



Wildlife Management Advisory Council (North Slope)

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Minutes

WMAC(NS) Quarterly Meeting

Whitehorse, Yukon

Alpine Bakery

March 25 – 27, 2006

Saturday, March 25

Present: Lindsay Staples – Chair
Doug Larsen – Yukon Government (Member)
Ron Larsen – Parks Canada (Member)
Ernest Pokiak – Inuvialuit Game Council (Member)
Danny C. Gordon – Inuvialuit Game Council (Member)
Wendy Nixon – Canadian Wildlife Service (Alternate)
Dorothy Cooley – Yukon Government (Alternate)
Michelle Sicotte – Secretariat

A. Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 9:45 am.

B. Review and Approval of Agenda

The Chair reviewed the schedule and agenda for the meeting. The financial report, muskox management plan, species at risk (COSEWIC), Herschel Island and ABECK were noted as important items.

C. Review and Approval of Minutes

a. December 13 – 15, 2005

Members reviewed the minutes of the meeting held December 13 – 15, 2005 in Aklavik and Inuvik. The following requests for changes were made:

- Page 4 – Change “Bob Klassen” to “Bill”.
- Page 6 – Change “it” to “removal of an animal” in paragraph three.
- Page 15 – Change “Pindard” to “Pinard”.
- Page 16 – Add Ernest Pokiak to list of members present December 15.

Motion to adopt the minutes from the December 13-15, 2005 WMAC(NS) meeting as amended

Moved: Danny C. Gordon

Second: Doug Larsen

Motion Carried

a. January 12, 2006

Members reviewed the minutes of the teleconference held January 12, 2005. The following comments and requests for changes were made:

- Page 4 – Change “Rusty Black Bird” to “Ivory Gull” under Action 06-01-06.

Motion to adopt the minutes of the January 12, 2006 conference call as amended

Moved: Ernest Pokiak

Second: Danny C. Gordon

Motion Carried

Action 06-03-01: Dorothy will make a poster for the Aklavik HTC on what hunters should do with animals that are harvested that have collars.

Ernest asked if it is possible to make collars more visible. This is done with Porcupine Caribou but it makes the animals more vulnerable for predators.

D. Report from the Chair

The Chair updated the Council on work since January, including the Habitat Stewardship Program and information sheets produced by Jennifer Ellis. The Chair discussed changes in the Council with the change in Secretariat. The Chair discussed the challenges of working on trans-boundary wildlife management and the importance in planning for 2006-2007 to accomplish goals and priorities.

The Chair reported on the Joint Secretariat (JS) Board of Directors Meeting on March 19, 2006. Peggy Madore is leaving the JS this spring. There has been a dramatic rise (25-30%) in costs for the JS (e.g. travel). There has also been an increase in salary for GNWT

employees and other organizations in Inuvik which raises concerns about retaining JS employees. A letter will be written to Minister Prentice (DIAND) from the JS to request a meeting to discuss a special submission to Treasury Board to address increased cost.

The IRC is having the same issue with salary competition as the JS. The importance of setting the Secretariat and honoraria rates for WMAC(NS) to be competitive was mentioned.

The Chair reported on the IGC meeting. The IFA information sheets were presented conceptually. The IGC questioned the budget for the muskox research program. The Chair also provided a briefing on the Co-op and emphasized the importance of the IGC being involved in North Slope monitoring discussions.

At the IGC meeting the decline in NWT caribou herds was discussed. This is expected to result in increased pressure on the PCH. The Council discussed the importance of communication between YG and GNWT on these issues. The Council also mentioned that Catherine Pinard will need to consider the harvest from Inuvik in the review of the Aklavik Harvest Study Protocol.

The Chair mentioned an article concerning the Porcupine Caribou harvest in the Yukon News (March 24). It suggested that with the decline in NWT barren ground caribou populations that Inuvialuit harvesters may harvest Porcupine Caribou in greater numbers. Along the Dempster Highway the harvest is about 500 animals. In some years the harvest is 2000 animals. More animals are harvested in Old Crow and on the coast. Most of the harvest on the Dempster comes from Ft McPherson.

The Council will add Porcupine Caribou Herd management as an ongoing agenda item. The Council recognizes that there is more to be done to support the PCMB. The Council is responsible for advising the PCMB. The PCMB is undergoing significant financial challenges.

E. Review of Action Items

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

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

Ongoing. The Chair mentioned the letter from YG to IGC. There has been no response from the IGC.

