



# Engagement Plan for the Peel River Ferry Landings

Version 2.0

Government of the Northwest Territories – Department of Infrastructure



## Table of Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Affected Parties</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Past Engagement Activities</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Engagement Approach</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Engagement Activities for the Project</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Summary</b>	<b>6</b>

## **Introduction**

The Government of the Northwest Territories, Department of Infrastructure (INF) has operated and maintained the Peel River Ferry Landings for over 40 years. Comprehensive community engagement regarding the landings has been undertaken on a continual basis since 1999. As Public Servants, the staff of the GNWT are accountable and open to the public for discussion of all matters. As such, the Department and staff are well acquainted with the communities and community members of Fort McPherson, and engagement practices and community relationships are well established.

## **Affected Parties**

Affected parties for the Ferry Landings were identified in the 2010 water licence renewal and have grown to include a number of aboriginal groups and other affected parties. The groups identified in the 2022 Water Licence Renewal include:

- Aklavik Indian Band
- Charter Community of Tiisgehtchic
- Ehdiiat Gwich'in Council
- Ehdiiat Gwich'in Renewable Resources Council
- Gwich'in Land Use Planning Board
- Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board
- Gwich'in Tribal Council – Department of Cultural Heritage
- Gwich'in Tribal Council
- Gwich'in Tribal Council – Lands and Resources
- Gwichya Gwich'in Band
- Gwichya Gwich'in Council
- Gwichya Gwich'in Renewable Resources Council
- Hamlet of Aklavik
- Hamlet of Fort McPherson
- Inuvik Native Band
- Nihtat Gwich'in Council
- Nihtat Gwich'in Renewable Resources Council
- Teetl'it Gwich'in Band
- Tetlit Gwich'in Renewable Resource Council
- Tetlit Gwich'in Council
- Town of Inuvik
- Margaret Nazon and Family

The Department of Infrastructure may engage with other Parties on a case by case basis as appropriate.

## **Past Engagement Activities**

Beginning in 1999, the Department of Infrastructure has engaged with stakeholders regarding the ferry landing operations. Multiple opportunities to engage stakeholders have occurred throughout the years, including during the previous water licence renewal process, the annual meetings as required under the previous water licences, and during the 2021/22 water licence renewal process. Written engagement was carried out, but due to COVID-19 in the region, the planned community engagement meeting in Fort McPherson was postponed. The Department is committed to holding the meeting as soon as it is safely possible. As a result of the open lines of communication, the Department has kept community members involved and informed on an ongoing basis.

## **Engagement Approach**

The Department of Infrastructure believes that meaningful community engagement is crucial in building and maintaining good relationships with communities and community members. The Department of Infrastructure Regional Offices' are open for residents to provide comments and concerns, or to ask questions regarding the Departments activities. As a result of the Departments open lines of communication, well-established relationships have been built with the people and communities of the Northwest Territories.

## **Engagement Activities for the Project**

During the life of the Ferry Landing Water Licence Term, INF will build on the engagement approach and there will be various opportunities for affected parties to learn and provide input on the ferry landing operations. This engagement plan will ensure that the people of the Hamlet of Fort McPherson, the major stakeholder, are fully aware of the schedule of construction, conditions, and operations of the Ferry Landings.

Normal ferry construction should not require a community meeting, but instead verbal or written communication between INF, Hamlet of Fort McPherson, and GNWT Water Resource Division.

Engagement for on-going operations could include key activities such as:

- Changes to ferry landing operations or locations of the landings due to high or low water levels;
- Spills;
- Ferry closures;
- Construction of the landings at the start of the season and closure of the ferry at the end of the season;
- Annual community meetings at the beginning of the ferry season to discuss any concerns the communities may have about the ferry landing operations; and
- Amendments to the water licence.

If there is a community meeting to take place it will be open to all members of the community, including:

- Youth;
- Elders;
- Women and Men; and
- Any other community members interested in participating.

## Summary

A summary of engagement triggers and methods is provided below in Table 1.

