



Wildlife Management Advisory Council (North Slope)

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Minutes

WMAC(NS) QUARTERLY MEETING

Whitehorse, Yukon

High Country Inn

September 24 - 26, 2005

Saturday, September 24, 2005

Present: Lindsay Staples – Chair
Herbert Felix – Inuvialuit Game Council (Member)
Ernest Pokiak – Inuvialuit Game Council (Member)
Ron Larsen – Government of Canada, Parks Canada (Member)
Doug Larsen – Yukon Government (Member)
Wendy Nixon – Government of Canada, Environment Canada (Alternate)
Aileen Horler – Secretariat
Michelle Sicotte – Secretariat

Guests: Richard Gordon – Herschel Island Territorial Park

A. Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 9 a.m. The Chair welcomed Michelle, who is replacing Aileen Horler as Secretariat. The Chair also welcomed Richard and thanked him for attending.

B. Review and Approval of Agenda

The muskox management plan, wildlife compensation, and the Arctic Borderlands Ecological Knowledge Co-op were identified as important issues to address at the meeting. A review of the Porcupine Caribou Management Board harvest management strategy was added to the agenda under New Business.

Motion to adopt the agenda as revised

Moved: Herbert Felix

Second: Ron Larsen

Motion Carried

C. Review and Approval of Minutes

1. April 9-10, 2005

Members reviewed the minutes of the meeting held April 9-10, 2005 in Inuvik. The following comments and requests for changes were made:

Page 8: Change Steering to Sterling on the second-last bullet on the page

Page 20: Change Tapping to Trapping on Line 27

Motion to adopt the minutes of the April 2005 meeting as amended

Moved: Ernest Pokiak

Second: Ron Larsen

Motion Carried

2. June 14, 2005 (teleconference)

Members reviewed the minutes of the June 14, 2005 teleconference. There were no comments or requests for changes.

Motion adopt the minutes of the June 2005 teleconference

Moved: Doug Larsen

Second: Herbert Felix

Motion Carried

3. July 24-25, 2005

Members reviewed the minutes of the meeting held July 24-25 in Sheep Creek, Ivvavik National Park, Yukon North Slope. The following comments and requests for changes were made:

Page 4: Change “for” to “from” on the second last line.

Motion to adopt the minutes of the July 2005 meeting as amended

Motion: Ernest Pokiak

Second: Doug Larsen

Motion Carried

D. Review of Action Items

The Secretariat and Chair reported on the status of the action items as follows:

1. July 24-45, 2005 Meeting

Action 05-07-01: The Council will review what the Inuvialuit Final Agreement states regarding wildlife compensation.

Defered: Chair to provide a briefing during the December meeting.

Action 05-07-02: Council members will review the draft Aklavik harvest study protocol and submit comments to the Secretariat prior to the next Council meeting. The Secretariat will forward the comments to Doug Larsen.

In Progress. Draft Aklavik harvest study protocol included in binders. Draft will be reviewed at the December meeting.

Action 05-07-03: The Secretariat will determine if the Aklavik Hunters and Trappers Committee is receiving annual reports on the results of the Aklavik harvest study.

Complete. Yukon Government is sending results on a regular basis.

Action 05-07-04: The Secretariat will distribute copies of the gazetted Yukon Environmental and Socio-Economic Assessment Act regulations when they are available.

Complete. Copies of the new regulations were distributed at the meeting.

Action 05-07-05: The Secretariat will contact Erik Val to follow-up on the Council's recommendations for changes to the Herschel Island Management Plan.

Complete. Eric attended the meeting and provided a briefing.

Action 05-07-06: The Council will review the provisions in the Inuvialuit Final Agreement as they relate to Thetis Bay.

Complete: Chair provided a briefing during the meeting.

Action 05-07-07: *Updated to Read.* Chair will request the Environmental Impact Screening Committee take the necessary steps to obtain a copy of the terms of reference/license for the SDC.

Action 05-07-08: The Secretariat will request that the Yukon provide a briefing document to the Council that describes Yukon jurisdiction and administrative arrangements with respect to polar bear and the Yukon's management interests in polar bear.

Requested.

Action 05-07-09: The Secretariat will compile a list of potential Council projects for members to review at the September meeting.

Complete. A list of projects was distributed and is on the agenda for discussion.

Action 05-07-10: The Secretariat will contact the biologists involved in North Slope projects over the summer and arrange for them to make presentations of their work at the next Council meeting in Whitehorse.

Complete. Researchers were contacted and research updates are included in the meeting agenda.

Action 05-07-11: The Secretariat will distribute the current draft of the Herschel Island Management Plan to all members.

Complete. A copy of the plan is included in the meeting binder.

Action 05-07-12: The Secretariat will invite Catherine Pinard to the Council's September meeting to discuss the next steps in the preparation of the 10-year report of the Arctic Borderlands Ecological Knowledge Co-op programs on the Yukon North Slope.

Complete: Catherine was unable to attend the meeting. Discussion about the report is included in the agenda.

Action 05-07-13: The Secretariat will compile the summaries of the results of the Aklavik Inuvialuit Community Monitoring Program.

Complete: Summary was included in the meeting binder.

2. Outstanding Items

Action 05-04-02: Information on the Enforcement Workshop held in Aklavik in March 2005 should be included in the next WMAC(NS) newsletter.

Outstanding: The Secretariat will work with Ron on the article.

Action 05-04-03: Ron will send a copy of the Ivvavik National Park enforcement poster to the Secretariat.

Requested.

Action 05-04-11: WMAC(NS) will obtain a copy of the Aklavik Hunters and Trappers Committee policies and procedures for the issuance of bear tags, and review them for any implications associated with the recent change in tag season for the North Slope harvest.

Complete. Copy was obtained and WMAC(NS) provided suggestions.

