



Wildlife Management Advisory Council (North Slope)

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MINUTES

WMAC(NS) QUARTERLY MEETING

**High Country Inn
Whitehorse, YT**

September 28 -29, 2003

Sunday September 28, 2003

Present: Lindsay Staples – Chair
Danny C. Gordon- Member – Inuvialuit Game Council
Herbert Felix- Member – Inuvialuit Game Council
Doug Larsen – Member - Yukon Government
Dorothy Cooley - Alternate- Yukon Government
Martin Raillard – Member - Canadian Wildlife Service
Aileen Horler- Secretariat

Guests: Ron Larsen, Parks Canada, Inuvik
Richard Gordon, Herschel Island Territorial Park

A. Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 9:15 am.

B. Review and Approval of Agenda

The Chair reviewed the agenda and outlined some of the issues to be covered during the meeting.

Motion

To adopt the agenda

Moved: Danny C. Gordon
Second: Martin Raillard
Motion carried

C. Review and Approval of Minutes of May 2002 meeting.

Members reviewed the minutes of the May 2002 meeting. The Secretariat noted that the number of the action items needs to be corrected. Also, on page 20, under Aklavik Hunter Education, Ian McDonald needs to be changed to Ian McLeod.

Motion

To adopt the minutes of the December 2002 meeting.

Moved: Herbert Felix
Second: Danny C. Gordon
Motion carried

D. Review of Action Items

Members reviewed the report in the meeting binder on the status of action items from the May meeting. The Secretariat reported on the following items:

Action 02-12-03: Council members will review the maps contained in the Muskox Management Plan and make suggestions to the Secretariat for changes or additions.

This action is still outstanding. It will be pursued once work resumes on the plan.

Action 03-05-01 : The Secretariat will send the most recent list of Canadian Species at Risk to Danny C. Gordon.

Complete.

Action 03-05-02 : The Council will review the Inuvialuit Harvest Study access protocol at its next meeting. The Council will also ensure that the Aklavik Hunters and Trappers Committee has had an opportunity to review the protocol and supports it's application to the current harvest collection program in Akalvik.

Ongoing. The Chair will supply the Secretariat with a copy of the protocol.

Action 03-05-03: WMAC(NS) will send a copy of the protocol used in the Aklavik traditional knowledge interviews to the Aklavik Hunters and Trappers Committee.

Complete.

Action 03-05-04: WMAC(NS) will prepare a Fact Sheet to explain IFA Implementation Funding pertaining to the Yukon North Slope, the level of funding and what tasks the funding is used for.

Outstanding. The Secretariat is still preparing this fact sheet. A copy of the document titled 'IFA-Funded Yukon North Slope Wildlife Management and Research Programs – Identification and Review Process' was sent to the AHTC.

Action 03-05-05: WMAC(NS) will send a copy of the Council's resolution to increase the Aklavik quota on grizzly bears to the Aklavik Hunters and Trappers Committee.

Complete.

Action 03-05-06 : WMAC(NS) will invite staff members from the Canadian Wildlife Service office in Whitehorse to attend the Council's meeting in the fall to exchange information about each other's activities.

Complete. Cameron Eckert will be attending the meeting on Monday.

Action 03-05-07: WMAC(NS) will write to the Arctic Borderlands Ecological Knowledge Coop to indicate the Council's wish to assist the Coop in obtaining multi-year financial support.

Complete.

Action 03-05-08: The Secretariat will co-ordinate a working meeting in Inuvik in early June to redraft the November 2002 Canadian North Slope Muskox Management Plan.

Complete.

Action 03-05-09: The Secretariat will follow-up with Harvey Jessup regarding Danny C. Gordon's concerns about chain length of the new modified traps.

Complete. The Secretariat noted that a copy of Harvey's response was included in the meeting binder. Harvey reported that the shortening of the chain length was done to save the manufacturers some money.

Danny C. Gordon informed members that the short chain on the traps is useless in the delta. The regulations say that trappers must drown muskrats. But trappers have to add more chain because it's not possible to drown muskrats with only a 4" chain. Other animals will break their legs because the chain is too short and it doesn't give them any running room. The longer the chain the better. Danny said he would pay more if he could get traps with the right chain length. The manufacturers should have left it the way it was.

Action 03-09-01: The Chair will raise the issue of chain length of the new modified traps with the Inuvialuit Game Council.

