



April 30, 2024

# Note to File

To all parties:

## RE: EA1213-02 Mackenzie Valley Highway, Government of the Northwest Territories, Sahtú Engagement

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Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board (Review Board) staff held engagement meetings for the Mackenzie Valley Highway Project (EA1213-02) in the Sahtú Region on the following dates:

- April 22, 2024, with the Norman Wells Land Corporation and held a Meet and Greet in Norman Wells.
- April 23, 2024, visited various organizations in Tulit'a and held a Meet and Greet in Tulit'a.
- April 24, 2024, met with the Town of Norman Wells.

At these meetings, Review Board staff described and answered questions about the environmental assessment process (copies of the presentation are attached). Review Board staff did not hear or collect any evidence at these meetings. The developer (Government of the Northwest Territories) was invited to present its Developer's Assessment Report and answer questions about the proposed project (copies of the presentation are attached). Meeting participants are listed below. In Norman Wells, five community members came to the Meet and Greet. In Tulit'a, forty-three community members came to the Meet and Greet. The lists of participants are attached below.

### Participants included:

- Review Board: Donna Schear, Simon Toogood, Clémentine Bouche
- GNWT-INF: Kelly Bourassa, Anita Ogaa, Erica Bonhomme (consultant, Stantec), Timm Rochon (consultant, DPRA)
- GNWT-ECC: Ash Varghese, Kelvin Igwe
- NPMO: Chantal Grey
- Norman Wells Land Corporation: Sherry Hodgson, Lisa McDonald, Jackie McDonald
- Town of Norman Wells: Frank Pope, Kacee Hunter, Kelly McCoy, Alexis Peachey, Dave Wever



- Meet and Greet in Norman Wells and Tulít'a: see the attached sign-in sheets

The primary contact on behalf of the Review Board is Catherine Fairbairn, Senior Environmental Assessment Advisor.

**Contact info:**

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Senior Environmental Assessment Advisor  
Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board  
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Yellowknife, NT X1A 2N7  
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[cfairbairn@reviewboard.ca](mailto:cfairbairn@reviewboard.ca)

Mackenzie Valley  
Review Board



Mackenzie Valley Highway Project Engagement Sign-in sheet			
Community: Norman Wells		Meeting date: April 23, 2024	
Facilitator: Review Board Staff		Location: SSI Office	
#	Name	Organization	Check if you do NOT want to be in pictures
1	Wendy Smith	Imperial	
2	Kelvin Igwe	GNWT - ECC	
3	Jim Popel	Aurora College	
4	DAWN MURPHY	MLA	
5	Carl Cedar	ECE	
6	ASH VARGHESE	GNWT - ECC	
7	De/bert Maand	Personal	
8			

Mackenzie Valley  
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Mackenzie Valley Highway Project Engagement  
Sign-in sheet

Community: Tulita		Meeting date: April 24, 2024	
Facilitator: Review Board Staff		Location: Tulita Arena	
#	Name	Organization	Check if you do NOT want to be in pictures
1	Scott PARKER	FNML	
2	Ered Andrew	R.R.C.	
3	Walt Mennh		
4	Brian Wrigley		
5	Danny Yakeleya		
6	David Yakeleya	Honkitt Tulita	
7	Jesse Yarelena	IPCA	
8	William Andrew	T.H.F.C.	
9	KRIST CUBERT	R.R.C.	
10	Tah Yakeleya		
11	Kurtis Widow	TRRC	
12	BILL CHAPPEL	Hanlet	
13	Caroline Widow		
14	Judith Wright	Bief FNMC	
15	DAVID Etchindok		
16	Don Decker		
17	Paul B		
18	Joe Bernada	Tulita	
19	Jonathan Yarelen	SRCS	
20	Lindsay	FNMC.	
21	Jaiden W		
22	Destiny Aepk		
23	Emerson Stewart		✓

Mackenzie Valley  
Review Board



Mackenzie Valley Highway Project Engagement Sign-in sheet			
Community: Tulita		Meeting date: April 24, 2024	
Facilitator: Review Board Staff		Location: Tulita Arena	
#	Name	Organization	Check if you do NOT want to be in pictures
24	Connor Stewart		
25	Alex Y		
26	Hailey Doctor		
27	Trishan MacLennan		
28	Emma MacEwen		
29	Samuel Ayah		
30	Alison Tomazynski	CAWS	
31	Brian Savoy	CAWS	
32	Aiden Widow		
33	Kaleb Clement		
34	Aaron Etchinelle		
35	Matt Yakeleca		
36	James Ayah		
37	JOAN McPHERSON	MYB	
38	Rosa Etchinelle	rosa-etchinelle@hotmail.com	Presented
39	David Etchinelle		
40	Marylene Korkal	Public	
41	Yvonne Yakeleca	Public	
42	Peter Macintosh	CAWS	
43	Heleen Squire	Elder	
44			
45			
46			

# Environmental assessment process for the Mackenzie Valley Highway Project

Presentation by the Mackenzie Valley  
Environmental Impact Review Board



# Why we are here today



- Sahtu environmental assessments (EA) – Mackenzie Valley Highway
- It's important for these environmental assessment to know:
  - who we are
  - what happens in an EA
  - **how to have your say**
- This session is not a step in the EA
- **Legally, we can't gather evidence from you today**
- You can share your concerns and views for the EA sessions
- **Questions about the Review Board and its process are welcome!**



