



MEETING MINUTES

WMAC (NS) Quarterly Meeting
Whitehorse, YT • Marsh Lake, Inn on the Lake
June 6-7, 2009

Saturday June 6, 2009

Lindsay Staples Chair • **Danny C. Gordon** Inuvialuit Game Council (Member) • **Ernest Pokiak** Inuvialuit Game Council (Member) • **Christian Bucher** Government of Canada (Member) • **Michelle Christensen** (Secretariat) • **Dorothy Cooley** Yukon Government (Alternate) • **Doug Larsen** Yukon Government (Member) • **Camille Thomas** Wildlife Technician Trainee, Porcupine Caribou Management Board (Guest) • **Dan Lindsey** Director, Fish and Wildlife Branch, Yukon Government (Guest) • **Boyd Pyper** Policy Analyst, Department of Environment, Yukon Government (Guest)

A. Call to Order

The Chair welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 9:20am.

B. Review and Approval of Agenda

The Chair reviewed the agenda noting that the Porcupine Caribou Harvest Management Plan (HMP) and the Yukon Government's proposed Interim Porcupine Caribou Conservation Measures would be important items for Council discussion.

A first draft of the Porcupine Caribou Traditional Knowledge report is included in the binders and should be reviewed by members. Results of the study could potentially align with or contribute to the Harvest Management Strategy.

Remaining IFA research funds need to be recommended for allocation and details for the North Slope Conference need to be set. The Chair outlined remaining agenda items noting that Ramona Maraj would be calling in at 10:00am to discuss her grizzly bear and polar bear research projects.

A member asked if the grizzly bear project was indeed winding down.

The Chair confirmed that yes, the project is wrapping up: when Ramona calls in she will be requesting additional funding in order to complete the project sooner rather than later.

Motion 06-09-01

June 6-7, 2009
WMAC (NS)
Regular Meeting

To approve the agenda for the June 6-7, 2009 meeting as revised.

Moved: Ernest Pokiak

Second: Danny C. Gordon

Motion carried.

C. Review and Approval of February, March, and April 2009 Minutes:

February 26, 2009 WMAC (NS) Teleconference Meeting:

A discussion ensued about a number of dead caribou found on Herschel Island recently by Park Rangers. Dorothy reported that their deaths are being investigated and that she suspected starvation as the cause due to poor snow conditions.

A member raised concern over why this event was not reported to the Aklavik Hunters and Trappers Committee (AHTC) or to WMAC (NS). The Chair clarified that such events should be communicated to the AHTC and flow to the WMAC (NS) from there.

Motion 06-09-02

To approve the minutes for the February 26, 2009 WMAC (NS) meeting.

Moved: Doug Larsen

Second: Danny C. Gordon

Motion carried.

March 7-8, 2009 WMAC (NS) Meeting:

The Council brought forward the following changes/revisions:

- Page 6: a member expressed concern that minutes be written in plain language wherever possible.
- Page 2: third bullet under December 2008 WMAC meeting, change sentence to read "...decided to move the **water station building** on the Firth River to Nunaluk spit..."
- Page 14: change sentence to read "Most sport hunters are from the United States and **up to 50%** of tags in a **harvest area** are set aside for sport hunting."
- Page 4: under Action 10-12-02 – correct spelling of Lindsey Croeken's name: **Lindsay Croken.**

The Council discussed the polar bear sport hunt and conservation. Ernest pointed out that in Sachs Harbour this past season there was no sport hunt, which resulted in a higher total bear harvest because of an increased local subsistence harvest. The Chair observed that limiting sport hunter tags may not be the most effective harvest management strategy for polar bear conservation when compared to other measures.

Motion 06-09-03

To approve the minutes for the March 7-8, 2009 WMAC (NS) meeting, as revised.

Moved: Christian Bucher

Second: Ernest Pokiak

Motion carried.

April 15, 2009 WMAC (NS) Teleconference Meeting:

June 6-7, 2009

WMAC (NS)

Regular Meeting

Motion 06-09-04

To approve the minutes for the April 15, 2009 WMAC (NS) meeting.

Moved: Danny C. Gordon

Second: Christian Bucher

Motion carried.

D. Review of Action Items

The Secretariat updated the Council on outstanding and in-progress action items:

Action 06-03-01: Dorothy will make a poster for the Aklavik HTC on what hunters should do with animals that are harvested that are collared. **Complete.** Dorothy presented the Council with a copy of the poster for distribution.

Action 07-06-26: The Chair will re-draft the muskox management plan and the Council will review it. **In progress.** Dorothy explained that Yukon and N.W.T. disagree on management direction and that as a result Yukon indicated it would like to see the Plan go to the ministerial level to be resolved. The Chair suggested that the Plan should be transparent and that minister involvement is unnecessary at this stage. Dorothy said that her most recent direction is to prepare a briefing note for the minister and that she has started re-drafting the Plan. The Chair asked her to ensure that the Plan reflect up-to-date and accurate survey numbers, tables, and charts etc. as well as management actions.

The Chair concluded that once reviewed by the Council, the Plan should be circulated to the parties.

Christian reported that Parks Canada is mandated to assess the management plan and asked members if they knew the history of Parks' involvement in the Plan to date. Dorothy said that Ian McDonald was involved on behalf of Parks and that after the six year study ended Parks decided to minimize involvement until a Plan was in place.

The Chair said that historically Parks has been involved on two levels: Ian McDonald partnered up with Dorothy Cooley on muskox research, and Parks' partnered with the Council on drafting the Plan. When Ian left Parks Canada the agency's role was diminished, though he now has a successor: Molly Kirk, and efforts should be made to keep communication open with her. He concluded that once the Plan is complete it would be recommended to the Parks Canada minister along with the Yukon and N.W.T. ministers. In the past Parks contributed IFA implementation funds and time.

10:10am - Ramona joined the meeting via telephone.

I. Ongoing Business – IFA Wildlife Research Funds

The Chair welcomed Ramona to the meeting and invited her to speak about grizzly bear project plans for the summer and her corresponding funding needs, as well as an update on the polar bear traditional knowledge study.

