

FAQ: Recreational Leasing Management Framework

Q1 Why is the Department of Lands developing a Recreational Land Management Framework?

As a part of Devolution, the GNWT mirrored the federal legislation and policies governing devolved land, now called Territorial land, while retaining its existing legislation and policies governing Commissioner's land. This means that the Department of Lands now administers two separate sets of public land management policies.

In order to streamline the policy environment, the Department is now beginning work to develop a Recreational Land Management Framework that will apply across the NWT. In developing a new Framework the GNWT also has an opportunity to ensure that northern values and priorities are reflected in land management decisions.

Q2 What is the Recreational Land Management Framework?

The Recreational Land Management Framework will include a unifying suite of policies to guide the disposition and use of rural lands across the NWT that are currently managed under two separate regimes. The Framework is intended to ensure that the administration and management of recreational public land across the Northwest Territories is fair and transparent.

The Framework will also ensure that the land is managed consistently with the Land Use Sustainability Framework in a responsible and environmentally sustainable manner that reflects Northern values and respects Aboriginal and Treaty Rights.

In the vicinity of Yellowknife, there will be discussions related to a focus area along the Ingraham Trail and Highway 3 which has the greatest density of existing recreational leases in the NWT, the highest incidence of unauthorized occupation, and the largest demand for new leases. In this area, the Department of Lands will be evaluating additional mechanisms for balancing interests such as an area-specific land use plan.

The Recreational Land Management Framework will address unauthorized use, access to leasing opportunities, maintaining public access to popular sites, and protecting areas of ecological and cultural value. It will also include area-specific studies and planning to address local land management issues like high demand for recreational leases.

Media requests for interviews with Members of the Executive Council may be directed to:

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Government of the Northwest Territories • PO Box 1320 • Yellowknife • NT • X1A 2L9
Tel: (867) 669-2302 • Fax: (867) 873-0111

Q3 How will the work roll out? Will you be seeking advice and input from the public?

The Department of Lands has informed Aboriginal governments of our intention to develop the Recreational Land Management Framework. Over the next few months, and prior to developing the Framework, the Department will be engaging Aboriginal governments, as well as the public and key stakeholders, to identify their interests and concerns about recreational land management.

There will also be targeted discussions related to balancing interests in the focus area. Engaging Aboriginal governments is a key component of the scoping study, and broader public engagement may follow, depending on the results of the preliminary scoping work. Knowing more about how land is being used in the area can help the Department manage the land in a sustainable manner.

Once a draft Framework has been completed, the Department will post the draft Framework on our website at www.lands.gov.nt.ca so that the public and stakeholders can review, ask questions and provide feedback.

Q4 How will recreational leasing be affected, can I still get a lease?

While the Framework is under development, the Department of Lands will not be accepting applications for new leases outside established subdivisions, within the focus area. This approach will ensure the conditions of future leases meet the most up-to-date standards and guidelines. Existing leases in good standing will not be impacted nor will commercial activity be affected.

The Departmental of Lands will continue to issue recreational leases in the remainder of the NWT.

Leases are an important tool for responsible and effective land management. They provide security of tenure for occupants and ensure the land is used sustainably. The Department of Lands continues to monitor and post notices on identified unauthorized occupations to ensure that the environment is protected.

Q5 When will the Framework be complete?

The Department of Lands expects that the work to develop a Recreational Land Management Framework will take approximately 18-24 months. The result of this work will guide decisions about the use and disposition of rural land across the Northwest Territories.

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