



## MEETING MINUTES

WMAC (NS) Quarterly Meeting  
Whitehorse, YT • High Country Inn  
February 16-18, 2009

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Tuesday February 16, 2009

**Lindsay Staples** (WMACNS Chair) • **Danny C. Gordon** Inuvialuit Game Council (Member) • **Ernest Pokiak** Inuvialuit Game Council (Member) • **Christian Bucher** Government of Canada (Member - telephone) • **Michelle Christensen** (Secretariat) • **Doug Larsen** Yukon Government (Member)

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### A. Call to Order

The Chair welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 9:25am.

### B. Review and Approval of Agenda

The Chair reviewed the agenda.

#### Motion 02-10-01

*To approve the agenda for the February 16-18, 2010 regular meeting.*

*Moved: Doug Larsen*

*Second: Ernest Pokiak*

*Motion carried.*

### C. December 2009 - Minutes Approval

Doug requested clarification on the following:

- Action 12-09-06 – “The Secretariat will determine if the EISC has responded to the two letters from Yukon government dated October 15 and October 20, 2009, noting whether the Chair’s concern regarding representation was addressed.” The Chair explained that the recent Yukon appointment to the Environmental Impact Screening Committee has raised questions about the roles of members on IFA committees, and whether or not government members are required to be government employees. He suggested raising these issues with the Joint Secretariat Board.
- Action 12-09-14 – “The Secretariat will ask the IGC when they anticipate holding the next North Slope Conference.” Doug expressed concern that the action implies that the Yukon government is not involved in deciding conference dates. The Chair explained that the IGC was requested to provide input on conference scheduling because they were

the ones who requested postponement, and may have had specific ideas. However, this action is now superseded by Yukon's latest correspondence which states that the conference will be held in 2012-2013.

The following changes were identified:

- Page 5 – change last sentence in first paragraph under “Porcupine Caribou Breeding Female Population Estimate” to read: “The new method has precision estimates as part of the technique, whereas the photo census method does not.”
- Page 13 – Delete 2<sup>nd</sup> last sentence in last paragraph: “Christian disagreed.”
- Page 15 – 1<sup>st</sup> sentence, 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph change to read: “Doug pointed out that increased funding will be needed for polar bear management if this Strategy is agreed to.”
- Page 15 – 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph under Ongoing Business, last sentence, change to read: “All other parties recommend some changes before signing.”
- Page 15 – 3<sup>rd</sup> paragraph under Ongoing Business, 2<sup>nd</sup> sentence, change to read: “The Vuntut Gwich’in First Nation (VGFN) is willing to sign but believe there are outstanding issues with harvest reporting for the...”
- Page 15 – 8<sup>th</sup> paragraph under Ongoing Business, change to read: “...assistance for First Nations to develop wildlife regulations within their own legislation. A memorandum of understanding to collect harvest information is currently being drafted with the Vuntut Gwich’in. There is interest to work with others in developing the appropriate instruments that would give effect to the intent of the interim measures’ provisions.”
- Page 15 – last paragraph, 2<sup>nd</sup> sentence, change to read: “Doug replied that the interim measures’ regulations state that they would be lifted when an acceptable harvest management plan is developed.”
- Page 15 – delete “Doug stated that the intent of the interim measures is to educate people.”
- Page 16 – change the names in the 4<sup>th</sup> paragraph under Report from the Chair to read: “...the Wolkie brothers and David Nasogaluak...”
- Page 17 – change last paragraph to read: “Christian clarified the policy around Inuvialuit Park employees harvesting in the park: Inuvialuit beneficiaries can harvest in the park, after working hours, because it is their right, but cannot transport products of harvest in a government vehicle or aircraft.”
- Page 18 - Delete last sentence at top of page.
- Page 19 – change 2<sup>nd</sup> sentence in 4<sup>th</sup> paragraph to read: “Danny mentioned that people are more likely to take trips to the Richardson Mountains to harvest muskox, and less likely to harvest at Shingle Point. Dorothy noted that it seems to be an opportunistic hunt at Shingle Point.”
- Page 19 – change 1<sup>st</sup> sentence in 5<sup>th</sup> paragraph to read: “Doug outlined a population-based approach, recommending a 0% sustainable harvest...”
- Page 19 – delete paragraph 6 (Ernest’s statement).
- Page 19 – 2<sup>nd</sup> last paragraph, last sentence, change to read: “Doug mentioned that a Yukon Species at Risk Act would likely declare the population to be listed.”
- Page 19 – last paragraph, last sentence – delete: “Doug noted that we are trying to determine a sustainable population without the required data.”

- Page 20 – 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph, 3<sup>rd</sup> sentence, change to read: “Doug noted that in considering recommendations for a sustainable muskox harvest that science-based estimates should be distinguished from policy-based estimates.”
- Page 20 – delete second paragraph (Doug’s statement).
- Page 20 – 1<sup>st</sup> sentence, last paragraph, change to read: “Christian said that Parks Canada is increasingly finding it hard to plan for the funding of wildlife surveys in the absence of management plans.”

