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Highways 357

Traditional Knowledge Baseline Information Report On the Mackenzie Valley Highway Extension

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For:

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1. BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

The Department of Transportation (DOT) of the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) awarded a contract to GeoNorth & Golder Associates to conduct an Environmental Scoping and Data Collection for the proposed Mackenzie Valley highway extension. With this in mind, GeoNorth & Golder Associates (G&G) contracted the services of the Dene Cultural Institute (DCI) to carry out a Traditional Knowledge (TK) scoping exercise for the gathering of baseline information from individuals living in the area of the proposed Mackenzie Valley highway extension route.

Prior to the start of gathering information, a training session for Community Liaison workers was held in Wrigley, NWT. The TK Research Director of the DCI prepared a training interview guide for the Community Liaison workers to use during the gathering of information. This package included instruction on interviewing techniques, guidelines to conducting ethical research and a prior consent authorisation form. To complete the training package G&G included a map of the proposed highway extension and an information newsletter as a way of informing the public about the proposed Mackenzie Valley highway extension.

With the conclusion of the training session, community liaison workers began the TK scoping sessions on a one-to-one basis. Contacts were made and individuals who participated did so voluntarily, and they began to speak about issues and concerns on the proposed extension of the Mackenzie Valley highway.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of the environmental scoping was to identify Traditional Knowledge (TK) issues and concerns related to the proposed extension of the Mackenzie Valley highway from people who are and have lived along the proposed highway extension route. This information is intended to aid departmental officials of the DOT in their decision-making process.

3. TK SCOPING RESULTS

A total of eighteen (18) individuals from six (6) communities (Colville Lake, Tsiigehtchic, Inuvik, Ft. Good Hope, Wrigley, Norman Wells) along the proposed Mackenzie Valley highway extension route participated in the TK scoping exercise. Participant's ages ranged from fifty-three (53) years to plus eighty (+80) years. Some chose not to respond to specific questions because either they did not have enough information and/or they did not have sufficient understanding of the highway extension plan to respond.

The TK scoping issues and concerns are summarised and categorised according to the responses received in regards to the proposed Mackenzie Valley highway extension, as follows:

3.1 TRANSPORTATION OF GOODS

- A few participants indicated that the highway extension would be good for the people and communities because the cost of transporting and buying goods would be less.
- A few participants indicated that it would be cheaper to travel by road, which might reduce airfares.

3.2 COST OF DOING BUSINESS

- No comments received.

3.3 EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING

- A few Elders remember past pipeline and highway extensions and the problems associated with that development. Once the project was completed, most of the jobs that remained were given to people not living in the North. Community people were out of jobs and left out of long-term employment opportunities.
- Most of the Elders who participated are concerned about the jobs that will remain when the highway is complete. They indicated that employment during construction would be very good for the people, however, they are concerned about the effects this may have on future generations.

- Some of the participants appear to be very concerned about the people and the communities when the extension is complete. Who will have jobs when the extension is complete? What will happen when people no longer have any money?
- Most of the Elders who participated want to know what employment and training opportunities will come from the proposed highway extension? Elders are not just looking at short-term but long-term employment and training opportunities so that community peoples will have something to fall back on once the extension is complete.
- Some Elders are concerned that the unskilled may be left out, and want to know what can be done to help community people who lack the training and education but want to work on the highway extension.

3.4 ACCESSIBILITY

- Most of the participants indicated that the highway would offer better access to communities. They felt that opening up access would allow more people to visit each other and meet more often for spiritual gatherings.
- Some elders indicated that by having road access this might help community people to get back to the land and continue to practice traditional ways of living.
- Most of the participants indicated that with the extension of the highway, there would be an increase in highway accidents and deaths.
- Some of the participants are concerned for the safety of the youth, especially when you here news from the south about disappearances and kidnappings.
- Some felt that it would be easier for young people to travel more frequently outside of the community and therefore, add to the erosion of their traditional way of life.

