



Wildlife Watch

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COUNCIL (NORTH SLOPE)
COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

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Yukon Will Amend Wildlife Act in 1998

The Yukon's Renewable Resources Minister, Eric Fairclough, has promised to bring the Yukon Wildlife Act into line with the Inuvialuit Final Agreement next year.

Fairclough made the commitment in a speech to the fifth Yukon North Slope Conference, September 29 in Dawson.

The Wildlife Management Advisory Council (North Slope) and the Inuvialuit Game Council have been pushing for changes to the Act since the IFA was signed 13 years ago.

"This task is officially on the government's workplan and we hope to introduce the IFA amendments in the Fall 1998 legislative session," the minister said.

Fairclough also said his department will work closely with the Inuvialuit Game Council and the Wildlife Management Advisory Council (North Slope) to review progress on implementation of the IFA and the use of funding under the agreement.

He said the Yukon wants to develop a coordinated approach to the federal government in upcoming negotiations to renew IFA implementation funding.

Announcement is welcome

Nellie Cournoyea, Chair of the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation, thanked the minister for his promise

to amend the Yukon law.

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"The conflicts between our agreement and the Yukon Wildlife Act have produced confusion and hardships for Inuvialuit hunters," she said. "We have waited 13 years for today's announcement, and we must all get on with the work immediately. We look forward to receiving a draft amendment within one year."

WMAC(NS) Chair Lindsay Staples also applauded Fairclough's commitment.

"It's been a long, long time in coming," he said. "I know the Inuvialuit who are here today are ecstatic about this announcement."

Hard job ahead

Drafting and passing the amendments will take a lot of hard work, Staples warned.

"But, as has been pointed out, the difficulties of not having accomplished these amendments have been very significant, creating confusion for a lot of hunters who know that they have rights under their agreement but at the same time aren't certain as to how these rights are recognized, respected, and the practical effect that they have with the government agencies of the day."



Conference Makes Dozens of Recommendations

The 1997 North Slope Conference passed more than 60 recommendations on topics ranging from climate change to animal rights.

The conference, which is held every three years, met in Dawson September 29-October 1.

The recommendations were developed during workshop sessions on transboundary species, contaminants, habitat protection, the animal rights lobby, and climate change.

Take regional approach

Many recommendations reflect the Conference's theme: Building Bridges Across Borders. Several concern sharing scientific and traditional information across political borders.

Other recommendations include creating region-wide maps and databases, co-ordinating research projects, and reaching beyond North Slope boundaries to protect the habitat of migratory animals like the Porcupine Caribou.

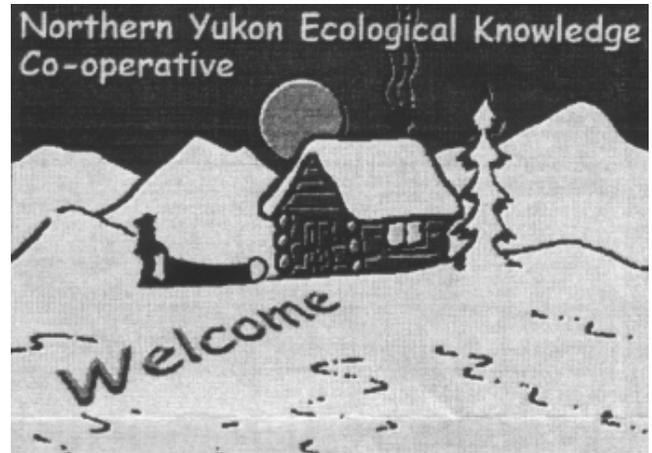
Conference delegates also looked at borders between cultures. Recommendations dealt with ways to link scientific and traditional knowledge while protecting the rights of those who hold the traditional knowledge.

Emphasis on communication

All workshops stressed the importance of making information on problems like contaminants and climate change available to communities in terms people can understand.

Several recommendations also looked at ways to make the North Slope's interests known in other parts of the world.

Finally, delegates approved a recommendation that the next North Slope Conference spend part of its time looking at problems created in the north by global climate change.



American delegates at the fifth North Slope Conference strongly supported a resolution to expand the activities of the Northern Yukon Ecological Knowledge Co-operative beyond the borders of the Yukon. WMAC(NS) and several northern communities belong to the Co-op.

Ex-Minister Back After 20 Years

Hugh Faulkner took a nostalgic trip back north to act as Chair of the 1997 North Slope Conference.

Almost 20 years ago, when he was Northern Affairs Minister in the federal cabinet, Faulkner signed the Inuvialuit Agreement-in-Principle on behalf of Canada.

He said he is delighted by progress made under the Inuvialuit Final Agreement.

Faulkner told conference participants they can make a difference to the future of the Arctic. "It's really more in your hands than in anybody else's hands, and that's what these agreements are all about, that's where the responsibility should be. I would judge that you're totally up to it."

Wildlife Management Advisory Council (North Slope)

- **Inuvialuit Game Council:** Danny C. Gordon; Herbert Felix; Alternates: Billy Archie, and Carol Arey
- **Government of Canada:** Joan Eamer, Canadian Wildlife Service; Alternate: Alan Fehr, Parks Canada

- **Government of Yukon:** Brian Pelchat, Renewable Resources; Alternate: Dorothy Cooley, Renewable Resources
- **Chairperson:** Lindsay Staples
- **Secretariat:** Aileen Horler

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