Action 06-03-02: Secretariat will follow up with Nelson Perry and Doug Larsen on the letter regarding compensation for research related wildlife losses from Yukon Government to the IGC dated January 16, 2006.

Action 05-07-02: The Chair will work with YG and the AHTC to finalize the Aklavik Harvest Study Protocol.

Ongoing.

Action 05-12-01: Dorothy will provide an information kit for interviewers and participants associated with harvest reporting in Aklavik that explains the importance of the harvest reporting program for compensation and for wildlife management purposes.

Requested. The information kit will take the form of a pamphlet. There is a lot of different information and people needed to bring this together.

Action 05-12-02: The Council will look into contracting Catherine Pinard to review the effectiveness of harvest reporting in Aklavik.

Ongoing. The Secretariat will contact Catherine to do an internal review of the program. The report will focus on Aklavik and Inuvik.

Action 05-07-07: The WMAC(NS) Secretariat will write a letter requesting the terms of license for the SDC. In the event the terms of license are not provided the Secretariat will pursue Access to Information.

Ongoing. The Secretariat will send a formal request to DIAND (Assistant Deputy Minister). If the terms are not provided the Secretariat will pursue an Access to Information request.

Action 05-04-13: The Secretariat will compile information that includes: current research permitting and reporting process; the kinds of research the boards and councils and EISC are and are not receiving information, and (2) what mechanisms can be put in place or amended to ensure that WMAC(NS) knows about all North Slope research including research that is conducted by academic institutions and industry. Secretariat to update the research matrix and research protocols. The Council will review this issue at a Council meeting when the appropriate information has been assembled.

Ongoing. There have been updates to the Parks Canada requirements. The previous Secretariat had begun this project. There needs to be an up-to-date registry of work done on the YNS. In addition, the Long-Term Research and Monitoring Plan needs to be updated.

Action 05-09-13: Dorothy will provide results on the environmental monitoring program at Herschel Island at the next meeting.

Ongoing.

Action 05-09-18: WMAC(NS) will have a teleconference to review the draft Muskox Management Plan by the end of October 2005. Following the teleconference, WMAC(NS) will revise the draft plan as suggested and circulate the revised draft to the Council and to those partners on the distribution list (WMAC(NWT), IGC, VGFN, VGRRC, TGFN, AHTC, GRRB, etc.)

Ongoing. The draft plan is to be reviewed at this meeting.

Action 05-09-19: WMAC(NS) will convene a workshop early in the new year (January) to discuss the revised draft Muskox Management Plan with partners.

Ongoing. People were contacted about the workshop. WMAC(NS) needs to finalize a draft plan for the workshop.

Action 05-12-03: The Secretariat will write a letter of support in principal pending receipt of funding for the Yukon North Slope Moose Study to Brian McLaren at Lakehead University. The letter will indicate that if the proposal is successful the Council would appreciate the opportunity to provide input on research design.

Complete.

Action 05-12-04: WMAC(NS) Secretariat will draft a letter to Alan Fehr (Parks Canada) indicating support for the proposed regulations. The Council will encourage the appropriate education and training to ensure conservation of the resource is the priority.

Complete

Action 05-12-05: The Secretariat will write a letter to Boyd Pyper at Yukon Government in support of a meeting to further discuss the proposed amendments to the Wildlife Act.

Boyd Pyper will join the meeting to discuss proposed amendments.

Action 05-12-06: Ramona Maraj was requested to produce a table including the quota and take for grizzly bears for each of the designated areas within the YNS, including whether the bear was harvested or a problem bear, and the sex.

Requested.

Action 05-12-07: Circulate updates from researchers for multi-year projects.

Complete .

Action 05-12-08: The Secretariat will access existing research reports for work on the Yukon North Slope and research summaries (including the wildlife status reports, YNS conference summaries, and the IFA Funded Research Day) that have been developed.

Ongoing. Reports available in the WMAC(NS) office have been assembled. Additional work to locate reports in other locations. Secretariat will hire a contractor to complete this work.

Action 05-12-09: The Secretariat will have a plaque of appreciation made for Park Rangers at Herschel Island and for staff at Ivvavik National Park. Letters will be forwarded to the Yukon Government Parks Branch and to Parks Canada acknowledging the service provided to WMAC(NS) at both parks.

Ongoing. Secretariat has submitted the design and text to the firm.