Action 05-04-13: *Updated to Read.* Chair to request the EISC to identify the current research permitting and reporting process to determine (1) what kinds of research the boards and councils and Environmental Impact Screening Committee are and are not receiving information about, and (2) what mechanisms can be put in place to ensure that WMAC(NS) knows about all North Slope research, including that being conducted by academic institutions and industry. Secretariat to update the research matrix and research protocols. The council will review this issue at the next meeting.

Ongoing.

Action 05-04-15: WMAC(NS) will write to the appropriate contact at Environment Canada inquiring as to EC's intentions regarding the recognition and role of the Wildlife Management Boards in the recovery process. The steps Environment Canada has taken as follow-up to the meetings held in Whitehorse in April 2003 on this matter should also be queried.

Complete.

Action 05-04-16: WMAC(NS) will write to Parks Canada regarding how and when zoning issues in Ivvavik National Park will be reviewed, notwithstanding that the revised management plan has not been approved by the Minister responsible for Parks Canada.

Complete: The issue has been raised with Parks Canada.

Action 05-04-17: WMAC(NS) will review and comment on the wording of Parks Canada's revision to the regulations regarding the harvesting of quota species in the national park.

Ongoing. Documents in binder.

E. Report from the Chair

1. Yukon North Slope Offshore Waters

The Chair provided an overview of the relevant sections of the Inuvialuit Final Agreement with respect to Thetis Bay. There are concerns among council members, and expressed to council by Herschel Island Territorial Park, over the storage of drill platforms and drill rigs in Thetis Bay. The Chair expressed the need for an integrated coastal zone planning process for offshore waters. Chair raised issue of the barite transfer

incident on the SDC. Council requested an update on this matter from Richard Gordon during his presentation.

Action 05-09-01: WMAC(NS) will invite Bob Bell from Fisheries Joint Management Committee to the December meeting to provide an update on offshore development and the implementation of the Beaufort Sea Integrated Management Planning Initiative (BSIMPI).

2. Inuvialuit Game Council (IGC) Meeting

The Chair recently attended the IGC meeting in Whitehorse. At the meeting there was a presentation on caribou in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region (Bluenose, Bathurst and Cape Bathurst Herds) showing population estimates from 20 years previous and a recent survey. All herds have declined dramatically over this period (+/- 40%). The Government of the Northwest Territories has looked at these declines at the Ministerial level and identified management options. Researchers stated that given the estimated population size the current harvest level is not sustainable.

The IGC expressed interest in working on the Richardson Mountain Sheep Management Plan and being a signatory to it, if it proved acceptable.

F. Ongoing Business

1. Herschel Island Territorial Park

a) Status of the Herschel Island Management Plan (Erik Val, Yukon Government)

The Parks Branch is continuing to finalize the Herschel Island Management Plan. Erik received comments on the revisions provided by WMAC(NS) in June 2005. The Parks Branch requires agreement from WMAC(NS) on the revisions so the Plan can go to Cabinet for approval. The Council reviewed the amendments.

The Chair updated Erik of the Council's intention to request the Inuvialuit Environmental Screening Committee to obtain a copy of the Terms and Conditions for the SDC, as well as the Council's review of the provisions of the Inuvialuit Final Agreement as they relate to Thetis Bay.

The Council had a follow-up discussion about the amendments to the Plan. The Council accepts the text provided by Erik, with the following changes:

4.4 (b) The YNSWCP and the LTRMP of WMAC(NS) *and the provisions of the Inuvialuit Final Agreement* will be *taken into account* in the assessment *and management* of potential impacts on Herschel Island – Qikiqtaruk Park by proposed oil and gas activities in the vicinity of the Park.

4.4 (c) The Yukon Government will monitor existing structures and their related activities associated with oil and gas exploration and evaluate their effects on the

visual landscape and visitor experience of the park. When appropriate, the Yukon Government will work with the companies and the appropriate permitting agencies to minimize the visual impact to the park.

- 4.4 (d) The review of existing lease renewals and applications for future leases for structures visible from Herschel Island Park, will *take into account* the objectives of the Park and the adjacent National Park *and the provisions of the Inuvialuit Final Agreement*.

Action 05-09-02: WMAC(NS) will forward the changes on the Herschel Island Management Plan to Erik Val.

2. WMAC(NS) Project Update

a) Breeding Shorebird Survey (Pam Sinclair, Canadian Wildlife Service)

The shorebird survey on the Yukon North Slope was part of the Program for Regional and International Shorebird Monitoring (PRISM). Two local people were involved in the research. Plots were selected by PRISM and two surveys were done in each plot. Researchers counted the number of pairs who have the centre of their territory (i.e. nest) within the plot. The work was timed for when birds were laying eggs and doing courtship flights. Nine shorebird species were counted nesting in plots. Four incidental species flew over plots, etc. Thirty-two other kinds of birds were counted. Researchers were impressed by the high diversity of birds observed.

Action 05-09-03: WMAC(NS) will request summary reports for all 2005 WMAC(NS) funded projects.

3. Grizzly Bear Research and Management

a) YNS Grizzly Bear Project Update (Ramona Maraj, Yukon Government)

Ramona provided an update on the 2005 fieldwork and community components of the research. The update included a written report that was distributed.

The next steps for the research include: (1) developing a community driven garbage strategy for community members at Shingle Point, (2) collecting DNA samples, (3) gathering and consolidating traditional knowledge, and (4) monitoring collars.

Ramona discussed issues with storing fuel at Shingle Point. The Department of National Defense owns the airstrip at Shingle Point, where fuel has been cached previously. The Department of National Defense no longer wants fuel stored at Shingle Point on the airstrip, as they are responsible for fuel spills. Yukon Government may lease and manage a portion of the airstrip as an option for continuing to cache fuel at Shingle Point. Ron has looked into this issue and has other options for storing fuel, including enclosing the

barrels in another container to capture leaks. Ron will speak with his contact at the Department of National Defense about this issue next week and get back to Ramona. Richard mentioned that there may also be an option to cache fuel at Herschel Island.

