



MEETING MINUTES

WMAC (NS) Quarterly Meeting
Whitehorse, Yukon · Alpine Bakery
Sept 7, 2011

Lindsay Staples (Chair) · **Rob Florkiewicz** Yukon Government (Member) · **Danny C. Gordon** Inuvialuit Game Council (Member) · **Christian Bucher** Government of Canada (Member) · **Evelyn Storr** Inuvialuit Game Council (Alternate) · **Dorothy Cooley** Yukon Government (Member) · **Wendy Nixon** (CWS) Alternate · **Jennifer Smith** (Secretariat) · **Christine Cleghorn** (Secretariat) · **Stephanie Muckenheim** Yukon Government IFA Policy Analyst (Guest)

A. Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting was called to order at 9:21am. He welcomed everyone to the first paperless meeting of the Council. He welcomed Wendy Nixon back to the Council as an alternate for Canada. He also welcomed Evelyn Storr to the meeting, as an alternate for Ernest. Lindsay informed members that Ernest would be arriving Sept 8th. He thanked Dorothy Cooley for attending as well. The Chair commented that he was glad that so many alternates were able to make it to the meeting and commented that this is a good opportunity to brief them on the information items and recent activity.

The Chair provided an overview of the coming days. He explained that the last meeting at Herschel was a four-day meeting and that the Council should be able to complete its business in one day this time. He advised that the meeting with the WMAC (NWT) would be a larger agenda and the Council would take time to go over the agenda for the joint meeting.

The Chair thanked Jennifer and Christine for putting together the electronic meeting packages on the Ipads and getting the office running with new equipment.

Evelyn informed the members that her and Danny's appointments are up in Sept 2011.

B. Review and Approval of Agenda

Chair provided an overview of the agenda and asked for comments.

Motion 09-11-01

To approve the agenda for the Sept 7th, 2011 meeting.

Moved: Danny Gordon

Seconded: Wendy Nixon

Motion carried.

C. Review and Approval of Minutes

The Council reviewed the minutes from the July 23-28th meeting and had the following changes to suggest.

page 1- change "Parks Canada" to **Government of Canada** for Christian Bucher in list of attendees.
remove sentence beginning "Christina noted that Parks Canada wrestles with this ..."

page 3 - Action Item: 05-09-09, change "appointed in previous years.." to "**designated** in previous years..." as there are no formal appointments for alternates for federal government.

- Action Item: 06-10-06, change "game management sub -units are no longer part of the grizzly bear management regime." To "game management sub -units are no **longer used in Ivvavik National Park for grizzly bear.**"

page 19- change " ..giving aboriginal peoples and their clients rights..." to " giving aboriginal people **rights to carry firearms for the protection of their clients against Polar bears.** "

The Chair explained the difference between Grizzly bear and Polar bear parks in regards to carrying firearms for protection.

-change "the new regulations will recognize the rights..." to "the new regulations will **give effect** to the rights of aboriginal people..."

-remove sentence "initially the right was to be for all bears..."

-change "Non- aboriginal people would be able to hire an aboriginal guide..." to " Non-aboriginal people would be able to hire an aboriginal guide **to carry a firearm for protection, if they want to go into the park.**"

Motion 09-11-02

To approve the minutes for the July 23-28th, 2011 WMAC (NS) meeting as revised.

Moved: Rob Florkiewicz

Second: Danny Gordon

Motion carried.

C. Review of Action Items

The Council reviewed the status of action items; updates to action items are shown here:

Action 05-09-09: The Secretariat will inquire with the Canadian Wildlife Service and/or Wendy Nixon to determine how alternate Canada members for WMAC (NS) have been designated in previous years. **In progress** Ifan or Sherri can confirm our working understanding of the process.

Action 06-10-06: Revised. Following discussion by the Chair and the Yukon member with the appropriate Yukon Government officials, write a letter to the Yukon Government recommending/confirming tag administration for grizzly bears in the Aklavik Grizzly Bear Hunting Area. **In Progress**. The Chair, Rob, Dan Lindsey and Shelly Marshall will meet on this matter. Rob clarified that game management sub-units are no longer used in Ivvavik National Park.

Action 06-10-07: Revised. Following discussion by the Chair and the Yukon member with the appropriate Yukon Government officials, write a letter to Yukon Government recommending/confirming tag administration by the Yukon Government for polar bear hunting in the South Beaufort polar bear management zone. **In progress**. A meeting was held between the Chair, Yukon Member, and Yukon Government officials.

