



NWT CONFERENCE OF MANAGEMENT AUTHORITIES

CONSENSUS AGREEMENT RESPECTING IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOVERY STRATEGY FOR WOOD BISON IN THE NWT

The Conference of Management Authorities has reached consensus (hereafter referred to as the “Consensus Agreement”) respecting the implementation of the *Recovery Strategy for Wood Bison (Bison bison athabascae) in the Northwest Territories*.

Recognizing the ecological role of wood bison and their importance to people – the cultural and spiritual values of bison combined with their consumptive and non-consumptive uses – the goals of this recovery strategy are to: (1) recover free-ranging, genetically diverse, and healthy wood bison populations broadly distributed within the Northwest Territories (NWT), to levels which can sustain ongoing harvest for the benefit of all people in the NWT and (2) contribute to the recovery of free-ranging, healthy wood bison populations in Canada. The recommended recovery approaches and the Management Authorities’ intent to undertake them are summarized in this Consensus Agreement. Further information can be found in the *Recovery Strategy for Wood Bison (Bison bison athabascae) in the Northwest Territories*.

Implementation is subject to appropriations, priorities, and budgetary constraints of the Management Authorities.

The processes for developing the recovery strategy and this Consensus Agreement are outlined in Annex B.

GNWT Statements

The Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) makes the following statements about its intentions to implement the recommended approaches in the recovery strategy, subject to appropriations, priorities, and budgetary constraints.

- A. **Implementation Underway** – The GNWT is actively implementing a number of the recommended approaches in the recovery strategy in whole or in part. Many of these actions are long-term and progress is made gradually over time. The actions are being implemented with co-management partners as part of ongoing management, monitoring, research, conservation planning, and environmental assessment programs. The recommendations in the wood bison recovery strategy provide advice to help guide these programs. This statement applies to recommended approaches 1.2, 2.1, 2.3, 3.1, 3.2, and 5.2.

- B. **Resources Required** - A number of the recommended approaches in the recovery strategy are important but implementing them would require additional resources and/or re-allocation of existing resources. The GNWT intends to pursue implementation of these approaches as resources and capacity allow. The GNWT will seek additional resources and may consider re-allocation of existing resources to implement these approaches. Re-allocation of existing resources could affect other commitments. This applies to recommended approaches 3.3, 3.4, 3.6, 4.1, and 4.2.

- C. **Not Pursuing** – Some approaches in the recovery strategy are more appropriately led by co-management partners other than the GNWT, and some approaches are not currently a high priority for the GNWT to implement given other higher priorities and resource constraints. The GNWT does not intend to actively pursue implementing these approaches at this time. This does not prevent the GNWT from participating in implementation if opportunities arise and/or when other management partners take a lead role. This applies to recommended approaches 2.2, 3.5, and 5.1.

- D. **Completed** – Approach 1.1 was completed after the recovery strategy was published but before the consensus agreement on implementation was signed.

Tłıchq Government Statements

Tłıchq Government staff have been involved and supported the development of the *Recovery Strategy for Wood Bison in the NWT* (recovery strategy) and the Chief's Executive Council of the Tłıchq Government approved the recovery strategy. With respect to the recovery strategy and subject to appropriations, priorities, and budgetary constraints, implementation will be a collaborative effort. The Tłıchq Government will identify which recommended approaches as set out in Annex A will be implemented by the Tłıchq Government to assist in the achievement of recovery objectives for wood bison in Wek'èezhìı and Mqwhì Gogha Dè Nııłtèè.

Wek'èezhì Renewable Resources Board Statements

With respect to the *Recovery Strategy for Wood Bison in the NWT*, the Wek'èezhì Renewable Resources Board will implement the identified management approaches for the Mackenzie population only.

INTERPRETATION

For greater certainty, terms and processes in this Consensus Agreement are as defined and described in the *Species at Risk (NWT) Act*.

For greater certainty, the Management Authorities for wood bison (*Bison bison athabasca*) in the Northwest Territories are: Tłı̨chǫ Government, Wek'èezhì Renewable Resources Board, and the Government of the Northwest Territories.

WE THE UNDERSIGNED, having reached this consensus on this 24th day of April 2020, provide this Consensus Agreement to the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, Government of the Northwest Territories, the Wek'èezhì Renewable Resources Board, and the Tłı̨chǫ Government.



