

North Yukon Regional Land Use Plan

Annual Implementation Report
2019/2020 and 2020-21
&
Annual Priorities for 2021-22

August 2021



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Background

The North Yukon Regional Land Use Plan (NYRLUP) was approved by the Government of Yukon and the Vuntut Gwitchin Government in 2009. In 2010, the Parties entered into a Memorandum of Understanding, to implement the plan and develop an implementation table to guide their activities through the years.

The Government of Yukon and the Vuntut Gwitchin Government work together to implement recommendations made in the approved NYRLUP. The governments meet quarterly to discuss the implementation activities and the conditions that influence plan implementation in the region.

Parties hold annual meetings to review their implementation activities and priorities, recognizing limitations and current conditions. They also update the timing for implementing each recommendation and identify priorities for the upcoming year. They prepare an annual report.

Due to restrictions associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, an annual meeting and report were not completed for 2019 or 2020.

Report

This report covers 2019, 2020 and 2021 and describes:

1. implementation activities and issues;
2. priorities for 2021-22;
3. plan amendment or review procedures and outcomes; and
4. conformity checks and cumulative effects reporting results.

1) Implementation Activities and Issues (2019-2020 and 2020-21)

A quarterly implementation review meeting was held March 5, 2020. With the start of the COVID-19 pandemic soon after, no further implementation review meetings were held until June 9 and 10, 2021. The pandemic also resulted in some delays of implementation activities that had been identified for 2019-20 and 2020-21.

Activities carried out to implement the NYRLUP recommendations and any issues affecting plan implementation were discussed at that meeting. Priorities for implementation in the following year were also identified.

The status of the activities undertaken to implement the NYRLUP recommendations is tracked in the Intergovernmental Implementation Framework table. The notes of the annual meeting provide discussion of activities undertaken during the year and rationale for the priorities (reference: Annual Meeting notes of June 9, 10 2021).

Actions taken on the priority activities that had been identified for 2019-2020 and 2020-21 were:

- a) Surface and linear disturbance tracking and reporting (NYRLUP Recommendation 1.1, 1.3)

Priority Activity: Parties reach agreement on methodology to identify historic disturbance levels and track disturbances in Integrated Management Areas.

Status: Yukon Land Use Planning Council (YLUPC) completed "*Pilot Study of Surface Disturbance in Eagle Plains. Report and Recommendations*" by Sam Skinner, January 19, 2021. It reports on the methods and results of a pilot study in the Eagle Plains area to map and evaluate human-caused disturbances, including the current surface and linear disturbance levels.

- b) Access Management Plan for the Eagle Plains oil and gas basin (NYRLUP Recommendation 6.3).

Priority Activity: Finalize framework for access management planning and complete focused engagement.

Status: The working group consisting of Government of Yukon, Vuntut Gwitchin Government and the YLUCP representatives prepared a draft access management plan for the Eagle Plains oil and gas basin, in December 2020.

- c) Guidelines for industrial activity in the winter range of the Porcupine Caribou Herd (PCH) (NYRLUP Best Management Practices)

Priority Activity: Support lead agency in researching and developing management guidelines to address the potential impacts of oil and gas activities on PCH and its habitat.

Status: Yukon Environment with Vuntut Gwitchin Government input, managed contracts to conduct research on caribou, and mitigation and management measures for industrial development.

- d) Protected area planning for Dàadzàii Van (NYRLUP 4.2.2)

Priority Activity: Support lead agency in developing management plan for Dàadzàii Van Territorial Park.

Status: TBD

- e) Planning for the Porcupine River Headwaters (southern section of the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation Traditional Territory that had been part of the Dawson Planning Region prior to the Overlap Agreement)

Priority Activity: Establish a planning framework.

Status: Vuntut Gwitchin Government has identified considerations for a planning framework for this Porcupine River Headwaters area in the southern part of the Traditional Territory.

- f) Evaluation of NYRLUP

Priority Activity: Complete an evaluation of the NYRLUP.

Status: The *“Evaluation of the North Yukon Regional Land Use Plan”* was completed September 2019 by Vector Research. Evaluation is to be considered by Parties to determine whether a plan review is required. In 2021, Vuntut Gwitchin Government reviewed the report to identify and consider issues in determining a plan review: these were discussed with Government of Yukon at the 2020-21 annual meeting in June 2021.

- g) Upcoming priorities:

Hydrological Studies (NYRLUP Recommendation 4.1 and Suggested Research priority)

Future aggregate source identification (NYRLUP Recommendation 6.5).

