



Meeting Minutes
WMAC(NS) Quarterly Meeting

July 6-8 2015
Herschel Island Qikiqtaryuk Territorial Park

July 6, 2016

Lindsay Staples, Chair • Danny C. Gordon, IGC • Evelyn Storr, IGC (Alternate) • Chris Hunter, Canada • Craig Machtans, Canada (Alternate) • Todd Powell, Yukon Government • Jennifer Smith, Staff • Christine Cleghorn, Staff

Guests: Stephanie Muckenheim, Yukon Government

Lindsay brought the meeting to order at 12:06. He welcomed everyone to the island and gave an overview of the week.

1. Approval of Agenda

Motion to accept agenda as presented

Moved by Danny C Gordon

Seconded by Chris Hunter

Motion carried.

2. Minutes from March 2015 meeting

Motion to accept the minutes as amended

Moved by: Craig Machtans

Seconded by: Danny C Gordon

Motion Carried

3. Action Items

Jennifer reviewed action items from the previous meeting. Most are completed, however some require follow up:

Action 03-12-08 Update research guide: This document is out of date. Significant work would be required to reformat and revise it. Staff to contact Marie Anik to find out the results of their discussions with Aurora Institute regarding research permitting.

Action 03-13-20 Follow up with Marsha regarding the collaring workshop so that the information can be disseminated. Indicate that we will circulate the notes in mid-August and hope to receive her revisions prior to then.

Action 06-13-13 Shingle Point garbage: Prepare the final version of the briefing document in advance of our December meeting. Find out how the WWF garbage removal project went this year.

Action 12-13-01 Rubber bullets: Finalize this correspondence before the end of this year.

4. Correspondence:

Lindsay reviewed incoming correspondence, and noted where issues had evolved since the correspondence was received.

Action 07-15-01: Follow up with PCMB on their June 11 letter regarding Harvest Management Plan review. Comments are due by September 15. The Council agreed that we should put some effort into the review of the Harvest Management Agreement. Staff to contact PCMB and ask for extension for 2-3 weeks so that we can review the Implementation plan. Come to September meeting ready to discuss.

A number of issues raised during the review of correspondence will receive greater attention during other parts of the meeting.

5. Chair's Report

Lindsay reported on the TK Guidelines Project that we have been working on for some time. In 2012 the Council asked Peter Armitage and Stephen Kilbourn for a four -page memo on Best Practices. They responded with a much more comprehensive document. This formed the basis for a document that was peer reviewed. On final review, the document had become problematic in a number of ways, but primarily in that it no longer spoke effectively to our primary audience, and made more assertions than we could comfortably endorse. In order to close this file, we will refer to it as a reference guide and add a disclaimer from the Council. We could also include a few paragraphs about how this document came to be.

Polar Bear Administrative Committee

This 2-day meeting is held attached to the Canadian Wildlife Directors meeting. Notes from this meeting are in the package.

Lindsay discussed the co-management chairs' letter that was written to Richard Elliot largely in response to Canadian involvement in the USGS South Beaufort Sea population analysis. The letter was written out of a desire to better understand Canadian research priorities and agendas and how they are determined.

Richard responded in written form and then at PBAC. He reviewed Environment Canada's mandate and how they set their priorities. The group determined that PBAC's priorities need to be refreshed if partners like EC are going to set long term priorities by them. In the next year Environment Canada scientists would talk to the jurisdictions and do a refresh on priorities as well as look to PBTC to determine and communicate these. There is still a desire for Canada to meet with the committees in the ISR to discuss the South Beaufort USGS paper, research priorities, and future directions.

Polar bear plans- We have been focused on developing a number of harvest and habitat plans. Nunavut and Alaska have recently released their plans as well.

The PBTC population status table was discussed and there is a recommendation to include management objectives for each population that would show: increase, decrease or stable. "Future trend" is a problematic category. The concern from many Inuit groups is that the projections are going out to far and the time horizons shouldn't exceed 10 years. The descriptors for characterizing the trend has also been a subject of conversation. "Uncertain" has been used to describe many of them. This will be reviewed by PBTC.

Attendance by jurisdictions was discussed. Some jurisdictions are having a hard time attending due to inadequate budgets.

