

# Meeting Minutes

## Tłı̨chq̓ ALL-SEASON ROAD CORRIDOR WORKING GROUP

June 13<sup>th</sup>, 2022



**Date:** 13 June 2022

**Time:** 1:00pm – 4:00 pm Mountain Time

**Location:** Whatı Cultural Centre & Microsoft Teams

### Attendees:

Alastair Beattie – DFO  
Amiee Guile - WRRB  
Benjamin Bey - INF  
Binay Yadav – INF  
Cameron Wilson (Chair) – INF  
Chuck Hubert – MVEIRB  
Dana Harris – DFO  
Daniel Drimes – INF  
Dave Green – NSI  
Devon Stephenson - NSI  
Dolphus Nitsiza - CGW  
Emily Finstad – WLWB  
James Hodson – ENR  
Jessica Hurtubise – NMSA  
Joelle Guedon – INF  
Justin Grandjambe – NSI  
Laura Meinert -WRRB

Kathy Unger – ENR  
Jess Hurtubise – NSMA  
Michel Moosenose - CGW  
Paul Vecsei – TG  
Regan Jeremicka – NSI  
Ryan Fequet – WLWB  
Sheyenne Jumbo INF  
Stephanie Behrens - TG  
Tatiana Leclerc – DFO  
Tammy Steinwand-Deschambeault - TG  
Yasir Jamal - INF  
Ziaur Rahman – INF  
Violet Camsell-Blondin – TG  
Ziaur Rahman – INF

### Regrets:

Clint Ambrose – Lands  
Glen MacKay - ECE  
Grace Mackenzie – TG  
Jessica Smart - NSMA  
Kamran Ata – INF  
Nancy Enn – AE  
Naomi Smethurst – ECE  
Salah Uddin - INF  
Terry Brookes - INF  
Tyanna Steinwand – TG

### 1. Opening Prayer

Led by Tłı̨chq̓ Elder Michel Moosenose

### 2. Welcome and Opening Remarks

Cameron Wilson, INF: this was the first trip up the highway, a bit of dust but overall, a nice drive. It is amazing to see what has happened these last couple of years, with the highway officially opening on November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2021. It is a new highway; we are working on a lot of things to make the experience better for people travelling on the road. Gave thanks to the people in the kitchen for preparing lunch for the group.

Dolphus Nitsiza, CGW: Overview of housekeeping items (i.e., emergency exits, muster station, washrooms, etc.)

### 3. Introduction of Participants

Welcome and greetings from chair, Cameron Wilson (INF), Regional Superintendent for the North Slave. Reminder to use microphones provided during the meeting so that the translator is able to hear everyone and that the meeting is being recorded.

### 4. Review of Agenda

### 5. Matters arising from previous Meeting Minutes, review of action items

- Continue to monitor bison movement toward Whatı
- Ben, INF - Engagement Plan and Traditional Knowledge being sought
- Ginger Gibson - Final socio-economic report card and concerns of liability and safety for the Community Government of Whatı
- General Overview of the Tłı̨chq̓ Highway operation updates and Management/Monitoring Plans.
- Devon Stephenson, NSI/Kiewit - No change in personnel.

- Tłıchǫ Government on the development of the fisheries pamphlet to notify the public of current on-goings

