

Mackenzie Valley Highway Wrigley to Norman Wells

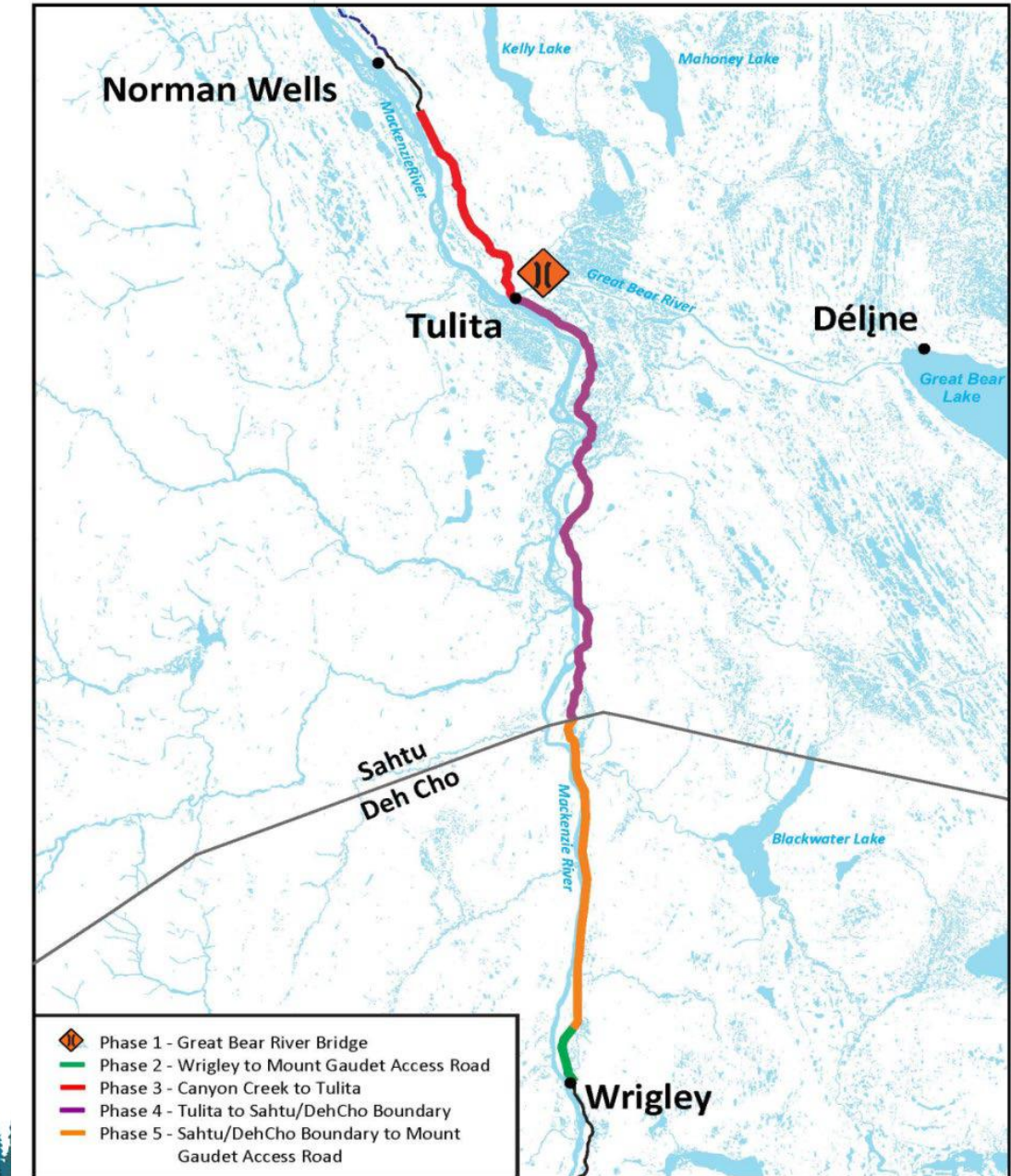
Environmental assessment Issues scoping, Terms of Reference and next steps

