



Wildlife Watch

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COUNCIL (NORTH SLOPE)
COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

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Revised Grizzly Bear Management Plan Responds to Community Concerns

The proposed grizzly bear management plan for the Inuvialuit Settlement Region is currently being revised following community reviews. Planners hope to have it ready for presentation to the Wildlife Management Advisory Councils for the Northwest Territories and the North Slope and the Inuvialuit Game Council (IGC) in June.

The first version of the plan was released last September at a special grizzly bear workshop in Aklavik. The workshop was attended by WMAC and IGC members and by government representatives. A second draft was finished in February. The communities of Inuvik, Paulatuk, Aklavik, and Tuktoyaktuk have had a chance to review and discuss the February draft. The version now being prepared will respond to concerns that arose in those community reviews.

Developing a grizzly bear management plan has

required cooperation among all the governments and agencies involved in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region (ISR). Organizations taking part in the project include the Wildlife Management Advisory Council (NWT), Wildlife Management Advisory Council (North Slope), Yukon and Northwest Territories governments, the Inuvialuit Game Council, and the Hunters and Trappers committees of Aklavik, Inuvik, Tuktoyaktuk, and Paulatuk.

Wise management of the grizzly bear population of the ISR is important to the over-all goal, established in the Inuvialuit Final Agreement, to protect and preserve Arctic wildlife, environment, and biological productivity. Declining bear populations in the south, along with increasing human population and development in the Northwest Territories, have put growing pressure on the bears of the ISR. Grizzly bears are particularly sensitive to human pressure because they reproduce slowly and need large tracts of undisturbed land for survival. The grizzly bear management plan establishes three major goals: to maintain productive populations of grizzly bears in their natural habitat within the Inuvialuit Settlement Region; to encourage the wise use of grizzly bear populations; and to encourage the active participation of northern residents in managing the grizzly bears. Some regulation will be required to ensure a healthy grizzly bear population. The details of government regulations and Hunters and Trappers Committee by-laws are currently being worked out to meet these important goals.



Wildlife Conservation & Management Plan Receives Broad Support

Over the past fall and winter, the Wildlife Management Advisory Council (North Slope) has been reviewing and revising the most recent draft of its North Slope Wildlife Conservation and Management Plan, released last August.

To gather responses to the draft plan, WMAC(NS) representatives held meetings in October with a wide range of industry, government, and non-profit agency representatives. In Calgary they discussed the plan with representatives of the oil and gas industry. In Ottawa they met a variety of federal government departments and agencies, as well as non-profit organizations interested in conservation on the North Slope. They also held talks with government and non-profit groups in Inuvik and Whitehorse.

The discussions revealed broad support for the August draft of the Wildlife Conservation and Management Plan. Major concerns expressed were the plan's scope, the mandate of WMAC(NS) to develop such a plan, the cost of implementing the plan, the timing of implementation, and the division of responsibilities under the plan.

Some participants in the meetings did not understand WMAC(NS)'s mandate under the Inuvialuit Final Agreement to develop a full wildlife conservation and management plan for the North Slope. The WMAC representatives also defended the scope of the plan, which considers both wildlife and habitat over a period of up to 30 years. Discussions and comments about the preceding draft of the plan had led to a consensus that the plan should be broad in scope and time frame, particularly in light of the overlapping jurisdictions and responsibilities associated with the North Slope.

As a result of last fall's consultation, WMAC(NS) has recognized the need to make the plan more flexible to allow for changes in legislative and economic circumstances. One proposal is that responsibilities for different actions under the plan will not be set out in the plan itself. Instead, the departments and agencies involved will meet

periodically to consider how and when to implement actions established in the plan and how to divide up the related responsibilities. They will be guided by priorities established by the participants at North Slope conferences.

The next draft of the North Slope Wildlife Conservation and Management Plan, incorporating changes resulting from this latest round of consultation, will be released shortly.

Ivvavik National Park Management Plan Almost Complete

After nearly three years of public consultation, the management plan for Ivvavik National Park is almost complete. In March, the Regional Director-General for the Prairie and Northern Region of the Canadian Parks Service approved the final draft of the plan.

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- Early in May the superintendent of Ivvavik National Park, Peter Lamb, will present the draft plan to the Assistant Deputy Minister of the Canadian Parks Service.
- If the Assistant Deputy Minister sees no problem with the draft plan, it will go to the Wildlife Management Advisory Council (North Slope) for review, possibly in June.
- Once WMAC(NS) considers the draft plan acceptable, the council will recommend it to the Minister of the Environment, probably in early summer.

The Canadian Parks Service expects no major delays in this last stage of the management plan's development. However, the plan will not take effect until the Government of Canada has approved and authorized it.

ANWR Update

The fight to protect the calving grounds of the Porcupine caribou herd continues, with no immediate end in sight. The calving grounds are threatened by possible oil and gas development in Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR).

Aboriginal, environmental, and Canadian government groups, including the Wildlife Management Advisory Council (North Slope), have been fighting development in the ecologically fragile Wildlife Refuge for several years. Their goal is to convince American politicians to make the calving grounds a protected wilderness area.

Letter-writing campaigns have been organized from communities that depend on the Porcupine caribou. In addition, a group opposing development travels to a different part of the United States each month in order to teach people about the herd's importance to aboriginal communities and to pressure local politicians to protect the calving grounds.

In February, a workshop was held in Fort Macpherson to teach people in the communities how to take part in the lobby efforts, either from their communities or as part of the travelling group. At least two of the participants have already begun using the skills they learned.



In April, Darcy Gordon of Aklavik joined the travelling lobby for a three-week trip through seven northeastern states, his expenses paid by the Inuvialuit Game Council. In May, Joe Charlie of Fort Macpherson, supported by the Gwich'in Tribal Council, is part of the lobby group touring midwestern states.

Last fall Americans elected dozens of new senators and congressmen, who must now be convinced of the importance of the caribou and their calving grounds to aboriginal people in both Canada and Alaska.

Two wilderness protection bills are before the American Congress, one in the House of Representatives and one in the Senate. Both bills would

ban any development in ANWR. The lobby group hopes to sign up enough senators and congressmen as co-sponsors of the bills to assure their passage. Co-sponsoring means the politician has agreed to support the bill.

In the Senate, where the most important battle will be fought,

about 30 senators have already signed on as co-sponsors. However, at least 60 are needed if the bill is to pass. With a pro-development lobby working hard against the wilderness protection bills, the battle to save a vital part of the Porcupine caribou herd's habitat is far from over.

Wildlife Management Advisory Council (North Slope)

- **Inuvialuit Game Council:** Danny C. Gordon; Herbert Felix; Alternates: Billy Archie, and Carol Arey
- **Government of Canada:** Joan Eamer, Canadian Wildlife Service; Alternate: Alan Fehr, Parks Canada

- **Government of Yukon:** Brian Pelchat, Renewable Resources; Alternate: Dorothy Cooley, Renewable Resources
- **Chairperson:** Lindsay Staples
- **Secretariat:** Aileen Horler

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