



MEETING MINUTES

WMAC (NS) Quarterly Meeting
Whitehorse, YT • High Country Inn
March 7-8, 2009

March 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) • **Ramona Maraj** Yukon Government (Guest) • **Wendy Nixon** Yukon Government (Guest) • **Syd Cannings** Government of Canada (Guest) • **Dave Fraser** Government of British Columbia (Guest) • **Doug Urqhart** Harvest Management Strategy Working Group Facilitator (Guest)

A. Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 9:10am.

B. Review and Approval of Agenda

The Chair announced that the meeting would focus on the Polar Bear Non Detrimental Finding (NDF), a review of this and next year's budget, the Porcupine Caribou Harvest Management Plan ("the Plan"), and the North Slope Conference. He noted that because the Yukon member is absent, the discussion on next year's projects would be deferred.

Motion 03-09-01

To approve the agenda for the March 7-8, 2009 meeting, as revised.

Moved: Christian Bucher

Second: Danny C. Gordon

Motion carried

C. Review and Approval of December 2008 and January 2009 Minutes

Joint WMAC (NWT)/WMAC (NS) meeting, December 8, 2008, Inuvik, NWT.

The Council brought forward the following changes/revisions:

- Page 4 – first paragraph – change second last sentence to read “Hides are currently banned for export to the United States”. Delete last sentence.
- Christian noted that all the minutes should indicate that Christian represents the Government of Canada, not Parks Canada.

Action 03-07-01: The Secretariat will revise all current and future Council minutes to show that Christian Bucher represents the Government of Canada, not Parks Canada.

Motion 03-09-02

To approve minutes for the joint WMAC (NWT)/WMAC (NS) meeting, December 8, 2008, as revised.

Moved: Ernest Pokiak

Second: Christian Bucher

Motion carried

WMAC (NS) meeting, December 9, 2008, Aklavik, NWT.

The Council brought forward the following changes/revisions:

- Page 9 – change first paragraph to read “The Chair described that Yukon Government and the IGC alternate **selecting** Conference Chairs”.
- Page 9 – third paragraph – delete “Dawson would be a good choice if organizers wanted to limit participation” and replace with “Holding the conference in Dawson would limit participation”.
- With regard to Action 10-12-02 Danny updated the Council that the HTC just held a meeting and decided to move the water station building on the Firth River to Nunaluk spit this summer to serve as a better shelter for rafters. Christian said that archaeological work done to date did not reveal any artifacts in the area.
- In reviewing the minutes, Ernest noted that Pippa Seccombe-Hett has now replaced Andrew Apple John at the Aurora Science Institute.
- Page 13 – change sixth and seventh paragraph down to read as follows:

“Christian said that zoning can be changed when the management plan is reviewed, which is not for another 4 years. However, a Superintendent’s Order, with strong justification, can alter activities within the zone.

“Christian explained that Park access for non-beneficiary traffic is well managed through designated landing sites and permits, but snowmobile, boat, and air access is more complicated. Parks manages the Ivavik coastline as a travel corridor between Aklavik and Barter Island. “

- Page 13 – delete sentence pertaining to Catherine Kennedy and IPY, as well as the next sentence regarding snowmobile traffic and wildlife harassment.
- Page 13 – bottom of page – delete last sentence.
- Page 15 – delete Ernest’s comment about Ramona and HTC.

Motion 03-09-03

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

To approve minutes for the WMAC (NS) December 8, 2008 meeting, as revised.

Moved: Danny Gordon

Second: Christian Bucher

Motion carried

Joint WMAC (NS)/Aklavik Hunters and Trappers Committee meeting, December 9, 2008, Aklavik, NWT.

The Council brought forward the following changes/revisions:

- Page 3 – in reviewing the minutes a member observed that some of Dennis Arey's comments were inaccurate. For example, he says that the Sheep Plan was complete in three years, when in fact it is still a work in progress.
- The Secretariat noted some line spacing issues that need correcting.

Motion 03-09-04

To approve minutes for the joint WMAC (NS /Aklavik Hunters and Trappers Committee meeting, December 8, 2008, as revised.

Moved: Ernest Pokiak

Second: Danny Gordon

Motion carried

WMAC (NS) teleconference, January 27, 2009

The Council had no changes to report.

Motion 03-09-05

To approve minutes for the WMAC (NS) teleconference, January, 2009.

Moved: Ernest Pokiak

Second: Christian Bucher

Motion carried

D. Review of Action Items

The Secretariat updated the Council on action items for which activity has occurred.

Action 07-06-26: The Chair will re-draft the muskox management plan and the Council will review it. **In Progress.** The Chair updated the Council that the Plan is in Dorothy's hands – she needs to ensure that the population data, tables, and charts are up to date. She also needs to have a discussion internally with her government about broad management direction. The Council should deal with the Plan at the summer meeting. Once it is updated, the Council should meet with WMAC (NWT) and the AHTC by fall.

Action 08-03-06: WMAC will provide comments on Incidental Take to CWS before June 30, 2008. **Deferred.** The Secretariat received and filled out paperwork on this file indicating that the Council would like to be informed as the issue moves forward.

Action 08-07-01: The Secretariat will create a new log system to keep track of action items and correspondence which captures the date letters go out and if and when responses are received. **Complete.** The Secretariat updated the Council that the correspondence log system is not a priority, because there is now only 1 person in the office. The Chair requested that the Secretariat at least forward an electronic copy of correspondence to the Chair and Members, and that they be printed and filed in meeting binders.

