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For immediate release

TIA Yukon Continues to Call All Canadians to Protect Peel Watershed

Whitehorse, YT – The Tourism Industry Association of Yukon (TIA Yukon) wants all Canadians to understand the facts surrounding the call for protection of the Three Rivers Area within the Peel Watershed, and are ramping up their communications efforts to help engage the nation with this issue.

The Peel Watershed is one of the last intact boreal forests of it's size in the world. Home to the Bonnet Plume, the Snake and the Wind rivers: it is one of the last remaining pristine watersheds of it's kind in North America. TIA Yukon supports its protection for future generations of Yukoners and all Canadians.

Last week news broke that what was originally a 22-page technical report created by the Yukon's Department of the Environment to be reviewed by the Peel Watershed Planning Commission, was dramatically edited to a watered down 4-page report, based on influence by Yukon Premier Fentie. This despite repeated comments from the Premier in the legislature and the media that the Commission should be at arms-length and free from any political interference.

TIA Yukon is asking Canadians to email their support for the Peel Watershed Planning Commission, (info@planyukon.ca) write letters to the editor of their national newspapers, get online, and on radio to voice their concerns and make this a national issue. Input is being sought by June 30th, but TIA Yukon intends to keep this issue front and centre through out the summer in an attempt to influence the Yukon government's final decision in the fall.

"This is not just a Yukoners issue. The blatant disregard our current government has regarding the integrity of the Peel Watershed planning process is disrespectful to all Canadians. We want to ensure that all the facts are presented so that people all over the nation can voice their concerns and support the work of the Peel Watershed Planning Commission," says Rod Taylor, Chair of TIA Yukon.

TIA Yukon's latest advertisement looks at recent comments and past issues to reinforce why this fragile area needs protection:

- ❖ **Myth:** Mining and Tourism have coexisted peacefully in the Three Rivers area within the Peel Watershed for 50 years.
- ❖ **FACT:** Since planning began in 2004 there has been a 700 per cent increase in mining claims in the Peel watershed, and people out enjoying the area have endured helicopters landing on gravel bars in the middle of the river, drill rigs in sight and earshot of the river and groups being asked to move their camps so that drilling can take place the next day, despite assurances by the mining industry that this would never happen.
- ❖ **Myth:** If the Three Rivers area within the Peel Watershed is protected it will set a precedent for protection of over 50 per cent of Yukon's land mass.

- ❖ **FACT:** Currently, less than 12 per cent of the Yukon land mass is protected. The Three Rivers Area represents six per cent of Yukon Land Mass and 40 per cent of the Peel Watershed. Therefore the total amount of land is less than 20 per cent of Yukon's land mass. This leaves 80 per cent of Yukon's land mass accessible for mining, within which 97 per cent of its mineral deposits are undeveloped.

“ The current plan grandfathers 12,000 mining claims, 8000 of which are for uranium mining. If this is allowed to go ahead the impact on Yukon and its reputation for its incredible wilderness experiences will be devastating. Are we prepared to allow this to happen and not protect this area for future generations and all Canadians to enjoy,” says Taylor. “ The Three Rivers Area within the Peel Watershed represents only six per cent of the Yukon and protecting it seems a reasonable compromise.”

For more information regarding the Peel Watershed Planning Commission, people may go to: <http://www.peel.planyukon.ca/>.

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