2) [Priorities for 2021-22](#)

The following implementation priorities were identified for 2021-22:

- a) **Surface and linear disturbance tracking and reporting ((NYRLUP Recommendation 1.1, 1.3) and Cumulative Effects Management (NYRLUP Goal 1).**

Priority Activities 2021-22: Parties confirm approach to cumulative effects monitoring and measurement. Parties agree to methodology to track linear and surface disturbance in other Landscape Management Units (LMU) designated as Integrated Management Areas in the North Yukon Region. (Adaptive management regime or new priority of climate change integration)

Milestones/Dates: Parties review and provide feedback on YLUPC report. Taking YLUPC report, research work PCH in support of PCH Guidelines, and the NYRLUP Evaluation, Parties are working together with YLUPC, reviewing approach to cumulative effects, including indicators, and identifying ongoing approach to cumulative effects in region. Parties confirm approach to cumulative effects and appropriate methodology to track linear and surface disturbance in LMUs designated as Integrated Management Areas in the North Yukon Region.

- b) **Access management plan for the Eagle Plains oil and gas basin** (NYRLUP Recommendation 6.3).

Priority Activities 2021-22: Parties complete, approve, and implement final plan.

Milestones/Dates: Parties and YLUPC working group complete technical work on the draft plan. Parties' internal review of the draft plan, including communications. Parties develop and carry out engagement process. Parties finalize, seek approval and implement the plan, including its application in the oil and gas regulatory process, including the *Yukon Environmental Socio-economic Assessment Act*.

- c) **Guidelines for industrial activity in the winter range of the Porcupine Caribou Herd** (NYRLUP Recommendation 1.5, Best Management Practices).

Priority Activities 2021-22: Parties complete, approve, and implement Guidelines.

Milestones/ Dates: Parties review the caribou research reports and reconvene project team to review research results and develop guidelines. Parties finalize, approve, and monitor implementation of the Guidelines, including their application in the oil and gas regulatory process, including the *Yukon Environmental Socio-economic Assessment Act*.

- d) **Protected area planning for Dàadzàii Van** (NYRLU Protected Area 4.2.2)

Priority Activities 2021-22: develop management plan for Dàadzàii Van Territorial Park

- e) **Planning for the Porcupine River Headwaters** (southern section of the Traditional Territory that had been part of the Dawson Planning Region prior to the Overlap Agreement)

Priority Activities 2021-22: approve terms of reference for a planning process.

Milestones/Dates: Parties identify and review options, including options for a planning process, planning body, funding, and other resources required to carry out planning. The Parties will consider how planning for this area relates to the current NYRLUP, and the need for a plan amendment or review.

- f) **NYRLUP Monitoring and Adaptive Management** (NYRLUP Principles 1.4, Goals 1.5, Plan Implementation 7.1 and Revision 7.2)

Priority Activities 2021-22. Parties develop and apply mechanisms to monitor the changing planning context and issues of the planning region, to monitor the ongoing effectiveness of NYRLUP, and apply adaptive management to plan implementation. These mechanisms will inform land and resource managers in adjusting to new situations, and will inform the need for NYRLUP revision or review. Parties determine a means to have annual reporting on and review of these matters.

Milestones/Dates:

- Parties develop and apply a monitoring framework to identify changes in the planning context and issues in the region and to determine implications of these changes for NYRLUP. Parties prepare an update on the status of the oil and gas industry, including the potential for any projects to come forward for review and consideration within the planning region over the next 10 years [i.e. planning cycle].
- Parties develop and apply indicators to monitor use of plan by land managers and agencies to guide decision-making, supported by educational materials on use of the plan to ensure the effective implementation of the NYRLUP through land and resource management.
- Parties build an adaptive management process to apply the NYRLUP principle of monitor, learn, and adjust in the implementation of the NYRLUP through land and resource management.

- g) **Determine requirement for NYRLUP Review** (NYRLUP Pan Revision 7.2)

Priority Activity 2021-22. Parties decide whether a NYRLUP review is required and scope of review.

Milestones/Dates: Following work on the above Priority Activities for 2021-22, the Parties consider the outcomes and decide whether a plan review is needed and whether the planning of the southern area will require a Plan amendment, may occur as part of a plan review, or should be done as part of another planning process.

h) **Share and communicate the implementation progress with Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation citizens and residents of Old Crow**

Priority Activity 2021-22: Engagement activities coordinated with Directors' meetings in the community

i) **Conformity Checks** (NYRLUP Recommendation 1.1)

Priority Activity 2021-22. YLUPC to carry out conformity checks for Class 1 notifications, in alignment with process determined through Peel Plan implementation.

j) **Upcoming Priorities:** Hydrological studies (Recommendation: 4.1 and Suggested Research Priority); and Future aggregate source identification (Recommendation 6.5).

