

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COUNCIL (NORTH SLOPE)

MINUTES (MAY 28-29, 1988)

Attendees

Council Members: Lindsay Staples Fred Bennett
 Billie Archie Art Martell
 Hugh Monaghan

Others: Laurie Henderson - WMAC(NS) Secretariat
 Cor Smits - Biologist, Yukon Territorial Government
 Brian Pelchat - Biologist, Yukon Territorial Government
 Dodie Malegana - Resource Person, Aklavik HTC
 Ruth Elanik - Secretary, Aklavik HTC
 Bruce Chambers - Yukon Land Use Planning, Northern Affairs Canada
 Bob Hayes - Biologist, Yukon Territorial Government
 Dave Mossop - Biologist, Yukon Territorial Government
 Bill Dolan - Chief Park Warden, Northern Yukon National Park
 Norm Snow - Executive Director, Joint Secretariat
 Leslie Treseder - Resource Person, Joint Secretariat
 Mike Fabijan - Harvest Study Co-ordinator, Joint Secretariat

1. Call to Order

Lindsay Staples called the meeting to order at 2:00pm. In his welcoming remarks, Mr. Staples read a congratulatory letter from David Porter, Yukon Minister of Renewable Resources. The strong interest from the people of Aklavik was recognized as a key factor in convening this and future meetings of the WMAC(NS) in Aklavik and the community was encouraged to actively participate in the meeting. Mr. Staples also noted the importance of having representatives of Old Crow working with the WMAC(NS) in the future.

The meeting was identified primarily as an informational meeting where all of the participants could learn and understand more about the Inuvialuit Final Agreement and its related cooperative boards, councils and committees, Yukon and Federal wildlife research programs, Yukon land use planning and other territorial initiatives in the Settlement Region.

2. Agenda Review

An update on the status of the Yukon Wildlife Act was added to the agenda.

3. Related Boards and Structures

3.1 Joint Secretariat - Norm Snow described the various management and advisory structures established under the Inuvialuit Final Agreement (IFA) (see appendix I). Three areas were discussed - the Inuvialuit businesses, the fish and

wildlife management committees (both Inuvialuit and joint committees) and the Inuvialuit harvest study. The Joint Secretariat is an independent body which serves the Inuvialuit-Government Renewable Resources Committee by providing resource people to the various management bodies and houses a financial/administrative wing to address the logistical operations of all committees and boards.

The Joint Secretariat is a registered society, with a Board of Directors that oversees the activities of the Secretariat. The Board is composed of the Chairs of the various joint management committees created under the IFA.

3.2 Wildlife Management Advisory Council (NWT) - This group is the NWT counterpart to the North Slope WMAC. Leslie Treseder, Resource Person to the WMAC(NWT) reported that the Council has met several times over the last two years and has recently established its operating procedures. They are currently preparing a conservation and management plan for the Settlement Region and are hoping to have this document published in the next few months. Complementing the general conservation plan will be community conservation plans. Designed to be very site-specific in nature, the community plans are being prepared in conjunction with the Mackenzie Delta/Beaufort Sea Regional Planning exercise. Paulatuk is doing the pilot project for the community plans and if this is successful, the other community plans will be completed soon.

The WMAC(NWT) has also recently initiated a review of all wildlife studies undertaken in the Western Arctic Region. The GNWT and the Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS) submitted their projects to the Council for review in January, 1988 and it is hoped that this review will now be undertaken annually in anticipation of the field season.

In the area of legislation, the WMAC(NWT) is acting as the co-ordinating point for an ongoing review of the NWT wildlife legislation. As well, any legislative changes requested by the Inuvialuit Game Council (IGC) are relayed to the appropriate government agencies and their progress tracked by the Council.

3.3 Aklavik Hunters and Trappers Committee - Billie Archie reported that the prime objective of the Aklavik HTC is to ensure the protection of the wildlife resources in their area and to assist and encourage community involvement in resource management. The HTC has hired a Resource Person to assist the Committee with research and in preparing project proposals. Currently, the HTC is involved with the Fisheries Joint Management Committee (FJMC) in preparing a beluga management plan and on a project concerning the charr fishery on the Big Fish River.

A distinction between the Hunters and Trappers Committee, which represents the Inuvialuit, and the Hunters and Trappers Association, which represents the Dene/Metis of Aklavik, was made. Only the communities of Aklavik and Inuvik have both an HTC and a HTA, all of the other communities in the Settlement Region have only the HTC.

