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Work on Peel watershed plan will continue, minister says

By [Whitehorse Star](#) on August 4, 2011 at 3:21 pm

The territorial government is working on a land use plan for the Peel River watershed, but it's unclear if it will be finished before this fall's territorial election.

Energy, Mines and Resources Minister Patrick Rouble, who is not seeking re-election this fall, offered no timeline in a statement he released last week.

The government received the Final Recommended Peel Watershed Regional Land Use Plan from the Peel Watershed Planning Commission last week.

"The Government of Yukon will now take the time necessary to review the final recommended plan, as set out in the letter of understanding between Yukon and affected First Nations," Rouble said.

"We are looking forward to completing a land use plan for the Peel in co-operation with the parties to the land planning process and in accordance with the letter of understanding agreed to earlier this year."

Renowned environmentalist David Suzuki called for the watershed to be fully protected when he visited Whitehorse last week. He is now canoeing the watershed with family members.

The senior liaison committee representing the Yukon government, the First Nation of Na-cho Nyäk Dun, Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation government, and the Gwich'in Tribal Council will review the final recommended plan and meet to discuss the next steps in the regional planning process, as set out in the letter of understanding and the Umbrella Final Agreement. This will include plans for consultations with the parties and affected communities.

"We recognize the challenges that the commission faced in working to create a balanced approach," Rouble said.

"Our expectation is that there will be protected areas within the Peel watershed and areas that allow a variety of activities that address the interests of all the planning partners and all Yukoners."

The Yukon Chamber of Mines has not commented on plan, saying it's still studying it.