Action 05-09-04: WMAC(NS) will invite Ramona to the December meeting to meet with the Aklavik Hunters and Trappers Committee and the Inuvialuit Game Council.

G. Correspondence

Members reviewed the following correspondence in the binders:

- 1. Report from Ernest Pokiak on the Adapting to Climate Change Conference.* The Chair commented that reports from members on events they are attending are very useful.
- 2. Letter from Aklavik Hunter and Trappers Committee regarding the grizzly bear research program.* The letter was in support of the research proposal and highlights the importance of continued communication between WMAC(NS) and the AHTC.
- 3. Letter from the Porcupine Caribou Management Board regarding recommendations for regulation changes on the Dempster Highway.* Council commented that regulation changes are also within the mandate of the Inuvialuit Game Council.
- 4. Yukon Environmental Assessment Newsletter.* The Chair noted that Yukon Environmental and Socio-Economic Assessment Board are inviting public input on assessment rules and gazetted regulations.

H. Financial Report

1. Revenue and Expenses September 2005

The Secretariat provided an explanation of the Statement of Revenue and Expenses for September 2005. The Secretariat stressed the need to make commitments for project funding at this meeting to ensure projects are underway at the December meeting.

2. Inuvialuit Participation Costs

The Chair provided an explanation of the Inuvialuit participation costs. Currently participation costs exceed the budget. In general, there is funding to send Inuvialuit members to one conference per year. It is WMAC (NS) practice to only bring alternates to meetings when they are in the region.

Motion to give Michelle Sicotte and Doug Larsen signing authority on financial account

Moved: Ernest Pokiak

Second: Herbert Felix

Motion Carried

Sunday, September 25, 2005

Present: Lindsay Staples – Chair
Herbert Felix – Inuvialuit Game Council (Member)
Ernest Pokiak – Inuvialuit Game Council (Member)
Ron Larsen – Government of Canada, Parks Canada (Member)
Doug Larsen – Yukon Government (Member)
Wendy Nixon – Government of Canada, Environment Canada (Alternate)
Aileen Horler – Secretariat
Michelle Sicotte – Secretariat

Guests: Richard Gordon – Herschel Island Territorial Park

F. Ongoing Business (continued)

4. Yukon Environmental and Socio-Economic Act

The Council had a brief discussion on the gazetted *Yukon Environmental and Socio-Economic Act (YESAA)*. Comments on the regulations are due October 17. The general comments were as follows: Inuvialuit rights and interests have been recognized but not addressed in the proposed *YESAA* regulations. The Council is not clear why this omission has occurred. Confusion remains about how proposed undertakings on the Yukon North Slope will be treated consistently under both the regulations and the provisions of the IFA. Most notably, screening exemptions for research studies that apply in other parts of the Yukon cannot not be triggered by the WMAC(NS) or other IFA co-management bodies on the Yukon North Slope in that the organizations are not recognized in the regulations.

Action 05-09-05: WMAC(NS) will have a teleconference in October to discuss Yukon Environmental and Socio-Economic Board Rules of Procedures and *YESAA* Regulations.

5. Parks Canada Report

a) Activities Update

Ivvavik National Park hosted the Artists in the Park program at Sheep Creek this summer. It was a successful program with a good mix of artists. There was also a Biology 20 field trip and a second youth trip to Sheep Creek.

Parks Canada worked with Arctic Nature Tours to develop a package to the Babbage Falls Day Use Site with an Arctic Nature Tours guide and an interpretive staff from Parks Canada. All the trips were sold out in advance. The program delivery was affected by

weather. The response from people who went on the trip was very positive. There was also interest by locals to visit the site as well. Arctic Nature Tours is including the program in next seasons' advertising and is keen to continue working on the program.

It has been a busy year for research and monitoring in Ivvavik. Natasha Lyons has been doing work in Aklavik on artifacts that have been collected as well as collecting stories from people in Aklavik. She has an initial set of results from her study.

Action 05-09-06: Ron Larsen will send copies of Nathasha Lyons' initial research results to WMAC(NS).

There was concern about the quality of work at the fuel clean-up site at Sheep Creek. There are plans to have the contractors back to the site to finish the work. Some contamination remains on the back north and east walls of the hole and directly under where the tank was. There were limitations due to the equipment available at Sheep Creek. There are concerns about destabilizing the bank by digging the hole deeper. Currently, the clean-up meets commercial standards. Following this fuel spill Parks Canada has changed their fuel caching protocols. It is intended that the project will be complete this fall. The contractors are creating a manual for the bio-pile and it is expected five years will pass before the bio-pile will be dismantled and spread.

A small Cessna 172 crashed at Komakuk Beach this summer. Fuel canisters were damaged and there was a fuel spill. The plane has been removed from the site. Ron passed on the regulations about the spill cleanup to the insurance adjustors. The assessment for the cleanup may be done this fall but the clean up will happen next spring.

b) Ivvavik National Park Management Plan (Update)

Christian made amendments to the Plan based on comments from the last conference call. There was some confusion about the status of the amendments. It was anticipated that the amendments would be tabled at this meeting. In preparation for the upcoming release of the Ivvavik Management Plan, WMAC(NS) updated the letter of endorsement. The letter was circulated for members to sign.

Action 05-09-07: Ron will obtain copies of the amendments from Christian and forward them to WMAC(NS).

c) Regulations

There was a discussion about the development of regulations in Ivvavik National Park. Ron will find out when the regulations will be in effect. The next step is to work with the Inuvialuit Game Council and the Aklavik Hunters and Trappers Committee to determine what mechanisms will work for empowering the by-laws. Parks Canada will endorse the use of grizzly tags issued for Herschel Island in Ivvavik. If tags are not issued on Herschel, Parks Canada will issue the tags for Ivvavik.

d) Upcoming Business

Ron circulated the three year business plan for the Western Arctic Field Unit. Parks Canada is looking for feedback from WMAC(NS) on general priorities.