4. Roles and Responsibilities of the WMAC(NS)

The mandate of the Council is established in Section 12 of the IFA. A thorough review of the roles and responsibilities of the group will take a special session of the WMAC(NS) and although it is important that this occur soon, it was agreed by all members that this discussion should be delayed until the next meeting of the Council.

ACTION: This item shall be the primary focus of the next meeting of the WMAC(NS). Several individuals who have knowledge of the intent of Section 12 should be asked to attend this meeting to provide the background and context of the related sections in the IFA.

The Secretariat will prepare an analysis of the tasks of the Council as outlined in the IFA.

5. Operating Procedures

This item was deferred until the next meeting of the WMAC(NS) to be considered in conjunction with the roles and responsibilities of the Council.

ACTION: Secretariat will analyze the operating procedures of the WMAC(NWT) and the EISC to determine their applicability to the WMAC(NS).

6. Northern Yukon National Park

Bill Dolan presented the status report on the activities of the National Park. These included:

- i) Staffing - A warden trainee, two patrolmen and a clerk have been hired from the Settlement Region. This summer several orientation and on-site training programs will be conducted including white-water rafting safety, bear immobilization training and plant and soil identification.
- ii) Operations and Communications - The operations facilities will be established this season at Stokes Point and Sheep Creek. As well, the communications system will be installed enabling communications between the Inuvik office and the park. Three to five labourers will be hired to help install the facilities.
- iii) Operations Centre - the operations centre has been established in Inuvik.
- iv) Firth River - Guided Arctic has been awarded a one-year, renewable commercial licence for operating raft tours on the Firth. Two firms, Ecosummer Yukon and Hyak Rafting (Vancouver) will be working with Guided Arctic this summer. Six or seven trips are already booked for this season.
- v) Management Plan - The interim plan has been reviewed by all parties and is currently being printed. The park management plan has been delayed indefinitely due to budget cutbacks.

- vi) Research Permits - Several permits have been issued for work in the Park. One permit, to UMA Engineering for gravel assessment potential, was refused.
- vii) Licence of Occupation - The licence of occupation for Gulf Resources was reissued for a two-year period.
- viii) Data Collection Program - Parks Canada is updating the biophysical inventory of the park. Also, they will be gathering visitor use levels for sport fishing and river rafting use and Firth River Corridor Assessment will be completed.

7. Herschel Island Territorial Park

7.1 Management Plan - Hugh Monaghan relayed information provided by the Director of Parks and Resources, Yukon Territorial Government, indicating that the management plan was currently being redrafted for consistency and format. The draft plan would soon be circulated amongst the Parks Planning Committee, and the Council would also soon receive copies of the plan for its comment and review.

Fred Bennett expressed concern that the Parks Planning Committee had not met or been consulted on the re-drafting. The Committee had not met since November, 1987 and consequently the group did not know what work was being conducted on the island this year or where the planning effort was going.

7.2 North Warning DND Site - It has been proposed by the Department of National Defence that Herschel Island be a site for short-range radar station. The first stage of the project will be a site-survey which will be completed by UMA Engineering. The Environmental Impact Screening Committee (EISC) has screened this element of the program and has concluded that the reconnaissance and survey project will not cause a significant negative impact.

Hugh Monaghan indicated that although the Yukon Department of Renewable Resources has met with DND representatives, the Yukon Government has not taken a position on the project. No formal position will be taken until DND has submitted a formal proposal outlining all possible development options. As well, the Yukon Government will likely not establish a position until the proposal has been reviewed through the IFA screening and review process.

It was suggested that the WMAC(NS) should meet with DND to discuss the project. DND had previously indicated to the IGC that they would not be doing any more work in the area until the UMA report was complete and thus they would not be holding any meetings at this time.

ACTION: The WMAC(NS) should attempt to meet with DND officials as soon as possible following the DND release and review of the UMA Engineering report. If possible, this meeting could be held jointly with the IGC.

8. Land Use Planning in the Northern Yukon

Bruce Chambers presented an update on the current status of land use planning in the Northern Yukon. He indicated that although the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation (IRC) has requested that a regional planning process be initiated in the North Yukon, the Yukon Policy Advisory Committee has determined that the Kluane region will be the initial area planned under the 1987 Land Use Planning Agreement. The North Yukon will be the second planning region and it is anticipated that a planning commission for the North Yukon will be established by the end of the year.

At a technical level, planning staff will continue to collect data for the North Yukon and a meeting of the technical staff will be held in the fall to review the status of the data collection process.