# Outline

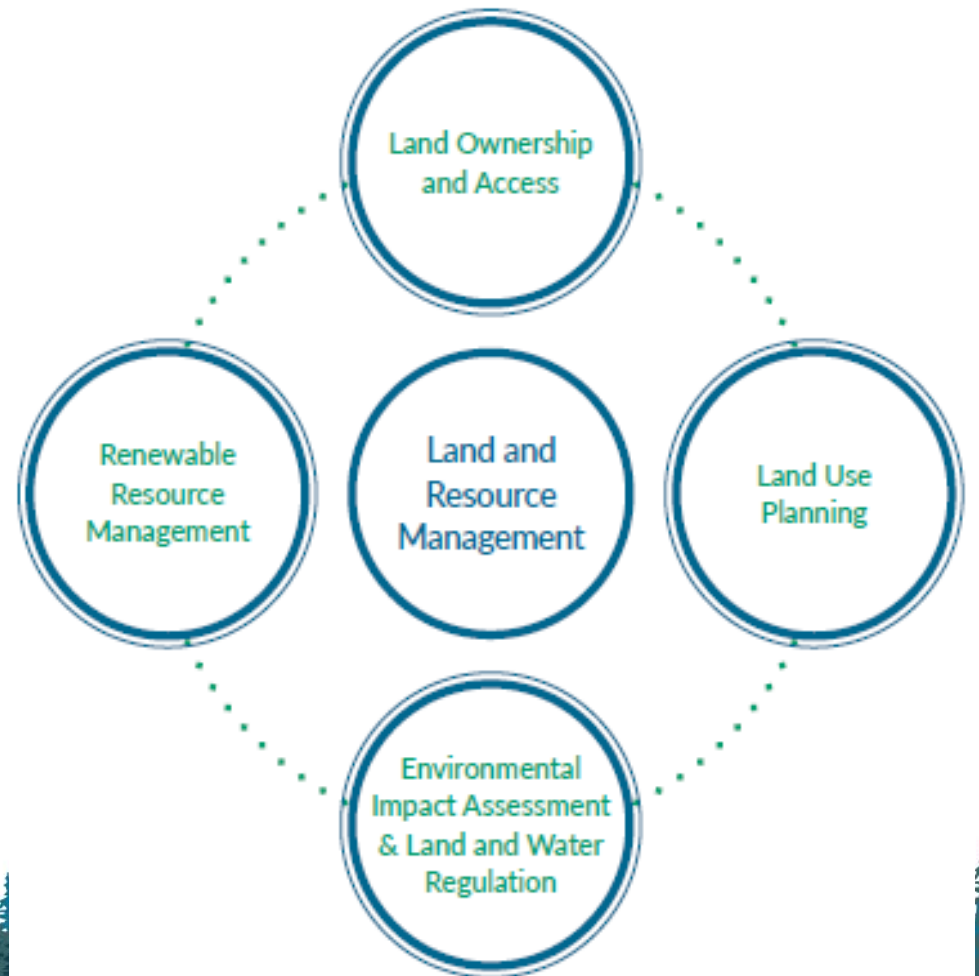
- Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act Boards
- introduction to Review Board and environmental assessment
- **steps in an environmental assessment**
- **summary of how to take part**