Action 09-12-02: WMAC NS will recommend a process for consultation and review of the final Harvest Management Strategy to the PCMB before the final draft is released. **Complete.** The Chair said he would update the Council on this item in the Chair's Report. In summary, when he met with the PCMB about a month ago he learned that expectations around the process were confused, and decided that the Council should provide some direction.

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. **In Progress.** Doug reported that Yukon does not have a written policy and that the Director has asked their Policy Branch to write one.

Action 09-12-06: WMAC NS Secretariat will contact the Joint Secretariat to determine whether or not they plan to make an appeal for an interim adjustment to implementation funding levels because the current funding cycle was extended from 5 years to 10. **Complete.** The Secretariat contacted Norm Snow and he indicated that he would be submitting a single submission next fiscal on behalf of all IFA bodies.

Action 10-12-01: The WMAC NS Secretariat will coordinate with Christian Bucher presentations by Ivvavik IPY researchers at the Council's March Meeting. **Outstanding.** Christian said that researchers would have come but the Council decided against it. He suggested inviting them to the summer meeting.

Action 10-12-02: The WMAC NS Secretariat will coordinate with the appropriate bodies a joint meeting to discuss the management plan for the historic store at Clarence Lagoon. **Retire.** Christian clarified that there is no management plan in place. Instead there is a care and maintenance plan. The Chair suggested inviting Lindsey Croken to speak about heritage resources at the summer meeting.

Action 10-12-01: The WMAC NS Secretariat will work with the AHTC to coordinate a joint full day meeting of both groups sometime before March 31, 2009. **Retire.** The Chair noted that the Council will attempt to meet with them at their summer meeting.

WMACNS HTC Action 10-12-03: The WMAC NS Secretariat will inquire into the issue of buffers along grizzly bear harvest zone boundaries with Yukon Government. Depending on the outcome, the management plan may need to change. **Outstanding.** Doug Larsen identified Ramona Maraj as the contact for this item.

WMAC NS HTC Action 10-12-04: WMAC NS Secretariat will research the Wilderness Tourism Act and Herschel and Ivvavik Park Regulation to find out what stretches of the Yukon North Slope coast are accessible to non-beneficiaries for tourism purposes and what other regulations and restrictions are in place. A briefing note will be prepared and communicated to the Aklavik HTC. **Retired.** The Chair suggested removing the action item and requesting that Afan Jones at Yukon Government send a briefing on the matter to the Aklavik HTC instead. The Secretariat will follow-up with the request.

Joint WMAC Meeting Action 08-12-02: WMAC NS and NWT Secretariat's will organize a 1 day meeting sometime in February for both Councils to come to consensus on the final draft of the Porcupine Caribou Harvest Management Strategy. **Outstanding.** The Chair explained that before contacting WMAC NWT, that this Council must have agreement. He said that a teleconference may or may not be necessary.

Joint WMAC Meeting Action 08-12-03: The WMAC NS Secretariat will obtain the latest copy of the NWT Species at Risk Act. **Complete.** The Secretariat obtained the latest draft at www.nwtwildlife.com.

Joint WMAC Meeting Action 08-12-04: WMAC NS Secretariat will obtain documentation confirming how many tags are issued for each grizzly bear hunting zone on the Yukon North Slope and what the season dates are for each. This information will be transmitted to WMAC NWT and the Aklavik HTC. **Retire.** The Chair explained that this is not a Council issue and that it is a process best left to the Yukon Government.

I. Ongoing Business: Porcupine Caribou Harvest Management Plan

In preparation for Doug Urqhart's presentation on the Plan, the Council discussed key items they would like to raise.

The Chair said he hoped to get clarification on process and how differing views held by the Working Group and the Porcupine Caribou Management Board ("PCMB" or "Board") would be handled.

He also expressed interest in knowing why the Plan does not contain a management objective. In its current form, the Plan serves more as a framework for making a management recommendation on a year by year basis, through assessment of annual information and indicators which may or may not be available.

Christian also expressed concern over the lack of long term strategy for herd management, as well as measures that will be taken to monitor success of the Plan.

11:07am – Doug Urqhart joined the meeting.

The Chair welcomed Doug to the meeting and began the discussion by asking him to explain his understanding of the Working Group's relationship with the PCMB.

Doug explained that the Working Group is comprised of various First Nations, Inuvialuit, and government groups, to provide balanced representation, and that its job is to deliver to the PCMB its best version of the Plan. Once the Plan is turned over to the Board, the Working Group will dissolve.

Plan development started in 2004 via a workshop in Inuvik, and the review of approximately 40 other wildlife management plans. This Plan stands quite apart from those in that it is much more accessible to communities. It has been challenging to strike a balance between providing enough detailed information and keeping it simple.

The Chair asked Doug if the Plan has an overarching goal such as herd stabilization or an increase in herd numbers.

Doug said that having an overarching goal is challenging because herd size fluctuates greatly over time, and has been decreasing for some time, as is the case with the Bathurst herd. There is no such thing as a stable caribou herd. He did point out that page four of the Plan is as close as the Plan gets to stating a goal: "We want to provide as many harvesting opportunities as we can while not pushing the numbers of caribou down by too much harvesting". The intent of the Plan is not to manage through numbers because it is not realistic. However, numbers are implied in the charts. Harvest is not going to solve the problem of herd decline because there are other factors at play. The goal is simply to prevent harvest from driving the herd into severe decline.