The question of Inuvialuit participation in the planning exercise and the issue of overlap were both briefly discussed by Council members. Bruce indicated that the land use planning sections in the IFA were presently being reviewed to determine how the Inuvialuit will be involved in the planning structure. The issue of overlapping land claims will also effect the structure of the planning bodies and many of the overlap issues will have to be resolved prior to the establishment of any planning bodies for the North Yukon.

ACTION: The Secretariat is to produce, for the next meeting, a discussion paper on strategies for land use planning in the North Yukon including an assessment of what is currently happening in the Northwest Territories and how it may affect the Yukon.

9. Wildlife Programs

9.1 General Discussion - The community of Aklavik is very interested in being involved in research programs at the planning level and also in actively participating in the research. It was agreed that there was a need to intergrate the various management agency ideas with the goals of the users and to incorporate the developmental ideas of the users in all wildlife plans.

ACTION: The technical staff of the Yukon Wildlife Branch and the Canadian Wildlife Service should meet with the Aklavik HTC to discuss the ongoing projects and to plan future research studies. This meeting should occur before the next meeting of the WMAC(NS).

The process of reviewing the various wildlife programs was discussed in terms of research goals and budget allocations. The experience in the Western Arctic has been to have the various government agencies present their proposals to the WMAC(NWT) or the FJMC, as is appropriate, and then these groups present the endorsed proposals to the IGC for their review. This planning needs to be done as far in advance as is possible, optimally in fall preceeding the summer field season.

ACTION: For the next meeting, information on all research projects being conducted by all joint and government agencies should be circulated to the WMAC(NS). This information should include budget details and project descriptions.

9.2 Yukon Wildlife Act - Hugh Monaghan informed the Council that the Act is currently being revised. The Act, itself, will be sketchy with the regulations prepared in detail.

ACTION: Hugh Monaghan will provide details on the changes to the Act, as they relate to the IFA for the WMAC(NS) at the next meeting.

9.3 Yukon Wildlife Program - Brian Pelchat reported that there were three projects ongoing in the Yukon. These projects are on moose, wolf and arctic fox. Each of the projects are designed to gather a good data base to facilitate decision-making on the Yukon North Slope.

Bob Hayes presented an update on the wolf research project and distributed a summary paper on the project. Twenty-six wolves, representing twelve packs, have been collared and are being monitored monthly. This data, combined with denning surveys, will enable the researchers to determine distribution and abundance of wolves and will record age class, sex and survival rates of pups.

Cor Smits reported on the arctic fox and moose projects ongoing on the North Slope. The fox project is in its third year and is designed to determine distribution and abundance of fox breeding dens, variations in yearly productivity and to determine the distribution and extent of human harvest in the area. The moose study is occurring in the Richardson Mountains and will determine the sustainable harvest for moose and will delineate key moose habitat areas.

9.4 Inuvialuit Harvest Study - Michael Fabijan reviewed the status and history of the harvest study. The hunters in each community are interviewed monthly by community field workers with over 60 species being considered in the study. The first full report on the project will be available by the end of September with subsequent reports available every March.

The project is being directed by a local working group with representatives from Environment Canada, Fisheries and Oceans, the GNWT, the IGC and the Joint Secretariat. The Yukon Government is not currently involved in the working groups although there is a provision to have the Yukon participate.

ACTION: The WMAC(NS) will discuss the role to the Yukon in the Inuvialuit Harvest Study at its next meeting.

9.5 Canadian Wildlife Service - The focus of their programs is on the management of waterfowl, migratory game birds and wildlife of international importance. At the present time, the CWS is not doing any work on the Yukon North Slope and they would like to work with the community to identify their interests and needs for future projects.

ACTION: Technical staff from the CWS should attend the working session with the Aklavik HTC currently being organized by YTG Wildlife Branch.

9.6 Parks Canada - An incidental observation program is being established for wildlife and cultural resources. The most pressing research issued identified by the Park, to date, concerns grizzly bear habitat and use along the intensively used Firth River corridor.

A Parks Conservation Plan has been prepared for the Northern Yukon National Park and it will guide park management and wildlife conservation in the Park. The Parks program was cut from the budget as it was felt that there were few immediate pressures on park wildlife populations.

ACTION: The Parks Conservation Plan and the Interim Management Plan will be made available to the WMAC(NS).

10. Other Business

10.1 Letterhead - It was agreed that the WMAC(NS) should have its own letterhead designed and produced.

ACTION: Design for the letterhead will be tabled at the next meeting.

10.2 Next Meeting - The next meeting will be held in Whitehorse, July 9 and 10, 1988. Details will be announced as they are finalized.

The meeting adjourned at 1:00pm Sunday May 29, 1988.