



## NEWS RELEASE...

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 17, 2012

### Yukon Government Compromises Six Years of Planning

Leaders of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, Na-Cho Nyak Dun, Vuntut Gwitchin, and the Gwich'in Tribal Council are dismayed by the Yukon Government's decision to deviate from the Peel River Planning process.

After five years of work, the non-partisan Peel River Watershed Planning Commission recommended a land-use plan in December 2010. According to the rules set out in the Umbrella Final Agreement, the Yukon Government should have presented its position on the plan to the Commission, First Nations and the public in early 2011. This would have allowed the Commission to take those views into consideration for the final recommended plan released this past July.

Instead, it was only this past Tuesday that the Yukon Government provided First Nation leaders and the public with eight new principles that they say "will be used" to shape the final plan.

"We were blindsided by these unexpected principles appearing when the plan was almost done," said Chief Eddie Taylor. "It is outside the process mandated by the Umbrella Final Agreement for the Yukon Party Government to introduce these principles so late in the process."

"The Yukon Government had six years to influence the direction of the Peel River Watershed Land Use Plan, but stayed silent," said President Richard Nerysoo. "Their recent announcement that they alone would determine what principles will be applied to the final plan is disturbing."

"We support the balanced plan recommended by the Commission," said Chief Simon Mervyn. "The majority of Yukoners do as well. The Yukon Government's unilateral actions undermine the integrity of future land-use planning in the territory."

"We were taken aback by the surprising actions of the Yukon Government," said Chief Norma Kassi, who noted a Letter of Understanding signed in January 2011 sets out a collaborative approach for land-use planning. "Their recent actions are a violation of that Understanding. We hope to revisit and reconfirm our cooperative relationship soon."

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