## 6. General overview of the Tłıchǫ Government Highway: updates on construction activities and schedule

- Justin Grandjambe, NSI: provided operational updates through a PowerPoint presentation.
- Devon Stevenson, NSI: A lot of the environmental monitoring plans are in the process of transitioning from the construction phase into the operations & maintenance (O&M) phase of the highway. Environmental update: Culverts installed at km 46 and km 220, upstream and downstream installation of tap and rockfill cap, riprap added to prevent fish getting trapped, James River treatment options on all sides forwarded to Kiewit for review. Monitoring will continue in spring of 2023.
- Devon, NSI: 5-day wood harvesting program review regarding tree harvest for Tłıchǫ residents. Wood harvesting program plan includes closing one lane on highway while harvesting happening. Date of program not finalized yet.
- Stephanie Behrens, TG: asked for signage to be posted about who is allowed to harvest trees and fish to prevent altercations.
- James Hodson, ENR: asked how long the construction camp at km 19 would be in use.
  - Devon, NSI: responded that the camp is nearly closed, and no one is staying there overnight. Camp may, however, be used again later if required.
- Laura Meinert, WRRB: How far north have the bison been spotted?
  - Dave, NSI: two individual bison have been observed at KM 76, however observations stopped in November. With the presence of monitoring and observation on the road now that construction is complete, observation is now left to users of the road. Cannot speak to the current ongoings, we do not have an update that we can offer you.
  - Amiee Guile, WRRB: on that note, in the Action Item update to continue to monitor bison movement, is that the monitoring that is ongoing?
  - Devon, NSI: responded that less people are on site now that most of the work has been completed so less chance for staff to monitor and report bison movements.
  - Benjamin Bey, INF: INF does not have an active monitoring plan and there is no additional monitoring planned as part of the contract. This summer is a good opportunity to start long-term monitoring program, then determine the best way to prevent bison from encroaching Whatì.
  - Stephanie, TG: we have started including bison observations to the Tłıchǫ Highway Monitors. To start a monitoring program, a meeting is needed.
  - Cameron, INF: to clarify, the monitoring of bison is through TG and NSI.
  - Devon, NSI: we are reporting on any wildlife we do see but formal reporting is through TG.
  - Laura, WRRB: is a change to bison movements expected?
  - James, ENR: this was discussed in the Environmental Assessment, and he will have to look up the anticipated impact on bison.
  - Ziaur Rahman, INF: there shouldn't be an impact.
- Ziaur, INF: reminder to include ENR in the coordination of the wood harvesting and keep them in the loop.
  - Devon, NSI: Yes, the right date still needs to be decided on. When it does happen, one lane of traffic will be shut down with all of the traffic management signs and guides on either ends to inform people.
- Ryan Fequet, WLWB: Do any of the 'Different Treatment Options' identified on PDF #8 of 11, require any revisions to any of INF's management plans? (This info was included in a PDF sent to everyone)
  - Dave Green, NSI: this is corrective work that will be done by NSI/Kiewit, The ESC Plan would be the guiding plan as a driver for the work. No other plans are in effect.
  - Ryan: All of the Plans within the TASR Licence and Permit apply through all phases of the TASR Project, unless approved otherwise. (As per the RFD or their approved purpose). To clarify - are any of the activities identified on the list of 'Different Treatment Options' different than currently approved? (i.e., therefore, requiring proposed revisions)
    - Dave, NSI: No need for an additional long-term plan, no instream work is planned. The

Wildlife Management Plan will address any issues but currently still working within parameters of the Water Licence and Land Use Permit. All treatment options are under the current LUP, no revisions expected. The Emergency Management Plan will cover anything after that.

## 7. Regulatory Compliance: Updates, Expectations, Concerns, and Recommendations

### Community Government of Whatì

- Lisa Nitiza: Road has been open for 6 months, concerned about traffic control and signage. Social impact has been hit hard based on increase in RCMP calls about domestic violence and sexual violence. A 2-person detachment is insufficient. Concerned about “stranger-danger” as new people come into the community. On the positive side, costs are down, additional flights added, and new houses are coming into the community, including a brand-new house that was brought in by road for the first time ever.
  - o Cameron, INF: INF will relay these concerns to the Socio-Economic Working Group so long- and short-term social impacts can be discussed. We have a duty to make sure things get back to normal.
  - o Ziaur, INF: Health and Social Services and TG are working collaboratively to address this.
- Laura, WRRB: as per clause 14.3, the CWG meetings are not solely for regulatory updates but also for other concerns to be raised.
- Devon, NSI: additional concerns with the amount of dust highway. Dust suppression (calcium chloride spray) has been sourced and will be applied to the roads in early July. It should last until the snow comes. The dust suppression application will take about 7 days. There will be no road closure, just traffic management and a single lane
- Lisa, CGW – Should the public be notified so they know what to expect? Michel Moosenose was at a council meeting on July 6th and said there is an obligation to inform public to notify of dust.
- Michel Moosenose, CGW – People gather a lot, just like in the old days and there is too much dust.
- Cameron, INF: In the meantime, users of the road should use caution and slow down.
- Ryan, WLWB: is there a stop from the water lines?
  - o Dave Green, NSI: it is not delineated yet, but we will follow the plan.