*Motion 02-10-02*

*To approve the minutes for the December 8-10, 2009 meeting in Aklavik, NT.*

*Moved: Danny Gordon*

*Second: Doug Larsen*

*Motion carried.*

**F. 2009/2010 Financial Report and 2010/2011 Budget Approval**

**2009-2010 Financial Report:** The Secretariat reviewed the current position of the Council.

She noted the addition of “external organizations’ honoraria” line item under “Other Meetings” to distinguish it from “Honoraria” which applies to the Chair’s attendance at regular meetings and business of the Council.

Noting that the “Other Meetings” category was overspent, Ernest asked the Chair about applying for outside funding to support attendance at meetings. The Chair responded that when support is offered the Council generally accepts it, but that actively soliciting support has not been a common practice.

The Council discussed the Chair’s upcoming travel to Doha, Qatar for the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) meeting. The Chair said that he would be attending the meeting for the minimal required time to address polar bear: most members attending on behalf of the Inuit are planning to attend from March 13-25, 2010 because the schedule is unpredictable. However, if polar bear is addressed early on and it becomes possible to leave the meetings early, he will do so.

**2010-2011 Budget Approval:** The Secretariat presented the proposed budget and requested Council feedback.

The Chair explained that the Council needs to approve the operational budget and that the projected surplus of \$39,309 would be allocated to the Projects budget which would be fully determined at the summer meeting.

The Chair raised the idea of having a summer student and/or another half Secretariat position to follow the 2007/08 office model whereby instead of hiring contractors to carry out projects, a second “in house” staff person carried out project work.

Doug noted that knowing what kind of work the Council planned to undertake in 2010/11 would help in determining whether or not hiring a second person would be a good idea.

The Chair said that in addition to Wayne Wysocki's phase II Borderlands' analysis, the Wildlife Conservation and Management Plan as well as the Long Term Research Plan need to be overhauled and would require a substantial amount of work. The Chair suggested that Council members consider additional projects to undertake for 2010/2011 and that the project list and related budget be finalized at the summer meeting. He also noted that employee retention is an issue and that where possible, when the Council employs two staff people, administrative and project work should be divided equally.

Christian asked when the next North Slope Conference would be held, and if any of next year's funds would be required.

The Chair explained that the Yukon government has proposed that the next conference be held in 2012-2013 because the conference must be held every three years. He noted that there is no legal requirement for the conference to occur on this timeline, and raised concern that implementation funding arrangements under the IFA are coming into question and require attention.

The Chair brought the discussion back to office staff. The Secretariat asked if the Council was recommending that two Secretariats be hired as well as a summer student noting office space as a concern.

Members discussed what projects the summer student would work on, how long the contract would last, if third party funding would be available, and whether or not the student could be hired from Aklavik or Inuvik.

The Council decided that having two staff people in the office would be preferable to having one Secretariat and a summer student, but that looking into outside funding for a summer student would be worth pursuing.

**Action 02-10-01: The Secretariat will explore third party funding programs available to the Council for the purposes of hiring a summer student for 2010.**

Motion 02-10-03

*To approve the 2010-2011 budget as revised.*

*Moved: Christian Bucher*

*Second: Ernest Pokiak*

*Motion carried.*

The Chair explained that once the budget is revised, the Secretariat will submit it to Yukon government after which time a contribution agreement will be established, and by April 1, 2010 the Council is scheduled to receive its first payment installment.

The Secretariat reviewed the Inuvialuit participation budget and relayed correspondence regarding the budget from Peggy Madore. The Chair explained that all IFA councils share the same Inuvialuit Participation budget except for WMAC (NWT) and that we have been advised to

remain a part of the shared budget, which allows us access to shared funds to cover shortfalls if necessary.

The Secretariat clarified that the \$2,000 surplus in the participation budget from last year represents WMAC (NS)'s surplus alone, and that additional funds are accessible through the shared budget. If necessary, the Council could draw upon shared funds to support further Inuvialuit participation before March 31, 2010.

Danny commented that he has been hearing that the Inuvialuit Harvest Study should be reinstated because current harvest reporting is very inaccurate, keeping in mind that oil and gas activities are increasing and that compensation may become an issue soon.

The Chair said that the anticipated harvest management plan for the Porcupine caribou herd will likely drive future discussions about harvest reporting. He explained some of the problems with the Harvest Study noting that they should be considered when designing future reporting programs.

### **I. Ongoing Business - IFA Wildlife Projects**

The Chair explained that at the December meeting the Council approved most projects for funding, however several were approved-in-principle and require further consideration.