The Chair briefed the Council on the meeting that Rob, Christine, Dan and himself had. He provided a brief history of the Yukon's involvement in the management of Polar bear. He mentioned the SAR act, the current capacity within the government for bear management (bear biologists), and different circumstances that have made Yukon more active in polar bear management. He explained that in the past the responsibility had largely been with the GNWT for management of North and South Beaufort Polar bears.

A few years ago the Yukon Government and WMAC (NS) expressed their interest to be involved in the management of Polar bear, and have been much more involved since that time.

Recently there was a request by the IGC and the I-I commissioners for a boundary change and quota adjustment. The WMAC (NS) was involved in the review of the boundary change and the quota. Both WMACs were able to produce a joint letter of recommendation on the matter.

The Chair explained that there are three jurisdictions responsible for the management of the South Beaufort Polar bear population in Canada, as well as jurisdictions in the U.S.. To facilitate cooperative management, arrangements for administration of South Beaufort tags is under review..

In Canada, the two broad approaches discussed are to manage shared populations on a jurisdiction-by- jurisdiction, or on a cooperative-basis across the ISR.

The IFA establishes wildlife management on a population basis. It may be simpler for each jurisdiction to manage by a shared population themselves, but the idea of each

jurisdiction recognizing a Beaufort-wide tag for the whole population is appealing for hunters and for the management of the population. The Chair reminded members that currently the tag allows Inuvialuit to hunt within the range of South Beaufort bears. This is different from the tag system for grizzly bears (tags issued by each jurisdiction).

The Chair briefly described the history of Aklavik tags. He said that the allocation goes back to the 1980's when the Yukon wildlife act was legislated and addressed Polar bear management. Around that time communities, including Aklavik, were consulted to see how many families harvested Polar bears. The original allocations were based on harvester interest, and not on population numbers. Aklavik was allocated six tags.

Danny mentioned that of the six tags, Aklavik gave one tag to Inuvik about 20 years ago and now has five. Inuvik has since been given another one. Currently Inuvik has two tags and Aklavik has five.

Lindsay mentioned that there was discussion during the quota review of Aklavik tags going to another community if they are not utilized. Lindsay said his understanding was that Aklavik wants to hold onto its tags. Danny confirmed and mentioned that he thinks that there will be more effort made to go and harvest polar bear from Aklavik due to higher hide prices.

The Chair suggested that to enter into the discussion on Polar bear tag administration the WMAC (NWT), as well as Parks Canada should be involved. It was suggested that Ifan Thomas (Parks Canada) attend the joint WMAC meeting the next day to discuss this further..

The Chair suggested the issuance of a common South Beaufort tag would require some level of cooperation and agreement between jurisdictions regarding how they will work together.- such as the sharing of information.

Rob suggested that there could be a common set of information shared for management purposes. Wendy said that in some cases i.e. in SAR, ATIP does not apply and does not limit the sharing of information between responsible government agencies.

Sharing of biological information of samples is another condition to meet in the ISR wide circumstance.

The generic tag would be deemed to be issued by the three governments (YG, CAN, GNWT), which would allow each government to recognize the tags.

Another issue to address with a joint tag is the setting of a TAH. Lindsay suggested that if all three government are working with one tag, all three governments would have to come to consensus with respect to TAH. Lindsay suggested that through the WMACs these decisions may be facilitated as all three governments are involved. Wendy clarified

that Federal government does not have the same jurisdiction for managing species, i.e. not specific to tag issuance. Lindsay mentioned Parks Canada would be involved with tag arrangements that applied to Inuvialuit harvesters in Ivvavik National Park.

The Chair suggested that the WMACs could provide recommendations to the governments on the elements that would need to be in place for a joint tag.

Christian mentioned that while we may be able to set out the conditions, enforcement may be the bigger challenge. Lindsay suggested that the issue of enforcement could also have set of arrangements that were subject to agreement.

Christian mentioned that HTC's have abilities to enforce through their bylaws. There has been some discussion in HTC's to have governments backstop their bylaws.

The Council discussed that administration of Polar bear tags would fall largely to the HTC's.

Evelyn explained that the HTC's are starting to enforce their bylaws. She said that someone was recently penalized in Aklavik for holding onto grizzly bear tags for too long. IGC has been working with the HTC to beef up the bylaws, not just with respect to tags, but for many of issues.

Evelyn mention that one year there was a workshop held on enforcement that was really helpful- everyone was involved.

Christian mentioned that when time allows, we should consider this kind of workshop again on enforcement, and in a broader sense, management roles and responsibilities.

Action Item: 09-10-02: Discuss research priorities with the AHTC in December to get an idea of their priorities for research. **Outstanding.** Will revisit when we next meet with Aklavik HTC.

