minimal impact on resident hunters while protecting habituated bears on or near the highway right of way that are ever so important to the public and wildlife viewers. There are 3 known kills of habituated Grizzly bears along road and highways in the Southern Lakes during 2011-2018. All of these kills were a high concern and loss to the public and wildlife viewers as evidenced by the outcry and press articles and attendance at meetings hosted by CTRRC as a result of these events. Concerns about roadside hunting of Grizzly bears were raised at all 4 public meetings conducted by CTRRC in the communities of Mt. Lorne, Carcross, Tagish and Marsh Lake during March, 2019.

4. It is expected that this proposal has been discussed with Environment Yukon (i.e. a biologist, a conservation officer, etc.) or the Board. Who did you discuss this proposal with and what was the result of this discussion?

Discussion is expected because there may be considerations you are unaware of that could affect this proposal (i.e. existing management plans, best practices guidelines, or Final Agreements).

Yukon Wildlife Act and Fisheries Regulation Change PROPOSAL FORM

Environment Yukon and/or the Board will also identify whether this proposal has been previously submitted.

This proposal has been discussed with the Environment Southern Lakes Regional Biologists and Conservation Services staff and extensively with YFWMB members and staff and YG biologists who co-hosted and attended the public meetings in 2014 and 2019 as well as YFWMB and other CTRRC meetings dealing with this issue.

5. If this proposal has been submitted before, please outline what has changed substantially to warrant a second review.

Substantial changes that may warrant a second review may include: biological or technical changes, new development or access in an area, environmental changes, changes to fish and wildlife populations, community support, economic feasibility, etc.

This proposal was submitted in 2014 by CTRRC to the YFWMB and YG as part of the roadside bear hunting review conducted by these agencies. CTRRC hosted public meetings and provided substantial recommendations and input and it has not changed substantially except of the expansion of the no-hunting corridor from 30 m to 100 m on both sides of the highway to make sure that any Grizzly bears that are harvested are well outside the highway corridor. Also the current proposal is limited to roads and highways in the CTRRC mandate area which is the CTFN Traditional Territory while the 2014 proposal was for the whole Southern Lakes region. This proposal was not approved but deferred pending the development of a Yukon wide Grizzly bear Conservation and Management Plan as outlined above.

The YFWMB deferred any decision on roadside bear hunting in 2014 pending development of a Grizzly bear management plan for all of the Yukon so there would uniformity of roadside Grizzly bear hunting regulations across the territory. However the Grizzly bear management plan that was completed in 2018 concluded that there was not enough consensus on this issue across the territory and that prohibitions on roadside hunting of Grizzly bears would have to be dealt with on a regional basis.

6. Who have you contacted that may be affected by your proposal (i.e. First Nations, Renewable Resources Councils, non-governmental organizations, industry, etc.)?

Please provide a list of those contacted and describe their response to the proposal.

Yukon *Wildlife Act* and Fisheries Regulation Change PROPOSAL FORM

RRC has or will be contacting all government management agencies as well as all affected First Nations, RRC's and a number of public interest groups as outlined above including TRTFN whose Traditional Territory extends into the Yukon have proposed a joint submission with CTRRC.

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