Ramona reported that this year's research is contingent upon receiving Polar Continental Shelf (PCS) funding, which came in \$56,000 less than she had planned for due to a number of factors. Her original plan was to monitor survival, pick up collars, perform den surveys, do a collar correction, and conduct blood and toxicology work. In order to free \$20,000 she has put the lab work on hold and has scaled back the den work/vegetation sampling scheduled for July-August. She might ask PCS for support again at a later date in order to complete all the work. Capture work needs to happen now and a collar correction might be done this coming week while she is out in the field.

Ramona said that she has enough funding to keep program essentials going. Denning and lab work, however, will suffer but there is a chance that PCS will still come through.

The Chair requested her to explain the implications of scaling back the den and lab work.

Ramona explained that the den work is the strongest climate change component of the project: habitat may be affected by melting permafrost and thus may be a limiting factor for the population, which is important from a land use planning perspective. The problem with delaying the work is that dens may collapse and be difficult to find later. The purpose of the blood and toxicology work is to see if contaminants are affecting reproductive success.

Doug asked her to rank project activities for priority.

She said that blood work should come first, den work second, followed by toxicology. Toxicology and bloodwork run at \$9-10,000 each, and the denwork budget is \$60,000.

Christian asked if den work was an add-on to the original project and if it didn't happen this year if the project would be extended.

Ramona clarified that some of the den work could happen this year but if PCS funding levels for next year are similar to this year, collars would come off but den work would continue for a third year. If funding was available to complete den work this year the project could be complete no later than next year.

The Chair asked from a harvest management standpoint what part of the research is most important.

Ramona pointed to the DNA survival analysis, indicating that it would likely be complete by next year with collars coming off. The den analysis is a habitat-related component that may be more influenced by harvest analysis: if changes in permafrost are affecting the population then the quota would be adjusted.

The Chair clarified that habitat availability currently is largely a function of climate change since there is no development on the North Slope, and because much of the land is protected via Ivvavik National Park and the Withdrawal Order.

Ramona said that the latest she would know about PCS funding would be March.

The Chair moved Council discussion to polar bear traditional knowledge work. He reminded members that Ramona brought forward a proposal before Christmas to do an Aklavik-based study. The Council approved it in principle contingent on WMAC (NWT) and ISR-wide involvement.

Ramona indicated that she has started work on a survey instrument with Steve Watkinson, to be used in the southern Yukon, and will forward it to the WMAC's for review shortly. Ian Stirling's work on traditional knowledge in the ISR will be integrated into the Beaufort study as well which will strengthen the project's value for management.

The Chair commented on the relationship among all project collaborators and that the diversity in skill sets and experience will greatly benefit the project.

Ramona reported that the Yukon sent a letter to the Game Council regarding its' re-engagement in polar bear management.

The Chair said that a coordinated, consistent approach to the suite of traditional knowledge studies happening in the ISR is important.

Ramona said that she has been working not only within the ISR but across the Beaufort in cooperation with Alaskans as well. Various organizations in Alaska have conducted TK studies in the past: she is working to harmonize a survey instrument so it can be applied in all three jurisdictions: Yukon, N.W.T, and Alaska.

She also mentioned that at the recent Polar Bear Technical Committee (PBTC) meeting development of the status table distinguished TK from scientific information. It was clear that most populations did not have the benefit of TK.

The Chair commented that every time the Council does a TK study they learn from it, and mentioned that Michelle had the idea to distribute grizzly bear TK reports to households in Aklavik which is effective for informing people. He also mentioned that the draft of the Porcupine Caribou TK study is complete and that the survey instrument is worth looking at, especially from a spatial data standpoint.

Danny reminded Ramona that when she is conducting surveys over the next couple of weeks to fly 2000 feet or higher because people are out on the land harvesting caribou. He requested that she avoid certain areas if possible.

Ramona thanked the Council for their time and support.

11:05 Ramona left the call.

Ernest requested that the Secretariat create business cards for members, as they would be useful to have when attending conferences and other events.

ACTION 06-09-01: The Secretariat will contact WMAC (NS) Council members to determine who would like Council business cards, and have copies printed for the fall meeting.

D. Review of Action Items: (continued)

Action 07-10-15: The Secretariat will draft a letter to Yukon Government recommending recommendation 2 and 3 regarding the research permitting and reporting process. As well, the Council will recommend rationalizing the two permit system within Yukon Government by combining Science and Explorers Permit with the Wildlife Permit for natural science research projects. **Complete.** Doug said that the Department of Environment had an internal meeting to address the letter but that the issue applies to the whole Yukon and relates to all land claims, so may take some time to address. The hope is to involve the Heritage department soon. The Chair suggested that research institutes in the N.W.T. have effective systems in place for research management. He suggested revisiting the issue twice a year in future, at the December and summer meetings, as the Yukon progresses on the issue as well as writing a follow-up letter to Dan Lindsey.

ACTION 06-09-02: The Secretariat will submit a follow up letter to Dan Lindsey, copying it to Allan Koprowsky, regarding the research and permitting process requesting a time line of action.

Action 08-07-05: WMAC (NS) will draft a letter to Parks Canada recommending that they adopt the Stokes Point fuel storage protocol for Shingle Point DEW line re-fuelling area. **Follow up – In progress.** Dorothy commented that Shingle Point is on Department of National Defense (DND) property and Doug remembered that Bruce McLean at Yukon Government was pursuing a land transfer from DND to Yukon for the strip. Christian recalled that Parks ran into a similar issue elsewhere.

Members reported that Canadian, Department of Fisheries and Oceans and GNWT have been storing fuel there as well as bear researchers. Historically Parks Canada did, but they have not had fuel there for the last two years.

Christian noted that fuel storage protocols apply to parties as a best practice – the coast guard recently adopted Parks' storage protocol.

The Chair remarked that a party-based protocol at Shingle Point would be a good way to avoid dealing with land ownership.