The US polar bear recovery strategy has come out and the Council will want to provide comment on this by the deadline. Chris said that it is interesting to compare this against the other plans we are reviewing. It is quite detailed, and clearer in many ways, but more complicated in other ways. The Canadian South Beaufort Sea population doesn't get much mention in the plan. Lindsay reminded people that the money that they have to do the research work in the US is far greater than what we have on the Canadian side, which is reflected in the plan.

Action 07-15-02 Staff to review USFWS Polar Bear Draft Conservation Management Plan, draft and circulate comments. Coordinate with Basile at Environment Canada on a Canadian response.

PBSG- is made up of 10-12 people, of those 4 are Canadian. The PBSG is set up under IUCN and it predates CITES and predates IUCN. The protocols that apply to all the other IUCN committees don't apply to the PBSG.

A few areas that are problematic are: that the chair appoints all the members and the members invite the chair.

The Canadian members on PBSG also sit on PBTC, but on the PBSG they don't represent PBTC or Environment Canada. They participate as independent experts. There is a concern about how to get Canadian concerns heard around the table. One major concern is that PBSG will not accept TK as a line of evidence when they are doing their assessments. Their assessments influence CITES-listing proposals for polar bears.

If a change is going to happen in PBSG, it will come from IUCN. There is a sustainable livelihoods committee and there may be sufficient to include PBTK through the work of this committee.

Craig asked for clarification about the way forward on this issue. There is an action item for the 2 WMACS to write a letter on this, but it makes sense to write this to IUCN instead of PBSG directly. Canada is interested in seeing this letter and there may be interest in signing on to it as well.

JS Board meeting-

The annual Joint Secretariat board meeting was held in Calgary on June 2-3. The JS board is made up of the chairs of all the committees under the IFA. This board oversees the activities of the Joint Secretariat. Our situation is a bit different as we have our own secretariat in Whitehorse.

Lindsay explained that the board went *in camera* to discuss the state of affairs of the JS board, the committees, etc. There were suggestions on how to improve this. All of the chairs have agreed to go to the IGC in Sept and raise these concerns.

CBM meeting- The Community Based Monitoring Program is moving to be an update on the 10- year harvest study. The idea is for one year to replicate the IHS, so it is a kill survey of all species, by all harvesters. Jennie Knopp has resigned and Kendra, her assistant has been doing a solid job. IRC has hired Jenn Parrot who built the Beaufort Sea platform for onshore and offshore projects. She will be there to work with Kendra to build the spatial database. IRC is also hiring a TK coordinator and that person will be involved as well. Would like to see this launched Jan 1 2016. There is enough funding for this year to have the work done until the end of the year.

Action 07-15-03- Staff to follow up with Marsha on program of harvest data collection for this year to ensure that systems are in place to collect information given that the CBM program is in flux.

Evelyn commented that CBM needs to also build in outputs and reports for the communities.

Lindsay said that he's hopeful that we would see a project design for this. Lindsay explained that Peter Armitage developed a Data Collection Manual that laid out the program design and plan for the Traditional Use study. This would be the expectation for the new program

Evelyn noted that IRC is involved and roles need to be clearly set out. We need coordination amongst all these people and agencies.

6. Financial Report

The Council reviewed the draft financial statements from 2014/15. Kim Tanner's office provided us with a financial engagement report. The statements compare 2014/15 with the prior year – most of the differences reflect the supplementary funds we received last year. These supplementary funds were largely spent on projects. We emerged from last fiscal with a shortfall of just over \$2000. This is a significant change for the Council – it is the first time that we have not rolled over an accumulated surplus.

Resolution 2015.07.01

To accept draft financial statements as presented.

Moved by Evelyn Storr

Seconded by Chris Hunter

Jennifer reviewed the proposed budget for this year, including \$190,000 in supplementary funding received from Canada. She described the process for applying for and receiving these funds.

The Council discussed the implementation funding situation, the sorry state of the discussions to renew our funding, the woeful inadequacy of our existing contribution agreement, and the unfortunate supplementary funding circumstance. It is our hope that a new contribution agreement could be concluded in the near future.

