



October 3, 2011

**Media Release
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

ATIPP Shows Yukon Party Government Ignored Peel Public Input

An Access to Information request by CPAWS-Yukon about the fall 2010 Peel public consultations indicates that Yukon government ignored overwhelming public support for protecting the Peel watershed.

CPAWS requested any information “pertaining to analysis, summary, drawing conclusions from, or otherwise considering public and stakeholder input from the official public consultation on the Recommended Peel Watershed Regional Land Use Plan, which included comments made at public consultation meetings and submissions by mail, fax and via the consultation website.”

The ATIPP documents show that Yukon government congratulated itself on having held successful consultations, but the Ministry in charge of the planning process appears to have ignored the results of the consultation.

Internal emails show that YG Parks Branch asked whether Energy Mines and Resources, which is in charge of the Peel planning process, was going to produce a “What We Heard Document”. When they were told that no analysis of the public input would be produced by EMR, Parks produced their own, and provided it to EMR.

The Parks analysis clearly shows massive public support for large-scale protection of the Peel Watershed, with 87% of respondents to the consultations wanting more than 80% of the watershed protected.

The EMR response to receiving the Parks document? A comment, which was incorrect, that the Parks report underestimated the number of responses opposing protection.

After that — silence.

“Instead of a smoking gun, this ATIPP data reveals a deafening silence. It is hard to take Mr. Pasloski seriously on the issue of consultation since the Yukon Party

government, apparently unhappy with the results, buried the last consultation report,” said YCS Executive Director Karen Baltgailis.

EMR did do an analysis of how the public consultations had gone in terms of process and numbers participating. Their analysis showed that there was high public participation both at the public meetings and on the consultation website. The EMR report commented:

“A core consideration of the high participation rates is the increased expectation from stakeholders and interested members of the public that their opinions will be reflected in the final decision made about the land use plan.”

“Yukoners' expectations of being listened to in the Peel consultation process remain unrealized,” said Baltgailis. “Yukon government did nothing with the input that Yukoners provided in good faith during the public consultation process last fall, even when the clear support for Peel protection was tabulated for them by Parks Branch.”

The Yukon government’s official response to the Recommended Plan ignored public input submitted through the consultation process. In its February 2011 response to the Recommended Peel Plan, Yukon government said *“a ban on surface access is not a workable scenario in a region with existing land interests and future development potential.”*

“This is clearly not consistent with the view of the vast majority of the people who responded to the public consultations,” said CPAWS-Yukon Executive Director Mike Dehn.

“Mr. Pasloski has been saying he can’t state whether his party supports the Final Recommended Plan for the Peel Watershed until after a final round of public consultations after the election,” said Dehn. “But why would they put so much emphasis on the upcoming consultations when they didn’t pay any attention to what people said the last time? Surely they are not just trying to delay taking a public position until after the election?”

-30-

For more information contact:

Karen Baltgailis
YCS Executive Director
(867) 668-5678

Mike Dehn
CPAWS-Yukon Executive Director
(867) 393-8080 ext 2

www.protectpeel.ca