The Chair suggested that it could be interpreted that the Plan is managing towards herd decline.

Doug cautioned against getting into a game of semantics. If hunting was curtailed now, the decline could level off.

Christian said that if the Plan is not managing herd size, then it is managing people's actions, and asked why, if people are being managed, the Dempster highway is not addressed in the Plan.

Doug replied that nobody could agree on including specific restrictions for the Dempster highway, especially because of the legal implications. The only thing people could agree on was that snowmobile use should be restricted for use on 8 inches of snow or more.

Ernest stressed the importance of using numbers to manage the herd, noting that a herd count is not always accurate.

Doug agreed that numbers bring everyone together, but that numbers are difficult to confirm. The only way to count caribou is from the air when they congregate and last time half the herd was in the shadow of a mountain, preventing an accurate count.

Doug said that much of what people have to say about the Dempster and the caribou harvest is very volatile. He quoted Hugh Monaghan by stating that the Dempster highway is a difficult issue and in many ways justifies the existence of the PCMB.

Christian suggested that the herd's current lowest-ever estimated size is a catalyst to address the Dempster once and for all.

Doug expressed that people will not rally until the population is threatened with extinction, as seen with the Bluenose herd. Being involved in the Plan from the beginning has made it difficult to keep perspective, and he talked about the idea of a companion document to address issues like the Dempster.

Christian expressed that meeting once a year to reassess the population, as stated in the Plan is too frequent. A period of five years would be more realistic, especially because surveys can't be performed successfully every year.

Doug clarified that the intent is not to change the Plan every year, but to determine what the management actions are every year with respect to what information is available. If hunting was closed on the Dempster claimant groups would challenge the restriction of their right to harvest, and with more than 100,000 caribou, how could you justify such a restriction? Roughly 75% of communities felt not enough was being done in the Plan to address the herd's decline, but the Working Group went as far as they could in the latest draft without causing too much change too soon. Approximately 60% of the harvest is cows.

He compared the range of the herd to Europe in that many different governments exist and they all would have their own way of dealing with a mandatory bull-only harvest and a Total Allowable Harvest (TAH). The limits within all categories have been pushed as far as possible.

The Chair said that even if we were in the orange zone and a mandatory bull-only harvest and a TAH came into effect, currently in the Yukon the Inuvialuit is the only group with the capacity to enforce it. In talking with Larry Carpenter, he said that in the case of the Bluenose herd, even where mechanisms are in place, compliance is still challenging.

The Chair asked, given the make-up of the Working Group, what decision will be left for the Board once presented with the Plan.

Doug said that ultimate power rests with the Board. The Board will submit the Plan back to the Parties. He expected that the Board would not change the Plan once received by the Working Group for fear that the whole Plan would unravel.

Ernest expressed concern over the lack of attention to conservation in the Plan.

The Chair raised concern that the Native User Agreements and the regulatory tools such as the TAH are not addressed to sufficient degree in the Plan.

Danny reminded people that everything could change in a couple of months in the face of a successful herd count.

Doug clarified that the Plan would in fact not change in that case and is structured to function regardless of what the count is.

The Chair said he understands that the Plan is a framework, a tool for arriving at the management decision. He responded to his own earlier comment and suggested that the management objective could be stated in a separate document. A second step: the framework would be distinguished from the actual decision.

Doug said that when the original plan started in 1988, in the end nobody signed it, which is why the current plan does not involve signatures. However, even though nobody signed the original plan people started implementing it. He noted that some groups are already implementing aspects of the current plan.

Ernest asked why the numbers changed from 50 to 45,000 for the red zone in this draft.

Doug couldn't quite recall, but surmised it was because the red zone changed from ceremonial hunting only to no hunting at all.

Doug noted that Lindsay designed the protocol for the Plan and that the reason for the Working Group was to ensure that groups had direct representation.

The Chair said that the idea behind the Working Group was to have people commit to the Plan up front.

Doug said that either everyone will be disappointed, which could be a good thing if it is equal, or people will be happy with the Plan because of its respect for all the agreements out there.

Doug said that applying laws on the Dempster is so difficult because it is structured like Europe out there, and therefore the Plan emphasizes monitoring. The Southern Lakes herd was doing poorly and people wanted to curtail hunting. No laws could be applied, so a door to door campaign started and in the end was a success. So when reflecting on the Dempster issue, he said maybe this Plan is at least a step in the right direction. With so much monitoring going on maybe hunters will feel pressure.

Doug asked if the Council could summarize points discussed today and send them to him, and suggested that a companion document be produced to go along with the Plan.

The Chair said that the Council needs to talk with WMAC (NWT) and the IGC before submitting comments, noting that it would be providing comments on the Plan first to the PCMB and then likely to the Minister.

Doug said that the Working Group would get together one more time, in the interest of not sending a firecracker to the PCMB, and that the Board will meet in early April.

12:15pm - Doug Urqhart left the meeting.

The Chair concluded that the Council needs to further discuss their comments, emphasizing that the Plan is a framework from which the Board will make a follow-up judgment regarding a recommended harvest management option..

Christian said that Parks Canada echoes the Council concerns about what the document intends to accomplish.

D. Chair's Report

The Chair reported that since December the polar bear file has taken off and become very contentious. The Council appointed Doug Larsen to the Polar Bear Technical Committee (PBTC) as well as the Polar Bear Administrative Committee (PBAC). The Council was invited to the Polar Bear Round Table meeting, and because of its significance, the Chair attended. He said the meeting was a good opportunity to get up to speed quickly and explore management issues.