- **Richardson Mountain Sheep Survey** – the amount of funding requested was contingent upon a cost sharing proposal between the NWT government and the Gwich'in Renewable Resource Board. The Board is meeting February 17-18, 2010 to discuss funding applications. The Council decided to wait to hear the outcome of the meeting before approving funding.
- **Integrated Freshwater and Dolly Varden Monitoring** – the Council is waiting to hear if the Fisheries Joint Management Committee (FJMC) has approved funding for the project so as to ensure that if the Council supports the project, they are onside with the FJMC. Council members expressed concern that by supporting a fish project they may be setting a precedent: typically the Council supports wildlife projects and related ecological monitoring activities and the FJMC focuses on fish. The Council agreed to approve this project from Parks Canada in principle on the grounds that the \$7,000 requested is not required to supplement projects of higher priority for the Council – most notably the grizzly bear project.
- **Beaufort Polar Bear Traditional Knowledge Study** – The Chair updated the Council that this project is well underway and that 2009-2010 funds will be fully spent by March 31. The project was initially approved-in-principle because the 2010-2011 funds, as proposed, were dependent upon completion of 2009-2010 work. The Council agreed to recommend funds as requested.
- **Herschel Island Ecological Monitoring** – Doug reported that this project was not a priority for the Fish and Wildlife Branch for 2010-2011. The Chair suggested soliciting

Dorothy Cooley's comments and requesting more project information from Cameron Eckert before determining whether or not to recommend the project.

Christian suggested that a meeting be held among managers/directors from Yukon government, Parks Canada, and perhaps other organizations, to discuss how IFA research funding works.

The Chair said that the Canadian Wildlife Service and the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development should be included, and suggested that he could raise implementation funding as a general issue with the Joint Secretariat Board at their June meeting. If there is interest in the issue a meeting could be convened in fall 2010.

**Action 02-10-02: The WMAC (NS) will prepare a discussion paper outlining issues associated with IFA implementation funding for consideration at the Joint Secretariat's Board meeting in June 2010.**

### **I. Ongoing Business: Parks Canada Firearms Regulations**

Christian reviewed the comment letter on firearms regulations with the Council. Overall he said that the amendments do a good job at addressing rights under the parks establishment agreements. However, the regulations do not address public safety: firearm rights are based on racial background and the presence or absence of polar bears. The regulations ignore the fact that grizzly and black bears are more of a threat than polar bear in the case of Ivvavik.

He added that the amendments deal well with rights of beneficiaries and issues relevant to researchers, but that overall they fail to address needs of park visitors, especially those who do not have the means to pay for guide services, or where guide service is not available. This may result in park visitors travelling elsewhere, resulting in lost economic benefit.

In the case of Ivvavik, to date, beneficiaries have not expressed a strong interest in guiding visitor activities such as rafting, hiking, kayaking etc.

Christian reviewed detailed amendments to the regulations and specific comments on each item.

The Chair commented that non-polar bear parks containing grizzly and black bears have the same management concerns around public safety as polar bear parks, but are not entitled to the regulation amendments.

Christian advised that the Council restrict its comments to Ivvavik even though they may have comments relating to parks nationwide. He noted that the amendments as presented go further than the current model, but that public safety is still an outstanding concern.

Christian said that the idea of separate regulations for isolated northern parks has merit simply due to the amount of time it takes to access remote sites in the case of an emergency when compared to parks such as Jasper where many of the sites visitors use are easily and quickly accessed.

Doug asked if Parks Canada would be receptive to the idea of separate regulations for remote parks. Christian said it was his understanding that separate regulations would not be considered.

Christian said that in 2006 amendments to the regulations were further ahead than they are now. At the time, after consultations with co-management groups, it was agreed that non-beneficiary guides would have the same rights as the Inuvialuit until such time as beneficiaries were trained and available to take on those jobs. He said he still has the resolution supporting that approach.

**Action 02-10-03: Christian Bucher will send the WMAC (NS) Secretariat Parks Canada's 2006 resolution regarding non-beneficiary guides' right to carry firearms.**

Christian made one last point about research in parks across the north and the challenges involved with different interpretations of the regulations resulting in some researchers being able to carry firearms and others not. Doug noted that the current regulations would deter Yukon government from carrying out research in Parks: if Ramona Maraj is not permitted to carry a firearm to conduct her grizzly bear research the project would not go ahead because of safety concerns.

Christian reinforced his earlier point about visitation: by not addressing public safety concerns, especially for southerners visiting remote northern parks, many economic benefits are lost.

**Action 02-10-04: The Secretariat will prepare a draft letter to Parks Canada regarding firearms regulations and circulate it to Council for comment by the first week of March.**

**I. Ongoing Business: Muskox Plan**

The Chair introduced the revised draft plan, containing changes as outlined in the December meeting, noting that communication with several parties including the Aklavik Hunters and Trappers Committee as well as the WMAC (NWT) and the Game Council need to take place before it is finalized.

The Chair pointed out the appendix on page 27: the population estimates and quotas in Alaska and Canada are outlined back to 1969, which gives a good indication of what has been going on across the range.

