

October 3, 2017

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Via Email
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Re: Commitment #11 – EA1617-01: Ṯcho All-Season Road

Mr. Toogood:

During the August 15-17, 2017 technical session for EA1617-01: Ṯcho All-Season Road (TASR), the Wek'èezhì Renewable Resources Board (WRRB) agreed to Commitment #11 – WRRB TK Info on Caribou: *The WRRB will be unable to provide the final report on Ṯcho knowledge of todzi (boreal caribou) and wildfire, which will contain information about key habitat types within their range. However, the WRRB may be able to identify if any of those special habitats for boreal caribou are in the vicinity of the proposed road route and provide this information to the Review Board by October 4, 2017.* Please find enclosed the WRRB's submission for Commitment #11. The final verified report will be available in April 2018.

The WRRB is looks forward to continued opportunities to provide meaningful input for the TASR. If you have any questions, please contact our office at (867) 873-5740 or jpellissey@wrrb.ca.

Sincerely,



J. Grant Pryznyk
Chair

Cc Michael Conway, Superintendent, Infrastructure, GNWT
Jessica, A/Manager, Culture and Lands Protection, Ṯchq Government

Habitat Types:¹ T̄odzı and Proposed T̄ıch̄q All Season Road

The information in this report builds on the information gathered over the last several years from elders and harvesters in Bechok̄ and What̄ı. The overall purpose will be to monitor *t̄odzı* (boreal caribou) and the state of their habitat along the proposed T̄ıch̄q All Season Road (TASR) using T̄ıch̄q knowledge. Monitoring will be based on what T̄ıch̄q have observed over time and shared through stories, and then compared with current T̄ıch̄q harvesters' observations.



T̄odzı track covered by wolf print.

(Compliments of A. Legat, 170626)

Research Team and Methodology

The research team included Camilla Nitsiza, community researcher and translator, and Aalice Legat, primary researcher. Both documented stories and evidence of habitat types along the proposed road with a focus on habitat types preferred by *t̄odzı*. Our question was: Are there habitat types preferred by *t̄odzı* along the proposed TASR route?

This report demonstrates that *t̄odzı* have a relationship with the land on which TASR will be constructed.

¹ T̄ıch̄q names of habitat types are listed on pages four (4) and five (5).

This report grew from the technical session on TASR, where there was a lack of information associated with habitat types used by t̥d̥z̥i.

September 12 to 19, 2017

From September 12 to 19, Camilla Nitsiza interviewed Bobby Migwi, and Elders George Drybones, Charlie Apple, and Phillip Huskey. During these interviews, they pointed out specific habitat types, and where they had harvested t̥d̥z̥i.²

September 25 and 26, 2017

On September 25, Aalice Legat interviewed Joe Rabesca, and on September 26, she travelled with him to view habitat types documented by Camilla and herself.



***D̥̥g̥̥q̥̥t̥̥'oa is being torn up
by vehicles.***

(Compliments of A. Legat, 170926)

What We Learned

Harvesters and elders want the land protected for all wildlife. They know roads drive most wildlife, with the possible exception of bison,³ away from an area. This was documented in *K'̥̥g̥̥d̥̥d̥̥t̥̥l̥̥i̥̥: Traditional Knowledge Study for the Proposed All-Season Road to What̥i*. T̥d̥z̥i are particularly sensitive to noise and activities.⁴

² Locations of harvesting have not been included in this report as we are interested in the habitat types only.

³ Jacobsen, Petter, Georgina Chocolate and Sjoerd van der Vielen. 2014. *K'̥̥g̥̥d̥̥d̥̥t̥̥l̥̥i̥̥: Traditional Knowledge Study for the Proposed All-Season Road to What̥i*. Behchok̥q̥: T̥l̥̥ch̥q̥ Government, T̥l̥̥ch̥q̥ Research and Training Institute.

⁴ Ibid

Research has indicated the boreal population in the NWT may have fared better than woodland caribou in other parts of Canada. Nevertheless, the NWT Species at Risk Committee stated that woodland caribou (boreal population) are “likely to become endangered in the Northwest Territories if nothing is done to reverse the factors leading to its extirpation or extinction.”⁵

Prior to 2014, Tłı̄chq̄ elders in Behchok̄ and Whatì explained that t̄dzı had been moving northwest due to the number of fires within Wek'èezhìi.⁶ During the last two years, Whatì harvesters have been saying that t̄dzı are moving to the area west and south of Whatì, probably due to the forest fires in the Sahtú. Similarly, harvesters from the Dehcho are saying t̄dzı are moving east of ʔedèezhìi (Horn Plateau).⁷ This information suggests there is an increase in the number of t̄dzı around TASR.

Bobby Migwi explained, “I’ve seen over 50 t̄dzı, there are small [ponds and] lakes here”. The area is west of his camp, which is adjacent to the TASR, and along the trapping trail that both his dad and grandfather were the boss of before he took over. Elder George Drybones continues, “We used to see moose now and then [and] also t̄dzı. ... When the small lakes or ponds dry up, grasses grow between the cracks.”⁸



*Whagweè:
Vegetation returning
around Bobby Migwi's
camp adjacent to TASR.
(Compliments of A. Legat, 170926)*

⁵ Species Status Report Boreal Caribou in the Northwest Territories December 2012.

⁶ Legat, Alice and Georgina Chocolate 2012. *Boreal Caribou Habitat and habitat Use in Wek'èezhìi*. Yellowknife: Wek'èezhìi Renewable Resource Board.

⁷ Elder Joe Rabesca (TASR: 170926)

⁸ TASR: 170912-18.

Habitat Types

Habitats types which t̥d̥zi frequent and are adjacent to TASR.

T̥l̥ch̥q̥	Description
<i>ʔehdaa</i>	Point of land reaching out into lake.
<i>ʔelati</i>	Translates as 'clay lake'. When dry, these are safe to walk on but can be dangerous when wet.
<i>Dèdagaoʔá</i>	Explained as 'floating land' or 'land that covers water'.



ʔelati:

Here we saw t̥d̥zi tracks on ʔela beach. Picture shows ʔehdaa in the middle, right side of picture.

(Compliments of A. Legat, 170926)

Tłıchq	Description
<i>Dègqł'oa</i>	Translated as 'like a meadow'. There is a lot of Dègqł'oa along TASR.
<i>Gonìtqa</i>	Valley with a creek and very thick bush.
<i>Shìgwegeh</i>	Two large hills with thick bush and a stream running through the valley. One such place is at the northern end of TASR in association with ʔeht'ètideè (James River) that crosses TASR.
<i>T'otsoa</i>	A small water hole surrounded by grasses. Often associated with dèdagaoʔá or ts'oo.
<i>Ts'oo</i>	Translated as 'muskeg'.
<i>Whagweè</i>	Sandy soil mixed with black dirt and covered with sparse vegetation.
<i>What'áa</i>	Translated as 'esker'.



What'áa: In this case there is one on each side of a small valley with a creek (habitat type could be Gonìtqa). This creek is dry most falls, but in spring, the creek flows into small ponds and lakes, and eventually into Whatawoodià (Mosquito Creek).