



Wildlife Management Advisory Council (North Slope)

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MINUTES

WMAC(NS) MEETING

Sundog Retreat Centre

Lake Laberge, Yukon

Aug 24-25, 2004

Present: Lindsay Staples – Chair
Danny C. Gordon- Member – Inuvialuit Game Council
Herbert Felix- Member- Inuvialuit Game Council
Evelyn Storr - Alternate- Inuvialuit Game Council
Dorothy Cooley - Alternate- Yukon Government
Ron Larsen – Parks Canada
Wendy Nixon – Environment Canada (August 24 only)
Harvey Jessup – YTG Environment
Aileen Horler- Secretariat

Guest: Ramona Maraj- YTG Environment (August 25, morning only)

1. Purpose of the Meeting

The Chair commented that the meeting is an opportunity for the Council to consider the focus of activities for the next 3 years. It is a chance to identify priorities and make some decisions about future actions. Areas that have been neglected but need attention can also be identified.

The Chair noted that he met with the Secretariat to compile a list of initiatives for Council members to consider. Members were encouraged to add their priorities and other issues or items they would like to see the Council pursue.

The Chair added that Ramona Maraj would be attending the meeting the following day to provide an update on the grizzly bear research.

2. Setting the Context

The Chair provided some context for the discussions. The role of the Council is to provide advice on wildlife management and habitat to various government agencies, such as Parks Canada, the Canadian Wildlife Service, and the Yukon Government. The Council also provides advice on policies related to wildlife and habitat management. A third responsibility is related to the conservation of traditional harvesting activities. Overall the Council wants to ensure healthy wildlife populations and habitat, and continuing Inuvialuit harvesting activities.

Since it began operating in 1986, the Council has been involved in the development of a number of management plans, such as the Yukon North Slope Wildlife Conservation and Management Plan and the YNS Long-term Research Plan. The environment has changed over the years with the introduction of new legislation, such as the Species at Risk Act, and the increased interest in regional development. How do all these changes affect the North Slope and the demands put on the Council? Off-shore development and its potential impacts is an area where the Council should direct more attention. DFO and the FJMC, for example, are involved in an initiative to establish a protected area in Shallow Bay. WMAC(NS) has a strong membership, good resources and good relationships with researchers and the community. This puts the Council in a good position to do some good work.

Evelyn Storr commented that the activities of the Aklavik Hunters and Trappers Committee has skyrocketed in the last few years. The HTC now has a better understanding of what the Council does. The Council is now better known in the community as well. It is important to begin to identify priorities and implement some of the actions in the management plans.

3. Initiatives for consideration

The discussion of priority areas within the mandate of the Council and related actions are summarized in the attached table.

At the conclusion of the discussions Council members agreed that the issues and projects to be given priority over the next year should include:

- the implementation of the Wildlife Conservation and Management Plan
- the completion and recommendation of the muskox plan
- a meeting with the Alaskans to discuss muskox management issues
- the grizzly bear research project, including developing and implementing a community involvement strategy and communications plan
- increased support for the Arctic Borderlands Ecological Knowledge Co-op
- a review of the requirements for research permitting on the YNS
- the development of a harvest study protocol for Aklavik

- a review of enforcement mechanisms and mandates applicable to the YNS that includes a public education component
- a report to the Council on climate change effects and projects on the YNS
- An operational monitoring and research plan for Herschel Island for 2005

Other initiatives were also suggested as forming part of the Council's activities over the next year, as appropriate. (see table)

4. Update on the Yukon North Slope Grizzly Bear Research Project

The Chair welcomed Ramona Maraj to the meeting. Ramona distributed a written summary of the summer field work and provided an update on the project as follows:

- Ten bears were collared in June- 6 females and 4 males. Bears were captured from different parts of the study area.
- A total of 16 bears were seen in 7 days of flying. A number of bears were in mating pairs. They were expecting to see more bears.
- No family groups were observed. It's possible that females with cubs are staying up in the mountains where they are more protected. One bear that was captured was lactating but didn't have a cub. She probably just lost the cub.
- All captured bears were blindfolded for their protection.
- All captured bears were tattooed for identification and fitted with a collar. The collars are specially designed to fall off after a number of years in case it is not possible to remove them at the end of the study.
- The collars put on the bears this summer all contain GPS units which record the bears' location every 4 hours. The information is stored in the collar and can only be retrieved by flying over the bear. The collars send off radio signals so that the bears can be located when it is time to get the information stored in the GPS units.
- Body fat was measured by sending a very mild electric current through the bear.
- Several body measurements were taken including length, weight and head size.
- A tooth was pulled from each bear to determine the exact age.
- Herschel Park Ranger Lee John Meeyok assisted with the captures one day.

Ramona commented that all the captures went really well. No bears died or were injured. However, since returning from the field work she was informed by the collar manufacturer (Telonics) that the collars all have faulty batteries and will only transmit the locating radio signal for a few more months. This means the collars will be useless if they are left on the bears. They need to be replaced as soon as possible.

YTG pursued legal action and has come to an agreement with Telonics. Part of the agreement is that Telonics won't charge for the collars as long as they are returned. Telonics will also supply 10 new collars.

Ramona is proposing to go out to the North Slope in late September or early October to replace the collars. If the collars are not replaced it will not be possible to locate the bears in the spring because the battery that operates the radio signal will no longer be working. The collaring program would then have to start from scratch in the spring. All the bears collared this summer would have been collared for no purpose. In addition, YTG will have to pay for the faulty collars if they are not returned.

Questions were raised about collaring the bears when they are so fat. Chasing them with the helicopter could be harmful. Ramona responded that the bears will be in good condition in the fall and that fall collaring has been done in many other studies. Ramona agreed to meet with the members of the Aklavik Hunters and Trappers Committee in early September to explain the situation.

5. 2004-2005 Wildlife Management and Research Projects

Dorothy Cooley reported that the funds allocated to the movement of fuel drums on the North Slope will not be required as the work was done by Parks Canada. Dorothy requested that these funds be reallocated to the Grizzly Bear Research Project.

Motion

to reallocate the \$4500 no longer required to move fuel drums on the North Slope to the Grizzly Bear Research Project

Moved: Herbert Felix

Second: Danny C. Gordon

Motion carried

Summary of discussion and comments regarding potential WMAC(NS) activities 2004-2007

Initiatives and Issues	Background Information	Summary of Discussion and Comments	Actions and Priorities	Linkages
1. Implementation of the YNS Wildlife Conservation and Management Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The plan has just been completed. The next step is its implementation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some action items have been completed and others are underway. However there is still a need to remind implementing agencies what is in the plan and what roles and responsibilities fall under their mandates. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WMAC(NS) will contact implementing parties in order to bring to their attention what they should be doing. Begin by asking each party to identify a contact person at that agency. Follow up with a letter alerting the agency as to what they need to be doing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Withdrawal Order YNS candidate areas for protection
2. Muskox plan and quota	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completing the plan is a priority. The completion has been complicated by the changes in population numbers from count to count and by differing management interests. We need to get all groups agreeing to the main goals. We must also consider the Alaskan situation and the major decline in the population over there. We need to co-ordinate management with the Alaskans. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (Danny) It must be a priority to finish this plan. People have been very patient. We have gone a long way in the past 3 to 4 years. The community has been waiting a long time to exercise their rights. (Evelyn) This is a priority. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Plan is to be completed and tabled at the October meeting WMAC(NS) representatives will attend a meeting with the Alaskans to discuss joint management issues, currently proposed for late October. The meeting should also include representatives from Parks Canada, YTG, AHTC and IGC 	
3. Grizzly bear research program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A major financial commitment has been made to this multi-year research project that was started in 2004. The Council can do a lot to involve the community in the research. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (Evelyn) This is a priority WMAC(NS) Secretariat is developing a communication strategy and a strategy for community involvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secretariat will continue to develop materials in consultation with the AHTC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Traditional knowledge studies Species at Risk

