



STEERING COMMITTEE REPORT #9

May 15 & 16, 2023 Meeting

Prepared by



GROUNDSWELL
PLANNING

July 2023

BACKGROUND

In March 2020, Government of Yukon (YG) and Kwanlin Dün First Nation (KDFN) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to work jointly towards a local area plan for the Łu Zil Män (Fish Lake) area. A Steering Committee comprised of three representatives of each government was appointed in Fall 2021. The Committee held its ninth meeting at the Willow Room (Yukon Inn) over two consecutive evenings (May 15 & 16, 2023 from 5:00 -8:00 pm).

ATTENDEES

Kathy Elliot (YG member)
Jane Koepke (Facilitator)
Jocelyne Leblanc (YG member)
Margaret McKay (KDFN member)

Roy Neilson (KDFN staff)
Joseph Petch (YG staff)
Bengt Pettersson (YG member)
Steven Shorty (KDFN member)

Regrets: Jasmine Bill (KDFN member)

MEETING OBJECTIVES

1. Review latest version of Vision & Values report
2. Seek input on a preliminary Plan outline
3. Explore Limits of Acceptable Change as a potential planning framework for use for LZM

DISCUSSION

March 21/22 Meeting Minutes

Minutes were reviewed. Bengt motioned to adopt the minutes without changes and Jocelyne seconded.

Communications Update

Roy and Joseph shared the formatted version of the 2-page project update highlighting engagement results, next steps (including engagement opportunities), and Vision and Values. This will be posted to the website and mailed out to citizens and stakeholders.

Vision and Values Report

Jane quickly revisited the most recent version of the Vision & Values report, which reflected the Committee input from the March meeting. Key Committee member input included:

- The use of “complement” in Principle #3 implies that Yukon First Nation ways of knowing is subservient to Western science
- The word “previous” in Principle #11 might imply that knowledge only extends to the most recent generation of ancestors instead of that accumulated through direct experience and observation of First Nation people over thousands of years

A Committee member also commented that he felt like proposed edits he had forwarded on may not have been shared and suggested that there be a mechanism for Committee members to see one another's comments to foster more informed discussion.

Draft Plan Outline

Jane presented a very preliminary outline for how the contents of the draft Plan document might be presented as follows:

- Vision, Values, Guiding Principles
- Goals and Objectives - goals being the broad statements that connect current conditions to the Vision, and objectives being the tactics/actions that will help achieve the goals
- Area-Wide Policies and Actions - these will not be specific to a particular land use designation and be organized by theme/topic, with objectives carried over from previous section and elaborated to the next level of detail through policies and actions
- Land Use Designations and Policies (including a land use designation map)
- Implementation (which sets out responsibilities, timing, resources)

Committee comments and suggestions included:

- Importance of the map(s) as communicating the substance of the plan, and need for a thoughtful approach to placement in the plan document
- Consider ways to help readers/users navigate straight to their interests
- A map-based Table of Contents or reference could be helpful
- Think hard about the implementation section and what belongs in there versus the planning actions or policies

Limits of Acceptable Change - Background

Jane introduced Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC), a park planning framework that originated in the 1980s and has influenced planning processes and inspired numerous "spin off" frameworks since that time. LAC focuses on the conditions that are desired in an area rather than how much use an area can tolerate (which park planning used to attempt to do with limited success).

According to Cole and McCool (1997), LAC and related processes all follow a basic six-step process:

- 1) Agree that two or more goals are in conflict
- 2) Establish that all goals must be compromised to some extent
- 3) Decide which conflicting goal(s) will ultimately constrain the other goal(s). In other words, establish a hierarchy of goals.
- 4) Write indicators and standards, as well as monitor the ultimately constraining goal(s) (i.e., the higher ranked goals).
- 5) Allow the ultimately constraining goal(s) to be compromised until the standard is reached.

- 6) Compromise the other goal(s) as needed so that standards are never violated.

Jane led the Committee through a series of discussions to explore the potential suitability of LAC as a tool for the extensive open spaces of the LZM planning area.

Ranking Planning Goals

As a means of exploring how well LZM “fits” the first three steps of the LAC process (according to Cole and McCool), Jane led the group through a discussion about goals. She distilled the Committee’s Vision and Values into six theoretical themes as follows:

1. Wilderness and wildlife (i.e., maintain area in a natural state)
2. Quality wilderness recreation experiences
3. Heritage resources
4. Subsistence hunting and gathering
5. KDFN connections to and occupancy of the area
6. Quality tourism opportunities
7. Rural lifestyles

The Committee endorsed these draft goals for the purposes of discussion and agreed that the first “test” of Cole and McCool’s LAC process was satisfied: the goals are in conflict. After some discussion, the Committee agreed that the second condition - that all goals must be compromised to some extent – also applied to the Fish Lake plan.