### Tłıchǫ Government

- Tammy Steinwand-Deschambeault, TG: comment that the pullouts are too small and dangerous due to the proximity to the highway; there should be ditches for separation, like at Boundary Creek. They are also not signed so it's easy to drive by and miss them.
  - o Ziaur, INF: additional signage will be installed by INF, just let them know where they are wanted.
  - o Cameron, INF - both types of the pull-outs were assessed by a professional engineer and were deemed safe.
  - o
- Tammy, TG: There is also a concern that there are no outhouses along the road so elders would have to use the bush. The road is too long to not have outhouses. No garbage bins are at the pull-outs, and they should be big enough to hold enough trash that it doesn't end up on the road, we are concerned about garbage getting into the water and fish could be killed, so the garbage and outhouses are really needed
  - o Cameron, INF: restrooms are not required for pull-outs, also concerned with household trash being put in larger bins. If there are any changes that are material changes in design and contract, the P3 contract for is for 25 years and any changes would have a cost impact in discovery so a larger conversation will have to be had. Additionally, INF is not responsible for putting up outhouses once road construction has been completed. The responsible department is ITI. TG should channel their request through ITI.
  - o Tammy, TG: the monitors travel up and down that road and recommendations are also coming from Whatì and Behchokò, so it is the users requesting these things. If it means looking at additional funding, they will go through those channels.
  - o Cameron, INF: that is a decision for a higher group, above our level.

- Laura, WRRB: asked about the process for submitting suggestions for additional signage.
  - o Cameron, INF: signage goes through Kiewit, then NSI, then the GNWT. We need to address interest groups putting up unapproved signs. All signs must go through Terry Brookes (INF), then respond to NSI.
  - o Tammy, TG: apologized for signs that were put up without protocol, they will follow the protocol now.
  - o Cameron, INF: will streamline the process for signage. Font and everything else can be a distraction. Signs should not be a visible nuisance to drivers. It is not the GNWT doing it.
  - o Devon, NSI: there is a 3rd party design firm, and the safety auditor must review signs for safety and ensure they are up to code.
  - o Lisa, CWG: an application has been submitted for Whatì limits, signage for the limits is also in process.
  - o Cameron, INF: GNWT will work with CGW on the process for getting signs made for historical/traditional places and landmarks, like fishing spots.
- Tammy, TG: Behchokò/Edzo has signs with blue and green lights when construction workers are working on the road. Bison are camouflaged against the background. Signs are needed to be aware of caribou and bison in the area, including a speed limit when approaching bison. You can't see the bison at night.
  - o Cameron, INF: signs are on the way, but they need to know where to put them.
  - o Devon, NSI: there is a message at km 0 to watch for construction. NSI will also put-up similar signage when leaving Whatì.
- Tammy, TG: would like to have emergency response figured out on the road. They are worried that nobody is on the road if something happens.
  - o Devon, NSI: does have to respond but staff are not medically trained.
  - o Cameron Wilson, INF: we need to work on a communication procedure and a number for highway emergencies on a sign heading north. A communication Plan is needed as soon as possible.
  - o Lisa, CGW: are there lessons learned from the Inuvik to Tuktoyaktuk Highway (ITH) emergency response that the CGW can learn from.
  - o Cameron, INF: Further discussion is needed if there is a response required by NSI. NSI will have a look at it.
  - o Lisa, CGW: we need first responders available; cell phones don't work everywhere along the highway. Fire Departments are not required in communities. Whatì would like a fire department with paramedics and first responders but there is nothing in the legislation that requires it.
  - o Ziaur, INF: INF will look at it as an Essential Plan.
  - o Ben, INF: There are measures in place for MACA to look at emergency response.

#### Wek'èezhì Renewable Resources Board

- Laura Meinert: would like to be involved in the discussions about bison in Whatì. Anything that the GNWT is going to do in response to the bison, an action management plan would have to go to the WRRB for review.
  - o Cameron, INF: work with Ben on this.
  - o Ben, INF: INF will work collaboratively with the WRRB to design a management plan, including TK and a comprehensive management plan. Based on the movement this summer, INF has been having discussions with ENR about holding an engagement session with the community, possibly, this fall to create a comprehensive monitoring plan.

#### Fisheries and Ocean Canada

- Tatiana Leclerc: Everything has been in compliance: road work, bridges, culverts, fish mortality issue has been fixed. Went to each culvert and bridge, no concerns.
  - o Lisa, CGW: asked that when DFO does inspections, they should contact TG fish monitors. DFO agreed to do that.

#### Wek'èezhì Land and Water Board

- Ryan Frequet: link to the Annual Report for TASR Project is up and available. Comment on the report, would like to express gratitude about the table on page 31 for water use.
- Land Use Inspectors sent reports and are also on the registry.

- Question for the group: Leading up to expiry of the type A water license, in 2026, how much watering will be required. It's time to start chatting about it: How much road watering might need to continue? Or if there are any other triggers that may require the water licence or land use permit to remain open.

#### Environment and Natural Resources

- James: The WWMP was updated and submitted for public review. This review of the WWMP is done every year, initiated in September, the plan is posted through the Online Review System. This will be done again this upcoming fall. No regulatory concerns were brought to attention.

#### Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board

- Chuck Hubert: MVEIRB would like to add to the agenda. The Board is very pleased and looking for improvements after each project. The MVEIRB would like to be included in future meetings.
  - o Cameron, INF: asked that MVEIRB be added to the agenda and have a regular slot at meetings moving forward.

### 8. BREAK

### 9. Management and Monitoring Plans: Updates, Implementation, Outcomes, Constraints, Concerns, and Recommendations

#### Wildlife Monitoring and Management Plan

- James provided updated through a presentation on Wildlife Monitoring Effects:
  - o Tammy, TG: Why is there a difference in wolf abundance rates between Alberta and the NWT?
    - James, ENR: The south is more productive for moose and whitetail deer, so much more choice for prey. We have a lot lower density for everything up here in the North.
  - o Devon, NSI: Why are only female caribou collared?
    - James, ENR: to calculate population index, the birth and survival rate need to be collected. There are some males collared to get other information, but they aren't needed to determine the population.
    - Ben, INF: Why was there a drop in calf to cow ratio?
    - Lisa, CGW: Why less productive?
    - James, ENR: No idea, could be many things. This needs to be checked over a 10-year period to learn any long-term information and get a better picture, not just a single-year drop.

#### Caribou Habitat Offsetting Plan

- Ben, INF: The final plan was completed and approved prior to the opening the road, the measures have been satisfied. The next phase of the plan is implementation of the plan, unfortunately, there was no budget allocated for this phase. Worked with ENR to submit a proposal to FMB, to get funding for the next phases of the offsetting plan.
  - o WRRB: Did the EA measures mention anything about implementation?
  - o Ben, INF: not before the road is opened, just that the measure specifically said that the plan should be finalized, but it does need to be implemented.

#### INF Quarry Plants & Permafrost Plan

- Terry Brooks sent his regrets.

#### Fisheries Management Plan by DFO & TG

- Pau Vecsei, TG: DFO update of FMP to fishers about what the FMP covers. A working group is in effect. People must follow the rules. An angler's diary will be available in some locations. It is important to fill this out; DFO will be politely forceful because catch information is extremely important. The FMP timeline update: complete. An Integrated Fisheries Management Plan will allow for small fishing operations, but for as of now the FMP is in place. The corridor is from Highway 3 to Whatì, but the impact goes far beyond that because of the east/west road. The area below the falls on Lac la Martre is a very sensitive area where spawning happens in an 8 km section upstream that now open to the world. TG is concerned enough to suggest limited access beyond the falls with gating. Whatì folks will be able to get a key for access further downstream. TG does not want new people accessing this area. Whatì has its own monitors. Buffers are now in

place so no one can fish on either side of it, but it is difficult to enforce. TG monitored 100s of Dwarf White Suckers; they are immune to angling. Several things were tried to make sure they won't take bait. Signage is close to being ready.

- Ben, INF: finalizing signs, specifications are going to be sent to the designer. Randy Jennings (WRRB) was instrumental in the planning and design.
- Paul, TG: not controlling the production of documents, once a draft has been received, TG can show parties what the pamphlets may look like and seek input.

#### Annual Reports and Review

- Ben, INF: Annual report (EA Annual Report)/reviews (WWMP) have been submitted and approved. The EA annual report was sent to MVEIRB in October. The Dept. of Lands should also be sending a policy assessment email soon. Reporting aspects have been going well.
- James, ENR: the Annual reporting for the WWMP is contained in Annual Water License Report that was sent to the WLWB review system.

### 10. Engagement Plan

Stephanie Behrens, TG: We have been working the Tłchq Highway Harvest Monitoring Program (HMP) with elders and harvesters the area of TASR. A HMP committee was formed in 2021 and used as a guide to develop and implement monitoring plan. Interviews were done by a wildlife coordinator with hunters. Currently TG has trained monitors are active on the highway everyday, each week the monitors are rotating Sunday-Sunday, and have been working since the opening of the road. These monitors also helped with a baseline vegetation study. Elders are going to be interviewed for TK on vegetation along the highway. Our HMP is focused on Wildlife Harvesting, impacts to wildlife habitat. Monitors have been taking note and reporting wildlife observations, sighting of tracks or any other signs of wildlife, any harvesting along the highway. There have been signs of moose, lynx, bison, marten, rabbit, wolverine, chickens, and grouse. Monitors have noticed an increase of roadkill; fox and wolverine carcass were collected by ENR. There is also an increase in garbage and wood harvesting, they have been picking up garbage and taking note of who is harvesting. We do believe that there will be an increase in moose and caribou harvesting along the road in the fall, once residents are ready to do their hunt. There have been lots of concerns of bison become a problem in Whatì, herd compositions, behaviors using daily logs, the monitors have stated to include bison monitoring within the HMP. Lots of concerns with dust, last years vegetation study shows that dust was found anywhere from 15-200 meters from the road. This year the plots will be extended to 500 meters and will be placing dust fall collectors alongside. An invite was sent to the ITH monitors crew for job shadowing, currently waiting for a response, this would be a great transfer of knowledge and insight on the areas of monitoring that should be focused on. There was consideration of including drones, but we do not see this necessary, so it is put aside for now.

