

**INUVIK FOREST USE
PLANNING WORKSHOP**

**Inuvik, NT
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**By
Jennifer Walker-Larsen
Forestry/Fisheries Biologist
Gwich'in Renewable Resource Board Report 01-05**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

SUMMARY	1
BACKGROUND	3
FOREST USE IN THE INUVIK AREA	4
PAST FOREST USE.....	4
CURRENT FOREST USE	5
<i>Subsistence Use:</i>	5
A. Firewood.....	5
B. Logs	7
<i>Commercial Use:</i>	7
FORESTRY ISSUES/CONCERNS AND POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS	8
FOREST VALUES	8
STATE OF THE FORESTS IN THE INUVIK AREA	8
HARVESTING PRACTICES	9
FOREST MANAGEMENT.....	10
AREAS PROTECTED FROM FORESTRY ACTIVITIES	13
TERRITORIAL PARKS	13
GWICH'IN LAND USE PLAN	13
OTHER AREAS	14

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: THE GWICH'IN SETTLEMENT AREA.....	2
Figure 2: WOOD CUTTING LOCATIONS (FIREWOOD AND LOGS) OF INUVIK RESIDENTS.....	6
Figure 3: TERRITORIAL PARKS IN THE INUVIK AREA.....	12
Figure 4: AREAS PROTECTED BY THE GWICH'IN LAND USE PLAN.....	15
Figure 5: AREAS PROPOSED WHERE CUTTING SHOULD NOT BE ALLOWED.....	16

LIST OF APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS.....	17
APPENDIX B: FLIPCHART NOTES.....	18
APPENDIX C: WORKSHOP AGENDA.....	19

SUMMARY

A Community Forest Use Planning Workshop was held in Inuvik on December 12th, 2000. Workshop participants included Gwich'in Renewable Resource Board (GRRB) staff, Department of Resources Wildlife and Economic Development (DRWED) staff, Nihtat Renewable Resource Council (RRC) members, and community delegates (see Appendix A). The goal of the workshop was to identify local forest use issues and to collect and map information about forest and land use in the Inuvik area. This information will be used to develop a sustainable Forest Use Plan for the community. Community Forest Use Plans will also be developed for Aklavik, Tsiigehtchic, and Fort McPherson. These plans will become part of the Forest Management Plan for the Gwich'in Settlement Area (GSA) being developed by the GRRB, GTC, DRWED staff, and the communities.



View from Inuvik across the Mackenzie River Delta

Funding for this project was provided by the Gwich'in Renewable Resource Board and the First Nation Forestry Program. The Department of Resources Wildlife and Economic Development (GNWT) and the Gwich'in Tribal Council provided considerable staff time and other in kind support.

