

To: Bob Kuiper  
From: Danièle Héon  
Re: PAS May 27th draft

I must say I approach this review without much enthusiasm. I feel that once again, our comments will be ignored, no justification will be given for not incorporating them and this will be called consultation. I question the validity of this document as being a "government" policy, which brings me to ask, is there a definition to "meaningful consultation"?

I think this format works, but the main document needs to be beefed up if it is to represent the basic framework of the PAS.

The simplification of the language from the previous drafts is in many places successful in making the concepts more accessible. But the "talking down" tone can be quite annoying and in fact hide the scientific justification for the proposed concepts. I think that a bit more rigor could be incorporated without jeopardizing the simplicity of the document.

The tone of the document is not what I would call "balanced". The biases are throughout and I will note them in my detailed review. If Cabinet wanted a balanced document, more work needs to be done to achieve this. It really wouldn't take much to reassure industry interests, but for that to happen, the tone would have to change. If the Department of Renewable Resources is sincere in wanting to propose a balanced approach, it could say so a bit more strongly, still without compromising the goals and intent of the strategy.

The avoidance of certain issues ignores concerns that were voiced at the different workshops. Despite the repeated requests, there is still no mention of the rationale for protection, no contextualizing of the PAS within the existing legislative framework, still no mention of a budget, still no compensation policy.

The introductory tone of this document is very patronizing, it addresses the concept of wilderness from an urban perspective. References to "poking around in the bush" trivialize the way of life of those who live in the bush. This condescending attitude is characteristic of a certain bureaucratic mindset that is prevalent in YTG bureaucracy. This mindset addresses nature as being separate from us, where it is an object of recreation, or something that we sell to others that have a need to recreate. To many Yukoners, "the bush" is a place where they live, they work, derive internal and external sustenance, and not just two weeks out of the year. And that reality is respected by many Yukoners even if they don't share that same way of life. The PAS should reflect this reality that is unique to the North.

As the leading land use planning exercise, the PAS needs to be viewed within the whole eco-socio-economic context of the Yukon. We cannot afford looking at protected areas as being isolated from the rest of the land-base.

There are some things we don't agree with. We've said them over and over again:

- There is still no elaboration of a rationale for the reason for protected areas. So that we can poke around in the bush is not a valid enough reason. It is astounding to me that in all these drafts, it hasn't seemed necessary to outline the "reasons" why we

are proposing such a process. It wouldn't take much, a short concise statement. Instead what is implied is that there would be a need and a will to protect everything. What are protecting these areas against? Again, that could be spelled out clearly and succinctly.

- Commitment to year 2000. Everyone agrees it is unrealistic, document spells out a 2-3 year time frame for implementation per ecoregion, with 16 ecoregions to go at 2 or 3/year, contradicts the obvious. Can rephrase it as: although we've made a commitment for best effort by year 2000,
- Wolf Lake could fit in the PAS but should not be listed as an objective to be met. The Yukon government has not yet approved the proposal. If it satisfies the criteria laid out in the PAS, then it could go through the process
- Large wilderness areas are not a criteria. Wilderness goals should fit criteria for ecoregion representation (
- Criteria are too broad, not specific enough
- Tourism should be considered as a form of development. Its impact should be addressed early in the planning stages, not only at the final implementing stage.
- If this document is not to be a policy to encourage economic development, it should not be a policy document to promote tourism
- **Still no review or acknowledgement of existing legislation, the document maintains inaccurate perception that development occurs in legislative vacuum and that only stringent protection will allow protection of nature.**
- Concept of corridors and their levels of protection were never clarified. Now there is even stronger emphasis on them
- The goals proposed by Economic Development are not included, all was needed was a brief strong statement stating that the will of the government is to implement the PAS within a framework of healthy economy and sustainable communities. This is a will of the government, but not of Renewable Resources, which is why it is so watered down.
- Still no mention of any budget
- Still a top down approach, community consultation happens once areas are selected

Other general comments:

Methodology for resource assessments is not consistent throughout the document. What's in the main document is too general, what's in the companion paper no.5 is ok, but doesn't correlate with the timing outlined in paper no.3.