Last year the Council recommended that polar bear's status continue to be "of special concern" through COSEWIC. An independent committee came up with the recommendation for the listing under the Species at Risk Act (SARA), which the

Minister of Environment must now accept or reject. The Minister must consult with wildlife management boards before making his decision.

Many changes have occurred within the federal government and corporate memory regarding government's obligations to consult with wildlife management boards has suffered - an issue of great concern at the Round Table. As a result Environment Canada has developed a schedule of consultation with wildlife management boards regarding the listing under SARA.

He said there are many groups who think the species should be listed as threatened noting that when Syd Cannings arrives today he will talk about Environment Canada's process.

Canada signed an MOU with the United States on collaborating in the management of the North and South Beaufort polar bear population, which was signed without any input from the IGC, a major breach of the land claim agreement. The IFA is clear that on these matters the IGC should be consulted. The Inuvialuit and Inupiat already have an agreement in place. Territorial governments are concerned about this as well.

In addition to the listing, the Chair updated the Council on the polar bear NDF noting that the Council needs to put forth comments on the recommended options. The Europeans are already supporting the ban on exports from four Canadian subpopulations, of which the Southern Beaufort is one. The other three subpopulations are of particular concern because they are shared with Greenland and Greenland does not have a quota system in place. A Canada-Greenland agreement is needed. The Southern Beaufort population is different in that a well-functioning management system is in place. Europe perceives that the Southern Beaufort population is declining, and suggest that no export of hides take place until the population has recovered, which is at odds with COSEWIC's finding. A concern with the polar bear NDF is that this is the first time a species has been considered on a subpopulation basis and not as a species as a whole.

The Chair suggested that the broad species approach may be the best, however, in a conversation with Larry Carpenter the concern of a ban spanning east to west was brought up. The NDF, in addition to the status assessment, and US-Canada MOU are all cases where Canada failed to consult the Inuit/Inuvialuit. The Chair suggested writing a letter to the Minister of Environment regarding the obligation to consult, an action not called for or necessary since the Final Agreement was signed in 1984.

A member indicated that the understanding of polar bear management units or boundaries is poor and needs to be better defined.

Christian said that what the European Union (EU) and others fail to understand is that the population decline is not due to harvest, but due to climate change and changes in ice.

The Chair asserted that in banning the export of hides which affects the sport hunt, the effect on polar bear could worsen as a result. A sport hunt tag is issued to one person and

stays with that same person all season. Subsistence tags, however, are passed on throughout the season which increases the potential for a bear to be killed.

A member noted that the number of subpopulations in Canada is debatable.

2:00pm – Syd Cannings and Dave Fraser joined the meeting.

I. Ongoing Business: Polar Bear – SARA – listing process

Syd explained that he would be speaking briefly on the proposed polar bear listing as “Special Concern” under the Species at Risk Act.

The Chair said that the Council was consulted in the review a year ago and was in support of the listing at that time.

Syd said that the listing is based on research as recent as 2006.

The Chair described that the Council has recommended IFA implementation funding towards a traditional knowledge study that will take place in six Inuvialuit communities which should be completed in the next two years.

Members noted that the Aklavik traditional knowledge study should be removed from the list of contributing reports to the COSEWIC status report on polar bear.

Members discussed the sea ice slide and noted that more recent information was missing.

The Chair commented that at the Round Table meeting concern was raised over how decline is linked to overharvesting in populations whose management is shared with Greenland where no quotas are in place.

Syd explained that in some cases quotas were set 10 years ago and do not reflect the change in sea ice conditions and other habitat changes.

The Chair asked in the context of the SARA review how appropriate the three year time frame is to complete a management plan.

Syd explained the process for consultation noting that the deadline for comment from WMAC (NS) is March 19, 2010. Within nine months of that date, Cabinet will decide to accept or reject the listing.

Syd highlighted some information coming out of a study that informed the COSEWIC report – bone structure in the Southern Beaufort population is found to have decreased (cubs and adult males), and there is evidence of a population decline, however, the 1970’s research that serves as the basis for this finding is not precise enough to compare with the latest research.

2:30pm - Ramona Maraj and Wendy Nixon joined the meeting.

Ramona added that the report notes incidences of cannibalism and bears digging through solid ice to access prey.

The guests and Council engaged in a discussion over the process associated with the listing. The Chair noted the importance of proper consultation and remarked that he is considering writing to the minister regarding development of protocol.

Syd stated that Environment Canada is still learning how the Land Claim Agreement should inform the process. He said that Larry Carpenter suggested that locals in the ISR be involved in facilitating community consultations. The extra year for consultation has been provided to allow for the process within communities to develop and be successful.

2:50pm – Syd Cannings left the meeting.

I. Ongoing Business: Polar Bear – Non Detrimental Finding

Dave Fraser began his presentation on the polar bear NDF and provided background as to his knowledge with NDF's and with CITES in general.

He began by explaining that CITES has more agreement and sign on than any other international agreement and that it is a preventative treaty. He went on to describe its structure.

Currently, polar bear exports are permitted from anywhere. The NDF assessment will determine whether or not trade is detrimental to the survival of the species. For high profile species like polar bear a lot of information must be considered.

Ramona asked Dave to explain the relationship between trade, harvest, and the survival of the species.

Dave said that CITES does not only concern itself with trade in its issuance of an NDF, but that it goes deep into the domestic management of a species. The Convention uses trade as a means to affect other management changes.

