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**STRONG RESPONSE TO FIRST-EVER YUKON ENVIRONMENTAL FORUM**

WHITEHORSE - Environment Minister Dennis Fentie has announced that over 165 delegates and presenters from around Yukon are converging in Whitehorse March 22 and 23 for the first-ever Environmental Forum for the territory.

The delegates responded to an invitation from the minister that was sent in January to First Nation Renewable Resources Councils, non-government organizations, federal and Yukon government departments and the private sector.

A major goal of the Environmental Forum is to bring people together from various interests to discuss how the Yukon fish, wildlife and environmental data collection can be improved for sound natural resource management. The information collected is considered essential for people and businesses that rely on natural resources.

Topics during the Thursday sessions include harvest management and inventory strategies from the Porcupine Caribou Management Board, as well as perspectives on inventories from First Nations, public advisory bodies, environmental non-government organizations and sustainable development interests.

Thursday evening, from 5 p.m. to 7:30 p.m., the High Country Inn Convention Centre will be open to the public to view the various forum topics displays.

The displays have been prepared by First Nations, Renewable Resources Councils, the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board, the Yukon Fish and Game Association, the Yukon Parks and Wilderness Society, the Yukon Conservation Society, Ducks Unlimited, the Yukon Trappers Association, as well as Yukon and federal government departments.

The Friday agenda will cover Climate Change, Landscape Change, Ecosystem Inventory and Biophysical Mapping, Parks, Habitat Protection Areas, Environmental Programs and will showcase Environment Yukon programs in the afternoon with presentations on Y2C2, the Celebrating Yukon Parks initiative, the Southern Lakes Caribou Recovery Program, Wildlife Viewing programs, the Chisana Caribou Recovery Project and wildlife-oriented International Polar Year projects.

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