Richard Gordon suggested that there should be an information session held in Aklavik so that trappers know what changes are happening. These changes are affecting traditional use. The Chair commented that Helen Slama has been trying to hold a workshop for some time. The Council could play a role in facilitating the organization of the workshop.

Action 03-09-02: The Secretariat will contact Helen Slama to encourage YTG to conduct a trapper education workshop in Aklavik in February, and offer the Council's assistance in facilitating the organization such a workshop. The workshop should be a forum to inform and educate trappers about current and proposed regulations.

Doug Larsen suggested that it would be very useful for someone to develop some fact sheets that explain some of the trapping regulations and addresses other trapping issues.

Action 03-05-10: Council members will review the draft Herschel Island Management Plan, as revised by Hillarie Zimmermann, and forward any comments to the Secretariat by May 16.

Complete.

E. Correspondence

Members reviewed the correspondence in the meeting binder and discussed the following items:

- A letter from Marco Festa-Bianchet (Chair of COSEWIC) as a follow-up to the meeting between the Wildlife Management Boards and COSEWIC in April. The Chair noted that further discussion on this item is on the Council's agenda for later in the meeting.

- A letter from the Inuvialuit Game Council to Evelyn Storr, congratulating her on her appointment to WMAC(NS).
- A report from DC Marine Offshore Services on the towing of the SSDC to Herschel Island in August.
- The Porcupine Caribou Management Board's Caribou Update for July and August.

F. Financial Report

a) WMAC(NS) Budget

The Secretariat referred to the Council's financial statement (September 26, 2003) in the meeting binder. Members reviewed the Council's spending to date. The Secretariat made the following comments:

- Most items are on track for the time of year, although a few categories, such as 'Meetings- other' are considerably under budget.
- The final costs associated with the Wildlife Conservation and Management Plan leaves a surplus of about \$7000 in this category.
- The \$1200 allocated to 'Muskox Communications' will not be required until next fiscal year if the Council decides to go ahead with an in-service on it's muskox school unit.
- The Term Report is now complete. It is over budget because it is much longer than in previous years and more copies were printed so that extras would be available for the North Slope Conference.
- There are several projects that will require an additional allocation of funds. The Aklavik Traditional Knowledge project is already over budget by \$3000. Another \$5000 is needed for the document's final production and printing.
- The North Slope Conference will also require additional funding. The Council plays a big role in the programming for the conference. This requires a lot of the Chair's and Secretariat's time.
- The Muskox Management Plan is currently over budget and may require more funding.

The Chair noted that more funding may also be required under the Species at Risk category, depending on the actions taken as a follow-up to the April meetings with COSEWIC. There is a possibility that the WMBs will meet in Ottawa in November.

Members agreed to return to the discussion on the budget once they have an opportunity to consider further funding requirements related to the Muskox Management Plan.

b) IFA Implementation Funding

The Chair reported that the Yukon Government received notice from DIAND as to the level that the Implementation Management Directorate (Implementation Branch) is prepared to support in securing funds for the next implementation period.

DIAND is supporting the Council's request for increased funding, with the exception of funds for harvesting reporting. If approved by Treasury Board, the Council will receive about \$50,000 per year in additional funding.

YTG received a small increase. However this increase is not enough to meet the needs of operating Herschel. Lack of funds affects benefits to the Inuvialuit and the ability to carry out the preservation activities required. The Chair added that he plans to raise this issue with the IGC.

G. Report from the Chair

The Chair commented that a lot of time has recently been spent completing Council publications. These include the Wildlife Conservation on Management Plan, the Term Report and the Aklavik Report.

The Chair attended a Joint Secretariat board meeting in the summer. One of the issues covered at the meeting was the role of the Executive Director.

Bob Blair has agreed to be the Chair of the upcoming North Slope Conference. His experience in both the oil industry and conservation and environment activities makes him very suitable for the role.

Work on the Mackenzie gap pipeline is moving ahead. The Mackenzie Gas Pipeline Information Package has been tabled. All affected parties are developing the Terms of Reference for the Review Panel. The Inuvialuit will have two members on the panel. The submission to the panel is being prepared.

The Chair and Doug Larsen met with the Yukon Minister of the Environment during the summer to follow-up on two letters written by the Council. One letter forwarded the Council's recommendations for the North Slope Conference and one was written in regarding the grizzly bear quota for the North Slope. Overall it was a good and positive meeting.