Dave explained how NDF's are requested and issued, noting that Environment Canada is considering three options. Up-listing polar bear from Appendix II to I to end commercial trade; significant trade review triggered at the Animals Committee; or stricter domestic measures of importing countries. Environment Canada would like feedback from the Council on which option to pursue.

Historically Canada has not been subject to many reviews. There is great potential for polar bear to be up-listed to Appendix I which would ban trade, due to mounting pressure from the American and Canadian public.

A member suggested that the recommended option would depend on Greenland's polar bear management, suggesting that the last two options be the way to go.

Dave cautioned that whatever option the Council recommends, if the continuation of harvest is recommended, its justification will have to be well documented.

Ramona reminded people that most other species are dealt with on a species-wide basis, and the polar bear NDF is currently looking at subpopulations.

Dave said that the NDF will play an important role in polar bear management over the next couple of years.

The Chair asked if the COSEWIC report represents the best available information, and if it is fair to say that it would be the driving piece of evidence behind the NDF.

Dave agreed, and added that additional information that comes to light would be considered.

Wendy asked if Dave could elaborate on the US government's report. Dave said that the US came up with a different concern than COSEWIC, noting that their system is not very transparent. The Chair provided a bit of background into polar bear management in Alaska and the history of bans in the 1980's on polar bear exports.

Having had to defend British Columbia's grizzly bear NDF, Dave offered the perspective that once the EU takes a position they are very difficult to sway. His team spent two years getting the NDF to the EU, and as a result of the delay, they became suspicious. Getting the polar bear NDF out immediately will be critical to its success.

Ramona asked if considering the broad-species approach instead of sub-population approach for the NDF would create added suspicion within the EU.

Dave said that given the EU has already placed restrictions on the subpopulations, the NDF would need to address subpopulations. He also explained that if trade was to continue you would have to argue that the harvesting which enables trade is not harming or causing a reduction in the range of the species.

Christian pointed out that in the Southern Beaufort climate change could impact the species heavily.

Ramona said that the case would have to show that management is sensitive and takes into consideration climate change.

Again, Dave cautioned that any body can request an NDF – it is a big machine and is tough to turn around once moving.

Wendy emphasized that the EU is front and centre on this issue, and asked Dave if, in the spirit of consultation, options outside of the three presented to the Council could be considered. She asked if reducing quotas for subpopulations of concern would make sense.

Dave said that of course other options could be considered, and that a reduction of harvest would only be acceptable if you could prove that there's not a decline.

Ernest remarked that we have a chance to demonstrate that trade is sustainable through management practices.

Dave said we will be asked to prove that. One of the challenges with the votes is that the EU represents a powerful block. If the EU can't come to agreement they abstain, so they almost always come to agreement.

Ramona asked if a subpopulation is listed as harvestable, if that means that the NDF must follow suit.

Dave said in that situation the NDF would be updated to reflect the current management practice. An NDF can contain triggers as well, almost making the NDF conditional. Dave said at the national level NDF's are updated every two years. He could not speak for the provincial or territorial level, but guessed that the NDF would likely be updated every time a permit is issued.

Ramona said that when Germany restricted import of grizzly bear hides, the NDF came from Ottawa, not Yukon or BC.

The Chair asked Dave, based on his experience with grizzly bear at the provincial level, key lessons he would pass on regarding the polar bear NDF.

Dave said that issuing the NDF in a timely manner is key – this was supposed to have already happened, and its delay creates suspicion. He also suggested that all documentation of evidence must be lined up. He said that our wildlife management systems are not nimble, and recommended creating provisions for emergency processes. The world moves fast and if we are not prepared, we may lose out.

Dave noted that the Scientific Authority in Ottawa is preparing this NDF. He also shared that in his experience with presenting the grizzly bear NDF, which was late, three members of the EU considered re-opening the case because they realized they may have made a mistake earlier having not had all the information, but political will had already swung too far in the other direction to go back and make the change.

3:45pm – Dave Fraser left the meeting.

The Chair invited members and guests to share their thoughts on the presentation.

Wendy provided some background on Yukon Government's approach with the NDF. Initially when the request for the NDF came in, Yukon recommended a population-wide approach. However, in light of the EU's ban on imports from some subpopulations, Yukon realized the population-wide approach would not work.

Wendy expressed concern that the single population assessment won't result in a good standing, suggesting that an export ban for every subpopulation would come into effect. She suggested that the Council would be concerned with the third option.

Ramona said that disputing a declining Southern Beaufort population would be very difficult because of the strength of the models and science behind the predicted decline.

The Chair added that the studies used in the United States' listing were used to support the COSEWIC assessment.

Ernest commented that he hoped someone from Environment Canada would sit down with the IGC and provide them with background information.

Ramona asked how dependent people are on being able to export polar bear hides.

Ernest said it depends. Most sport hunters are from the United States and up to 50% of tags in a harvest area are set aside for sport hunting.

The Chair said that sport hunt tags result in fewer polar bear kills than subsistence tags, so by restricting sport hunting, more bears may end up being harvested.

Ernest added that sport hunters prefer to take big bears, and so let many smaller bears pass. He also said that hides are either sold or used to make crafts.

Christian commented that option C would demonstrate that Canada is taking polar bear management seriously. The single population assessment would send a message to the international community that Canada is not properly managing its population.

Wendy noted that the NDF should clarify that there are sound management practices in each management zone.