Witness



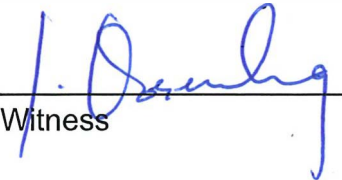
Joseph Judas, Chairperson
Wek'èezhì Renewable Resources Board



Witness



Grand Chief George Mackenzie
Tłı̨chǫ Government



Witness



Brett Elkin, A/Assistant Deputy Minister -
Operations
Dept. of Environment and Natural Resources
Government of the Northwest Territories

ANNEX A

RECOMMENDED APPROACHES TO ACHIEVE RECOVERY OBJECTIVES FOR WOOD BISON IN THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

Management Approach	GNWT Statements ¹	Partners intending to implement ²
Objective #1: Work with communities and Indigenous governments and organizations to complete and implement separate management plans for the Mackenzie, Nahanni, and Slave River Lowlands populations.		
1.1 Develop management plans for each of the Nahanni and Slave River Lowlands populations.	Completed	
1.2 Implement management plans for the Mackenzie, Nahanni, and Slave River Lowlands populations.	Implementation underway	WRRB
Objective #2: Promote opportunities to increase acceptance as well as social, cultural, and economic benefits of wood bison.		
2.1 Manage wood bison harvest to be sustainable for the benefit of all people in the NWT.	Implementation underway	WRRB
2.2 Promote non-consumptive economic benefits, including tourism based on wildlife viewing.	Not pursuing	
2.3 Work with communities and other agencies to reduce bison-human conflicts.	Implementation underway	WRRB

¹ This column refers to the GNWT Statements found on page 2 of this Consensus Agreement.

² The co-management partners in this column intend to undertake the approach indicated, subject to appropriations, priorities, and budgetary constraints.

Objective #3: Maintain healthy, genetically diverse, and productive wood bison populations.		
3.1 Monitor health in all populations.	Implementation underway	
3.2 Continue to manage the risk of disease transmission.	Implementation underway	
3.3 Collaborate with and engage partners, agencies, and organizations to manage diseases and investigate new or emerging methods to manage diseases.	Resources required	
3.4 Eliminate bovine tuberculosis and brucellosis from wood bison over the long term in the NWT.	Resources required.	
3.5 Explore options to increase genetic diversity of Mackenzie and Nahanni wood bison, and avoid loss of genetic diversity from bison in the Slave River Lowlands.	Not pursuing	
3.6 Develop studies to learn what factors regulate population size of bison in the NWT.	Resources required	
Objective #4: Monitor and conserve important wood bison habitat.		
4.1 Monitor and assess the cumulative effects of changes to wood bison habitat.	Resources required	
4.2 Manage bison habitat to prevent habitat loss and degradation and maintain adequate, productive habitat.	Resources required	WRRB
Objective #5: Support recovery of healthy wood bison populations broadly distributed within the NWT.		
5.1 Consult with communities, wildlife management boards, and Indigenous governments and organizations to support and expand wood bison recovery efforts in the NWT.	Not pursuing	WRRB

5.2 Collaborate on recovery and management of wild bison in Canada.	Implementation underway	WRRB
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ANNEX B

DEVELOPMENT OF RECOVERY STRATEGY AND IMPLEMENTATION AGREEMENT

On July 13, 2017, the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources (ENR), Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT), acting on the direction provided by the Conference of Management Authorities in their *Consensus Agreement on Listing Wood Bison (Bison bison athabascae)* (April 2017), added wood bison to the NWT List of Species at Risk as a Threatened species. A recovery strategy was developed by the Conference of Management Authorities to address the recovery requirements of wood bison in the NWT. The recovery strategy includes appropriate recommended objectives and approaches for the conservation and recovery of wood bison in the NWT, as well as descriptions of threats and positive influences, as required under section 61 of the *Species at Risk (NWT) Act*. The recovery strategy was completed on July 29, 2019, in accordance with subsection 60(1) and sections 65-58 of the *Species at Risk (NWT) Act*.

This *Consensus Agreement Respecting Implementation of the Recovery Strategy for Wood Bison (Bison bison athabascae) in the Northwest Territories* was informed by discussions of the Conference of Management Authorities, the recovery strategy, the *Consensus Agreement on Listing Wood Bison (Bison bison athabascae)*, the *Consensus Agreement on Accepting the Recovery Strategy for Wood Bison (Bison bison athabascae) in the Northwest Territories*, the Species at Risk Committee's assessment and reasons for assessment, and the approved species status report. It was also informed by public input (solicited by the Management Authorities) and the results of Crown consultation duties performed by the GNWT during the listing process and the development of the recovery strategy. No information was provided to the Species at Risk Committee by the Conference of Management Authorities or a Management Authority under paragraph 31(1)(c) of the *Species at Risk (NWT) Act*.