What We Heard:

Summary of Comments on the draft Yukon Government Climate Change Action Plan

September 2008



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Introduction

The Yukon Government produced a draft Climate Change Action Plan to set out in detail the actions the Yukon Government will undertake to address climate change, within its areas of responsibility. This draft Action Plan builds on the *Government of Yukon Climate Change Strategy* released in 2006, which committed to the preparation of a detailed action plan.

Since the release of the 2006 *Strategy*, Yukoners have shown increased concern about global and local climate change. They have also shown an increased commitment to doing something about it and a keen interest in participating in discussions on what should be done.

The draft Action Plan is a product of ongoing discussions. It presented ideas that Yukoners provided to us through workshops, meetings and written submissions. It also included ideas generated through in-house technical research by staff, inter-departmental working groups and discussions, and internal government direction.

The draft Action Plan recommended 33 actions based on the following 4 goals:

1) Enhance our awareness of climate change;

- 2) To improve our ability to adapt to climate change;
- 3) To reduce our greenhouse gas emissions; and,
- 4) To establish Yukon as a northern leader for climate change research and innovation.

The purpose of the draft Action Plan was to present the proposed actions to the public and receive comments. The final version of the Action Plan is intended to reflect the desires and interests of Yukon people, therefore all Yukoners were invited to review this draft plan and provide feedback.

Consultation Process

In May 2008, the Yukon Government released the draft Climate Change Action Plan for public review and comment. The consultation process was open from May 12, 2008 to July 31, 2008. The consultation period provided all Yukoners an opportunity to provide feedback on the draft Action Plan.

Through out the consultation process, we received written comments via email or fax from 30 individual stakeholders and heard from approximately 100 individuals through meetings, forums and phone calls. For example staff talked to individuals at the Environment

Forum, Climate Change Open House and a Brown Bag lunch for internal staff, the Energy Strategy Open House, and the Yukon Youth Engagement Forum. Responses were received by all orders of government, non-governmental organizations, industry, business and individuals. A list of all of the organizations that were contact during this process has been included at the end of this report. The comments and suggestions received are summarized below.

General Comments Received

During the public consultation on the draft Action Plan, most people made it clear that they wanted and expected the Yukon Government to take a leadership role in the response to climate change. They wanted the Action Plan to be clear on the specific actions that were being committed to and make clear which would take priority and why. There was also a general recognition that we all have a role in reducing greenhouse gas emissions as well as coming up with ways to adapt to change.

During the consultation process a number of specific areas received a number of comments including the following:

 Transportation and buildings (commercial and residential) were identified as areas where Yukoners

- were very keen to see initial action, as individuals are personally most affected in these two areas.
- No opposition was received with regards to developing targets Yukon wide greenhouse gas emissions target. Some respondents felt targets were essential and should be established as soon as possible while others cautioned that targets should not limit resource development in the territory
- Facts on climate change and greenhouse gas emissions were disputed. Some respondents felt that the information about climate change either false, misleading or exaggerated while others felt that the information downplayed the broad scientific consensus on the topic.

Next Steps

The feedback received during the consultation was summarized for this report and is being used to complete a final version of the Action Plan. We will consider all of the comments received during consultation in this revision process. The final version of the Climate Change Action Plan will reflect the priorities identified through the consultation as well as our available resources. We will immediately implement the Action Plan once it has been finalized.