Ecological Monitoring

Parks Canada is developing a list of indicators for monitoring the state of Ivvavik National Park with respect to ecological integrity. Parks Canada will consult with WMAC(NS) on the indicators. Parks Canada is attempting to develop consistent indicators across all parks. Existing ecological monitoring protocols will be incorporated.

Zoning

Council members identified zoning as a priority for Ivvavik National Park. There was a discussion about the difference between wilderness zoning and wilderness declarations.

The Council discussed the business plan. Zoning continues to be an outstanding management concern. Although Environmental Integrity monitoring was identified as a priority for Members, it was decided that it is a Parks Canada priority that will move ahead on its own.

Members asked for clarification on the heritage project for Ivvavik National Park. This project involves development of interpretive materials based on Marion Nagy's work in Aklavik. The Chair advised Ron of previous proposed work by the Council to update and improve upon this work. A Parks Canada cultural resource person is required to move this project forward.

Identifying Species at Risk in Ivvavik was viewed as a priority. The members added "rare species assessment" to "update resource description".

The Council identified the top priorities with respect to the Yukon North Slope as follows (priority items are in bold and prioritized numerically):

- 1. Begin the implementation of EI monitoring and reporting work plan, including program evaluation, pilot development, community engagement and strengthening bioregional group (4)**
- 2. With Inuvialuit, complete development of subsistence harvesting regulations (inclusion of bylaws) (2)**
3. Stokes point landfill delineation and assessment complete
- 4. Grizzly bear population research completed for Ivvavik (1)**
5. Complete the State of the Park Report for Ivvavik
6. Complete clean-up and implement monitoring program for Stokes Point landfill
- 7. Update resource description (rare species assessment) (5)**
8. Complete heritage project for Ivvavik (oral history)
9. Complete Komakuk Dewline book and FR cultural guide
10. Enhancing communication with Aklavik Inuvialuit groups
- 11. Zoning (3)**
12. Porcupine Caribou ecology and monitoring

2. WMAC(NS) Project Update (Continued)

a) Rare Plants and Animals on the Yukon North Coast (Bruce Bennett, Nature Serve Yukon, Yukon Department of Environment)

The researchers spent three weeks on the Yukon North Coast this season surveying plants. Previously, there was no clear understanding of rare plants on the Yukon North Coast and the impact of climate change in species was also unknown.

Most of the work was done at Shingle Point, Clarence Lagoon, Kay Point and Ptarmigan Bay. Researchers spent a short time at the Blow River Delta and at Komakuk DEW line station. King Point and Stokes Point were not well surveyed because of bad weather.

No new plant species for the Yukon were found. There were 268 species of vascular plants recorded and 193 collected. Twenty-five species were new to the Yukon Coast. Twenty new vascular species were identified in Ivvavik National Park. Five species (mostly aquatic) were not previously known in the ISR in the Yukon. The species found in Ivvavik were very different than those species east of the Babbage River. Researchers found no introduced species anywhere along the coast with the exception of introduced grasses on the waste dumps on the DEW line station at Shingle Point.

Arctic pennycress, a globally rare plant, was found at a few locations. It was most common on Herschel Island and there were a few populations at Ptarmigan Bay. It was unusual the researchers did not find Arctic Rock Cress, Sea Thrift, Siberian Trisetum as these plants were previously reported as very common. Other plants reported as common in the past have disappeared from Kay point, Nunaluk Spit and Clarence Lagoon. This may be due to increased disturbance by storms. Arctic marsh sedge was found during the survey. It was previously only known from the Dempster Highway. Researchers observed large areas of polar grass.

At Shingle Point, snails were collected to look for parasites in Muskox. The small mammal report for the Shingle Point and Blow River area is to be completed. It appeared to be a poor year for small mammals.

This work brought the first bryologist to the Yukon Coast. There were lots of interesting species of mosses, lichens and liverworts found and collected that has not been previously identified on the Yukon North Coast.

Next steps:

- Return to the area east of the Blow River, King Point and Stokes Point
- Determine what happened to plants previously identified as common
- Go further inland
- Develop a list of plants that are truly common on the Yukon North Coast.

Bruce expressed his appreciation for the financial support from the Council and the support of Danny C. Gordon – the guide for the research team. Bruce will advise the Council early in January if he is interested in continuing this work next season.

I. New Business

1. Review proposed WMAC(NS) Projects (2005-2006)

Currently there is \$47,000 in unallocated project funds for 2005/2006. The Council reviewed the WMAC(NS) projects proposed by the Chair and Secretariat and had a discussion on the current funding priorities.

a) Sources of Documented Traditional Knowledge (Database Update)

In 1998 the Aurora Research Institute compiled all traditional knowledge literature available for the Yukon North Slope in a database. The database has not been updated in seven years. The Council agreed to move forward with updating the database.

b) Publication and Distribution of the North Slope Climate Change Report

The Chair stressed the importance of making the work available to the public and this project is intended to review and publish the work. Members expressed that more could be added to the project. There was concern about the depth of detail provided in the summaries and the ability for the report to inform management decisions. It was described as a good tool to identify the sources that are in existence. The Chair said that it may be premature to talk about how to publish the report until Members have had time to review the report and provide comments.

