



# FISH



# WILDLIFE



# HABITAT



# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT REPORT



**CARCROSS/TAGISH RENEWABLE  
RESOURCES COUNCIL**

FEBRUARY/MARCH 2019

# **Fish, Wildlife and Habitat Community Engagement Report - Mount Lorne, Carcross, Marsh Lake and Tagish**

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## **Carcross/Tagish Renewable Resources Council**

February/March 2019

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## **Report Approach:**

Over the course of four evenings in February and March of 2019, the Carcross/Tagish Renewable Resources Council (C/TRRC) conducted broad-based community engagement in Mount Lorne, Carcross, Marsh Lake and Tagish with a focus on fish, wildlife and habitat.

This report is organized in a manner that provides: 1) an overview of the engagement approach, 2) executive summary, 3) community specific reporting and priorities, 4) aggregated feedback around "ways to communicate", and 5) an appendix featuring: a Southern Lakes map, written submissions, poster, photos, citations, and contact information.

## **Engagement Purpose:**

- Opportunity for the C/TRRC to engage with residents of the C/TFN Traditional Territory.
- To brief residents from the four communities on the mandate and activities of the C/TRRC.
- To identify values and priorities around fish, wildlife and habitat in the traditional territory of the Carcross/Tagish First Nation (C/TFN).
- To begin the process of preparing for a C/TFN Traditional Territory Community-Based Fish and Wildlife Work-Plan.

## **Engagement Principles:**

- Focus on values and management priorities and not just issues.
- Report back to the communities in a "what we were told" document including strategic themes from the four communities.
- Not a specific, formal consultation, rather, preparation for various planning efforts in progress or being contemplated.
- Identification of where this engagement and content can fit within other planning processes.
- Not limited to fish and wildlife; will also incorporate hunting, fishing, trapping, forestry and industry where appropriate.

## **Engagement Approach:**

Given this was broad-based engagement around fish, wildlife and habitat, the approach was designed to allow as much dialogue as possible around a wide variety of topics. Subsequent approaches can focus around specific topics of interest with defined strategic outcomes.

The evening meetings were advertised by the C/TRRC and various community contacts and were open to all residents. Refreshments were served with a door prize for each community provided by the C/TRRC.

Meetings started with opening remarks from the Chair or Executive of the C/TRRC and an acknowledgement of the meetings taking place in the C/TFN traditional territory. The C/TRRC also provided an overview of their mandate, structure, and key accomplishments. After round table introductions, participants were asked the following questions through a facilitated and recorded process.

Meeting Participants were asked:

- What Brought You Here Tonight?
- As residents of your community and the Southern Lakes what are some of the ways you interact with fish, wildlife and habitat?
- In your opinion, when you think of the future fish, wildlife and habitat in your community and the Southern Lakes, what seems certain and what seems most uncertain?
- In your opinion, what needs to happen to support fish, wildlife and habitat in the Southern Lakes?
- What is the best way for the C/TRRC to communicate with you and your community on fish, wildlife and habitat related issues?

Given each community is different, each engagement session was customized to optimize participation. For example, some of the sessions maintained a tightly facilitated approach (as laid out above), while other communities featured free-flowing dialogue around relevant topics of interest.

It should also be noted that this report is based on feedback from a small cross-section of the community that was present at each meeting. It does not represent all perspectives nor a confirmation of community priorities. More intensive consultation using a variety of tools (i.e. door to door interviews, surveys), beyond a two hour and a half hour evening session, would be required to confidently confirm community priorities.

In addition, two detailed, written submissions were provided via email and have been added in the appendix. Names have been removed to be consistent with feedback not being attributed back to any individual.

### ***Voting Machine:***

Finally, a "voting machine" exercise was provided whereby all participants were encouraged to vote on the following question:

- In order to realize your vision for your community and the Southern Lakes, we need more....
  - Research
  - Enforcement
  - Education
  - Regulation

- Cooperation

- Other...

The "voting machine" results were captured for each community by percentage on a pie chart.

### ***Acronyms:***

The following acronyms were used in the report:

HPA - Habitat Protection Area  
LAP - Local Area Plan  
RRC - Renewable Resources  
Council  
C/TFN - Carcross/Tagish First Nation  
TKC - Ta'an Kwäch'än Council  
KDFN - Kwanlin Dün First Nation  
ILRP - Indigenous Land Relationship  
Plan

LUPC - Land Use Planning Council  
YG - Government of Yukon  
SL - Southern Lakes  
UFA - Umbrella Final Agreement  
TK - Traditional Knowledge  
ORV - Off-Road Vehicle  
C & R - Catch and Release

## **Executive Summary:**

The Southern Lakes is a large area, covering 24,753 square kilometers bounded by the British Columbia-Yukon border to the south, Teslin Lake to the east, and Kusawa Lake to the west (see Map in the appendix). The Carcross/Tagish Renewable Resources Council (C/TRRC) works with the communities of Mount Lorne, Carcross, Marsh Lake and Tagish within this rich and diverse ecological region.

The purpose of these meetings within the traditional territory of the Carcross/Tagish First Nation (C/TFN) was to focus on fish, wildlife and habitat in preparation for a Community-Based Fish and Wildlife Work-Plan (FWWP).

The FWWP is a planning tool, typically led by the Renewable Resources Council, in collaboration with the First Nation Government and the Government of Yukon. The FWWP is normally established with a formal MOU, is always community-based, and is designed to identify the main issues for the area and come up with cooperative approaches for addressing these concerns. The FWWP stays within the boundaries of the traditional territory while attempting to complement efforts at different scales (i.e. Regional Land-Use Planning, territorial policy development or species related plans).

The engagement with the four communities of Mount Lorne, Carcross, Marsh Lake and Tagish over the period of two weeks in February and March of 2019 resulted in numerous similarities and numerous differences.

Generally, all communities were supportive of the FWWP concept, although there was an interest in coordinating with other parties and other planning efforts. People are very busy and there is an increasing amount of engagement on all topics requested of these small communities.

There was general agreement in all communities that the Southern Lakes is a recreational "playground" for Whitehorse and that there are competing land-uses and impacts from tourism, forestry, and mining. Consistently, feedback stated that access and disturbances from these industries is causing stress, alterations and impacts to animals, landscapes and water. In general, many residents are seeing declines in populations of fish, caribou, plants, and country foods. There is also considerable local knowledge around changes in the behaviors and movements of birds, fish and large mammals.

Thanks to the very thorough work of the Southern Lakes Wildlife Coordinating Committee and the Southern Lakes Caribou Recovery Program there is a great deal of information and collaborative success from which to draw upon. Keystone species like the Southern Lakes Caribou featured as a major source of discussion and general concern. Concerns revolved around roadside mortality,

the fragmentation of habitat and competing land uses from other industries and activities (especially within their winter range).

The state of fish and fishing were of concern with expressions of frustration at the general decline of many fish populations, increased fishing pressure, overfishing, and the changing patterns and dynamics of specific fish populations. There were many concerns around the concept of recreational catch and release from an ethical, physiological and worldview perspective.

Forestry, forest fires and fire abatement were a discussion point in almost all of the communities. These ranged from the concerns around general forestry practices (i.e. Fire Smart), impacts to wildlife, personal safety and property concerns. There was acknowledgement that the decades of managing forests have gone against the natural cycle and thus created concerns around a large forest fire in the future.

A number of issues were framed as a balancing act or set of trade-offs around human focused values rather than those beneficial to fish, wildlife and habitat. Numerous communities brought forth the concept of a spiritual connection, and looking towards traditional values, and knowledge as a means of identifying a path forward.