Our total budget for this year, including \$190,000 supplementary funding, is just over \$435,000. Jennifer indicated where areas of flexibility exist within the budget.

Craig suggested taking another run at the polar bear portion of the supplemental funding process immediately.

The Council agreed to proceed with the budget as tabled, recognizing that we will closely monitor the financials throughout the year.

Motion to pass the 2015/16 budget as presented.

Moved by Todd Powell

*Seconded by Chris Hunter
Motion passed.*

Herschel Book Revenues

The Council contemplated what to do with the Herschel book revenues. Decision to let this money accumulate and review at the Council's annual summer meeting.

7. Report from the Members

Evelyn reported that she was pleased to be at the meeting. It has been some time since she has been to a WMAC (NS) meeting. Her involvement on a number of committees, including the Screening Committee, and her job at the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation, keep her in constant communication with the communities and various issues in the ISR.

Todd Powell – Yukon Government

Todd gave the Council an update from Mike Suitor on the Porcupine Caribou herd. They primarily calved in the 10-02 lands. Eastern North Slope was used from mid-May to mid-June. ADF+G was unable to do a calving survey because of weather. Mike spent some time in Imniarvik with a BBC film crew.

Richardson's Sheep – this file has not significantly progressed since our March meeting. Lamb counts have not occurred. GRRB is trying to recruit people from Aklavik to work on this. ANWR staff are doing some investigations in the Refuge and note good lamb counts this year. Normally what is happening in the Richardson's reflects what is happening in the Refuge, so this is a hopeful sign.

Muskox

Parks purchased 8 GPS satellite collars for Muskox. This will be the first time muskox have been collared in over 10 years. The focus will be on the cows in Ivavik. The strategy for putting on the collars is to try, in part, to understand interactions between caribou and muskox, and to help us understand grouping and movement that we could then relate to caribou grouping the movement data. Having all of the collars in the same general area (caribou and muskox) will help to speak to those interactions.

Danny asked how far west caribou calved in ANWR this year? Todd thought it was very close to the Yukon- Alaska border. Danny noted that people in Kaktovik have not seen caribou yet.

About a month ago there was a fire close to Aklavik that was close to where sheep range. Danny asked about how this impacts sheep movements – will they move away from this area? Todd to follow up.

Danny raised a number of questions regarding collaring of muskox. He wanted assurances that this collaring project is not a long-term project. Todd replied that collar life is 4-5 years, and this is probably the limit of the project at this time. Danny noted that most people in Aklavik would support collaring a few muskox so that we can get some answers to community questions about caribou and muskox interactions.

ELC

Weather permitting, Nadele's crew will be on the ground in the field on July 14. There will be 10 days of work by two teams, doing ground-truthing surveys in order to collect enough data to run the models. This will all complement what has been done in Ivavik. The timing of completing this by March 2016 still looks like a reasonable end date. Three people from Aklavik will be working on the project. CHARS is supporting \$30,000 for the SPOT imagery for the area.

Yukon Grizzly Bear Management Plan

Yukon Grizzly Bear Management Plan is in its infancy. The YFWMB requested the development of a management plan for grizzly bears. This will be similar to other species management plans. It is anticipated that there will be a planning process similar to the wolf conservation and management plan from 2012, with a 3-4 year time horizon. This process will be led by a group (3 YG staffers and 3 members of YFWMB).

Lindsay noted that the Council will need to think about our standing in this planning process, our interests and priorities, and the complicated jurisdictional context of this plan.

North Slope Grizzly Bear Research Plan

Todd reported that work continues on finalizing this project. There are some concerns regarding how the sample is extrapolated across the population and then incorporated into the calculations that lead to a final population estimate. YG is looking at the modeling work now, trying to examine how the data and the calculations combined to create the model output. YG still anticipates bringing this project to completion during this fiscal year.

Todd noted that the Southern Lakes grizzly bear study will go through a similar process.

Action 07-15-04

Todd to provide a letter to Aklavik HTC to brief them on the status of the grizzly bear project.

Craig Machtans – CWS

Craig noted that ABEKS received \$43,000 from Environment Canada this year.