The Chair suggested that the groups storing fuel at Shingle adopt Parks' protocol: party-based protocol is easier than land-based because of ownership issues at the site.

ACTION 06-09-03: The Secretariat will follow up with Karen Clyde at Yukon Government to receive an update on fuel storage at Shingle Point. If necessary,

the Secretariat will write a letter to the groups storing fuel at the Point recommending that they adopt Parks Canada Fuel Storage Protocol.

Action 08-09-05: The Secretariat will work with Dorothy on the muskox genetics project proposal. The Secretariat will cc WMAC (NWT), GNWT, and GY on the project proposal. **In progress.** Dorothy reported that the project has been delayed due to the challenge in acquiring Alaska and Yukon samples.

Action 08-07-20: The Secretariat will look into the old mapping project to locate past maps including the satellite image created by Jim Hawkings used on a WMAC (NS) poster. The Secretariat will draft a one page outline to describe the project and present it at the fall 2008 Council meeting. **In progress.** The Secretariat reported that she found the Atlas at Yukon Archives and will bring it forward for the September meeting.

Action 08-09-06: The Secretariat will investigate ways to create a searchable database of Council meeting minutes. **Complete.** The Secretariat will upload the searchable PDF's onto an FTP site where they can be easily accessed by the Council.

Action 08-09-08: The Secretariat will update the Wildlife Conservation and Management Plan-section of the website with a modifier that explains that the Plan is being updated. **Complete.** The Chair noted that the Plan likely will not be updated until next year.

Action 08-10-01: The Secretariat will send all members a copy of the North Slope Wolf presentation by mail or a web link. **Complete.** Members began to reflect back upon a video made by the Inuvialuit Communication Society that featured Danny C. Gordon and appeared on the old Council website.

ACTION 06-09-04: The Secretariat will acquire the Inuvialuit Communication Society-produced film that featured Danny C. Gordon's ground-based monitoring work on the North Slope in April of 1996 or 1997, and post it on the website. She will also check the old website's master file to see if any other material was not transferred over to the new website and was lost.

Action 09-12-03: Doug Larsen will get a copy of Yukon Government's formal policy on wildlife compensation and deliver it to the WMAC (NS) Secretariat. **Complete.**

Action 09-12-04: The WMAC (NS) will review its Communication Plan periodically to review its performance. **In progress.** Members decided that they would review the Plan once a year at the December meeting.

Action 10-12-01: The WMAC (NS) Secretariat will coordinate with Christian Bucher presentations by Ivavik IPY researchers at the Council's March meeting. **In progress.** Christian said that Donald McLellan is willing to attend the Council's September meeting. The Chair remarked that Donald Reid should present at the fall meeting as well. The Council suggested changing the long-standing formatting of action items so that they are easier to track for future.

ACTION 06-09-05: The WMAC (NS) Secretariat will change the formatting of action items to reflect month/year/action item number.

Danny reported that the AHTC questions WMAC (NS)'s role in reviewing research and development activities, noting the drilling platform at Stokes Point of particular concern.

ACTION 06-09-06: The WMAC (NS) Secretariat will send the Aklavik HTC all WMAC (NS) correspondence relating to the issue of offshore marine storage.

ACTION 06-09-07: The WMAC (NS) Secretariat from this point forward will request copies of Aklavik HTC minutes and review them

Danny asked if the Council received the Herschel Island dog sledding trip proposal for review. The Secretariat reported that it was received and was included in the March meeting binder for Council review.

The Chair said that the Secretariat reviews proposals that go through the Screening Committee and brings items concerning the Council forward. He clarified that it is not WMAC (NS)'s responsibility to comment directly to the HTC regarding development proposals.

ACTION 06-09-08: The WMAC (NS) Secretariat will send a letter to the Aklavik HTC reminding them that the Environmental Impact Screening Committee has authority over approval of development activities.

Action 10-12-03: Richard Gordon will work with the WMAC (NS) Secretariat to organize a meeting with Stephanie Muckenheim and others identified as being appropriate regarding Herschel funding. **Outstanding.** The Secretariat will contact Stephanie Muckenheim to clarify this item's current relevance.

Action 10-12-05: The WMAC (NS) Secretariat will get minutes from the December 2008 Aklavik HTC meeting relating to research proposal screening. **In progress.** The Council clarified the purpose of this action item: to show that the WMAC (NS) consults with a variety of groups before recommending research. The Chair reminded people that when he attends the IGC meeting in December he reports on how the Council plans to recommend research, which in part, is based on the AHTC's feedback during the December joint meeting.

1:30pm Dan Lindsey and Boyd Pyper joined the meeting.

The Chair welcomed Dan and Boyd and introduced the issue of Porcupine Caribou Interim Measures being proposed by the Yukon Government.

Boyd proposed that he give a brief overview of Access and Benefits of Genetics Resources (ABS) before launching into the caribou discussion.

J. New Business – Access and Benefit Sharing of Genetic Resources (ABS)

Boyd explained that ABS is a federal initiative and that he is briefing the Council on it only because the Yukon is engaged in the process and therefore familiar with the issue.

He clarified the meaning of genetic resources and noted that because Canada signed the UN Convention on Biodiversity there is mounting pressure for Canada to come up with its own domestic policy. Canada is seeking views on whether or not the approach should be nationally consistent, which is what Yukon is favoring at this point. They are also considering either a set of best practices/voluntary compliance or full scale legislation. He mentioned that Yukon is supportive of legislation.

Canada is also deliberating whether or not to include traditional knowledge in its ABS policy or if that is best left to self governments. If a national policy is developed formal consultation would take place with aboriginal groups on the matter.

The Chair summarized that essentially countries around the world, through development of policies, are trying to get a grip on rights and benefits as they relate to genetic resources.

Boyd said that whatever form the national policy takes, no mechanism would force aboriginal people to give up their traditional knowledge. However, if traditional knowledge is shared with a company, then that knowledge may fall into the public domain which could then involve intellectual property rights.

