

900201

PLEASE NOTE:

Scott Milton suggests that as this is a regular briefing, perhaps a Department briefing session with the Minister to raise the other issues would be more appropriate.

PARKS AND PROTECTED AREAS STRATEGY

ISSUE: The Protected Areas Strategy and the Role of the Department of Economic Development.

- POSITION:**
- The Department supports the development of the Protected Areas Strategy, which will guide the creation of a representative system of protected areas in the Yukon.
 - Industry, First Nations, the Federal Government and YTG are working cooperatively to develop the Strategy, which is due for release by the end of this fiscal year.
 - As with all land-use planning processes, there are competing values that will need to be considered along with a process to resolve resource conflicts.
 - The Department of Economic Development is participating in the development of the strategy, in both steering and technical advisory capacities. The Department works to ensure that economic and resource values are considered in the development of the Protected Areas Strategy.
 - The Department has seconded an employee to the Department of Renewable Resources to coordinate the development of the Protected Areas Strategy

BACKGROUND: Yes

Briefing note copied to Renewable Resources

Approved: _____
Maurice Albert
Deputy Minister

Branch: Strategic Management/
Mineral Resources
For: Minister, Ec. Dev.
Date: Oct. 10, 1997

BACKGROUND

TO BRIEFING NOTE:

The Protected Areas Strategy and the Role of the Department of Economic Development

- The decision-making process around protected areas selection will be clarified through the Protected Areas Strategy. This includes the role and scope of resource assessments for minerals, oil and gas and forestry.
- In conjunction with the Protected Areas Strategy, the Department is working to improve the Yukon Government's internal review process related to the establishment of Strategic Management Areas (SMA's) through First Nation Final Agreements. SMA's are seen an important tool towards achieving a system of representative protective areas in the Yukon, yet the establishment of SMA's lies outside of the scope of the Protected Areas Strategy.
- The Department of Renewable Resources will be undertaking public consultations on the Protected Areas Strategy in November. These discussions will proceed the drafting the Strategy.
- Economic Development participates, at a senior level, on the Steering Committee and has Working Group representation from the Oil and Gas, Mineral Resources and Strategic Management branches. This participation will continue through the completion of the Strategy and into its implementation.

MINERAL POTENTIAL ASSESSMENT

ISSUE: Mineral Potential Assessments

POSITION:

- a) Mineral and energy resource assessments must be carried out before any lands are permanently withdrawn from mineral staking and set aside for territorial parks or other special management or protected areas.
- b) A referral system for all special management areas will ensure all resource values are fully understood and assist in the full consideration of the public interest in special management options.
- c) The departments comprehensive work on compiling a Yukon wide mineral potential assessment is in anticipation of assisting the Yukon Government achieve a protected areas network in a responsible manner through a referral system. The referral system ensures mineral resource assessments are considered in the selection of protected areas.
- d) The Department of Economic Development is proposing that mineral resource assessments be used in a two step process:
 - Step 1: in the initial selection process of representative candidate areas, using the Yukon Wide Mineral Potential Map which will be available during the spring, 1998. It is hoped that areas of high mineral potential can be excluded from proposed study areas.
 - Step 2: for refining protected area boundaries. Once candidate areas are proposed, Economic Development will evaluate those candidates and determine the need and scope of further assessment work. Fieldwork or additional compilation may be required.
- e) Oil and gas assessments are conducted separately, using a methodology developed by the National Energy Board.