While there were similarities, there were also differences. Mount Lorne spent considerable time discussing forestry and fire abatement. Carcross dedicated efforts towards land claim agreements, and the traditional and spiritual values around animals, land and water. Marsh Lake was very concerned about roadside hunting and animal mortality associated with the highway. Fish and fishery conservation concerns around large Lake Trout influenced the Tagish meeting.

In terms of voting preferences all communities featured education, cooperation and research as their highest-ranking priorities. Notable differences included a relatively stronger interest in enforcement for Carcross, and a very strong interest in cooperation in Tagish with no interest in regulation.

This report is a first step in preparing for a Community-Based Fish and Wildlife Work-plan. The C/TRRC will broadly distribute this report and develop next steps in collaboration with the community of interested parties and Governments.



## Community Specific Reporting:



### Mount Lorne - February 26, 2019

Location: Mount Lorne Community Hall

Participants: 17 participants (12 residents and 5 C/TRRC members)

#### Community Priorities for Mount Lorne:

- **Fire Hazards, Abatement, and Fire Smarting Concerns**
- **Multiple Competing and Increasing Land-uses (esp. dog-mushing, tourism and mining)**
- **Southern Lakes Caribou - protection of habitat, especially winter range**
- **Balance Protecting Wildlife and other Interests**
- **Coordination of all Planning Efforts**
- **Protection of Habitat and Cumulative Effects**

#### *What Brought You Here?*<sup>1</sup>

- Would like to acquire a trap line
- Engage youth and kids
- Would like to keep it how it has been
- Enjoy the beauty of seeing the animals
- Seeing more impacts on the landscape
- Increased use by all in the Southern Lakes
- Musers and tourists increases in off-season four-wheeler use
- Keeping wildlife safe from increasing tourism
- Seeing more people cutting trails
- Would like a transparent plan around fire smarting that does not only factor in people but wildlife, plants and landscape
- Concerned about the impacts of trails (i.e. from fire smarting) and migration routes
- Southern Lakes Caribou:
  - Involved in the recovery program in the early days

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<sup>1</sup> Multiple similar responses have been identified by the number of comments in parenthesis [i.e. two responses identified by (2)]



- Fuel abatement/fire smart and their relationship with caribou
- Worry about caribou decline and the increased traffic
- Support the caribou herd and other large animals like bears
- Enjoy seeing caribou on the landscape and the success of the SL Caribou Recovery
- There is a lack of regional land use planning which is important to help wildlife and caribou

### ***How We Interact with the Landscape?***

- Mount Lorne is a community known for dog-mushing and canoeing
- I enjoy backcountry skiing (2)
- It is in close proximity to Whitehorse
- A great trail system right out of our house
- Enjoy seeing caribou tracks and monitoring caribou. Should we report and is this being recorded?
- Marshes and wetlands often get lost, we have many animals that use these (birds, beavers, muskrats, otters, moose)
- Is there a Mosquito program? Does the RRC/LAC provide feedback
- Need to protect our water
- Cumulative effects - need to share data between activities
- Enjoy picking berries and wild herbs
- Food security - i.e. gardening and growing food to ensure balance and sustainability in living the wildlife
- Balancing Grizzly Bears and chicken coops - don't compromise wildlife
- Tourists education around bears and wildlife
- Public education and how to get it across to the right people

### ***What Do We Know is Certain?***

- More people living, recreating and visiting
- There is more highway traffic
- Mineral exploration
- Land claims
- Climate change
- The older forest needs to, and wants to, burn
- Forestry is going to happen with more access roads

### ***What Do We Know is Uncertain?***

- Impacts of roads and access - there is a loophole around the 1.5M trail regulations
- Reluctance around land use planning and too long of a time frame to solve problems
- Effects of increasing population are being seen
- Placer and Quartz act - trumps everything
- People don't understand land claims and the powers that were removed from YG

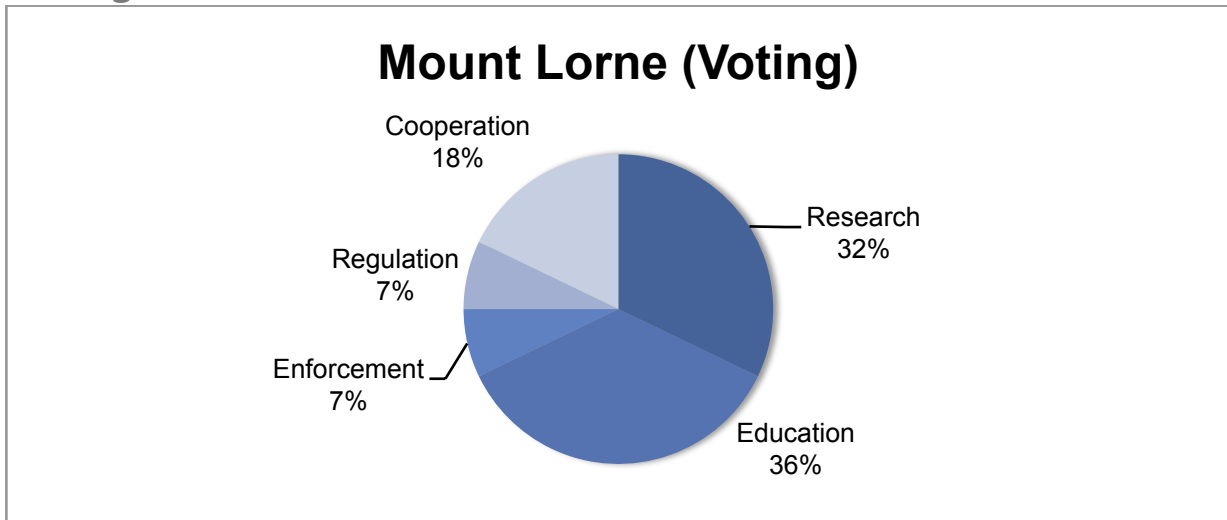
- People don't appreciate others perspectives
- There should be more ways for people to participate, often written testimony is very hard
- Climate change effects
- Large-scale land management around fuel abatement - controlled burns?
- Fuel abatement and how to mimic natural forces
- How to improve wildlife habitat
- Also need to worry about the Deer populations at Kookatsoon
- Require responsible cutting
- Have a consistent agreement with First Nations and YG and turn into policy
- Look at fish habitat given the winter flows, this should be beneficial and overwintering for climate change
- Break ups, spring blockage and release of water how it is impacting spawning and overwintering
- Southern Lakes Caribou:
  - Caribou wintering area pressure and incompatibility - dog mushing, firewood, cutting
  - Caribou road signs to slow down to avoid collisions along their migration routes - need to involve the RCMP
  - Should be no access roads into winter calving area
  - Need a consistent agreement to protect caribou especially in the wintering grounds
  - Participant presentation on caribou range assessment - there is a lack of implementation of some of the recommendations protecting their range

### ***What Needs to Happen?***

- Enforcement
- Habitat protection and land
- First Nations need to react quicker given cumulative effects on the land but have capacity issues
- Success of the SL Caribou Recovery Program as an example
- Highways Departments needs to listen re: collisions with caribou
- Need to protect keystone species
- Placer at Judas Creek - area needs to be protected, mining has to change when we have caribou
- Can't mitigate all impacts and cumulative effects
- Industry needs to step up and make a commitment to habitat, make it happen to better plan and restore it
- Government priorities are mining and economy and need to consider environment as a higher value
- Incompatibility with tourism/mining (i.e. Red Ridge Mountain example)
- Spot land applications are not acceptable nor are farms

- These need to be evergreen documents/living plans - revisited with new data to reflect changes
- Remove roadblocks within Government
- Fire Smarting Concerns:
  - A wildlife impact study be conducted (current migration routes - high density areas)
  - Wildlife corridors be established and protected Education for people in the area on their responsibilities (camping, burn piles, private property fire smarting)
  - Incorporate high fuel zones with special fire wood harvesting areas for local land users (FN and local residents)
  - Ensure all stakeholders are consulted (FN, local residents)
  - Have a true practical evacuation and emergency plan and have fire smarting planned around that (clear designated evacuation points).
- Coordinated Planning:
  - Regional Land Use Planning
  - Community Fish and Wildlife Plans and Indigenous Land Relationship Plan
  - How is planning going to be coordinated? (2)
  - Overlap with other First Nations to have them working together
  - Convince people plans have value and must believe in it (2)
  - Protection through the Land Use Plan to ID protected areas.