H. Members' Report

Doug Larsen informed members about a regulation proposal that will be presented to the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board at its meeting the following week. It is a joint proposal by the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation, the North Yukon RRC and the Yukon Government for a limited sheep hunt in the Richardson Mountains. If supported by the Board there will be a public meeting in Whitehorse to allow for further review and comment. The hunting would take place in the Yukon only, using a permit system. There would be a limit of two sheep. The VGFN is also interested in seeing opportunities for wildlife viewing maintained. Therefore no hunting will be allowed in one area.

Herbert Felix reported that he has moved to Fort Smith for the year.

Martin Raillard reported that Paula Pacholek has been hired to work on oil and gas issues in the Whitehorse office of Environment Canada. The Conservation Data Centre has started up. Sid Cannings has been hired as its manager. Sid is very well qualified for the position. The Birds of the Yukon book has been published. Several employees of Environment Canada worked on the project. The Species at Risk Act is now in force and implementation funding is available. The Yukon Species at Risk Committee still needs to be established.

Dorothy Cooley and Danny C. Gordon both commented that the issues they wish to raise are covered elsewhere on the agenda.

I. Old Business

1. Herschel Island Territorial Park

a) Park Operations

Richard Gordon distributed copies of the 2003 report from Herschel Island Territorial Park. Richard highlighted several items as follows:

- When the Rangers first arrived on the island in the spring they found hinges broken on the buildings and caribou gut piles near the trappers cabin. The Aklavik HTC has been informed. Charges will be laid if this happens again. People should be prepared if they are traveling on the land. The Rangers are tired of cleaning up the mess. The HTC needs to inform its membership as well as people in Kaktovik.
- Rangers record all their observations throughout the season in a book. These are later transferred to the computer.
- Visitor numbers were way down. Only 5 camping permits were issued.
- Five research permits were issued. Chris Burn didn't install the 50-meter probe as proposed. He only put in snow measurement sticks. Chris will be going to Herschel again in the spring to give some training to the Rangers. Wayne Pollard, from McGill University, has been getting information on erosion.
- The Coast Guard did some work on their navigation systems in certain areas of the Park.
- The Park is going to upgrade the weather station.
- The SSDC is now parked off Pauline Cove.
- There is a need for better planning in order to get the heritage work done. Lots of time is wasted. There is a limited budget. The Park can't afford all the extra flights. The Rangers are willing to help out so that the work is done more efficiently. The Rangers have the time, especially when the weather is poor. The Rangers and the Heritage Branch should be working together.

- There are plans to do fire drills with the campers so that everyone know what to do if there is a fire.
- The Park has been able to purchase some new equipment, such as snowmobiles and water pumps.
- Efforts are being made to get the Elder Host Program started again. The Parks Branch is trying to identify what the park budget can cover. Others are being asked to contribute to the program as well.
- The Herschel Island brochure is being reprinted in black and White. It is too expensive to reprint in colour.

Questions were raised about the system for issuing research permits. Council members felt that the system isn't working very well. It seems to be quite subjective. This is an issue that needs some attention. Richard commented that the Coast Guard did some work in the Park before the Heritage Branch issued the permit.

The Chair asked Richard what he considered to be some of the issues or challenges for the next year. Richard responded that two of the Rangers quit in mid-season and will have to be replaced. These positions will be advertised this fall. There is a lot of interest in these jobs. Richard added that he is meeting with the Human Resources personnel in Whitehorse to discuss the hiring and training. Another challenge will be the budget. Flights are very expensive.

b) Herschel Island Management Plan

The Chair provided members with an update on the meeting that was held in Whitehorse September 25. The Chair, Secretariat, Danny C. Gordon, Dorothy Cooley, Hillarie Zimmermann, Brent Riley, Erik Val, Richard Gordon and Dave Ladret met to review the latest draft of the plan. A number of additions and changes were made, including the need for improved policy and planning for the cruise ships. The group also recognized the need to develop an operational monitoring plan as a companion document. The development of such a plan has been added as an action in the main plan.

Hillarie will now incorporate the suggested changes. Once completed the revised plan will be ready for review by the Aklavik HTC. A timeline has been established that aims to have the plan finished and recommended by the Council before the Yukon North Slope Conference, mid-November.

The Chair added that the Management Plan requires the development of an annual workplan. The workplan will show what is planned for the coming year and is to be reviewed by the Council before the beginning of every season.

2. Parks Canada Report

Ron Larsen reported on activities related to Parks Canada. Ron distributed the September 2003 Update by Parks Canada Western Arctic Field Unit.

