



Wildlife Management Advisory Council (North Slope)

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**Minutes
WMAC(NS) QUARTERLY MEETING**

**Sheep Creek, Yukon
July 24 and 25, 2005**

Sunday July 24, 2005

Present: Lindsay Staples – Chair
Herbert Felix- Member- Inuvialuit Game Council
Ernest Pokiak- Member – Inuvialuit Game Council
Doug Larsen – Member - Yukon Government
Aileen Horler- Secretariat

Guests: Pat Dunn – Parks Canada, Western Arctic Field Unit
Michelle MacGregor

A. Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 9pm. The Chair welcomed Pat Dunn, Communications Manager for Parks Canada in Inuvik. Michelle MacGregor was also welcomed to her first Council meeting. Michelle will be replacing Aileen Horler as the Council's Secretariat in September.

B. Review and Approval of Agenda

A review of the Ivvavik National Park Management Plan was added to the agenda at the request of Parks Canada.

Motion

To adopt the agenda.

Moved: Herbert Felix
Second: Ernest Pokiak
Motion carried

C. Review of Action Items

The Secretariat referred members to the written update of the action items included in the meeting package. In addition, the Secretariat and Chair reported on several items in more detail, as follows:

Action 05-04-01: WMAC(NS) will write to the Inuvialuit Game Council to request an update on their actions regarding research related compensation.

Complete. The Secretariat reported that the IGC discussed this issue at its recent meeting. The IGC will shortly be sending a letter to YTG to forward their position. The Chair added that WMAC(NS) wrote to the IGC in June, 2004, suggesting a workshop be held to consider compensation-related issues for all species throughout the ISR. The IFA addresses wildlife compensation as it relates to development activities. The treatment of government-related research activities as they relate to IFA-based compensation measures should be reviewed.

Action 05-07-01: The Council will review what the IFA says regarding wildlife compensation.

Action 05-04-04: The Secretariat will obtain the draft Aklavik harvest study protocol from Harvey Jessup and include it in the binder for discussion at the next meeting.

Complete. The Council agreed to discuss the protocol further at the next meeting.

Action 05-07-02: Council members will review the draft Aklavik harvest study protocol and submit comments to the Secretariat prior to the next Council meeting. The Secretariat will forward the comments to Doug Larsen.

Action 05-07-03: The Secretariat will determine if the Aklavik Hunters and Trappers Committee is receiving annual reports on the results of the Aklavik harvest study.

Action 05-04-08: WMAC(NS) will obtain a copy of the draft YESAA regulations and provide comments to the appropriate government authorities.

Complete. The current version of the regulations was included in the meeting package. The Secretariat reported the gazetted version of the regulations will soon be available. Substantial changes are expected from the previous version.

Action 05-07-04: The Secretariat will distribute copies of the gazetted YESAA regulations as soon as they are available.

Action 05-04-09: WMAC(NS) will write to Erik Val, Yukon Department of Environment, to convey the Council's requests for changes to the wording in the proposed text (March 2005) of section 4.4, as determined at the April 2005 Council meeting.

Complete. The Secretariat reported that there hasn't been any response to the letter yet.

Action 05-07-05: The Secretariat will contact Erik Val to follow-up on the Council's recommendations for changes to the Herschel Island Management Plan.

Action 05-07-06: The Council will review the provisions in the IFA as they relate to Thetis Bay.

Action 05-07-07: The Secretariat will obtain a copy of the licence for the SDC.

Action 05-04-11: WMAC(NS) will obtain a copy of the Aklavik Hunters and Trappers Committee policies and procedures for the issuance of bear tags, and review them for any implications associated with the recent change in tag season for the North Slope harvest.

Outstanding.

Action 05-04-13: WMAC(NS) will assess the current research permitting and reporting process to determine (1) what kinds of research the Council and the EISC are and are not receiving information about, and; (2) what mechanisms can be put in place to ensure that WMAC(NS) knows about all North Slope research, including that being conducted by academic institutions and industry

Outstanding.

Action 05-04-16: WMAC(NS) will write to Parks Canada regarding how and when zoning issues in Ivvavik National Park will be reviewed, notwithstanding that the revised management plan has not been approved by the minister responsible for Parks Canada.

Outstanding. Discussion of this item was deferred to later in the meeting.

Action 05-04-17: WMAC(NS) will review and comment on the wording of Parks Canada's revision to the regulations regarding the harvesting of quota species in national park.

Outstanding. Discussion of this item was deferred to later in the meeting.

D. Financial Report

a) Review of WMAC(NS) 2005-2006 budget

The Secretariat reported that the Council received \$21,600 from the Habitat Stewardship Program to fund activities related to the grizzly bear project in 2005-06. As part of this agreement, WMAC(NS) is required to contribute \$13,466 to the project. The HSP will provide more funding next year.

