



The Yukon Land Use Planning Council (YLUPC) will be assisting the Vuntut Planning Commission in coordinating and organizing the workshop. Please contact Glenda Koh at the YLUPC at (867) 667-7397 or [glendak@internorth.com](mailto:glendak@internorth.com) if you have further questions.

The Vuntut Planning Commission is sincerely looking forward to hearing from you and to understanding your perspective on the planning region.

Yours truly



Joe Binger  
Co-Chair  
Vuntut Planning Commission



Darius Kassi  
Co-Chair  
Vuntut Planning Commission

# Summary of Issues in the Vuntut Planning Region from the 1990 Public Consultation

## Introduction

The Vuntut Planning Commission (VPC) was appointed in September, 2000 by the Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. The task of the VPC is to develop a land use plan to recommend to the governments of Canada, Yukon and the Vuntut Gwitchin as defined in Chapter 11 of the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation Final Agreement.

The Vuntut Planning Commission consists of:

- Joe Binger
- Bruce Chambers
- Marvin Frost
- Shirlee Frost
- Darius Kassi
- Esau Schafer

## Map of planning region and description

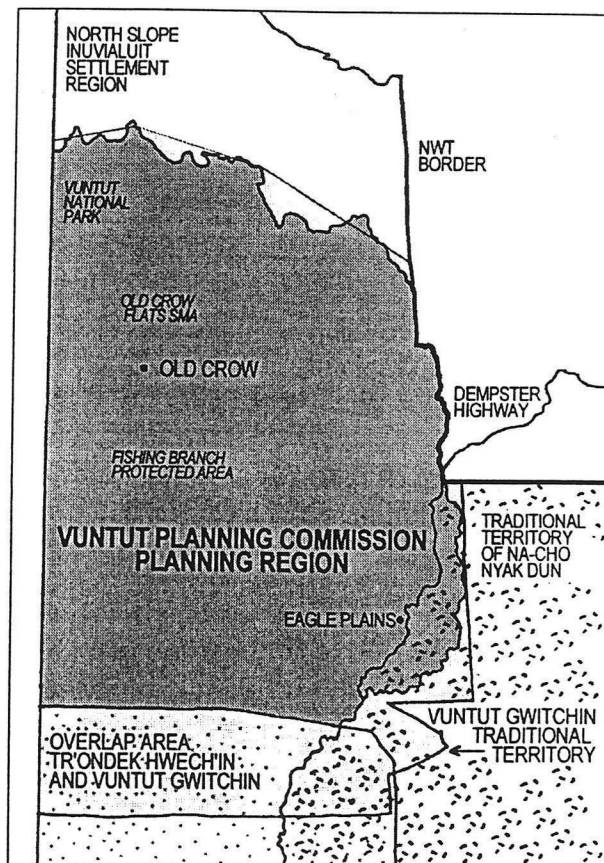
The planning region for the VPC consists of the Yukon portion of the Porcupine River watershed, which is roughly the same area as the Vuntut Gwitchin Traditional Territory. The planning region does not contain any portion of the Inuvialuit Settlement Area, nor of the Tr'ondek Hwech'in Traditional Territory.

## What is a Regional Land Use Plan?

The VGFN Final Agreement states that a regional land use plan makes recommendations for the use of land, water and other renewable and non-renewable resources in the planning region, both on settlement and non-settlement land. The land use plan should include opportunities for meaningful public participation, and should use the knowledge and traditional experience of the Vuntut Gwitchin. The plan should consider the well

being of the region's residents, and promote sustainable development.

## Map of Planning Region



## Summary of Issues

Land use planning was first initiated in the North Yukon in 1990. Under the Yukon Land Use Planning Program, a Commission was appointed and began planning for a region that included the current planning region, as well as a portion of the Peel watershed and the Inuvialuit North Slope. A plan was never completed for that area because the program was cancelled when it became clear that the UFA would be addressing land use planning.

However, one of the tasks the previous North Yukon Commission did carry out was the compilation of public input statements. These statements took the form of public hearings, community meetings, and written submissions. The issues that emerged from that exercise are summarized briefly here.

This summary excludes most fish and wildlife issues. The region is currently undertaking a Fish and Wildlife Management Plan wherein most issues will be brought forth.

### **Energy Development**

It was evident in 1990, as now, that there was potential for large scale energy development in the form of gas fields. Two of the four possible pipeline routes would affect the planning region: the Dempster Lateral and the Prudhoe Mackenzie Valley. There is currently seismic exploration work being conducted in Eagle Plains. Exploration bids have recently been sought by YTG. The Commission would like more information on energy development interests and potential.

In 1990, there were mixed opinions on the potential effects of oil and gas exploration and development: some participants felt it could be carried out responsibly; others felt pressured by industry and foresaw negative impacts. Proponents of energy development brought forward the following main points:

- areas requiring protection should be identified;
- development required access to land; technology was mitigating impacts; and
- the industry is subject to many standards and practices.