After the Council signed off on the Ivvavik Park Management Plan, it was forwarded to the Director General. Parks Canada in Inuvik has only just received comments from the national office. A number of small changes need to be made. None of them are substantive and Ron reported that they can be done quickly. The Chair added that the Council sent a letter to the Director General in September asking for confirmation that the plan will be approved prior to the North Slope Conference.

The Western Arctic Field Unit had set aside quite a lot of money for visitor information centres in Paulatuk and Sach's Harbour. Not all of the funds will be spent this year so Parks would like to be able to contribute some of it to other projects, such as the North Slope grizzly bear research.

In reference to activities in Ivvavik National Park, Ron made the following comments:

- An 'Artist-in-the-Park' pilot project took place in the summer. Five artists, including 3 Inuvialuit artists, spent two weeks at Sheep Camp.
- A number of regular monitoring activities took place in the park over the summer. Species monitored included caribou and muskox as well as general bird and mammal observations. Campsites. Cultural sites, permafrost, water flow, water quality and weather were also monitored.
- A salvage archaeology project was carried out at Clarence Lagoon. Two sod houses in danger of being destroyed by erosion were excavated. A report on the project is available.
- There is no repeater yet in the south part of the park.
- Steve Solomon has been doing some work on the coast. Some of the storm surge probes were recovered. Steve will be providing data for Parks' research and monitoring report.
- Parks Canada is trying to develop a day use area on the Babbage River in cooperation with Arctic Nature Tours. The EISC asked for an archaeological inventory before this area is opened up to tourism. The inventory was completed and showed no significant findings.

3. 2003-2004 Wildlife Management and Research Update

Dorothy Cooley distributed a report summarizing the 2003-04 YTG wildlife research projects.

a) Porcupine Caribou Herd Satellite Location Program

The object of this project is to maintain 8-10 satellite radio collars on cows in the Porcupine caribou herd to document annual migration routes and winter range use. This is an ongoing cooperative effort with many agencies contributing to the

costs of system fees, data recovery and collar purchase. The Council recommended \$6000 of IFA funding for this project this year. YTG is contributing \$2000 and Parks Canada is contributing the remaining \$4000. Locations are logged on an ongoing basis. Maps are being produced and distributed, and the web site is updated weekly.

b) Porcupine Caribou Conventional Collaring, March 2004

The object of this project is to maintain between 80 and 100 conventional radio collars on the herd to assist in the location of the herd during composition counts and censuses. The fieldwork will be conducted in March. The IFA contribution for this year is proposed to be about \$23,750. Other interested parties will contribute a further \$8,300.

The calving survey conducted in the spring found that 87% of the cows had calves. No census was done this year because the caribou did not group together. The Alaskans will try again to do the census next year.

c) Aklavik harvest data collection (April '03 and March '04)

The object of this project is to document harvest of moose, caribou, sheep, swans and furbearers in the Yukon and NWT by Inuvialuit hunters in Aklavik, from January to December 2003. YTG has done this collection in Aklavik for two years now. The Council had recommended an allocation of \$3000 for this project. Half of the funds were spent to complete interviews in May and June. The remainder will be used to cover the second set of interviews scheduled for October.

d) Muskox satellite program 2002-2005

The objective of this program is to maintain 8 satellite radio collars on North Slope muskox in order to determine their habitat and movements. A spring survey was done in April to assess the population and included the determination of yearling survival. Another survey was conducted in July. Both Parks Canada and the Yukon Government contributed funds to this project.

e) Joint Muskox Meeting

Funds had been carried over from the previous year to support a meeting between parties with an interest in the muskox population in the Richardson Mountains. Although YTG is still interested in seeing such a meeting happen there is not much support from other agencies right now. Dorothy recommended that this project be deferred until later.

f) Herschel Island Permafrost Monitoring

This project is being carried out by Chris Burn, Carleton University, to obtain information on ground temperature warming on Herschel Island. In summer 2003, Chris established a snow course for long-term monitoring of snow depth, active-layer thickness, and near-surface ground temperature. The Council recommended \$2000 to cover the cost of some of the required equipment. All of

this was spent during the summer's fieldwork. Chris pays for all his other costs from his own budget.

g) Herschel Island raptor and fox survey

The objective of this survey is to document the abundance and distribution of raptors, and foxes on Herschel Island. The survey was conducted in July. More birds were counted than in 1999, except for Snowy owls. The Council had recommended \$2000 be allocated to this project. However more helicopter time was required than originally estimated and the project expenditures totaled \$3325.