Action Item: 12-10-04 Write a letter to the AHTC, Minister, and IGC stating that our Council views the amendment to the trapping concession boundary as administrative and have no objection to it. **Completed.** No letter was written: AHTC approved the change at their AGM.

Action Item 03-11-03: Write a letter to the federal and territorial ministers of Environment recommending a quota increase of two bears to convey motion 03-11-03 increasing for Inuvialuit hunters the quota of YNS grizzly bears by two bears. **In progress.** Pending discussion with the AHTC.

Action Item 03-11-04: The chair will meet with the AHTC to discuss the quota increase, the distribution of the harvest and option to provide "additional opportunity tags. **Outstanding.** Meeting is planned for Sept 11 2011.

Action Item 03-11-11: WMAC (NS) will coordinate grizzly bear NDF comments with the Yukon and have members review, and schedule a teleconference to submit comments. **In progress.** WMAC will work with Yukon to finalize these comments.

Action Item 04-11-2: The Council will work with YG and submit comments on the COSEWIC Draft Status Report on Grizzly Bear. **Outstanding.** The report has been redrafted and sent around for comments; the Council will provide comment by Nov. 30th.

Action Item 07-11-02: 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. **Outstanding.**

Action item 07-11-04: Secretariat to develop 3-5 page piece on spatial data and community based monitoring for circulation to Council members for continued development and then circulated to the working group. The Secretariat to subsequently turn this into a briefing note on spatial information that Wayne can contribute to (pay him for a day). **Outstanding.**

Action item 07-11-05: Council to get back to Melanie from eSPACE to determine a way to feed information into the project. Secretariat to get some guidance from eSPACE and then provide information to them. Get the PowerPoint presentation from Melanie. **In progress.**

Action 07-11-07: Rob to inquire to Yukon determine if it could prepare a multi-year summary of IFA-funded research work. The working assumption would be that WMAC(NS) would not cover the costs of this production. **In progress.**

Action 07-11-12: The Chair directed members to review “Goal A” by the end of August and provide high-level direction to Christine on the plan. **In progress.** Members will continue to provide direction to Christine as appropriate.

Action Item 7-11-20: Ask Wendy to provide the Council with a scoping exercise for the coastal project for \$25,000. **In progress.** Wendy has been approached to redraft the proposal; she will provide it to the Council.

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.** The JS is still in beginning stages of development of the initiative.

Action item 07-11-24: Christine and Jennifer to develop two pager about what the deliverables could look like for the PBTK project as well as outline components of workplan. **Complete.**

D. Correspondence

The Chair reviewed correspondence and focused on the following:

1. *CARMA* meeting has been postponed.

2. *Russia puts arctic Self Expansion to UN*. Circumpolar north staking claim to arctic shelf.
3. *The YG process for delegating a new Yukon Government WMAC (NS) member*. The Chair suggested that the council could draft up the process for IGC appointments and send it to Steve/Jennifer for comment.
4. *Porcupine caribou calving survey, State of Alaska, dept of Fish and Game*. Dorothy mentioned that calf survival was really low this year, but it is not something that they are really concerned about at this point. If it is to continue over time it would be a concern. The Porcupine caribou herd calved in Ivvavik Park again this year.

The Chair mentioned the perception and challenges associated with modeling around the Porcupine Caribou Herd. Lindsay mentioned the modeling presentation that Eric Rehger, USF&WS, gave on modeling and that the Council should get a copy of it.

Dorothy mentioned that it is on the PCMB to-do list to provide information on the "green zone" as well as education around modeling. The Secretariat will give Dorothy a copy of this presentation.

Dorothy mentioned that the PCMB is still waiting for the final caribou calculator from the contractor.

5. *Arctic National Wildlife Refuge –Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Impact Study*. The Conservation plan for the Arctic National Wildlife refuge is available and the Chair suggested that it may be helpful for the Council to review it in light of the revision of our own CMP.

Action Item 09-11-01: Council to review the “Arctic National Wildlife Refuge – Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Impact Study”. Nov 15th deadline.

6. *Yukon Fish and Wildlife branch projects*. These are projects that are ongoing and upcoming in the next year. The Chair mentioned that it is helpful to see what is going on elsewhere in the Yukon to put our own work in context.
7. *Grizzly bear COSEWIC report*. Council has yet to provide comment on. It is the draft status report of grizzly bears in Canada. Shelly had given comment on this, but it would be worthwhile looking at the new draft to see how comments are addressed..
8. *Transport Canada public consultation on overwintering of fuel barges*. Christine explained that during the Mackenzie valley pipeline project review, concern was raised about overwintering of fuel barges. As follow-up, Transport Canada wanted to do public outreach to find out what the issues are, there are holding two meetings, one is during the AHTC meeting in Inuvik. Christine has responded and the contact at Transport Canada has committed to providing the Council with information from the meeting.