	Goal #1 - Enhance our Understanding and Awareness of Climate Change		
	Action	Summary of Feedback Received	
4.1.1	Document how Yukon's cli		
4.1.1 a	Improved monitoring and reporting on Yukon Climate Change	 Monitoring for baseline information is important. The goal to collect climate data and share it with other parties involved in climate change research and modeling is worthy of applauds. The YG is too focused on studying, exploring and developing. Real action is required. Research and monitoring is of utmost importance as we lack many continuous or complete base line data records. 	
4.1.2	Enhance awareness of cli	mate change	
4.1.2a	Encourage and support climate change information in school curriculum	 It is great to see that climate change will have a greater role in the Yukon school curriculum. It is important that the issue is covered in school from kindergarten until high school graduation Make climate change a mandatory part of school curriculum. 	
4.1.2b	Expand public education on climate change	 Include a strong education element for all ages and sectors of the community. It is essential to ensure climate change and public education experts design and deliver information programs. There needs to be far more public education and awareness on climate change issues. Public involvement needs to include local knowledge sharing among elders and youth 	
4.1.2c	Expand specialized education and training on climate change	 The public would like to see objective and factual input into all educational models delivered by government. Engage the private sector by enlisting local businesses to promote/sell more efficient heat sources. The Energy Solutions Centre could provide training and certification to ensure appropriate technical expertise. Making climate change part of the curriculum and including further education and training for teachers would be very valuable. Education is needed but should be science and fact based and not alarmist. Also, it is important that climate change information is presented in a proper historic context. Targets should be created for training Yukon workers to benefit from low-carbon jobs. General and content relative material needs to be incorporated into training for all Yukon College students. 	

	Goal #2 - Improve Our Ability to Adapt to Climate Change		
4.2.1	Expand our research capa	bility and knowledge on northern climate change	
4.2.1a	Establish a Yukon Research Centre of Excellence	 Unique research in the Yukon is important. The Energy Solutions Centre requires more support to build local capacity in preparation for the Research Centre of Excellence and the Cold Climate Innovation Cluster. It is really important for the Yukon to be a leader by setting an example with its actions. There has been a lot of talk about the Yukon Research Centre of Excellence. There has yet to be an understandable description of what exactly it would do. 	
4.2.1b	Support the Cold Climate Innovation and Technology Centre	It is unclear what exactly a Cold Climate Innovation Centre has to do with dealing with climate change. While developing business opportunities is all well and good, how does that reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions or help Yukoners adapt to a changing climate?	
4.2.1c	Establish climate change research study areas	 In regard to research and innovation what happened to Yukon Energy's wind energy program in the last 5 years? Wind energy is the only renewable energy source that is more abundant in winter than summer. Wind in Carmacks is stronger these days- maybe a windmill would work? Every community could use geothermal to offset oil and gas's declining supplies and increasing cost. 	
4.2.2	Identify environmental imp	pacts of climate change and take action to adapt	
4.2.2a	Develop Regional Climate Scenarios	 YG can avoid this expensive and lengthy process by developing regional scenarios that are grounded in traditional and local knowledge 	
4.2.2b	Monitor changes in permafrost conditions and landscape terrain	There is a lost of creeks due to beaver dams and lack of trapping. The lack of permafrost under beaver lakes is causing water to drain to the water table and is reducing water flow levels.	
4.2.2c	Monitor changes in Yukon hydrology and water quality	Glacier retreating at Klukshu Creek has caused not enough water for salmon to go and spawn.	
4.2.2.d	Assess risks to infrastructure and determine adaptation strategies	 Emphasis should be given to establishing an effective integrated plan for adaptation and monitoring. Research should be dedicated towards adaptation technologies and monitoring techniques. 	
4.2.2.d	Monitor and analyze changes in Yukon biodiversity	 A comprehensive approach to climate change must include mandatory measures to reduce harm to biodiversity. Protecting wilderness ecosystems and the biodiversity within them contributes to an adaptive response to climate change. Climate change is the second largest threat to biodiversity after habitat loss. 	

