

February 19, 2024

# Note to File

To all Parties:

**RE: Mackenzie Valley Highway Project, Government of the Northwest Territories – Project Engagement**

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The Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board (Review Board) staff recently held engagement meetings for the Mackenzie Valley Highway Project in the Dehcho Region.

- On January 31 and February 1, 2024, the Review Board held meetings in the communities of Fort Simpson and Wrigley.
- On January 31, 2024, Review Board staff met with Łíídlı́ Kúé First Nation staff and held a public *Tea and Bannock* at the Fort Simpson Community Hall (a copy of the invitation, the Review Board and Developer presentations are attached).
- On February 1, 2024, Review Board staff briefly met with the Métis Nation Local 52 in Fort Simpson, followed by meeting in Wrigley for Pehdzeh Ki First nation members (see attached invitation). Copies of the Review Board and Developer presentations are attached.

In early February, the Review Board planned to travel to Fort Good Hope, Norman Wells, and Tulita for the same purpose. The plans for Sahtu Engagement were postponed due to winter road travel, and the availability of community members and staff to meet.

## **Łíídlı́ Kúé First Nations meeting**

### Participants

Łíídlı́ Kúé First Nations: Dieter Cazon

The Developer (GNWT – INF): Patricia Coyne, Anita Ogaa, Erica Bonhomme (Stantec)

GNWT - ECC: Alison Heslep

NPMO: Katie Baker

Review Board staff: Catherine Fairbairn, Donna Schear, Malorey Nirlungayuk

### Overview of discussion

On January 31, 2024, Łíídlı́ Kúé First Nations met with the developer with Review Board staff and the developer in Fort Simpson. The Review Board staff discussed the Environmental Assessment (EA) process and addressed questions. The developer presented the Developer's

Assessment Report (DAR) and addressed questions. The Government of Canada and Government of the Northwest Territories had consultation representatives present.

### **Métis Nation Local 52 meeting**

#### Participants

Métis Nation Local 52: Shane Kwasney

The Developer (GNWT – INF): Patricia Coyne, Anita Ogaa, Erica Bonhomme (Stantec)

GNWT - ECC: Alison Heslep

NPMO: Katie Baker

#### Overview of discussion

On February 1, 2024, the Métis Nation Local 52 briefly met with the Review Board staff in Fort Simpson as the Review Board staff were on their way to Wrigley. Review Board Staff offered an optional online meeting with the Métis Nation Local 52 to go over the EA process. The Métis Nation Local 52 then met with the developer. The developer presented the DAR and addressed questions. The Government of Canada and Government of the Northwest Territories had consultation representatives present.

### **Pehdzeh Ki First nation meeting**

#### Participants

Pehdzeh Ki First Nation: Christian Moses, Jay Horesay, Albert, Rose Moses, Mia, Darcy Moses, Elsie Hardisty, Charlotte, Sharon Pellissey, Darcy Moses

Review Board staff: Catherine Fairbairn, Donna Schear, Malorey Nirlungayuk

#### Overview of discussion

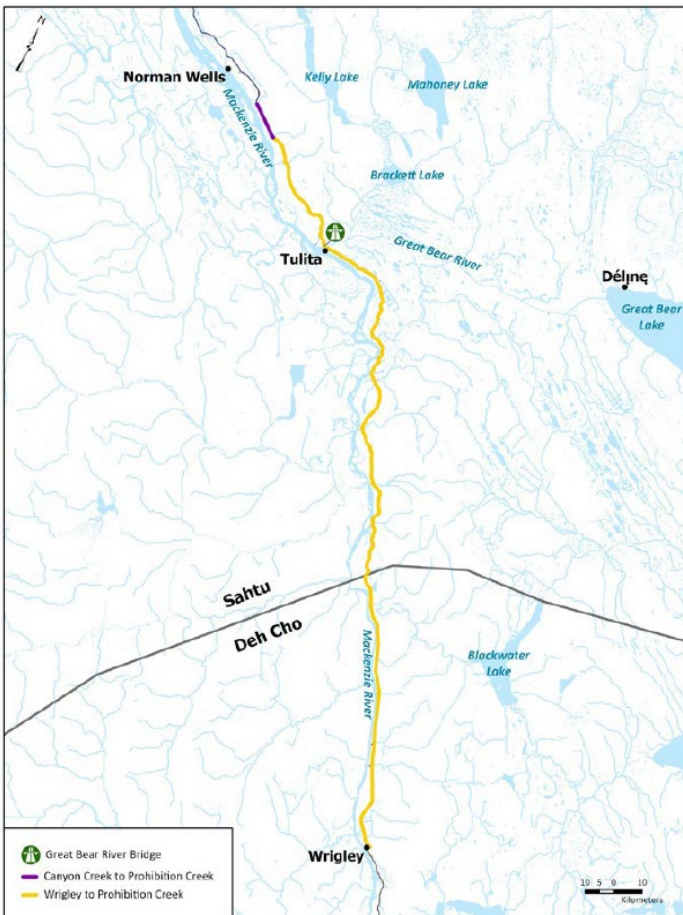
On February 1, 2024, Pehdzeh Ki First Nation met with the Review Board staff in Wrigley for a meeting and a catered lunch with members. The Review Board staff discussed the EA process and addressed questions.