<p>4. Arctic Borderlands Ecological Knowledge Co-op</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Setting up an ecological monitoring program for the NS was seen as a priority over 10 years ago. This led to the establishment of the Coop. • There are a lot of action items in both the Long-term Research Plan and the Wildlife Conservation and Management Plan that are being done by the Coop. • If we provide give more support can we get more? • If we give the Coop specific direction, can they follow through if we give them more resources? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council should review the Coop monitoring information for the NS to see what is available • WMAC(NS) needs to go through all the actions in the WCMP and the LTRP and assess the Coop's activities and roles. • There is a need for an evaluation of some of the community monitoring information • What would we like to see in the 10 year report? What kind of information? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WMAC(NS) should consult with the Coop to determine ways that the Council can further support the Coop's work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traditional knowledge studies
<p>5. FJMC- improving communications</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WMAC(NS) has a significant marine interest off the NS • The Council has a protocol with the FJMC to work together so activities don't overlap. There is also a protocol with DFO and YTG. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should the WMAC(NS) and the FJMC be working closer together? Is more collaboration needed especially in regards to the coastal zone, marine protected areas, shorebirds and habitat? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff of co-management bodies should meet to update each other on activities. • Council should meet with FJMC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coastal sensitivity mapping • Off-shore development
<p>6. Withdrawal Order</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Withdrawal Order has been used to date as a mechanism for protection and as a conservation tool • WO extends into the VGFNTT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • YTG is initiating the discussions. A number of actions need to be taken before the Withdrawal Order could be removed. All of this will take several years. • This will become a priority for the Council's attention if the removal of the WO is pursued by YTG. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council will continue to monitor the situation and respond as required. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • YNS candidate areas for protection

7. YNS candidate areas for protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are four areas listed in the Wildlife and Conservation and Management Plan that are identified for further conservation consideration • They are also listed in other plans such as the Aklavik Community Conservation Plan. Shallow Bay is listed in the Beluga Plan • The recommendation in the WCMP is for them to be investigated further, not necessarily protected. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some action will be required if any changes are proposed to the Withdrawal Order 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aklavik Community Conservation Plan • Withdrawal Order
8. Coastal sensitivity mapping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are concerns regarding off-shore drilling, marine storage and increased usage of the area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some work in this area has been done under BSIMPI and DFO's integrated management initiative • Any mapping needs to include traditional knowledge 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • traditional land use • Aklavik Community Conservation Plan
9. Climate change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We need to know more about how it effects the North Slope 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What work is being done in the region on climate change? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WMAC(NS) will be prepare a climate change profile that describes NS related research and findings. Include information on EMAN website and reporting on the IFA Research Day. 	
10. Status of birds associated with wetlands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was lots of work done in the early 90s but not much recently • We don't currently have a good handle on it on the situation • We need a more current sense of what is happening with the population 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (Wendy) The Alaskans are putting together a protocol for monitoring water birds. Once it is done it will be worth looking at these protocols to see what work and training could be done here. Also there is the issue of climate change and how it 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Secretariat will forward the Council's concerns to CWS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Species assessments • WMAC(NS) species status reports • SAR • Climate change