3.5 MONEY AND JOBS FROM TOURISM

- Some of the participants felt that there would be an increase in money in the communities, however, from past experiences once projects were completed, the money and jobs were gone.
- Some people feel things should stay as they are, and do not trust any development that will have a negative impact on people and communities

3.6 BRING PEOPLE TOGETHER

- A few Elders said that the highway extension would bring communities together.
- Some felt that the highway extension would help younger people get back to the land to learn and continue to practice traditional ways of living off the land.

3.7 TRADITIONAL LIFE

- Some of the participants indicated they did not agree with the project, and felt that the highway extension would have a negative impact on the people and communities. The highway extension would affect the practices of living a traditional way of life.
- Participants are afraid that the traditional way of teaching and passing knowledge from generation to generation will be destroyed if the highway is extended. Their ancestors did not have to write this knowledge on paper because they shared through teachings, stories and practices. This way of life could be destroyed.
- Most of the participants are concerned that more people will travel out of the communities more frequently and this will lead to a loss of their culture and language.
- A few participants said that they are concerned about the increase in traffic and what long-term effect this will have on communities and people.

3.8 SUBSTANCE ABUSE

- Most of the participants are concerned that with the highway extension there would be an increase in drug and alcohol usage in the communities.
- Elders are concerned that an increase in drugs and alcohol will lead to an increase in crime, family problems and highway accidents.

3.9 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

- Most of the participants are concerned about the environmental effects that the highway extension will have on the fish, caribou, eddies, land and the people.
- Some of the Elders did not feel that the highway extension would have much impact on the caribou as indicated from past experience with the Dempster highway.
- Some of the participants felt that an increase in traffic would increase the garbage on the roads and in the rivers, and question the long-term effects that this will have on people.

3.10 TRADITIONAL BURIAL SITES

- A few elders said they are concerned about the highway extension route because gravesites of their people are in the area of the road development.

3.11 COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

- A few of the participants indicated that they lacked trust about this project based on past development.
- The majority of participants indicated that further discussion is required amongst the leaders, community people and Elders before any highway extension is approved.
- A few of the participants want to discuss alternate expansion routes other than what is proposed.
- One participant said that an issue like this highway expansion should be talked about before all the planning is complete.

4. APPENDICES:

- 4.1 Interview Guide – Part One**
- 4.2 Code of Ethical Research Conduct**
- 4.3 Prior Informed Consent**
- 4.4 Interview Guide – Part Two**
- 4.5 Map of Highway Extension Route**
- 4.6 Comment Form**
- 4.7 Information Newsletter of DOT**

Tulita Missing

**MACKENZIE VALLEY HIGHWAY EXTENSION
COMMUNITY LIAISON WORKERS
FEBRUARY 25, 1999**

TK INTERVIEW GUIDE

Introduction:

In many community-based traditional knowledge research projects, interviews are only a small part of larger more complex form of social investigation. Typically, the research process¹ consists of four basic elements:

- ▶ **the study design:** in which the research question or problem is defined, the researcher or research team is determined, research goals and objectives are identified, funding is sought and got, and the place to be studied and the methods for doing the study are decided;
- ▶ **the data collection:** in which the information for the study is gathered using the methods decided for the study design (for instance by reading books written about the subject of the research or by interviewing people knowledgeable about it, by designing surveys and asking people to fill them out, by conducting experiments, or by many other methods);
- ▶ **the data analysis:** in which the information collected is examined to detect patterns, in order to see if the research goals and objectives have been met, to identify study findings or conclusions, and (if required) to make recommendations;
- ▶ **the study presentation:** in which the findings, conclusions, and recommendations (if any) – based on the data collected and the analysis done – are reported, usually in writing.

It is important to distinguish between the full community-based participatory traditional knowledge research model and the one being proposed here which is a partial scoping exercise to determine future information needs.

¹ *A Participatory Research Process for Dene/Métis Communities: exploring community-based research concerns for Aboriginal northerners.* B. Masuzumi & Susan Quirk. 1993.