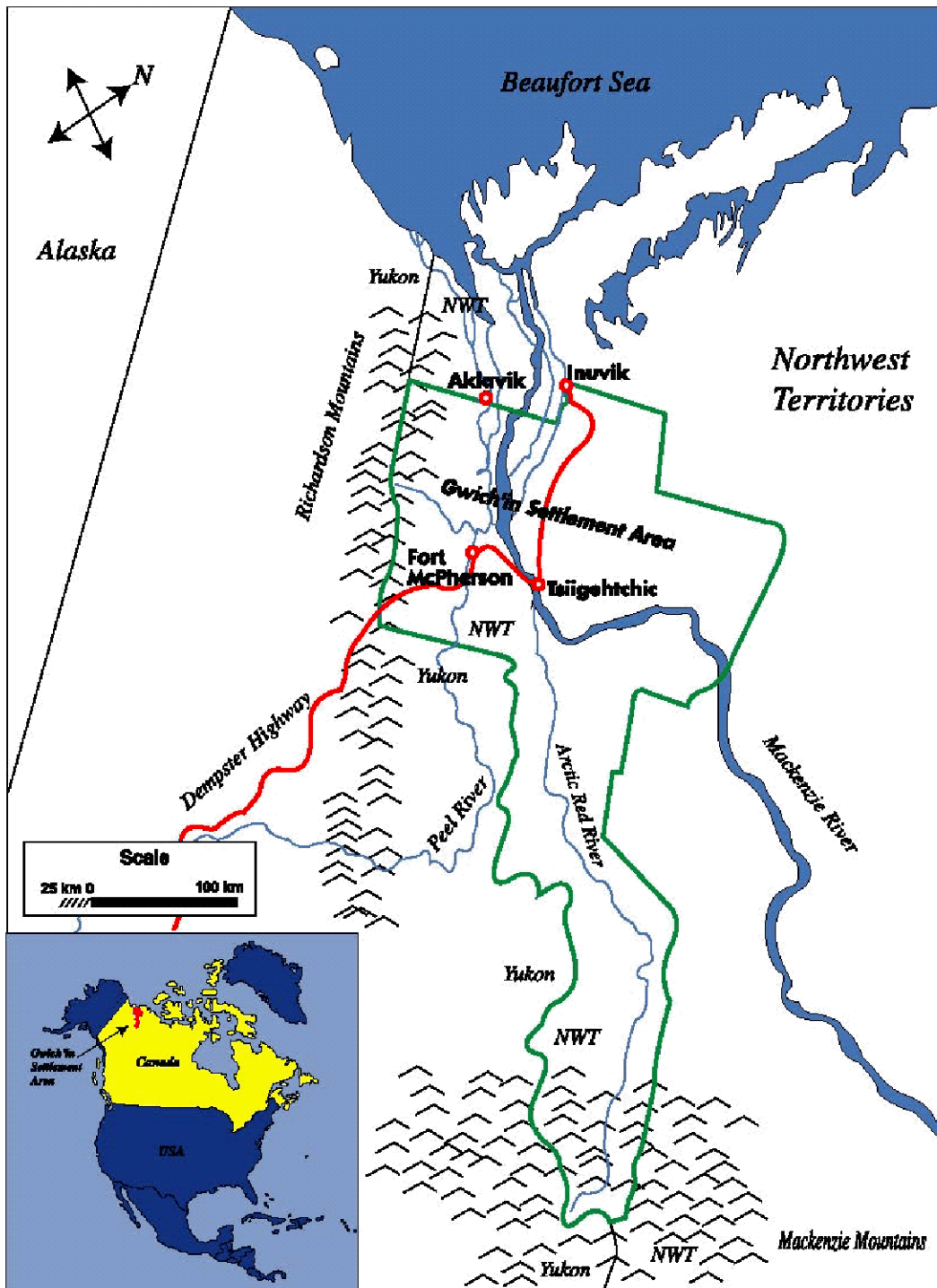


Fig 1. The Gwich'in Settlement Area.

BACKGROUND

The GRRB and DRWED began working on a Forest Management Plan in 1995 to guide forestry activities in the Gwich'in Settlement Area (Figure 1). Before the land claim, the Territorial Government managed the forests in the region from the Hay River office through local Renewable Resource officers. From 1973 to 1994, commercial permits for the harvest of 36,814 logs were issued. With the land claim in place, the communities wanted to protect timber resources for the future. In 1995, at the Regional RRC Meeting in Fort McPherson, it was decided that commercial forest regulations would be developed for Gwich'in private lands. A Forestry Working Group involving GTC, GRRB, and DRWED staff and community representatives was formed and met in November 1995 to discuss forest management. This group directed the GRRB to begin work on a forest management plan for the GSA.

The GRRB and DRWED, under direction from the Forestry Working Group, started research projects to provide background information needed for the Forest Management Plan. The following projects have been completed:

- forestry inventory of 3 productive areas in the GSA (Arctic Red River, Peel River, and Mackenzie River Delta);
- forest use survey of households in all communities;
- traditional knowledge forestry workshop; and,
- ecoforestry workshop.

The remaining projects are on-going:

- vegetation classification of the GSA;
- forest regeneration and productivity project;
- historical forest use project; and,
- developing sustainable non-timber forest products.

At the Traditional Knowledge Forestry Workshop (1997) concerns were raised about current forest harvesting practices in the settlement area. According to community elders, people are not spreading their cutting out enough and overharvesting in a few areas.

In 1998, the Silva Forest Foundation facilitated an 'Ecoforestry Training and Forestry Workshop' in Inuvik involving 25 participants from the settlement area. The focus of this workshop was to train community representatives, DRWED and GRRB staff in ecosystem-based forest management.

In 1999, the GTC hired a resource planner. This staff member began working with DRWED and GRRB staff on the Forest Management Plan shortly after starting the position.

FOREST USE IN THE INUVIK AREA

Past Forest Use

More wood was used in the past than is used today in the Inuvik area (Traditional Knowledge Forestry Workshop, 1997). Steamboats also used a lot of wood from the 1880's to the 1950's. From his analysis of steamship logs, Chandler (2000) estimated that these ships burned approximately 3.5 cords per hour of travel, however Nap Norbert, a Tsiigehtchic elder who worked for the steamships, stated the ships burned 1 cord per hour (personal communication, 2000). Elizabeth Firth's mother travelled on steamboats and said they stopped every 30 miles to pick up firewood.



*The Hudson Bay Company steamship, 'The Distributor' on the Mackenzie River.
Photo courtesy of the Hudson Bay Company Archives.*

ogs were needed during the construction of Inuvik in the 1950's and the oil boom in the 1970's. These logs were used as pilings for buildings and oil rig platforms. Logs were mainly cut up the Peel and Arctic Red Rivers and then rafted to Inuvik. Most of the lumber used for construction of Inuvik houses and buildings was shipped up from southern suppliers.

