



WMAC (NS) Quarterly Meeting
Inuvik, NWT · Public Library
December 5-6, 2011

Lindsay Staples (Chair) · **Rob Florkiewicz** Yukon Government (Member) · **Dorothy Cooley** Yukon Government (Member) · **Ernest Pokiak**, Inuvialuit Game Council (Member) · **Jennifer Smith** (Secretariat) · **Christine Cleghorn** (Secretariat)

December 5, 2011

A. Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 9:40. He explained that Christian was unable to leave Yellowknife due to airplane problems, and would be joining by telephone for parts of the meeting.

The Chair welcomed Peter Armitage. Peter has been hired to work on the Polar bear Traditional Knowledge project and is in Inuvik to meet people who have worked on the project, the WMACs, IGC, and obtain the data from the project.

Danny C. Gordon arrived 9:43 (late due to travel delays).

B. Review and Approval of Agenda

The Chair reviewed the agenda. There were no additions or revisions.

Motion 12-11-01 to accept the agenda as presented

Moved by Danny C Gordon

Seconded by Rob Florkiewicz

Motion carried.

C. Review and Approval of Minutes

There were no additions or revisions to the September minutes.

Motion 12-11-02 to accept the September Minutes.

Moved by: Ernest Pokiak

Seconded by: Rob Florkiewicz

Motion carried.

The Council reviewed the November teleconference minutes, and noted one typo (Chari to Chair in the first line).

Danny updated the Council on the Parks Canada draft firearms regulations discussion from the Aklavik HTC meeting. The HTC felt that there are some very big matters given to the superintendents, and that there should be guidelines for Superintendents when they make their decisions.

Ernest suggested that HTCs have lists of wildlife monitors and people should have, as a minimum, first aid certification.

Motion 12-11-03 to approve the November minutes as amended.

Moved by: Danny C. Gordon

Seconded by: Rob Florkiewicz

Motion carried.

****Peter Armitage joined the meeting****

D. Polar Bear TK project

The Chair provided an overview of the project to date, reminding the members that at the last joint WMACs meeting, it was decided to seek an external contractor to complete the PBTK project. A call for Expressions of Interest went out to 12 people with the relevant skill set. A working group was established of Lindsay, Marsha, Larry, Christine and Jennifer. We interviewed two people. After checking his references, we entered into a multi-year contract with Peter Armitage.

The Chair introduced Peter, briefly described his background, and his unique suitabilities for working on the PBTK project.

Peter explained that he understood his main job to be representing Inuvialuit knowledge about polar bears to the rest of the world. He committed to doing his best, working collaboratively with the Steering Committee, and thanked the Council for the trust they have placed in him.

Ernest noted that it is important that we are doing this work now. There is a lot of misunderstanding about Inuvialuit culture that this can help people be clearer on.

****10:20 am Christine and Peter left to go introduce Peter to the Joint Secretariat staff****

E. Action Items

Jennifer reviewed the following action items with the Council:

Action 7-11-02: The Chair will draft a letter on behalf of the JS board to hold a two- part meeting to bring together knowledgeable people to write down some of the history of IFA bodies operations (not described in the IFA or otherwise). The first part would be to codify understandings and the second part would be to educate a broader audience. **In progress** Lindsay, Norm and Larry to complete during this week.

Action 12-11-01: Write a short letter to the BREA Research Advisory Committee indicating the need for improved coordination and integration between projects. Based on the presentations in the Inuvik BREA workshop in December 2011, this appears to be lacking.

Action 12-11-02: Chair suggested that we hold a teleconference in the new year on GOAL A of the plan to provide feedback back to Christine.

Action: 7-11-21: Action Item 07-11-21: Inquire with the JS where they are at with implementing the harvest data collection requirements and find out where the money is coming from. Gather this information for the Sept meeting. **Complete.** Marsha has begun this work with Aklavik. HTC is still

doing their program. Capacity and funding is still an issue overall. The program is not running right now in Inuvik.

Action 9-11-04: Form a working group between the WMACs to work on tag administration and make sure that it has the implementing parties in it. Resource people to identify a date for a one day meeting in Inuvik. **In Progress** To be discussed this evening with WMAC (NWT).