Action 05-12-10: The Secretariat will develop a summary list of projects with recommended funding included. The list and an attached letter will be sent to Parks Canada, Yukon Government and Canadian Wildlife Service (copied to the IGC and EISC).

Complete.

Action 05-12-11: The Chair and Secretariat will draft a new terms of reference for publishing the climate change report and possible follow-up work and circulate to the Council for comments.

Ongoing. The Secretariat has developed an Executive Summary and will proceed with having the report updated to include work for 2005/2006 and published.

Action 05-12-12: The Secretariat will request and compile a list of possible contractors from the Council and obtain additional proposals for the Yukon North Slope 10-Year Report. Additional proposals will be circulated by the end of January 2006 or when they are received.

Ongoing. Secretariat and Chair will develop a statement of work based on discussions at this meeting.

Action 05-12-13: The Council will provide Michelle Schlag with comments on the Draft Management Plan and Regulatory Intent.

Outstanding. There are still opportunities for Council members to comment.

F. Financial Report

The Council reviewed the Financial Report for 2005-2006. It is anticipated that there will be \$60,000 carried over. There was a discussion on the auditing process for the Council. There has been one independent audit in the past. Every year the accountants complete a Review Engagement Report. Yukon Government and Canada are recipients of annual financial statements. There have never been concerns raised about money allocation.

The Council reviewed the draft budget for 2006-2007. The following changes were made. Reduce Other Meetings budget to \$7,500. Increase Council Meeting budget to \$22,000. Reduce Workshops, Conferences and Studies budget to \$6000.

Motion

To adopt the budget as amended, for 2006 – 2007. In addition, any funds unspent in 2005 – 2006 are to be carried forward into 2006 – 2007 and allocated to the “projects” category.

Moved: Ron Larsen

Second: Ernest Pokiak

Motion carried

G. Correspondence

Members reviewed the following correspondence in the binders:

1. Arctic Wildlife Observations Linking Vulnerable Ecosystems (Arctic WOLVES) Project Description (Submission to the JS, EISC and HTC)

Don Reid, project coordinator, has requested a letter of support for the project from WMAC(NS) by March 31, 2006. The Council discussed the proposal and raised the following points:

- Logistical issues with working in winter
- Representation of Herschel Island of the remainder of the ISR (Dorothy mentioned she was encouraging work on Herschel because of long term monitoring data and contribution to the ranger monitoring program)
- The need for Wildlife Monitors
- Hiring of local boats and snow machines
- Importance of ensuring there is no overlap between these large programs (Bob Van Diekin has a role in evaluating overlap)

- Data management and sharing.

Action 06-03-03: Secretariat will send a letter of endorsement for the Arctic WOLVES IPY proposal. The letter will encourage discussion with the HTC's on the use of wildlife monitor's, request proponents to brief the Council periodically on the project, and request the opportunity to provide input on project details if the program is funded.

2. *Letter from Deputy Minister Ed Hubert RE: Proposed Wildlife Regulation Changes for 2006.*

Action 06-03-04: The Secretariat will send a letter to Yukon Government expressing thanks for the opportunity to comment on the proposed wildlife regulation changes for 2006. The letter will express interest in pursuing discussions on trapping regulations on the YNS.

3. *Letter from Porcupine Caribou Management Board RE: WMAC(NS) Contribution to the Harvest Management Strategy.*

A total of \$150,000 is required to complete the strategy. PCMB is seeking funding from the Walter Duncan Foundation, YG and Canada. The educational component will be very important. There may be quotas implemented if the PCH declines. The Council discussed the importance of partners providing both in-kind and financial contributions. The PCMB offers a unique opportunity for boards and councils to cooperate.

Action 06-03-05: The Chair will send a letter to the PCMB acknowledging the responsibility we have in management of the PCH and in assisting the PCMB through financial and/or in-kind contributions. The letter will be copied to all boards, councils and organizations that also have a responsibility in management of the PCH.

H. Richardson Mountain Sheep Management Plan

Dorothy and Danny provided an update on the Richardson mountain sheep management planning meeting held in Inuvik. The facilitator was not present. The technical group discussed sheep biology. GRRB has a proposal to study bear predation. The group will collect information on harvest and produce a status report. Danny mentioned that five large rams were taken by Aklavik. Danny added that there is a person from Aklavik who misuses the animals. The management plan needs to be in place soon as the caribou populations are declining and potential increased harvest pressure may impact Richardson Sheep. The map the group was using was very poor. The group requires two more meetings. After the technical group provides advice on the biology there will be discussions about allocations and restrictions.