# EA in the Mackenzie Valley: part of an integrated system rooted in land claim agreements

## Land Claims of the NWT



# Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act Boards

## Preliminary Screening & Permitting/ Licensing Boards

Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board

Gwich'in Land and Water Board

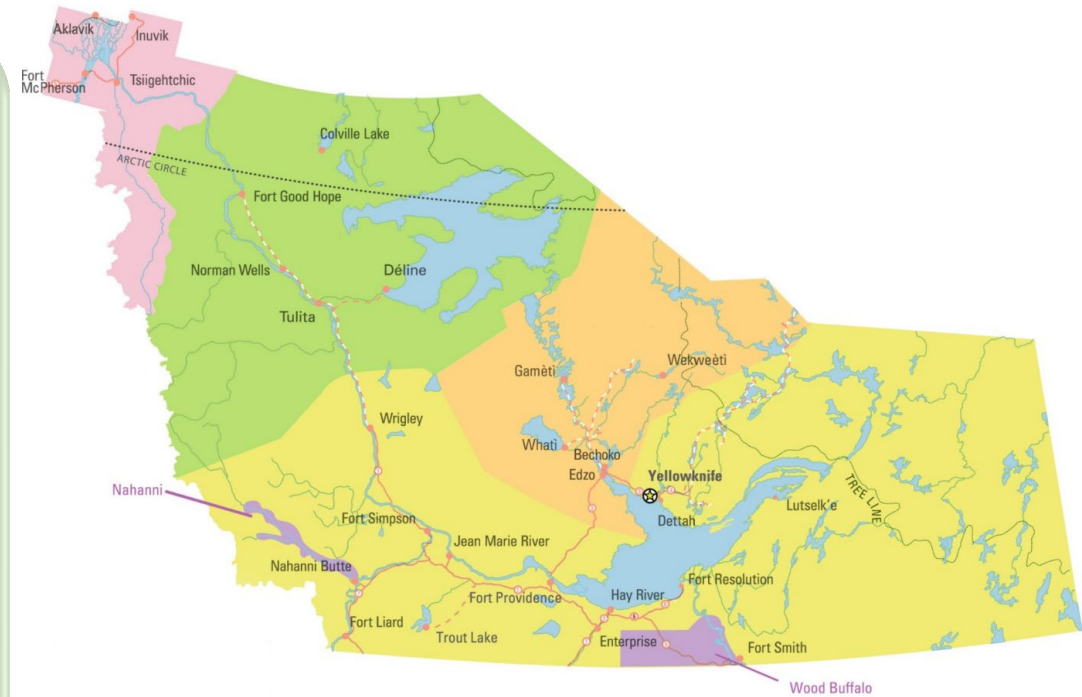
Sahtu Land and Water Board

Wek'èezhìi Land and Water Board

## Environmental Assessment & Impact Reviews

Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board

Impact Review Panels

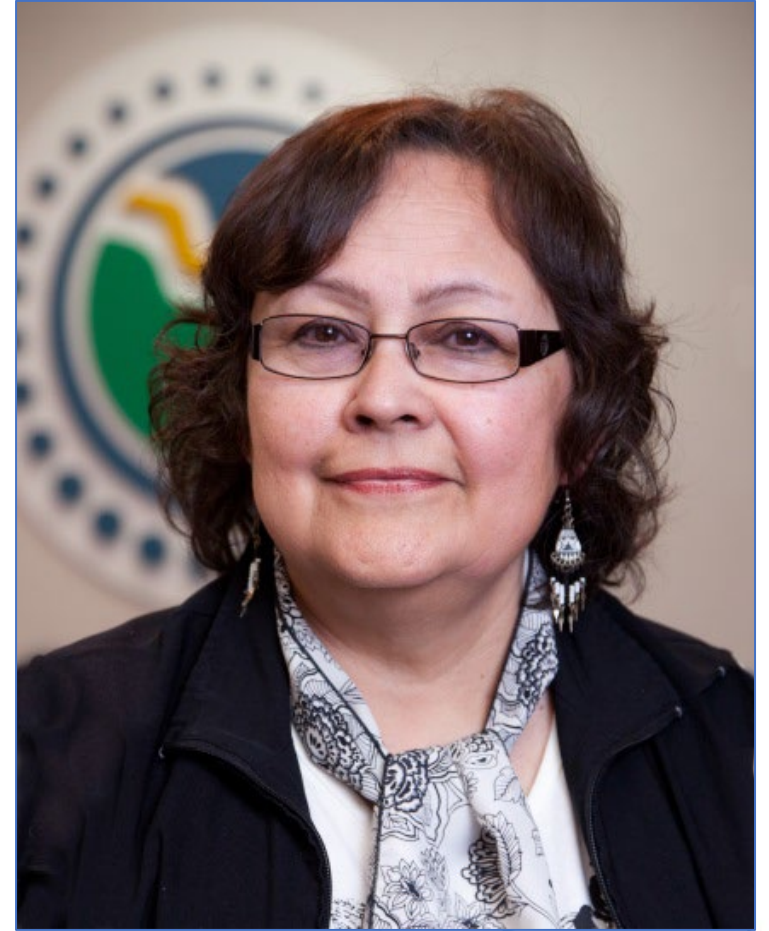


# What is the Review Board?

- The Review Board is
  - a **co-management** tribunal that **conducts environmental assessment**
  - **independent**
  - not federal or territorial government
  - runs a **fair** process that relies on evidence
  
- Made of **equal numbers** of members nominated by:
  - Indigenous land claim organizations
  - Federal/territorial governments

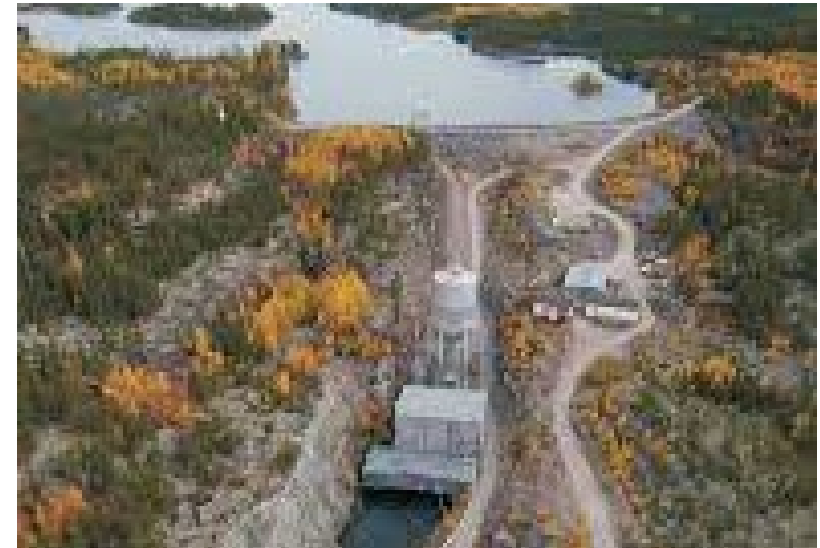


# Review Board members



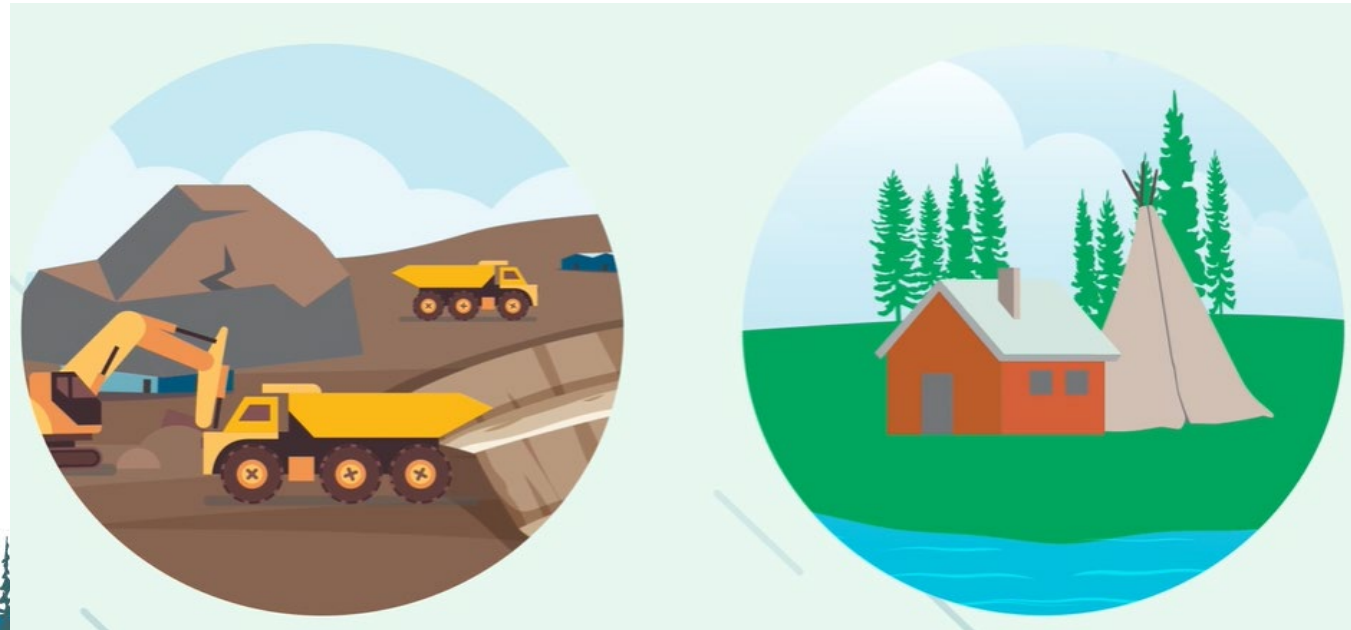
# Environmental Assessment (EA) is:

- a process and set of steps for making decisions about a project
- usually for big or controversial projects



# Why do environmental assessment?

- **communities get more say** on the projects that affect them
- **projects get designed better** from the beginning
- unacceptable projects can be rejected



# Why do environmental assessment?

- Some past development decisions in NWT led to serious problems for the environment + people
  - Port Radium
  - Colomac
  - Giant Mine
- It is wise to carefully consider unanticipated consequences *before* major developments
- **Look before you leap!**



# How does the Review Board do environmental assessment?

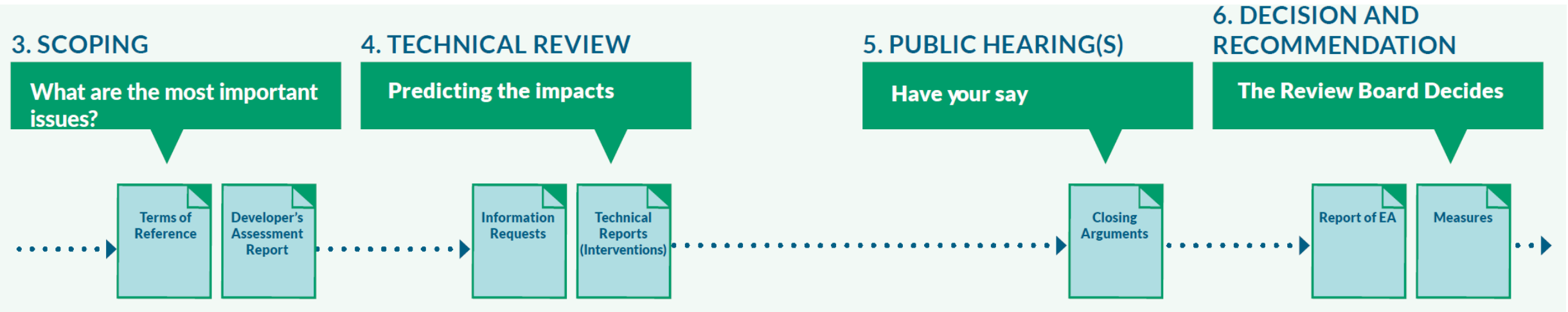


- look at what is being proposed
- **talk to people** who could be affected
- predict and analyze **what impacts could happen**
- identify mitigation to **avoid or reduce impacts**
- recommends **if** project should go ahead, and **under what conditions**





# Steps of the Environmental Assessment Process



# Scoping - the Board wants to hear from you!

- Scoping: what the rest of the EA will focus on
- What issues should the EA focus on?
- What should be included in the development?

**How could the project affect you or the things that are important to you?**



# What is the Developer's Assessment Report (DAR)?

The Developer's Assessment Report describes:

- **the proposed project**
- **the developer's impact predictions**
- **how the developer wants to reduce or avoid those impacts (mitigation)**

It includes all the information required in the **Terms of Reference**, including issues from communities and Indigenous Governments from scoping sessions



**Developer's  
Assessment  
Report**



# What happens next?

When the Board gets the Developer's Assessment Report, it will:

- look to see if each question has been answered (**conformity check**)
  - If not, it issues a statement saying what info the developer still needs to give
- take **comments from parties** on if each question has been answered



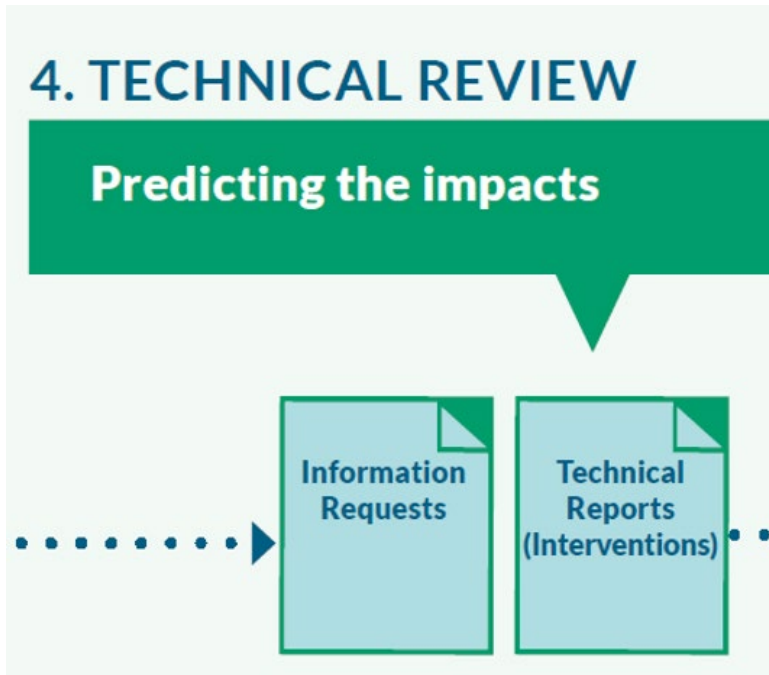
# Indigenous Governments review the Developer's Assessment Report