		<p>affects the distribution of water birds.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (Ron) Parks doesn't do any coastal water bird monitoring, only breeding bird surveys inland (Margaret Lake and Sheep Creek). The monitoring program could be expanded to include the coast. 		
11. Consolidation of information related to the ISR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How well are we sharing information within the JS boards, regional agencies and the outside? • Information needs to be available so that we can get a coherent view 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consolidating information about the ISR was recommended in one of the workshops at the North Slope Conference. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JS should take the lead in consolidating information. The JS could use their new website to provide information on plans, research etc in the ISR. • Staff of co-management bodies should meet to update each other on activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ISR research day and any expanded research forum
12. WMAC(NS) website expansion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More information can still be added to enhance the website 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional information will be added as required 	
13. Research process and permitting guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EISC is no longer screening industry research. How are the co-management bodies reviewing this research? • Also how is research being permitted in the Yukon? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (Evelyn) The timing is poor. The HTC is getting information about the permits too late from YTG. Often the HTC receives the information after the date set for comments. HTC wants researchers to come back and explain things to the community <p>(Ron) Everything has to be permitted in the park. Proposals have to go through the EISC or be exempt (industry / education). Parks Canada asks researchers to consult with the HTC.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WMAC(NS) Secretariat to prepare a summary of current permitting processes. Include implementation of YESAA by look through the regulations for triggers • Research Guide in the LTRP should be updated to reflect recent changes in permitting 	

14. Traditional knowledge studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lots of work can still be done. • TK input is still needed for several species in the Council's species status reports • There is a TK component to the grizzly bear project. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (Evelyn) Kavik-Axys is doing most of the industry related work regarding traditional knowledge (Aklavik, Inuvik and Tuktoyaktuk). Industry is paying for the work but the Inuvialuit will own the information. There has been some mapping work done. 		
15. Human use mapping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This includes traditional use of the land • In the past the IHS has provided information on land use • Is there still a means to document land use? 			
16. Communication related to Long-term Research Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The LTRP was completed in 1999 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there something the Council can be doing to promote use of the plan? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WMAC(NS) will send out reminder about the LTRP to all relevant parties 	
17. Harvest study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a need for a data sharing protocol with the AHTC and others • Inuvialuit Harvest Study is no longer operating. YTG has been collecting harvest information in Aklavik for a limited number of species for three years. • The GNWT produces an annual summary for all species harvested under quota in the ISR. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (Herbert) It would be good to see the Harvest Study developed more and kept consistent over the next 5 years. • (Harvey) Harvest data from Aklavik has been mapped by Game Management Zones. It is possible to go back to the raw data to pull out more precise harvest locations. • (Harvey) In reference to the protocol, it should be possible to use some of the wording that was developed for the IHS. There has also been a request from the GNWT to share data from the Aklavik and Inuvik 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • YTG will develop a protocol for the Aklavik Harvest Study. The protocol should include the Aklavik HTC, the GNWT, CWS (for Porcupine caribou and possibly water birds) and WMAC(NS). • YTG will produce an annual summary similar to the one produced by the GNWT for all harvested species on the NS, especially grizzly bears. • Wendy will make inquiries about the addition of water bird species to YTG's harvest study in Aklavik. 	

		<p>harvest interviews. YTG and the GNWT have an agreement but so far no harvest information has been exchanged.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (Ron) Parks Canada would like to get the harvest information for Ivvavik National Park. 		
18. Species at Risk/ (including rare species and species assessments)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The new SAR legislation has several requirements for assessing populations and their habitat. • The Council has been working with COSEWIC to develop a mechanism for Co-management Board involvement in species assessment. The Council will also have a role on the Yukon's SAR board when it is established. • YTG has plans to implement rare species studies in the northern Yukon next summer • Draft Yukon legislation for SAR did go to Cabinet but it never went any further 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (Harvey) YTG is considering whether it should have stand alone legislation for SAR or if it should be added to the Wildlife Act. • (Harvey) CITES listed assessments for NDFs (non-detrimental findings) are being required for grizzly bears, lynx, otter, wolves and black bears. • A number of the Council's species status reports need to updated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WMAC(NS) will continue to work with COSEWIC on species assessments • WMAC(NS) will update species status reports as required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • grizzly bear research project
19. North Slope Conference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is not an immediate priority but only 2 years to go until the next conference 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There needs to be some rethinking of how the conference is organized and what it hopes to accomplish. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible parties should begin to form a working group late in 2005 to begin planning for 2006 conference. 	