For questions or more information, please contact Senior Environmental Assessment Advisor Catherine Fairbairn (867-766-7054, [cfairbairn@reviewboard.ca](mailto:cfairbairn@reviewboard.ca)).



# Meet & Greet Information Sharing

## Environmental Assessment of the Mackenzie Valley Highway



### Purpose

Understand the highway project

Learn about the environmental assessment process

Find out how you can be involved

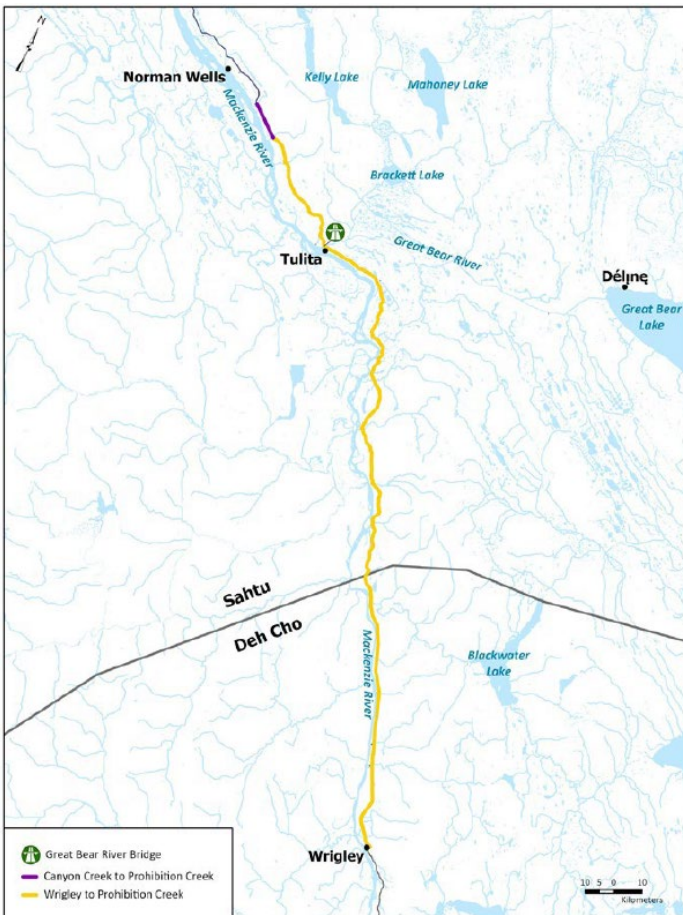
**6-8 pm on Wednesday, January 31, 2024**  
**Recreation Center (Community Hall)**  
**Coffee, tea, and bannock offered**

Questions? Call the Review Board at  
867-766-7050 or toll-free at 1-866-912-3472