I still think that it should be spelled out that the process outlined is applicable to core areas representing ecoregions. Lesser levels of designation, if under the umbrella of the PAS, might not require interim protection etc... This is spelled out in the companion document no.2 but not in the main document.

There has never been any discussion about sequential use, as was proposed during the workshop. It is unfortunate that different ideas about how to achieve protection goals within a balanced approach could not be explored. I guess we don't really have the time to be creative.

Not setting a cap on protected areas creates a climate of uncertainty. I suggest setting a limit on the percentage of the area of an ecoregion that can be fully withdrawn from

resource-based activities such as a core protected areas. I'm sure we can come up with a number that will satisfy everybody's needs and alleviate concerns.

Here are my detailed comments on the main document:

Detailed comments

Quotes from the document are in *italic*, SUGGESTED WORDING is underlined.

## Page 1

### Sidebar

Good vision statement, SUGGESTED WORDING: suggest changing *sustainable economies* to sustainable communities and healthy economies.

### Main text

I would suggest at least starting the text with a full sentence.

Main comment is about patronizing tone and that the paragraph doesn't answer the question raised in its title. See general comments. What are we protecting against?

Should clarify ecoregion representation in *why*?

*Can we protect everything?* Implies that outright protection is the only way to "preserve nature".

SUGGESTED WORDING: Without having to protect everything, we can achieve representative protection of natural processes by using the principles of ecosystem management.

*/...without forgetting the families supported by....* Sounds like Little house on the prairie.

SUGGESTED WORDING: while preserving access to resources to maintain healthy economies.

or

And we can put it in effect to provide adequate ecoregion representation without compromising the access to the potential resource wealth.

## Page 2

### Main text

At least define "ecosystem".

The first list of bullets on this page, starting with "represents the full range of ecosystems..." gives the impression that there could be no limit to the extent of land protected. To represent the full range of ecosystems and to protect species **throughout** their range can address the whole territory. It's hard to suggest wording without changing the sense of what is being said. SUGGESTED WORDING Maybe insert: make the best effort to represent full range of ecosystem, etc.

We have a problem with using "wilderness areas" as one of the commitments for core protected areas and have said so in the past. The goal of preserving wilderness should be met by the outcome of the ecoregion representation, it should not be a separate goal. If, as according to CPWS, 75% of the Yukon is wilderness, we would need better criteria to narrow down candidates for selection. This goal is also duplicated in the "second goal". SUGGESTED WORDING: delete that goal or bullet 1: represent the ecosystems in the Yukon and by doing so, also preserving their inherent wilderness values.

In the section on second goal:

1<sup>st</sup> bullet: *habitat link **among** core protected areas?* Or between? If it is among, does it need extra protection or does the statement reflect how the PA would meet both goal 1 and 2.

Last bullet: repeats goal outline in goal 1/Ecosystems

### Page 3

#### Sidebar

Again: among or between the islands of green ?(par. 3)

#### Main text

*Guiding principles.* This would be a good place to insert a statement on the need to balance economic goals, since the emphasis on this has disappeared since the march 30<sup>th</sup> draft. The section on respecting all interests doesn't really make the point that industry's needs will be respected and acknowledged.

SUGGESTED WORDING: **Balanced decision-making** Government will ensure that protected areas planning respects the need for maintaining a suitable land base for industries such as mining, oil and gas, timber harvesting, and hydro development. These industries play an important role in the economy. Opportunities for their continuation must be ensured (taken from March 30<sup>th</sup> draft, p.5)

Or

Government will recognize the need for industry to access land resources by protecting the integrity of the resource base on which sustainable communities are dependent.

### Page 5

#### Sidebar

Heritage Rivers are not protected areas even though Bill wants them to be

#### Main text

*Process* A compensation policy needs to be established right from the start. This is not to be dealt with at the end. The potential compensation costs might affect the selection of one candidate over another. Cabinet, to approve a study area, must know what the potential compensation costs might be. The policy needs to be set, and compensation options be discussed in roughing out management plans. Different management plan options also need to be elaborated earlier in the process, to help communities and government with candidate selection.

*Step 1* all the workshop discussions emphasized the need for the local community to participate in if not to lead the selection of general study areas, with YTG acting as steward of the process. The process has now reverted to a top-down approach. Is this consistent with what was heard in consultation?