North Slope Conservation Award

The Chair tabled the idea of the Council creating an award that recognizes the contributions that individuals have made to the North Slope and its conservation. This would be similar in some ways to the FJMC award regarding contributions towards fisheries conservation in the ISR. Council members agreed that this was a good idea. Ernest suggested that awarding it at the North Slope conference might raise the profile of the award. It is possible that more than one person could receive the award in the same year.

****1:30pm Christian Bucher joined via teleconference****

Motion 12-11-04 to establish the Yukon North Slope Conservation Award, to be given out at the North Slope Conference

Moved by: Ernest Pokiak

Seconded: by Danny C. Gordon

Motion carried.

F. Wildlife Research Funds

The Chair noted that we have received most of the reports from last year's work. Dorothy informed the Council that of the \$10,000 that was allocated to the Aklavik Harvest workshop, \$6,400 is remaining. This money could be allocated to another project, as the project is now complete.

The Chair provided an overview of the 2012/13 project proposals that were submitted, along with an overview of current IFA Research Funds. Environment Canada is showing \$0 to contribute to research for next year as a result of current internal funding challenges for them regarding their IFA implementation funds. The matters have been raised by the Council with the Environment Canada.

Christian explained the following Parks Canada proposals:

Ecological Integrity Monitoring in the Forest and Tundra Ecosystems of Ivvavik National Park

This is a continuation of Linh's project from last year. The hope is to be able to hire back some of the same students from last year, including one student from Inuvik and one from Aklavik. This year they are planning on doing some Robin banding (approx 20 - 25 birds), in an effort to monitor nesting success. Christian described the importance of the pollinator's work that is part of the proposal. He noted how this work ties into the State of the Park Report.

This is likely the last year of this element of this multi-year project.

Decision: **Recommended for \$14,000.**

Porcupine Caribou Satellite collar project

Parks has contributed to this project for a number of years. The project deploys the collars on the Porcupine Caribou herd.

Decision: **Recommended for \$6,000.**

Arctic Borderland Ecological Knowledge Co-Op

Christian gave a brief overview of this proposal. Lindsay discussed the community-based monitoring initiative that is developing across the ISR, and its possible implications for ABEK. Dorothy provided a summary of other monitoring initiatives and noted that the ABEK redesign tried to be mindful of those initiatives and avoid overlap. She said that the caribou questions in the new survey were designed to feed into the harvest monitoring for the herd. Don Russell is currently working on another synthesis product. She said the focus right now is to deploy the survey instrument in February/March.

Decision: **Recommended** (conditionally, based on availability of EC funding) \$10,000 from Environment Canada, **Recommended** \$5,000 from Parks Canada

Coastal Zone Monitoring

The coastal zone is one of the zones to be monitored in the park. This proposal addresses the coastal zone for the first time in terms of the monitoring and reporting in the SOPR. It establishes a sustainable long term monitoring program for Ivvavik. Initially, this project looks at gathering baseline data to inform the longer term monitoring to come. This project starts from scratch with a literature review, looking at remote sensing data that is available, and other relevant work that has taken place on or regarding the coast. The hope would be to have at least one of the Ecological Integrity indicators established in time to start monitoring next year. The coastline is one of the most vulnerable areas of the park and right now we know little about the coastline, although Inuvialuit have indicated its importance. This work is long overdue.

Council members commented that the coastal zone could be the theme of a session at the next North Slope conference. There is a clear need for someone to take a coordinating role regarding research and monitoring on the coast.

Provisional decision to recommend \$14,000 from Parks Canada, noting the importance of linking it to eSpace, exploring whether the literature review could apply to the whole Yukon coast, and linking it to the possible CWS project.

Baseline Data and Monitoring Shorebirds

The Chair reviewed the EC-submitted project regarding shorebirds. Rob noted that CWS is contributing significant funds on this project, and it seems that this project is likely to proceed even in the absence of resolution of the IFA funding issues. The project is strongly focused around listed species of concern. It is not clear if this is presence/absence, or quantifying the species that are there. In the final report from this project we are assuming that the trend analysis will go back to the previous work and make some comparisons. A question was raised about how this related to the PRISM work from a number of years ago. It would be beneficial for EC to communicate with Parks Canada about the coastal monitoring work to avoid overlaps and promote efficiencies.