**Suggested revision: include column for the NWT right of the "Yukon" column, as well as a total column to the right of "Year".**

The Chair asked if the Council approved of the revisions made to the draft plan since the last meeting – the Council agreed.

Doug shared his general comments on the draft. He noted that while the draft reflects editorial changes made at the December meeting, it does not address fundamental issues around Total Allowable Harvest. Yukon is working toward a Species At Risk Act which would list muskox, meaning there would be no harvest. However the plan as currently laid out allows for a 3%

harvest – the Yukon government is uncomfortable with harvest on a population that is so small and vulnerable.

Doug also expressed concern over resolving conflicting North Slope muskox management strategies between the Yukon and NWT governments.

The Chair said that many changes in the population have occurred over the last ten years and that the Council only has jurisdiction for the Yukon North Slope. The best we can do outside of our jurisdiction is to discuss the different management regimes impacting the animals and make recommendations informed by these different management regimes.

The Council discussed ways to determine a sustainable harvest percentage for the Yukon North Slope, including population viability analyses.

Doug clarified that the Yukon at this time does not support a muskox harvest for the entire territory, not just the North Slope.

**Suggested revision: Page 4 - move list of organizations to appear in an appendix instead of in main body of Plan.**

**Suggested revision: Page 10 - change “Objective 1” under “Population Management” to read “Manage to maintain a productive and viable population of muskox on the Canadian North Slope”.**

**Suggested revision: Page 11 - ensure numbers referenced here match up with numbers in appendix two, and clarify that the 98 muskoxen that were counted during a sheep survey may have been one group (49 animals)\*\*Ensure Plan’s text matches up with information in all appendices.**

**Suggested revision: Page 12 - change Action 3 to read “If the population size falls outside of the range...”**

**Suggested revision: Page 13 - change Action 4 to read “Tracking the movements of North Slope muskoxen in Canada is important for understanding how their distribution changes over time and what habitats they are using. Placing satellite or radio collars on North Slope muskoxen in Canada every five years to coincide with a population survey is a good way of collecting this information.**

**Suggested revision: Page 13 - change objective at bottom of page to read “To improve the understanding of the relationship between muskox and the Porcupine Caribou herd.”**

**Suggested revision: Page 15 - under “Current Status” adjust section to have separate sections dedicated to Alaska, the NWT, and the Yukon North Slope – the Chair to work on this.**

The Council discussed the section that refers to the seed population within Ivvavik: if there is to be no harvest in the Yukon, then the population within Ivvavik no longer classifies as such. Members noted that the section involving the Vuntut Gwitchin needs to be addressed.

**Suggested revision: Page 16 - delete first sentence of 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph: “The harvest of male muskoxen is strongly encouraged, but there will not be any penalties for hunters who harvest female muskoxen” as it no longer fits if there is a zero harvest quota; Action 9 may not be necessary if there is to be no harvest; delete first sentence under Action 10 “Hunters are strongly encouraged to harvest male muskoxen”.**

**Suggested revision: Page 19 - accept highlighted changes however adjust so that they are in accordance with a zero harvest quota.**

**Suggested revision: Page 25 and 26 Maps - why the core distribution areas are defined as such is not clear – there seem to be many incidental observations outside the core area; the legend’s symbol for incidental observations does not line up with what shows on the maps; would “incidental observations” be more appropriately titled “Sightings reported by people”?**

**Action 02-10-05: WMAC (NS) will incorporate changes identified at its February meeting into the draft Muskox Plan and convene a teleconference at the end of April to review the revised draft, after which time meetings be held with the WMAC NWT and IGC Chairs as well as the Aklavik HTC to review the draft. Once the draft is finalized it will be sent out for broader comment.**

#### **J. Upcoming Meetings – On the Land Meeting**

Members agreed to hold the summer meeting from June 16-23, 2010.

June 16 – travel to Inuvik

June 17 – fly from Inuvik to Herschel Island – sharing flight with Herschel Rangers.

June 20 – fly to Sheep Creek if room at camp, **if not**

**June 22 – fly from Herschel to Babbage River and back to Inuvik.**

June 23 – travel out of Inuvik.

4:30pm – meeting adjourned.

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Wednesday February 17, 2009

**Lindsay Staples** (WMA CNS Chair) • **Danny C. Gordon** Inuvialuit Game Council (Member) • **Ernest Pokiak** Inuvialuit Game Council (Member) • **Michelle Christensen** (Secretariat) • **Ramona Maraj** Carnivore Biologist, Yukon Government (Guest) • **Syd Cannings** Species at Risk Section, Canadian Wildlife Service (Guest) • **Rob Florkiewicz** Manager, Species Programs, Yukon Government (Guest)

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The meeting was called to order at 9:10am.