Action 05-09-08: WMAC(NS) members will read the climate change report and terms of reference for the contract. The report will be reviewed at the December meeting.

c) Publication and distribution of the Muskox management plan

The council agreed to set aside funds for this project.

d) Ten Year Results of the Arctic Borderlands Ecological Knowledge Co-op (the Co-op) Programs on the Yukon North Slope (1996-2005)

The Co-op has collected government data and community information for ten years in Aklavik. This report would include a compilation of government data and traditional knowledge over a ten year period. The Council agreed that it would be important to reflect the limits of the data in the report. It is important for community members to have access to the information they provided. The Council agreed to move forward on this project.

e) Aklavik Ecosystem Monitoring

The Chair highlighted WMAC(NS) commitments in the area of ecological monitoring on the Yukon North Slope. The Secretariat provided a summary of these commitments as stated in the Conservation and Management Plan. This proposal assumes WMAC(NS), on an interim basis, would undertake monitoring and deliver the data to the Co-op which

would coordinate the data for all the communities. Members want to ensure monitoring in Aklavik this year but were concerned that this approach would lead to the breakdown of the Co-op. The Council determined it was premature to do monitoring in Aklavik.

f) Co-op Survey Program

Last year, WMAC(NS) had a contractor review and assess the Co-op community-based monitoring program questionnaire and database. The findings have been outlined in a report to WMAC(NS). The contractor raised some concerns about questionnaire development and use, as well as the size and organization of the database. WMAC(NS) would like to finalize this report for use for the Co-op and it's partners. The report has highlighted the need for a re-assessment of both the questionnaire and database structure.

There was agreement among council members of the importance of producing a report, on behalf of WMAC(NS), to review the methods and produce recommendations for the Co-op. Members will review the report and determine how to convey the findings. Further work with Catherine Pinard on this project is required. Members highlighted the importance in involving social scientists with experience in community monitoring when modifying the existing questionnaire.

g) Institutional Issues at the Co-op

Council members raised concerns about the status of the Co-op, including limited staff support available at the Canadian Wildlife Service, change in administration, lack of funding and the status of the board of directors

There was a meeting with Co-op partners in May 2005. The Secretariat provided the minutes from the discussion. There were recommendations from that meeting but they have not been circulated and the Secretariat was unsure if the any of the recommendations have been implemented. The Council agreed that they have a responsibility to make recommendations about the future of the Co-op

Action 05-09-09: WMAC(NS) will recommend Parks Canada and the Canadian Wildlife Service will put their contributions towards the Co-op as they see most appropriate. WMAC(NS) will withhold funds from the Co-op until such time as members have the opportunity to meet with Co-op staff.

h) Development of Inuvialuit Final Agreement orientation/education materials

There is a need to develop educational materials that explains certain aspects of the IFA as it applies to the Yukon North Slope and Inuvialuit harvesting rights on the North Slope for new board members. These materials should also address the roles and responsibilities of the various boards. There is also some interest in developing a hands-on training course as well. It was suggested that WMAC(NS) involve other boards in this initiative. Members expressed concern about making the project too big. If the materials are aimed at a general audience and an average reader other boards could find it useful. It was decided that the materials be developed primarily for WMAC(NS) at this time. Wendy suggested sending a letter to other organizations to advise them of our intention to go ahead with this project.

i) Porcupine Caribou Management Board Harvest Management Strategy

Doug informed the Council of the harvest management agreement currently being developed by the Porcupine Caribou Management Board that requires funding. The Council may want to allocate funding to this project conceptually. The Council discussed the program and agreed to allocate funds towards the project.

Action 05-09-10: WMAC(NS) will contribute \$2000 to Phase I of the harvest management agreement developed by the Porcupine Caribou Management Board.

j) Video Project on the North Slope Grizzly Bear Population Study

This proposal would include creating videos with footage from the Grizzly Bear Population Study of the three stages of the research project (introduction, interim, and conclusion). The videos would serve as a different communication tool to inform about the project. The videos could be used at home or in the classroom. The contractor would work with Ramona on the project. An initial scoping followed by an actual cost of production and duplication is required. The Council is interested in reviewing a proposal at the next meeting.

Motion to proceed with the following projects:

- Updating the Traditional Knowledge Database
- Publication and Distribution of the Muskox Management Plan
- Publication of the Aklavik Ecological Monitoring 10 Year Report
- WMAC(NS) to develop a report and recommendations based on Catherine Pinard's review of the ABEKC database
- Develop IFA education materials

Moved: Herbert Felix

Second: Ron Larsen

Motion carried

Doug expressed concern that \$23,000 remains unallocated.

Action: WMAC(NS) will have a teleconference before December to discuss additional options for allocating funding.

Monday, September 28, 2005

Present: Lindsay Staples – Chair
Herbert Felix – Inuvialuit Game Council (Member)
Ernest Pokiak – Inuvialuit Game Council (Member)
Doug Larsen – Yukon Government (Member)
Wendy Nixon – Government of Canada, Environment Canada (Alternate)
Aileen Horler – Secretariat

Michelle Sicotte – Secretariat

Guests: Richard Gordon – Herschel Island Territorial Park
Mike Connor, Alan Koprowsky, Susan Davies - Department of Environment

F. Ongoing Business (Continued)

1. Herschel Island Territorial Park (Continued)

b) 2005 Activities (Richard Gordon, Herschel Island Territorial Park)

Richard Gordon provided an update of 2005 seasonal operations at Herschel Island Territorial Park. Two new rangers were recruited this season. Only 7 of 70 applicants were from the Inuvialuit community. Richard expressed concern that the hiring process was too slow making the beginning of the season rushed. Rangers had a pre-season meeting with Dorothy Cooley and Chris Burns. There were 11 shifts over the season. Richard was pleased with the initiative of the returning rangers in training new rangers. There were seven caribou harvested this season (5 bulls, 2 cows).

There were 480 visitors (97 from the cruise ship and 80 rafters from Firth River) at the park this year. This is down from the 2004 season (520 visitors). July was an extremely busy month with 23 twin otter flights. The air strip is being used a lot. Richard suggested visitors may need permits to use the airstrip. The rangers have concerns with low flying aircraft over the park, which may be affecting caribou. At present, it is not economical to use floats. Council members expressed concern that the number of flights might possibly affect nesting birds and disturbing vegetation.

The elder and youth program was successful this season. Four elders, two camp attendants and five youth attended. The youth spent time learning from elders and accompanying rangers on their duties. In the future coordinators need to be more aware of the medical conditions of participants due to the remote nature of the island.