Action 06-03-06: The Secretariat will obtain the shape files of the ISR boundary from the JS. Files will be forwarded to Dorothy.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:15 pm.

I. Species at Risk

a. Update on Species at Risk Act Development from Tom Jung

The Chair welcomed Tom Jung. The Chair asked Tom to provide background on the goals and intentions of the work completed on the proposed Yukon Species at Risk Act in 2002. Tom showed a presentation of the process from November 2002, which was developed at the end of the previous consultation.

The following points were made by the Council and Tom:

- SAR legislation addresses concerns in Canada and the Yukon
- Without SAR legislation in the Yukon we are only dealing with species relevant in Canada and there are not tools to address species only at risk in the Yukon
- Boards and Council have other access points to COSEWIC deliberations and listings
- A SAR advisory committee would allow for information to be shared across the Yukon and a stronger voice to COSEWIC from the Yukon
- Difficult to see species at risk legislation that are only incorporated in the *Wildlife Act*
- The consultation prior to 2002 was very inclusive
- Ron expressed concern about duplicate processes in Ivvavik for the consideration of species at risk
- Yukon could help make sure local and Aboriginal knowledge was incorporated into status assessment
- It is not the intention to duplicate processes
- In the past WMAC(NS) recommended the Yukon's proposed species at risk listing process and program to the Yukon's Minister of Environment and the Minister replied with confirmation that he intended on proceeding with legislation. However, this initiative was not pursued.
- Discussed the situation in other provinces and territories

J. Parks Canada

- a. Ivvavik National Park Management Plan** - The plan is at the CEO office. The new Minister needs to be briefed. It is expected that the CEO will make the plan a priority. The undue delay is not coming from the Minister's office.

- b. **Staffing** - Field Unit has been busy with staffing. Ron's position was posted for assignment however no interest was expressed. Three new wardens were hired in January. Interpreter PM-03 was posted. Sarah Rogers is taking a year leave and that position will be staffed. The Resource Conservation Manager posting has been extended. There is a new position looking at environmental impacts related to pipeline development. Interviews for that position are this week.
- c. The office is being renovated. Over spent budget this year. Scale back work including repeater work at Margaret Lake. Money will be invested so that the Rapid Creek Repeater will be working properly. Stokes Point assessment work is going ahead. Many events planned at Sheep Creek. Discussed changes to Marmot work in Ivvavik.
- d. Danny asked Ron if the historical site at Clarence Lagoon will be saved. This site is not viewed as a priority because it is not degrading fast. If Aklavik Community Corporation viewed it as a priority, it would become a priority for Parks. Ron will bring it up to Parks Canada and Danny will bring it up at the Aklavik HTC. There is not a long term plan for cultural sites.

Action 06-03-07: Secretariat will write a letter to the Aklavik Community Corporation indicating that the need to protect the historical site at Clarence Point against weather was raised at the meeting. The letter will suggest the ACC contact Parks Canada to initiate this work.

K. Arctic Borderlands Ecological Knowledge Co-op

The Council discussed upcoming work with respect to the Aklavik 10 year report and other ABECK business. The following points were made:

- Management need
- Questionnaire design
- Compilation and analysis of information
- Link between data collection and analysis
- Need to involve youth
- Role of WMAC(NS) and ABECK in the conservation of traditional use

The Council was joined by Mike Gill from the Canadian Wildlife Service.

Mike reflected on the broad support for the ABECK at the annual gathering held in Old Crow. New funding has been obtained from DIAND (SIMP) and VGFN. There is a graduate student (Jadah) working on the database. There has been expanded support with respect to funding partners and potential new funding from IPY. The ABECK is in need of a five year work plan.

Mike raised concerns about the proportion of funding from Environment Canada and the need to have a more balanced funding. Mike mentioned the opportunity to work with Microsoft. Gary Koffinas and Jadah have proposed to undertake the Aklavik 10 year report as a pilot project for the overall ABECK data synthesis.

The Chair expressed concern about the changes to the information collected and whether these reflect the management needs of participating partners. He suggested there was possibly a need to re-evaluate the monitoring program needs from the perspective of wildlife managers and organizations and the different mandates of different partners. As well, the need for different products for different audiences was raised. The Council is interested in a high level analytical report of the data. Mike mentioned the analysis of the data and concerns that were raised by Catherine Pinard's work.