Ramona said that when considering option B and C people should keep in mind that the Southern Beaufort boundary might change in the next few years. This could be leverage to argue that the Southern Beaufort shouldn't be included in the export ban until the boundary is adjusted to accommodate for the changing sea ice conditions.

The Chair agreed that recent sea ice research needs to be taken into account by biologists.

Ramona said that she is in the process of obtaining recent research on changing sea ice from the United States Geological Survey and the Fish and Wildlife Service.

Christian asked how the Council's comments on the NDF would be integrated with what other regions are saying.

The Chair commented that the Round Table was a great way to learn about regional perspectives from east to west by having Inuit representatives together in one room.

Ramona informed the Council of a traditional knowledge study in Baffin Bay which indicated that the polar bear population was increasing.

Christian asked if and how CITES incorporated traditional knowledge from that study.

Ramona said that in the region the study was conducted, CITES accepted the science which said the population was decreasing instead of the traditional knowledge which showed the population was increasing.

Ernest said that in the Southern Beaufort it seems the bears are travelling great distances to access sea ice and that more research is necessary to determine if numbers are declining or if bears are simply moving.

The Chair referred back to Yukon's letter dated January 13, 2009 which was a good reflection of the mood of many parties across Arctic Canada on how to approach the issue. He noted that these are complicated issues and that first we need to have a good understanding of whether the one population argument will work, and if not a new round of discussions will be necessary.

In closing members remarked that a conversation with Environment Canada would be useful and noted that the single pan-Arctic population approach probably won't work.

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 4:30pm.

March 8, 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)

The Chair called the meeting to order at 8:45am.

I. Ongoing Business: Harvest Management Plan – continued.

The Chair said that having Doug sit in yesterday was very useful and reminded members that comments to the Working Group would not address the management goal, but would focus on process. The yearly management decision would invite different comments.

Christian said that the Plan should do a better job of describing what it is trying to achieve and exactly what the annual review would entail.

Danny commented that some community people in Aklavik are going to have difficulty understanding what the Plan is saying despite efforts to make it accessible. He also said that most young people in Aklavik don't know the difference between a cow and a bull.

The Chair said that the Inuvialuit are equipped to deal with implementing the orange zone and that First Nations generally are not which is problematic. He reminded people that enforcement of regulations with the Bluenose herd was difficult. Danny echoed that even if bylaws are in place, enforcement is a problem.

Members talked about the Bluenose herd noting that most people abided by the laws. Near borders though, abiding laws according to jurisdictional boundaries can be difficult.

Christian noted the importance of education on the difference between bulls and cows, meat wastage etc. Even if all regulations are in place he said there would likely always be some illegal harvest.

Ernest said that much of the Plan's enforcement will fall to aboriginal leadership in communities. He said that enforcement of the rules and education is important.

The Chair said that once the Board receives the Plan from the Working Group he doesn't anticipate that they will make any changes. He noted that Yukon and NWT governments appear to have differing perspectives, but that the management actions associated with the orange and yellow will not result in meaningful change for caribou.

Danny again said that enforcing this would be difficult.

The Chair brought up the idea of having a second document accompany the Plan explaining the issues of contention.

Christian wondered why the Plan doesn't reflect the views of the communities.

The Chair asked the Council, if the Plan was to go further, what would change.

Christian said yellow and orange could both be considered as orange, or the numbers could be lower.

Christian noted the importance of knowing when to make the call for conservation and brought up the Bluenose West herd example. People were not willing to cut harvest until numbers decreased drastically.

Danny said that caribou are consistently available to in mid summer in the Blow River area noting that the Dempster is not the only area where overharvesting is a problem.

The Chair directed attention back to the charts noting that because tools are not in place there is no difference between the orange and yellow zones. If the Council wants to see the population recover, chart four is the only option, but management tools are not in place, meaning that the only realistic course of action is the voluntary bull-only harvest with emphasis on a strong education campaign. Other points to be made include the importance of enforcement, setting up a tag system, and quotas.

Danny said that a bull-only harvest is the only way the herd is going to recover and people need to know that.

Christian said that comments to the Working Group should reflect that work towards a TAH should be done, but realized that most First Nations will not work until it is clear that a TAH is necessary. He noted how quickly the herd declines in chart one.

The Chair said at minimum the Council will require a teleconference to discuss the letter to the Working Group because the Yukon member is absent. Two letters may need to be written: one to the Working Group and one to the Board. He also said that a second document should be written describing the issues of contention. The Council agreed.

Danny emphasized that hunters go out in March and April and that education on the difference between bulls and cows needs to start now.

Christian noted that education is really the only tool available at this point in time and that the Plan should emphasize that. He said he is disappointed in the PCMB because they have not taken a large role in all of this.

The Chair commented that he would have liked to see a clearer focus in the implementation and review section.

Ernest said that if the Plan is signed off land claim groups will feel pressure. He also expressed concern for the next generation and brought up the example of pollution and people's hesitancy in eating certain types of wild meat.

The Chair noted that the the two WMAC's would likely have different views on what management actions should be recommended. He indicated that he would call their Chair to discuss it. He also expressed disappointment in the representation on the Working Group and the lack of leadership by the Board in development of the Plan.

I. Ongoing Business: Polar Bear – Non Detrimental Finding – continued.

The Chair communicated to members that if the NDF states that the export of hides won't affect the polar bear population in Canada, Canada needs to provide strong justification that this is indeed the case. Environment Canada is currently consulting the wildlife management boards to decide how Canada should proceed and has laid out three options. One view is that export of hides should vary according to the health of the population, and the other offered by Yukon, is that the NDF should be issued for the whole population because bears move back and forth between subpopulations.