The main points regarding environmental protection were

- locations had to be appropriate to prevent land use conflict;
- proper waste disposal; and
- potential for spills.

The potential for hydro power was addressed in 1990. In general, residents of the planning region were reluctant to support hydro development if the benefits were located primarily outside the region.

### **Forest Management**

The planning region contains no forest resources of any commercial value. There were two main issues regarding forestry:

- the supply of the fuelwood and building logs for Old Crow; and
- the need for forest fire priorities.

### **Heritage**

In the 1990 issues gathering exercise, it became evident that the term "heritage" includes not only physical artifacts, but also the lifestyle, the wilderness, and the special relationship of VGFN people to the land. Participants commented on the link between cultural tourism and heritage; they identified the need to ensure heritage protection while developing the region's tourism potential.

### **Mineral Development**

The 1990 issues report said there was considerable mining potential in the region, particularly in the central and eastern areas, as well as lazulite deposits in the northeast portion of the region that were not accessible due to a 1978 Mineral Withdrawal Order. It is uncertain if there is much mining potential in the current planning region, which is somewhat smaller and which now has more protected areas. The Commission acknowledges there are existing claims in the Fishing Branch area, but would

like to more information on current mining interests in the region.

In general, the community of Old Crow was opposed to mining in the areas. Other groups pointed out that mining could be lucrative, despite the remoteness of the region. The Canadian Nature Federation recommended that mining occur only after important habitat and sensitive areas are protected and thorough impact assessments conducted.

### **National Defence**

in 1990, DND activity was located primarily in the North Slope, which is not part of the current planning region. The Commission would like to know whether any DND activities should be considered in the land use plan.

### **Subsistence**

Subsistence was an important issue in 1990, and continues to be. There is currently a Fish and Wildlife Management Planning process underway. However, the land use plan will address the broader issue of how subsistence activities conflict with development such as roads, oil & gas, mining and tourism.

### **Tourism and Outdoor Recreation**

The potential for tourism was recognized as high in 1990, with tourism and recreation concentrated on the Dempster Highway and in regions outside the planning area such as Herschel Island, Ivvavik, and many of the Peel tributaries. Participants were generally positive towards wilderness and cultural tourism, which could inject money into the economy. These activities must be sensitive to local ecology and lifestyles.

Now that the VGFN Final Agreement exists, Is tourism development an issue to be addressed in the land use plan?

### **Transportation and Communications Facilities**

Transportation and Communication comments were mainly concerned with the Dempster Highway. Some of the issues that were raised in 1990 were:

- Whether the highway should be upgraded or not;
- What the impacts of upgrading would be, especially on the Porcupine Caribou Herd
- NorthwesTel's then proposed 15 microwave towers along the highway
- The impact of access roads required to build these towers

The prospect of the winter road to Old Crow was also discussed, as well as an airport at Eagle Plains.

### **Water Resources**

Participants discussed the need for long term hydrology monitoring. Water quality was seen as an important indicator of conflict between development and the environment (i.e. pollution). There is also concern regarding low flow volumes during the winter months.

### **Conservation**

Limiting development was seen as the most important means of protecting the wilderness and ecosystems of the area.

### **Protected Areas**

Within the past 10 years, progress has been made on the Old Crow Flats SMA, Fishing Branch SMA and Vuntut National Park. Although the land use plan will not plan within these areas, the Commission should know what issues are associated with them that may affect the plan.

## Other Issues

Some issues brought forward in the 1990 exercise did not fit into any of the above categories. Briefly, they were:

- the need for conflict resolution in interpreting the plan
- the potential for game farming and grazing
- waste management (community and commercial)
- the environmental impacts of gravel extraction
- the relationship between the land use plan and environmental assessment
- use of climatic information in decision making

- what development and human activities are permitted in protected areas?

## Other Plans

The Vuntut Planning Commission must attempt to integrate other planning exercises into its land use plan. Some current plans are:

- Fish and Wildlife Management Plan
- Porcupine Caribou Herd Management Plan
- Wildlife Management Advisory Council, North Slope
- Dempster Highway Interpretive Strategy—Department of Tourism

## Time line of planning process

	2001				2002				2003			
	Jan Mar	April June	July Sept	Oct Dec	Jan Mar	April June	July Sept	Oct Dec	Jan Mar	April June	July Sept	Oct Dec
Communication Strategy/PTOR production	█											
Review existing information, gather issues statements		█	█	█								
Produce issues document			█	★								
Produce data gap analysis, resource reports, TEK summaries				★								
Data Analysis			█	█	█	█	█	█	█			
Develop plan scenario					█	█	█	█				
Initial Draft Plan								★				
Consultation on Draft Plan								█	█			
Final Draft Plan									★			
Approval Process								█	█	█	█	█