The Council was of the view that there needs to be a better understanding of how the data can be used. There is a need to re-evaluate the role of ABECK and role of the partners, and the need for leadership. The ABECK does not have a clear direction or mandate as it is not legislated. Doug would like to see greater contribution from YG. Ron suggested a user-pay scenario and that partners need to take true ownership. There is an AGM this summer to elect Board of Directors. There is a need for the BOD to be connected to organizations that can support the work. EC is currently funding a half year position to work on ABECK. They require 40K for a program director. Ernest suggested implementing membership fees. There needs to be a more formalized relationship/structure to the co-op. The ABECK has been approached to deal with the IPY community component, which brings another layer of complexity of the program.

The Chair thanked Mike for joining the meeting. The Council had a roundtable discussion regarding ecological monitoring on the YNS and the work of the ABECK.

Ernest Pokiak

- The need for a ten year report
- Consider membership fees to keep the co-op functioning
- The co-op is lacking in resources and needs a coordinator
- The community involvement part is good
- There is an opportunity to get young people involved
- We are holding the Co-op up with indecision about how to proceed
- The co-op is making people more aware of their surroundings

Michelle Sicotte

- The communities are very engaged in the process
- There is a need for leadership, as well as funding
- The most critical issue is not in the data collection, but in the data management

Danny C. Gordon

- There was an impact when Joan left.
- There is a need for leadership.

Ron

- There needs more certainty to the funding
- The funding organizations need to be more closely linked with the process
- The community is very well connected to the program
- There is a sense of ownership by community.
- Long term funding needs clear objectives

Doug

- Not sure that this is the right model.
- Roles, responsibilities and mandate needs to be clarified
- Time to pull back unless they can look at the organization
- Want to remain optimistic
- The Co-op don't have the resources to look at the bigger picture and the next steps
- There may have been expectations made of the group that are not realistic.

Dorothy

- The strength of the Co-op is in the community information gathering
- At the gathering people agree that it is time to use the data
- Jadah's work was a good case study at how to use the data
- Need more direction about their scope, etc.
- Made recent changes to the Board of Directors, easier to bring smaller group together
- Posters and annual reports are good for the communities.
- Need to develop a range of products for the different audiences
- Nothing came out of the meeting last spring
- Some of this could be addressed with more clear leadership

Lindsay Staples

- The organizational model is not functional, there is no place for a leader to emerge.
- The individuals on the board of director level don't have access to implementation resources
- There needs to be more discussion about what groups are in a position to offer support
- Monitoring, climate and changes to the environment are topics that bring people together; this is the only group that's bringing diverse groups together to talk about these areas and the associated topical issues
- People want to get together to talk about their changing environment and they want to share with others. The Co-op provides a way to document that, store and analyze information and we need to keep doing this.
- The biggest challenge for WMAC(NS) is implementing Council recommendations of how model should change.
- Perhaps the Co-op can play a role with respect to bringing people together across communities – organizing event, sending out material, etc.
- Council's role is in the interests of Aklavik, Inuvik then Tuktoyaktuk
- 10 year report hasn't happened through the Co-op
- Need to be confident in the 10 year report and products for the YNS (technical component, community component, poster component, etc.) with multiple audiences.

- We need to develop a list of possible candidates to prepare a 10 year report. There may be additional costs for someone to become acquainted with the information. Prefer someone from Canada and someone who is independent of the ABEKS who can work closely with the Council.
- Need agreement among the Council members about the product and also solicit views from the co-op members about products, etc.
- There is an opportunity to build a monitoring workshop with Co-op participation, around the YNS conference

Co-op related projects suggested by members:

- Aklavik 10 Year Report
- Revisiting management interests of the Council and members
- Reviewing the indicators with the communities in a systematic way (NS Conference)
- Explore re-designing the survey based on management interests.
- Contract Statistics Canada to review current survey questions

Action 06-03-08: The Chair and Secretariat will draft a letter to the ABECK suggesting an alternative model for the Co-op, and will indicate our intentions with respect to Co-op activities. The letter will also request partners to come forward with their management interests with respect to ecological monitoring. The letter will be copied to Yukon Government, GNWT, CWS and Parks Canada.