3) **Plan Amendment and Plan Review Procedures and Outcomes**

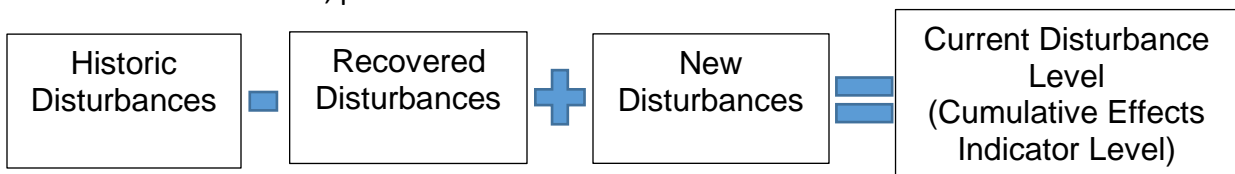
There were no Plan amendments for 2019. The Directors' plan to revisit the discussion of the need for a Plan revision or review in 2022, following work on the 2021-22 priorities, no later than the next annual meeting.

Cumulative Effects Reporting

This component of the annual report is an important tool for monitoring the functional disturbances and potential impacts of activities within the planning area at the LMU level.

There are two metrics utilized to report on functional disturbance: surface area and linear density. Both of these cumulative effects indicators are defined and discussed in greater detail in Section 3.3.1.1 of the Plan.

The annual current disturbance level reflects the historic disturbance values, less updated recovered disturbances, plus new disturbances.



The following is an overview of cumulative effects indicator related activities that took place during 2020-21:

1. **Historical disturbance data update project:** During 2017 and 2018 the YLUPC undertook a pilot project to comprehensively measure existing disturbances in LMU 9 (Eagle Plains Basin). A final report, including options for additional disturbance inventories, a plain-language report and web content were delivered in 2020-21 and are awaiting final approval in 2021.
2. **Recovered disturbance levels project:** Once the existing disturbance quantifying project has been completed, the implementation committee and technical staff will continue its work to determine and integrate processes to monitor, measure and record on-going disturbance levels.

The following summary provides an overview of cumulative effects and functional disturbances being tracked and monitored within the North Yukon planning region:

1. **Projects assessed under the YESAA** within the North Yukon planning region are reviewed by the YLUPC for plan conformity. No projects were assessed in North Yukon during 2020, however, four class 1 notifications were reviewed in 2021.
2. **New disturbances** occurring since the approval of the North Yukon Plan in 2009 until the end of 2020, are summarized in the table included as Appendix 1. Note that this table does not list the historical disturbances from before 2009. Those values are currently

being reviewed and updated as discussed above, and once finalized (see projects above) will need to be approved by the Parties before becoming official.

Since Plan approval in 2009, there has been an estimated total of 637 hectares of new surface disturbance in the North Yukon planning region. There were no new disturbances reported in 2020-21.

Cumulative Effects Summary: There were no new disturbances in 2020-21.

Appendices:

1. Disturbances Report 2009 – 2020

Appendix 1: Disturbances Report 2009 – 2019

New Disturbances from June 2009 – December 31, 2019						
Landscape Management Unit (LMU)	LMU sub-unit	Area (km ²) ¹	Land Use Category ²	Integrated Management Area (IMA) [†]	New Surface Disturbance (km ²) since 2009 ^{††}	New Linear Density (km/km ²) since 2009 ^{††}
1. Old Crow Flats Special Management Area	1A. Vuntut National Park	4,374 (8%)	PA	N/A	0	0
	1B. Old Crow Flats Core Wetlands	4,504 (8%)	PA	N/A	0	0
	1C. Old Crow Flats West	726 (1%)	PA	N/A	0	0
	1D. Old Crow Flats East	2,518 (5%)	PA	N/A	0	0
	LMU total	12,122 (22%)			0	0
2. Lower Porcupine River	2A. Old Crow – Rampart House	1,525 (3%)	IMA**	Zone II	0	0
	2B. Bluefish River – David Lord Creek	3,083 (6%)	IMA	Zone III	0	0
	2C. Bluefish – Cadzow Lake Wetlands	980 (2%)	IMA	Zone I	0	0
	LMU total	5,588 (11%)			0	0
3. Driftwood River – Salmon Cache	none	2,876 (5%)	IMA**	Zone II	0	0
4. North Richardson Mountains and Foothills	4A. Bell – Waters River	2,126 (4%)	IMA**	Zone II	0	0
	4B. LaChute River	1,331 (2%)	IMA	Zone II	0	0
	4C. Summit Lake – Bell River	1,525 (3%)	PA	N/A	0	0
	LMU total	4,982 (9%)			0	0

¹ Percentage of total plan area occupied by each LMU or sub-unit is shown in brackets

² Land Use Category: PA=Protected Area (existing or proposed), IMA=Integrated Management Area, ** = under North Yukon Land Withdrawal, *** = Fishing Branch HPA Land Use Category for LMU 12B to be determined.

