

FOR RELEASE #05-171
June 23, 2005

2004 YUKON WILDLAND FIRE REPORT RELEASED

WHITEHORSE – The Wildland Fire Review panel issued its report today on the 2004 Yukon forest fire season, including ten recommendations for the Yukon government to enhance the Wildland Fire Management program.

The Yukon government contracted an independent, five-person panel to conduct the community-based review. Three of the five members, Cliff Smith, Lou Foley and Dennis Quintilio are fire experts from outside of Yukon; the other two members, Lawrence Joe and Bill Klassen, are well-respected Yukoners with extensive local experience and natural resources management expertise. The panel visited every Yukon community for face-to-face meetings to gather Yukoners' views on the 2004 forest fire season.

“I want to thank the panel members for their professional approach to consulting with Yukoners and creating the report,” Community Services Minister Glenn Hart said. “Yukoners can rest assured that we will consider all of these recommendations for the benefit of maintaining community safety. Yukon has already implemented, or is in the process of implementing, several of these recommendations.”

The recommendations speak to improving the zonation system; expanding the communications protocol; establishing a reinforced preparedness system through the application of hard-line principles; and enhancing fuel management programs like FireSmart. The recommendations also address issues relating to staffing, including the addition of a heli-attack crew supported by a medium helicopter, certification, expanded training, and cross-departmental sharing of staff and resources.

“Overall, Yukoners were supportive and appreciative of the response delivered by the various agencies last summer,” panel chair Cliff Smith said. “Judging from the issues and concerns brought forward by the public and stakeholders, and our evaluation of the Wildland Fire Management program, things generally went well considering the scope of the fires.”

-30-

The report is available on the Yukon government Web site at www.gov.yk.ca . Printed and CD versions will be available at Fire Management offices throughout the Yukon.

Contact:

Peter Carr
Cabinet Communications Advisor
(867) 667-8688
peter.carr@gov.yk.ca

Doug Caldwell
Communications & Policy Analyst
(867) 667-8065
doug.caldwell@gov.yk.ca