Action 06-03-09: The Secretariat and Chair will draft a statement of work for the North Slope 10-Year Monitoring Report and other related projects and circulate to the Council. The Council will forward additional candidates for this work to the Secretariat.

The Chair adjourned meeting for the day.

Monday, March 27, 2006

Present: Lindsay Staples – Chair
Doug Larsen – Yukon Government (Member)
Ernest Pokiak – Inuvialuit Game Council (Member)
Danny C. Gordon – Inuvialuit Game Council (Member)
Wendy Nixon – Canadian Wildlife Service (Alternate)
Dorothy Cooley – Yukon Government (Alternate)
Michelle Sicotte – Secretariat

The Chair called the meeting to order at 9:40 am. The Chair reviewed the agenda.

L. Reports from the Members and Secretariat

Council members provided the following reports.

Ernest mentioned an unusual muskox near Tuktoyaktuk sighting

The Secretariat mentioned the need to set a date and location for the North Slope Conference.

Danny asked how many muskox have been counted on the Canadian North Slope. There were 170 recorded in the last survey.

Wendy provided an update on CARMA. They are currently developing an IPY proposal to expand the program, including body condition, disease and parasite loads. The work will be expanded to representative migratory herds in Canada. The work is intended to develop decision support tools to help managers. ABECK and PCMB are involved. WMAC(NS) may be requested to review the proposal. It was mentioned that there needs to be a central coordinator ensuring there is no overlap in the IPY proposals.

Action 06-03-10: The Secretariat will determine who is on the IPY review and approval committee. The Secretariat will also obtain copies of all proposals submitted that include the YNS. The information will be forwarded to the IGC.

M. NatureServe Yukon

The Council was joined by Syd Cannings (NatureServe) and Tom Jung (YG). Syd gave a background on species ranking internationally, federally and territorially. Syd explained the nature serve ranking system (1-5) and the ability to use uncertainty. The broad purpose of Nature Serve is to provide the information to individuals and agencies on species in the Yukon. Species are ranked each year and WMAC(NS) is welcome to provide input. A great deal of information on YNS was from the Aklavik Inuvialuit TK report. There was a discussion about separating populations that cross boundaries (like muskox). There are international levels of standards for assessing ranks to make comparisons easier. At this time, NWT and Nunavut does not have NatureServe.

www.natureserve.org

Action 06-03-11: NatureServe rankings will be included in species status reports.

N. WMAC(NS) Projects

The Secretariat provided an update on the following WMAC(NS) Projects

- **Habitat Stewardship Fund** – Kyle Russell was hired to complete the work this winter. Kyle interviewed five Aklavik grizzly bear hunters and did a review of existing TK literature in Yellowknife, Inuvik, Whitehorse and Aklavik. The work is not complete, and Kyle will be hired again in the summer to finish. Al Baer is facilitating a workshop with grizzly bear hunters to request that they take GPS units on their hunts. Ramona and Michelle will meet in April to discuss a workplan for 2006-2007. The HSP report is available for members who are interested.
- **TK Database Update** – Nathalie Bergeron was hired to update the online TK Database. There were not many new resources added since 1997.
- **IFA Fact Sheets** – Jennifer Ellis completed four IFA related fact sheets. Three are complete with comments from Lindsay and Michelle. One requires further work. When the sheets are complete they will be circulated to members for approval.
- **Climate Change Research on the YNS** – The Council reviewed both the report and the terms of reference. The report will be published with an executive summary and made available online. There may be future Climate Change work in the future.

O. Herschel Island Territorial Park

The Council reviewed the Herschel Island – Qikiqtaruk Territorial Park Draft Management Plan.

Motion to recommend the Herschel Island – Qikiqtaruk Territorial Park Draft Management Plan

Moved: Danny C. Gordon

Second: Ernest Pokiak

Motion Carried

Action 06-03-12: The Chair will send a letter of transmittal along with the recommendation for the Herschel Island Management Plan.

Dorothy provided a status of the action items in the draft Herschel Island implementation plan. Richard intends to write a letter to the council addressing the action items. The Environmental and Resource Monitoring Plan was written as an operational level plan and needs to be recommended by WMAC(NS). They would like to have the Plan completed and printed for the CZC2006 and the North Slope Conference. Dorothy also mentioned that there is an instructional manual for rangers as well as a data report.

Action 06-03-13: Council members will provide comments on the Herschel Island Environmental and Resource Monitoring Plan to Dorothy. Secretariat will circulate digital copies of the plan.