# Information Sharing Catered lunch

## Environmental Assessment of the Mackenzie Valley Highway



### Purpose

Understand the highway project

Learn about the environmental assessment process

Find out how you can be involved

**12-2 pm on Thursday, February 1, 2024**  
**Pehdzeh Ki First Nation's Complex Gym**  
**Lunch offered**



# Environmental assessment process for the Mackenzie Valley Highway Project

Presentation by the Mackenzie Valley  
Environmental Impact Review Board



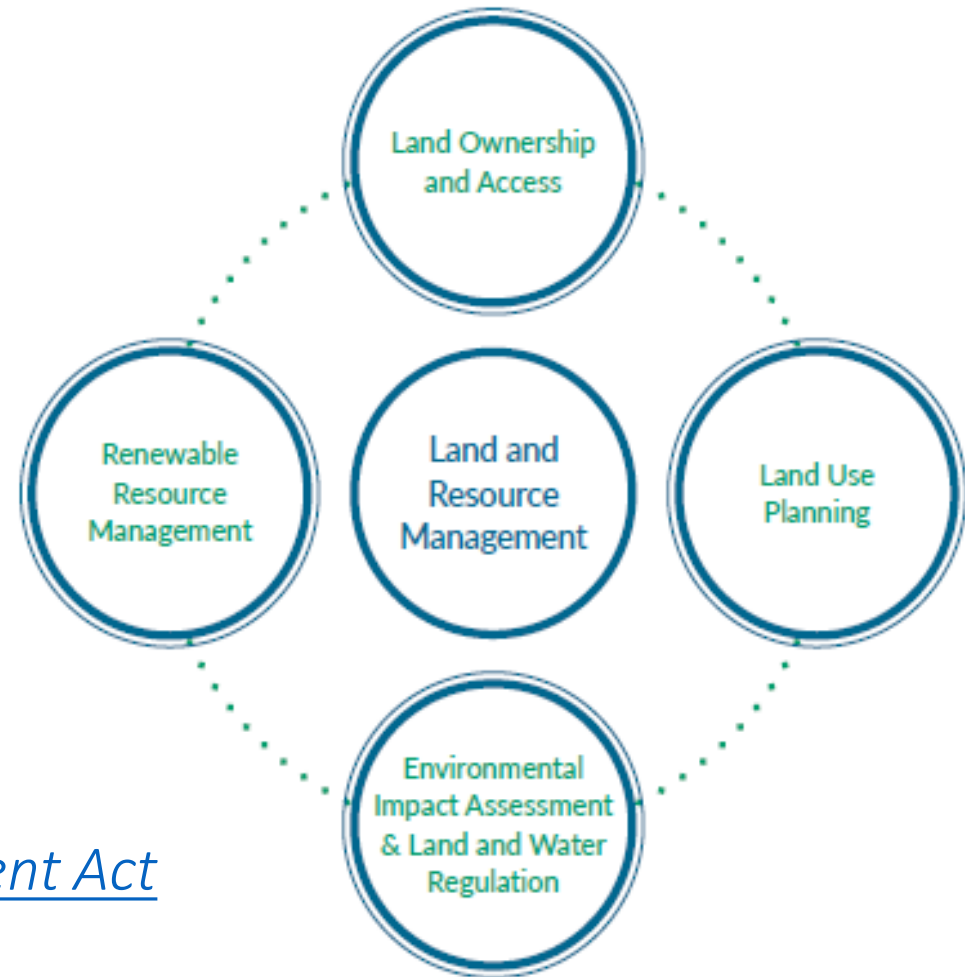
# Outline

- co-management system
- 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*



# 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



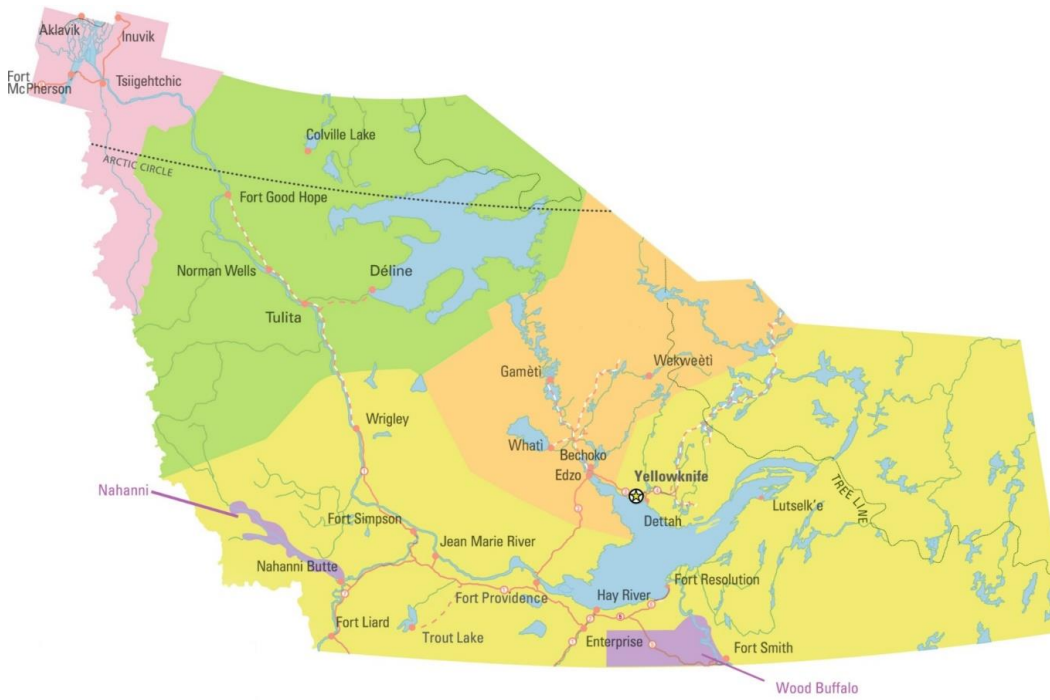
Wek'èezhì Land and Water Board

## 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





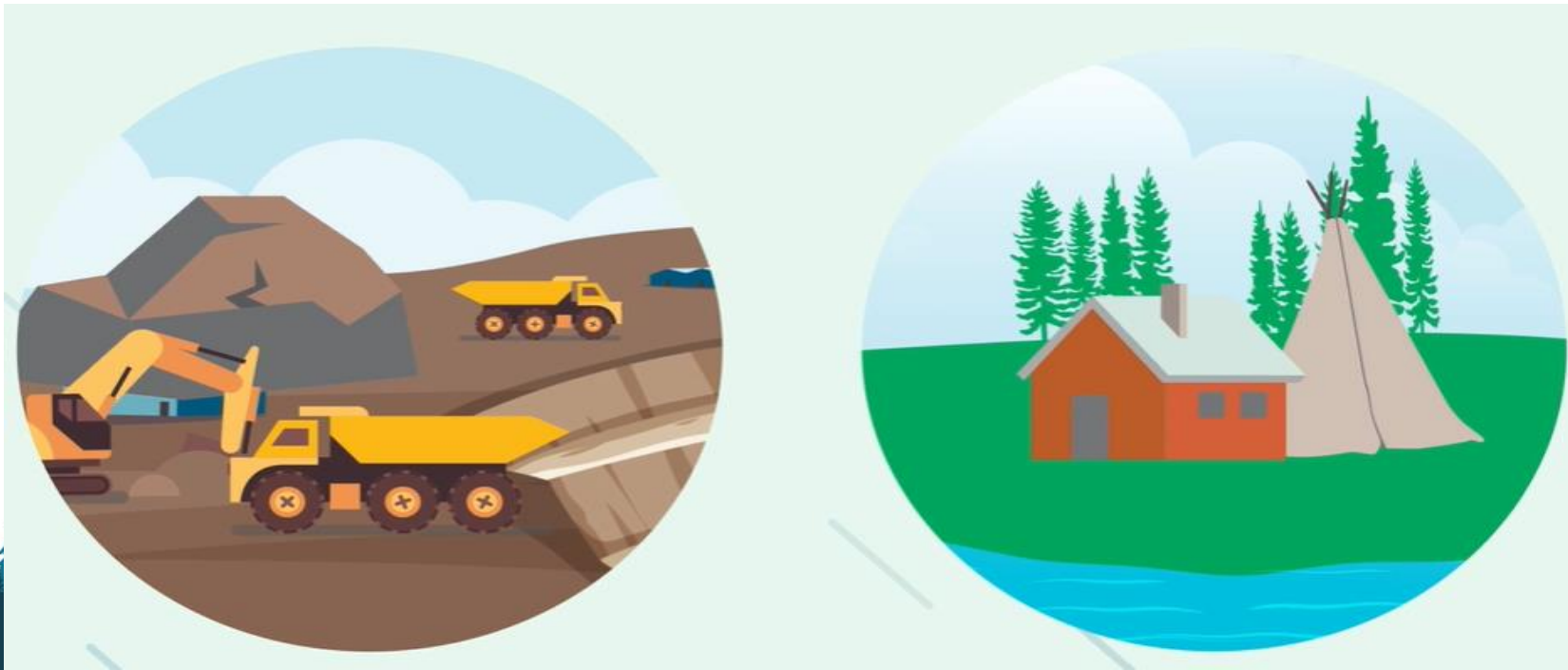
# Environmental Assessment (EA) is:

- 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**



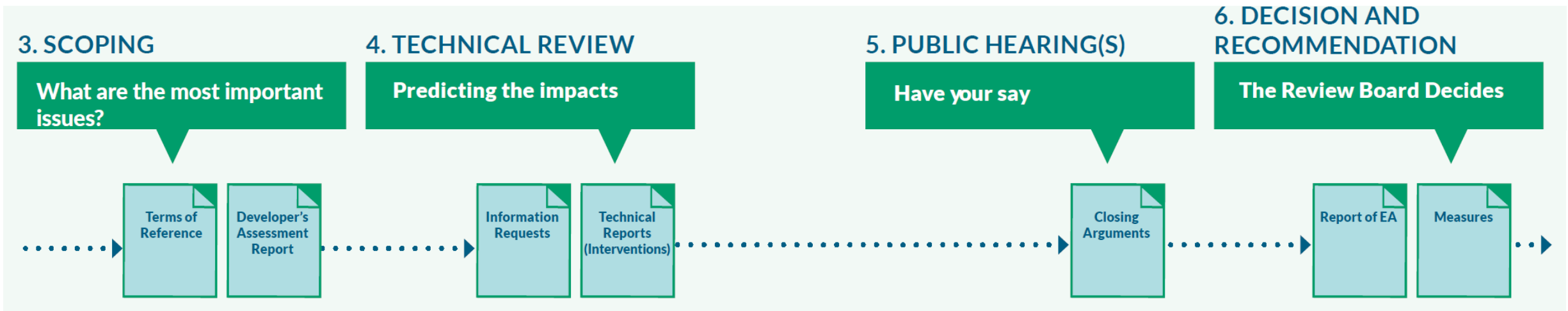


## How does the Review Board do environmental assessment?

- 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!

## 3. SCOPING

What are the most important issues?

Terms of Reference

Developer's Assessment Report

- During scoping, the Review Board determines what the rest of the EA will focus on
- Scoping the issues: The Review Board wants to know **what you think it should focus on**

**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, and
- how the developer wants to reduce or avoid those impacts (mitigation)

It includes all of the information the Review Board 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

## 4. TECHNICAL REVIEW

### Predicting the impacts



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!**





An illustration of a landscape. The top half shows a brown, hilly terrain with several blue industrial buildings and yellow construction vehicles (excavators and trucks) working on the slope. The bottom half shows a green valley with a blue river, a small orange cabin, and several grey teepees. A white, torn-paper-like border separates the two scenes.

# Why would Indigenous Governments write information requests?

To help the Board and parties get the **right information** to better **predict impacts**:

- Get **accurate information** on issues (impacts and project details) from:
  - the developer
  - the federal and territorial governments
- **Challenge others' predictions and assumptions**

# Why would Indigenous Governments write information requests?

- To **follow up on the concerns** they described earlier in the EA
- To identify **disagreements**, look for **solutions**
- To share **Indigenous Traditional Knowledge** and ask questions based on it



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

Be asked to **respond to the Review Board's information requests** on certain matters (such as project impacts on rights, communities, cultural use, spirituality or Indigenous law)

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

- Submit a reporting form for the record



# Public Hearings

## 5. PUBLIC HEARING(S)

Have your say

Closing  
Arguments

- The Review Board listens carefully to everyone who speaks and submits information
- 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!**





# Public Hearings

- Speak directly to the Review Board members
- Interpreters will be present
- The Review Board considers all information collected through the EA to make decisions about the project



# 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

# 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



# How can governments, communities, and the public take part in the EA?



- **Developer's Assessment Report:** review the developer's information on the project
- **Information requests (ORS):** ask the developer about impacts and mitigation
- **Community sessions:** community members and Traditional knowledge experts discuss the impacts
- **Technical sessions:** technical experts get into the details of impacts
- **Public Hearings:** Tell Board members what you think





