

**GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES RESPONSE TO MOTION
17-17(5):
INTERIM MEASURES FOR THE COMMERCIAL HARVEST OF WILD MUSHROOMS**

Motion

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the Honourable Member for Weledeh, that the Government of the Northwest Territories, prior to summer 2014, honour its commitments and work with those Northwest Territories First Nations and entrepreneurs that have an interest in harvesting morels and other mushrooms, to implement interim measures that regulate and manage the commercial harvest of wild mushrooms;

AND FURTHER, that the Government of the Northwest Territories immediately begin drafting legislation to provide for the responsible management of the wild mushroom resource and provide a comprehensive response to this motion within 60 days.

GNWT Response

The *Forest Management Act*, passed in 1988, enables the GNWT to regulate the production of timber from territorial lands. Currently, the *Act* defines timber as “trees in forests that are alive or dead and that are standing or have fallen”. This narrow definition limits our ability to develop regulations, interim or otherwise, in this area without first amending the *Forest Management Act*.

Environment and Natural Resources (ENR) is in the process of researching and developing a legislative proposal which, if approved, would establish a plan for the eventual creation of modernized forest management legislation in the NWT. ENR hopes to have this legislative proposal completed during the 17th Assembly, but, due to extensive consultation requirements, does not expect new legislation to be in place until the 18th Assembly.

During the 2014 mushroom harvest period, ENR Renewable Resource Officers will be out on patrols throughout the NWT checking for compliance with ENR legislation including forestry, environmental protection and wildlife. ENR will be working with other agencies and departments such as Municipal and Community Affairs, Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission, Environment Canada, Department of Fisheries and Oceans and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to ensure residents and visitors to the NWT are respecting the land and environment.

In addition, the department of Industry, Tourism and Investment (ITI) will continue to offer financial support to businesses that qualify under its programs and will continue to deliver community-based training programs aimed at morel harvesters.