Repairs are urgently needed to the ranger accommodations at Herschel, including: windows and floors, insulation under the building, etc. Herschel Island will contribute \$20,000 to the project next season. This season Herschel Island staff acquired some new equipment, including stoves, a boat, solar panels, laptop and projector.

The Council discussed the ERM Instruction Manual for Rangers. All the data from the program is stored in Dawson City with Dorothy Cooley. The rangers appreciate seeing the results and importance of the work they are involved in.

The Chair suggested organizing a meeting to discuss the different ecological monitoring initiatives on the North Slope and how they work together.

Richard discussed training options for rangers this winter including wilderness first aid, plant identification, law enforcement and gun safety.

Projects identified for next season at Herschel include: repairs of ranger living quarters, developing a project description for the restoration of the sod and ice houses, maintenance on skidoos, purchase of new sleds, meeting in Aklavik to de-brief on the elder/youth program, repainting the buildings, work on the whaler headstones, purchasing of Inuvialuit tools and clothing for interpretation, working with human resources to hire a part time office assistant, work on the Junior Ranger Program (interpretation), acquiring hand-held radios and repeater, and trail assessment.

3. **Species at Risk**

a) **Proposed *Wildlife Act* Amendments for Species at Risk (SAR)**

The Chair welcomed Mike Connor, Alan Koprowsky, and Susan Davies from Yukon Government Department of Environment to brief the Council on proposals for amendments to the *Yukon Wildlife Act*.

Two years previous, YG proposed the development of a stand alone act to address SAR. Since then YG decided to instead update the *Wildlife Act* to address federal SAR legislation and regulations. This will enable YG to focus effort on species management and recovery planning.

The definition of *Wild Species* was introduced in the *Act* to provide the Yukon with the ability to deal with any species (plant or animal) listed federally.

The Chair noted that discussions at the COSEWIC meeting in Whitehorse in 2002 lead to a change in the listing process where boards and councils are now included in the sub-committees. The role of boards and councils in species recovery is significant. There was no follow-up on this issue, beyond the letter that has been sent by the Council to Environment Canada regarding revisions to the Recovery Manual to address the role of Co-Management bodies.

Representatives from Yukon Government Department of Environment discussed the proposal for involving boards and councils in recovery planning. Canada and British Columbia have a bilateral agreement where cooperation of boards and councils in recovery is addressed by a clause under Aboriginal engagement. Yukon Government is in discussion with Canada on a clause requiring Canada to invite affected First Nations, boards and councils to participate in species recovery. The current suggestion is to go through recovery process and if harvest limitations are in place the boards and councils will be engaged.

The Chair noted that there is an important role for boards and councils with respect to recovery. This role is not restricted to the consultation process but also as participants in the recovery planning.

The separation between the development and implementation of the recovery strategy was noted.

YG representatives stressed that there is flexibility on how the process for involving boards and councils in recovery planning in the Yukon.

The role of boards and councils must be laid out in the legislation and consistent with other provisions of the act.

Comments on the proposals for future amendments are due October 21, 2005.

Proposed Wildlife Act Amendments for Consistency with the UFA

YG representatives also discussed the “Proposed Yukon *Wildlife Act* Amendments Required for Consistency with Yukon First Nation and Gwich’in Final Agreements”. Like the species at risk amendments, these amendments will be a separate part of the *Act*. The changes to the *Wildlife Act* will not affect the IFA amendments. If there are changes that do affect the IFA amendments WMAC(NS) will be consulted. It is intended that the changes are brought to the legislative sitting this fall.

Comments on the amendments are due October 21, 2005.

Action 05-09-11: WMAC(NS) will hold a conference call in October to discuss the amendments to the *Wildlife Act*. Members will provide comments to the Secretariat one week prior to the teleconference. The Secretariat will circulate the comments.

Updating Wildlife Regulations

The Council and YG representatives agreed to meet early in the New Year to discuss updating the regulations to address the changes made to the *Wildlife Act* to be consistent with the Inuvialuit Final Agreement. Trapping issues were identified as one issue in particular to address.

The Chair encouraged Alan and Susan to review the YESAA regulations for the Yukon North Slope as they pertain to IFA arrangements on behalf of their departments.

The Council also raised the issue of tracking research activity on the North Slope and the need to establish a process for informing different organizations of both government and non-government research projects and initiatives.

The Chair advised the YG representatives of the intent of WMAC(NS) to draft a letter to

Yukon Government and Government of the Northwest Territories to request a common policy for wildlife compensation in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region.

2. WMAC(NS) Project Update (Continued)

b) Herschel Island Birds Survey - Project Update (Cameron Eckert, Yukon Environment)

Black guillemots took up residence on Herschel Island sometime between 100 years ago and now. Black guillemots are more abundant in the Eastern Arctic. A small portion of the population resides in the northwest. Herschel once had the largest breeding colony in the Northwest. The birds on Herschel nest in the Mission House and spend time loafing and feeding in the water. Naturally the birds nest on the beach in spaces in rocks and driftwood. Nesting boxes on top of the mission house (roof) and in the house too. The birds use nest in the boxes and nest within the spaces in the structure of the building.

Rangers have collected data on black guillemots since 1988. The data is sporadic over the years. In the early years there was upwards of 60 eggs at the colony with 36 sites occupied and about 80 birds. There was a drastic drop in eggs and live chicks in 2003/2004 when 8-10 sites were occupied, 13 eggs laid and likely none hatched.

These declines are apparent among many other species of arctic seabirds. At Point Barrow, Alaska the early retreat of ice has limited food for black guillemots and researchers are anticipating a decline in the population as a result. As the ice moves off shore there is a shift from large cod to small cod and other smaller fish.

Cameron found the following results from the 2005 surveys:

Approximately 47 adults were counted on the water. Approximately 50-60 birds were counted in total. Eight viable nests were counted. The birds were eating small near-shore fish that were smaller than those observed at Point Barrow. The birds are not thought to have moved locations; only a single adult was seen northwest of Herschel. The results from the nest boxes are not yet available.

