



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Northern Yukon First Nations Chiefs Meet to Discuss Common Issues

DAWSON CITY – The Northern Yukon First Nations Chiefs recently met as part of their commitment to hold regular meetings and prepare for sharing areas of concern with the newly elected territorial government. Three issues were identified as priorities for advocacy: the Dawson Regional Land Use Plan, oil and gas activity, and drugs and alcohol.

DAWSON REGIONAL LAND USE PLAN

The Northern Yukon First Nations Chiefs have been united in wanting to see collaborative land use plans developed and implemented within their traditional territories and are seeking an opportunity to present to the Dawson Regional Land Use Planning Commission on the urgency of climate change considerations in the region and the interconnectedness of planning regions within the Yukon.

Climate change is occurring at an unprecedented rate within the Northern First Nations' traditional territories and having widespread impacts, including challenges with accessing the land and rivers, affects on harvesting patterns, exacerbated environmental changes, changes to wildlife and vegetation, and impacts on the spiritual, cultural, mental, and physical well-being of First Nations people.

OIL AND GAS ACTIVITY

The Chiefs discussed ongoing oil and gas issues affecting their communities and all Yukoners, including aging wells within their traditional territories and Chance Oil and Gas Limited's outstanding lawsuit against the Yukon Government over the 2015 fracking moratorium. The Chiefs are committed to working with Yukon Government through the North Yukon Oil and Gas Intergovernmental Forum to address shared priorities relating to the sustainable development of oil and gas resources, including dispositions, royalties, exploration, development, production, abandonment, and reclamation in First Nations traditional territories. The Chiefs also reaffirmed their prohibitions against fracking within their traditional territories and commitment to uphold the standard of free, prior, and informed consent, guided by the treaties and land use planning, to ensure the fundamental objective of sustainable development enshrined in their treaties is respected by government and industry.

DRUGS AND ALCOHOL

The Chiefs discussed the struggles their communities have with drugs and alcohol and reiterated their belief in on-the-land programming. The Chiefs are supportive of mental health hubs, but greater interventions are required. The Chiefs are prepared to work together on community-led initiatives, share ideas, and lobby for increased awareness for community-specific issues.

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