There is still over \$45,000 unassigned in the budget for 2005-06. These funds are available for Council projects.

Doug Larsen questioned the need for the Council to allocate \$2500 to a polar bear jurisdictional review. This work can be done internally by YTG. Members agreed to remove this item from the Council's budget.

Action 05-07-08: The Secretariat will request that the Yukon provide a briefing document to the Council that describes Yukon jurisdiction and administrative arrangements with respect to polar bear and the Yukon's management interests in polar bear.

Action 05-07-09: The Secretariat will compile a list of potential Council projects for members to review at the September meeting.

E. Report from the Chair

Michelle MacGregor has been hired as the new resource person for the Secretariat. Michelle will begin working mid-September. The Chair attended a meeting of the Joint Secretariat Board of Directors in June. Liz Snyder has been appointed as the new Chair of the Environmental Impact Review Board.

F. Members Report

Doug Larsen commented that YTG no longer plans to develop stand-alone Species at Risk legislation for the Yukon. The Chair commented that the Council hasn't had any correspondence from the Yukon Government on this issue for almost two years.

G. Ongoing Business

1. 2005-2006 wildlife management and research updates

a) Grizzly bear research -spring fieldwork

Doug Larsen reported that there are now 30 bears collared as part of the North Slope grizzly project. Eight of the defected collars, deployed the previous summer have been recovered.

b) Spring and summer muskox survey

A report of the spring muskox survey was included in the meeting packages. There were 86 muskox counted within the survey area. This number is lower than the previous year. The Secretariat reported that the summer survey is scheduled to take place the following day. The one remaining satellite collar will be removed as part of this fieldwork.

c) Herschel Island Fieldwork and YNS Vegetation Change Measurements

Council members were able to meet the biologists involved with this project and see some of the work carried out when they were on Herschel Island earlier in the week.

d) 2005 Yukon North Slope raptor survey

The survey has just been completed all along the coast and on the Firth River. No results are available yet.

e) Breeding Shorebirds Survey

The survey was successfully completed by CWS in June.

Action 05-07-10: The Secretariat will contact the biologists involved in North Slope projects over the summer and arrange for them to make presentations of their work at the next Council meeting in Whitehorse.

2. Herschel Island Territorial Park

A number of documents related to Herschel Island Territorial Park were included in the meeting package. These include a report on the status of the Park Management Plan action items (Implementation Plan and Workplan 2005/06), an environmental and resource monitoring plan, and an environmental and resource monitoring instruction manual for the Rangers - 2005 season.

The documents were prepared by Richard Gordon and Dorothy Cooley, in consultation with the Herschel Island Rangers. Members agreed to review the documents and discuss them further during the September meeting.

Action 05-07-11: The Secretariat will distribute the current draft of the Herschel Island Management Plan to all members.

Monday July 25, 2005

Present: Lindsay Staples – Chair
Herbert Felix- Member- Inuvialuit Game Council
Ernest Pokiak- Member – Inuvialuit Game Council
Doug Larsen – Member - Yukon Government
Aileen Horler- Secretariat

Guests: Pat Dunn – Parks Canada, Western Arctic Field Unit
Michelle MacGregor

3. WMAC(NS) project updates

The Secretariat provided an update on the following projects:

a) FJMC Summer student mentoring program

The Council has budgeted \$3000 to support the participation of a mentoring program student in research activities on the North Slope. Council members had an opportunity earlier in the week to meet and spend time with Noel Cockney, the summer student working with the team of YTG biologist on Herschel Island this summer.

b) Rare plants and animals on the Yukon North Coast

The Secretariat reported that the project got underway earlier in the week. Bruce Bennett (YTG Environment) is leading a group of biologist who are traveling along the coast for a several weeks to look for rare plants and animals. The Council is contributing \$4000 to this project. The funds are being used to hire a boat and operator to cover the area east of the Babbage River. Danny C. Gordon has been contracted to do this work. Parks Canada will be supporting the work along the coast of Ivvavik National Park.

c) Climate change report

The Council contracted Claire Eamer earlier in the year to prepare a report on climate change research and information as it relates to the Yukon North Slope. A copy of the draft report is included in the meeting package. Members agreed to review the report and decide on next steps at the September meeting.

d) Arctic Borderlands Coop – 10-year report

The Council contracted Catherine Pinard to prepare a 10-year report of the Arctic Borderlands Co-op's programs on the Yukon North Slope. Catherine was asked to assess the available information, determine a suitable analysis of results, compile and summarize information, and prepare a written summary report. The

report is to include a general description of the type and extent of the information obtained by all programs of the Borderlands Co-op pertaining to the Yukon North Slope between 1996 and 2005.