I. Species at Risk

The Council was joined by Boyd Pyper from Yukon Government to discuss the amendments to the *Wildlife Act*.

Boyd provided background on the amendment process. Stakeholders were contacted by letter from Minister Jenkins and given 28 days to respond. Concern was expressed by the timeline was too short and not enough information was provided. Cabinet decided to extend the consultation period. Originally the intention was to have the amendments made in the spring 2006. At present there is no deadline for the consultation.

Boyd discussed the consultation done by Yukon Environment in 2002. That work did not move forward due to a change in government. In the meantime Canada implemented the *Federal Species at Risk Act*. It is important that this work (the current discussions convened by Yukon) does not duplicate work completed in 2002. The current amendments were done with information from the previous consultation.

Most groups have recommended developing a stand-alone Yukon Species at Risk Act. The mandate assigned by the current government is to look only at amendments to the *Wildlife Act*.

Any amendments made for species at risk need to complement Federal law. Some other jurisdictions have their own listing process to address provincial/territorial species in addition to the Federal law.

There will be no process to list species at risk in the Yukon through the amendments. Boards and councils in the Yukon do have input at the Federal level, including: (1) direct input to COSEWIC and Species Specialist Committees by WMAC and YFWMB, (2) NACOSAR, (3) species put forward by individuals, (4) Environment Yukon's role, and (3) the technical committee on traditional knowledge.

There is a need to identify the roles of the boards and councils in the process and the challenge of incorporating the different groups. Currently they are looking for internal agreement from Environment Yukon on how to make the consultation a departmental initiative.

The Chair made the following points:

- The work has taken a major step backward, not forward
- The Minister indicated to WMAC(NS) in 2003 that the stand alone act would proceed. This has not happened.

- Many of the questions that the government is asking have already been answered in previous consultations
- The old package provided more certainty with regard to the process for the Yukon-wide review of candidate and listed species
- The grounds for dismissing the old package are not clear other than unexplained political desire
- The old package provided a more proactive role for the involvement wildlife management boards in the review and listing process

Boyd responded that in any case revisions would have to be made to the 2002 process. He could not comment on why the government changed their position. It is important that the process is a government initiative and not a political initiative. The federal listing process needs greater clarity. There is still the option of creating a non-legislated advisory Council. WMAC(NS) has the option to endorse the 2002 package. If the Council does so, it is important to articulate the rationale for doing so and discuss what the new consultation process would look like.

The Chair thanked Boyd for coming and indicated that the Council will follow up with a letter.

Action 06-03-14: The Chair will send a letter to Boyd Pyper (Yukon Government) thanking him for meeting with the Council. The letter will express the Council's continued support for the Species at Risk package recommended by WMAC(NS) in 2002. An outline of the package, correspondence with Minister Kenyon, and the suggestions of public consultation that is based on the old package. The letter will be copied to the IGC, YFWMB and other relevant boards and councils.

I. Species at Risk (COSEWIC)

Short eared owl

The Council discussed the COSEWIC status report on the short-eared owl. Although the Yukon population appears stable, the species is disappearing from other parts of its range in Canada due to habitat loss. There is no shortage of habitat (open grassland, alpine, meadow) in the Yukon. The Council recommends the species be at least maintained as Special Concern. Wendy suggested developing a proposal for the HSP (next fiscal) which looks at more detailed distribution on the North Slope. Danny mentioned he sees the species occasionally in April and that they are not as abundant as they used to be. They are present around Blow River. The Council mentioned that they are not clear what the criteria are to move to the next level. Wendy will find out current NatureServe ranking.

Action 06-03-15: The Secretariat will send a letter to COSEWIC regarding the Short Eared Owl Status Assessment. The letter will indicate that the Council is not in a position to make a formal recommendation. The letter will include traditional knowledge observations from Danny C. Gordon that there has been a notable decline in the species

on the North Slope and that the species was not traditionally harvested. The Council recommends the status should remain at least the same.

Peregrine Falcon

There are two different sub-populations of peregrine falcon. On the North Slope the sub-population is *tundreas*. There is some confusion in the report as the sub-populations are lumped together. The species has been listed as special concern for many years. In the Yukon and NWT surveys have indicated the populations are increasing. There was a reported increase in numbers based on the YNS survey. Danny indicated that there are a pair of peregrine falcons around the Blow River. There used to be a pair in the bush camp around the delta. They occupied a bald eagle nest for two years but have since been chased out. There were two nests 30 miles inland from Aklavik in Cache Creek, but Danny is not sure if they are still being used.