The Chair asked members if there were any issues with overwintering barges from the Council.

Some of the concerns raised included: infrequent inspections, rust on barges and public safety issues related to traveling. Evelyn said that there is a danger for people when traveling as well as barges should not be single-hulled. Christian commented that there should be a standard of double-hulled barges if you want to overwinter fuel. The Council raised the issue of older vessels and when they become retired. Moorage was another issue raised. Vessels should be secure when stored so that they do not float away in the spring, as well as a moorage study should be done along the coast.

Action Item 09-11-02: Secretariat to write a one page letter outlining concerns from the Council to Transport Canada on overwintering fuel barges.

9. *Range states meeting in Iqaluit.* The meeting is in October. Lindsay briefed the council that we are observers as part of the Canadian delegation. The Canadian delegation would like to present the National Conservation Strategy. The Chair mentioned that it will be a good opportunity to understand the views of the Range States participants regarding the status of various polar bear populations in the circumpolar arctic. This could be a preview for CITES.
10. *Yukon Wolf Conservation and Management Plan.* Lindsay spoke about the plan, and indicated that the draft plan that has been recommended by a review committee to the YFWMB and YG. He explained that the plan takes into consideration the roles of various organizations in wolf management as well as a review of wolf reduction programs.

In terms of reduction programs, the Chair informed members that wolves are highly resilient and that there is a high cost to reduce numbers. If the aim is to improve ungulate populations, there may be better ways to do that, beginning with harvest management. The plan suggests subtle measures to reduce wolf numbers mostly through trapping. There was a large interest in the communities to pursue trapping of wolves for recreational use, personal gain, and for the benefit of ungulates.

The Council was not very involved in the review of the plan as most issues are largely outside of the North Slope. The management issues for wolves are very different on the Yukon North Slope.

Christian pointed out that there are many factors that effect ungulate populations and provided an example of a reduced bison population where wolves were thought to be the main culprit, when in fact a change in water levels due to a dam was the real reason for the decline.

Lindsay mentioned that the Council's comments on the plan largely focused on changes in administrative arrangements, and voiced support for the goals, but the actions don't necessarily apply or are appropriate on the YNS.

Danny shared the view that wolves on the YNS don't have much of a chance once sighted by hunters as it is all open country. On the North Slope a good harvester can take a high number of wolves yearly.

11. *Caribou Designatable Units.* Rob drafted comments on behalf of the Council and they were submitted in Aug.

12. *YESAA letter- on the 5-year review.* Jennifer briefed the Council on the YESAA 5-yr review and asked if the Council had further comments.

Members suggested that the YESAA review person should be in contact with the EISC and EIRB.

Action Item 09-11-03: Secretariat to follow up on YESAA review and refer them to the EISC and EIRB. Send EISC our past correspondence to ensure that they have it on file. Indicate that it may be helpful to formalize communication between Dawson DO and Inuvik.

Christian mentioned that the YESAA has progressed in their ability to facilitate the process in terms of administrative arrangements.

13. *Letter to CWS in support of SARA listing.*

E. Financial Report

Jennifer provided a summary on the budget to date. We are overspent on conferences and other workshops, which includes some of the community-based monitoring meetings, the International Oil Spill conference, etc. There has been a lot of travel and meetings. At Herschel the Council increased the amount allocated to assets for the office, and it is likely that this line item will be fully spent. Christian asked for clarification about the costs associated with the polar bear consultation tour. Jennifer clarified that we are still waiting for the invoice from the JS, but that she had provided the JS with the categories we are prepared to support financially.

Lindsay reviewed the Inuvialuit participation budget. This includes attendance at meetings, the occasional workshop or conference. The budget is underspent on the year at the moment.

The Chair also reviewed the salary chart for the JS. He noted that the benefits are difficult to compare with those of the WMAC(NS) secretariat since the circumstances in Inuvik are so different from those in Whitehorse - for example the housing benefit. The Council agreed to put this on the agenda for the December meeting and review this more formally at that time as it affects the wages of WMAC(NS) resource personnel.