- How well **did the developer address the issues raised** by the Indigenous Government?
- **Do you agree** with the developer's **impact predictions**?
- Are the developer's **answers** to the Terms of Reference questions **good enough**? Are the answers clear? Is anything missing?
  - If not, tell the Board

**Flag any other questions and concerns** for the next phase of the environmental assessment (*information requests*)



# Technical review of the developer's information



The Review Board and parties will analyze the information from the developer:

- 1) at meetings, and
- 2) using written information requests

**Your comments and questions can help the Review Board understand impacts!**

# What are Information Requests?

- **Written questions** to the developer or other parties about **project impacts and predictions**
  - Read and considered by Review Board and other parties
  - Placed on the public record
- **Get answers to questions!**



# *Sometimes, in this stage Indigenous Governments will...*

Be asked to **respond to the Review Board's information requests** on certain matters



Hold **sidebar meetings** with the developer or government on a specific question

- Submit a reporting form for the record





# Community sessions vs technical sessions



# Public Hearings

- Speak directly to the Review Board members
- Interpreters will be present
- The Review Board:
  - considers all information collected through the EA
  - listens carefully to everyone who speaks and submits information



# Public Hearings

## 5. PUBLIC HEARING(S)

Have your say

Closing  
Arguments

- After hearings, parties make written closing submissions. These describe parties' conclusions on:
  - the impacts of the proposed project
  - what to do about them
  - what should happen to the proposed project

**Tell the Board what YOU think!**



# Decision and Recommendation

## 6. DECISION AND RECOMMENDATION

The Review Board Decides



- The Review Board makes the final decision on whether the project is likely to cause **significant impacts**
- Based on the evidence
- The Review Board will describe its reasoning in the **Report of Environmental Assessment**

# Decision and Recommendation: The Report of EA

The Review Board will make a recommendation to the Minister to:

- **approve** the project (usually with additional mitigation)
- **reject** the project because impacts are too great



# GNWT ECC Minister Decision

- The Review Board's recommendation is sent to the responsible government Minister for final approval
- The Minister consults with Indigenous groups
- The Minister makes the final decision as to whether a project can go ahead or not, and:
  - **accept** the Board's recommendation
  - consult to modify (ask the Board for **minor changes**)
  - ask the Board to **reconsider** its recommendation
  - order a **panel review** of the proposed project, or



# Recap: Many ways take part in EA

**Organizations** can participate in:

- **Scoping:** Prioritize issues in sessions and written comments
- **Draft Terms of Reference:** Verify what impacts the developer must predict
- **Developer's Assessment Report:** Review document
- **Information Requests:** Ask written questions to the developer and others
- **Technical sessions:** Work together to predict impacts
- **Interventions:** Give the Board written predictions and conclusions
- **Hearings:** Present your conclusions and recommendations to the Board members



# Recap: Many ways take part in EA

**Community members** can take part in:

- **Scoping meetings:** Tell the Board what issues and impacts it should study
- **Community sessions:** Help predict the impacts
- **Hearings:** Tell Board members what you think





# Draft workplan



**Public Review  
of DAR**

**Review Board  
IRs**

**GNWT  
Responds**

**Party Information  
Requests**

**GNWT  
Responds**

**Technical and  
Community Sessions**

**Second round  
of IRs**

**Developer DAR  
addendum**

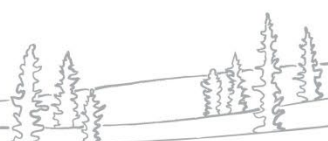




# Mackenzie Valley Highway Project

Developer's Assessment Report Overview – Dehcho and Sahtu

February 1-8, 2024



# Agenda

- Project Overview
- Engagement and Traditional Knowledge
- Project Schedule
- An Overview of the Developer's Assessment Report (DAR)
- Assessment Notable Findings
- GNWT's Commitments
- Questions



# Project Overview

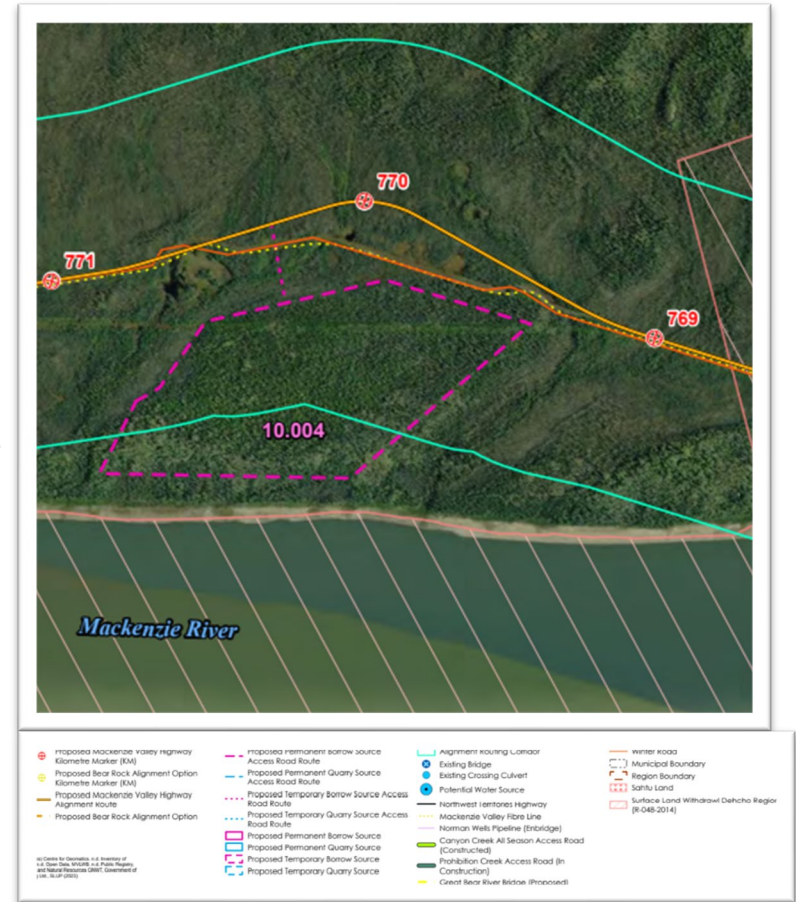
The Mackenzie Valley Highway Project will:

- Extend the Highway #1 all-season gravel road from Wrigley, to Tulita and Norman Wells
- Replace the seasonal Mackenzie Valley Winter Road (MVWR) along this portion
- Will create infrastructure to support improved quality of life and lower cost of living, and support the expansion and diversification of the economy



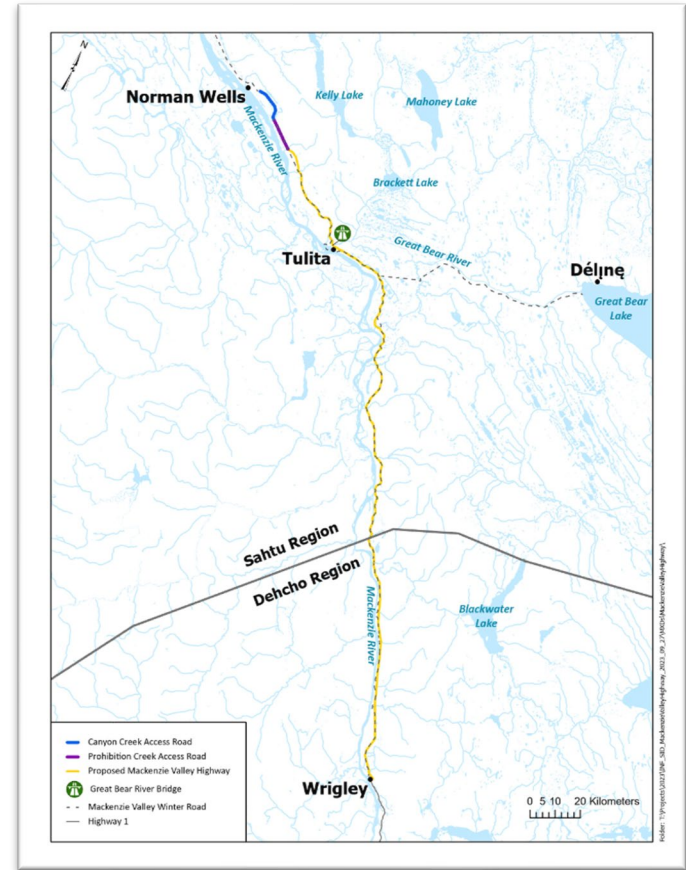
# Project Overview

- Highway route mostly follows the MVWR
- Factors considered:
  - Safety
  - Sensitive terrain and wetlands
  - Engineering and environmental standards and best practices
  - Engagement input
  - Traditional Knowledge
- Currently, the route is within a 1 km wide alignment routing corridor
- Project mapbook 1:20,000 in Appendix 5A (DAR Ch.5)



# Project Overview

- 281 kilometres (km) of new highway connects to 23 existing bridges along the MVWR and existing road portions
- Additional watercourse crossing structures (culverts)
- Temporary and permanent quarries and borrow sources and access roads
- Temporary infrastructure, workspaces and activities to support construction
- Permanent maintenance yards
- Highway operations and maintenance (DAR Ch.5)



# Engagement and Traditional Knowledge



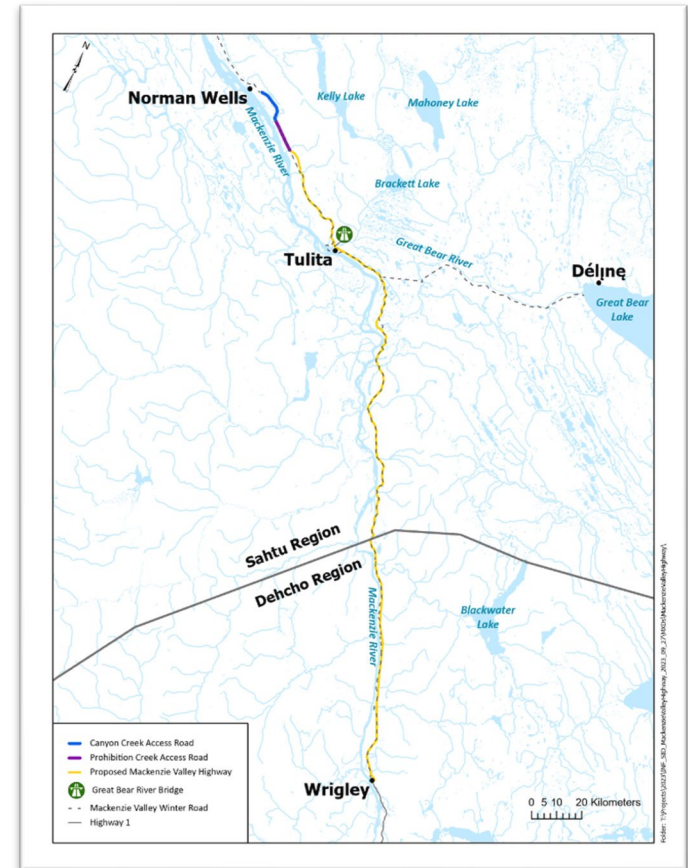
- 2010-2012 - Project Description Reports
- 2018-2020 - Project Updates
- 2021-2023 – Developer’s Assessment Report
  - Project description and construction activities
  - Potential project interactions and effects
  - Mitigation and monitoring
- Traditional Knowledge Studies:
  - Tulita Renewable Resources Council
  - Norman Wells Renewable Resources Council
  - Funding provided to Pehdzéh Kǰ First Nation