Yukon Government Projects

Rob provided an overview for YG projects. He recognized that the request for funds exceeds the available funds. However, he wanted the Council to have options and be able to prioritize. He mentioned the concept of purchasing incinerators for Shingle Point as a project variance. This would reduce the attractants for bears at Shingle Point. This is a holdover from the Grizzly Bear plan – cost would be about \$3000 each. Danny thought that 4 might be needed, although the Aklavik HTC has not made this a priority item. He pointed out that Herschel burns all of their outhouse waste, and Rob agreed that an incinerator at Herschel might be appropriate.

Herschel Island Monitoring

Dorothy noted that Cameron Eckhert has taken the Herschel project over and he proposes to go back to the Island and continue the monitoring that has been going on for a number of years. This summer some of the tasks would be ongoing but others are new. This includes training and orientation for Rangers, and looking at protocols for monitoring the cruise ships. Thus far Dorothy has worked a bit with the Rangers on this issue, and continues to refine the monitoring of the airstrip. The two questions of prime concern are bird nests on the airstrip and some of the plants. Some of the plots were set up in 1999 and recommendations have been made about how to maintain these plots better. There is also a need for continued erosion monitoring around Pauline Cove sites. There are a few reasons to be concerned - one is heritage resources like buildings washing into the ocean, but it is also easy to monitor there because the Rangers are right there too. Another question is about bird nesting sites - this habitat gets lost when it erodes into the ocean. Cameron has continued to have a student focus with this project, which is quite valuable.

March 2012 the 10-year Herschel monitoring synthesis report should be finalized. Fall 2012 there should be a final report on monitoring results.

Decision: **Recommended for \$5000 from YG.**

Grizzly Bear

Rob provided an overview to this ongoing study. The proposal is divided in two priorities. The first priority allows the population information and assessment component to be completed this spring. After the assessment is completed, there would be a communication piece that transmits the information to Aklavik and others.

Beyond this, there is an additional request for second priority items, for funds to do contaminant analysis of the collected samples. This work is approximately another \$70k.

Rob noted that the communication budget is a earmarked and the timing uncertain until the results of the population work is completed.

Danny observed that it is amazing what you can find out about bears from this kind of analysis, and that people in Aklavik will find this very interesting. Some people may not believe it; it doesn't seem possible that this kind of information could be gathered from the way this project was done. Lindsay also observed that there is also traditional knowledge about grizzly bears that we need to be included in the final product and communication pieces.

Christian observed that there is a difference between what we need to know and what would be nice to know. At the end of the day the community wants to hear about the initial questions of the project.

Christine reminded the Council that the grizzly bear recommendation we made for an immediate harvest quota increase was based on the idea that the Council would meet next fall with the final results and have a meeting/workshop in Aklavik with the WMAC NWT and inform the communities about the results of the study. The Chair observed that the North Slope conference is next fall, and we don't have the capacity to do both. It would be better sometime between Jan-March 2013. Rob agreed that the final results should be ready by then.

Decision: **Recommended \$10,000** (priority one item). Priority 2 work TBD in future.

Porcupine Caribou Rut Count

This is relatively new for the PC Monitoring program. There was a composition count done in 1980 by Don Russell. He determined that the ratio of bulls was 57 bulls to 100 cows. This was the only time they ever estimated the number of bulls. Since then we have focused on the number of cows. Now that

Porcupine caribou harvest and harvest plan focus on a bulls-only harvest, we need to estimate the number of bulls. A composition count like this would happen in the fall. Yukon will co-fund this and is seeking support from the GRRB and GNWT. Their call for proposals will be in February and they will make decisions on that in late March. This provides plenty of time to do the survey. It is just a matter of time to hear back from various funders.

Decision: **Recommended for 15,000**, understanding that this project is contingent on other funders contributing.

Porcupine Caribou Satellite Collar Project:

Dorothy noted that this program is getting cheaper to run with each passing year. Usually USFWS buys the collars; this year they are looking at different (GPS) collars that provide more accurate locations so researchers can use it to do habitat analysis. There is significant effort to convert our data over to use with the data from the new collars. Right now we have 11 collars - we try to maintain between 10-15 collars, and as they are due to die we replace them with new collars. There are about 110 conventional collars that we have to hear from a plane.