		A Yukon Government commitment to maintaining our ecosystems in an intact state would mitigate the rate of climate change.
		 The YG should be proactive in protecting large ecosystems and therefore support the ability of biodiversity to respond to and survive in the face of a changing climate
		 It is important not to be aware of the preservation of human habitat and include as part of Climate Change Action Plan activities.
4.2.2f	Assess forest health risks and determine adaptation	 The Action Plan does not acknowledge or discuss this important climate change value. The boreal Yukon wetlands are also essential to capture and store water.
	strategies	 Commit to protect and maintain the ecological function of Yukon wetlands and boreal forests.
		 Dugout canoes are now made out of spruce while they used to be made out of cottonwood as cottonwoods are now not big enough or are rotten in the middle.
		 Land has changed a lot since 70 yrs ago. It used to be lightly treed (like a mountain top) and now is heavy bush.
		 YG needs to work with Forest Management Branch to develop policies and/or regulations that help the Yukon maintain boreal forest's important function as a carbon sink
4.2.2g	Land Use Planning	Energy efficiency should be integrated into land use planning
		 Land Use Planning should include land baseline environmental research, data collection, and values assessments.
		 YG must commit to protecting large, intact natural areas as carbon sinks and to allow room for wildlife to move as their habitat changes.
4.2.2h	Continue to explore adaptation needs and	 Promote local agriculture; government could demonstrate the ability to farm in the Yukon and then rent them out.
	action in other sectors	Support local, buy local.
		 Motivation for more agriculture is required.
		 YG needs to address food security.
		 Work with the Agriculture Branch to identify areas for agriculture development instead of fighting (courts etc).
		Need to consider our future food supply. Will our natural resources support our population?
		 The Yukon needs to be aware of contaminants whose development is temperature dependant (i.e. as methyl mercury levels in Yukon caribou and moose).
		Need to maintain what is produced in Yukon, which is vulnerable to the lost of access roads.
		 Managed lots are not the sustainable approach to food security. Agriculture Branch needs to be involved to help identify the Agriculture lot availability.
		What about Carbon Sequestration? Local farming? Make it attractive to farm here
		Agriculture policy to support local food production
		 More emphasis on making the Yukon self-sufficient for food with year-round plant greenhouse

		 production that uses renewable energy on a commercial scale. Raise awareness of local eating. Yukon should focus its effort on adapting to the inevitable climate change, whether it is warmer or colder, and providing a science and fact based assessment of the changes in climate and impacts on the biosphere. Research into human health related to climate change is important.
4.2.3	Community Adaptation	
4.2.3a	Support Community Adaptation Planning	 Should emphasize and develop sustainability relationships with all Yukon communities Some communities needs a little bit of aid for adaptation planning, such as an adaptation tool kit. This is simple and is YG's role to provide. YG has only committed limited funding for adaptation planning in three communities. This falls far short in developing our capacity to adapt to climate change. The plan should include goals such as having a community becomes carbon neutral; this would put out a strong message and also draw attention to the Territory.
4.2.3b	Examine the establishment of a Community Climate Change Initiatives Fund	 Appeal to everyone's interest and currencies (social, environmental, commercial) in order to move forward in a successful manner.

	Goal #3 – Reduce our Greenhouse Gas Emissions		
	Action	Summary of Feedback Received	
4.3.1	Identify greenhouse gas		
4.3.1a	Conduct an inventory of current Greenhouse Gas Emissions	It is good to identify sources and amounts of emissions, but this study must not be used to stall the setting of aggressive reduction targets.	
4.3.1b	Project potential future emissions for the Yukon	It will be important to project future emissions for the Yukon.	
4.3.2	Set a target for greenhous	se gas emissions in the Yukon	
4.3.2a	Establish territorial emission targets	There needs to be specific timelines and measurable goals attached to setting territorial emission targets.	
		 The challenge will be to come up with a number or a target (mitigation number) that is attainable. Make the public sector carbon neutral by 2010 (following BC's lead). 	
		 Overall Yukon GHG reduction targets in this plan are unacceptably weak. 	
		Let's clean the air in all diesel-powered communities.	
		 Cannot wait another two years to set overall reduction targets for the Yukon. 	
		 The final Climate Change Action Plan must includeat least interim targets equal to or better than the most ambitious targets in Canada. 	
		 There are not enough incentives (tax and other) to motivate people to conserve energy, reduce emissions, and adapt behaviour. 	
		 Growth in GHG emission must be capped immediately. 	
		 Reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions must be our number 1 priority. 	
		■ To be a leader in addressing Climate Change, YG must commit to maintaining GHG levels at the current level and then work towards reducing them by a set percentage per year until carbon neutrality is achieved.	
		 Setting a target along with monitoring and promoting current status is an important educational component to allow people to be aware of climate change, prepare for it, and assist in reducing GHG emission level. 	
		 Until an effective energy plan is developed that ensures energy sources are sufficient to support the Yukon economy there should be no effort toward limiting emissions. 	
		 Even if emissions are cut to zero, there would be no effect on this phenomenon. By using mostly hydro to power our Territory we are already mitigating our footprint to a large extent. There should be no effort wasted on establishing or enforcing targets. 	
		Establishment of emission targets must take into account the cyclical nature of the mining industry.	