(DAR Ch. 2, Ch.3)

# Project Schedule

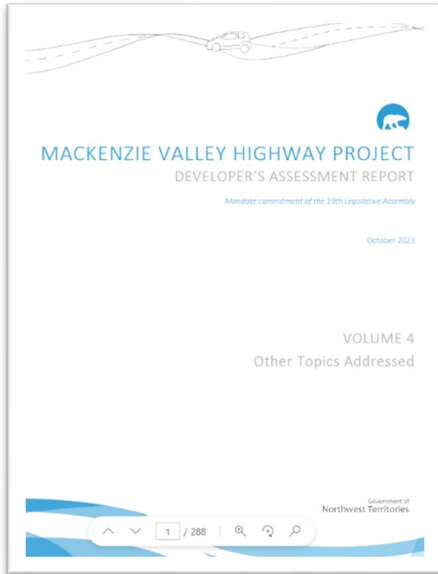
- 10 years to build over a 20 year period
- 3 construction segments
- Segments will open to public use once each is built
- MVWR will remain open while construction is underway
- Highway to be operated & maintained by GNWT-Infrastructure

(DAR Ch.5)





# Developer's Assessment Report (DAR)

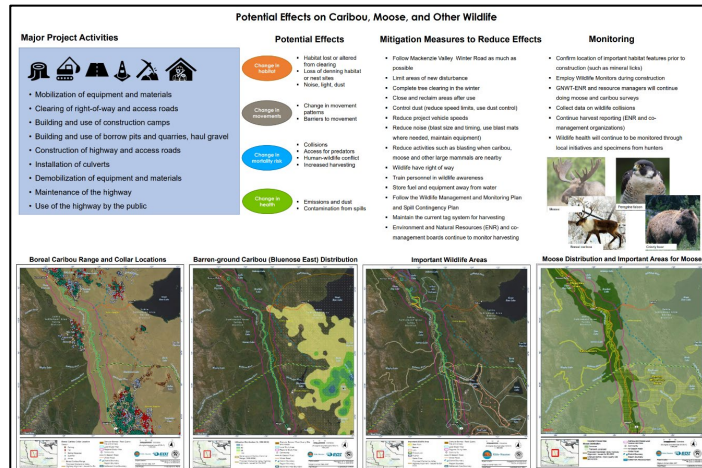


- Presents detailed information required by the Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board
- Predicts the residual effects of the Project on the environment by:
  - Identifying potential interactions between the Project and the environment that could lead to changes (potential effects)
  - Applying mitigation measures to reduce potential adverse effects
  - Predicting the effects on the environment after mitigation actions are taken (residual effects)
- Summarized in Non-technical Summary

# Developer's Assessment Report (DAR)

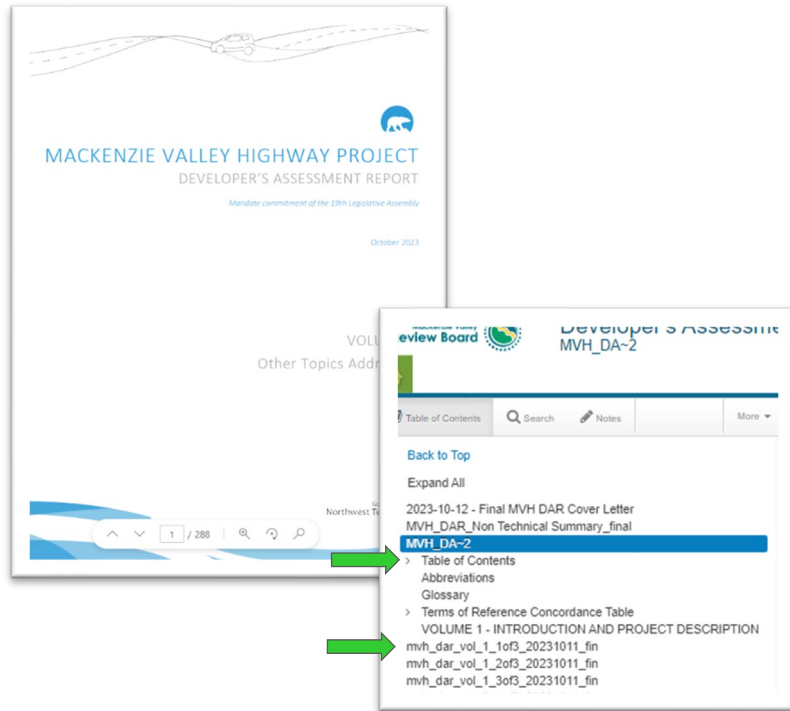
To help with the assessment, GNWT:

- Completed engagements with Indigenous Governments, Indigenous Organizations and other affected parties
- Conducted interviews and focus groups
- Completed field studies (birds, fish and fish habitat, water flow, archaeology)
- Reviewed geotechnical information
- Analyzed caribou and moose survey and collar data