Danny raised the idea that he has heard around Aklavik that since the caribou numbers are strong maybe we should relax the caribou for a few years and take all the collars off. When is collaring enough? He thinks more people will think this way now that the herd is enjoying strong numbers. Danny noted that he will always want to see a population count - we have to know how many we have. Dorothy noted that at the PCMB March meeting, the management plan will be discussed. She discussed the need for collars and their role in the census count. She calculated that .07% of caribou in the herd wear collars. Eventually there will be a two day workshop in Old Crow or Inuvik to revisit the management plan. This request is for \$9,000.

Decision: **Recommended \$3,000**.

Richardson Moose

The first survey was done in 1989, and it included radio-collaring moose. At that time the moose showed a considerable movement in north/south drainages. The last count was completed in 2000. Other parties have done their surveys in the last few years so would be helpful if we could have our information up to date too. No formal partners with this project, but this survey extended into NWT, and GRRB co-funded with Yukon as so did VGFN. Part of the GRRB survey in the Mackenzie Delta overlaps with this, which means we would need to coordinate with them. Full cost of the project is \$60,000.

Decision: **Recommended \$20,000**, recognizing that further discussions are required with other parties.

Richardson Muskox

No formal proposal was supplied for this proposal; it is a discussion piece. This project would be a great candidate for co-funding with GRRB or GNWT. Dorothy estimates the cost of the full survey would be about \$60,000. We continue to hear reports from people that they are seeing muskox in the Richardsons. We think there are about 50 animals in the Richardsons.

Decision: Wait for more information about the costs and need for this project. Rob and Dorothy will discuss with Aklavik HTC, GNWT and GRRB to better understand priority questions for harvest and population management. Once the muskox plan is finalized we will have a better understanding about the management questions we need to pursue.

Polar Bear Traditional Knowledge

This project has its major deliverable one year from now, with more work in the following year. There is a \$5,000 roll over from 2010/2011.

Decision: **Recommended for \$20,000.**

Christian made the point that more coordination could be done before projects are submitted. The Council discussed ways to make the IFA Research Funding discussion smoother and more efficient

Action 12-11-03: Secretariat to produce a briefing note that would go out to the parties, reviewing the process, and encouraging the parties to collaborate prior to submitting their proposals.

The Council settled on the following table of projects that are Recommended, and projects for consideration once more information has been received.

Motion 12-11-04: to provisionally accept the research projects as presented

Moved by: Ernest Pokiak

Seconded by: Rob Florkiewicz

Motion carried.

IFA wildlife research
proposals FY 12/13
WMAC(NS)
recommendations 7 Dec
2011

PC	EC	YG
35,000	0	135,400

REGULAR BUDGET AMOUNTS

		RECOMMENDED		
Project	Total project cost	PC	EC	YG
		Ecological Integrity Monitoring in the Forest and Tundra Ecosystem of Ivvavik NP	75,000	10,000
Monitoring the Coastal Zone Ecosystem in Ivvavik NP	51,500	14,000		
ABEK	123,500	5,000	10,000	
Porcupine Caribou Satellite Collar Project	9,000	6,000		3,000
Baseline Data and Monitoring Shorebirds (multi-year)	14,900		9,000	
Coastal vulnerability? (Year 2 of 3)	25,000		0	
Herschel Island Monitoring	8,000			5,000
Grizzly Bear - communications	10,000			10,000
Grizzly Bear - priority 1 (diet isotopes)	26,500			0
Grizzly Bear - priorities 2 to 4 (contaminants)	74,600			0
Porcupine Caribou Rut Composition Count	35,000			15,000
Richardson Mountain Moose Survey	60,000			20,000
Richardson Mountain Muskox Survey (no proposal)	60,000?			0
Aklavik PCH Harvest Monitoring (no proposal)	3000?			5,000
Porcupine Caribou Satellite Collar Recovery	32,000			32,000
Community based monitoring?	?			0
Polar Bear TK	100,000			20,000
TOTAL		35,000	19,000	110,000
		0	- 19,000	25,400

Items in yellow will be revisited at the March meeting. Items with no colour were provisionally recommended at the Dec WMACNS meeting

The Chair adjourned the meeting for the day, reminding members about the joint WMACs meeting tonight - 6pm, Aurora Research Institute.