Cameron is interested in returning to Herschel in 2006 to continue research:

- Continue monitoring the population and nesting success
- Further standardize nest box surveys and counts with rangers
- Identification of the prey species (fish)
- Be on the lookout for “prospecting puffins”

c) Yukon North Slope Vegetation Change Measurements (Catherine Kennedy, Yukon Government)

In the 1980's researchers produced an ecological map of Herschel Island. In a subsequent visit 20 years later researchers noticed an increase in polargrass, which appears to be invading mudboils and stable vegetation types. Similar trends were found on both

vegetation types surveyed. Researchers found similar trends on one type on the coastal plain of Ivvavik.

Catherine is networking with other biologists in the Western Arctic on the issue. She has been unable to find other researchers working on this issue.

Rare plants and runways

The preliminary survey suggests the lungwort is abundant on some spits and absent from others. The plant may not be able to survive with wave action, wind or planes landing on Pauline Cove airstrip.

Doug suggested using satellite imagery to look at the orientation of the spits to possibly establish a trend. There was a discussion on the satellite imagery available for Herschel Island. There is interest to work with other organizations to obtain digital imagery for Herschel Island.

J. Review of Agenda

The Council reviewed the agenda and determined the following are priorities to be discussed on a teleconference prior to the next Quarterly meeting:

- Response to YESAA regulations
- Response to the amendments of the *Wildlife Act*
- Final draft of the Canadian Muskox Management Plan
- Directions on Department of Fisheries and Oceans proposed regulations

The following items will be moved to the December meeting agenda:

- Further discussion of the Arctic Borderlands Ecological Knowledge Co-op
- Muskox Management Plan
- 2006 North Slope Conference
- Department of Fisheries and Oceans update on the *Oceans Act*
- Fuel caching
- Harvest study protocol
- Ecological monitoring and indicators
- Porcupine Caribou Management Board update
- Research proposals for the 2006 season
- Status of rare species on Herschel Island

1. Herschel Island Territorial Park (Continued)

b) 2005 Activities, Continued (Richard Gordon, Herschel Island Territorial Park)

Richard informed the council of the following concerns surrounding the SDC this season. The rangers need to know about all the activities that occur on, or around, Herschel Island as there are potentially onshore effects from offshore activities. Incidents are reported to the supervisor by the rangers. Therefore the supervisor must be aware of

activities surrounding Herschel so he can provide rangers clear direction when situations arise. The rangers require regulations training so they are aware of their right (and responsibility) to act (e.g. *Parks Act, Wildlife Act, etc.*).

Barite Transfer

During a routine tour of the island rangers came upon a cloud of dust above the water line around Pauline Cove. The side of the vessel and the deck was covered in dust. The ranger expressed concern to the crew of the SDC and asked to see appropriate paperwork. The crew informed the ranger they were transferring barite from the barge to the ship. The rangers were under the impression the lease was to doc the SDC however there was no indication that there would be chemical transfer. The rangers were not aware how the barite would affect the water and ocean bottom at Pauline Cove. The rangers were also concerned that there was no Environmental Monitor on the SDC during the transfer. The ranger notified Richard of the incident.

Fuel Transfer

Originally, rangers were invited to observe the fuel transfer on the SDC. However on the day of the transfer (despite several attempts to be involved) the rangers were not included.

Moving the SDC

When the SDC was being moved one of the rangers overheard while monitoring the radio that the SDC was stuck in the sediment. The extent of the seafloor damage is unknown. Prior to the arrival of the SDC the rangers requested images of the seafloor (before and after) from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans but their request was not accommodated.

No Arctic Char were harvested at Herschel Island this season. Elders indicated this may be due to the noise coming from the SDC.

Action 05-09-12: WMAC(NS) will write a letter to the Yukon Parks Branch regarding plans for addressing non-conforming uses at Herschel Island.

Action 05-09-13: WMAC(NS) will receive an update on the monitoring program at Herschel Island at the December meeting.

3. Species at Risk (Continued)

On behalf of Martin Ralliard, Wendy asked the council about the process for involving boards and councils in the COSEWIC assessment process. Is the current means that COSEWIC contacts the Council sufficient for harvested species? Should the Council advise on harvest species or should COSEWIC consult with communities as well?

The Chair responded by saying the current listing process is working and that the Council is kept up-to-date on the assessment work. There is concern remaining about how the

boards and councils are involved in the recovery process. It is important that the decisions of COSEWIC recognize the views of the boards and councils to ensure local and regional issues are considered prior to COSEWIC making recommendations for species listings and assessments.

G. New Business (Continued)

2. Richard Mountain Sheep Management Plan

Doug provided background on the issue. Two years ago YG were interested in issuing sheep tags in Game Management Zones (GMZ) 125 and 128. YG approached Vuntut Gwich'in First Nation and Tetlit Gwich'in First Nation on the idea of having a limited hunt for resident hunters. VGFN co-authored a joint proposal to the YFWMB with YG. There was a two year trial harvest held. Two hunters received tags both years; one sheep was shot each year.

The Richard Mountain Dall Sheep are a shared population between YG and GNWT. The population was last surveyed in 1993 and is estimated at 750 animals. Access into the area is extremely limited. Hunting is open in August and September. Certain blocks in the area are reserved for wildlife viewing purposes.

At the end of the second year of the trial there is an initiative to develop a trans-boundary sheep management plan. Last June the Department of Environment (YG), Department of Environment and Natural Resources (GNWT), Vuntut Gwitchin Government, North Yukon Renewable Resource Council, Gwich'in Renewable Resource Board, Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board, Gwich'in Tribal Council, Inuvialuit Game Council met in Dawson for a pre-planning meeting on the development of the trans-boundary Plan.

There is an MOU in progress which addresses roles, responsibilities and land claim agreements (restricted to governments). The next step would be to determine who would be involved in the working group (involving governments, Renewable Resources Council's and Management Boards).

