



April 17, 2009

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### **The use of Bait in Outfitted Harvest of Black Bears**

At its Board meeting April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2009, the Wek'èezhii Renewable Resources Board (WRRB) considered True North Safaris Ltd. application for a General Wildlife Permit to bait black bears in Unit R, south of Behchokò. The Board considers this application a proposal submitted by Department of Environment and Natural Resources (ENR) under section 12.5.1 of the Tłıchq Agreement and as such will be consulting with Tłıchq Government and ENR as per requirements under the Agreement.

Key issues related to the proposal and considered by WRRB include:

- The fact that bears are culturally significant animals for Tłıchq people and should be treated respectfully;
- The proximity of the proposed baiting stations, and therefore the bears, to other human activities in the area including the community of Behchokò, cabins, active gravel pits, timber operations and people walking along Highway 3 or in the bush;
- The proposed use of "any kind of bait" including used cooking oil from commercial food operations;

- Public safety concerns related to the possibility of bears becoming conditioned to artificial food sources and thereafter becoming aggressive in seeking out human food in camps, cabins, landfill sites etc.;
- Failure of the applicant to meet the terms and conditions in the 2008 permit that help ensure public safety; and,
- The lack of scientific certainty regarding the extent to which bears may habituate to human food sources as not a suitable reason for the WRRB to postpone or avoid reaching a decision on this application.

After careful consideration of the above issues, WRRB made the following motion provided herein as an initial position with respect to the proposal:

**Motion #57-04-03:**

- (a) The use of bait in harvesting black bears should not proceed this season (2009) but rather the applicant should work with ENR officials to establish appropriate criteria for the proposed bait stations (including appropriate design, location, signage, record keeping requirements and types of bait) such that ecological effects are minimized and public safety is preserved to the satisfaction of WRRB and Tłıchǫ Government;
- (b) Based on the work described in (a), a permit application be submitted to ENR by True North Safaris Ltd. for the 2010 season and include provisions for operation that minimize ecological effects and ensure public safety to the satisfaction of WRRB and Tłıchǫ Government ; and,
- (c) ENR, Tłıchǫ Government and WRRB initiate research into the cultural significance of black bears, as well as the basic biology and ecology of black bears in Wek'èezhìi to help further assess the potential impacts of this type of harvesting.

WRRB requests your comments in writing on this initial position by April 24<sup>th</sup>, and will consider any changes that might be warranted at that time. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call our office.

Sincerely,



Alfonz Nitsiza  
Chairman