# Draft workplan



**Public Review  
of DAR**

**Review Board  
IRs**

**GNWT  
Responds**

**Technical and  
Community Sessions**

**Second round  
of IRs**

**Party Information  
Requests**

**GNWT  
Responds**

**Developer DAR  
addendum**

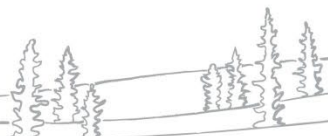




# Mackenzie Valley Highway Project

Developer's Assessment Report Overview – Dehcho and Sahtu

February 1-8, 2024



# Presentation Outline

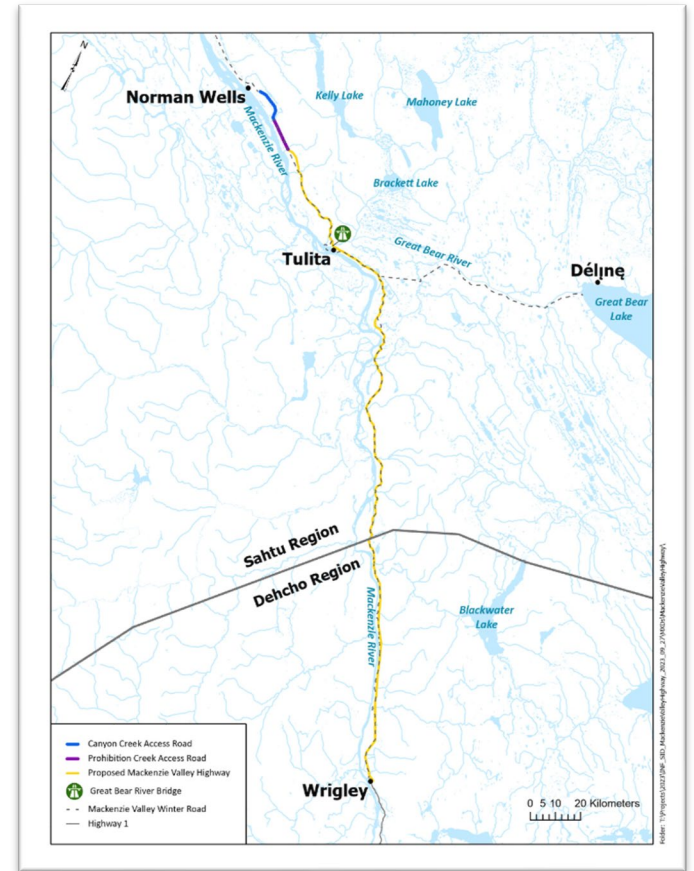
- Project Overview
- Overview of the Developer's Assessment Report (DAR)
- Notable Findings of the Assessment
- GNWT's Commitments
- Questions





# Project Overview

- All-season gravel road from Wrigley, to Tulita and Norman Wells
- Replaces the seasonal Mackenzie Valley Winter Road (MVWR) along this portion
- Connects to 23 existing bridges along the MVWR
- New watercourse crossing structures needed
- Temporary and permanent quarries and borrow sources
- Temporary infrastructure, workspaces and activities to support construction
- Permanent maintenance yards
- Highway operations and maintenance



