



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Conservation Groups Support Compromise Peel Plan Urge Government and Industry to Do the Same**

Whitehorse, Yukon (July 25, 2011) CPAWS-Yukon and the Yukon Conservation Society are giving their support to the Final Recommended Plan for the Peel Watershed. “It is a tough compromise, but one that we can live with,” said Mike Dehn of CPAWS-Yukon. “The Peel is a national treasure and we are willing to accept industrial access in some of the watershed in exchange for protecting 80% of the watershed. This Plan honours the overwhelming support by First Nations and the Yukon public for Peel protection while leaving some of the watershed open to paced industrial development.”

Last year, the Yukon Government ignored public comments from government consultations strongly in favour of Peel protection and instead backed industrial special interests that favoured access by extractive industry to the watershed. In response, the Planning Commission eased restrictions on industrial access to some of the more easily accessible parts of the watershed, but held the line on sustaining the watershed's globally significant wilderness values.

The Yukon mining economy has been booming over the past 2 years despite a moratorium on new staking in the Peel Watershed over the same period. “Mining investors have shown that protecting the Peel will have no impact on their investment decisions. We can protect the world class Peel wilderness watershed and the mining boom and the jobs it brings will continue unaffected,” said Dehn.

“It's time for the Yukon Government to represent the interests of all Yukoners and support this compromise plan,” said Karen Baltgailis of the Yukon Conservation Society. “YTG worked very hard to defend the special interests of the mining and oil and gas sectors in the Peel, and the Planning Commission weighed those demands against the broad public and First Nations support for more protection. No one got everything they wanted, but we can accept the trade-offs this plan represents. In this election year, we urge the Yukon Government to do the same. Yukon voters will have the final word on this.”

On the industry side, CPAWS-Yukon and YCS expect responsible resource firms to respect First Nations and the Yukon public by withdrawing their interests in the 80% of the watershed that will be protected under the Final Recommended Plan. “Responsible companies listen to the voices of local people and First Nations and respect public processes. It's time for the good guys in the mining and energy sectors to show some leadership in the Peel,” said Baltgailis.

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