The Secretariat referred members to a draft report included in the meeting package. The report needs to include more information on the status of the data, its strengths and deficiencies, its use, and the methods Catherine followed to analyze it. More information also needs to be added on the indicators.

Catherine made a number of recommendations. The main problem with the database is that the questionnaire and the database doesn't seem to have been created with a clear understanding of how the data would be stored, used and analyzed. In some cases the same question was not asked from one year to the next which made it difficult to compare the answers. In other cases the sample size was too small. She stressed that the community-monitoring questionnaire needs to be revised. People who prepare the questionnaire should have a plan of what they want the data to tell them and how this will be stored in a database.

Joan's departure has meant a number of changes are needed to keep the entire Co-op program going. The Council needs to give the Co-op some recommendations as to how to proceed. Members agreed that it is important for an ecosystem monitoring program to be in place for the North Slope.

Action 05-07-12: The Secretariat will invite Catherine Pinard to the Council's September meeting to discuss the next steps in the preparation of the 10-year report of the Arctic Borderlands Co-op's programs on the Yukon North Slope.

Action 05-07-13 : The Secretariat will compile the existing summaries of the results of the Aklavik Inuvialuit Community Monitoring Program.

At its meeting in December 2004, the Council supported the allocation of \$15,000 in IFA funding for Co-op programs. At that time members agreed to defer the formal recommendation of the funding pending receipt of more information on how the Coop would be operating in 2005-06. Council members agreed to consider the issue of the recommendation at the September meeting.

4. Parks Canada

Pat Dunn distributed copies of the Ivvavik National Park Management Plan to members the day before the meeting. This was the first time the Council had seen the plan since the 2002. Government has still not approved the plan but it is very close to being signed off by the Minister of Environment.

Alan Fehr had requested that the Council review the actions contained in the plan and determine which ones they see as priorities for Parks Canada and WMAC(NS) to implement. Having read through the plan, Council members

raised a number of concerns about the contents. Most of the concerns are a result of the delay between the time the Council recommended the plan and the date of its approval. The Council's letter of recommendation is dated 2002 but the plan is dated 2005. Some of the information in the plan is no longer current or accurate, and members were not comfortable with attaching an out-dated recommendation to the 2005 version.

Much has changed since 2002. Some actions, such as the annual muskox surveys, will not be continued. There are also some large gaps in the content, such as the absence of any reference to species at risk and the Species at Risk Act. Questions were raised about some of the statements of objectives. They are not doable as they read now. The Council wants to be able to recommend a plan that is current - not a 2002 draft. Members commented that, if possible, they would like to see some changes made that would bring the plan up-to-date before it's approved by the Minister. If it is possible to make changes the Council needs to meet with Parks Canada and determine how to proceed.

Members held a brief discussion regarding actions that they see as priorities for Parks Canada and WMAC(NS) to implement. A number of items identified were as follows:

- Coordinate vegetation mapping with habitat classification requirements for grizzly bear modeling, as described in section 5.3.2. (p. 29)
- Maintain two weather stations in Ivvavik National Park and expand the permafrost monitoring program by installing permafrost probes at or near each weather station. (p. 29)
- Work with the Inuvialuit Game Council, the Aklavik Hunters and Trappers Committee, and cooperative management partners to develop harvesting regulations that are consistent with both the *Canada National Parks Act* and the Inuvialuit Final Agreement. (p. 32)
- Facilitate cultural resource research, protect cultural resources, and use cultural resource information in park management and interpretation in partnership with the Inuvialuit Social Development Program and the Inuvialuit Cultural Resource Centre. (p. 43). The Chair noted that the report prepared a number of years ago by Muriel Nagy needs to be reviewed and updated.
- Any actions related to the implementation of the muskox plan and grizzly bear research.

Discussions about zoning and the visitor use policy were also seen as a priority. Members agreed that it would be useful to have a status report on the actions when trying to determine priorities.

H. Upcoming Meetings and Conferences

Members agreed to hold the next regular meeting in Whitehorse sometime around September 25. The meeting should be scheduled for three days if possible.

The Secretariat reported that there will be a workshop in Anchorage sometime in later September titled “Snowchange 2005- A Workshop on Indigenous and Local Observations of Ecological and Climate Change”. Ernest expressed an interest in attending this conference.

I. Adjournment

Motion

To adjourn the meeting.

Moved: Ernest Pokiak
Second: Doug Larsen
Motion carried

WMAC(NS) Chair

Date

WMAC(NS) Secretariat

Date