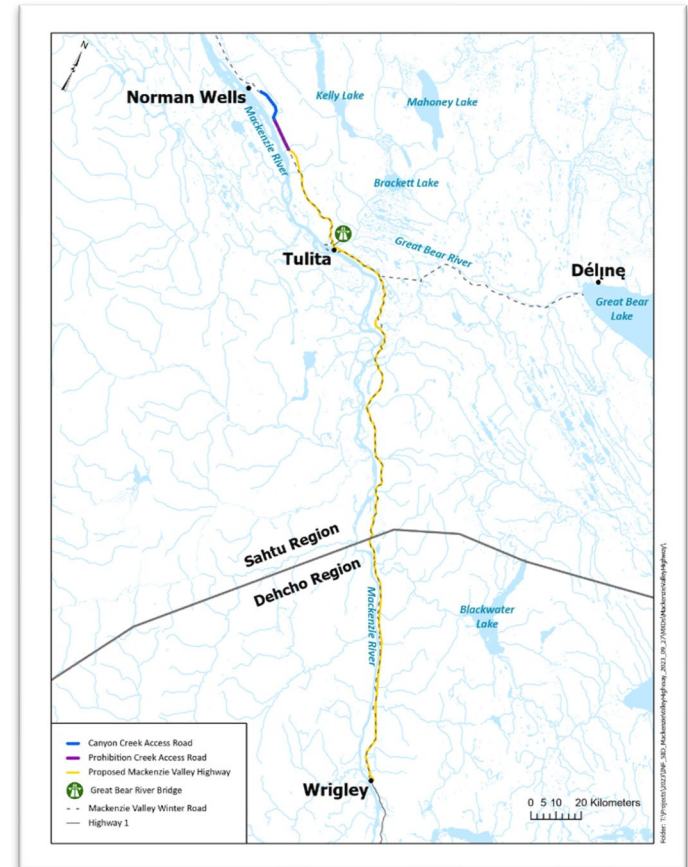




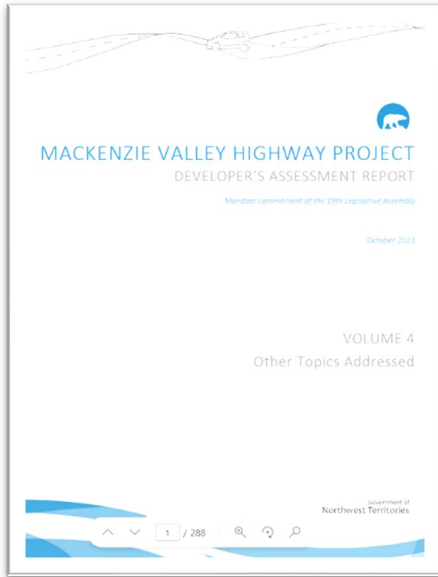
# Project Schedule

- 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)

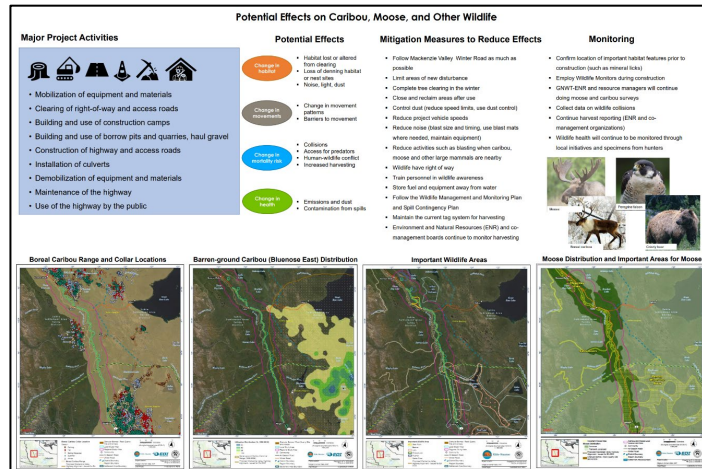


- Presents detailed information required by the Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board
- Predicts the residual effects of the Project on the environment by:
  - Identifying potential interactions between the Project and the environment that could lead to changes (potential effects)
  - Applying 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)

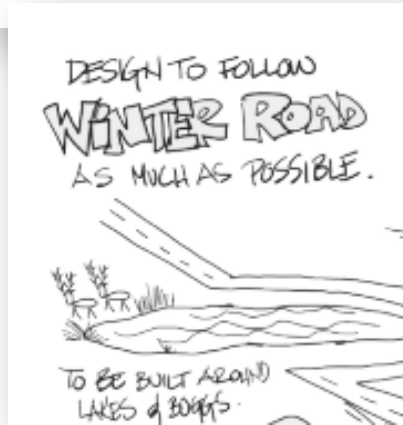
To help with the assessment, GNWT:

- 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 Poster Example

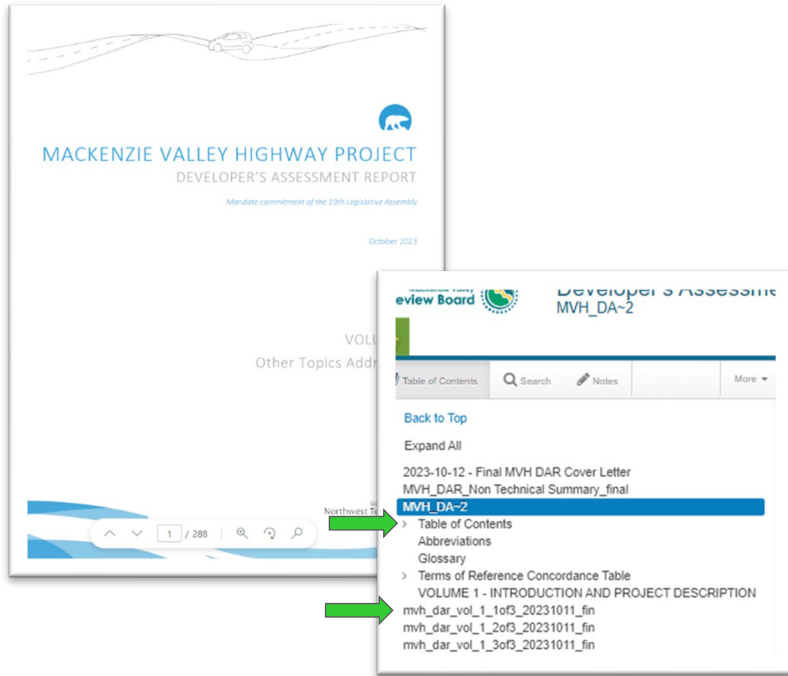
# Engagement and Traditional Knowledge



- 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

(DAR Ch. 2, Ch.3)

# DAR Organization

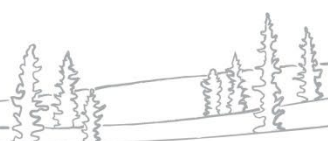


- Front Matter
- Volume 1: Introduction and Project Description
- Volume 2: Key Lines of Inquiry
- Volume 3: Subjects of Note
- Volume 4: Other Topics Addressed
- Volume 5: Draft Management Plans
- Technical Data Reports as Appendices in Vols. 2, 3, and 4



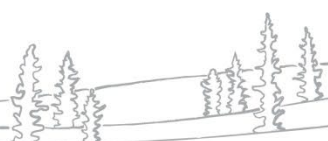
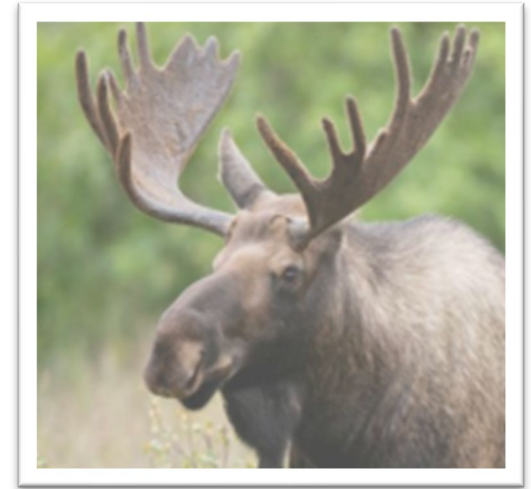
# DAR Volume 1: Introduction and Project Description

- 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



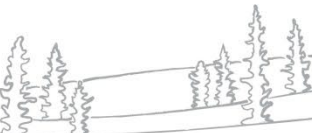
# DAR Volume 2: Key Lines of Inquiry

- 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

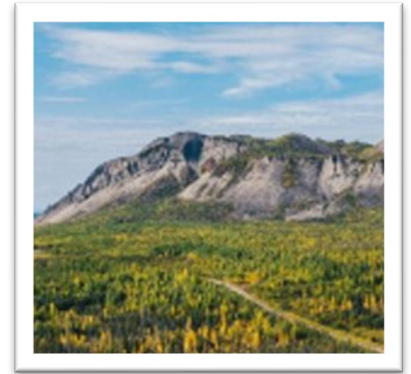
- Chapter 23: Compliance and Effects Monitoring
- Chapter 24: Effects of the Environment on the Project
- Chapter 25: Accidents and Malfunctions
- Chapter 26: Cumulative Effects Assessment Summary
- Chapter 27: Developer's Commitments





# 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



# Notable Findings of the Assessment

- 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.



# Notable Findings of the Assessment

- 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)



# Notable Findings of the Assessment

- 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)

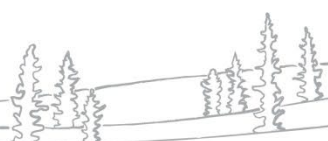




# GNWT's Commitments

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)