	Why not cap YG emissions now?BC will be carbon neutral by 2012
_	YG should not provide free parking to employees.
targets	 The Yukon has dragged its collective feet for more than two decades now and can't wait nearly 15 more years to neutralize operations.
	 Internal YTG emission targets for short, medium, and long term time frames are too stretched out and need to be stronger.
Develop sector specific ad	ction plans to reduce greenhouse gas emissions
Reducing emissions in	YG operations are not efficient.
internal Yukon	Cap internal government emissions now.
Government operations	 Shift school year to have December and January offit would be efficient use of school buildings.
	Rethink and reduce fleet vehicle use and vehicles, green your fleets
	 YG should take advantage of digital telecom technologies for conducting meetings and conferencing.
Reducing emissions in the	Tax big vehicles.
transportation sector	If transportation is such a significant contributor to YT GHG emissions, how come there is not stronger commitment in this action plan to reduce GHG emissions in this sector?
	What about annual or bi-annual vehicle emission testing?
	 The Yukon should consider rail (railway) development and its benefits on energy use and GHG emissions.
	 Since there is an ample internet system in the territory (ample, not excellent), it should be taken greater advantage of digital telecom technologies for conducting routine meetings and conferencing.
	There should be higher incentives to use alternative transportation.
	 Capital start-up costs of a railway (to the south) would be high, but in time will be more than worth it.
	■ The Action Plan doesn't deal with transportationwhich accounts for over 50% of GHG emissions in the Yukon – The YG needs to address this issue.
	 What about Department of Transportation vehicles? Transport checks, operations and maintenance, vehicle safety, and operational checks for efficiency and cleanness should be included.
	 Incentives are far more practical than punitive measures (taxes and regulations).
	Provide public transit between communities.
	Improved transit within Whitehorse.
	What about coordination of traffic lights in Whitehorse so cars will not having to stop and start unnecessarily?
	Reducing emissions in internal Yukon Government operations Reducing emissions in the

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		Adopt Californian style vehicle fuel efficiency standards.
		There should be anti-idling legislation.
		■ The Yukon could create more jobs and a self-sustaining economy if it had more manufacturing &
		production industries here. Less reliance on transporting goods would prove beneficial.
		Build a small scale paper mill to reduce dependency of southern wood shipments.
		 High School students should be walking or taking the city bus or biking.
		 Vehicles 10 yrs or older should require a special vehicle permit before registering.
4.3.3c	Reducing emissions in	There are no rules for large scale mining activity – why?
	resource based industries	 YG should offer grants/publicity/tax incentives for business and companies that are carbon neutral
		Public energy audits of major companies could provide great social pressure for change.
		 Establishment of emissions targets must take into account the cyclical nature of the mining industry.
		 Reducing YG's internal emissions is all well and good, but it is pointless if industry, business, and the public continue to produce greenhouse gases.
		The wilderness of the Yukon will make better long term financial return for Yukoners than mining
		ever will. Tourism, recreation, and traditional lifestyles are sustainable industries.
		 Why doesn't the Government purchase a few major geothermal units and rent them to mining
		companies for the life of the mine?
4.33d	Reducing emissions in the	 Subsidies for builders/home owners to build more efficiently using innovative heat systems.
	building and residential sector	• Focus on low hanging fruit: improve existing housing stock, low grade housing, rentals, etc. This will require government intervention to do the work.
		 Ensure there is a high level of efficiency when houses change hands.
		There should be additional high density housing downtown and there should be additional infilling. filling.
		Focus retrofits on the low income rental market.
		There should be building codes that ensure energy efficiency.
		It amazes me how little YG (Yukon Housing, Building Code, and Inspection) and municipal
		governments (primarily Whitehorse) are doing in terms of ensuring energy efficiency in house construction.
		Will there be a policy decision for energy conservation, such as energy conservation building code requirements and regulations?
		 There needs to be more additional incentives for building green in the Territory than there currently are.
		 When YG builds in Communities it should ensure those building have high energy efficiency.
		Programs need continual modifications and structural changes to enfranchise all Yukoners