Chris Hunter – Parks Canada (PC)

Chris reported on Ivvavik. This season started early in May with BBC production which went very well. BBC is excited about the footage that was obtained. BBC will produce 4 one-minute pieces for Park's exclusive use. There were no additional costs incurred as a result of this production. They were filming primarily caribou, and wolf to some extent. It should be out within the year. Parks was pushing to include local stories as well.

The bear fence has been installed around the core of the camp including the tenting area. There have been two school camps in so far as well as BIO 20, followed by 7 visitor camping trips. The self-catered trips were not as popular. There is a cook and a cultural host at the site now and there is good feedback on both of these.

The EI monitoring program continues with the proposed changes that are largely to increase the "power" of monitoring and make them more efficient. The wildlife camera program is evolving. In the middle of July, some of the EI monitoring team will go down the river to do some monitoring and trial this method. If it goes well Parks Canada may try to grow an economic opportunity to sell a few seats on this trip and get people involved in the monitoring. As part of this project PC would like to trial a rotary drone. The plan is to map three of the airstrips; map the monitoring sites, and the cabin at Nunaluk. Possibly use it for camp-site monitoring (de-vegetation and erosion). Drones can fly at 90m and must be used in line-of-sight, and regulated by Transport Canada.

Peregrine falcon surveys coming up. Dolly Varden work will be happening in the fall as part of mark-recapture study.

State of the Park Report (SOPR) – Western Arctic Field Unit Staff are hoping to get the management plan for Ivvavik ready for the fall 2016, so the SOPR would start this fall. A new management planning directive for the plan has been established. The SOPR is a much more refined document and it is no longer for public consumption. It is really to inform the conversation between the field unit and the CEO and share with key partners. It has also moved from a 5 year to a 10 year planning cycle. The management plan would be pared down to a 10 page document and the SOPR would be even shorter.

Evelyn said she was involved in the hiring of the ranger positions and she wondered about Inuvialuit beneficiary hiring and capacity building within parks. Chris spoke to PC's effort to create opportunities for Inuvialuit.

Staff update-

PBTK media results- PBTK study was released on March 31, 2015. Kelly Milner (Jigsaw Consulting) was hired to do the media work on this. 10 stories were generated from the work, and we saw our web traffic increase significantly. Steve made a presentation of the study from the Washington meeting. There is an appetite to take this around to various conferences. Canada wants to present this at Range States.

TU study update- we received supplemental funding. Priority is to get the transcripts done and verification done in Aklavik this fall, and then analysis in the winter.

On the biophysical side, Jennifer and Kim Heinemeyer from Round River Conservation Studies met with the HTC (all day) and the Community Corp (morning only) to give an overview of the project, and then in the afternoon we went through a comprehensive conversation about the focal species concept, and then identified 12 ranked focal species. TIDES Canada supported this project.

July 8

Jen briefed members about ABEKS board, direction and the council talked about priorities and ways of moving forward.

North Slope Conference

Lindsay described how the conference is evolving. This is a two- day event, with a hands-on-focus and more break out groups. Bob DeLury is the Chair; Bryan Evans will be the facilitator for the conference in order to focus on outputs. Conference information will be circulated to the Council as it is developed.

The audience we are looking for is those who are involved in the “biz” of using TK in research and management. The intent is to have a conversation between those who generate TK and those who use it. Craig suggested that in working groups there is a harvester/researcher in each session. Evelyn suggested identifying workshop group participants by color “dots” on their nametag.

Chris asked about what support is required. It would be helpful if Council members suggested speakers. Craig is willing to help facilitate and get everyone prepped with tools for those sessions.

North Slope Conservation Award

To be awarded at reception during conference. The Council discussed possible award recipients.

Lindsay spoke about the one-day event pre-conference to provide an education session on the IFA to hear the vision and origin on the IFA: an Inuvialuit negotiators perspective. Treat this as a conversation with questions and answers.

We could make a podcast out of this so that there would be a living record of the discussion. We can have some YG observers in the room. It's a great opportunity to educate YG, Parks Canada and Environment Canada directly involved in implementing

the IFA. This will be a very high-level conversation; not a legalistic one. The principal audience is the Inuvialuit members of the committees.