### ***Voting:***





## **Carcross - Thursday February 28th**

Location: Carcross Learning Centre

Participants: 10 participants (6 residents and 4 C/TRRC members)

### **Community Priorities for Carcross:**

- **Collaboration - UFA Provides the Tools and Opportunity to Work Together**
- **Fewer Animals and Fish and Depletion of Country Foods**
- **Look to the Elders, Traditional Ways, Values, Respect and Spirituality for Connection to the Land, Water and Animals**
- **Conservation around Fish and they Need to be Treated with Respect (especially concerns with C & R)**
- **Concerns around Recreation and Tourism in Sensitive Areas**

### ***What Brought You Here?***

- UFA brings the tools to bring together and participate (2)
- We are all part of the land and the water for generations
- All tied to the wolf and to the caribou
- Caribou are important
- We are a playground for Whitehorse
- There are fewer traditional foods which is what the Elders prefer (2)
- Thanks to all the boards and committees for all the co-management groups working together
- Educate the younger generation, there are too many cell phones. Story shared around taking a young person hunting with no cell phones, time to learn, time for ceremony. They want to learn the full process of harvesting a moose
- There are gaps between youth and elders, parents are overlooked, the family needs to be connected
- Bring people together to make fire and bannock, share tea and stories
- There is an overall depletion of wildlife and traditional foods
- There have been many species lost since the 1950s, this a "canary situation"
- We need to acknowledge the animals in prayer to even the bees and mosquitoes

- Not many regulations in place to manage the number of people that come here to play
- Carcross was having problems over-taxing a small sewage lagoon supporting the number of tourists
- The large dock in Tagish makes noise
- Need to coordinate with other councils and other groups in order to protect habitat
- Tourist numbers influence us, especially from White Pass
- Used to see moose in winter - now none
- Elders used to say don't play with animals, even an ant hill
- Fish:
  - At a culture camp there was a spot where Elders would always catch Lake Trout, they set a net for three days and there were none
  - Boat launch in Tagish is very busy because other lakes throughout Yukon are being shut down
  - Bridge in Carcross has people fishing for too long and taking too many fish, there are no monitors and tourists are doing this
  - There should be no C & R for trout and should be closed to reduce mortality. People say that we can't shut down the lake
  - I was taught to not play with food and respect it (2)
  - If there are not enough for us to eat Lake Trout, how come people can torment them (2)
  - There is a proven mortality around C & R, the First Nations have been saying this for 30 years
  - If you play with the fish they will be gone
  - Climate change is warming up our lakes. When we set nets we are getting 30-pound pike in deep lakes. We are also not getting as many. We used to get enough with one set now it takes three
  - Suckers are being caught now. Elders used to keep them under control
  - Used to catch 30-40 pound Lake Trout in Deep Bay, now we catch nothing
  - We are not catching fish in the usual spots
  - Used to be millions of herring from one end of the bridge to the other. Elders might know what happened to them? There was the spill from the mine. It could be associated with the wood and metal from the bridge pilings
  - I have seen Pike floating in the river upside down because of poor C & R techniques
  - How can we stop fishing on the bridge? Poaching happens that we don't know about
  - If the numbers are 80% are participating in C & R, the Elders frown upon this
- Birds:
  - Some of the birds are disappearing, the bushes sound different
  - There are swans still around with doves in town - that is unusual

- The Grosbeaks are late and there are fewer Chickadees moving around

### ***Discussion Around a Fish and Wildlife Work plan***

- Final Agreements need to overlay with this FWWP
- There are issues around habitat with tourists baiting bears
- ILRP preparation taking place; don't have faith in the other processes
- There are concerns over the dog culture with mushers and caribou, how do these fit together?
- 1.5 meter trail loophole causes access into the bush
- Trails and access need to be managed with quads on the mountain
- Don't know who is doing what? It is so busy these days
- There are no rat push-ups anymore; do we need to research this?
- Desert is busy and overrun by four wheelers and skidoos, they tear up the beach
- How does this fit into legislation?
- I found an eagle stuck in a flip flop, garbage at the beach
- Youth brought forward garbage bins on bridge for recycling
- Elders leave the mountain alone, now look at it, it needs to be cleaned up

### ***What Needs to Happen?***

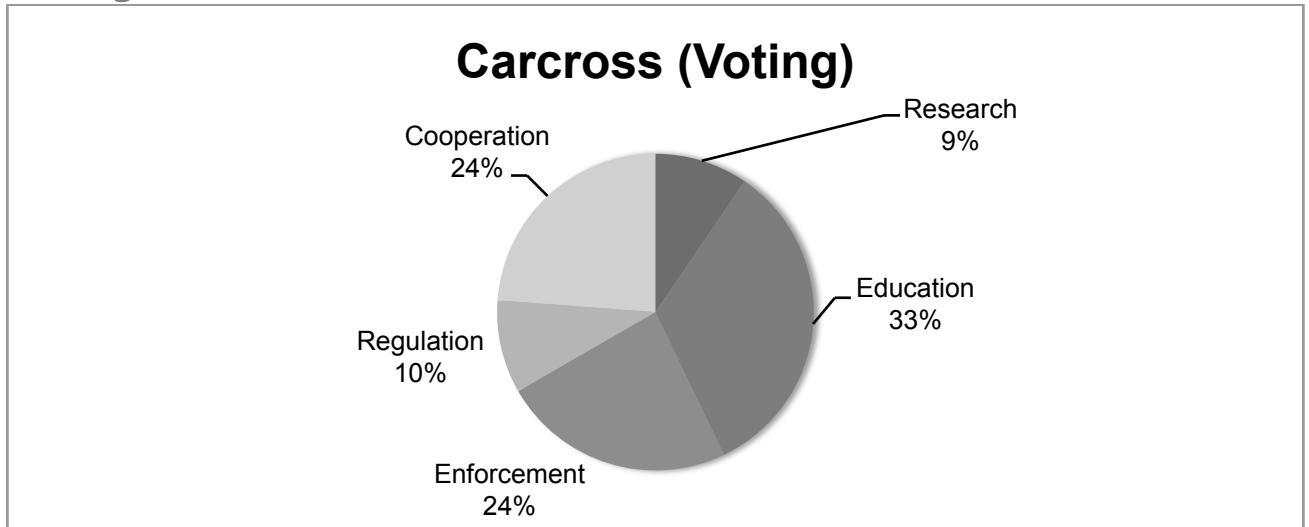
- People don't visit anymore unless they bring their technology
- Kids need to give cell phones and technology a break
- Too much damage to lakes with invasive species (zebra mussels)
- There needs to be dollars available to support this work
- Caribou, habitat, fish and water a high priority
- Manage access with cuts into the bush a half a mile, and then another half a mile, we need to regulate ORVs and dog teams
- Mindful of how caribou migration routes and wintering grounds change
- There are too many dog teams that changes caribou movements
- How many dog teams are there? Numbers of dogs? Noise, where should they be, in residential
- In the desert, there are dirt bikes and snowmobiles with noise all the time
- ORV legislation does not include snowmobiles and does not cover any type of machine above the tree line where there is a fragile ecosystem
- Snow is packed solid from snowmobiles which means caribou have a hard time digging for food in the winter
- There needs to be a cap on snow machines on side by sides
- Buckwheat Trail is too wide for skiing
- There are fewer berries
- It is important to pick a few and let them grow better, they appreciate us too, it is a two way street
- Keep working on it, and teach all like the Elders were brought up
- There needs to be continued experiential education
- Caribou collisions mortality was 12 in 2018