COMMUNITY LIAISON WORKERS TK INTERVIEW GUIDELINES

CODE OF ETHICAL RESEARCH CONDUCT²

Researchers must follow certain guidelines and professional codes of conduct when they are doing research. These are not laws, but researchers must follow guidelines if their projects are to be approved by the agencies that fund them, and by the agencies who issue research licences or permits. Here are some things researchers are asked to do:

- apply for approval from permit agency and community, and offer a full explanation of their research plan;
- inform and get permission from individuals who are to be involved in a research project;
- offer and guarantee confidentiality;
- share with the communities information about the purpose of their research, its methods, and findings throughout the life of the project;
- make serious efforts to incorporate traditional knowledge, whenever relevant, throughout their project;
- avoid disrupting family and community life;
- provide information on their research in the local language and/or dialects;
- state how consent was given in any document that is published from their work;
- whenever possible, provide training to community members.

² *Negotiating Research Relationships: a guide for communities.* Prepared by Nunavut Research Institute and Inuit Tapirisat of Canada. 1998.

COMMUNITY LIAISON WORKERS TK INTERVIEW GUIDELINES

Prior Informed Consent

Project Description:

At present, the communities of Tulita, Norman Wells, Fort Good Hope and Deline can only be reached by road in the winter, and the only all-weather road to Tsiigehchic and Inuvik is via the Dempster Highway. There is year-round access to these communities by air, and summer access by barge. Since the early 1970s, there has been discussion of connecting these communities by extending the Mackenzie Highway. The Department of Transportation of the Government of the Northwest Territories is conducting studies to determine if it makes sense to extend the Mackenzie Highway. This extension would go north from Wrigley toward Tsiigehchic, with a possible side route to Deline.

Project Method:

Your community's interests are protected by _____, which has contracted with _____ to carry out individual and/or group interviews. These people will ensure that your information will be treated with the strictest confidentiality. Your signature on this document would signify that:

- you have been informed of the project intent in language you understand;
- you have consented to give them information;
- your name will not be reported with any of the information that you give;
- you may withdraw from the research at any time you wish to; and that
- your community will retain the ownership of any information you provide.

Informant: _____

Researcher: _____

Date: _____

Date: _____

Witness: _____

Date: _____

*Not necessary
to have signed*

Focussing the Research:

The Community Liaison Workers (CLW) will need to discuss *how informants will be selected*. Some ways might be the following:

X

- Who are the people most familiar with the future route?
- Confirm these names with the HTA and/or Band Council
- Approach these people and ask if they would be interested in participating

Once the individuals have been confirmed, it might be useful to consider doing interviews one-on-one and/or with the whole group. Keep in mind that the communities are already linked in many other ways than just by road access i.e., hunting and trapping routes, etc.

group?

In the case of Wrigley and Tulita for example, it might be a good idea for both Agnes and Albert to discuss existing sources of information and possible Elders who might be interested in participating. The same approach could apply to the other communities.

Defining the Questions:

Within the context of this process, how would you pose questions to determine concerns that might involve further more intense traditional knowledge research? Here are some possible opening questions:

- How would an all-weather road change things from what it is today?
- In what ways could an all-weather road improve access to the land for traditional knowledge purposes?
- In what ways could an all-weather road impact negatively on traditional knowledge activities (i.e., bush skills camps, spiritual gatherings, etc.) on the land?
- In what ways could a community prepare for the increased traffic and possible impacts of an all-weather road?

What effects has the existing winter road had on wildlife?

Recording the interviews should be through generalized statements which are then immediately verified and confirmed by all in the group.