Ernest agreed that due to changing ice conditions bears move great distances.

The Chair commented that the Yukon approach is one that WMAC NWT and the IGC likely have been considering until now. Dave's presentation showed that CITES is already favoring the subpopulation approach. If the Council advocates the single population approach they should talk to Environment Canada to get a sense of how it would be received.

Christian said he thought he saw in a letter from Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated (NTI) or a different wildlife management board that they would not consider the single population approach. He worried about the message Canada would be sending by advocating the single population approach.

Ernest said that fewer young people are hunting now, and this trend will likely continue into the future. Sachs used to be a competitive community but is no longer. Danny agreed with the situation and related it to Aklavik.

The Chair concluded that the Council could not argue the single population approach and turned to Canada's recommended options, keeping in mind the case for why export from the Southern Beaufort could be continued. For example, harvest of polar bear for export is not a significant factor in the decline of the population. However based on Ramona's comments yesterday, recent studies suggest that there is no harvestable surplus at this time, which is the same information that COSEWIC is using.

Ernest commented that polar bear management in Canada is good, but given the different value set in Europe, this may be difficult to convey.

The Chair relayed the story from the Round Table meeting of bear-human conflict in Manitoba where people were killed by polar bears, noting that the international perspective sided with the bears instead of the people.

Ernest brought up the movement of bears in the Southern Beaufort northeastward with the ice. The Chair said that this could form part of the argument.

The Chair concluded that if the Council is of the view that the single population approach will fail, he will communicate with WMAC NWT. The Council will need to work through the evidence, emphasizing that there should be ISR-wide agreement on the NDF.

Action 03-08-01: The Secretariat will obtain the letter from NTI regarding NDF options, as well as the Alaskan studies on the southern Beaufort population.

The Council needs to consider the COSEWIC assessment, the United States' assessment and its supporting study. If the United States has already taken a position on hide export from the Southern Beaufort then Canada will be hard pressed to say anything different.

Christian reminded the Council that the NDF needs to come out quickly.

Action 03-08-02: The Secretariat will organize a teleconference in early April to come to a decision on the Polar Bear NDF.

The Chair commented that the SARA listing process for polar bear is underway. Once consultation is complete we can make our comments anytime before March 2010.

Action 03-08-03: The WMAC (NS) will send a letter to the Canadian Wildlife Service Director General confirming that the Council's recommendation to the Minister would follow the review of results from the SARA consultation.

I. Ongoing Business: Scientist and Explorer Act licenses

The Secretariat informed members that approved licenses are filed in the binders and requested that the Council decide how they would like to deal with applications in future.

The Chair said that the Secretariat should review licenses independently, requesting Council review where necessary.

Christian noted that the Parks' annual research report serves as a good way to review research happening in Ivvavik.

I. Ongoing Business: Grizzly Bear Traditional Knowledge Report.

The Chair updated the Council that the report is close to being printed. He noted that Yukon came forward with substantive comments at a late stage, and that as a result Yukon is adjusting its own review process for future reports like these. The Council has decided to accommodate some of their comments - Ramona will be writing up a Methods section. Considering Yukon's latest review, he requested that Council members review the report one final time.

Danny commented that on page 25 some people may not appreciate the description of some of the beliefs around hunting.

The Chair suggested changing the wording to reflect that some of the beliefs are not necessarily held today. Danny agreed this would help.

The Chair asked the Secretariat to follow up with Ernest and Danny to ensure that this section is worded properly.

G. Report from Chair – continued.

The Chair commented that the polar bear file has required a lot of his time and effort lately. He was glad for the opportunity to go to Winnipeg and to touch base with the broader Inuit community on polar bear and other issues. In fact it got him thinking about how to improve communication between all these different groups. As a result WMAC (NS) is back on the mailing list of Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami.

Action 03-08-04: The Secretariat will track the parliamentary committee's review of SARA.

He noted that as a Council dealing with Arctic issues, being based out of Whitehorse is challenging. Yukon's understanding of Arctic issues is also compromised by its base location but has improved in the last 8 years or so.

Christian suggested making an effort to meet with other wildlife management boards across the Canadian arctic once a year.

The Chair agreed and suggested that the North Slope Conference could be a venue for this. He suggested looking at past challenges across jurisdictions as well as 20 years ahead. He mentioned this idea to some folks from NTI and they responded well.

The Chair brought attention to upcoming issues and events and remarked that the Secretariat will need help in the upcoming year. Last year having one and a half staff was productive, though it was also a very busy year for him, which at times was problematic.

The Chair commented that having Richard Gordon at Council meetings in the last while has been extremely helpful.

Ernest commented how impressed he was at the Round Table meeting with groups from the eastern Arctic in terms of their preparedness and experience, and legal representation.

The Chair said it would be a good idea for us to tap some of these resources. He brought up the Precautionary Principle and how it applies to harvesting rights.

E. Correspondence

The Chair drew attention to the letter from the IGC regarding member conduct and noted that he'll be interested to watch how effective it is.

Action 03-08-05: The Secretariat will inform Ramona of the letter from the SDC which indicates that GNWT will have a seat for the Yukon-based inspection to have the opportunity to survey polar bear along the Yukon coast.

Action 03-08-06: The Secretariat will review the Council's comments on the Sheep Plan process and remind Marsha Branigan that the Council already provided comment.