- Traditional Values/Respect:
  - What are the values? First Nations and the Final Agreements within the regional land use planning process. There are tools to look after the land and the water
  - Traditional and local knowledge contributes to what is happening out there. They know what is happening. TK is proactive not reactive like scientific knowledge whereby they study and make a decision
  - Elders story about how it took four years for the Government to study things and now the caribou are in trouble
  - Balance values between monetary and traditional values (i.e. swamp story with different values to First Nation people)
  - Have a "Fish Day" in Tagish with what to do with fish. "Respect for Fish" and educate all
  - Young people have never hunted caribou together to learn to take care of them from Elders. It needs to be a meaningful cultural hunt. Where people skin, work and eat together (swans too)
  - Maybe a school harvest to start the caribou harvest
  - How do we share and get stories out there
  - There is little respect for nature and wildlife, need to take care of the animals or mountains. There is the mountain man, the fish mother, the beaver man
  - Respect for berries and trees. Blueberries are getting trampled and snowmobile are used all winter long
  - Start a ceremony in Southern Lakes where we eat, harvest and learn about caribou (i.e. tan hides) "Caribou Days"
- Coordination/Collaboration:
  - Trans boundary people and communities we need to think about and have First Nation collaboration
  - Need a plan of where we are going and how we are going to work together
  - There needs to be protocols with other governments (i.e. BC and YG)
  - There is no collaboration with other governments
  - Fish and Wildlife plan needs to be used, all need to buy in or it will be the same old thing
  - There are too many committees, groups and meetings, how can we bring these all together on the same page
  - The RLUP was promised in 2006 and 2007
- Tourism:
  - Tourism advertising is increasing with YG government not putting as much advertising into "Respect". It does not resonate with what is important to locals
  - Tourism does not promote respect for land. It is promoted as the last frontier and it is wild and free



- Need to advertise tourism in a more respectful way and not just promote everything
- There needs to be a proper way to sell the Yukon and not to feed the bears.

***Voting:***





## **Marsh Lake - Tuesday March 5th**

Location: Marsh Lake Community Centre

Participants: 16 participants (10 residents and 6 C/TRRC members)

### **Community Priorities for Marsh Lake:**

- **Concerns around Highways and Animals (mortality, signage, speed and education)**
- **Balancing Trail Use into the Backcountry (esp. recreation, forestry)**
- **Concerns with Roadside Bear Hunting and Bear Attractants**
- **Do More to Manage Fisheries and Concerns with C & R**
- **Continued Support and Conservation of Southern Lakes Caribou**
- **Concern with the Possibility of Forest Fires**

### ***What Brought You Here?***

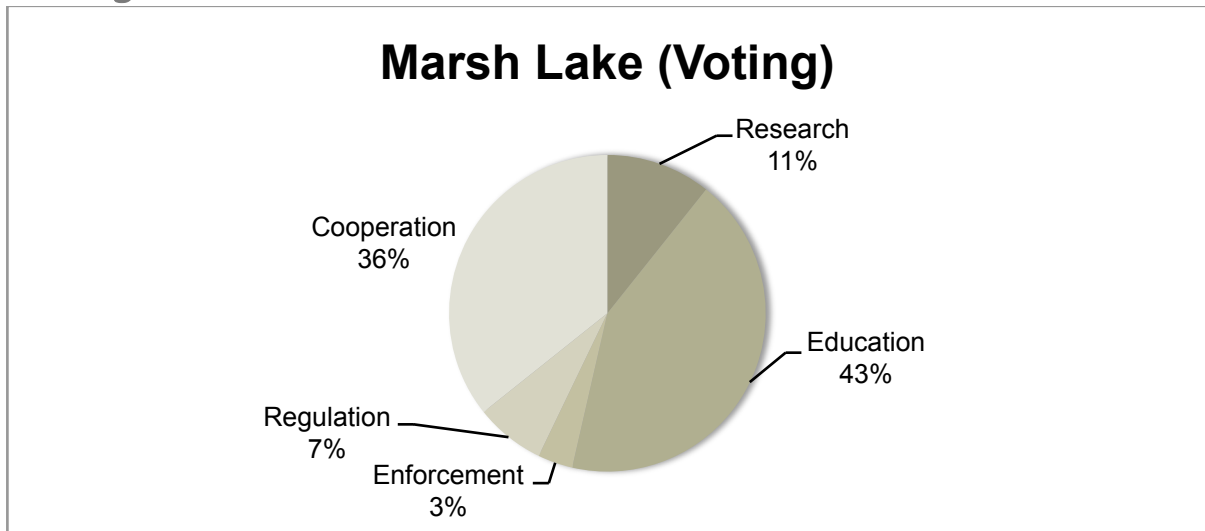
- Harvest management on the lakes and overfishing, especially areas that are too easily accessible
- Incorporate a deep ecological perspective in the plan, not just for human use and consumption as a renewable resource
- I care about the birds, raptors and terns
- Increasing wildlife risk
- Marshes are a concern with outflows to Judas Creek and birds are at risk with dogs in the spring, this is a confluence of habitats
- Concerns about forestry in the area
- Hear about wolf incentive program for trappers and predator control. How does this work?
- We are driving faster seeing this around passing school buses. There are not as many RCMP to control this as in other places
- Need more driver awareness and the brushing has an impact
- There needs to be public education around watching for tracks and the motor vehicle act needs to be opened up (i.e. photo radar)
- How does the FWWP apply to First Nations, how does it tie together
- Kids and youth don't know which areas to go to, in order to not disturb wildlife

- Human density in the Southern Lakes, which is a safety, concern regarding hunting and trapping. There are many people out there in the bush making it unsafe for hunting
- Moose hunting is permitted in some wide open areas, there should be concerns about safety
- What is the status of lake levels with Yukon Energy? This is still on the books and being discussed
- Fuel load is a big issue with the forest not having burned in a while. Nervous about the risk
- Subdivisions are a concern with one road in and one road out concern in Carcross/Taku subdivision
- There is local knowledge around wind and things have changed
- There needs to be a spiritual connection with the planet earth and our natural region
- Balance lake use, motorized and non-motorized
- Community Education to raise awareness of the intrinsic value of wildlife and wildlife habitat (i.e. becoming a WildWise community)
- Trails and Access:
  - How are ORVs influencing more remote areas (2)
  - Ski trails are important and are multi-use (quads in the summer for families), snowmobiles are not supposed to use them
  - Maintenance of the Marsh Lake ski trails
  - Supporting ORV management areas within the Southern Lakes Region
- Caribou:
  - Caribou disturbance and the impacts from even tracks being set by skis and snowmobile and general noise in the area (2)
  - Concerns around highway mortality around caribou (3)
  - Road salt where does it end up? What about beet juice as an option?
  - As caribou recover there are more animals on the road, driving behaviour effects animals (2)
  - We need to make sacrifices because it is going to be caribou or property?
  - Caribou are crossing in a bad spot by a hill which means you can't see them
  - We need to reduce our fuel load with the 40+ year trees, and how would this alter caribou
  - We need to know where the caribou are, over time, what is the plan over the decades?
  - Reduce vehicle speeds in high collision areas such as Jake's Corner north to Judas Creek south access and other areas where caribou and wildlife roam
  - Minimize the use of calcium chloride and chemicals used for de-icing highways, and investigate alternatives that would not attract ungulates and other wildlife.