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		regardless of their financial strata.
		 Delivery of programs to low or set income homeowners or renters who do not have sufficient up- front money to invest in the existing programs must be set as a priority.
		New building code that is R2000 or better.
		 Builders need to be forced to make new construction more energy efficient. A lot could be done
		to reduce the waste in the house construction industry.
4.3.3e	Reducing emissions in the solid waste sector	 Groups and local governments involved with waste reduction initiatives know what it is that needs to be done to divert more resources away from landfills.
		 Instead of burning resources at community landfills, set up a territory wide system of transfer stations similar to what has happened at the Mt. Lorne community landfill.
		 Ensure community landfills have adequate funding to staff landfills and to truck recyclables to central recycling facilities.
		 Composting is easy to do. Fruit, veggies, meat, yard waste etc. is put in a pile and allowed to compost. No further research is required.
		 GHG emissions from Waste and Solid Waste on Land increased from 1990 to 2005 by 8 kilotons of CO2, despite our population remaining relatively stable.
		 YG must increase support and encourage the creation of community waste diversion organizations and services.
		 YG should increase deposit/refund rates on existing refundable items.
		YG should expand the number of items that are covered by the deposit/refund legislation.
		 YG could implement commodity bans, such as banning single use plastic bags from being
		handed out at grocery stores.
4.3.3f	Examine the potential of a Yukon Carbon Economy	 Local Carbon Fund could offset carbon by local actions and waste diversion (works at the local recycling composting facility).
	Takon Garbon Economy	Carbon credits should go into a local Yukon Carbon Fund.
		 A Yukon Carbon Fund will be important as to allow individual Yukon people to offset their emissions, and will promote moving towards carbon neutrality.
		A Carbon Fund for offsetting is a first step in approaching carbon neutrality.
4.3.3g	Continue to explore other	 Create a geothermal pilot project in Carmacks as a showcase for the territory.
	methods for reducing	 Cash payout for increasing energy efficiency (perhaps by the utility).
	greenhouse gases in	 A comprehensive approach to climate change must include mandatory reductions to GHG
	Yukon	emissions.
		 YG should offer incentives for businesses and companies to adopt more environmental friendly practices along with providing resources for this.

	Action	Summary of Feedback Received
4.4a	Continue to participate on national and international climate change forums	 Yukon could sign on to the western climate initiative. Greater participation at the Arctic Council with the attention it needs to allow for gaps in the Arctic Climate Impact Assessment to be filled in. Working together with governments representing other northern Canadian regions would be
4.4b	Create a forum for Yukon Partners for Climate Change action	 beneficial for all involved. The Action Plan needs more meat, money, partnerships, and implementation; who is going to do it? With regard to Climate Change Action Plan – more leadership is needed. Need to inspire individuals to take action.
		 Develop a territory-wide Climate Change Adaptation Strategy There could great benefit in asking for assistance from environmental organizations; ask for their input and help
4.4c	Create a forum for Yukon Youth for Climate Change	 Create Youth Climate Change Ambassadors. Support youth involvement in local, national, and international climate change forums. Support ongoing youth climate change networking and efforts in the Yukon throughout the year. Maintain Yukon Youth Outside (the box) as an annual event. Create one or many STEP student position(s) – youth would travel the Yukon and set up booths/plays about climate change (keep the public involved/updated by being present).
4.4d	Incorporate climate change considerations in all levels of government decision making	 YG needs to take leadership on energy efficiency. The public wants the government to lead by example. Taking our tax dollars and using it for only internal government initiatives is ridiculous. The Government should be using tax dollars to look outward instead of just inward. Draft plan has no time lines for the current government to demonstrate that they are serious and accountable about solving these issues. The Energy Strategy talks about sustainable oil and gas development (which in itself is an oxymoron) while the Climate Change Action Plan talks about reducing GHG emissions. The YG should show leadership by taking action within its own operations.