December 6, 2012

Marsha Branigan, GNWT joined the meeting 9:00am.

G. Inupiat -Inuvialuit Meeting update

Marsha led the group through the chart of Recommended Actions coming out of the Inupiat – Inuvialuit (I-I) meeting in the summer. She explained that at the I-I meeting we get invited as technical advisors and the Commissioners produce a list of recommendations. These are the recommendations from last year.

She noted that when old population estimates are not very good, it makes it hard to determine whether populations are declining, stable, or increasing now. It is great that the Commissioners have asked for a five-year research plan, because it will help with research communication, planning, transparency, and prioritization.

There currently is no date for the next I-I meeting. Ernest asked about response from researchers on bringing the info back to communities. Marsha said that in some cases it is more favorable than others.

Marsha has seen positive changes in the way that the business is done and there is still a ways to go, but it is getting better. In the process of research development, the USGS doesn't have a permitting process that requires them to undertake community consultation.

H. Correspondence

Incoming:

Overwintering Fuel Barges: Danny spoke about concerns over overwintering barges. There is a risk of people running into barges. He was pleased that we had contributed comments to the Transport Canada process reviewing this practice.

Porcupine Caribou Sale, Trade, and Barter Guidelines: The direction to develop these guidelines is in the Management Agreement for the herd. The Porcupine Caribou Management Board is trying to deal with the sale for profit of caribou meat. The most controversial component has been the monetary value for selling a caribou (\$200). The board is therefore providing communities the latitude to set this amount for themselves. These are guidelines not regulations.

Yukon Polar Bear Conservation Strategy: Rob spoke to the Yukon's comments.

YG Response Boundary Change + Quota: Rob reviewed the YG letter on the quota change and boundary change. YG is interested in seeing the idea of the buffer raised with the PBTC so that there is some consistency across all polar bear hunting. How do you consider the 15km buffer to meet your management objectives for those two populations? Before YG supports it the buffer zone should be presented to the technical committee for any comment they might have. If there is an issue in buffer zones this could affect how we manage polar bears.

Outgoing Correspondence:

Jennifer reviewed the correspondence package to Virginia Poter regarding the CWS funding for this year, including previous correspondence.

Danny, Ernest and Christine reviewed the NEB roundtable in the context of the WMACNS outgoing correspondence to the NEB. Wind and weather were described as the highest risk factors for the drilling in the Beaufort. Danny has seen ice pile up to over 100 feet high. A storm with current can be very powerful. Danny also observed that the power of waves would be a real challenge for the companies to operate safely.

****10:55 Lindsay Staples joined the meeting (from the IGC meeting).****

****Christian Bucher joined by telephone.****

The Chair updated Christian on the direction the discussion went last night on the Parks Firearms Regulations. We are going to send out a letter signed jointly by the comanagement bodies and IGC, saying that by virtue of our relationship with the Minister, we would like to see the consolidated regulations prior to gazetting, and that we need additional time in January to provide a full and complete set of comments. Lindsay will check with the Tuktuk Nogait board to verify if they would also like to be party to the letter. Letter to be reviewed by legal counsel to ensure that we are not undermining or infringing on the IFA in any way.

The Chair also reported that the parties are ready to sign off on the Tag Administration. Idea is to produce a response to Minister Kent's letter further describing the work that went into the recommendation. The letter would say that based on the consultations, the work with Alaska, and the sensitivities about a male-dominated harvest, it is our opinion that the sensitivities have been addressed, and the intention is to proceed accordingly. The response could be educational as opposed to staking out a position that would be contrary.

I. Parks Canada- State Of The Park Report

The State of the Parks report was introduced and put into the context of the Parks Canada management planning cycle.

The SOPR is based on the results of ongoing monitoring. It provides a summary of the current conditions in Ivvavik and assesses performance in meeting established objectives for indicators associated with Parks Canada's mandate. It is used by Parks Canada to communicate the state of Ivvavik to a wide public audience.

The SOPR informs the scoping document and the management plan: it is a very important planning document and is prepared by the Superintendent every 5 years. It is fundamental in identifying strategies for management planning and in evaluating the effectiveness of management actions. It presents key issues and challenges to be considered in the next management plan and can help us determine whether a new management plan or amendment to the plan is required.

