



WMAC(NS) September Teleconference

September 14, 2015

In attendance: Lindsay Staples, Chair • Jennifer Smith, Staff • Todd Powell, Yukon Government • Danny C Gordon, IGC • Craig Machtans, Canada • Mike Suitor, Yukon Government • Christine Cleghorn, Staff • Jennifer Smith, Staff • Chris Hunter, Canada • Evelyn Storr, IGC • Michelle Gruben, IGC

Lindsay called the meeting to order at 9:05am.

North Slope Conference

Lindsay provided an overview of the 10 days leading up to and including the North Slope Conference. Game Council, FJMC, the Joint Secretariat Board, and the WMAC NWT are all meeting in Whitehorse.

On Sunday September 27 the council will hold a short meeting to discuss the State of the Parks Report. Chris noted that the opportunity to discuss the State of the Park Report in September is a welcome one. Diane Wilson will be in attendance at this meeting.

The Council has organized a workshop for one day with Bob DeLury on September 28. We anticipate approximately 60 people in attendance, including members of WMAC (NS).

Jennifer provided an update on the North Slope Conference (Sept 30/October 1). We anticipate approximately 100 people. The conference is organized around three themes, including mobilizing knowledge, best practices regarding methods, and analysis/interpretation/ validation.

After the conference a small working group will spend one day working on further developing guidelines for the collection of polar bear tk. The TK guidelines that we have been working on are finalized and will be distributed at the conference.

ISR Polar Bear Plan

Parties who have been working on the ISR polar bear plan are meeting tomorrow with the idea to finalize the plan. Todd indicated that the major re-write of the plan that happened on July 21 was a major improvement. Nevertheless, there is still an opportunity to push further regarding quotas and changes that may happen under different scenarios of conservation concern or liberalization. The Council discussed

scenarios and responses and how an adaptive management approach could be strengthened in the plan. Michelle noted that discussions and communications with the communities about quotas is one that should be made in the plan. We have eyes and ears on the land – this is not management by remote control. The plan should also note that polar bears are managed on a population basis, per the definition and direction in the Inuvialuit Final Agreement.

US Polar Bear Plan

Lindsay provided our initial comments on the US draft plan. He noted that the resources that the US is able to apply to this planning process far outstrip those that Canadian agencies can apply. The treatment of harvest in the US plan is important for us, and is something that we will likely want to flag. Similarly, we will likely comment on habitat based on some of the information arising out of the sea ice colloquium several years ago.

I-I meeting update

Lindsay briefed the Council on outcomes from the I-I meeting in late August. Most of the first day was USGS presenting a series of prepares that they undertook in previous years. We will provide those papers to Council members. The US notification that they are considering up-listing polar bears again under Appendix 1 of CITES took up considerable amounts of time. It was noted that there is nothing the US Polar Bear plan to suggest that international trade is a threat to this species.

Range States Meeting

The US sent a large delegation to Greenland. They indicated that the desire to uplist polar bears is rooted in a precautionary approach to ensuring polar bears thrive in perpetuity. They are not bringing new scientific or trade-related information as a rationale for uplisting. Because of this failure to bring new information to the discussion, IFAW and WWF are unlikely to support the uplisting.

The Circumpolar Action Plan was signed at the meeting. It is a ten-year plan and of the 64 actions, 16 were chosen to work on in the next two years.

The Council will work on a response to the US notice to up-list and try to have a coordinated response with IGC and WMAC (NWT). Will circulate to council members prior to submitting.

Danny noticed at the I-I meeting that there was a lot of research coming out of the Alaska side. The Inupiat seemed happy with the research and approach that is happening on that side.

Teleconference concluded 10:15am.

Next meeting: Sunday September 27. 2-4pm. Location TBA.