h) Aklavik Hunter Education

YTG contributed \$3000 to the GNWT to conduct a camp for Aklavik youth in August at Canoe Lake. Other agencies also contributed to this project.

i) Richardson Mountain Sheep survey

The bulk of the survey was completed in August. One survey block needs to be redone. The number of sheep counted dropped from about 1100 to between 800 and 900. All of the \$2000 recommended has been spent.

j) Grizzly Bear Population and Movement on the Yukon North Slope

Fuel has been purchased and moved into place in the field at Komakuk and Shingle Point. Dorothy added that Doug Larsen will be providing more information to the Council about this project later in the meeting.

Monday September 29, 2003

Present: Lindsay Staples – Chair
Danny C. Gordon- Member – Inuvialuit Game Council
Herbert Felix- Member – Inuvialuit Game Council
Doug Larsen – Member - Yukon Government
Dorothy Cooley - Alternate- Yukon Government
Martin Raillard – Member - Canadian Wildlife Service
Aileen Horler- Secretariat

Guests: Ron Larsen, Parks Canada, Inuvik
Richard Gordon, Herschel Island Territorial Park

4. Species at Risk/ COSEWIC

The Chair commented that there are three issues to cover in relation to Species at Risk– the establishment of a Yukon Species at Risk Committee, the follow-up to the meetings in April with COSEWIC and a request from CWS to review background information papers prepared for three bird species.

Martin Raillard reported that the Species at Risk Act is now in force. The provinces and territories have the first opportunity to protect species by developing their own legislation. However if any province or territory doesn't develop their own legislation to protect species then the federal government then has the mandate to step in and do it themselves. The Yukon has developed the legislation but it hasn't been introduced in the Legislature yet. No one is sure when this will happen. A Yukon Species at Risk Committee (YSARC) will be needed anyway as it is required under both levels of government. WMAC(NS) will have a seat on this committee. Hopefully the committee will be established this spring. Among its other responsibilities, YSARC will decide how the funds allocated by the federal government for species at risk should be spent in the Yukon. There will be lots of funding associated with the implementation of the Species at Risk Act. The question is whether to use it to invest in learning more about rare species (there are over 500 Beringian species in the Yukon) or in preventative management. Not all the funding should be used for protection. Funds were provided to establish the Conservation Data Centre. All the information gathered will ensure that the Yukon is better prepared to respond to any development activities.

The Chair commented that COSEWIC will be meeting again in November in Ottawa. The Wildlife Management Boards need to decide whether to try to meet again at the same time. This will depend on the progress COSEWIC has made with the draft revisions to its operating manual. If the revisions have not been completed there is no point in having another meeting at that time. COSEWIC is also looking for guidance on how the WMBs would relate to the Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge Sub-committee (ATKSC). What would their relationship be? What role would the WMBs play if any? The ATKSC only has one seat on the larger committee. What is the merit in developing a relationship with the ATKSC when the WMBs have the authority and mandate to deal directly with COSEWIC? The ATKSC will better serve southern First Nations who don't have any other means to participate.

The Chair drew the members' attention to a letter in the meeting binder from Wendy Nixon requesting the Council review the contents of three background information papers prepared for three rare bird species - Bluethroat, Yellow Wagtail and Black Guillemot. The papers were prepared for use in the development of species status reports for each of these birds. The Council has been asked to provide comments regarding other available sources of information, the level of detail that should be included in the final species status reports, and any concerns in relation to threats or changes to habitat. Any other comments are also welcome.

When asked how listing would affect the Guillemots, Martin Raillard replied that funds would become available for their protection. As an example, these funds could be used to stabilize the building they nest in. This is only a preliminary

assessment. If any recovery program was necessary it would be done in consultation with the Aklavik Hunters and Trappers Committee.

The Chair asked Danny C. Gordon to review the materials and provide his comments to the Council.

Action 03-09- 03: The Secretariat will contact Wendy Nixon to determine if the Aklavik Hunters and Trappers Committee has been asked to provide their comments on the background information papers prepared for Bluethroat, Yellow Wagtail and Black Guillemot.

Danny C. Gordon commented that he regularly sees common eiders in open water in November and December. These birds will freeze. Someone should go out and check these birds in the early winter. When asked why these birds are not listed by COSEWIC, Martin responded that he will ask the CWS specialist and report back to Danny.