- Review the agricultural lease practices and land use planning initiatives through a radical habitat and wildlife lens that reduces land development and the granting of agriculture leases
- Continue hunting bans and/or restrictions on ungulates in support of the existing caribou recovery program
- Roadside Hunting:
  - Roadside hunting has a long history and controversy around a bear being shot on the Atlin Road in 2014
  - Roadside hunting corridors and concern over the Blonde Grizzly Bear that was shot
  - Not enough being done to protect Grizzly Bears and Black Bears
  - Highway brushing happens and the bears hang out and get shot
  - Is there hunting of other species along the roadsides?
- Bears:
  - Mandate and enforce livestock protection options such as electric fencing in order to protect bears and other carnivores from being destroyed
  - Reduce the number of bear seals in order to reduce the "unintentional" killing of bears
  - Ban the hunting of grizzly bears or at the very least roadside hunting
- Bear Attractant Management:
  - Garbage, recycling and compost stored indoors or in a wildlife-proof containers
  - Fruit trees or berry bushes are removed or have electric fencing around them.
  - Vegetable gardens are fenced with electric fencing, and vegetables are harvested as soon as they ripen
  - Bird feeders are stored away March-November or are wildlife-proof. Birdseed is stored securely indoors
  - Pets are fed inside and their food is stored indoors. Dog bones are not lying around the yard. Cats, dogs and other pets are kept indoors when unsupervised and managed when out on trails and on the land.
  - BBQ is clean and all grease and food residues are removed after each use. BBQ, meat or fish dryers and smokers are stored indoors or in a secure shed
  - Freezers and all food are kept in people's homes or in a secure, locked shed
  - Chicken coops and other livestock have electric fencing around them to protect them from predators
  - No trash, groceries, animal feed, coolers or any smelly items are stored in your vehicle or in the back of a pick-up truck
  - Petroleum products are stored in an area where bears cannot access them

- Fish and Fishing:
  - We need to change the amount of fish we catch (3). How do they monitor catch?
  - We need to get a handle on high quality waters and manage nets in the water
  - What are the impacts of netting? Some First Nations are still netting for Whitefish
  - Netting is not a huge issue, there are a few First Nations that are teaching their kids
  - There may be some jet boats on M'Clintock River
  - Lubbock River - there are fly fishers in the middle of the river with waders bothering spawning fish, they should not be there
  - Limit on the number of fish being caught and released
  - Marsh Lake does not have a fishing problem, only in a few areas
  - Most people are keeping food to eat, locals and friends are fishing for the day
  - There is still good fishing for Lake Trout when the ice goes out
  - Need to have respect for fish. Concerns around C & R. Fishing for sport and recreation is a cruel practice and needs to be banned
  - Promote fishing practices that conserve and enhance fish populations by catching "sufficient fish for immediate needs: and if non-targets fish are caught ensure immediate, responsible catch and release practices
  - Pollution of fish habitat is a concern
- Forestry/Forest Fires:
  - What can YG do about the forest fire risk? What is the RRC position? Need to balance the natural system. YG needs to manage the landscape more to manage risk
  - RRC is involved in the forestry plan. RRC is monitoring the caribou and their range changes
  - RRC has asked forestry what are the most urgent areas and how this would be staged over the next 30 years
  - Fires are a natural process and they have been suppressed which is causing another problem
  - What can we do and learn from other places, like Fort McMurray to not reinvent the wheel
  - There are many variables within this analysis (wind, temperature, soil) around fire load. The number one largest risk is Cowley Lake/Kookatsoon with a fire to Whitehorse
  - When a fire starts it creates its own weather and can travel 15-20km per hour and very hard to figure out.

***Voting:***





## **Tagish - Thursday March 7th**

Location: Tagish Community Hall

Participants: 15 participants (11 residents and 4 C/TRRC members)

### **Community Priorities for Tagish:**

- **Tagish as an Important Gathering Place for People and Animals**
- **Traditional Ways and Place Names Hold Many Lessons**
- **Many Changes on the Landscape are Happening**
- **Fishing Pressure, Decreased Populations and Concerns with C & R**
- **Animals are Changing their Behaviour**
- **Coordination into other Planning Processes (i.e. LAP, ILRP, HPA)**

### ***What Brought You Here?***

- Swans are important for Tagish and a part of socializing with the community
- Concerns around dogs and snowmobiles and stressing out the swans
- Should be more communications and signage around the swans
- Winter ditch cutting can affect caribou, owls and raptors. C/TRRC was not consulted on their work
- We don't see the same levels of wildlife anymore
- The river has changed and the ice is dangerous
- Pollution in the water and may be a cause of cancer
- Water fluctuations are changing, the river, the landscape, the trees and the animals are using the land differently
- C/TFN is starting to use thermal imaging to look at temperature changes
- Seeing more motorboats which may require some speed control
- We need a boat launch on either end of the river to cut down on traffic
- There was a motorcycle race on Marsh Lake and where they put it was a sensitive area
- Muskrats and beavers make their houses in August and September but the water from the dam can flood their homes
- There are some successes around animals coming back, (i.e. salmon at Squaw Point/Deep Bay and Bennett) we have to encourage this, what can we learn from the caribou?



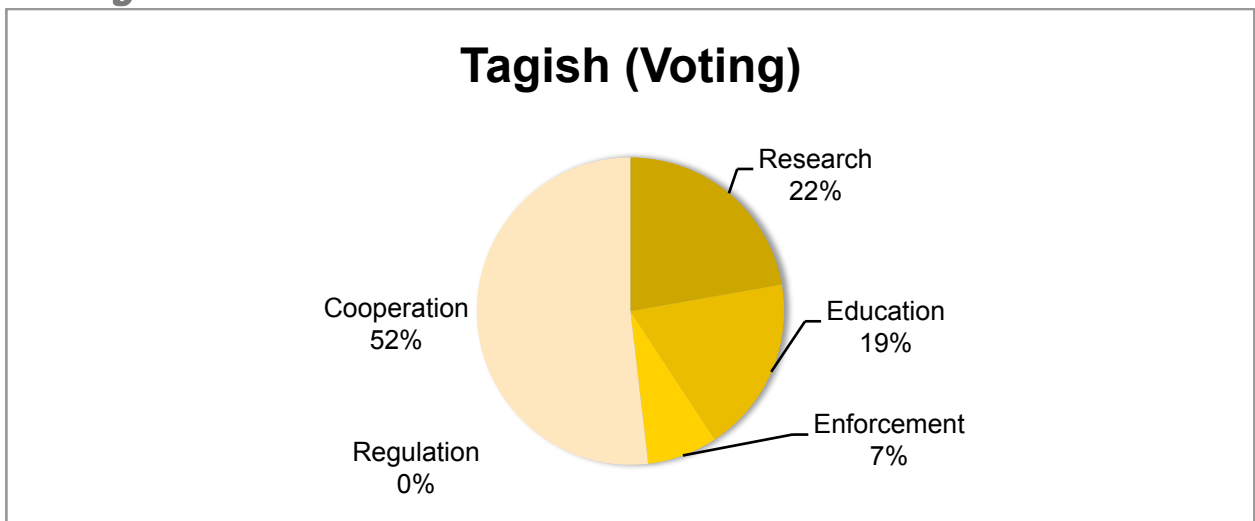
- How can we get the animals back, should we look at how to enhance things
- It will take 2-3 cycles to re-populate
- We need to educate people to regulate themselves (2)
- Need to talk about the way enforcement is done is important, not necessarily more enforcement
- Nobody hunts Gophers anymore
- Hikers and tourists were in sheep lambing areas, we put up signs and 90% followed the educational signage
- We know the ice is changing and how do we change with land
- Threat of climate change have featured milder winters and more temperature fluctuations, what are our plans for renewable resources (i.e. solar to reduce fossil fuels and no fracking)
- Fish:
  - There were more Grayling, large Lake Trout in the 70s and 80s
  - Concerns that all fish populations are down (2)
  - There are less Lake Trout, Grayling and Herring than there used to be, there seem to be fewer Pike as well
  - We used to fish for 1000s of Herring in the 1970s, collect them in five gallons pails and would jig them with a three pronged hook
  - There are fewer people fishing now
  - There used to be fur farms that would net the suckers and Burbot (2). We are now discouraged to do this. They impact Lake Trout by eating their eggs
  - In the 1980s and 1990s we used to target Whitefish with nets for trapping. We would catch 200-300 and this would mean fewer to eat Lake Trout eggs
  - Overpopulating Whitefish, perhaps there is disease
  - Need to balance traditional harvesting with current ways
  - The large, older Lake Trout are very important to control the population of fish in an area. They control the Whitefish, Burbot and Suckers. Lake Trout need to make up 35-50% of a healthy biomass. Once below 30% the other species take over
  - There was a fishing derby in the past that took the large Lake Trout
  - There are stories about large fish with scales the size of a tobacco can
  - Fish are not as big anymore
  - Concerns over how we do tourism, especially sport fishing and how we do C & R. The C/TRRC would like to make recommendations
  - There are many boats on Tagish River practicing C & R
  - Not sure how many guided fishing operators there are on the river and the lake
  - The pictures being advertised around large Lake Trout and tourism are not helping