The Inuvik DGO (Designated Gwich'in Organization) purchased a wood miser with GNWT Department of Economic Development and Tourism funds in 1994. This wood miser is used primarily by Chi Construction, a company owned by the Nihtat Gwich'in Council that sells siding and blocking, 4x4 posts, and firewood. The wood miser is also available for use by community members. One household surveyed during the Forest Use Survey (52 houses surveyed) reported using the wood miser.

Current Forest Use

Most Inuvik residents cut timber in the Mackenzie River Delta (see Figure 2 for map of timber permit locations). Most cutting occurs in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region, with about two thirds of all permits issued for that area. The remainder occurs in the Gwich'in Settlement Area.

Subsistence Use:

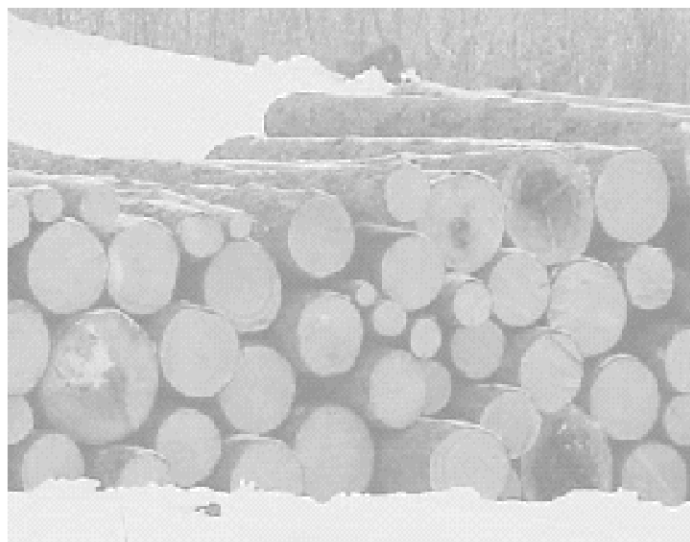
A. Firewood

Currently, much of the wood cut in the Inuvik area is used as firewood. Of the 52 households surveyed in the community in 1997, 25% reported using wood stoves in town and 37% reported using wood stoves at their camps (Table 1). Roughly 137 cords of firewood in total was reported cut in the Inuvik area in 1997.

Table 1: Firewood use by residents of Inuvik in 1997 (GRRB Forest Use Survey Data, based on 33 households surveyed).

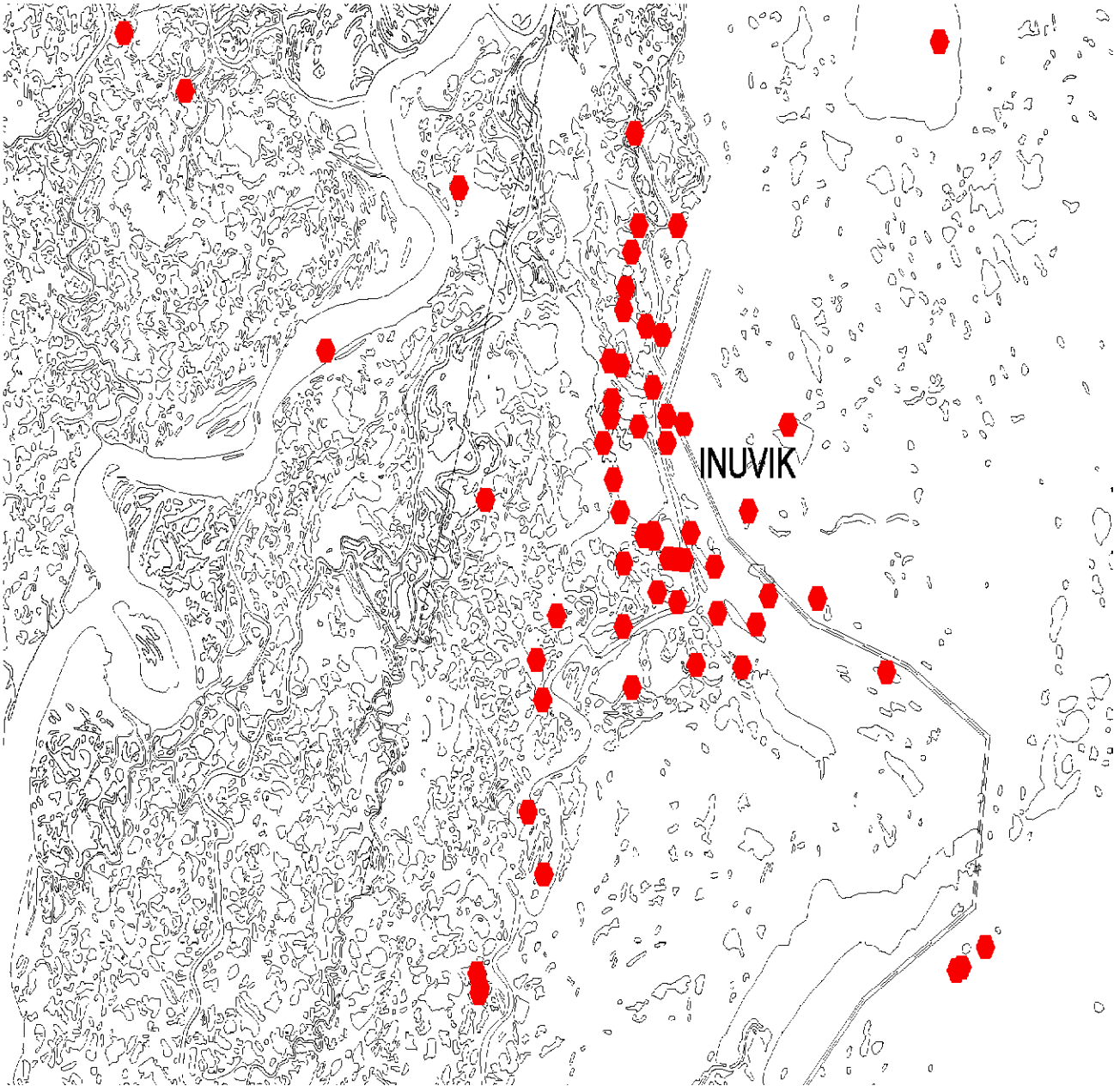
Activity	Number of households	Average amount each year	Total amount
Firewood use in town	13	4.5 cords	59 cords
Firewood use at camp	19	4.1 cords	78 cords