The Chair pointed out the Muskox report from Alaska noting that some of the information was misleading. He hoped that Dorothy Cooley would be compiling more recent survey information and communicating it to Alaska.

The Council was asked to comment on the YESAA process, but once Parks Canada comments came in the Chair realized the Council would not have anything to add, so they did not submit comments.

The Chair voiced his disappointment in the overall quality of the Integrated Oceans Management Plan. He called Roger Connelly at the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation to report his concerns. Christian also commented that Parks was extremely disappointed with the document.

F. 2008/2009 Financial Report and Budget 2009/2010

The Secretariat walked the Council through the 2008/2009 budget noting areas of concern.

The Chair recommended changing the projected Chair Honoraria to \$42,000 from \$45,000. He also recommended increasing the Council Member Honoraria and Teleconference categories for 2009/2010.

The Chair recommended dealing with the review of ecological monitoring programs at the next meeting.

The Chair commented on how glad he was to see that the Council is now spending down its annual budget instead of carrying over a large surplus.

The Chair asked Christian if Parks Canada receives annual IFA implementation funds, because there seems to be a lack of understanding within Environment Canada about the arrangement. Christian responded that yes, Parks receives annual IFA funds.

The Council went on to review the 2009/2010 budget and made the following changes:

- Remove North Slope Conference from the budget because it is a separate item.
- Budget \$45,000 for Chair Honoraria.
- Change the Porcupine TK Report line to show \$35,037 because \$10,000 from 08/09 would not be spent and therefore would carry into 09/10.

Members briefly discussed the North Slope Conference. The Chair suggested that this year there should be a registration fee to help with costs. He also said that Yukon typically takes care of the administrative/logistical end of organization and WMAC (NS) looks after content. He suggested asking Michelle Sicotte if for the last conference a portion of the budget went directly to WMAC (NS) to pay for speakers.

Motion 03-09-06

To accept the 2009/2010 budget as revised.

Moved: Ernest Pokiak

Second: Christian Bucher

Motion carried

J. Chair Honoraria Review

The Chair explained that his honoraria rate currently sits at \$350 per day. Because of the amount of time WMAC (NS) has required over the last year, he is increasingly feeling that he is not being compensated adequately for the work he is providing to the Council. He noted that the FJMC Chair receives \$450 per day and the Review Board and Screening Committee Chairs receive \$500 per day.

Members commented that the WMAC (NS) Chair receives one of the lower Chair rates around and were surprised to hear what his current rate was. The Chair clarified that he didn't have as much of an issue with the rate of pay as he did with the amount of time the position has required in the last couple of years, which has diminished his capacity to become involved in other work.

The Chair also expressed that when the new Treasury Board submission goes forward, a proposal to increase member rates would be proposed at that time as well.

The Chair requested that the Council make a decision regarding adjustment of his honoraria.

Members agreed that \$500 per day would more adequately reflect what the Chair has to offer.

Motion 03-09-07

To increase the WMAC (NS) Chair's (Lindsay Staples') honoraria rate to \$500 per day.

Moved: Danny Gordon

Second: Christian Bucher

Motion carried

Christian remarked that the Joint Secretariat should be made aware that their rates are very low.

J. Regulatory Strategy to allow for Mobility-Impaired Hunters to Hunt Migratory Birds from a Motorized Vehicle

The Secretariat requested that the Council make a decision on whether or not they would support Environment Canada's proposed regulatory strategy.

Members discussed the issue and indicated their support.

The Secretariat brought a few more items to the Council for discussion.

She explained that because the muskox genetics and Aklavik harvest data project did not get underway in 2008/2009, the \$10,000 that was allocated towards these projects must now be re-allocated. Stephanie Muckenheim indicated an interest in re-allocating the funds towards Herschel operations. The Chair emphasized that the Council would only support that re-allocation if the grizzly bear project and Herschel Island monitoring write-up did not require funds.

Action 03-08-07: The Secretariat will recommend to Yukon Government that surplus 2008/2009 IFA wildlife research funds be allocated on a priority basis to the grizzly bear project, and the Herschel Island monitoring write-up.

J. Herschel Island – YG Infrastructure Proposal

The Secretariat explained Yukon's proposal to upgrade the infrastructure on Herschel Island in support of researchers, and asked the Council if they would endorse a letter of support. Members agreed.

Action 03-08-08: The Secretariat will write a letter of support for Yukon's infrastructure proposal and send it no later than March 10, 2009.

K. Upcoming Meetings

The Council discussed dates for upcoming meeting and decided to block out the last week of June, the third week of September, and the first two weeks of December. Christian noted the difficulty in arranging a Sheep Creek meeting because the facility is so popular.

Ernest offered to host the fall meeting at his Husky Lakes cabin, pending its availability and his schedule.

Members reviewed the upcoming meetings as listed on the agenda.

Christian brought the Council's attention to a Parks' education program that has been incorporated into Inuvik's school curriculum and described its success. He said he would forward the webpage link to Members.

The Secretariat quickly updated the Council on the progress of Yukon's SARA. The process is still underway but has been delayed. Boyd Piper will be in touch as things progress further.

L. Adjournment

The Chair thanked members for accommodating the meeting and said he would be in touch through the Secretariat on the Harvest Management Plan and the Polar Bear NDF.

Motion 03-09-08

Motion to adjourn the meeting.

Moved: Danny Gordon

Second: Christian Bucher
Motion carried.