- The big fish are important. Lake Trout don't spawn until 10 years old, this is a long time to replace 30-40 year old Lake Trout to continue the population
- Pike are more localized and don't move around too much
- People don't like things "shutting down", maybe closures, permits, open only three days at a time
- Fly-fishing Whitefish and teaching to fish for alternative species
- With the mine at Carcross, we saw dead herring/Whitefish along the creek and the mine
- Fishing off the Bridge:
  - There is a great deal of fishing off the bridge, we need to let the Lake Trout pass through sometimes of the year
  - Bridge is a place for socializing, why do we fish off the bridge if the fish stocks are down
  - There was a meeting in 1991-1992 about fishing off the bridge, it is a polarizing issue on the bridge where families would camp and catch Lake Trout
  - Size limits don't apply on the bridge which results in stress on the fish
- Salmon:
  - There were more salmon in the Yukon River until mining and dams
  - There is little connection to salmon anymore, some of the lands lie now with the TKC and KDFN
  - Historically a connection to salmon at M'Clintock river, people would row from Carcross to fish for salmon
  - C/TFN often feels left out of the salmon discussion
  - There is a connection to salmon in the Tahltan Territory with stories and a relationship
  - Salmon were affected by the dam, people used to fish at Mabel Island
- Tagish Gathering Place:
  - Tagish was always a gathering place, especially in the spring
  - When the ice was good people used to gather in Tagish where they used to meet about fish and wildlife
  - We used to gather and talk about what is happening around moose, sheep, goats and caribou. We need to do this again
  - Would be good to create a gathering place and annual event on the land
- Caribou:
  - Are coming down to communities to hide from wolves
  - We need to celebrate the SL Caribou recovery
  - Brushing is good on highway for reduced caribou collisions
  - Airplane noise is a concern for caribou as well
  - The highways are impacting caribou, we need to change how we plan roads
  - Caribou used to come by my place and now they are no longer

- Need to leave the moose and caribou alone post rut to "seed"
- Bears:
  - 25 years ago we saw few bears now we see many more
  - Bears used to be scared of people, now not so much anymore
  - There were rules that came from traditional laws, i.e. only Tlingit women should not eat bears
  - Bears used to be hunted for fat and grease for the winter
  - Bears are seen eating grass on residences in Tagish
  - Used to be more Grizzly Bear sightings now there are Black Bears
  - When bears and wolves were managed more traditionally things were different, they would take some of the pups and leave a few wolves in the den, this would help the moose and caribou populations
- Traditional Ways/Place Names:
  - Traditionally we used to walk around our land and talk to the birds/animals
  - We know from our place name research that temperatures are changing
  - A need for more education for youth on traditional ways, language and cultural law
  - Need to incorporate Traditional Knowledge and scientific knowledge
  - What is happening with the Dam and the increase in surface temperatures, relative to the place names research?
  - It is not traditional to put regulations in which is what we are doing now
  - Planning process around traditional values
  - Need to shift how we live with the air, land and water
- Wolves:
  - Wolves use seismic lines to hunt moose and caribou
  - This is a land use issue, humans are making trails, either seismic or dog teams which give wolves better access to kill caribou. Then we blame the wolves
  - If you cull wolves, they are not as efficient at killing moose, there is a relationship between the weight of wolves and if they can kill moose. Need to manage the pack
  - Wolves regulate themselves and their pups, they cycle with human influences
  - The kill rate of a large pack and they small pack, they kill with less meat taken
- Trails and Access:
  - Is there a way just to make trapline trails just for traplines
  - How to make trails that are safe, off river in the winter, not to impact moose and caribou
  - Now with cell phones and technology we know where we are, there are designated trails that are possible to manage

- There should be no backcountry snowmobiles (i.e. Tally-Ho) to give moose a chance
- Governance:
  - RRC has by-law making authority to look at things locally, YG has blanket regulations
  - LAC has no authority (i.e. by-laws) but looks to regional governance model with better integration of plans. This makes sense in the Southern Lakes
  - Want to work with First Nations that can pass regulations. How to get more integration i.e. Tagish HPA brought into the LAC and the RRC process
  - Coordinate FWWP with other efforts (i.e. Tagish HPA/ILRP)
  - YG is looking at regional governance because they want to hand off certain things, i.e. LUP and Wetland Policy
  - Tagish HPA process is well underway and at the draft plan stage
  - We need to coordination with YG to address these issues
  - The ILRP will support us in planning for all the activities that are happening now.

### ***Voting:***



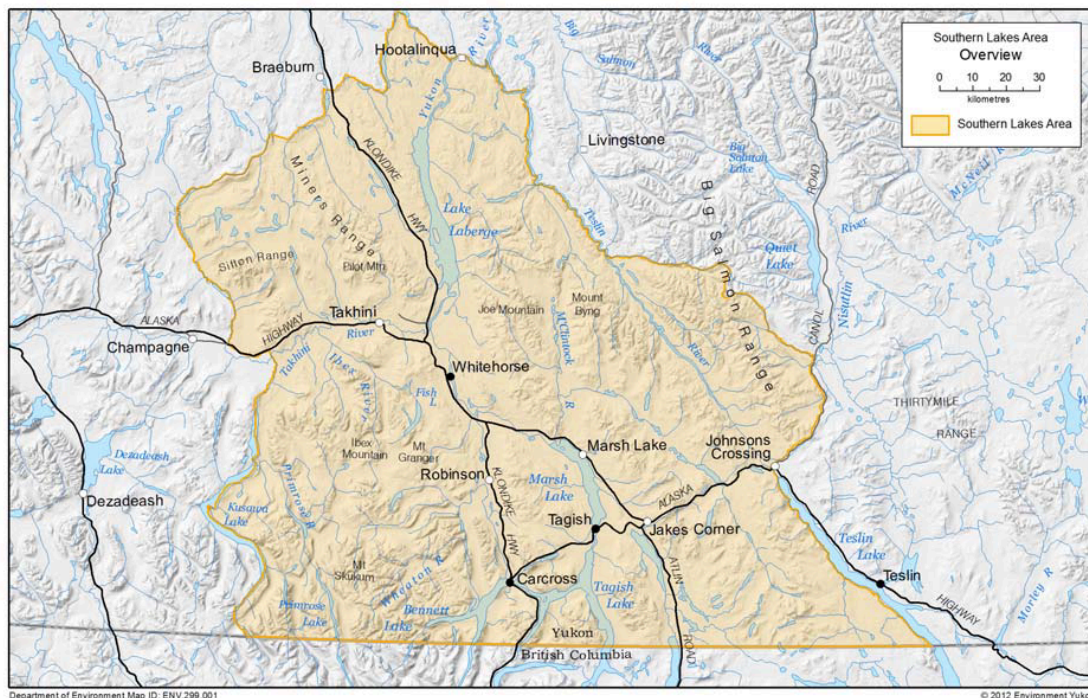
## **How to Best Communicate with Each Community?**