**MACKENZIE VALLEY HIGHWAY EXTENSION
COMMUNITY LIAISON WORKERS
FEBRUARY 25, 1999**

***TK INTERVIEW GUIDE
PART TWO***

The Interview Situation:

Any interview, whether it is one-on-one or in a group, is an artificial setting in which information is gathered. Your task is basically one of facilitating easy discussion. There are several things that you should observe:

- Show respect for whomever you are interviewing;
- Try not to interrupt sharply the flow of talk;
- Make sure others will not unexpectedly barge into the session;
- Be clear at the outset what they will be talking about;
- Give some rough idea of how long the session will be;
- Have some tea and sweets available;
- Always try to recognize when they are getting tired and then arrange a break;
- Even during the breaks, there might be some important things said; and
- Try to bring the conversation around to include as much range as possible.

For the purposes of this exercise, it might be useful for you to consider doing the interviews in two separate sessions of two or three hours each with three Elders. If at the second session, you have three different Elders - then you will have covered a great deal more personal views and experiences. In this scenario - you will be paying each of them \$50 for *their time* . . not for their information.

On the other hand, you might consider using the same Elders for the two sessions.

Recording the Interview:

Note-books and tape-recorders are very distracting in an interview situation. For a group session, a flip-chart is always appropriate with you as the recorder. It is a physical exercise that also gives the speakers a chance to think about their responses.

A good leading question might be: *"In what ways will an all-weather road affect the community's plans to protect and enhance the traditional knowledge of people?"*

Write down in general form what their responses are. Continue the discussions and if it wanders a bit here and there - don't worry. Just bring it back lightly with questions directed at someone else or with a more specific topic in mind.

Always - before finishing the session, show them what they have said so far and if they could make even more broader statements of what they have already said.

Reporting the Interview:

Each of you will have an eight-day contract with your respective land corporations to carry out this work. The traditional knowledge component will easily take three full days of that time. Plan your work so that it coincides with the open-house schedule and the availability of the Elders.

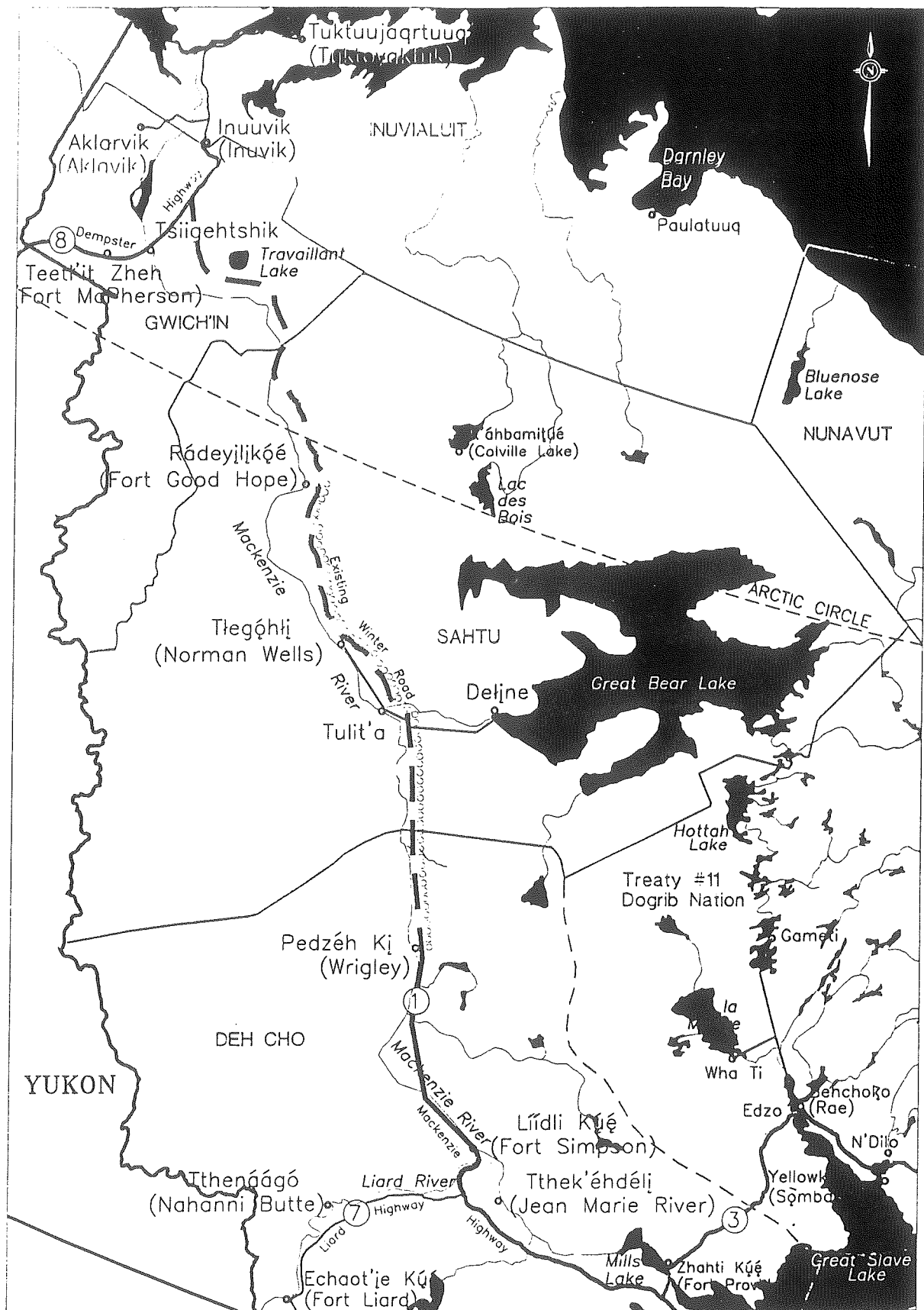
You are expected to send in the detailed notes of the sessions as well as the generalized statements of the Elders. The Dene Cultural Institute will compile the information gathered together from all the communities and write up a overview report which will be returned to you for final verification. Your responses will then be incorporated into a final draft report which will then be submitted as an important part of the overall exercise.