5. Yukon North Slope Research Update- Bird Studies in the Clarence Lagoon Area, Summer 2003

The Chair welcomed Cameron Eckert, Conservation Biologist with YTG Environment. Cameron along with a crew of four other people spent several weeks June conducting bird studies in the Clarence Lagoon area. He explained that the first objective of the study was to document nesting and habitat use and establish population estimates for Bluethroat and Yellow Wagtail in the Clarence Lagoon area in Ivvavik National Park. Bluethroats migrate from Southeast Asia. The western Yukon is the farthest east these birds are found. The second objective was to document the occurrence, habitat use and nesting evidence for other species of conservation interest including Ruddy Turnstone, Red Phalarope, Stilt Sandpiper, and Buff-breasted Sandpiper.

This study was conducted for a number of reasons. The Bluethroat and other species in the Clarence River area are priorities of conservation interest. Current data are required to determine their population and conservation status in the Yukon. Nesting data on Bluethroats remains an outstanding gap in information for the Yukon's and Canada's avifauna. Maintaining current and comprehensive baseline data on Arctic breeders is required to monitor environmental change, such as changes in populations and habitat related to global climate change. Cameron added that it had been 10 years since work was done specifically on these birds.

Methods included line transect surveys through specific habitats, such as riparian shrubs, coastal ponds and lagoons. Focal observations of priority species on their nesting territories were conducted, as well as habitat surveys of Bluethroat nesting territories.

A total of 80 species were observed with nests records for 32 species. The study documented Canada's first breeding record for Bluethroat and 3 new nests records for Yellow wagtail. Several species new to Ivvavik National Park were recorded and include Dusky thrush, Hermit thrush, Arctic warbler, and Common grackle. Peregrine Falcon nest at Clarence Lagoon and a Smith's Longspur nest at upper Craig Creek established new breeding locations for these species. Pairs of King eiders and Pomarine jaegers suggest that these species breed in the Clarence Lagoon area.

Cameron reported the studies preliminary conclusions as follows:

- The Clarence River area supports diverse, abundant, and unique breeding bird communities.
- Bluethroat and Yellow Wagtail populations appear stable over ten years.
- Surveys of Bluethroat habitat are required to the east of the Clarence River area to establish more accurate population estimates for the Yukon's North Slope.
- Periodic monitoring of these populations are required to track environmental changes.

Ron Larsen commented that Parks Canada currently conducts breeding bird surveys in the Margaret Lake area and along the Firth River. Ron asked Cameron if Parks should consider doing them along the coast as well. Cameron replied that a coastal survey would provide a lot of valuable information. If done near the Firth delta the best place to do a survey is in the shrubs away from the braided areas.

When asked about priorities for the next five years, Cameron commented that birds in the Blow River area have never been studied. He expects that a lot of song birds would be found there.

6. Trapper Regulations

The Chair referred to a letter from Kelly Olson regarding the project to bring the Trapping Regulations into conformity with the IFA and Part 13 of the Wildlife Act. Following a meeting of the Trapping Regulations Working Group in January 2003, Kelly prepared a package of specific amendment proposals. This package underwent an internal review by the Dept. of Environment Regulation Steering Committee last summer. The ten proposals that received internal approval are now entering the consultation process (Package A attached to Kelly's letter). The five proposals that did not receive approval at this time will be brought back to the Working Group for further discussion (Package B). The Council hasn't been given any details as to why these later proposals did not receive approval. Kelly requested that the Council review the proposals contained in Package A and invited the Council to submit its recommendations on the proposed regulations to the Minister of Environment.

The Council reviewed each of the proposals in Package A, as follows:

- Section 2- Definition of a furbearing animal
- Section 6(1)- Eligibility requirements for concession holders
- Section 11- Group trapping concessions
- Section 15(2) Fur trading licence requirement
- Section 17- Export of furs
- Part V- Fees (Schedule B)
- Part VI- Prohibition or restriction
- Section 21- Notification of prohibition or restriction to media and native groups
- Section 22- Notification of prohibition or restriction to Boards
- Trapping Concession Boundary Regulations- amendment to maps

Council members agreed with all of the proposed changes as presented.

Motion

To recommend the proposed changes to the Yukon Trapping Regulations, as reviewed at the Council's September 2003 meeting, to the Yukon Minister of Environment.

Moved: Danny C. Gordon

Second: Doug Larsen

Motion carried

Action 03-09-04: The Secretariat will contact Kelly Olson to obtain information on the reasons why five proposals for changes to the Trapping Regulations did not receive internal YTG approval.