In the interest of further engagement by the C/TRRC, each community was asked what would be the best to communicate and get the word out. The comments from all four communities have been aggregated

- Have a key community contact (i.e. at the community centre or LAC)
- Be consistent and commit to engagement
- Rotate C/TRRC meetings in each community
- Build an email list for each community and distribute all materials
- Meet and share all relevant documents with the LAC
- Use posters with a listing of "issues" and "meeting outcomes"
- Be clear on who in the community is invited, is it "citizens" of a First Nation or all "residents" or general public
- Let people know where the information will go
- Bring people out using food/meal and door prizes
- Have representatives from the other governments as well (TKC, KDFN, YG)
- Create a connection between the meeting and the land (i.e. serve country foods, moose jerky)
- Supplement by going door to door (i.e. have a cup of tea in homes)
- Hold the meeting as part of a workshop (i.e. fishing with youth)
- Consider taking more time for meetings. We used to spend a week together on the land planning
- Embrace ceremony within the meetings as a means of managing relationships and bringing people out on the land for gatherings
- Bring people out seasonally around events, i.e. spring/summer gather around the swans, and the fall/winter bring together the fishing/hunting people
- Make sure people are acknowledged with gratitude (participants, cooks, Elders, youth, organizations)
- Use different media channels
  - radio stations (i.e. CHON FM, CBC)
  - social media (i.e. Facebook page)
  - website
  - [engageyukon.ca](http://engageyukon.ca).

## Appendix:

### Map of the Southern Lakes:



### Written Submissions:

Two additional written submissions were provided. Feedback in brief bulleted form was to the main document with the actual submission presented here in full. Names have been removed to be consistent with the feedback not being attributed back to any individual.

#### ***Submission #1 Marsh Lake Resident:***

(via email submitted March 13, 2019)

#### **Carcross Tagish Renewable Resource Council Fish and Wildlife Management Plan Priorities, opportunities and concerns**

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#### General comments

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input into a future fish and wildlife management process for the Southern Lakes Region. I hope that you will

incorporate a deep ecology perspective when developing a plan in whatever form it takes for protecting fish, wildlife and their habitat. It should be one that recognizes their autonomous nature and intrinsic value; not just as a renewable resource for human use and consumption.

I suspect that you will be working with the findings from the Southern Lakes Caribou Recovery Program [http://www.env.gov.yk.ca/animals-habitat/documents/Regional\\_Assessment\\_Wildlife\\_Southern\\_Lakes\\_Vol\\_1.pdf](http://www.env.gov.yk.ca/animals-habitat/documents/Regional_Assessment_Wildlife_Southern_Lakes_Vol_1.pdf) and [http://www.env.gov.yk.ca/animals-habitat/documents/Regional\\_Assessment\\_Wildlife\\_Southern\\_Lakes\\_Vol\\_2.pdf](http://www.env.gov.yk.ca/animals-habitat/documents/Regional_Assessment_Wildlife_Southern_Lakes_Vol_2.pdf) and CTFN as many of the recommendations within the two links reflect similar priorities and concerns that I have brought forward and continue to exist.

### Respect for Fish

*Catch and release:* Fishing for sport and recreation is a cruel practice. Not only do fish feel pain and trauma by swallowing hooks (barbless or otherwise) they also suffer when their protective coating is disrupted by handling. They also begin to suffocate when taken from the water and can suffer from barotrauma.<sup>2</sup> A study published by the Department of Natural Resource's Marquette Fisheries Research Station in Northern Michigan<sup>3</sup> found that temperature and trauma were even higher contributors to fish mortality than water depth, the cause of barotrauma. Given the unknown and possibly dwindling fish populations in the Yukon, perhaps it is time to end fishing practices that are causing more harm and are carried out only to give personal pleasure to anglers.

*Overfishing and polluting fish habitat:* Fishing for food is a practice that has been done for millennia in many forms. Currently, while most people fish for food, there is still an element of sport included with this practice. Recreational activities on lakes and rivers encourage more fishing. "*On the Yukon River, First Nations people whose way of life depends on salmon are seeing fewer and smaller fish than they have in years.*"<sup>4</sup> Fish populations should be monitored closely and populations should be kept healthy by introducing precautionary measures. Promoting non-harmful fishing tackle and practices and that keep lakes and rivers clean should also be incorporated into any conservation plan.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.peta.org/living/entertainment/the-cruelty-of-catch-and-release-fishing/>

<sup>3</sup> <http://greatlakesecho.org/2017/12/21/catch-and-release-kills-many-fish/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/article-for-the-chinook-the-yukon-is-the-last-chance-to-get-it-right/>



**Recommendation:**

1. Ban catch and release recreational and sport fishing practices.
2. Promote fishing practices that conserve and enhance fish populations by catching “sufficient fish for immediate needs” and if non-targeted fish are caught ensure immediate, responsible catch and release practices.

Bears and other carnivores

*Mandatory electric fencing:* Defense of life and property is the most prevalent contributing factor to bear mortalities. Other wildlife such as wolves, coyotes, and foxes are also destroyed due to mismanagement of attractants and poorly protected livestock. More bears were killed in 2018 than the previous year and incidents increased by 25%.<sup>5</sup>

If we don't regulate the management of attractants and **include “livestock” within the definition of attractants under the Yukon Wildlife Act**, these numbers will continue to increase. If we don't mandate and enforce livestock protection options such as electric fencing, these numbers will continue to increase.

We also must reduce the number of bear seals sold each year to deter hunters from ‘unintentionally’ killing bears. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/yukon-bear-seal-hunting-1.4940392> This is giving ‘license’ to people to take conservation into their own hands and to kill bears for sport.

*Ban the hunting of grizzly bears* or at the very least roadside hunting. Grizzly bears are not a food source and when shot, hides and heads are taken, bodies are left. There is no reason for this but to give personal pleasure to a human hunter; not out of necessity, but for human pride.