Workshop participants felt that firewood use has remained the same since the survey and will remain steady in the future.



Log pile.

Figure 2. Map showing the locations of timber cutting permits issued for Inuvik.



A. Logs

Some trees are also cut for logs. Only about 4% of households interviewed during the Forest Use Survey (1997) reported cutting logs for personal use (Table 2). These are generally used as skids for boats, flagpoles, or foundations for cabins and tents.

Table 2: Use of logs by residents of Inuvik in 1997 (GRRB Forest Use Survey Data, based on 33 households surveyed).

Activity	Number of households	Average number of logs	Total number of logs
Cutting logs for personal use	2	62 logs	124 logs



Mike Gravel, Ruby McLeod, Neil Firth, Elizabeth Firth, and Flo Carmichael discussing forest use.

Commercial Use:

There is a small local demand for firewood and logs, and a number of community members supplement their income by cutting wood commercially. In 1997, two households reported that they sold firewood (total of 130 cords). Workshop participants felt that current firewood use is about the same.

In 1997, two households reported selling logs (total of 210 logs sold). Most of these logs were used for pilings or landscaping.

More logs might be used in the future. Oil and gas activity may increase demand for rough cut lumber. This lumber is used for building camps, building skids for machinery, and building foundations for structures. If the Mackenzie Valley pipeline is constructed, there will also be a demand for woodchips.



Jennifer Walker-Larsen, Elizabeth Firth and Flo Carmichael.

FORESTRY ISSUES/CONCERNS AND POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS

Forest Values

The forests of the Gwich'in Settlement Area are important to residents of Inuvik. The forests provide wood for cabins and firewood, shelter for wildlife, clean air, and medicinal products. It is important that the forests remain healthy so traditional use can be continued by future generations.

State of the Forests in the Inuvik Area

There is lots of deadwood available near the community, likely due to the relatively low number of people that use wood stoves in town. However workshop participants felt that there are not many accessible trees left in the Mackenzie River delta that are good for pilings. These were mostly cleared out during the construction of Inuvik in the 1950's and the oil boom in the 1970's.



White spruce forests in the Mackenzie River delta

Harvesting Practices

Heavy equipment is not used for logging in the Gwich'in Settlement Area. For both subsistence and commercial purposes, wood cutters access stands by boat or snowmobile, cut trees with chainsaws, then raft or haul the wood to the final location.

Workshop participants generally felt that most people harvest trees in a responsible manner. Education is needed to ensure people understand the importance of good harvesting practices. Workshop participants identified the following forest practices as being especially important for harvesters to follow.

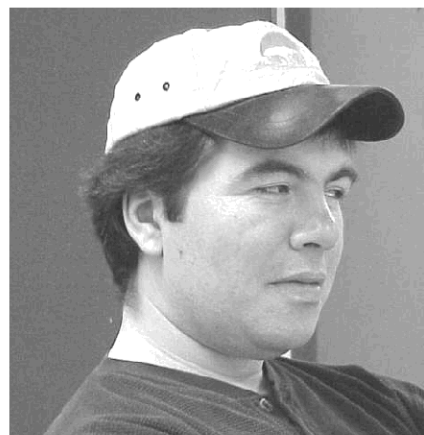
1. *Clean Up*
Branches left after cutting should be spread out rather than piled. All garbage should be taken out of the bush, not left.
2. *Driftwood*
People should collect driftwood and use as firewood.
3. *Leave trees leaning over still lakes*
Trees leaning over standing lakes should not be cut. These trees provide important habitat for waterfowl and fish.
4. *Cut stumps high or very low*
Short stumps can damage skidoos. Stumps should either be cut right to ground level or left 3.5 to 4 feet high.