We need to see a stronger commitment to using regional resource assessments in the initial planning stages, to help select general study areas, as was discussed and agreed upon during working group meetings and the workshop. SUGGESTED WORDING: *It will do so using widely accepted scientific criteria for ecoregion representation as well as regional resource assessments.*

Also add

The government will elaborate a compensation policy that will be outlined to the different stakeholders at the initial planning and consultation stages.

### Page 6

#### Main text

*Step 3* SUGGESTED WORDING: before last sentence: Management plans for each possible scenario will be sketched out to assist in the selection of a single study area.

*Step 4* to add at the end: SUGGESTED WORDING: Only one study area per ecoregion will be withdrawn at one time.

Step 9 delete the sentence on compensation since this should be done at a much earlier stage.

**Page 7**  
**Main text**

There should be some thought given on the cost of the process. As a second item, at the top of the page, insert SUGGESTED WORDING: How much will this cost? The Yukon government will provide an estimate of the costs of establishing core protected areas within each ecoregion.

**Sustaining and diversifying our economy** 2nd par. SUGGESTED WORDING: It's about creating new tourism jobs in some areas and safeguarding other opportunities for employment by protecting the integrity of the resource base on which sustainable communities are dependant.

**Resource Assessments** this whole section is meaningless and would do nothing to convince the public that meaningful resource assessments are part of the process. The three stages should be replaced with the three stages outlined in the companion document no.5. SUGGESTED WORDING: resource assessments will be done at the three stages of the planning process. First, once priority ecoregions have been identified, regional scale resource assessments will be used, in addition to ecological information, to help define areas of interest. An effort will be made to locate these areas where competing resource values are low. This will help minimize potential future conflict. Second, once areas of interest have been identified, a more detailed analysis will be undertaken, involving fieldwork if needed. This level of assessment will supply the detailed information needed to chose between candidate study areas. Third, once a study area is approved by cabinet, further detailed work may be needed to help refine boundaries.

**Page 8**  
**Main text**

**Managing industry uses**

The environmental impact of tourism should be assessed at the early planning stages. What about pre-existing rights (trapping, outfitting, mineral rights?). Again, we need to talk about compensation.

What is this "most" public lands? This offers no certainty. If the area is not "formally protected" government can add on regulations? What does this mean ? Is this in reference to the existing legislation? This is really not clear. SUGGESTED WORDING: Extensive sets of regulations already affect development activities on crown lands...(depending on what you are trying to say)

Second to last paragraph. Discussion on sequential use could be done here.

Last paragraph: *Yukon people have a wide range of tools ... List a few.*  
*Most powerful tool... to exclude industrial development* assumes development is the only threat and ecological values could not be preserved if development of any kind was

allowed. That attitude does not fit in with a balanced approach. It is quite biased. What about hunting restrictions?

Last sentence: SUGGESTED WORDING: ...in ways that will recognize the need for balance and that will not affect the health of the economy that supports us all.

#### Page 9

##### Main text

**Managing recreational uses** Need to factor in the environmental impact of tourism.

SUGGESTED WORDING: the government will undertake environmental impact studies of tourism during the early planning stages, in order to ensure that the values that we are striving to protect do not end up being threatened by the result of protection.

#### Page 10

##### Main text

##### **Implementing the strategy**

Delete the commitment to the year 2000. SUGGESTED WORDING: although the government has committed to making best efforts to complete a network of protected areas by the year 2000, that goal seems impossible to reach with less than a year and a half to go. We will continue in our best effort to establish a network of protected areas in a timely manner. In the next two years, the government will continue working towards setting up ...

Modify the commitment to the Wolf Lake Park. SUGGESTED WORDING: Once the protected Area Strategy is in place, the federal proposal for a park in the Wolf Lake area will be considered if it meets the criteria set out in the Strategy.

Technical paper no.5

##### **pp.2-3 Types of social and economic impacts to be assessed**

add to impacts: environmental impacts from tourist or recreational activities.

p.6 outdoor recreation and tourism values should be in the social and cultural accounts

Technical paper no.3

Resource assessments should follow the timeline outlined in paper no.5.