**Recommendations**

1. Monitor and correct human behaviour when the following attractant management practices are not adhered to:
  - ⇒ Garbage, recycling and compost stored indoors or in a wildlife-proof containers
  - ⇒ Fruit trees or berry bushes are removed or have electric fencing around them.
  - ⇒ Vegetable gardens are fenced with electric fencing, and vegetables are harvested as soon as they ripen

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/yukon-bear-conflicts-2018-1.4953089>

- ⇒ Bird feeders are stored away March-November or are wildlife-proof. Birdseed is stored securely indoors.
  - ⇒ Pets are fed inside and their food is stored indoors. Dog bones are not lying around the yard. Cats, dogs and other pets are kept indoors when unsupervised and managed when out on trails and on the land.
  - ⇒ BBQ is clean and all grease and food residues are removed after each use. BBQ, meat or fish dryers and smokers are stored indoors or in a secure shed.
  - ⇒ Freezers and all food are kept in people's homes or in a secure, locked shed.
  - ⇒ Chicken coops and other livestock have electric fencing around them to protect them from predators.
  - ⇒ No trash, groceries, animal feed, coolers or any smelly items are stored in your vehicle or in the back of a pick-up truck.
  - ⇒ Petroleum products are stored in an area where bears cannot access them.
2. Ban the hunting of grizzly bears and/or roadside hunting as recommended to the YFWMB per the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board consultation process (see attached submission from Marsh Lake residents)

### Caribou and Moose

Many caribou and moose are killed on our major and secondary roads and highways as people are not driving defensively and are often speeding along stretches of highway that are not monitored by enforcement officers. Some measures have been taken in the Southern Lakes Region to deter these mortalities although more could be done. Salt pooling and the continued use of calcium chloride and other de-icing chemical agents attract ungulates onto highways. We've seen many caribou at night on the highway, heads down, consuming 'something', even though within a report: *Large Mammal-Vehicle Collisions: Overview of Mitigations and Analysis of Collisions in Yukon*<sup>6</sup> calcium chloride was not determined to be a major problem.

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<sup>6</sup> [http://www.env.gov.yk.ca/publications-maps/documents/wildlife\\_collisions\\_report.pdf](http://www.env.gov.yk.ca/publications-maps/documents/wildlife_collisions_report.pdf)



Caribou and moose are also displaced from areas where human populations and activity have increased. Agricultural leases that include large parcels of land continue to be granted through the Government of Yukon, Agricultural Land Program. This program has been and continues to be problematic in that much of this land is cleared for nothing more than food for livestock, often in sensitive habitat areas for the Southern Lakes Caribou Herd, grizzly bear roaming and denning areas and within habitat for other small mammals and birds.

The monitoring of hunting and hunting practices should always be in the forefront of any management plan. As a long time resident of Marsh Lake, I have seen less and less moose and caribou on my extensive hiking, kayaking, outdoor and roadside adventures. I can only guess that this is due to hunting pressure on these ungulates, even though hunting of caribou in the Southern Lakes Region is closed to non-Indigenous people. Mitigations that include killing other predators that rely almost solely on these animals are not best practices. As humans, we have alternative food options; wild mammals do not. Continued hunting restrictions and moratoriums must be seen as a viable option to wildlife conservation.

As mentioned above under correcting human behaviour, our pets (dogs) should be managed while on the land so as not to disturb or harass wildlife.

### **Recommendations**

1. Reduce vehicle speeds in high collision areas such as Jake's Corner north to Judas Creek south access and other areas where caribou and wildlife roam.
2. Minimize the use of calcium chloride and chemicals used for de-icing highways, and investigate alternatives that would not attract ungulates and other wildlife.
3. Review the agricultural lease practices and land use planning initiatives through a radical habitat and wildlife lens that reduces land development and the granting of agriculture leases.

4. Continue hunting bans and/or restrictions on ungulates in support of the existing caribou recovery program.

### Habitat

Promote education that supports a *tread softly on the land* lifestyle. Living in the Yukon is a privilege and should not be taken for granted. Recent initiatives such as the survey on ORV use and other habitat protection initiatives create optimism. In the Southern Lakes region the use of ORVs (land and water) compared to other jurisdictions is relatively moderate although more and more we are less reliant on our legs and arms and more dependent on wheels and motors. Supporting ORV management areas within the Southern Lakes Region will be an important step to reducing motorized vehicle use in sensitive habitat areas.

As mentioned above, reducing agricultural leases, mining exploration, managing eco-tourism, can all be effective ways to reduce and prevent habitat degradation. Community Education to raise awareness of the intrinsic value of wildlife and wildlife habitat would be helpful. In Marsh Lake we look forward to becoming a WildWise community following the acceptance of the Yukon Grizzly Bear Management initiative.

Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to submit a few observations and suggestions to your fish, wildlife and habitat protection process.

### ***Submission #2 Mount Lorne Resident:***

(via email submitted February 21, 2019)

I am writing in response to your request for input into. I will not be able to attend.

As a resident of Annie Lake Rd, I am concerned with the drive to complete extensive brushing (vs. just at road intersections which should be done by local residents) and fire smarting all along Annie Lake Rd without an effective transparent plan (shared with the public) that looks at all aspects (wildlife impacts, changes to the land, costs, and impacts to residents living next to the road).

I work in the mining industry and I know 1st hand the impact of roads on wildlife migration routes (caribou/moose) and the increase in other animal attractants such as increase grass and other leafy plants (bears and likely bring more bears into contact with residents/visitors). I have resisted and will continue to resist fire smart next to my property as I try to manage it through my fire wood harvesting

(It will also pose a security risk to my home and family - more visible, vandalism/theft and remove my noise buffer). In the last 8 years I have seen a reduction of caribou coming through our area (1st 5 km of Annie Lake Rd where the majority of fire smarting has occurred). It is a scientific fact that widening roads increases the resistance of that artificial barrier and will have direct impacts on animal migration roots. The current approach to fire smarting removes all young trees and increases the spacing (effectively drying the ground, introduces grasses, disturbs the soil - increases the risk of non-native plants establishing, kills all the lichens (caribou) and lingonberries/cranberries that Yukoner's love picking).

I am **not against fire smarting** but I would like to ensure that it is done not just from a human perspective and be done in a practical and cost effective manner. As a person living in that area it is my responsibility to protect my home, not the governments. It would cost in my rough estimate \$1.5M (~\$20K-30K x 2 sides / km x 25km) to do fire smarting just along Annie Lake Rd + side roads (multiply that by all the roads in rural residential areas in the Yukon) every 5 to 10 years. I can think of better ways to use my tax money.

What I would like to propose and I will be volunteering myself to be part of the planning group:

- A wildlife impact study be conducted (current migration routes - high density areas)
- Wildlife corridors be established and protected Education for people in the area on their responsibilities (camping, burn piles, private property fire smarting)
- Incorporate high fuel zones with special fire wood harvesting areas for local land users (FN and local residents)
- Ensure all stakeholders are consulted (FN, local residents)
- Have a true practical evacuation and emergency plan and have fire smarting planned around that (clear designated evacuation points).

**The cumulative environmental/social impact of fire smarting is more than many small current mineral exploration and placer projects. They all have to go through YESAB, fire smarting doesn't.**

It is impossible to prevent everything from happening and I would like the conversation to remain rational and practical (not based on fear mongering).

## Poster and Photos:

Sample poster and photos.



## MARSH LAKE

### HAVE YOUR SAY ON FISH, WILDLIFE AND HABITAT

*What are the priorities, opportunities and concerns that you would like to share?*

**March 5 • Tuesday • 6:30PM**

#### MARSH LAKE COMMUNITY CENTRE

The Carcross Tagish Renewable Resources Council is your voice in managing local renewable resources. We want to hear from you!

**Coffee/snacks provided. Enter to win a \$250 gas card.**



More info: 867-399-4923

[carcrosstagishrrc@gmail.com](mailto:carcrosstagishrrc@gmail.com)







## **Citations:**

Southern Lakes Wildlife Coordinating Committee. 2012. Regional Assessment of Wildlife in the Yukon Southern Lakes Region: Volume 1: Context and Recommendations. Environment Yukon, Whitehorse, Yukon 76 pp.

## ***Suggested Citation for this Report:***

Carcross/Tagish Renewable Resources Council and Dennis Zimmermann, Big Fish Little Fish Consultants. 2019. Fish, Wildlife and Habitat Community Engagement Report - Mount Lorne, Carcross, Marsh Lake and Tagish.

## **Contact Information:**

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