

**YUKON FISH AND WILDLIFE
MANAGEMENT BOARD**



Box 31104, Whitehorse, Yukon, Y1A 5P7
Phone: (867) 667-3754 Fax: (867) 393-6947 officemanager@yfwmb.ca

November 2, 2018

Emmie Fairclough
Director, Department of Lands and Resources
Teslin Tlingit Council
Box 133
Teslin, Yukon Y1A

To Emmie,

Re: Mandate of the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board

This letter is a response to the letter sent by your office regarding the mandate of the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board, dated August 24, 2018. The Board needed to discuss the letter at our October 16-18 meeting, hence our response being delivered to you at this time.

Thank you for the points you raised in your letter. The Board greatly values open dialogue with Teslin Tlingit Council, and other First Nations, and we acknowledge that we can always work to strengthen this communication.

Firstly, I would like to address the point in your letter about the Board's in camera discussions and the perceived closure of meetings to the public. The Board does hold in camera sessions for personnel discussions, and during the recommendation-making phase, which includes not only the formal process for regulation changes under the Wildlife Act but also other recommendations that are being drafted as issues arise. There are confidentiality requirements under the Umbrella Final Agreement (16.7.7) that require " ". As such, any discussions that pertain to recommendations that have been made must be confidential until the information is made public by the appropriate Minister.

The Board does also on occasion list discussions as in camera when there are fish and wildlife issues to be discussed between Board members that may be uncertain, sensitive, or political in nature. However, it should be clarified that these discussions are open to First Nations, RRCs, and the public to attend and are only listed as in camera in order to ensure that there is no media present. The Board understands that this is unclear in our agendas, and as such we will make an effort to clarify when this is the case.

Additionally, in the interest of transparency and encouraging participation from First Nations and RRCs, the agendas for our Board meetings are provided to all parties as far ahead of the meeting as possible. Last minute scheduling changes are unfortunate and we endeavor to avoid

these as much as possible, however they do occur and are often as frustrating to the Board as they are to everyone else attending the meeting. If there are ever any clarifications you'd like with regards to a particular meeting agenda, please don't hesitate to communicate this to us.

Secondly, I would like to address the specific concerns you see for fish and wildlife in the Teslin Tlingit Council Traditional Territory. With respect to the over-harvest of moose populations, the Board hears this loud and clear from many First Nations and RRCs who are upset with the way harvest is currently being managed and feel that their moose populations are in decline. The Board is hoping to address these concerns through a territory-wide comprehensive harvest management review, for all species and in all Traditional Territories. We feel that the current system is fragmented and not achieving the broader conservation of our ecosystems that we need. We will be reaching out to First Nations in the near future to determine what this process will look like.

Regarding the issue of catch and release fishing – the Board is actively engaged on this issue and has been for many years through our Angling Working Group, which has a representative from Teslin Tlingit Council. The Board submitted a recommendation to the Minister of Environment in 2017 to review the fisheries management framework in Yukon in part due to these catch and release concerns, which we have also heard from many people across the territory. The Department of Environment has stated that they are currently undertaking a formal review of their fisheries management practices, including slot size limits and catch and release regulations, and the Board continues to put pressure on this issue as it unfolds.

Ultimately, the Board is concerned with conserving the fish and wildlife of our territory, for our future generations. This work does become political at times, and as a recommending body that does not have the power of implementation the Board does its best to remain focused on conservation and working in the spirit and intent of the Umbrella Final agreement in a way that moves the conversation forward. We look forward to working with

Sincerely,



John Burdek

Chair, YFWMB