5. *Don't take wood from other people's trails*

People often need to spend a lot of time cutting a snowmobile trail in order to access a good deadwood area. Other people should not go into those areas and take wood without permission.



Harry Carmichael



Allen Firth

Forest Management

Workshop participants discussed current forest management in the Gwich'in Settlement Area, identified issues that needed to be addressed, and suggested possible management solutions.

1. *RWED transfer free timber permit authority to RRC*

There is confusion and frustration about the current timber permitting process. Sometimes community members go to offices to get permits and there is no one there that can help them or there are delays. Workshop participants felt that DRWED should transfer responsibilities for free timber permits to the community RRCs. The RRCs then will give free timber cutting permits for both Crown Lands and Private Lands within the Gwich'in Settlement Area. The RRCs will map free timber permit locations at their office and provide the free timber cutting permits to DRWED.

If transfer of the free timber permit responsibility occurs, participants felt that it should be transferred to all RRCs in the Gwich'in Settlement Area. This will ensure a consistent approach within the GSA. Mike Gravel pointed out that no fee is collected for the free permits and that DRWED would not fund the RRCs to administer the permits. Inuvik RRC members felt they needed to consult with other community RRCs and decide whether they want the extra responsibility of the permits.

2. *Clear messages*

Wood cutters are getting different messages about what to do with tops and branches. Some say to pile up and burn them, others say to cut into small pieces and spread them out. We need to give one clear message.

3. *Boundaries*

The public needs to be educated about boundaries of settlement areas, protected areas, and private lands. A pamphlet should be sent to residents that show the various boundaries around the community. Also, signs should be put up along access points that indicate boundaries of GSA and ISR (e.g. river boat launch in Inuvik).

4. *Need to understand erosion in the delta*

Lots of discussion about whether leaning trees on cutbanks in the Mackenzie River delta should be left or taken. Some people believe leaning trees protect the banks from ice scour, reduce erosion and should be left. Others believe trees cause more erosion and should be removed. We need to find out what the best practice is to prevent erosion.

5. *More Education about good harvesting practices and chainsaw safety*

Community residents need to be educated about proper ways of cutting wood, how to handle a chainsaw, and about good harvesting practices. Courses and workshops should be held provide people with this information.

6. *Cutting on Gwich'in Private Lands by Non-Beneficiaries*

Workshop participants felt that non-beneficiaries should not be allowed to cut wood on Gwich'in Private Lands.

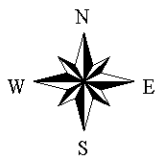
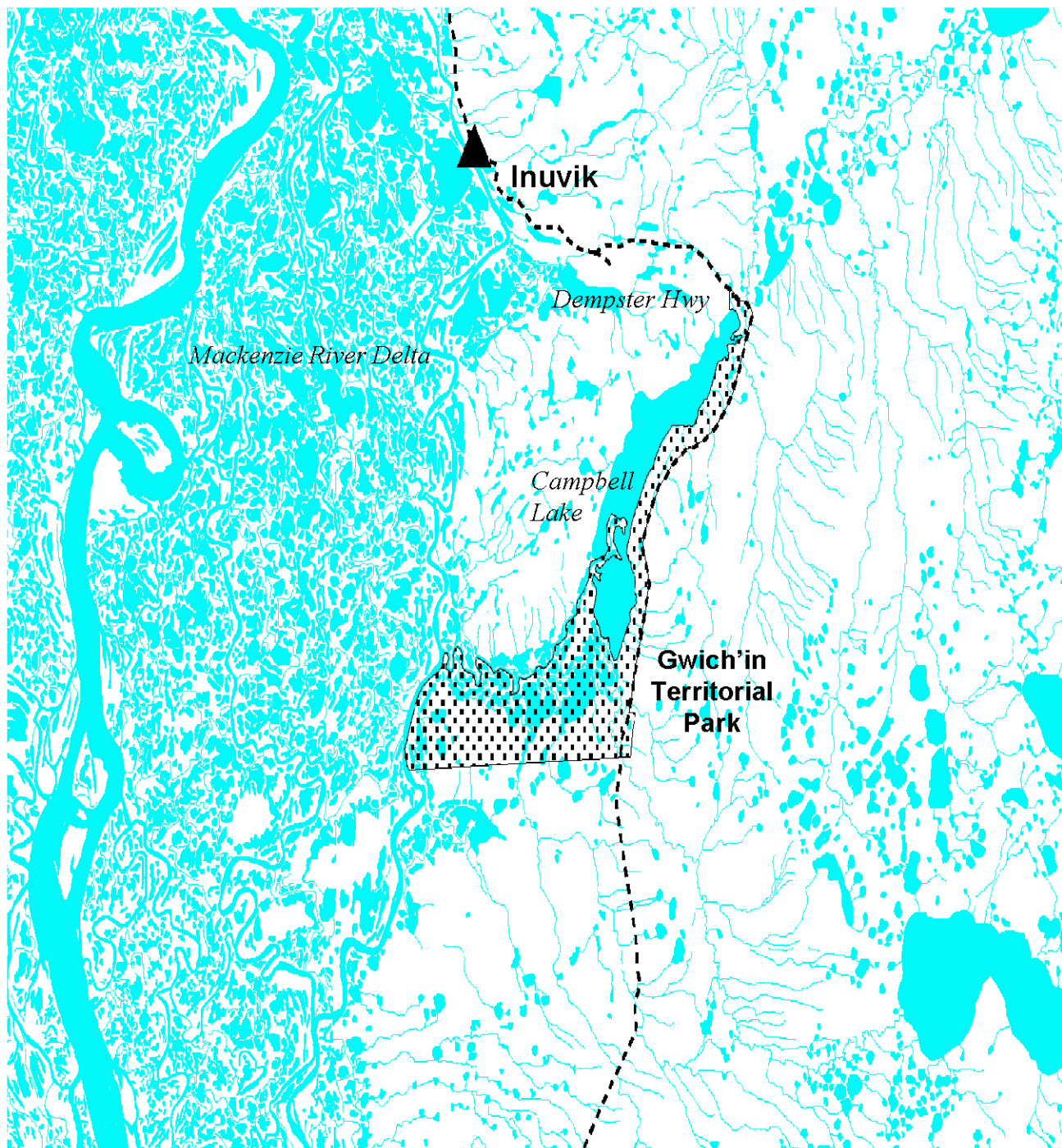
7. *Replanting*