**I. Ongoing Business: Review Action Items – note that only items updated/changed during the meeting appear below.**

**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** – the Secretariat will contact Ramona Maraj and Dorothy Cooley, and others as necessary, to determine what organizations are storing fuel at Shingle Point. A letter will then be written to all parties storing fuel in the area to adopt Parks Canada’s fuel storage protocol.

**Action regarding contacting Randall Pokiak to discuss posting his North Slope Conference talk on the WMAC (NS) website: Follow up** – Ernest will provide Lindsay with Randall’s phone number.

**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. **Follow up** – the Secretariat will develop a draft letter based on the Council’s previous letter to COSEWIC and the February Council meeting discussion.

**Action 06-09-02:** 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. **Follow up** – the Secretariat will follow up with Danny to see if he has a copy of the video.

**Action 06-09-12:** 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. **In progress** – the Secretariat has prepared a draft briefing note for muskox and is awaiting the Chair’s approval before circulating it to Council.

**Action 09-09-09:** The Secretariat will inquire with the Canadian Wildlife Service and/or Wendy Nixon to determine how alternate Canada members for WMAC (NS) have been appointed in previous years. **Follow up** – revise action to read “the Chair will raise the issues associated with government appointed members and alternates with the Joint Secretariat Board.”

**Action 09-09-10:** The WMAC (NS) will write a letter to Environment Canada regarding securement of IFA funds for wildlife research. **Follow up** – the Secretariat will find letter written to the Canadian Wildlife Service two years ago relating to a similar topic and will use it to help construct the new letter.

**Action 12-09-02:** The Secretariat will routinely review the AHTC, IGC, and all other IFA co-management boards’ minutes, alerting the Council of important developments. **Follow up** – the Secretariat will file AHTC and IGC minutes in quarterly meeting binders as well as post them on the Sharefile site.

**Action 12-09-03:** The Chair will determine whether summaries of Council meeting minutes are worth pursuing. **Retire.**

**Action 12-09-04:** The Secretariat will compile/reproduce maps from the 1999 Yukon North Slope Atlas, as well as Jim Hawkings' satellite image map, and bring them forward to the next Council meeting for review. **Follow up** – the Secretariat will bring hard copies forward to the next scheduled meeting in Whitehorse. Once hard copies are acquired maps should be digitized as well.

**Action 12-09-05:** The Council will discuss mapping work done since 1999 at the next WMAC (NS) meeting. **Retired.**

**Action 02-10-06: The Secretariat will purchase an additional external hard drive, back up all files semi-annually and store at the bank in a safety deposit box.**

**Action 12-09-07:** The Secretariat will determine if the EISC has responded to the two letters from Yukon Government dated October 15 and October 20, 2009, noting whether the Chair's concern regarding representation was addressed. **In progress.** The Secretariat will ensure that the Council has received the latest correspondence on the issue, and if necessary will write a letter to the Minister outlining the concern.

**Action 12-09-08:** The Secretariat will clarify with Ramona whether or not the polar bear traditional knowledge project outputs will be released on a community-by-community basis. The Chair asked Ernest and Danny for their input – both responded that one report with community sections would be sufficient. **Follow up** – the Secretariat will inform project leads that in the opinion of the council one report with community sections will be sufficient.

**Action 12-09-09:** The Secretariat will acquire a copy of Dan Slavik's traditional knowledge study results for the Council's review. **Follow up** – the Chair will provide comments before February 19<sup>th</sup> and the Secretariat will provide a copy to Danny Gordon.

**Action 12-09-10:** WMAC (NS) shall consider the grizzly bear communications exit strategy under the 2010/2011 projects budget. The Council discussed this item and decided they would raise it with her when she joins the meeting later in the afternoon.

**Action 12-09-17:** The Secretariat will obtain a copy of Jim Hawkings' satellite image map that was produced for the Yukon North Slope poster produced by WMAC (NS). **Complete.**

**Action 02-10-07: The Secretariat will obtain a copy of the digital file of the WMAC (NS) poster created in the late 90s.** Currently WMAC (NS) only has copies of the photos and files used to create the poster, and not a digital copy of the poster itself.

## **I. Ongoing Business: Correspondence**

The Chair highlighted the paper on the Precautionary Principle [Berney et al., The Precautionary Principle: Its Limits and Uses] and its treatment, including its application to harvesting rights.

The Chair reviewed the North Slope Conference correspondence noting that the Yukon government's interpretation of the funding arrangement raises questions about the treatment of implementation funds for this task. The current interpretation appears to be "use it or lose it" and precludes rolling over conference funds to next year instead of waiting another three years to hold the conference.

Ernest and Danny agreed that waiting three years for the next one is too long. The Chair noted that the issue would be raised when Stephanie attends the Council meeting tomorrow.

The Council reviewed the Polar Bear maps.

**Action 02-10-08: The Secretariat will file Beaufort Polar Bear Population survey results (colour maps) in future Council meeting binders.**

The SDC correspondence item was reviewed. Danny noted that on his visual inspections of the SDC he has not been impressed with the amount of garbage and level of maintenance. The Secretariat informed the Council that the owners are currently applying for an exemption under the Environmental Impact Screening Committee – the Chair remarked that the Council would have no further input to what was last submitted.