Action 06-03-16: The Secretariat will send a letter to COSEWIC regarding the Peregrine Falcon Status Assessment. The letter will indicate that the Council is not in a position to make a formal recommendation. The letter will include traditional knowledge observations from Danny C. Gordon.

In the future, WMAC(NS) will ask Tom Jung or Syd Cannings to assist with these discussions. The Council mentioned that the role of the species at risk advisory committee would be, in part, to advise us in these situations.

P. Muskox Research and Management

The Council discussed the draft Muskox Management Plan and members offered the following individual comments:

- There have been changes in the population over the time the plan has been developed. The population has declined and there should be no harvesting surplus at this time. If the herd increases, a quota may be implemented.
- It is important to consider the muskox management situation in Alaska.
- The draft Executive Summary and the Plan do not reflect the current management situation
- If there is a risk of parasite transfer the harvest should be focused on the NWT portion of the population.
- The population is shown to fluctuate considerably.
- Aklavik is not very interested in harvesting muskox.
- There may be a quota established, but it would be set at zero for the current time.
- Changes can be made based on concern from community members and addition surveys.
- The Council is unsure if the community of Aklavik is aware of the decline in Alaska.

- It may be possible to developing a harvest management strategy to let people know what to expect under different population levels. Or, it may be possible to simply build those ideas into the harvest management section of the Plan.
- A workshop should include informing people about the change in herd size, harvest management options. It is important to involve the Alaskans.
- The final report on the six year study will be released in the summer.
- Management objective to sustain a stable population should recognize the changes that have occurred. The population objective is the highest number counted during the 6 year study program.
- Any harvesting areas should be located away from potential tourist spots.
- There is a very different management circumstance between YG and NWT

Action 06-03-17: The Secretariat and Chair will re-draft the plan based on the comments provided. Dorothy will lead the re-drafting of the population management section.

Action 06-03-18: The Secretariat will send a letter to partners updating them on the development of the Muskox Management Plan.

Q. IFA Projects

Aklavik Harvest Study

Dorothy provided an update on the Aklavik Harvest Study Data Collection. December 2005 interviews are late and the coordinators would like to combine the winter and spring interview. The Council agrees to cancel April 2005 interviews and complete the program review before December.

The Council discussed the following proposals submitted by Yukon Government for IFA research funding:

- **Black Guillemot Population Monitoring and Nest Success**
The Secretariats reviewed the questions from the December 2005 meeting. The Council reviewed the report provided by Cameron Eckhart. The Council agrees that Cameron has addressed the Council's questions and has shown consistency in reporting. The Council recommends \$4000 for this project.
- **Arctic Fox Den Survey on Herschel Island**
The Council discussed the project. The time and scope of work will be reduced and there will be attempts to ensure Tom Jung and Don Reid are at Herschel Island at the same time. The Council recommends \$3000 for this project.

Motion to recommend the black guillemot (\$4000) and Arctic fox (\$3000) projects

Move: Wendy Nixon

Second: Danny C. Gordon

Motion carried

Action 06-03-19: The Secretariat will send a letter recommending IFA research funding for black guillemot population monitoring and nesting success and the Arctic fox den survey on Herschel Island.

The Council discussed the following additional projects to be considered for IFA funds:

- Muskox Genetics
- Aklavik Harvest Data Collection Review
- Richardson Muskox Study
- Alaskan survey of Yukon muskox (Pat Reynolds)
- Herschel Island Sod and Ice House

Action 06-03-20: The Secretariat will circulate a list of potential WMAC(NS) and IFA funded projects for discussion.

Action 06-03-21: The Secretariat will send a letter of support for Pat Reynolds' muskox survey on the Yukon North Slope.

Action 06-03-22: The Secretariat will draft a letter of support for the Porcupine Caribou Herd census.

Action 06-03-23: The Secretariat and Chair will circulate a memo to Members with potential dates for the North Slope Conference.

R. Upcoming meetings

1. Summer meeting on the North Slope. The Secretariat will canvas Members for dates and ideas for this meeting.
2. There may be a need to have a one-day meeting in May to allocate the remainder of the WMAC(NS) project budget.

Motion to adjourn the meeting

Moved: Danny C. Gordon

Second: Ernest Pokiak

Motion carried.