Specifics things to include in your community reports:

- all of the notes and flip-chart pages
- all of the general statements
- a three-four page summary in your own words of what happened:
 - describe how you chose the Elders
 - describe how and where you held the sessions
 - give a summary of what they told you

Contact information for Barney Masuzumi;

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LEGEND

- EXISTING ALL WEATHER ROAD
- - - WINTER ROAD
- x - x - PROPOSED ALL WEATHER ROAD

0 50 100 150 200km

DIGITAL MAP OF NORTHWEST TERRITORIES FROM:
SELECTED MINERAL DEPOSITS OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES.
DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY, MINES AND RESOURCES, MINERAL
INITIATIVES 1991 TO 1996, REVISED OCTOBER, 1996.
INFORMATION MANAGEMENT GROUP, DIAND (Sept. 5/1997)

CONCEPT FOR AN ALL WEATHER HIGHWAY EXTENSION FOR THE MACKENZIE VALLEY

Comment Form

Mackenzie Valley Highway Extension

Name (optional): _____

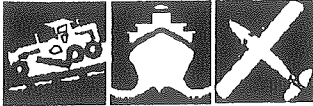
Address: _____

[illegible]

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NORTHWEST TERRITORIES



TRANSPORTATION

Mackenzie Valley Highway Extension Information for Public Consultations

Introduction

At present, the communities of Tulita, Norman Wells, Fort Good Hope and Deline can only be reached by road in the winter, and the only all-weather road to Tsiigehtchic and Inuvik is via the Dempster Highway. There is year-round access to these communities by air, and summer access by barge. Since the early 1970's, there has been discussion of connecting these communities by extending the Mackenzie Highway.

The Department of Transportation of the Government of the Northwest Territories is conducting studies to determine if it makes sense to extend the Mackenzie Highway. This extension would go North from Wrigley towards Tsiigehtchic, with a possible side route to Deline.

This information paper has been written to provide the public with an outline of the Mackenzie Highway extension proposal and the reasons for it. This paper will also raise some possible environmental and socio-economic considerations and describe upcoming community meetings.