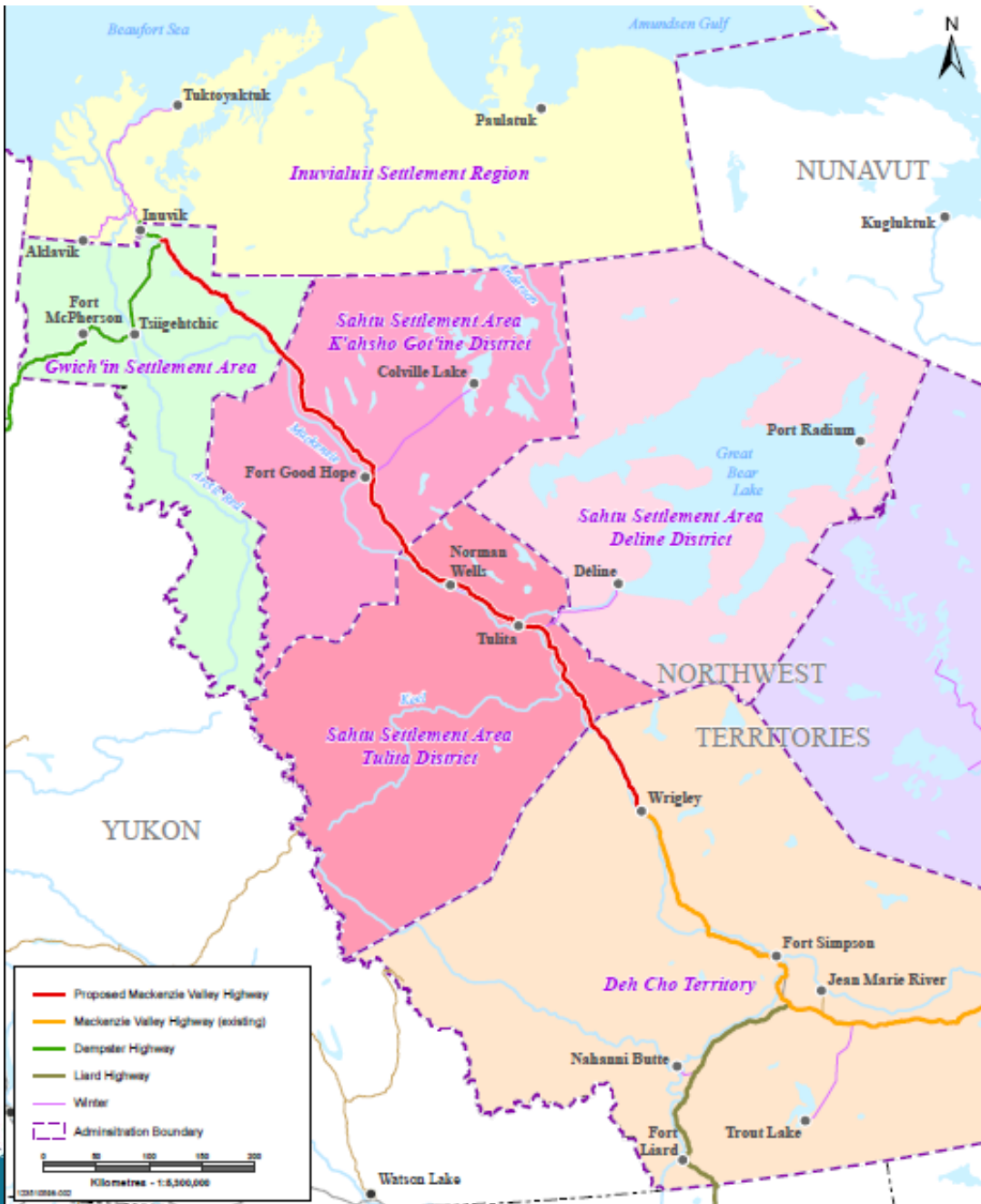
Meeting with SRRB – Nov 26, 2021



Outline

- Environmental assessment of the project
- Steps in an environmental assessment
- Issues scoping by Review Board
- Terms of Reference preparation
- Project change – revised Terms of Reference
- Next steps





Background



- 2013 – EA start-up, original highway proposed from Wrigley to Inuvik
- Project description reports submitted by GNWT
 - Dehcho, Tulita and K'asho G'otine districts Sahtu, and Gwich'in
- Project revised later - **Wrigley to Norman Wells**
 - 321 km extension



Steps in an environmental assessment



- EA Referral
- Project description & supporting info
- Public Notice
- Distribution list

- Written comments
- Scoping meetings
- Terms of Reference
- Scope of Assessment
- DAR instructions

- Developer's Assessment Report
- Information requests
- Technical meetings
- Community meetings

- Technical Reports
- Public hearings in community
- Closing arguments

- Board deliberation
- Report of EA writing
- Decision to Minister



Issues scoping - community meetings

Board staff host community scoping meetings, 2013:

- Wrigley
- Tulita
- Norman Wells
- Fort Good Hope
- Inuvik

Technical scoping meetings

- government regulators



Purpose of issues scoping meetings

Meetings hosted by Board staff

- Board staff describe EA process steps

GNWT presents project

- People ask question

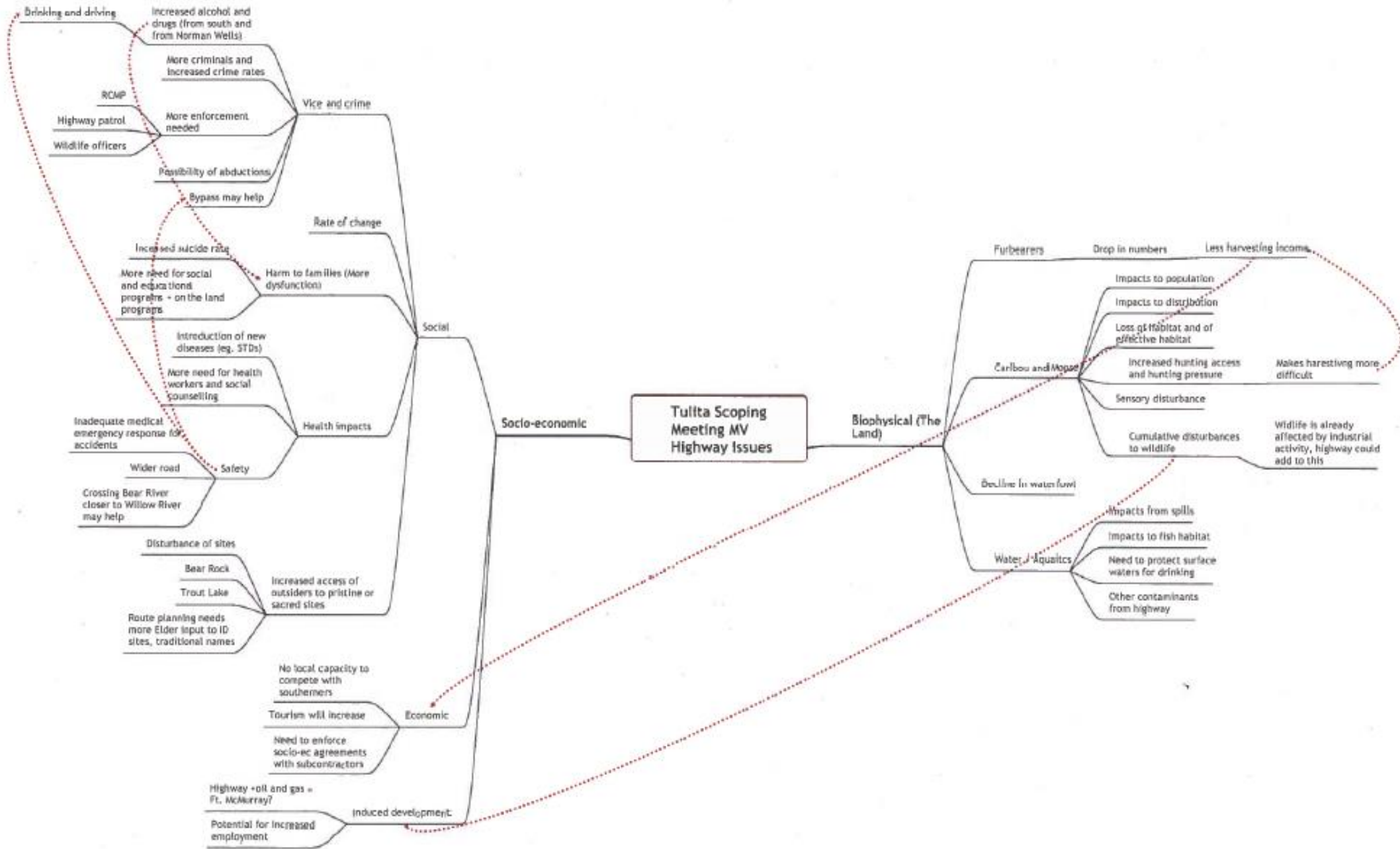
People tell Board staff:

- what matters to them in the area of all-season road
- how road may impact things that matter to them
- tell Board staff which things matter most



Links between people and the land

Tulita meeting



Tulita Scoping Meeting MV Highway Issues

Biophysical (The Land)