Engagement Round 2 Poster Example

# DAR Organization



- Front Matter
- Volume 1: Introduction and Project Description
- Volume 2: Key Lines of Inquiry
- Volume 3: Subjects of Note
- Volume 4: Other Topics Addressed
- Volume 5: Draft Management Plans
- Technical Data Reports as Appendices in Vols. 2, 3, and 4

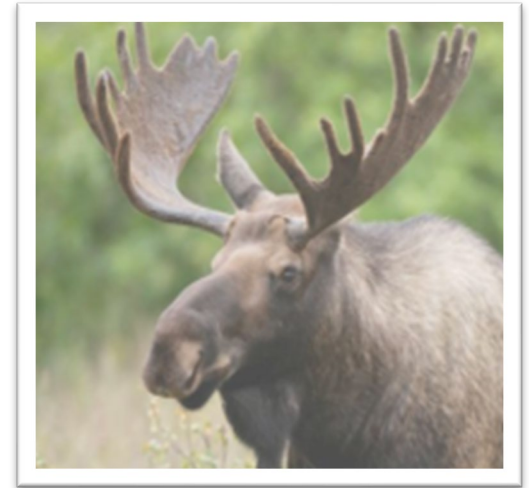
# DAR Volume 1: Introduction and Project Description

- Chapter 1: Introduction to the Assessment
- Chapter 2: Consultation and Engagement
- Chapter 3: Traditional Knowledge
- Chapter 4: Assessment Approach and Methods
- Chapter 5: Detailed Project Description
- Chapter 6: Authorizations, Approvals, and Agreements
- Chapter 7: Assessment of Alternatives



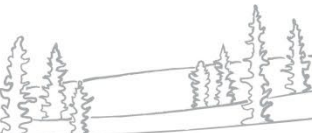
# DAR Volume 2: Key Lines of Inquiry

- Chapter 8: Summary of KLOI
- Chapter 9: Socio-economic Impact Assessment:
  - Human Health and Community Wellness
  - Education, Training and Skills
  - Employment and Economy
  - Infrastructure, Services and Institutional Capacity
  - Non-traditional Land and Resource Use
- Chapter 10: Caribou and Moose
- Chapter 11: Culture and Traditional Land Use, Including Harvesting



# DAR Volume 3: Subjects of Note

- Chapters 12-22: assessment of potential effects on:
  12. Air Quality
  13. Noise
  14. Terrain, Soils and Permafrost
  15. Water Quantity
  16. Water and Sediment Quality
  17. Fish and Fish Habitat
  18. Vegetation and Wetlands
  19. Wildlife and Wildlife Habitat
  20. Birds and Bird Habitat
  21. Biodiversity
  22. Heritage Resources



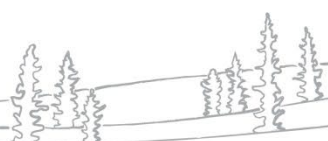
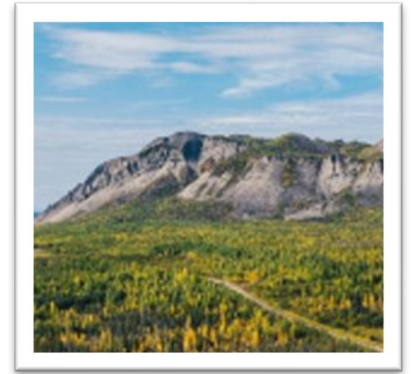
# DAR Volume 4: Other Topics

- Chapter 23: Compliance and Effects Monitoring
- Chapter 24: Effects of the Environment on the Project
- Chapter 25: Accidents and Malfunctions
- Chapter 26: Cumulative Effects Assessment Summary
- Chapter 27: Developer's Commitments



# DAR Volume 5: Management Plans

- Emergency Response Plan Framework
- Fish and Fish Habitat Protection Plan
- Heritage and Sites Protection Plan
- Spill Contingency Plan
- Waste Management Plan
- Erosion and Sedimentation Control Plan
- Quarry Development Plan Framework
- Wildlife Management and Monitoring Plan
- Permafrost Protection Plan





# Assessment Notable Findings

- Most residual effects are predicted to be not significant
- Many positive socio-economic effects
- Some residual effects are predicted to be significant.
- New and ongoing collaborative monitoring and management of these effects will be required.



# Assessment Notable Findings

- People want to be prepared for the Project
- Most socio-economic effects are not significant when mitigation measures are applied
- A Community Readiness Strategy is proposed to mitigate adverse effects and enhance positive effects
- Increased drug and alcohol availability will affect social pressures (significant)
- The Project will affect public safety within communities and will increase potential for injury from traffic accidents (significant)



# Assessment Notable Findings

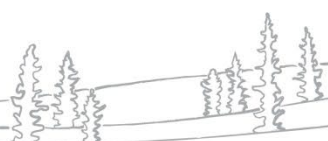
- Mitigation measures are expected to be effective at preventing significant effects to air quality, noise, soils and permafrost, vegetation, most wildlife, birds and water.
- The Project will reduce boreal caribou habitat, and the amount of existing disturbance is already significant.
- The Project will improve access to harvesting and traditional land use areas.
- The Project will make it easier to harvest fish and may lead to overfishing (conservatively significant)



# GNWT's Commitments

GNWT's commitments are in Chapter 27. These include:

- Project design commitments
- Mitigation measures – biophysical and cultural environment
- Socio-economic mitigation and monitoring measures
- Compliance and effects monitoring
- Engagement and enhancement commitments



# Questions?

Email: [MVH@gov.nt.ca](mailto:MVH@gov.nt.ca)

Project Website: [www.inf.gov.nt.ca/en/MVH](http://www.inf.gov.nt.ca/en/MVH)