The Chair informed members that the letter regarding the draft Yukon Species at Risk Act was submitted to the Yukon in January. He highlighted the main concerns raised in the letter.

**G. Report from Chair**

*In camera* session.

**H. Report from Members and Secretariat**

The Secretariat reviewed the Arctic Borderlands meeting that happened last week in Whitehorse. Products produced over the last few months were identified, including Jocelyn McDowell's monitoring review and Gary Kofinas' analysis of ten years of Borderlands data. A review of Co-op goals and objectives were discussed as were partner needs and future data analyses. She reported that it seemed that many of the items discussed at the meeting had been discussed before, but that having more key players at the meeting was helpful in generating new ideas and perspectives.

A representative from the Yukon Bureau of Statistics was present, and she established a plan with timelines to ensure deployment of a new survey in December 2011. A survey subcommittee was set up that the Secretariat will sit on until May.

Because monitoring did not happen this past year, the Co-op will engage in a community tour in March 2010 to update people on the work that has been accomplished to date and the plan for next year.

The Chair commented that the survey re-design remains to be a challenge: who will decide what questions are relevant?

The Secretariat said it was discussed at the meeting that questions asked in the survey must have a clear management application.

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11:15am – Syd Cannings and Rob Florkiewicz joined the meeting.

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### **I. Ongoing Business: Polar Bear: Listing under federal Species at Risk Act**

Syd presented his review of COSEWIC's assessment of polar bear as well as the results of community consultations to the Council.

Polar bear is currently listed as of "Special Concern" under the Species at Risk Act. The species has been assessed as a single population and different subpopulations have been assessed as increasing or decreasing or stable.

Members discussed how disagreements between western scientists and traditional knowledge holders have arisen on population status for some of the subpopulations.

Syd reviewed the main reasons for the listing noting that harvest quotas may need to be updated. The "Special Concern" listing requires the development of a management plan within three years, in cooperation with provinces and territories, wildlife management boards, and communities. "Special Concern" species do not involve prohibitions or critical habitat protection.

Syd reviewed the listing process to date:

- Recommendation was made to the Minister in summer 2008
- COSEWIC recommendation went to federal cabinet in December 2008
- Consultation was extended 15 months – deadline March 2010
- Following consultation cabinet will review assessment and may on the recommendation of the Minister accept or reject or refer the decision back to COSEWIC for further information or consideration.

Syd reviewed the community consultations that took place in the ISR communities which were led by Donna Mulders from Yellowknife. In general he noted that there was very little public interest in the subject but that there was support from the WMAC (NWT) and IGC.

Common concerns from the community consultations included management, culture, traditional knowledge and science, development and climate change, and research techniques. A final consultation report will be sent to the WMAC, IGC, and communities.

Syd noted that if the Council is planning on commenting on the listing, that they direct their letter to Virginia Potter and copy him.

The Chair asked Syd if the Council's concerns line up with those of the community. In general he said yes, but that there is opposition to the listing in Nunavut and Manitoba.

Members briefly discussed the review of the SARA noting the importance of emergency provisions.

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12:00pm – Syd and Rob left the meeting.

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1:20pm – Ramona Maraj arrived at the meeting.

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**Grizzly Bear Project** (note – not listed as an agenda item)

The Chair asked Ramona if she had ideas on an exit communications strategy directed towards the community of Aklavik. He noted that people would be interested in how results affect the quota and asked her for a rough idea of when results would be ready.

Ramona said that a rough population estimate will be ready by March/April of this year and that a final estimate would be ready by spring 2011. She mentioned that there are three components to the quota: knowing the number of bears in the different habitat types, seeing what areas are being used for habitat, and knowing the number of bears in the whole study area, including how many are born, die, enter, or leave. When the quota is set, it should ensure that the number of animals harvested does not exceed the number of bears that would die or leave the area. In order to determine how many bears are born, cub survival of collared females must be tracked.

Doug asked how old a female must be before she has cubs. Ramona said that on average in the Yukon it takes a female eight years before she has cubs. Judging from study results thus far, it looks like the grizzly population on the North Slope is healthy.

The Secretariat asked if Ramona still planned on producing a final report that incorporates both traditional knowledge and science. She said that yes, such a report would be produced once the project is complete.

The Chair suggested that though a report makes sense, drafting a plan or management guidelines at some point after 2011 would be helpful.

Ramona suggested that in the interim a newsletter could be sent out and community meetings scheduled. Ramona asked Danny if he had suggestions on what the community would like to hear about. Danny said generally that a newsletter stating what has been done complete with photos would be of interest.

The Chair suggested that because of turnover in local committees it would be valuable to do a roll up of the project to-date before the end of the next fiscal year: he recommended earmarking money in the WMAC (NS) budget for this purpose.