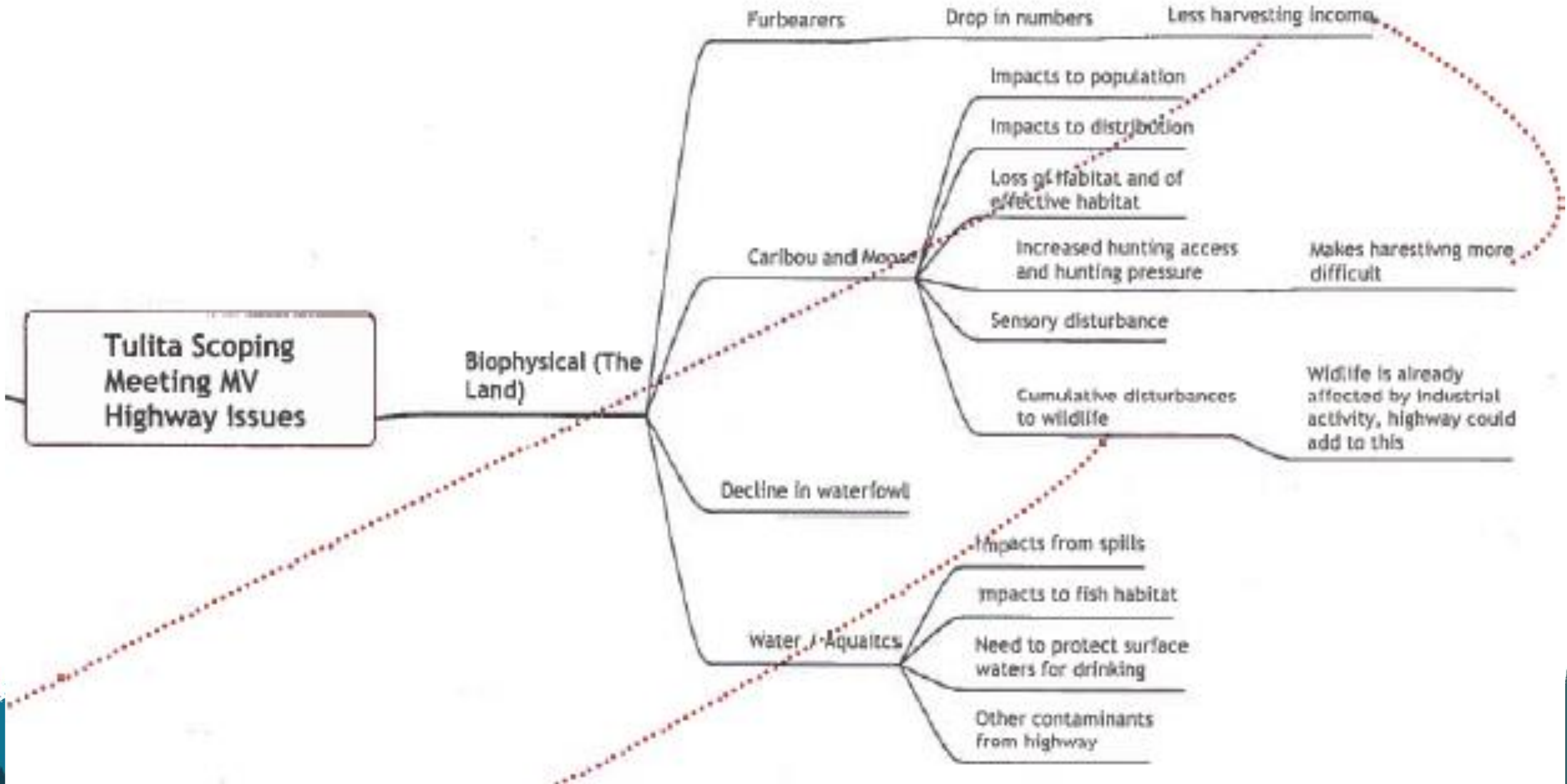
Furbearers Drop in numbers Less harvesting income