Some areas are overharvested and should be replanted. These areas include the mouth of the Rengleng River and Willy Simon's cutting spot near airport creek on the main channel by the sandbar.

8. *Enforcement*

Cutting areas should be checked by officers to make sure people are following good harvesting practices and cleaning up their sites. Enforcement is also needed to ensure people get timber cutting permits and don't cut in someone else's area.

Fig 3: Territorial Parks in the Inuvik area.



0 20 km

AREAS PROTECTED FROM FORESTRY ACTIVITIES

Workshop participants discussed existing protected areas in the Inuvik region. Currently there are two types of protected areas near Inuvik: Territorial Parks and areas protected by the proposed Gwich'in Land Use Plan.

Territorial Parks

There is one territorial park near Inuvik, the Gwich'in Territorial Park at Campbell Lake (Figure 3). This area is for conservation and recreational use. Personal and commercial forest use is NOT allowed in these areas, except subsistence use by Gwich'in beneficiaries.

Gwich'in Land Use Plan

The Gwich'in Land Use Plan is now complete and is awaiting approval from DIAND. The Plan allows timber cutting for personal use in all areas of the Gwich'in Settlement Area, however the Plan proposes two types of protected areas where commercial forestry (and other developments) would not be allowed. See Figure 4 for a map of these areas.

1. *Gwich'in Protected Areas* – areas of outstanding wildlife significance (none near Inuvik).
2. *Gwich'in Heritage Protected Areas* – areas of outstanding historical or cultural significance. These areas include Big Rock and Earl's Place near Inuvik.



Discussion of protected areas. In photo are Allen Firth, Jennifer Walker-Larsen, Elizabeth Firth, Flo Carmichael and Harry Carmichael.

Other Areas

Workshop participants discussed whether any area required additional protection from forestry activities. It was generally felt that because there is lots of deadwood available for firewood there was no need to give protection from subsistence harvesting to any area. However, people should avoid cutting timber in the following areas:

1. *Rengleng River*

People in Tsiigehtchic felt that two areas on the Rengleng River are overharvested and needed protection. These areas are at the mouth of the Rengleng and where the Dempster highway crosses the Rengleng (see Fig 5). Inuvik participants discussed these areas. They agreed that timber permits should not be given out for these areas, except to people with camps in the area for subsistence use.

2. *Near other people's camps*

People should not cut wood within 500 m of another person's recreational camp. The buffer should be larger for camps used by active harvesters. Driftwood can be collected within the buffer zone.