I. Ongoing Business: Porcupine Caribou

Dan thanked the Council for having him at the meeting and provided some background on the government's proposed interim measures. The measures are proposed in order to ensure that harvest is sustainable and not pushing the population into further decline. The proposed bull-only harvest addresses the current high level of cow harvest. Yukon is looking to have measures in place by fall 2009, and they have high political support from the Yukon premier to do so. The measures are not about intruding on harvesting rights, but instead address herd conservation. The Porcupine herd is complex to manage for a number of factors: a high number of users, a year round road that runs through its wintering range, interest in development of its calving grounds on the Alaska side, and poor productivity.

He summarized that the measures include a bull-only harvest as well as a tag system to track the harvest. He apologized that more information was not made available at the front end of consultation. Conservation and the precautionary principle play strongly into the measures: there are lots of examples out there of population collapse and Yukon is acting now in order to prevent that situation from happening. He expressed hope that after Doug makes his power point presentation that Yukon's intent will be made clear, and again, apologized that Yukon didn't do a better job of communication off the start.

The Chair commented that indeed some people were upset about the timing of Yukon's announcement but that at the end of the day the institutional arrangements and processes in place will correct the problems.

Doug reiterated that rationale behind the measures should have been given earlier. He noted that a lot of information would be presented today, and that the Council has until the end of June to respond.

Dan explained that the tight timeline for consultation is in place in order to have regulations in place for fall.

As for the measures' relationship with the HMP, Doug said it would be a good idea to have Dorothy speak to the HMP following Yukon's presentation on interim measures.

The Chair commented on the deadline for comments noting that the PCMB's response to the HMP would affect the Council's comments on Yukon's interim measures.

Boyd agreed that Yukon's measures will be informed to some degree by the HMP, but remarked that final positions by the parties to the PCMA on the Plan likely won't be ready this fall. He said that interim measures would not supplant the Plan but would be complementary instead.

Dan commented that the Yukon's interim measures over the short term would flow into the HMP which will be in place over the longer term.

The Chair asked if this presentation clarifies the rationale behind the measures that the Council requested of the Minister back in April.

Doug clarified that this is the formal consultation process for proposed interim measures and began his presentation. Conservation obligations under land claims, concerns from First Nations and the Inuvialuit, co-management boards, communities and the PCMB have all influenced development of the measures.

ACTION: 06-09-09: Doug Larsen will provide the Council with full records of the Working Group's consultation with communities on the Porcupine Caribou Harvest Management Plan.

Doug reviewed the management goal: to respect conservation principles and to stop decline and promote herd recovery. He then outlined the specifics of what the measures entail.

Ernest noted that the presentation needs to mention Inuvialuit everywhere First Nations are mentioned.

Regarding implementation of measures, the Chair explained that Hunters and Trappers Committees have legal authority to regulate the harvest of their members. In the N.W.T. once HTC's have passed those bylaws the N.W.T. government is required to enforce them. In the Yukon, where HTC's pass bylaws apply, the minister has discretion over whether bylaws are reflected in the regulations or not.

A member asked how much power bylaws have, noting that the HTC's themselves have no power to enforce them.

The Chair responded that bylaws may have their own penalties and punishments and that they also may be enforced by way of territorial regulations, which in the case of the Yukon may or may not be in place depending on what the minister decides. He noted though that by the time a regulation is put in place, management conditions may change, which can compound the initial problem.

Danny said that in the early 1920's the government mistakenly declared there were no more caribou and brought in reindeer to prevent people from starving, when in fact there were still many caribou around. He also mentioned that some people focus too much on harvesting rights and not on just taking what they need.

He also talked about areas near Aklavik that have caribou consistently every year at certain times of year, and that caribou calve in some of these areas as well. He also noted that getting accurate harvest information is a challenge.

Doug continued and said that the interim measures would not involve a Total Allowable Harvest.

Christian asked when and if the federal government would be involved in the measures.

Dan explained that Parks Canada has a member on the PCMB and that Ivvavik currently does not have any legislation, in which case territorial law could apply. The process still needs to be worked out but for now the Canadian Wildlife Service and Parks Canada are at least aware of interim measures.

The Chair inquired if any regulations are currently in place for subsistence harvesting in national parks. Christian said regulations are not expected to come into effect before the next five to ten years.

Doug went on to discuss conservation and the precautionary principle and how they relate to harvesting rights and implementation of the measures. He also talked about provisions for consultation.

The Chair commented that the speed with which Yukon is proceeding with the measures could be interpreted by some groups to indicate an emergency situation.

Dan clarified that the measures are better classified as expedited interim measures rather than emergency measures.

Doug explained that depending on what comes out of the Harvest Management Plan Yukon hopes that the interim measures and the Plan will merge.

Doug went over the management response process noting that a period of 17 years has passed since the herd started to decline: Yukon does not want to wait any longer to act.

A member asked that if aboriginal groups don't agree with the measures if Yukon will proceed with implementation.

Doug noted that if changes to the measures are suggested, the additional time required to consult and deal with process could add anywhere from six months to a year.

Christian asked about international implications. Doug said that the Alaskans are aware of the Harvest Management Plan and the interim measures, but that different challenges exist in Alaska so they are not involved at this stage.

Doug moved on to discuss the reasons behind the herd's decline and a member suggested adding natural predation as a factor in herd decline because of its significance.

Doug spoke to accuracy of harvest data noting how important it is, especially from the perspective of monitoring success of the measures if implemented.

Danny said that if there are lots of caribou people take more bulls than cows, as the Elders have always done.

Dorothy explained that Yukon is proposing to conduct a study to determine the bull/cow ratio, noting that it was last done in 1980. If successful it will provide a good baseline to monitor the effect of a bull-only harvest.

Doug overviewed the impact of harvesting on a declining herd and discussed the nature of population fluctuations. He stressed that in the past caribou have been able to recover from population lows, but that due to a variety of new factors impacting the herd today, they may not be able to recover.

The Chair explained that because harvest is only one factor impacting herd size, the importance of land use planning cannot be underestimated: other conservation management strategies such as range management planning need to be addressed.

