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Your file Votre référence

Our file Notre référence

October 21, 2009

EXECUTIVE CORRESPONDENCE #INT/13OCT09/147
CIDM#342784

Judith Wright-Bird
Chairperson
Sahtu Land Use Planning Board
Box 235
FORT GOOD HOPE NT X0E 0G0
Email: sahtulanduseplan@airware.ca

Dear Ms. Wright-Bird:

Re: Meeting on Integration of Great Bear Lake Watershed Management Plan & Sahtu Land Use Plan

This letter is in response to your letter of August 28, 2009 in which you requested detailed comments from Indian and Northern Affairs Canada on the Great Bear Lake Watershed Management Plan, and my participation at a meeting in Deline to discuss integration of the Great Bear Lake Watershed Management Plan and the Sahtu Land Use Plan. I apologize for the delayed response, as you know there was a miscommunication between our offices and I did not receive your letter until very recently.

The department is committed to working with the Sahtu Land Use Planning Board, Deline and the Government of the Northwest Territories on this issue, and to complete and implement a Sahtu Land Use Plan acceptable to all parties. In response to your first request, I have asked departmental staff to assist by reviewing key sections of the Great Bear Lake Watershed Management Plan, and to submit comments to the Planning Board no later than the first week of November.

In response to your meeting request, the proposed October date is already upon us. I respectfully suggest it be rescheduled to the first week of December (December 1 & 2) which will allow adequate time for the completion of the department's comments, and for the parties to review those comments along with any submissions from Deline and the Government of the Northwest Territories. I have requested that Marc Lange, Manager of Environment and Conservation Division, attend on behalf of the department. Mr. Lange was involved in the development of the Great Bear Lake Watershed

Management Plan, and will be prepared to speak to the department's forthcoming submission.

To respond to the purposes of the meeting as set out in your letter:

- 1) It is not feasible to submit the Great Bear Lake Watershed Management Plan for approval in advance of the revised Sahtu Land Use Plan, because there is no authority for the approval of the Great Bear Lake Watershed Management Plan except as part of a single Sahtu Land Use Plan. The department supports the completion of a single land use plan for the whole of the Sahtu, as contemplated in the Sahtu Dene and Métis Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement;
- 2) The department will provide written comments on key sections of the Great Bear Lake Watershed Management Plan to the Planning Board (and for distribution to Deline and the Government of the Northwest Territories);
- 3) The department will send a representative to the forthcoming meeting in Deline to discuss options and next steps for integrating the two plans. It is the department's view that the Planning Board is ultimately responsible for determining the most effective method for integrating the Great Bear Lake Watershed Management Plan and the Sahtu Land Use Plan, and for completing a single land use plan for the whole of the Sahtu;
- 4) The department is currently seeking funding in response to a request from the Deline Renewable Resources Council to review the Draft 2 Sahtu Land Use Plan, and to attend the meeting in Deline. Departmental staff will follow up directly with the Deline Renewable Resources Council on this matter.

If you have any questions about this response, or wish to discuss it further, please contact Marc Lange at Marc.Lange@inac.gc.ca or 867-669-2588.

Sincerely,



Trish Merrithew-Mercredi
Regional Director General – NT Region

Cc: Gary Bohnet, Deputy Minister, Environment and Natural Resources, GNWT
Ethel Blondin-Andrew, Chairperson, Sahtu Secretariat Incorporated
Peter Menacho, President, Deline Land Corporation
Chief Raymond Tutcho, Deline Land Corporation
Russell Kenny, President, Deline Renewable Resources Council
Edna Tobac, Sahtu Land Use Planning Board
Heidi Wiebe, Sahtu Land Use Planning Board