F. Report from the Chair

The Chair reported on the I-I meeting in Anchorage. It was a valuable meeting and worthwhile to continue to attend these meetings. He mentioned that in terms of managing South Beaufort Polar Bear on a population basis, Yukon was the one jurisdiction that was absent from that meeting. (Yukon was not invited). There were Commissioners on each side (each side has 3-4 Commissioners) and there was good information exchange as it related to current research initiatives. The second day involved internal deliberations for the Commissioners and their resource support people. Minutes from the meeting have not yet been received. The Chair appealed to the commissioners to extend an invitation to the Yukon next year. There was no official response on this as of yet. There were suggestions tabled for revising the I-I agreement,

and these were received by the Commissioners but deferred to next year. The Council reviewed the I&I Meeting Recommendations.). The Chair noted the recommendation for the jurisdictions to prepare a long-term polar bear research plan (basically a table of proposed or intended initiatives). Climate emerged as a fairly significant discussion as well, which is reflected in the Recommendations. He also noted the Commissioners' interest in seals, sea ice conditions, and the far offshore as areas of possible future research. While there remains a high level of concern regarding highly intrusive research techniques such as mark-recapture, there is a recognition that, under some circumstances, depending on what you are trying to investigate, there is a justifiable reason for it. There is a better appreciation for aligning research needs with a range of methodologies or techniques.

The Chair provided an overview on the management arrangements established in the IFA and how they affect PBAC and how they affect the National Strategy. Members are in receipt of the final versions of both documents. He mentioned that we could consider joint WMAC recommendations to both ministers proposing a sign off on both documents.

G. Report from Members and the Secretariat

Members and Secretariat reported briefly on their activities, given that short time frame since the last meeting. Stephanie noted that the Yukon Member for the EIRB was reappointed - Bruce Chambers. Yukon still does not have an implementation funding agreement with Canada. Evelyn noted that there are a number of new members on the AHTC. Evelyn was recently appointed to the Screening Committee. The decision on the boundary change for the trapping concession was made- and was supported as a whole by the membership. There was very little discussion once the explanation was tabled by Billy Storr.

Christian echoed other member's comments in appreciating the Ipads and the new format of the paperless meeting.

P. Wildlife Research Funds – surplus allocations

The Chair oriented the Council to several projects that require further discussion prior to the finalization of funds.

Regarding the polar bear distribution flights he inquires how the initial project identified for \$30k relates to the polar bear population survey project for the far offshore. Rob asked what constitutes the far offshore? The Chair responded that he understood the survey range to be as far offshore as 82 degrees.

Harvest Data collection model development: This project remains undefined.

Polar Bear Traditional Knowledge study: We will discuss this substantively tomorrow since a lot needs to be done on this, and quickly. The carry over amount from the original proposal is \$25,970.

Wendy spoke briefly to the coastal ecological project and why this project could be useful for future decision making. The first step would be determining the species priorities, then contacting all of those data holders and getting a picture of all of the sources of data and what format they are in. CWS has recently been revisiting their own data and has a much better appreciation now of the cost of converting data into readily available and useable formats. One approach might be to only use data that is readily available and useable. Additional funds could go towards sorting out what WMAC (NS) thinks is the best approach for data management. We don't want to reinvent the wheel or take on what other agencies are doing well. At the same time we want other agencies to know what data is readily available and could be applied to management decision making.

Wendy will forward the Council a redrafted proposal for \$25k total. The project would start by working with the Council to identify priority areas - we would be looking for geospatial data. The concept of focusing the work outside of the national park has merit since we know that the park is fully protected. Migratory birds, wolverine, caribou and grizzly bear are species of special interest. The AHTC has identified muskrat in the Delta as an area of research concern.

This will become a multi-year project. How does the Council build on this initiative in the future? Wendy said she envisions this at least as a two year project. A key interest is in identifying species and areas that are sensitive to development. The Council understands that the program of work will review and synthesize a body of information that will assist in future decision-making with regard to potential impacts in areas and species that have special conservation requirements. The Council proposes that the project focus on the following areas and species outside of Ivvavik National Park: withdrawal area, coastal plain, coastal zone, spits and lagoons, caribou, wolverine, waterfowl and raptors.

The Council recommended that the project proceed based on the following assumption: (a) 25k/year for 3 years, and (b) clearly stated outcomes/deliverables and how these inform, management decisions on the YNS.

The Council will review the status of the project at its next meeting. Wendy will work on terms of reference for a consultant.

Motion 09-11-03: To recommend \$25,000 of IFA implementation funds to the Coastal Ecological Vulnerability and Risk Assessment Project

Moved by Rob Florkiewicz
Seconded by Evelyn Storr
Motion carried.

The Council decided to defer the Defer CBM discussion to December meeting.

The Chair reviewed the joint WMACs meeting agenda with the Council.

V. Upcoming Meetings

The dates of upcoming meetings were reviewed.

Motion 09-11-04:

To adjourn the meeting.

Moved by: Wendy Nixon

Seconded by: Danny C. Gordon

Motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:20 pm.