The Concept

The extension is included as one of four highway developments that are now under consideration by the Department of Transportation.

At the present time, the extension is only a concept: the Government has not formally proposed the construction of the road, nor committed to building it. A final decision will depend on the results of engineering, economic and environmental studies that are

now underway, and on your comments as residents of the Mackenzie Valley.

One of these studies will identify the important issues that should be investigated in detail in any future environmental assessment, if the Department of Transportation decides to build the road. This study is **not** the same as an environmental assessment - rather, it is the consultation and research needed to be sure that if and when the Government proposes the project, the environmental assessment for it would be a good one.

Why extend the Mackenzie Highway?

The main reason intended in considering extension of the Mackenzie Highway is for social and economic purposes. The extension would ensure year-round road access to communities and sites along the route. This could have many economic effects.

1. It would be cheaper to transport goods to communities, it would reduce the cost of living and increase the variety of products available to community members.
2. By reducing transportation costs, the overall cost of doing business in to communities would go down, which would encourage business development. This would provide more jobs.
3. Jobs would be created during highway construction and maintenance. Also, education and training opportunities on heavy equipment would be created during construction and operation of the highway.
4. The road would provide better access to petroleum and other resources near the route, and promote additional economic development.

5. The extension would bring in money and jobs from tourism by creating road access to the region and to the Arctic coast through the NWT.
6. The road would bring together people and communities along the route.

Even though these are all these good reasons for extending the highway, there may be better reasons for **not** extending it. The economic study being done now for the Department of Transportation is weighing both the economic advantages and disadvantages of the extension. Available funding for this extension is a major concern, and a study of financing options is being done at the present time. There are also many other issues that must be considered, including the possible effects of the ecological, social, and cultural impacts of the project.

What would be the route of the highway extension?

The all-weather Mackenzie Highway presently ends at Wrigley. The extension being considered is based on a route identified in the early 1970s. This route would go from Wrigley through Tulita, Norman Wells and Fort Good Hope. It would connect to the Dempster Highway between Tsiigehtchic and Inuvik. A side branch also being considered would go from Tulita to Deline. Much of the extension would approximately follow the route of the current winter road. **While this would be the general route, no details have been finalized . Because of this, it is possible for the Department of Transportation to modify its plans so as to work around site specific issues if necessary.**

From Wrigley to Norman Wells, the route is expected to follow the existing winter road along the eastern bank of the Mackenzie River, north past the Blackwater River, and then into Tulita.

The side route from Tulita to Deline has not yet been determined.

From Tulita through Norman Wells and on to Fort Good Hope, the extension would roughly follow the route of the winter road. This stays close to the river until some distance past Norman Wells, but then swings away from the river on a more direct route to Fort Good Hope.

Past Fort Good Hope the suggested route roughly follows the winter road, with some deviations, until close to Travaillant Lake. It then leaves the existing winter road route to go south of Travaillant Lake before heading westward to connect with the Dempster Highway. This is the route identified in the Gwich'in Final Agreement. Although the route selected as the preferred route in the 1970's joins the Dempster near Campbell Lake, discussions with the Gwich'in Tribal Council identified a more southerly route, to join the Dempster near Tsiigehtchic.

Such a route crosses Crown land, Sahtu-owned land and Gwich'in-owned land. Acquiring this land would be done according to requirements of land claim agreements as well as Federal and Territorial regulations.

How will Land Claims be considered?

The entire Mackenzie highway extension would pass through portions of 3 land claims regions, and any decision to proceed would demand political support and approvals on the portion of the extension within each region.

- For the Deh Cho, where no land claim has been negotiated, it would require political support from Deh Cho First Nations. In the absence of a land claim, it is anticipated that an application would have to respect the Deh Cho Process and any initiatives that may come from negotiations pursuant to the report of the Ministerial Envoy.