**Action 02-10-09: The WMAC (NS) will reserve project funds to contribute toward a grizzly bear project summary report to be produced before March 31, 2011.**

Ramona suggested that because the project started with a poster it might be a good idea to end with a poster as well.

Ernest said that in Tuktoyaktuk community members have a strong interest in hearing back from researchers.

**Action 02-10-10: The WMAC (NS) will discuss communication products for the grizzly bear and polar bear traditional knowledge projects during its summer 2010 meeting.**

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1:50 – Christian Bucher joined the meeting by phone.

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### **I. Ongoing Business: Polar Bear**

The Chair requested Ramona to provide an overview of the latest meetings involving polar bear.

Ramona reported that the United States' proposal to up-list the polar bear from the CITES Appendix II to I has been resisted by every jurisdiction that has a management responsibility for polar bear in Canada. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service attended the last Polar Bear Technical Committee (PBTC) meeting. She said that while groups like the Inuvialuit Game Council have argued that an Appendix I listing may result in increased harvest because of the effect on subsistence tag usage, that possibility is only true for the Northwest Territories which only represents 6% of harvest in Canada.

Ramona said that the U.S. is not considering pulling their proposal at this point. The Polar Bear Specialist Group and others have given support for the Canadian position of opposing the uplisting to Appendix I, however, the outcome of the CITES meetings will be a result of how well the Canadian government and Inuit groups can lobby other parties to oppose the uplisting.

Ramona reported more specifically on discussions within the Polar Bear Technical and Administrative Committees (PBTC and PBAC).

The Chair asked about Arctic Net and if any link between polar bear and sea ice researchers have been made. Ramona reminded the Council that the Arctic Net initiative was borne out of the Polar Bear Round Table meeting that happened last January and that it was created to bring the two research communities together. She reported that from what she has heard to date the network is not functioning well: the two research communities are not coming together as was hoped.

**Action 02-10-11: The WMAC (NS) Secretariat will contact Nick Lunn at Environment Canada and IGC to receive the latest update from Arctic Net.**

Ramona said she has been requested by the U.S. to provide them with information on polar bear and jurisdiction. Over a year ago she began work on a briefing note explaining the subject but it has not been finalized.

The Chair suggested that having a third party expert, such as Nigel Bankes who has worked on Beaufort jurisdictional issues in past, prepare such a briefing would be beneficial. The note should be broad in scope so as to ensure its applicability to wildlife, oil and gas issues, etc.

**Action 02-10-12: In 2010/11 WMAC (NS) will explore options regarding hiring Nigel Bankes to prepare a briefing note on jurisdictional issues in the Beaufort.**

Ramona reported that a boundary shift for the northern and southern Beaufort polar bear population has been proposed, which will have an effect on quotas. A contractor has been hired to determine possible effects on the quota: his findings will be tabled at the Inuvialuit-Inupiat User meeting in July 2010. She suggested that it would be beneficial for the WMAC (NS) to be present at the meeting.

Ramona asked the Council if they had any suggestions for future polar bear research, as the U.S. Geological Survey is looking for suggestions.

The Chair suggested that among other considerations, a gap analysis that was done five to seven years ago by Gartner Lee should be consulted.

Christian asked if the U.S.'s research funds are limited to polar bear. Ramona said she understood that U.S. funds are applicable beyond polar bear. Christian stated that Parks Canada would be interested in the work.

4:30pm – meeting adjourned.

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Thursday February 18, 2010

**Lindsay Staples** (WMA CNS Chair) • **Danny C. Gordon** Inuvialuit Game Council (Member) • **Ernest Pokiak** Inuvialuit Game Council (Member) • **Michelle Christensen** (Secretariat) • **Doug Larsen** Yukon Government (Member) • **Pam Sinclair** Wildlife Biologist, Environment Canada (Guest) • **Stephanie Muckenheim** IFA Policy Analyst, Yukon Government (Guest)

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The meeting was called to order at 9:15am.

The Council observed a moment of silence in memory of the passing of Andy Carpenter Sr..

The Council set their fall meeting for September 9-11, 2010, Whitehorse, Yukon.

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9:20am - Stephanie Muckenheim joined the meeting.

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The Chair welcomed Stephanie to the meeting and asked her to explain Canada's position with regard to North Slope Conference funding.

Stephanie said that when Canada was contacted with the news that the Conference would not be proceeding within the 2009-2010 fiscal year, they said that the \$50,000 in funding must be returned so that it can be re-allocated to other programming.

The Chair said that the variation in understanding of implementation funding arrangements between governments and IFA organizations has become problematic and needs to be addressed. He suggested convening a meeting this fall, including the heads of other committees and councils as well as government representatives, to help clarify understandings. He recalled that in the past the Yukon could re-allocate funding across its own tasks.

