



MR. STEVE LOUTITT
DEPUTY MINISTER
DEPARTMENT OF INFRASTRUCTURE

August 19, 2021

Wildlife Act Section 95(1) determination of the requirement for a Wildlife Management and Monitoring Plan for the Mackenzie Valley Highway Project

This letter is to inform you that the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources (the Minister) has determined that an approved Wildlife Management and Monitoring Plan (WMMP) will be required for the Mackenzie Valley Highway Extension Project under Section 95 of the *Wildlife Act*.

In accordance with Section 3.1 of the WMMP Process and Content Guidelines, the Project falls into the category of developments that are deemed always likely to satisfy one or more of the requirements in subsection 95 (1)(a-d) of the *Wildlife Act* because:

- a) it is an all-season road >50 km in length;
- b) it was referred to environmental assessment (EA) by the Mackenzie Valley Review Board (MVRB) on February 13th, 2015;
- c) impacts to wildlife and wildlife habitat from the proposed Project are among the concerns to be addressed in the EA.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (ENR) requires the Department of Infrastructure (INF) to submit a draft WMMP with the Developer's Assessment Report. ENR will use the EA process to evaluate the potential impacts to wildlife and wildlife habitat from the proposed Project, and to understand interested parties' views on the sufficiency of the proposed mitigation and monitoring approaches in the draft WMMP. Periodic updates or revisions to the draft WMMP may be provided or requested during the EA.

Following the EA, INF should submit a revised WMMP that captures the commitments and measures arising from the EA, along with an updated project description in their application for authorizations to the Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board (MVLWB). Unless otherwise advised, approval of the WMMP will occur during the licencing and permitting process as laid out in Section 4.2.2 of the WMMP Process and Content Guidelines.

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Section 5.2 of the WMMP Process and Content Guidelines provides guidance on how to ensure that the WMMP submitted for approval meets the content requirements outlined in subsection 95(2) of the *Wildlife Act*, and that it is scaled appropriately to the size and nature of the proposed development.

Based on preliminary assessment of the materials provided in the EA initiation package, ENR recommends INF prepare a Tier 2 WMMP which includes:

- a) A description of the impacts of the development on wildlife and wildlife habitat;
- b) A description of how those impacts will be mitigated, using all steps of the mitigation hierarchy;
- c) A description of mitigation monitoring; and
- d) A description of project-specific wildlife effects monitoring.

Given that responsibility for implementation of some wildlife effects monitoring programs for the project may fall to ENR, ENR will assist INF in developing the effects monitoring component of the WMMP. To ensure transparency and accountability, ENR will assign roles internally to ensure that ENR staff involved in drafting the WMMP are kept as separate as possible from those involved in the review / approval of the WMMP. All mitigation and mitigation monitoring related to construction and operation of the road are expected to be developed and undertaken by INF.

Please contact Dr. James Hodson, Manager, Habitat and Environmental Assessment, Wildlife and Fish Division at (867) 767-9237 ext. 53227 or james.hodson@gov.nt.ca if you have any questions.



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c. Dr. Brett Elkin, Assistant Deputy Minister, Operations
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Ms. Heather Sayine-Crawford, Director, Wildlife and Fish
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Mr. Jeffrey Walker, Superintendent, Sahtu Region
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Mr. Mark Cliffe-Phillips, Executive Director
Mackenzie Valley Land Review Board