Muskox framework

Aklavik meeting was held a couple of months back and the letter that was sent to the PCMB that conveyed most of what was discussed in the meeting. The principle interest from a number of Aklavik individuals was to remove a number of animals from the park, as a means of addressing concerns about interactions with caribou and food security.

There are no legal grounds in the IFA for a cull. If a cull were to occur, legal measures would need to be taken. The concern about food security remains an issue. There is an appendix to the plan that addresses interaction between caribou and muskox. Concerns still remain amongst some communities and IGC.

We committed to sitting down with the AHTC to explain the framework once it is finalized.

There was a meeting with the AHTC in Inuvik about 3 years ago to discuss the harvest quota. We don't capture that output in the draft.

Todd reviewed some of his comments in the draft Muskox Framework. The Council discussed how the reference material associated with the Framework could be presented, and how bringing together parties to discuss management activities could be triggered in the Framework without being too specific (i.e. not specifying a number for the herd). Todd will draft this paragraph and circulate for comment.

Evelyn discussed concerns about food security and how the caribou not coming to Aklavik has impacted people's access to fresh meat. She said that the IFA Implementation workshop with Bob DeLury will be a good refresher for people about the roles and responsibilities of the various boards and councils.

Action 07-15-05: Council members to provide any final comments by the end of July. Framework to be finalized in early August.

Chris noted that in terms of distribution of the two muskox populations (east and west of the Delta), the area where the two herds overlap is not well defined in this section. We assume it is in the delta.

Chris noted that the Ivavik Management Plan includes goals for muskox management. These should be included in the Framework. Right now it directs managers to use the Ivavik population as a seed population, and manage for conservation values, including the possibility of a subsistence harvest. Chris to redraft this section and circulate to members.

Wolverine – SARA

Craig refreshed the Council about Wolverine being under consideration for listing under SARA. Originally wolverine was listed in 2003. The eastern population was listed as endangered, while the western population was supposed to be listed as special concern, but was not listed because of concerns brought forward by Nunavut. More research has been done since 2003, and now it is being proposed to classify the whole species as one designatable unit, and to list the whole population as special concern. Wolverines have been doing well in the last few generations.

In the Yukon the population is estimated at 3500-4000 animals. The COSEWIC report has considerable TK in it from across Canada – the fur returns and the TK component are the major sources of information about the species.

Environment Canada has requested the Council's views.

Danny noted that the report talks about caribou being an important food source for wolverine. Craig indicated that the report isn't clear about whether wolverines are scavenging caribou from wolf kills, or whether they are actually killing caribou. Danny agreed with Craig, and noted that bears and wolves are often scared of wolverines. Danny said that wolverines are handsome and smart, and they know that if they turn a trap over if it is safe and they can eat the bait. He noted that ENR from GNWT gives \$75 per carcass for research. YG pays \$50 per carcass. Danny has seen a wolverine den with a caribou skin inside. He noted that they are very savvy wildlife.

Generally, what is driving the Special Concern designation is that it is a high value species that occurs in low numbers. It is presently doing fine, but managers wish to closely monitor this species. Nothing has changed for the species since 2003.

Lindsay asked Craig what a management plan for wolverine would look like, given that the populations are healthy in the west but that the eastern population is struggling. Craig indicated that the eastern population is likely not recoverable, and the management plan would reflect this. Craig referenced the caribou plan for Mountain Caribou that was developed to reflect different circumstances for various herds. A Special Concern designation would not affect people's ability to harvest wolverines.

ACTION 07-15-06: Write a letter supporting wolverine special concern designation. Mention that we understand there to be no adverse restrictions on harvest, and with regard to management planning we suggest that attention could be given to the circumstance in the western arctic, and look forward to being involved in the management planning process. This is a high value species for people on the North Slope and this is good reason to raise its profile by designating it as a species of special concern.

8. Ivavik Park State of the Park Report

Chris Hunter briefed the council as to the intent of the SOPR – it is supposed to provide a snapshot of the park, and show the condition and trend for every national park and historic site. As a Council we had reviewed a much more comprehensive document than what we have here. Big changes since the last iteration include moving to a 10 year management cycle. The SOPR is now more of an internal document meant to be shared with important partners. WMAC(NS) is considered an important partner for Parks. Parks also identified the IRC as a key partner. Parks wishes to get endorsement by both Council and IRC on this document. The technical compendium that was put together in 2012 is still applicable to this, but this is a ‘dashboard’ look at condition and trends of Park.