	Implementation		
	Action	Summary of Feedback Received	
5.1	Implementation and Coordir	nation	
5.1a	Create a Climate Change Secretariat	 Every YG department should do a sustainability plan and the secretariat can function as an auditor. Strongly disagree with the need to establish a 'secretariat,' but if one is to be established, aggregation of external research should be one of its mandates. There is a disconnect between the Action Plan and energy production Climate change Secretariat would create strong linkage to energy required. The government must figure out a system to prioritize things that include consideration for the long- term. The Secretariat must have some independence from government so it can oversee and comment on YG actions. Two year updates and five year reviews will be important tools to keep the action plan relevant and up to date with emerging science and technologies. The Secretariat must be more than a simple coordination agency if created. Rather than creating yet another bureaucracy, why not have a working group headed by one ministry that meets regularly (i.e. monthly) and coordinates activities, responses, etc.? Absolutely not. There is no need to waste money in this manner. Enough YG 'experts' travel at taxpayer's expense coordinating various programs without any positive impact to the Territory. A non-government directed body as governments are too subject to political positioning. The Secretariat would require an independent research and education division. What would it do? I think it's important for each department to take some leadership for the things it is responsible for and come up with their own plan. 	

Organizations Contacted during the Consultation Process

ACR Systems Inc. Indian and Northern Affairs Canada Town of the City of Dawson Alsek Renewable Resource Council Intergovernmental Relations Directorate Town of Watson Lake **Architectural Design** Indian and Northern Affairs Canada Tr'ondek Hwech'in Arctic Health Research Network Inuvialuit **UNEP/GRID-Arendal**

Association of Professional Engineers of Yukon JP Pinard Consulting **Utilities Consumers Group** Association of Yukon Communities Kaska Dena Council

Village of Carmacks **Bruce Community Development Consultants** Kha Shade Heni Village of Mayo

Business and Strategic Consulting Kluane First Nation Village of Teslin

BYTE Kwanlin Dun First Nation **Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation** Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation Laberge Renewable Resources Council White River First Nation

Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society Leading Edge Projects Inc. Whitehorse Chamber of Commerce Liard First Nation Wildlife Management Advisory Council

Carcross/Tagish First Nation Carmacks Renewable Resources Council Little Salmon/Carmacks First Nation YESAB

Champagne and Aishihik First Nation Mayo District Renewable Resources Youth of Today Society

City of Whitehorse - All departments National Round Table on the Environment and

Yukon Agriculture Association the Economy Council of Yukon First Nations Yukon Chamber of Commerce

Natural Resources Canada **CPAWS** Yukon Chamber of Mines

New Era Engineering Corp. Dakh Ka Tlingit Nation Yukon Conservation Society North Yukon Renewable Resources Council

Dan Keyi Renewable Resources Council Yukon Contractors Association

Northern Tutchone Tribal Council David Suzuki Foundation Yukon Convention Bureau

One Fish Consulting Dawson Renewable Resources Council Yukon Development Corporation

Porcupine Caribou Mgmt. Board Yukon Electrical Company Ltd. **Ducks Unlimited Canada** Raven Recycling **Environment Canada** Yukon Energy Corporation Ross River Council epoH Consulting Yukon Environment Network

Selkirk First Nation Feather Youth Centre Yukon Federation of Labour Selkirk Renewable Resources Council First Nation of Na-cho Nyäk Dun Yukon First Nation Tourism Association

Southern Tutchone Tribal Council Fisheries and Oceans Canada Yukon Fish & Wildlife Management Board

Ta'an Kwach'an Council Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada Yukon Gov't – All Departments and Directorates

Taku River Tlingit First Nation Government of Northwest Territories

Yukon Land Use Planning Council Teslin Renewable Resource Council

Government of Nunavut Yukon Salmon Committee Teslin Tlingit Council Gwich'in Renewable Resource Council Yukon Utilities Board

Tourism Association Yukon Gwich'in Tribal Council Yukon Wood Products Association