Fig 4: Protected areas in the Inuvik region established by the Gwich'in Land Use Plan

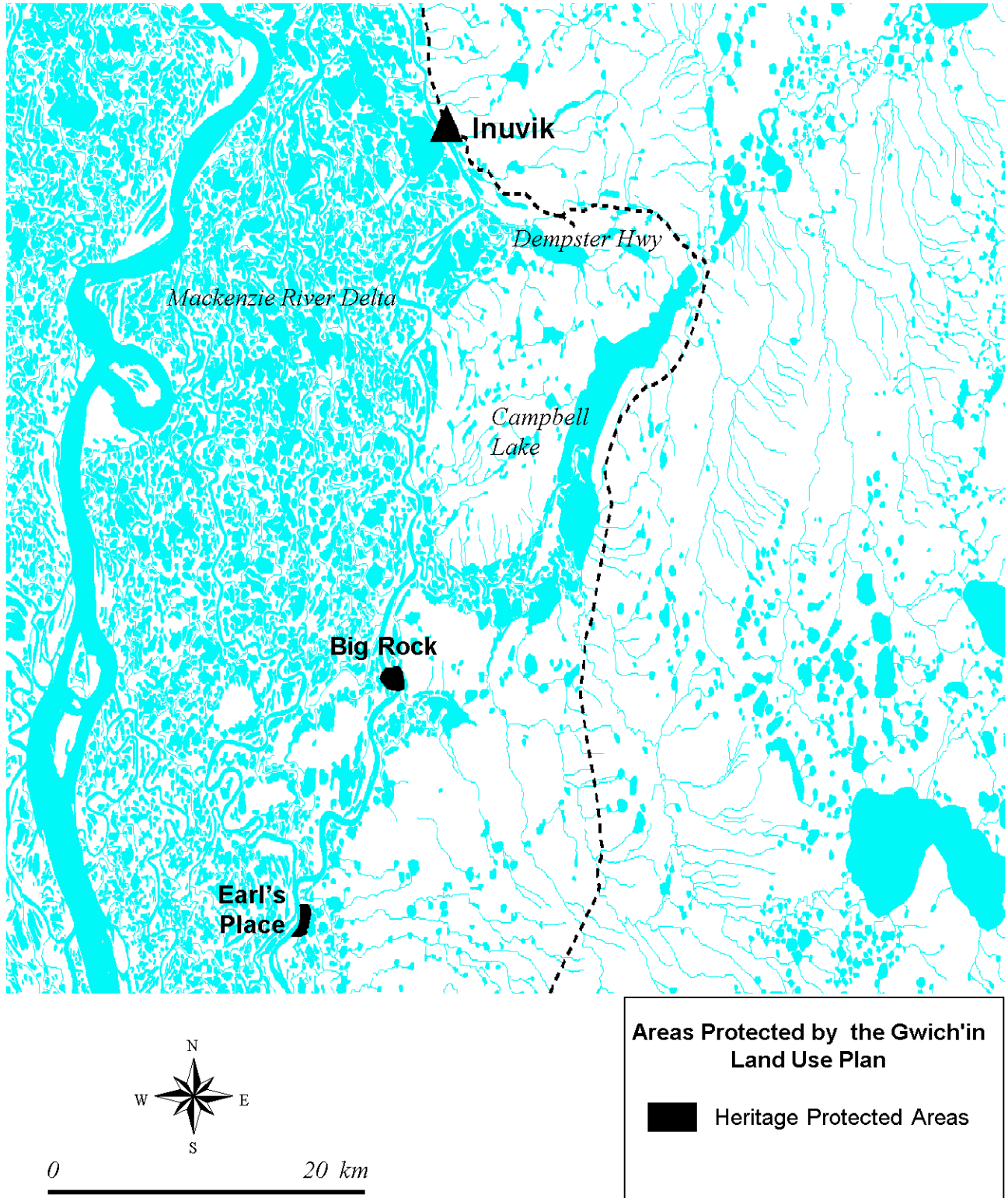
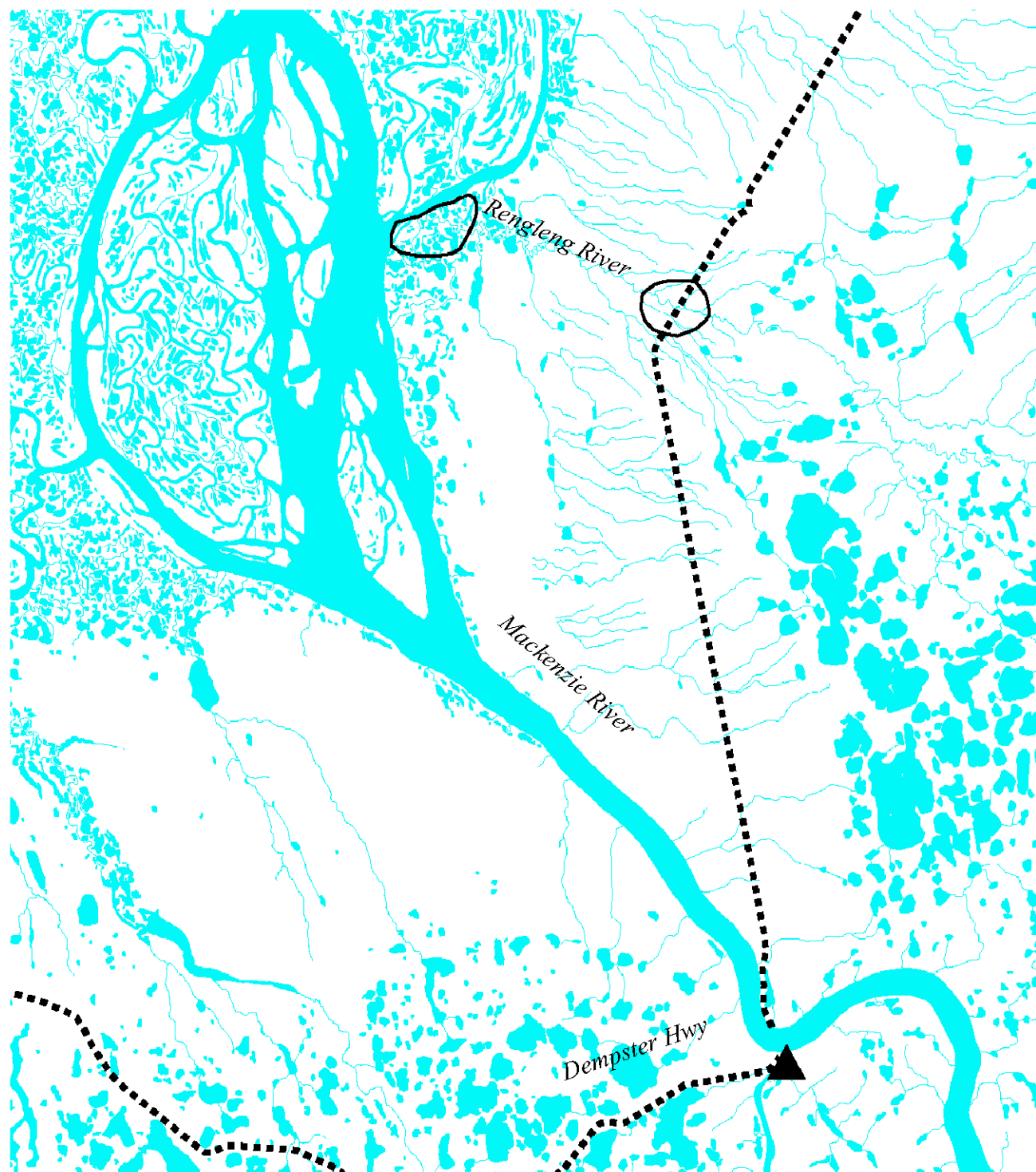