Doug talked about the importance of sustainable yield which requires a growing population. He also talked about the key role cows play in herd productivity, noting that the Porcupine Caribou herd is one of the least productive in North America.

The Chair cautioned that success of the interim measures might be difficult to distinguish from other factors that might contribute to an increase in herd productivity.

Dorothy reminded the Council of the importance of harvest data, which can help determine success of management actions.

The Chair commented that harvest data, especially over the long term, could be key.

Doug talked about the importance of habitat protection and the role that caribou play: the less caribou there are out on the landscape the more difficult it may be to argue for protection of critical habitat. He moved onto discussing population projections and the corresponding management scenarios.

The Chair asked, if measures were implemented, how hunters' actions would be seen to change.

A member commented that the Inuvialuit may focus on their harvesting rights, but that it would be difficult to predict how compliant people would be, especially given that caribou is a preferred meat.

Another member commented that Dempster caribou are a long way from some communities and that introduction of reindeer, for example, may reduce dependency on Porcupine caribou.

The Chair commented that within the ISR a variety of country foods are available and that over the years people have adapted their diets to what is available at the time.

Doug went over a number of different population scenarios noting that the worst case scenario could result in disappearance of the herd in 12 years.

The Chair asked how Yukon's approach lines up with the N.W.T. in the context of the joint letter from both premiers to the PCMB regarding the Harvest Management Plan. Doug commented historically that Yukon and N.W.T. have had different responses to declining herds.

Dan said that Yukon is currently in discussions with the N.W.T. on this matter.

The Chair asked if both governments are in agreement with why interim measures should be undertaken this fall.

Doug noted that the push for interim measures is partly based on not having known when the PCMB would recommend a Harvest Management Plan.

The Chair suggested that interim measures may have more to do with the lack of capacity of management institutions than they do with a perceived imminent collapse of the population.

Dan agreed that the measures are more about taking steps forward because many of the management tools required to enforce implementation of the Harvest Management Plan are in their infancy.

The Chair suggested that another way of thinking about interim measures is that they are an attempt to implement conservation measures until such time that all management institutions have the necessary instruments to implement the Harvest Management Plan.

Dan reminded people that a population census is scheduled for the summer, which if successful, could affect management decisions.

Ernest agreed that something needs to be done about the herd's decline and that in the absence of interim measures the minister may decide to do something different.

Doug reminded him that the minister is waiting for a recommended Plan from the PCMB.

Ernest drew attention to the fact that herd size is still uncertain.

Dorothy said that if the census is successful, numbers should be finalized by October.

Dan thanked the Council for accommodating Yukon on the agenda and said that Boyd's discussion summary would be forwarded to the Council for comment.

The meeting was adjourned for the day at 5:30pm.

June 7, 2009

Lindsay Staples Chair • **Danny C. Gordon** Inuvialuit Game Council (Member) • **Ernest Pokiak** Inuvialuit Game Council (Member) • **Christian Bucher** Government of Canada (Member) • **Michelle Christensen** (Secretariat) • **Dorothy Cooley** Yukon Government (Alternate) • **Doug Larsen** Yukon Government (Member) • **Camille Thomas** Wildlife Technician Trainee, Porcupine Caribou Management Board (Guest)

The Chair called the meeting to order at 9:00am. He reviewed the agenda noting that action items need to be finished up, the Harvest Management Plan and interim measures reviewed, and next steps outlined for genetic resources.

Doug said that the PCMB met last week and has decided on a final version of the Plan and is working on a letter to send to the parties. He noted that the letter to the IGC would likely be copied to both WMAC's.

The Chair suggested that in order to keep things streamlined the Council could submit one response to the minister on the Plan and the interim measures.

A member suggested that Yukon hold back at least one year from September on implementing interim measures considering that we are not in an emergency situation and to give time to the Plan. He also noted that two herds in Alaska are increasing.

Dorothy clarified that two herds west of the Porcupine herd are indeed increasing in size.

The Chair said once the PCMB releases its recommendation and the Council has the full set of information from Yukon on interim measures a Council meeting should be scheduled. One letter would be written to the Yukon minister, minister of parks, and would be copied to the IGC and GNWT minister and the PCMB. He remarked that the appearance of an emergency is causing some groups to review their land claim agreements.

Doug said that the PCMB is obligated under the PCMA to recommend the Plan to the three ministers, but that they will recommend it to the parties as well. It is possible that the minister could respond with suggested changes to the Plan. He also said that the parties may get together for a meeting but could not say for certain.

The Chair said that the parties to the Plan will likely have different approaches on implementing the Plan: it would be ideal to see a harmonized approach but it may not be possible.

Dorothy reminded the Council that every point in the Plan represents the minimum that the Working Group could reach consensus on.

Doug said that he hoped the PCMB would release a document in addition to the Plan explaining some of the background discussion that went into the final draft Plan.

The Chair suggested that the Council meet immediately following the release of the Plan.

ACTION 06-09-10: The WMAC (NS) will meet within the next 4-5 weeks (June 17-July 29) to prepare comments to the PCMB on the Harvest Management Plan.

I. Ongoing Business: Porcupine Caribou Traditional Knowledge Project Update

The Secretariat outlined the project budget and handed members a first draft of the complete report. She requested feedback from the Council on the report as a whole and whether or not mapped information showing community hunting areas should be released.

Members decided that the information was at a small enough scale that it could be released without worry.

The Chair suggested that some of the material in the report could be incorporated into the Harvest Management Plan, especially around hunting ethics.

Danny spoke briefly on hunting ethics in the Aklavik area and how practices have changed over the years. He also commended the interviewer, Lisa Christensen, and on her ability to get interviewees to open up and speak honestly. He said she was the right person for the job and she provided some excellent capacity building opportunities for the community interviewers.

ACTION 06-09-11: WMAC (NS) Council members will submit comments on the Porcupine Caribou Traditional Knowledge report on the to-be-decided meeting day to discuss the Harvest Management Strategy.