7. North Slope Conference

The Chair provided members with an update on the North Slope Conference. The Conference is now scheduled to be held 2 weeks later than the Council had originally recommended due to logistical considerations. The dates are now November 18-20.

The Chair of the Conference will be Bob Blair who is the past President and CEO of Foothills Pipeline. He was an active and well-known participant in the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry and is the past Chair of Nova Corporation. He has a reputation for being progressive on many issues, including environmental responsibility. The theme of the Conference is "Meeting the Challenges of Conservation and Beaufort Development on the Yukon North Slope". The conference will be an opportunity to provide industry with information on the region's conservation regime as well as the research that has been done on the Yukon North Slope.

In reviewing some of the ideas that have been put forward regarding the agenda, the Chair reported that there are three main areas that could be addressed, with respect to the significance of the coastal zone and the coastal plain- conservation, development and traditional use.

The conservation side of the program could include providing information about the accomplishments and challenges of community-based projects, such as the Westside Working Group, the Aklavik traditional knowledge project, the Community Conservation Plans, the Sustain project and the Borderlands Coop. There are also issues around other research work, including conservation management and climate change. A lot of work is being done but more is needed in relation to offshore development. The FJMC has suggested addressing the topic of 'empty oceans' and the issue of overharvesting. Information can be presented on Marine Environmental Quality and research work being conducted below the surface of the water.

There are several topics to address at the conference in relation to development. A workshop on best practices would invite industry to go further than the minimum when setting their environmental standards. There are issues around transportation support, its effect on the Herschel Basin and what some alternatives are. Industry also needs to be asked what are their interests and issues as do the Screening Committee and Review Board.

Richard Gordon commented that it's going to be difficult to balance conservation with development and opportunities for employment. His job is to protect Herschel Island to the greatest extent possible but many Inuvialuit want development because of the work it brings. This puts Herschel Island in a difficult position. There were many negative comments from visitors about the SSDC.

Doug Larsen commented that it would be worthwhile having a discussion about how things have changed for the Inuvialuit in the last 25 years. It would be good to hear this from an Inuvialuit perspective.

Questions were raised about the accessibility and storage of all the information that is going to be collected over the years by industry. How will it be made available to others? It is important for this information to get back to anyone who is doing research on the North Slope. There should be a way for people to know what is available.

8. Aklavik Harvest Study

The Chair welcomed Catherine Pinard who has been coordinating the Aklavik Harvest Study for YTG. Catherine provided a written a summary of results from 2001 and 2002.

Catherine reported that she is going back to Aklavik in October to train a new field worker. The interviews conducted in December will ask questions about big game only. Furbearers and big game are included in the April interviews. The interview area covers both the Yukon North Slope and the NWT. Interviews are done with Inuvialuit hunters only. The Gwich'in do their own interviewing and provide YTG with the information.

Harvest activity is identified using game management sub-zones as this is what YTG uses elsewhere in the territory. The Chair commented that it might be good to get more precise information for management and compensation purposes.

When asked if there is an information protocol in place, Catherine replied that there isn't one in place yet. For now the Yukon is only sharing information with GNWT and the Aklavik Hunters and Trappers Committee so there hasn't been a need for a protocol. HTC has never requested one be put in place.

9. MuskoX Management

The Chair reported that he and the Secretariat attended a one-day meeting in Inuvik in June for the purposes of reviewing the current draft of the MuskoX Management Plan. The meeting was also attended by Danny C. Gordon, Evelyn Storr, John Nagy, Larry Carpenter, Ian McDonald, Ray Case, Doug Larsen, and Dorothy Cooley. The group went through the plan and discussed a number of issues. Some of the main points were as follows:

- There has been a significant change in the population since last year. The plan talks about a stable population as being plus or minus 10 %. Is this 10% reasonable? In a small population it may be difficult to manage for stability in such a narrow range.
- The population has very different status between the two territories
- The interests of the two territorial governments are different in terms of conservation objectives for the population.
- Questions arose about survey methods and count estimates. What is the best way to come up with population numbers? John Nagy wants total population estimates instead of just a count.
- This is an introduced population. What are the implications on the native populations east of the Mackenzie?
- We need to know more about what the Alaskans are doing as they are also dealing with a big drop in numbers.
- Some parasite issues have been settled but some remain.
- The genetic issues need to be investigated too.