#### Open floor suggestion period – TK Input and EA Lessons Learned

- Ben, INF: would like to actively ask participants to feel free to provide input to improve monitoring and mitigation measures and the TK aspect of our monitoring. Based on this summer's observation of the bison movement, it is likely we will have an engagement session this fall, not just related to the bison but any management plans that are in place to satisfy the EA measures, feel free to send an email. A mini project of Lessons Learned during the EA process was undertaken by a consultant. They completed interviews and worked with different stakeholders to complete a final report of what went right/wrong, this was sent out with the agenda prior to the meeting, this is a comprehensive document that we may not have time to discuss today, but if there are any suggestions or questions, please let us know.
  - Chuck, MVEIRB: Measures regarding socio-economic and environmental implementation may have been too soon – more so the socio-economic, recommend that in the next report of EA in October 2022, they be discussed then to determine the effectiveness. The MVEIRB is looking forward to seeing this.
  - Ben, INF: the next report will capture the social issues mentioned earlier by Lisa.
- Tammy, TG: the CWG should review and revise the ToR so the cost of travel for community members to future meetings could be defrayed by INF.

### 11. Summary of meeting expectations and moving forward

Cameron, INF: Provided a summary of meeting expectations, asked that the TASR CWG to go through the

Guiding Principles of the CWG to note the sharing method and means to communicate. Discussions regarding the design or lack of design is not for this forum, discussions about dust will be addresses because there is an environmental concern about that. Am not going to move forward with discussions that will in any way lead to a material change of the contract in place between NSI and the GNWT – which includes the TG. These topics can be discussed at other forums. Discussions need to be topical at the next meeting to stay on track.

Action Items:

1. Stephanie Behrens, TG: meetings are needed to start a bison monitoring program and asked for signage to be posted about who is allowed to harvest trees and fish to prevent altercations.
2. New signage for roads required (goes through Kiewit). Cameron will work to streamline process for places and landmarks; warning of bison/caribou in area; Bison Control construction sign when leaving Whatì, same as a km 0.
3. Communication Procedure and contact number required for road emergencies.
4. CGW asked for first responders available, INF will look at it as an Essential Plan.
5. CGW asked to contact TG fish monitors when DFO does for inspections. DFO agreed to it.
6. MVEIRB would like to be included in future CWG meetings.
7. TG is working on a TASR Engagement Plan for the Tłı̨chų Highway Harvest Monitoring Program (HMP) with elders and harvesters.
8. Continue to monitor Bison movement toward Whatì.

**12. Discuss possible dates for next meeting**

- Next meeting date tentatively set for December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2022, in Yellowknife, meeting location may be changed to Behchokò.

**13. Closing Remarks**

**14. Closing Prayers**

Led by Tłı̨chų Elder Michel Moosenose

Meeting Adjourned: 4:35 pm MT

**Legend:**

AE - Associated Engineering / Associated Environmental  
CANNOR - Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency  
CGB - Community Government of Behchokò  
CGW – Community Government of Whatì  
DFO - Department of Fisheries and Oceans  
EA – Environmental Assessment  
ECCC - Environment and Climate Change Canada  
ECE - GNWT Dept of Education, Culture and Employment  
ENR - GNWT Dept of Environment and Natural Resources  
FIN - GNWT Dept of Finance  
INF - GNWT Dept of Infrastructure  
ITI – Industry, Tourism and Investment  
Lands - GNWT Department of Lands  
NSI - North Star Infrastructure  
NSMA - North Slave Métis Alliance  
MVEIRB - Mackenzie Valley  
Environmental Impact Review Board  
TG - Tłı̨chų Government  
WLWB - Wek'èezhì Land and Water Board  
WMMP – Wildlife Management and Monitoring Plan

WRRB - Wek'èezhì Renewable Resources Board  
WSCC - Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission  
YKDFN - Yellowknives Dene First Nation