Chris ran through the new SOPR with the Council. He asked the Council for a response to the material in the PowerPoint. The first page includes endorsement lines for the Council and the IRC. He reviewed the indicator ratings – these look at condition and trend of each indicator. The length of time for trends and the depth of knowledge for the indicator varies from one indicator to the next. Nevertheless, the SOPR tries to do as much as it can with the information that exists. There are some areas where we don’t have enough data to establish a trend or comment on much more than the current condition. Freshwater and Coastal/Marine have not been rated.

Lindsay noted that with respect to these documents no longer being public documents, maybe there is still grounds that would warrant some kind of commentary about the coastal/marine indicator having been eliminated. That could be one place the Council may want to identify as a significant gap.

Fall 2016 is the target for an approved management plan in place in Ivavik. This likely takes one year. It would be nice if this could get endorsed this July. There is very little new data since the last exercise.

Cultural Resources Indicators

Overall condition has not changed, although there are some changes regarding specific components of this indicator.

External Relations Indicators

These are very challenging pieces to create the condition and trend for, so the narrative is important in this section.

Aboriginal Relations Indicators

Parks engaged the IRC in a conversation about engagement and relationships, aboriginal voices on site, and benefits to aboriginal people to understand what an appropriate

status for these indicators should be. The narrative from this conversation is still under development. Chris is interested to hear from WMAC(NS) of these same indicators.

Visitor Experience Indicator –

Indicators in this section lack enough data to quantitatively rate this section. One measurable indicator is the number of annual visits to the park.

The three key issues identified in the Assessment are:

Integration of Traditional Knowledge

High cost and logistical challenges of management

Low visitation and limited economic benefits to communities

Evelyn commented that she feels that the effort by Parks staff to integrate traditional knowledge into park management exists, and should be marked as ongoing and not characterized as requiring 'renewed' effort.

Coastal erosion remains an area of concern for the Council. There is a strong argument that this should be flagged as a key issue and the Assessment should reference this as a key issue.

WMAC NS to provide comments to Parks about Aboriginal Relations Indicators.

ACTION 07-15-07: Provide our letter to Parks Canada regarding the State of the Park Assessment before July 31, 2015.

ISR Polar Bear Plan Update

We submitted substantial comments on this plan, as did Yukon. These and other comments contributed to GNWT realizing that their ambitious timelines for the plan were unrealistic. A working group will be struck for the plan.

Cross Appointments between Parks Canada and Yukon Parks

Chris briefed us on this at our last meeting. In March Parks Canada heard general support for this idea. Parks hoped to meet with Game Council in September.

Screening Committee

Lindsay briefed the council on the legal opinion by John Donihee on pre-screening and its implications. Donihee opines that all developments, including cruise ships, should be screened. The Council discussed the implications for Parks Canada and Qikiqtaryuk Park in their operations, especially given that Ivvavik and Qikiqtaruk operate under approved management plans, and with respect to government research.

Action 07-15-08: Write a letter to the Screening Committee, setting out what the procedures could be to address this situation. Mention that it is duplication of effort

when the very groups that the EISC would consult for comment are endorsing the project in the first place. Lindsay would like to refer this letter to John Donihee so that from an IFA standpoint it is solid. Mention government funded research in this letter too and address procedures for this type of effort.

Evelyn commented that at their last EISC meeting she requested a review of their operating procedures.

EIRB update

It seems that there will be no substantive hearings or review in 2015, in part because of the NEB's review of same season relief well equivalencies.

Strategic Goals

Christine reviewed the strategic goals of the WMAC (NS) for the next year and beyond, at a very high level. The Council had no questions or concerns.

9. Upcoming Meetings

Teleconference September 10.

F2f meeting October 1 ½ day (tentative)

Upcoming Meetings

Danny to go to I-I meeting

ArcticNet Vancouver

Meeting adjourned at 4:59pm.