The Chair commented that he hoped the value of these kinds of reports is more commonly recognized.

Doug highlighted Shawn Francis' cumulative effects project and explained that this multi-year project will require many partnerships. The project addresses cumulative effects thresholds and involves thinking on a range management plan scale.

ACTION 06-09-12: The WMAC (NS) Secretariat will coordinate with the PCMB Council involvement in Shawn Francis' upcoming cumulative effects project partnership meeting in fall 2009.

Dorothy noted that Shawn has spoken with the Porcupine Caribou Technical Committee and that he is looking at incorporating caribou zones of influence into his model.

Doug emphasized that the PCMB is interested in looking at factors other than harvest that impact the herd.

The Chair noted that the Council's response to the HMP should reflect the importance of non-harvest impacts on the herd. The N.W.T. is already monitoring against thresholds which is proving useful in monitoring the impact of development activities, even if it is just a measure and does not have any legal teeth.

In talking to Sean, Doug said that what they liked about the Porcupine Caribou traditional knowledge study was that the questionnaire could be employed in other user communities and could input into the cumulative effects work.

The Chair explained that the big difference between land use plans in the N.W.T. and the Yukon is that they are not legally enforceable in the Yukon. In the N.W.T. they are driven by land claims and rolled into the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act.

Dorothy asked the Council about National Park permits for caribou monitoring activities in relation to the Environmental Impact Screening Committee (EISC).

ACTION 06-09-13: The WMAC (NS) Secretariat will locate and transmit to Dorothy a letter written a few years ago by the Council to the EISC stating their support for caribou monitoring work in Ivvavik. Dorothy will draft a letter on behalf of the Council supporting a three year permit commencing in 2010 for a calving survey, and the Chair will sign it off.

Danny asked that the Aklavik HTC be copied. Dorothy replied that results are released to everyone, including the HTC.

Dorothy proceeded to update the Council on herd monitoring activities. In March of this year collar work and a composition count was completed. One new collar was deployed, resulting in 16 satellite collars and 100 regular collars on cows and bulls. A hard ice layer was found through much of the surveyed area which made for a tough winter for the animals. She explained that the PCMB hired a summer student to do some analysis of collar data dating back to the 80s.

A photocensus will be attempted later in the month and GY has proposed a composition count to take place during the rut: efforts will be made to ensure the count happens before other herds start mixing with the Porcupine herd.

A study is being developed to better understand what factors contribute to wounding loss.

The Chair remarked that the Dempster corridor has been identified as a good place for cumulative impact monitoring noting that the North Yukon Land Use Plan makes no mention of it.

Dorothy responded that this was why the Board has pursued cumulative effects: rather than an overall land use plan Shawn's project relates specifically to caribou. She talked about the lichen study and reported that last year's rain prevented the ability to monitor lichen dust levels.

Dorothy explained that periodically when not a lot of Porcupine caribou are on the Dempster there is a concern that people will take a large number of Hart River caribou, mistaking them for Porcupine Caribou.

J. New Business: Access and Benefit Sharing of Genetic Resources (continued)

The Chair suggested that there are other organizations with more focused mandates on the subject, such as ITK, ICC, and the IRC, and that the Council wait to see how they respond before becoming involved.

A member inquired why Inuvialuit would be compensated for anything other than traditional knowledge.

The Chair explained that the issue concerns both knowledge and exploitation of resources at various levels of intensity, some of which would be monitored through mechanisms already in place such as the Environmental Impact Screening Committee.

E. Correspondence

The Secretariat reviewed the correspondence section and Ernest commented that it would be useful to number items within the section because of the volume of material.

Most of the material was for information only. Items requiring Council decisions were highlighted.

Dorothy reported that a collar on a dead moose was going to be picked up by Ramona when she engages in her fieldwork over the coming weeks.

The Secretariat explained that she worked with the Aklavik HTC on updating Grizzly Bear Policies and Procedures to reflect WMAC (NS) resolutions that were passed years ago. Due to changeover in staff at the HTC, despite changes being implemented on the ground, they were not reflected in the policy itself until now.

The Secretariat pointed out the note from John Cheechoo regarding his concern about the Department of Oceans' Center of Expertise in Traditional Ecological Knowledge. The Council wrote a letter of support a year ago. Christian commented that Parks had also written a letter of support and was concerned that they hadn't since heard anything. Council agreed to follow the issue.

The Secretariat consulted the Council on how they would like to receive correspondence. Some members requested electronic versions, others wanted to continue to receive hard copies. Dorothy brought up the importance of having complete meeting binders for the sake of referencing.

Ernest asked that briefing notes be prepared for some issues. The Chair suggested that depending on the issue, briefing notes could be prepared on a yearly basis for example, but was conscious of not overloading the Secretariat's workload.

ACTION 06-09-14: The WMAC (NS) Secretariat will prepare a briefing note later in the fall once Porcupine Caribou management issues have settled, reflecting back on the last year and a half of activity. Notes will also be started for grizzly bear, polar bear, and muskox.

F. Financial Report

The Secretariat reviewed the final position of the Council for the 2008/2009 fiscal year. She highlighted areas where the Council had overspent and noted that the surplus to carry into 2009/2010 was slightly lower than what was projected, but that the Council is now consistently spending down its annual contribution agreement amount.

The Council discussed how great it was having one and a half staff people in terms of spending down the budget and accomplishments.

The Secretariat reported that she anticipates needing help in the coming months organizing the North Slope Conference.

The Secretariat explained that a contribution agreement was needed to secure IFA research funds for the Canadian Wildlife Service in 08/09 and that discussions are underway with the Joint Secretariat to remind Canada of their obligations to dedicate IFA funds towards Canadian Wildlife Service research and that contribution agreements should not be necessary.

The Council discussed the time period for funding agreement negotiations noting that currently we are in a 10 year cycle.

The Chair said that usually the Council speaks directly with INAC regarding funding requirements. At times all bodies have sat at the table working through the envelope of IFA funds and at times different groups have lost out like Herschel Island Territorial Park did in the last round of negotiations.