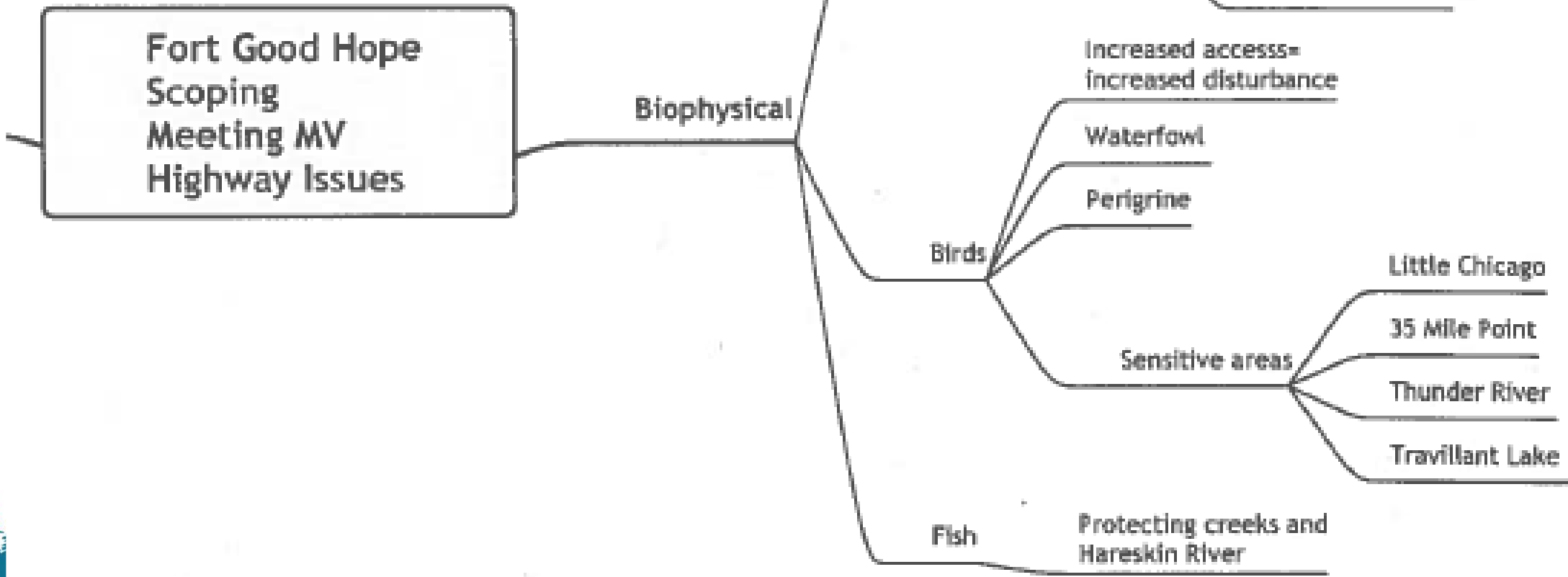
- Impacts to population
 - Impacts to distribution
 - Loss of habitat and of effective habitat
 - Increased hunting access and hunting pressure
 - Sensory disturbance
 - Cumulative disturbances to wildlife
- Makes harvesting more difficult
- Wildlife is already affected by industrial activity, highway could add to this