**Table 1: Summary of Engagement Triggers and Methods**

Engagement Trigger	Primary Purpose	Primary Methods	Primary Participants
Changes to the ferry landing operations	Discuss changes to the ferry landing operations	Verbal and/or written notification.	GNWT Water Resource Officer, GLWB
Amendments to the water licence	To advise stakeholders and the public of amendments to the water licences	Verbal and/or written notification	GLWB and parties identified in <i>Affected Parties</i>
Renewing the water licence	To advise stakeholders and the public of the departments intentions to renew the water licence	Verbal and/or written notification	GLWB and parties identified in <i>Affected Parties</i>
Spills	To advise affected stakeholders of spills	Verbal and/or written notification	Spill hotline, GNWT Water Resource Officer, Tetlit Gwich'in Council and renewable resource council
Ferry Closures and opening at the beginning of the season	To advise the public of any ferry closures or opening at the beginning of the season	Verbal and/or written notification, as well as social media	Public
Changes to the location of the ferry landings	To advise stakeholders of changes to the landing positions	Verbal and/or written notification	Tetlit Gwich'in Renewable Resource Council
Annual Meeting at the beginning of the seasons	To discuss any planned changes to the ferry landings, and to discuss any concerns about the ferry landing operations	Verbal and/or written notification, as well as in person meeting	Tetlit Gwich'in council, Hamlet of Fort McPherson
Other	To discuss any concerns or other topics that may arise during ferry landing operations	Written, verbal, or as required by affected parties	Tetlit Gwich'in Council and renewable resource council, and/or any other group or

			individual
--	--	--	------------



Ft McPherson Community Engagement Meeting  
Hamlet Council Chambers Ft. McPherson, NT  
Tuesday, April 26, 2022, 1PM  
Marine Operations Water License Renewal Meeting Minutes

In Attendance:

**Community Members:**

- Rebecca Blake – LJs Contractor Representative
- Sharon S. Jerome – Community member
- Robert Alexie – Community member
- Peter Firth – Community member

**Department of Infrastructure (INF):**

- Merle Carpenter – Regional Superintendent – Beaufort Delta - GNWT - Department of Infrastructure
- Mosiul Alam – Regional Manager – Highways and Roads Division
- Bruce Krutko – Maintenance Supervisor – Highways and Roads Division
- Allan Hamilton- Project Technician – Highways and Roads Division
- Jason MacNeil – Regional Manager – Airports Division
- Dennis Pascal – Maintenance Coordinator – Beaufort Delta
- Pat McLaughlin – Manager - Marine Operations (North)

**Gwich'in Tribal Council**

- Leigh-Anne Williams-Jones
- Christina Martin

Introductions of and the Roles and Responsibilities of all GNWT – DOI employees in attendance

Merle Carpenter (RS) – This community engagement meeting is a requirement under the Gwich'in Land and Water Board to meet and discuss with the affected communities the Water Renewal Licenses for the Mackenzie and Peel River Ferry Operations.

- The quality and quantity of the granular material used for the construction and maintenance of the ferry landings
- The placement and recovery of the quantities of granular material used during the operating season

Community member

- How much fill is used annually for the construction of the landings?
- What does the Marine Operations do with the fill recovered?

#### Pat McLaughlin - Manager Marine Operations

- The water license allows the Marine Operations an annual allotment of 500 cubic meters of granular material for the construction and maintenance of the ferry landings.
- There is a program in place to minimize use of new granular material and to use suitable equipment to adjust landings accordingly to help control any sedimentary issues. The procedure is to utilize the granular material currently in place, and if any granular materials are placed it is removed as soon as conditions permit
- The granular material that is recovered, is assessed and if deemed unusable, the material is stockpiled and dried out – in the past the DOI Marine Operations have gifted the material to the affected communities for their use – usage of the recovered material has been utilized for the capping of the Tsiigehtchic landfill site – Marine Operations yard fill – capping of roadways into local users camps
- Fill recovered from a culvert replacement was stockpiled above the South Shore of the Peel River Ferry Landing by the contractor – concerns expressed by local users that the melting of the material was entering the water – manager contacted the contractor – matter was resolved, and material gifted to local users – material was used to cap existing roadways into users camps

#### Pat provided a summary on the preseason work:

- Vessel refit currently underway for both vessels
- MV Louis Cardinal vessel – reached its 40-year life expectancy anniversary – this required a complete refit of the vessel – the refit increased the life expectancy for another 40 years
- The CF Abraham Francis will soon be reaching its 40 year anniversary and will undergo a complete refit to allow it to operate for an additional 40 years
- The Marine Operations has also undertaken an engineering study on the CF Abraham Francis to increase the length of the deck space – this improvement will allow for greater load capacity and to handle the types of transport units that are longer than the existing deck space
- The CF Abraham Francis has had its buoyancy increased with the addition of material to its hull space – this allows better stability/ travel through the water in addition this allows the vessel to handle an increase in the load carried

#### Community member:

- What is the effect of climate change to the ferry operations?
- Does the department have plans to return to extending the operations during freeze up?