Doug Larsen commented that YTG does not want to see two plans with management issues being addressed in one plan and harvest and allocation issues in another plan. The two territories have different views about this population. The plan shouldn't be held up until these differences are settled. One

solution would be for the plan to require the two governments sort out their differences if and when it is required. The Council should also be encouraging government to resolve the genetics and parasite issues as well.

Another big issue is to figure out how to monitor the Richardson Mountains group. 43 muskox were seen during the sheep survey. YTG acknowledges that the Richardson Mountains population are a separate group and are not counted with the others in the North Slope population survey. They are accounted for in the total population count but they are noted as reported sightings. Management of the Richardson population is a shared jurisdiction and there is currently no interest from others (such as GNWT, GRRB) to get together to talk about management options.

Population counts are based on actual numbers seen on the Yukon North Slope and are therefore a minimum number. In Alaska, Pat Reynolds does her surveys using 3 km transects. YTG uses 10 km transects. Doug Larsen commented that the population count should undergo as much statistical analysis as possible given the cost of doing a bigger survey. YTG wants a plan in place before a harvest can go ahead. There's no need to start over. The workshop informed the plan. It's now up to individual agencies to endorse it.

Danny C. Gordon asked if there were still any concerns about sheep getting parasites from the muskox. Doug Larsen replied that a study conducted last year showed that there is no problem.

The Chair agreed to reword some of the text based on the discussion in Inuvik in June. Ian McDonald and Dorothy Cooley need to update numbers and revise the parts of the plan that refer to population counts. The Chair noted that there is also a need to get agreement between the two WMACs.

10. Grizzly Bear Management

The Chair referred to a letter in the meeting binder from Tim Devine (Manager, Wildlife and Fisheries, DWRED, Inuvik) to Duane Smith regarding the assigning of unused grizzly bear tags to bears killed for defense or for research purposes. There were a total of six defense and two research kills in the ISR in 2002-03. During the same period only 3 bears were harvested on the Yukon North Slope, leaving five tags unused. Tim is proposing that two of the North Slope tags be allocated to two bears killed in the Aklavik/ Inuvik hunting areas (GB01 and GB02).

Doug Larsen commented that quotas are allocated for sub-populations on the basis of total allowable harvest. Moving tags from one area to another may have an impact on the sustainable harvest. The quota has been set and it should be maintained. If bears were being over harvested on the North Slope it wouldn't be

good management practice to reallocated tags from another area. It would be better to borrow from the following year than from another area. Council members agreed that it is difficult to determine the potential for over harvesting because it is not easy to define a sub-population.

In reference to the North Slope grizzly bear population study, Doug Larsen distributed a detailed proposal prepared by Ramona Maraj. Ramona has already cached fuel on the North Slope in preparation for the field work. The research design has been completed and it is out for review. Ramona is addressing a number of funding issues. She has also contacted the University of Alaska Fairbanks to pursue graduate student involvement in the project. Ramona would like to do the first two years of the research herself and then have graduate students take over the work. Dorothy added that she has spoken to Ramona about trying to figure out a way to get more information on grizzly bear predation on muskox. Ron Larsen noted that Parks Canada will also be contributing funds to this project and that there will be many opportunities for YTG and Parks Canada to work together.

F. Financial Report (continued)

a) WMAC(NS) Budget

Council members reviewed the discussions held the previous day and agreed to the following reallocations in the budget:

- The \$1200 budgeted for muskox communications should be reallocated to the traditional knowledge project. Funds unspent in the budget for the Wildlife Conservation and Management Plan (approximately \$7000) are also to be reallocated to this project. This will bring the total budget to about \$13,000.
- A further \$5000 should be allocated to the muskox plan to finish up the work.
- A further \$3000 should be allocated to the North Slope Conference for a total of \$5000.
- Funds should be reallocated from 'meetings' category as required.

Motion

To reallocate funds in the WMAC(NS) 2003-2004 budget, as determined.

Moved: Martin Raillard
Second: Herbert Felix
Motion carried

J. Next Meeting

The Secretariat noted that the next Council meeting will be held sometime around December 14 to 16, 2003, in Aklavik or Inuvik, prior to the IGC meeting. Dates will be confirmed as soon as possible.

K. Adjournment

Motion

To adjourn.

Moved: Danny C. Gordon
Second: Dorothy Cooley
Motion carried

WMAC(NS) Chair

Date

WMAC(NS) Secretariat

Date