<p>20. Regulations and enforcement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questions have arisen about who has the authority to enforce what on the YNS. This needs to be clarified. There is also a need to clarify how bylaws and regulations work together. • Parks Canada doesn't have a mechanism for issuing tags to Inuvialuit for harvesting in the ISR national parks. • Some action has been taken to develop trapping regulations for the NS but more work still needs to be done. Issues related to trapping also include the need to modify the boundary of the Vuntut Gwitchin group trapping that currently includes part of the ISR. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (Evelyn) Some Inuvialuit are still not clear about what they can and cannot do in Ivvavik National Park. There is also the issue of enforcement mandates. This needs to be made really clear. It would be good to have a session where this kind of information can be shared and not just presented as written information. • (Ron) Parks is currently developing regulations to allow for the issuance of tags to Inuvialuit in the ISR parks. • (Harvey) YTG has sent a letter to Vuntut Gwitchin and the AHTC regarding the group trapping area boundary. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ron will take the lead in organizing a meeting for the winter to review enforcement issues • WMAC(NS) will prepare a summary of YNS enforcement mechanisms and authorities. • YTG should meet again with the AHTC, WMAC(NS) and IGC to give an update on the trapping regulations • Harvey will send WMAC(NS) a copy of the letter written by YTG to VGFN and AHTC regarding the need to change the VG group trapping boundary so that it no longer extends into the ISR. 	
<p>21. Herschel Island monitoring plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Herschel Island Management Plan calls for the development of an annual research and monitoring plan for the park. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is WMAC(NS)'s role in developing the plan? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dorothy will work with Richard Gordon and the WMAC(NS) Secretariat over the winter to develop the monitoring plan for the park for 2005. 	
<p>22. IFA Research Day and research information</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are plans to hold a one day session on IFA funded research in December • A larger session involving all researchers in the ISR has been proposed for later in the winter. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (Dorothy) Will the day in December be for reporting just to the IGC or to a larger group (i.e. other co-management bodies and governments)? • (Ron) Everyone doing research in a Western Arctic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Joint Secretariat should take the lead in organizing the Research Day (for IFA funded research) and a larger session with all researchers. 	

		park has to provide plain language report to Parks Canada to be used in the annual Research and Monitoring report. An annual summary could be prepared to wrap up all research for the year (government, industry, education etc)		
23. Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WMAC(NS) currently produces a number of publications (Newsletters, term reports) to keep people informed about issues on the YNS. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (Lindsay) It would be useful to have a pamphlet that explains quotas- what they are and how they are derived. The pamphlet could give examples and show how quotas are used to manage harvests for the purposed of conservation • (Aileen) An educational component has been added to the community involvement and communication strategies for the grizzly bear project. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WMAC(NS) will continue to develop an educational component to the grizzly bear project • WMAC(NS) will develop an education pamphlet that explains quotas 	
24. Off-shore development/ oil and gas development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Off-shore development and its potential impacts is an area where the Council should become more involved. • There is increased activity in the Mackenzie Delta as well as off-shore. • Other issues included marine storage and transportation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (Wendy) There should be a program to monitor the possible effects of off-shore development on water birds • Devon Canada will be filing their EIS this winter • A spill contingency response is needed 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coastal sensitivity mapping
25. Military activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There has been an increase in the presence of the military in the north. (sovereignty issue) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (Wendy) Military activity and its impact has become a big concern for Environment Canada. • (Ron) Parks Canada is also 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WMAC(NS) will continue to monitor the situation 	

		seeing an increase in military presence and the military wanting to do exercises in national parks. There was an incident in Ivvavik this summer where two F-18s flew low over a rafting group. This kind of activity impacts wildlife and tourism.		
26. Richardson Mountains Sheep Management Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A limited hunt for sheep was opened up this year in the Richardson's • VGFN is taking the lead on developing a plan 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WMAC(NS) will participate in discussions on a plan as required 	
27. Porcupine Caribou Harvest Management Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PCMB taking the lead on this 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WMAC(NS) will participate in discussions as required 	

 WMAC(NS) Chair

 Date

 WMAC(NS) Secretariat

 Date