There was a discussion of the roles of the co-management bodies and the government organizations and other regional authorities in preparing and approving the MOU and developing the management plan. The Council supports an approach whereby the process for co-management board, First Nation and IGC participation is outlined in the MOU. It is the Council's view that those parties (federal, territorial and aboriginal governments, and representative aboriginal organizations) with regulatory-type authorities and responsibilities (i.e. responsibilities for regulating harvesting activities) should assume the role and responsibilities of signatories to the MOU and Plan. Other organizations, such as the WMAC(NS), with management-related responsibilities (e.g. recommending total allowable harvests) should be involved in the development of the plan and recommending the plan to those parties who are signatories to it (i.e. those listed above). Again, the distinction is between those parties that have decision-making responsibilities

for harvest regulation and those parties that have advisory responsibilities with regard to recommending management arrangements to regulatory authorities for their approval.

Aileen distributed the letter from the IGC to Ron Morrison, Environment and Natural Resources, September 19, 2005 concerning the Richardson's Mountain Dall's Sheep MOU and Management Plan..

The council also discussed the potential change in the administrative boundary of GMZ 125. The Chair advised the Council of a letter from the Minister dated 1993 to WMAC(NS) indicating that the border would be changed. Apparently the YG did not follow through with the change to the administrative boundary for GMZ 125. The Council agrees that the border should be changed to make it coincide with the ISR boundary and to facilitate management arrangements GMZs inside and outside the ISR

Action 05-09-14: The Chair will write to the IGC in support of their letter of September 19, 2005 to Ron Morrison (GNWT – Environment and Natural Resources) concerning the development of a MOU and management plan for Richardson Mountain Dall sheep and will outline the respective roles of the parties participating in the process to develop a MOU and management plan.

Action 05-09-15: The Chair will draft a letter to YG requesting a change be made to the administrative boundary of GMZ 125 for consistency with other GMZs in the ISR. YG had intended to change the boundary in 1993 and it was the Council's understanding that the change had already been made.

Action 05-09-16: The Chair will draft a letter to the IGC in reference to the Council's request for the change in administrative boundary of GMZ 125.

Members discussed the Council participation in the preparation of the Management Plan.

There was support at the Dawson meeting for Lindsay to facilitate meetings associated with the development of the plan. The Council discussed Lindsay's participation as facilitator and felt there was no conflict between his role as WMAC(NS) chair and meeting facilitator. If the working group determined that it was comfortable selecting a facilitator from amongst the organizations participating on the working group, Council members indicated that they would support their Chair as a candidate facilitator.

F. Ongoing Business (Continued)

6. Wildlife Compensation

The Council discussed wildlife compensation in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region. The Council agrees that a common policy for compensation is needed across the Inuvialuit Settlement Region.

Action 05-09-19: The Chair will draft a letter to the Inuvialuit Game Council (cc. to Yukon Government, Government of Northwest Territories and Parks Canada) stating the Council supports a common policy for wildlife compensation across the Inuvialuit Settlement Region and suggests holding a meeting with involved governments, boards and councils to discuss the issue further.

2. WMAC(NS) Project Updates (Continued)

d) FJNC Summer Student Mentoring Program

The Secretariat reported on the FJMC Summer Student Mentoring Program. Council provided financial support for the student (Noah) to have an experience on the North Slope this season. Noah wrote a report on his experience which will be printed in the next FJMC student newsletter. He particularly enjoyed watching the rangers work and working with the biologist. The Secretariat felt the project was a success and would like the Council to consider contributing to the project next summer.

7. Muskox Research and Management

a) Results of July 2005 Aerial Survey

The results of the 2005 muskox survey and summary were distributed in the meeting binder. Herd productivity was estimated at 29 calves per 100 females. This productivity is relatively low; in most populations, 40 calves per 100 females is considered stable.

b) Management Plan (Next Steps)

There was a brief discussion on the Muskox Management Plan. The Plan revisions need to incorporate:

1. Proposed changes from the Alaskan partners,
2. Outcome of the meeting with WMAC(NS) and WMAC(NWT) in Inuvik,
3. Different management approaches for muskox between YG and GNWT.
4. Quota arrangement in the west.
5. 2005 season research results.

Action 05-09-18: Chair will circulate the current draft of the Muskox Management Plan.

Action 05-09-19: WMAC(NS) will have a teleconference to finalize the draft by the end of October 2005. Following the teleconference, WMAC(NS) will circulate the revised draft to those partners on the distribution list (WMAC(NWT), IGC, Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation, Vuntut Gwitchin Renewable Resources Council, Tetlit Gwitchin First Nation, Aklavik HTC, Gwitchin Renewable Resources Board, etc.)

Action 05-09-20: WMAC(NS) will convene a workshop early in the new year (January) to discuss the revised draft muskox plan with partners.

K. Upcoming Meetings and Conferences

1. Winter 2005

It was noted that the IGC is meeting in Inuvik December 6-9, 2005

Members agreed to hold the next regular meeting in Aklavik and Inuvik December 5-7, 2005. Members will travel to the meeting Sunday and return Thursday to ensure there are three full days available for the meeting. The Chair could report to the Game Council December 8, 2005. Secretariat will follow-up with details for the upcoming meeting.

2. Costal Zone Canada 2006 Conference and Youth Forum

The Secretariat reported that the Costal Zone Canada 2006 Conference and Youth Forum (Arctic Change and Costal Communities) will be held in Tuktoyaktuk July 10-14, 2006. Details on the conference were included in the meeting binder (Tab 14).

3. Ecological Monitoring and Assessment Network (EMAN)

The Secretariat also reported that the EMAN National Science Meeting will be held in Penticton, British Columbia November 20-26, 2005. Details on the meeting were included in the meeting binder. The Members agreed that Michelle should attend the meeting on behalf of WMAC(NS).

L. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn the meeting

Moved: Herbert

Second: Wendy

Motion Carried

WMAC(NS) Chair

Date

WMAC(NS) Secretariat

Date