



Yukon Water Board Releases “What We Heard Report” for the Public Interest Hearing on Placer Mining in Wetlands

The Yukon Water Board thanks everyone for their participation in the Public Interest Hearing on Placer Mining in Wetlands which has been considered in the drafting of a *What We Heard Report* released today.

The Board received a large volume of information and endeavors to accurately reflect the range of participants’ perspectives provided during the hearing process in the *What We Heard Report*. The report will also inform the Board’s understanding of the issues into the future.

As a path forward in addressing outstanding issues related to placer mining in wetlands, the Board has made a recommendation to the Premier to consider establishing a *Technical Advisory Committee for the Protection, Use and Reclamation of Yukon Wetlands*. The Board sees the committee as a key driver in helping build broad consensus and a renewed emphasis on the Yukon Wetland Policy, land use planning, guidelines for Progressive Wetland Reclamation Plans and security.

“Public participation is the cornerstone of the water licensing process and the Board considers all participation meaningful and important, whether through oral or written submissions and will continue to evaluate and integrate information from the hearing. This review consists of a careful and thorough examination that respects the efforts of each parties’ involvement and the Board believes the establishment of a Technical Advisory Committee is an important next step in order to keep the conversation going.”

Chair of Yukon Water Board, Piers McDonald

A copy of the *What We Heard Report*, letter to the Premier, hearing transcript and other hearing related information can be found at www.yukonwaterboard.ca and on WATERLINE under file no. PM20-018.

Quick Facts:

- On October 7, 2019 the Board sent a letter to the Premier advising of the Board’s intent to hold a public hearing to “consider whether or not wetlands can be further eroded by placer mining – that is, if mining is acceptable in undisturbed wetlands, and if so, what conditions should apply to mining in these undisturbed wetlands.”
- The Water Board held a virtual public interest hearing from October 27 to 29, 2020 featuring presentations from ten organizations over video-conference and live-streaming. The Board also accepted over 80 written submissions up until the close of the public comment period on December 14, 2020.

- The hearing was held in order to gather information to further develop the Board's Draft *Wetland Information Guidelines* and to hear views on placer mining activities occurring in wetlands. The Board specifically invited perspectives on the following questions:
 - What information should be required to support a water licence application related to placer mining activities in wetland areas?
 - What should the wetland conservation, development and utilization objectives be for a watershed and how can they be balanced on an application by application basis?
 - What wetland reclamation objectives should be considered during the water licensing process?
- The Board has summarized the information it received into six themes found in Section 5 in the report. These are: Policy Considerations, Indigenous Treaties and Rights, Information Requirements for Water Licensing, Wetland Reclamation, Conservation and Development of Wetlands and Financial Implications.

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