Questions for the Council:

- 1) Do we agree with the approach that PC is taking for monitoring?
- 2) Do we agree with the assessment of the overall state of the park? Assessment of ecological integrity, commemorative integrity and connection to place?

- 3) Do we agree with PC's evaluation of its performance in achieving the objectives of the 2007 Management Plan?
- 4) Are all of the key issues represented in the SOPR? If not, they will not get addressed in the management plan.

Initial analysis indicates several areas of challenge, including spill preparedness, the Sheep Creek Plan, and tag administration. It is also not clear who participated in the review and the report (HTC's? WMACNS?). Neither is there much of an explanation of methodologies, and there is no mention of TK, how it was considered, or why it was not considered. There are also some questions that could be asked about thresholds. Most SOPRs elsewhere include a chapter called Aboriginal Perspectives, which is not included here. At the same time, the document reads easily, and could be a great communication tool.

The Council has identified the coast as an area of high priority; this should be reflected in the planning docs moving forward from the SOPR.

Action 12-11-04: Christian to put together a one pager of bullets to inform Council discussion on SOPR.

J. Financial Report

Jennifer took the group through the financials, current until November 23, 2011.

We had budgeted to spend \$282,752 this year, and were planning to roll-over an accumulated surplus of approximately \$30,000.

Jennifer led the group through the project updates and explained the podcast work that the Secretariat has been undertaking. The Council expressed their interest in the Secretariat continuing this work. The Spatial information review was also included in the projects update package.

North Slope Conference: This is upcoming in October 2012. The intention is to roll over the theme from the planning for the previous conference (that was cancelled).. The IGC has suggested that we could do something along the lines of "Where are we at with Co-Management in 2012" and invite other folks from the circumpolar north. At the Council's March meeting potential topics and issues should be discussed, along with potential panelists. This would allow the Council to develop the conference program over the spring and the summer. YG will address the logistical arrangements.

Ernest wondered if we should advise some of our partners about the dates so that they can budget for it. The Chair agreed that this is a good idea, but that we should wait until we have the theme finalized prior to Yukon starting to communicate about the conference.

K. Yukon Government Polar bear project

Rob tabled his draft proposal regarding the Southern Beaufort Polar Bear project. The Chair refreshed the group on the purposes of the project. The main purpose of the proposal is to test out a new, non-invasive population estimation method, as a pilot project.

Ernest suggested that this is a valuable project, and that it meets the request of the I-I Commissioners. Animals are used to noise now, so it should bother them less than darting them and handling them. The Council discussed the challenges associated with the project. Danny observed that the time of the month that this project happens will be important because you don't want to be interfering with people who are out harvesting.

Decision: Agreement-in-principle subject to the input and approval of the Inuvik, Tuk and Aklavik HTCs. Rob will discuss Yukon's participation in the GNWT January HTC tour with Marsha to present the revised research proposal.

Motion 12-11-06 to support the project subject to the input and approval of the Inuvik, Tuk and Aklavik HTCs.

Made by: Ernest Pokiak
Seconded: by Rob Florkiewicz
Motion Carried.

L. Salary Review:

The Secretariat was excused while the Council reviewed the salary for the Secretariat position.

Motion 12-11-07: to adjust the upper range for the position from \$55,000 to \$67,000 effective Dec 1, 2011, and to adjust the current salary to \$67,000 effective December 1, 2011, based on equivalency to other positions in the JS. The adjustment is a timely one since there hasn't been a review for the range and the salary for number of years.

Moved by: Ernest Pokiak
Seconded by: Rob Florkiewicz
Motion Carried.

Deferred items until the next meeting (likely a teleconference early in the new year): Spatial Data, Muskox Plan

The Chair noted that the Grizzly Bear NDF is a technical response. If the Council has comments, it will likely be based on those provided by Yukon.

Action 12-11-05: Secretariat to develop (with input from YG) Grizzly Bear NDF response and circulate.

Motion 12-11-08 to adjourn the meeting
Made by: Rob Florkiewicz
Seconded: by Danny C Gordon
Motion Carried.

Meeting adjourned