The Chair brought the Council back to the 2008/2009 financial statements and asked for a motion to sign off the statements.

Motion 06-09-05

To approve the Wildlife Management Advisory Council (North Slope)'s Financial Statements for 2008/2009.

Moved: Doug Larsen

Second: Ernest Pokiak

Motion carried.

The Secretariat moved on to discuss the 2009/2010 budget and drew attention to WMAC (NS) projects. Wayne Wysocki's Phase II analysis of Borderlands data was discussed and the Council realized that a decision regarding Environment Canada's Borderlands proposal for IFA funds needed to be made before decisions on Wayne's project could be made.

I. Ongoing Business: IFA Wildlife Research Funds (continued)

The Secretariat reviewed the Arctic Borderlands Ecological Knowledge Co-op's proposal for IFA funds, walking them through activities to be carried out through the year as indicated in the work plan. She highlighted that the monitoring assessment Borderlands is proposing is based on the work that the Council had started work on in fall 2008 by engaging Michelle Sicotte.

The Chair expressed concern over the proposed gap analysis, pointing out that everyone has different needs and that some groups don't know how Borderlands can meet their needs. He remarked that the Council had intended to hold a workshop on monitoring and needs assessment but that it would require a great deal of time and effort, noting that the time Michael has allotted for this in the workplan may not be extensive enough especially if WMAC (NS) is to be a collaborator.

A member said he would rather see funds go towards analysis of spatial data than an annual gathering, and that analyzing the five years of existing data is priority over having the full dataset digitized.

The Council discussed the value of the workplan. The Chair explained that by continuing to involve Wayne in reviewing Borderlands' outputs, the Council will continue to develop a better sense of the value of the program to the Council.

A member expressed his lack of confidence in the University of Alaska synthesis report due to the lack of rigor shown by researchers at the October 2008 meeting in applying Wayne's concerns with the data.

The Council decided they would like clarification on how the gap analysis would be conducted.

The Chair expressed concern that the work plan was overly ambitious for the one year timeframe. He also discussed the possibility of spreading the task of assessment and gap analysis around to each individual institution, but noted that with more of an individualistic approach some sharing of information would be necessary along the way. He also noted that Borderlands' role could be expanded beyond data collection to include integration of territory-wide datasets.

A member commented that he would like to see Borderlands continue to focus on reviewing the data instead of investing in another year of monitoring.

Dorothy remarked that Borderlands canvassed people for ideas on monitoring priorities some time ago and got no response, that being the reason that they turned to pursuing synthesis work instead.

The Chair stressed that a monitoring assessment followed by a workshop needs to precede questionnaire re-design and that surveys do not need to take place annually. Going back to previous discussions, the Chair said until a review of the program is complete the Council would likely not recommend a survey. The need for a monitoring assessment is clear – describing what people are doing will be easy but for groups to understand what they need will take some time.

Christian said that Parks is currently assessing its needs and that what they want now may be different from two years down the road. He also said that no further need for the Borderlands program is still something worth keeping in mind.

The Chair commented that historically the full \$15,000 allocated to Canadian Wildlife Service has always gone to Borderlands.

The Council reviewed the work plan again debating over what to support.

The Chair concluded that spatial data digitizing and analysis, monitoring assessment, and gap analysis, totaling \$7,500 is necessary. Once all those items are completed and

reviewed, only then would support in the order of a further \$7,500 be offered for conducting surveys and holding a gathering.

The Chair again expressed concern over the difficulty groups have and seem to continue to have with regard to identifying monitoring needs.

ACTION 06-09-15: The Chair and Dorothy Cooley will try to locate Council comments on the Borderlands Program that date back to when the program began, on what the Council's monitoring needs were.

A member suggested that the additional \$7,500 be directed toward a workshop of institutions instead of a gathering. The Council agreed.

Motion 06-09-06

The Council recommends allocating \$7500 of IFA research funds towards Arctic Borderlands' spatial data digitization and analysis (\$2500) and monitoring assessment (\$5000). Upon completion of these items and review by the Council, a further \$7500 will be recommended toward a workshop to review the assessment which would then inform revised surveys and a gathering.

Moved: Doug Larsen

Second: Ernest Pokiak

Motion carried.

The Chair emphasized that the monitoring assessment will have to be very well laid out and that there is not much time if a meeting is to be scheduled for the fall. He commented that it might be useful to have a few organizations sign a letter of support.

Members pointed out that Michael's request for \$5000 in funding from Parks Canada IFA funds was allocated back in March and is no longer available.

F. Financial Report (continued)

The Council resumed its discussion on the 2009/2010 budget.

The Secretariat updated the Council on expenditures. The Chair suggested that given the outlook of activities for the year, the budget for Chair Honoraria should be knocked down to \$40,000.

Members discussed where in the budget money could be pulled from to re-direct into projects.

ACTION 06-09-16: The WMAC (NS) Secretariat will determine if the budget amount of \$71,974 for staff as indicated in the 2009/2010 budget accommodates a second staff person for a period of time, and will make necessary adjustments based on current projections.

The Secretariat said that the Porcupine Caribou Traditional Knowledge Project was all spent out except for further review and changes to the draft by the contractor. The Chair suggested that \$2000 more be allocated to this to accommodate final review.

The Secretariat noted that the map project was deferred from last year and reminded the Council that the Wildlife Atlas had been located, requesting a decision as to whether or not money should be allocated for this year.

Motion 06-09-07

For the 2009/2010 fiscal year, the Council will allocate \$2000 more for the Porcupine Caribou Traditional Knowledge Project, and \$2000 towards mapping.

Moved: Doug Larsen

Second: Ernest Pokiak

Motion carried.

The Chair said that by making these further allocations, the Council would have \$13,000 to allocate through the year as projects and initiatives arise.

H. Report from Members and Secretariat

Ernest reported on his attendance at the 2030 North Conference in Ottawa. He described the different conference themes and noted that he had handouts he would be happy to share. He was disappointed that he was the only aboriginal person in attendance from the west and that only a handful attended from Nunavut.