BACKGROUND: Yes

Approved: _____
Maurice Albert
Deputy Minister

Branch: Mineral Resources
For: Minister, Ec. Dev.
Date: October 8, 1997

BACKGROUND

TO BRIEFING NOTE: MINERAL POTENTIAL ASSESSMENT

1. Section 6(1) of the Parks Act (1979) states that "...the Commissioner in Executive Council may establish a system of parks to protect unique natural and historic features and provide for comprehensive outdoor recreation opportunities".
2. The Parks and Outdoor Recreation Policy (September 1991) provided for a shift in focus from "protecting unique natural and historic features" to "protecting portions of the land that are representative of the ecological diversity of the Yukon". This policy also provided that industrial activity such as mining would not be permitted in territorial parks.
3. The objective of the Parks System Plan (June 1992) is "...to complete the establishment of a Yukon Parks System by the year 2000. At a minimum the system will include one Natural Environment Park in each of the eight Park Landscapes". Since then the focus has shifted to protect representative portions of each ecoregion.
4. The Parks System Plan provides for a Parks Steering Committee consisting of senior representatives from Renewable Resources, Tourism, Economic Development, and C&TS. Proposals for candidate parks, generated either at the land claims table or by the Parks and Outdoor Recreation Branch, are to be forwarded to the Steering Committee for review and consideration. This Committee has not yet convened (1997).
5. The first assessment to be conducted was a preliminary (Phase 1) assessment of the proposed Tombstone Park in late 1993. This assessment was conducted by DIAND for YTG.
6. A methodology for Mineral Resource Assessments for Parks was developed in 1994 after consultation with governments and special interest groups. A steering committee was set-up to oversee this process; members included representatives from YTG, Economic Development, Parks, DIAND Geology, and Yukon Chamber of Mines. The department hired a mineral assessment geologist in 1995 who began conducting assessments of proposed park areas, using funding transferred from Renewable Resources. In June 1995 the department received Management Board approval for a new capital project entitled "Parks Mineral Assessments".
7. The mineral assessment methodology involved a two-phase approach. A Phase 1 assessment produced a comparative ranking of the mineral potential of candidate areas based on analysis of existing data and some new fieldwork. A Phase 2 assessment, involving additional fieldwork and further evaluation and report, was used to refine park boundaries or in areas of potential resource conflict. Phase 1 alone is a process which requires one full-time geologist, a budget of about \$150,000 and 12-15 months to complete – for each candidate area. To date, mineral potential studies have been undertaken for the Kluane Wildlife Sanctuary and the Eagle Plains Ecoregion.

BACKGROUND

TO BRIEFING NOTE: MINERAL POTENTIAL ASSESSMENT

8. With the anticipated increase in the number of areas proposed for some type of withdrawal and a short time frame, this selection process will not be feasible without a large increase in budget and staff. A different approach and method will be necessary to meet YTG's goals.
9. One way of streamlining the process would be to include consideration of mineral potential alongside ecological values in the early stage of the selection process. If mineral potential information was included in the initial screening, the choice of candidate areas would be more straightforward as areas of high mineral potential could be immediately avoided in favour of lower potential areas of similar ecological character.
10. We are proposing a new method for selection of protected areas that would incorporate mineral potential into the initial screening process. This new process has two phases:
 - Phase 1 will result in the production of a Yukon wide mineral potential study. This regional scale exercise will rank tracts of land throughout the whole Yukon according to their relative mineral potential. This product would be made available to Renewable Resources to aid in their initial selection process as well as to the communities to assist with the consultation process. The proposed new Phase 1 methodology would involve three-steps:
 - Step 1 – Digital compilation of geoscientific data, tract selection and preparation of deposit models and grade tonnage data.
 - Step 2 – Expert estimators workshop, production of a mineral potential map of the Yukon.
 - Step 3 – Following initial selection of park candidates, review of that selection, recommendation to support selection or to go on to a Phase 2 if more work is needed or if conflicting interests could be resolved or refined with further work.
 - Phase 2 would consist of detailed resource assessment and/or additional fieldwork as recommended in Phase 1, Step 3.
11. The Yukon-wide Mineral Potential Map should be completed by the end of May 1998 at a cost of \$145,000. In some areas of the Yukon this level of work will be sufficient to support establishment of a protected area, in others, further work will be required.
12. A Yukon-wide mineral potential assessment will benefit implementation of the protected area strategy, and also provide fundamental data for other land use planning initiatives, the mineral industry through generation of new exploration ideas, and the Yukon Geology Program through better planning and product development.
13. The department has been providing information to Land Claim negotiators and are completing the mineral assessment of the City of Whitehorse. We have also been requested to supply a desktop compilation for the Peel River Basin study area.