- For the Sahtu, it would have to conform with the *Sahtu Dene and Metis Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement* and meet requirements of the *Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act*. This would involve political support from Sahtu Secretariat Incorporated, and approvals from district and community land corporations and full and open consultation with beneficiaries living in the Sahtu communities, before applications could proceed through the regulatory process. Schedule XVII of Appendix E to the *Final Agreement*, which identifies how consultation, public review and compensation must occur for the extension of the Mackenzie Valley Highway, must be adhered to.
- For the Gwich'in, it would have to conform with the *Gwich'in Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement* and meet requirements of the *Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act*. This would involve political support from the Gwich'in Tribal Council and approval from Gwich'in Land Administration before applications could proceed through the regulatory process. Schedule XVII of Appendix F to the *Final Agreement*, which identifies how consultation, public review and consultation will occur for the extension of the Mackenzie Valley Highway, must be adhered to.
- building a gravel and earth pad as a base for the road;
- filling in muskeg under the road base;
- some blasting to even out steep slopes in certain locations;
- installing bridges or culverts where the highway crosses rivers or streams; and
- the setting up of temporary work camps for construction crews.

There would also be a need for maintenance activities on the road after construction. This would involve occasionally grading and resurfacing the road with more gravel.

Two different designs are being considered, one based on traffic speeds of 80km/h and the other 60km/h. Both roads would be 8.4 meters wide and built on a pad of at least one and a half metres of gravel, shale and sand. The main differences between them are that the 80km/h road would involve slopes that are less steep, longer stopping distances, and more gravel, sand and shale for the base than would be involved in the 60km/h road.

There is no specific schedule being considered for construction at present, but, if the road were to proceed, it is likely that the road from Wrigley to Fort Good Hope would be built first, and then the connection from Wrigley to the Dempster would be constructed.

What would be involved if the Highway was extended?

If the highway extension is built, construction along the route will involve:

- clearing a strip of vegetation approximately 60m wide;
- the use of heavy machinery;
- quarrying sand and gravel to use as construction material;

What is the area around the route like now?

The vegetation of the area is mostly northern boreal forest of black spruce, birch and muskeg. The route includes an area that is the western edge of the Bluenose caribou herd winter range. Other large mammals present include moose, black bear, grizzly bear and timber wolf. The area is also home to many

other species of furbearers and waterfowl. Other birds also use the route area for breeding and staging grounds and as a migratory route. Fish species present include grayling, pike, burbot, walleye, inconnu, round whitefish and longnose sucker.

Hunting, fishing and trapping are all important activities in the area that depend directly on the well-being of local fish and wildlife.

What issues should be considered?

Any environmental assessment of the extension would have to look at ecological, socio-economic, and cultural issues arising from the environmental effects of the project, if it were proposed. The environmental assessment would most likely have to answer questions such as:

- What would be the effects of the extension on community well-being?
- How would the highway extension affect wildlife?
- How would cultural heritage sites along the route be identified and protected?
- Would fish spawning or migration habitat be affected?
- What would be the effects of wildlife – vehicle collisions on wildlife populations?
- What would the risks be of accidental spills along the highway?

These are only a few examples of the kinds of questions that will help focus any future environmental assessment on the most important issues. By finding out what issues people care most about, the Department of Transportation will be able to make better predictions about the impacts of extending the Mackenzie Highway, and whether or not the extension should be built. Also, by knowing beforehand what people's concerns are, the project can be improved to avoid problems.

How can you take part in the environmental scoping study?

Public meetings are being organized in each of the communities near the route of the highway extension. These meetings will be organized and advertised well in advance. They will inform communities about the highway extension idea, and will help identify environmental, social and cultural issues of concern to community members.

If you take this opportunity to express your concerns early, it is more likely that they will get thorough consideration during the environmental assessment.

If the Department of Transportation eventually decides to propose the extension, in whole or in part, you will be able to participate in the review of the environmental assessment at that time as well.

If you want to know more about the idea of extending the Mackenzie Highway, or have any environmental, social or cultural concerns about it, please come out to the meeting, or please ensure that your representatives understand and voice your concerns.