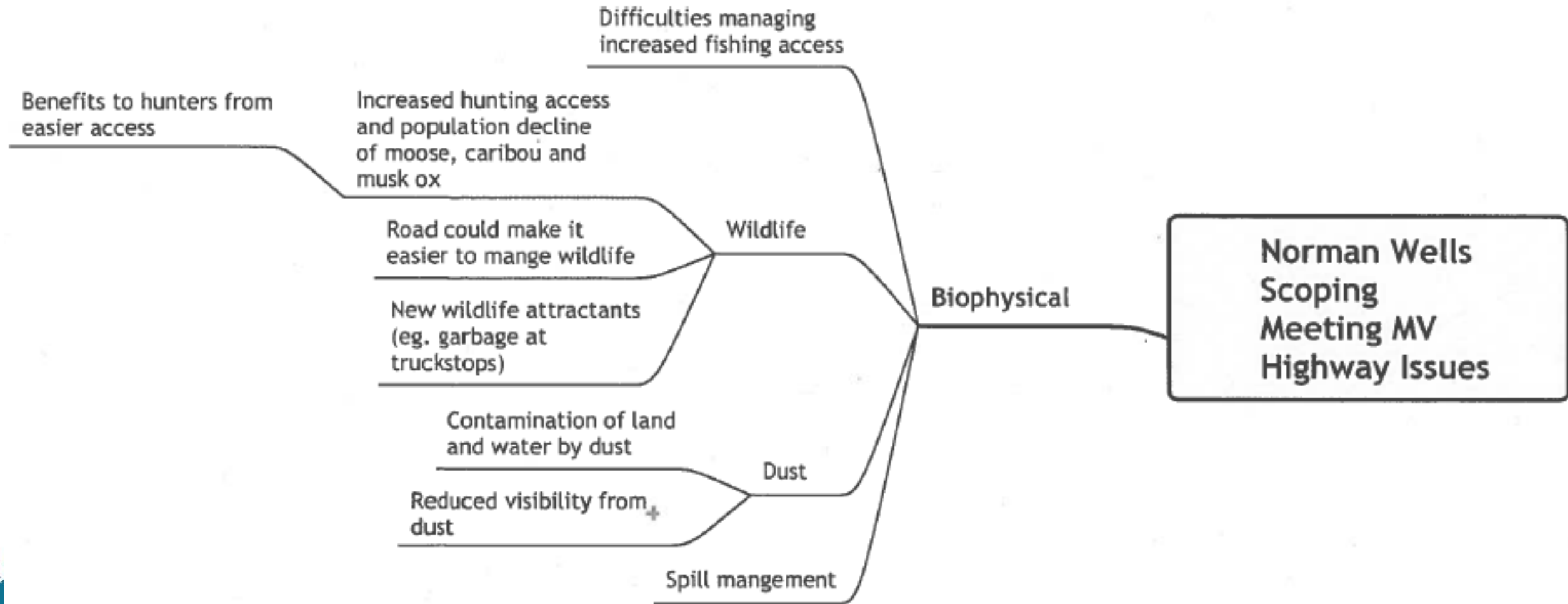
Decline in waterfowl

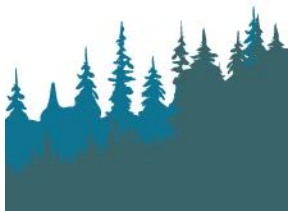
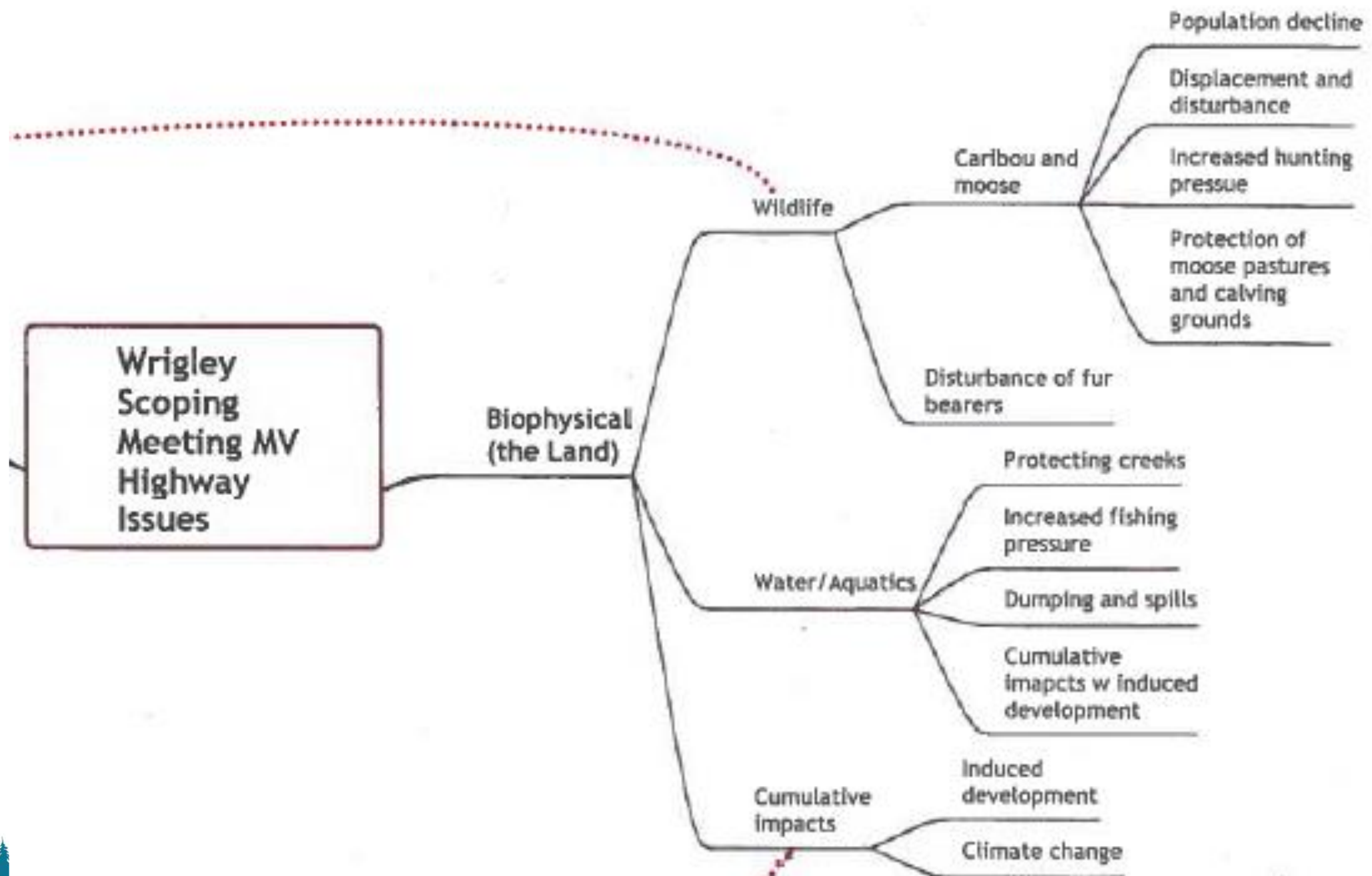
Water / Aquatics

- Impacts from spills
- Impacts to fish habitat
- Need to protect surface waters for drinking
- Other contaminants from highway









What the Review Board heard was important

Biophysical:

- impacts to wildlife and habitat - hunting, collisions, fragmentation, poaching
- moose, caribou, fur bearers, ducks
- impacts to water and land from spills along road
- impacts to harvesting from increased year-round access

induced (new additional) development due to all-season highway

Climate Change



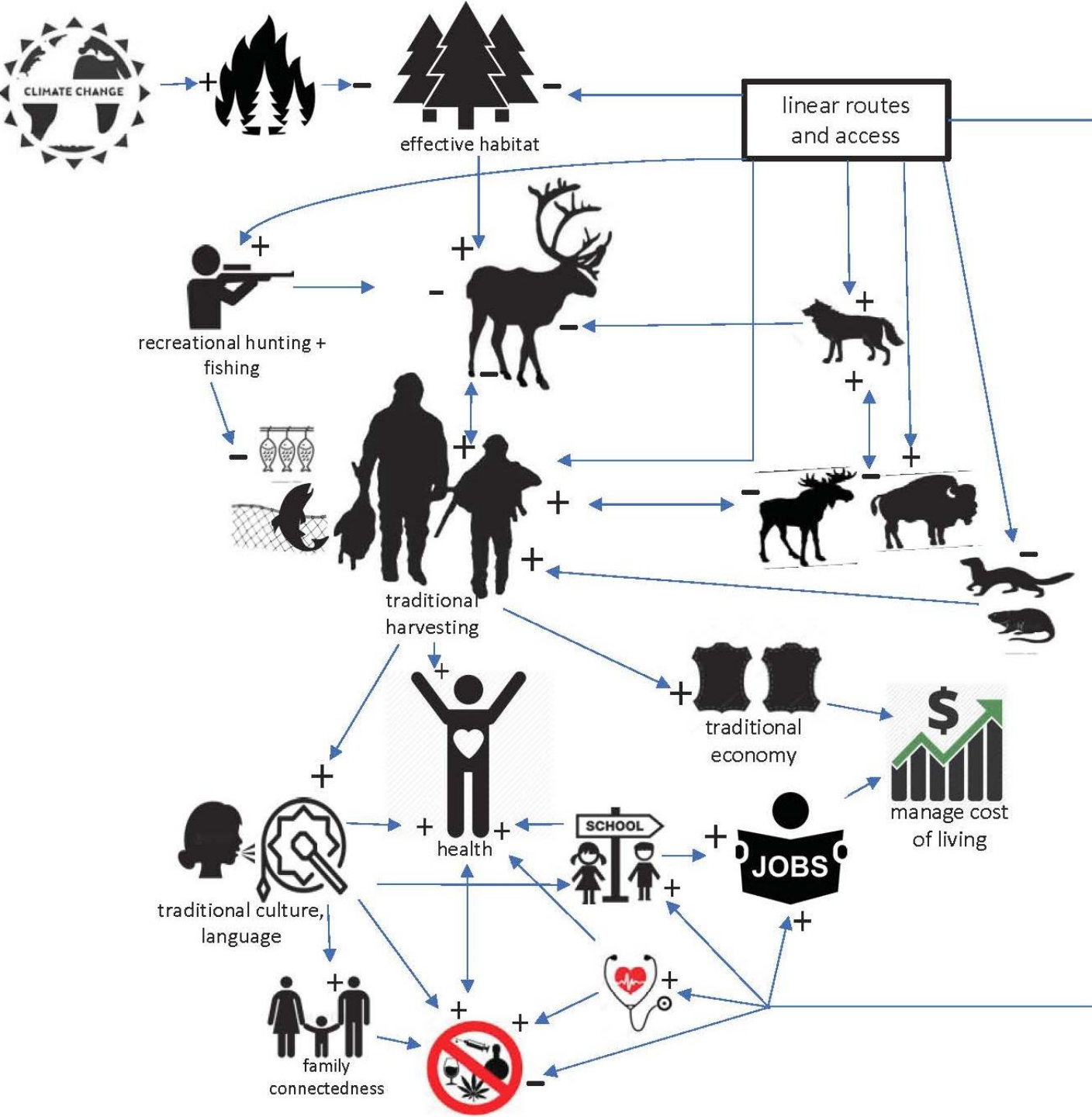
What the Review Board heard was important



Socio cultural and economic well-being

- impacts to families
- concerns over safety – abductions, collisions, more cars on the road
- alcohol and drugs into communities - bootlegging
- community services capacity to deal with more people/tourists (RCMP, health, education, social services, stores, recreation)
- potential for increased employment during construction and road operations
- cost of living
- cultural and traditional sites
- health (new diseases was identified as concern in 2013)





Integrated system of people and the land

Tlicho All-season Road



Terms of Reference development



Review Board prepares Terms of Reference, 2013

- questions developer must answer in its **Developer's Assessment Report**

Key lines of inquiry – **focus of the environmental assessment:**

- **impact to social and economic conditions**
- **impacts on caribou, moose and harvesting**

Other topics that matter include impacts on:

- terrain, water, air, climate, fish, wildlife, birds, vegetation, species at risk
- biodiversity, country foods, culture and traditional land use, heritage resources