#### Merle Carpenter (RS)/Pat McLaughlin

- Climate change has presented significant engineering challenges to the Department – warming trends have impacted the road and highway systems – increase in permafrost degradation has affected water course runoff – an increase to the accumulation of sediment is a direct result of permafrost degradation – buildings are showing signs of instability or have defects to the structural integrity of buildings as a result
- The reason for the past extended ferry season was a result of the heating fuel shortage issues in the Town of Inuvik





- No – the Department will not be extending the ferry season – Transport Canada has strict guidelines on the type of vessel used during operations where you encounter ice – the vessels that are owned and operated by the Department were not designed to work in ice conditions
- Cost prohibitive – vessels/equipment showed lots of wear and tear – manning of the vessels was challenging, additional crew members required – additional equipment required

Community member:

- Has the department looked at the construction of a bridge across the Peel River?

Merle Carpenter:

- Several years ago, a study was undertaken to consider the construction of a Bridge across the Peel River – the study showed that there were significant engineering challenges – costs associated with the design/engineering and construction of the bridge determined that this project would not be economically feasible

Community member:

- Has the Department looked at alternative options for the landings?

Merle Carpenter/Patrick McLaughlin

- Yes, in the past the Marine Operations placed rig mats on the landings as an alternative to the use of granular material – the department found that when adjusting the landings during high and low water conditions, the rig mats trap water on the underside of the mats which in turn causes the landings to be soft and unstable – the weight of the rigs mats also caused them to sink into the granular base when it rained.
- Fixed and permanent landings – studies have shown that because of the fluctuating water levels during the operating season adjustments would still be required and this would create additional work to maintain the access to the landings – during the breakup phase of the rivers, there is a considerable amount of energy created and this energy would damage the landings causing additional cost/work to repair or replace

Merle Carpenter:

- There were two studies done on the water quality and quantity of the Peel River. The reports were issued in 2003 (Water Resources Division – INAC) – and again in 2020 (Wilfred Laurier University)
- Both studies concluded that the ferry operations landings have not negatively affected the water quality and the health of the fisheries – the studies have also noted that the construction of the landings have created eddies on both side of the landings allowing local fishers easier access to the harvesting of fish
- Merle/Pat met with a local user in Tsiigehtchic on a matter related to the proximity of the ferry landing to a fishing location, both assured the local user that they will do what is necessary to reduce the impact of the operations to the harvesting of fish – local fisher was appreciative of the effort put forth by the Ferry Operations.



- Fiber Optic Project – should have no impact to the Ferry Landings – the owners of the project must undergo the same process/scrutiny that the GLWB expects in order to be awarded a Water License for their project

Pat provided an overview of the past and present seasons operational activities and challenges:

- 2021 – MV Louis Cardinal – mechanical issues at the start of the season
- 2021 – No fuel or chemical spills
- 2022 – Ferry Contract – tendered and awarded for another 5 years (2022 through to 2026) with the option to extend an additional year
- 2022 – Additional staffing for the vessels – 3 new training positions may be created
- 2022 – Deck Hand Training will take place prior to the season opening – all contract employees must attend
- 2022 – 80 percent of the Marine Operations employees and its contractor employees are local

Pat expressed his gratitude to the contractors/employees and the members of the community for their support. If there are issues or concerns with the Ferry Operations, he would appreciate if they would call him directly for him to provide a timely response.

Merle Carpenter (R/S) – Thank you to the community members that attended the meeting, we need to hear the community’s concerns and issues with our operations. We are here to serve you and to ensure that our operations are meeting the expectations and needs of those that we serve.

Meeting concluded at 2:30 pm