[†] Cumulative effects indicators (cautionary level % of LMU) for the four IMA zones are: Zone I = 0.075%, Zone II = 0.15%, Zone III = 0.375%, Zone IV = 0.75%

^{††} Surface Disturbance and Linear Density values: Most project related disturbances during the defined time period occurred in either LMU 2A (Old Crow community area) or in LMU 9 (Eagle Plains). The 2014 Old Crow winter road project utilized the pre-existing licensed route through LMU 2A, 2B, 2C, 6, 7, 8C and 9 and therefore is not considered a new disturbance by the Plan. Historic disturbances from before 2009 have not been included in the reported values. Note that the new disturbance values listed are the raw values which do not yet reflect any deductions based upon the definition of functional disturbance and exempt activities as described by the Plan (See definition of Functional Disturbance, pg.3-2, North Yukon Regional Land Use Plan, June 2009). There was no new disturbance in 2018.

New Disturbances from June 2009 – December 31, 2019						
Landscape Management Unit (LMU)	LMU sub-unit	Area (km ²) ¹	Land Use Category ²	Integrated Management Area (IMA) [†]	New Surface Disturbance (km ²) since 2009 ^{††}	New Linear Density (km/km ²) since 2009 ^{††}
5. Bluefish Lake – Keele Range	none	2,066 (3%)	IMA	Zone III	0	0
6. Ahvee and Sharp Mountains	none	2,714 (5%)	IMA	Zone III	0	0
7. Johnson Creek	none	3,230 (6%)	IMA	Zone IV	0	0
8. Whitefish Wetlands	8A. Whitefish – Porcupine Lakes	468 (1%)	PA	N/A	0	0
	8B. Eagle – Bell River	1,124 (2%)	IMA	Zone I	0	0
	8C. Porcupine River	302 (1%)	IMA	Zone I	0	0
	LMU total	1,894 (4%)			0	0
9. Eagle Plains	none	6,415 (11%)	IMA	Zone IV	3.17 km ²	0.181 km/km ² (= 1161.2 km)
10. South Richardson Mountains and Foothills	10A. South Richardson Mountains	780 (1%)	IMA	Zone II	0	0
	10B. Rock River – Mount Joyal	2,374 (4%)	IMA	Zone II	0	0
	LMU total	3,154 (5%)			0	0
11. Whitestone River	none	1,740 (3%)	IMA	Zone III	0	0
12. Ni'iinlii'njik (Fishing Branch) Special Management Area	12A. Ni'iinlii'njik Protected Area	5,524 (10%)	PA	N/A	0	0
	12B. Fishing Branch Habitat Protection Area	980 (2%)	***	N/A	0	0
	LMU total	6,504 (12%)			0	0
13. Kandik River	none	2,266 (4%)	IMA	Zone IV	0	0
TOTALS		55,548 (100 %)				

¹ Percentage of total plan area occupied by each LMU or sub-unit is shown in brackets

¹ Land Use Category: PA=Protected Area (existing or proposed), IMA=Integrated Management Area, ** = under North Yukon Land Withdrawal, *** = Fishing Branch HPA Land Use Category for LMU 12B to be determined.

[†] Cumulative effects indicators (cautionary level % of LMU) for the four IMA zones are: Zone I = 0.075%, Zone II = 0.15%, Zone III = 0.375%, Zone IV = 0.75%

^{††} Surface Disturbance and Linear Density values: Most project related disturbances during the defined time period occurred in either LMU 2A (Old Crow community area) or in LMU 9 (Eagle Plains). The 2014 Old Crow winter road project utilized the pre-existing licensed route through LMU 2A, 2B, 2C, 6, 7, 8C and 9 and therefore is not considered a new disturbance by the Plan. Historic disturbances from before 2009 have not been included in the reported values. Note that the new disturbance values listed are the raw values which do not yet reflect any deductions based upon the definition of functional disturbance and exempt activities as described by the Plan (See definition of Functional Dist