Christian provided an update on Parks Canada activities.

Noted research activities for the summer include Pollard's permafrost project on Herschel, Dolly Varden work on the Babbage, char work over much of the north, Ramona's grizzly project, Arctic Wolves on Herschel, and Stokes Point remediation. Ground water monitoring at Komakuk beach is also taking place. Much of participation from Moose Kerr school was cancelled due to lack of interest from students, though a group of 15 older students will be travelling to the Park to carry out studies.

Cultural resource work is underway at Sheep Creek: artifacts will soon be on display. He also noted that the Backcountry site plan that was prepared a number of months back is not moving forward because of other field unit priorities.

He quickly overviewed a number of other items: youth-assisted monitoring activities on the Firth river; ongoing maintenance on the repeater system; an annual hazard assessment on the Firth River to ensure public safety; artist in the park in July; a coastal patrol and bird survey; and a fall campsite impact assessment.

Park's CEO is keen on assessing implementation of management plans for all parks, including Ivvavik. The Inuvik-based field unit argued that it doesn't make sense to do the assessment annually, however in September the first assessment will be done and a planner will be in touch with the Council for input.

Lastly, he noted that Lindsay Croken would like to update the Council on heritage resources at the September meeting.

I. Ongoing Business: IFA Wildlife Research Funds (continued)
Porcupine Caribou Rut Count Proposal

Dorothy explained GY's composition count proposal noting that the last count was done ~25 years ago. Yukon will be working with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, to conduct the count during the rut when the herd will be most mixed. Depending on which jurisdiction the animals are in, research permits may be required, and funds may have to be transferred. \$15,000 in IFA funds are being requested. Currently the count is being proposed as a one time estimate, but if a bull-only harvest comes into effect then counts would be conducted more frequently.

Muskox Genetics

Once Dorothy hears back from the lab on fecal sample costs she will get back to the Council on the funding request which should be close to \$8,000.

Aklavik Harvest Data

The Aklavik HTC has started their own harvest data collection program and it is unclear at this point if and how the government-run programs will be affected.

Final Reports

The Secretariat reported that she has received final reports for most projects and that she will send members copies electronically and in hard copy for those not on email.

Remainder of IFA Research Fund Allocation

Motion 06-09-08

To allocate the remainder of Yukon Government-allotted IFA research funds as follows: \$10,000 for grizzly bear project blood work; \$15,000 for Porcupine caribou rut composition count project; and \$6,000 in principle for muskox genetics work (pending receipt of a full proposal).

Moved: Ernest Pokiak

Second: Danny Gordon

Motion carried.

Dorothy reminded the Council that next year's IFA research budget will be in strong demand because next year is North American peregrine year, the final year of the grizzly bear project, and biologists are gearing up for the need to survey moose and muskox.

I. Ongoing Business: Wildlife Compensation

Doug reported that it is Yukon's policy not to provide compensation for loss of wildlife to harvesters as a result of research activities, but that an internal review is taking place to investigate whether or not the policy is consistent with the IFA.

The Chair reported that research activities do not classify as development activities as defined in the IFA. This is a reason why research activities unrelated to development are exempt from screening through the EISC.

Doug suggested that because the Council recommends research they could be seen as responsible on some level to harvesters requesting compensation.

Danny commented that the lack of compensation protects industry and government and expressed concern for the harvester who makes their living out on the land.

Doug clarified that Yukon's policy is not consistent with the N.W.T. and Parks Canada when it comes to defence of life and property kills.

I. Ongoing Business: Polar Bear – PBAC/PBTC Update

Doug updated the Council on his participation in PBAC and PBTC meetings over the last few months. Of note was his recommendation to the PBTC that co-management boards be designated the responsibility of integrating traditional and scientific knowledge instead of the committees.

The Secretariat was also in attendance at recent meetings and noted other meeting highlights including the development of a National Management Strategy, a status table, and the identification of a need for an inter-jurisdictional agreement between Greenland and Canada.

I. Ongoing Business: Yukon Trapline Concession and Boundary Update.

Stephanie Muckenheim was not in attendance to speak on behalf of GY on the issue. The Council requested learning more about the amendment before writing a letter of support because a member identified that an unknown group may have raised concern about it.

ACTION: 06-09-17: The WMAC (NS) Secretariat will research the trap line boundary amendment issue with Stephanie Muckenheim to determine whether or not the Council will write a letter of support.

I. Ongoing Business: North Slope Conference 2010

The Chair reviewed letters written to the IGC and WMAC (NWT), outlining proposed dates, locations, chairs, and themes for the upcoming 2010 conference. He hoped Council members could think about what lessons have been learned about the co-management process over the last 25 years. A challenge that came to mind for him was management in a trans-boundary context which encompasses finances, inconsistency of management approaches, etc. He requested that the Secretariat follow up with members on ideas.

He also noted that Yukon was in favour of holding the conference at an earlier date, and expressed concern that holding the conference any earlier than February 16-18 would be very difficult.

He said that greater Arctic participation at this conference would be very valuable, and that co-management groups from the area should be contacted soon to get a feel for whether or not it would be possible.

ACTION 06-09-18: The Secretariat will work with the Chair to have the 2010 North Slope Conference draft program ready for the Council's fall meeting.

J. New Business: Upcoming meetings

The Council discussed possible scheduling options for holding a meeting to finalize comments on Yukon's interim measures and decided that a teleconference on June 26 would work best. The Chair said that the Council would try to meet with the WMAC (NWT) sometime before September to discuss these matters as well.

Council also agreed on meeting in September at a coordinated time around the IGC and WMAC NWT meetings. Doug and Dorothy said that a PCMB meeting in September will also have to be considered when booking the Council's meeting.

The Chair thanked everyone and called the meeting to a close.

Motion 06-09-09

To adjourn the June 6-7, 2009 meeting.

Moved: Danny Gordon

Second: Christian Bucher

Motion carried.