Fig 5: Areas identified by workshop participants that should be protected from timber harvesting, except subsistence harvesting by local camp owners.



0 10 km



APPENDIX A: WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS

Neil Firth (RRC Co-ordinator)
Harry Carmichael (RRC)
Allen Firth (RRC)
Florence Carmichael (Community Delegate)
Elizabeth Firth (Community Delegate)
Vern Firth (Community Delegate)
Ruby McLeod (Community Delegate)
Mike Gravel (DRWED)
Jennifer Walker-Larsen (GRRB)
John Edwards (GRRB)

DRWED Department of Resources Wildlife and Economic Development, GNWT

GRRB Gwich'in Renewable Resource Board

RRC Renewable Resource Council

APPENDIX B: FLIPCHART NOTES

Forest Issues/Concerns:

leaving a mess – litter, camp junk, branches/tops

unclear message – burn/not burn, pile/not pile

accountability – find out who did it, track

driftwood

boundaries – educate public, post boundaries (river boat launch), pamphlet

cutting near camps

erosion – leaning trees protect banks from ice scour OR leaning trees cause more erosion

most leaning trees cut from ice road, not other areas

educate people about how to cut: chainsaw, practices

cutting green wood – mixed firewood

RWED – transfer management to Gwich'in organizations, permitting by RRC

standing lakes – leaning trees important habitat

signs at access points – private lands, protected areas

APPENDIX C: WORKSHOP AGENDA



AGENDA

Inuvik Community Forest Use Planning Workshop

Dec 12th, 2000

10 am to 5 p.m, lunch provided

There will be a morning coffee break and an afternoon coffee break
Lunch will be 12:00 - 1:00 p.m.

1. Welcome

- Participants introduce themselves
- Explain format of the workshop

2. Workshop Objectives

- Provide input to the Forest Management Plan
- Identify forestry concerns in the Inuvik area and in the GSA as a whole.
- Identify potential management solutions to forestry issues.
- Identify areas that should be protected from forestry activities

3. Introduction to the Forest Management Plan

4. Forest Concerns and Potential Solutions in the Inuvik area

- Open forum to identify issues/concerns
- Prioritize issues
- Break out groups to discuss potential solutions
- Open forum to discuss potential solutions

Areas that should be checked and possibly replanted

6. Identify and map any cut out areas

7. Protected Areas from Forest Activities

Existing protected areas - what they mean for timber
Identify and map any areas where timber harvesting should not occur

8. Forest Monitoring

Current monitoring
Timber Permitting Process

9. Summary and Closing

Recap of workshop
Where to from here