Committee members were then asked to rank the seven working goals. There was generally clear direction that wilderness and wildlife were the highest priority, heritage and subsistence hunting and gathering came second, and recreation and tourism came third. KDFN occupancy/reconnection and rural lifestyles received polarized results due to different Committee interpretations about their meaning for future development.

In response to a Committee member question, Roy clarified that the KDFN Traditional Territory Land Vision identifies Fish Lake for various Community Development, Heritage and Wildlife goals. The Land Vision directs KDFN to consider R-40A to meet potential KDFN residential needs and R-4A and R-75A for infrastructure such as culture camps, healing centres or campgrounds. KDFN is also processing historical submissions from citizens for traditional or residential use of settlement land, some of whom may involve the Fish Lake area.

Committee members spoke to the focus being on reconnecting people/families who traditionally resided in or occupied the area, not an invitation for others to establish residency.

Spatial Effects on Goal Ranking

Committee members broke into two groups to explore how the relative importance of the seven working goals might change depending on location within the planning area. Group discussion highlights, by location, included:

- **In and around Fish Lake and Jackson Lake roads (and existing residences)**
 - Wilderness and wildlife protection are important here because of a known wildlife corridor
 - Tourism is more important than recreation here because tourism is already concentrated in this area (although there are risks of overtourism and associated negative impacts on other values)
 - Protection of heritage and subsistence activity is of moderate to high importance
 - This is a logical place to re-establish KDFN occupancy
 - Further development in this area should be avoided due to negative impacts on accessible subsistence activity
 - Maintaining rural lifestyles is very important here
- **Grizzly Hill/upper Mount Mac trail network**
 - Wilderness and wildlife protection are important here because of known wildlife activity
 - Heritage protection, subsistence activity, recreation also have high importance
 - Tourism may be less important here
 - Area is vulnerable to overuse (new trails being one sign) with degradation of environment (e.g., plants, caribou habitat)
 - Maintaining rural lifestyles is of low importance given undeveloped nature of area
- **Bonneville Lakes/R-4A area (not including Fish Lake Trail)**
 - Wilderness and wildlife protection, heritage, subsistence and tourism are highest value here due to the area's wilderness character
 - Recreation is of low importance
 - Maintaining rural lifestyles is of low importance given undeveloped nature of area

Policy Approaches

Committee members broke into two new groups to explore how different goal rankings might influence planning policy responses along a spectrum of intervention. Key points were as follows:

- Signage and education efforts carried out to date have not always been effective and at least partial intervention may be required instead
- Reducing impacts of recreational use on subsistence hunting and wildlife values could include timing or spatial restrictions on use, infrastructure, quotas, standards for larger groups, prohibiting certain activities, etc.
- If warranted, closures could be considered for areas or vulnerable resources such as fisheries

- Management action could move along the intervention spectrum (from less to very restrictive) if monitoring determines less restrictive management policies or actions are proving ineffective

Jane commented that Committee discussion generally aligned with the final three conditions of Cole and McCool's LAC process. Based on this, she recommended that her team should develop both LAC-influenced and non LAC planning concepts for Committee review at the next workshop. Committee members expressed support for this recommendation.

NEXT STEPS

KDFN Event

Roy reported that KDFN is considering hosting an on-the-land citizen's event in the planning area in August. Engagement around LZM is envisioned but will not be tied to any specific milestone in the LZM process.

Next Meeting

Committee member and KDFN staff availability for July is low. Mid-August looks like the earliest opportunity to reconvene the entire Committee in person.

Action Items

Action Items generated during the meeting include:

- Consider mechanisms for Committee comments and edits on documents to be shared (Roy/Joseph/Jane)
- Complete and circulate draft May meeting minutes for approval by email (Jane/Roy/Joseph)
- Schedule a day-long Committee meeting in the planning area for mid-to-late August (Roy/Joseph)
- Circulate the final version of Vision and Values report to Committee (Roy/Joseph)

Reference: Cole, David N. and McCool, Stephen F. 1987. Limits of Acceptable Change and Natural Resources Planning: When is LAC Useful, When is it Not? Retrieved from:
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/238770727_Limits_of_Acceptable_Change_and_Natural_Resources_Planning_When_is_LAC_Useful_When_is_it_Not