Revised Terms of Reference



2014 – GNWT submits revised project description

- Wrigley to Norman Wells, Deh Cho and Tulita district, 321 km all-season road extension

2015 Review Board issues revised Terms of Reference

- revised project description
- public review of revised Terms of Reference



Some approaches have changed since 2014

Discussions with GNWT on preparing Developer's Assessment Report

- **Tlicho All-season road EA** and Review Board's Report of EA is a more recent example of potential issues and how to address them
- consider Board approaches in recent EAs:
 - greater focus on **well-being, climate change, boreal caribou as species at risk**
 - **holistic approach to interconnected systems**

work on short sections of roads:

- Canyon Creek, Prohibition Creek, Mt Gaudet
- Great Bear Bridge



Next steps

Technical Analysis

- 2022 - DAR submission
- Information requests
- Technical meetings
- Community meetings

Hearing phase

- Technical Reports
- Public hearings in community
- Closing arguments

Decision Phase

- Board deliberation
- Report of EA writing
- Decision to Minister



EA Process – Involvement Opportunities

- review of Developer's Assessment Report
- community sessions, technical sessions & information requests
- public hearings
 - Written intervention
 - In-person presentation and questioning
 - Written closing arguments



Developer's Assessment Report (DAR)

- Gives details on:
 - Project
 - Alternatives
 - Setting
 - **Predicted impacts**
 - Mitigations - to avoid impacts



EA Analysis

- Developer's Assessment Report
- Information requests by Board and parties
- Technical sessions
- May include community sessions
- Sidebar meetings



Hearings



Is an impact significant?

Does the impact matter
enough to the Board so
that it should be reduced
or prevented?

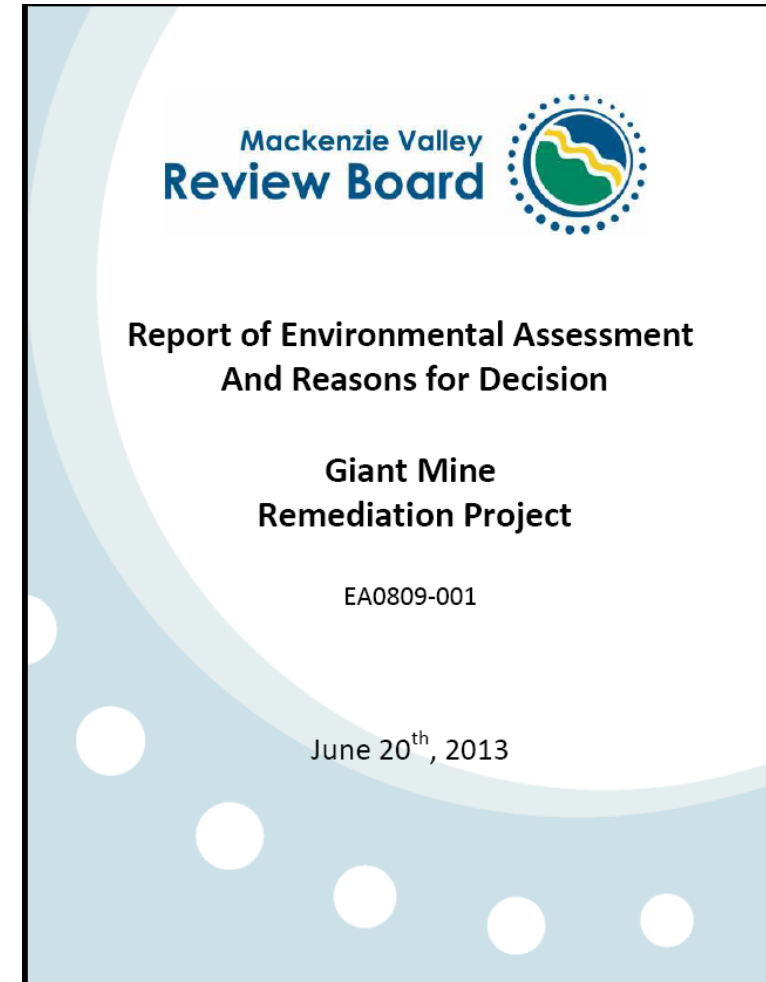
- *Parties' evidence and arguments matter*



Board Decision + Report of EA



- Board determines **significance** of impacts
- Recommends to Minister:
 - Approve the project (usually with measures)
 - Reject the project
 - Do EIR- Highest level of assessment (Review Panel)



At the End of the Day...

- conflicts can be resolved
 - meaningful, effective participation = more informed decisions...
 - commitments can address impacts
 - less non-technical risk
- better project design to avoid problems
- new mitigations prevent or reduce impacts
- follow-up programs track issues