The Chair explained that it is an administrative understanding that the Conference be held every three years, not a legal requirement, and that as he understands it, the Conference could have been postponed until next year. He expressed concern that if we don't clarify current understanding of these arrangements now we could end up departing from earlier understandings.

Stephanie said that in the two years she has been in her position there have been three federal implementation coordinators: turnover is high, which is not conducive to continuity. She explained that the decision to postpone the conference until 2012-13 was a Yukon government decision and not Canada's.

The Chair asked if money was available to hold the Conference next year if Yukon may have changed its view about scheduling.

Stephanie said that Yukon is concerned that even if funds were held over for the Conference for next year, that the conference would indeed go ahead.

Ernest said that the timing is right to hold a conference next year.

Stephanie asked if the timing is still right given the legal issues currently on the table.

The Chair said that the issues may be resolved in a year's time. He reiterated his concern that funding intended for the North Slope is being redirected to another IFA implementing party.

The Chair said that in past non-conference years conference funding could be re-assigned toward implementation of the North Slope wildlife conservation and management plan actions (including monitoring work, wildlife research etc.). In the last funding negotiation the Yukon lost that arrangement which allowed for more flexibility in conference scheduling. He noted that he still has the correspondence from DIAND relating to the matter.

Stephanie said that she would be interested to find out if conference funding could be redirected toward other North Slope-related programs.

The Chair suggested that Allan Koprowsky would be very knowledgeable about implementation funding history within the Yukon government.

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9:30am – Pam Sinclair joined the meeting.

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The Chair brought up the situation with the Canadian Wildlife Service and the difficulties they have had with their IFA funding.

Pam clarified that the problems the Service is having are not specific to Whitehorse, but apply nationwide.

The Chair again mentioned holding a meeting of the parties in the fall: holding this meeting with the involvement of people who have knowledge of past funding arrangements would be helpful.

**Action 02-10-13: The WMAC (NS) Chair will attempt to locate correspondence from Richard Berg regarding the second ten year funding cycle and bring it forward for a meeting of IFA committees and councils in fall 2010 to discuss IFA implementation arrangements.**

### **I. Arctic Plains and Mountains Bird Conservation Regional Plan**

Pam introduced the Regional Plan as one of many being implemented across the country. To date waterfowl, landbirds, shorebirds, and waterbirds have been managed separately: this Plan reflects current thinking that all birds should be managed together.

The Arctic Plains and Mountains planning unit encompasses the Inuvialuit Settlement Region.

Doug asked if this initiative parallels what land use planning is trying to achieve. Pam responded that the regional plans will not be specific enough, but that once the plans are completed implementation plans for specific areas will come into effect, which will more closely resemble land use plans.

The Chair asked if Important Bird Areas (IBAs) are part of the plans. Pam said that yes, IBAs are identified in the plans.

Pam highlighted that the Arctic Plan includes 150 species, will focus on priority species, highlight important areas, and be used as communication and stewardship tools.

The Regional Plans will not infringe on aboriginal rights: the plans are advisory only. The Plan will work to conserve all bird species in Canada and will not replace existing management of harvested bird species.

Draft Plans will come forward in September 2010, and will be finalized in September 2011. Plans will be updated every five to ten years. Environment Canada plans to engage wildlife management boards in review of the plans.

The Council expressed interest in being involved in plan development and implementation, specifically where priority species are of concern.

Pam agreed to send the Council the list of priority species for the Arctic Plains and Mountains region.

**Action 02-10-14: The WMAC (NS) will provide comments on the draft Arctic Plains and Mountains Bird Conservation Regional Plan when released in September 2010, as well as on the list of priority species for the region, and will comment on implementation plan development. The Council will also discuss with the WMAC (NWT) in September 2010 the plan for an ISR-wide implementation plan.**

The Council agreed that all comments to Environment Canada on the Plan would be delivered through Pam Sinclair.

### **I. Ongoing Business – Correspondence**

Lindsay pointed out the correspondence between the Environmental Impact Screening Committee and the Yukon Government regarding representation of the Yukon government member on the Committee. He questioned statements by Yukon that its member shall represent the interests of the Yukon government: he understood that appointees to the EISC are not to represent the interests of their appointing party, but to remain independent.

Stephanie commented that she wasn't sure if the Screening Committee representative must represent government or not.

The Chair said that is an important question for all of the committees and councils. Members discussed the pros and cons of government appointments.

**Action 02-12-115: Stephanie Muckenheim will locate the latest correspondence regarding the Yukon's appointment of their EISC representative and transmit it to the WMAC (NS).**

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11:30am – Stephanie Muckenheim left the meeting.

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### **I. Ongoing Business: Porcupine Caribou – Harvest Management Plan.**

*In camera* update.

*Motion 02-10-04*

*To adjourn the meeting.*

*Moved: Danny Gordon*

*Second: Doug Larsen*

*Motion carried.*

### **K. Adjournment**

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 12:10pm.

Approved:

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Chair, Lindsay Staples

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Date

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Secretariat