



## WMAC NS Regular Meeting Minutes

June 24, 2021

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**Attendees:** Evelyn Storr (IGC Alternate Member), Michelle Gruben (IGC Alternate Member), Allison Thompson (WMAC Staff), Kaitlin Wilson (WMAC Staff), William Storr (Alternate WMAC Chair), Tyler Kuhn (YG Member), Matt Clarke (YG Alternate), Colleen Arnison (Canada Member), Mike Sutor (YG Biologist), Jessica Norris (Graduate Student), Johanna Havelaar (WMAC Contractor)

Meeting called to order at 1:05pm.

### 1. Agenda

The IGC letter regarding the Chair appointment was added to the agenda under staff updates.

**Motion 2021-06-01** to approve the June 24, 2021 meeting agenda as amended. Moved by Michelle Gruben, seconded by Tyler Kuhn.

### 2. Meeting Minutes

**Motion 2021-06-02** to approve the April 29, 2021 regular meeting minutes. Moved by Evelyn Storr, seconded by Colleen Arnison.

**Motion 2021-06-03** to approve the special May 3, 2021 meeting minutes. Moved by Colleen Arnison, seconded by Michelle Gruben.

### 3. Action items

Kait provided an overview of the Council's action items from the previous meeting. There were no comments or questions.

### 4. Discussion items

#### Society Status for WMAC North Slope

WMAC (NS) derives its status from the *Inuvialuit Final Agreement*. That said, the Council's "legal status" is not entirely clear. This could, in a worst-case scenario, land the staff and/or Chair in some trouble - as the Council does not have legal status and therefore does not have the authority to do things that societies do - such as enter into leases and contracts, hire staff, etc. In the Council's 33-year history its legal status has not been an issue – so it is possible to keep going as we have been.



Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board (borne out of the Umbrella Final Agreement) is not a society either, and are in the same position as WMAC NS. Conversely, the Inuvialuit Game Council and Joint Secretariat do have society status, which provides legal protection.

There is a small cost associated with becoming a legal society and maintaining society status.

Q: If we did become a society, would we have to have additional meetings?

A: We could likely work the annual 'society business' into one meeting per year, as part of a regular meeting. We can work with the lawyer to reduce additional burdens on the Council's time.

Q: Are the other IFA boards societies?

A: The other boards (aside from IGC) fall under the JS society umbrella, and staff are hired by the JS not the boards. The Boards themselves do not enter into any contracts or contribution agreements, the JS does.

Q: Is this a YG requirement?

A: No. The motivation for this is that it is a legal issue to do with liability when the Chair/Staff enter into legal agreements.

Tyler: The Off-Road Vehicles regulations specify that only societies can raise certain issues under the new regulations. This wouldn't necessarily be an issue but could be something to consider, if this type of language is used in future regulations.

Billy: Proceed with contacting a lawyer and continuing to explore this issue - gather some more information. Table a final decision until a later date when we have a new Chair.

**Action item 2021-06-01** Staff will contact a Yukon lawyer and gather more information on WMAC NS forming as a society, to be presented to Council once the new Chair is instated.

## 5. Presentations

### Mike - Canadian Mountain Network

- Received \$480,000 over three years for a project on ecological change and livelihoods in the Porcupine caribou herd summer range
- This project aligns with what WMAC NS is already doing and what's in the WCMP, also emphasizes relationships between partner organizations and researchers
- Thematic areas include: wildlife, vegetation, Indigenous knowledge, and community based monitoring (tied together with co-management, partnerships, sharing resources)
- Graduate students and other collaborators will help to move this work ahead
- There is funding for an Indigenous knowledge coordinator: a key position to link communities, PCMB, government and researchers



- Mike outlined the core areas for the secured funding but also noted areas where the team would like to seek additional funding
- It's important that existing capacity isn't taxed further by this project
- Requests for support:
  - Apply unidentified IFA funds to support this work (e.g. moose and wolf work)
  - WMAC staff to support initiative (time/capacity)
  - Potential collaborative approach for Inuvialuit resource person (overlap with WMAC staffing interests)

Billy: I have been part of some discussion of directing funding into harvest data collection. At PCMB, we were promised there was a new harvest study coming. In attending the last IGC meeting, it sounds like the harvest study had stalled out. The IFA speaks to harvest data collection and its importance. It's difficult for me as a PCMB member, when we are not collecting harvest data for Inuvialuit, because it is a commitment in the Porcupine Caribou Harvest Management Plan.

Kait: spoke with Gilly, the TLK coordinator at the Joint Secretariat. WMAC NS can expect a letter regarding the harvest study sometime in the near future. Last fall, Catherine Pinard completed a review of the recent harvest study - that report is in the WMAC NS meeting folder for members to review. The next steps once the letter is received from the JS, is for the Boards to provide input to the JS, and hire a contractor to put it all together and re-design the harvest study.

Mike: We had talked about the pilot project, for the focal group approach to gathering Porcupine Caribou Herd harvest data. Are we still considering that?

Kait: I produced a methods document for WMAC NS on a pilot program to collect harvest data on porcupine caribou. Could add it to next meeting's agenda.

Mike: Principle Investigators are PCMB and Trevor Lanz. WMAC NS is a potential partner. Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board, Vuntut Gwitchin are listed as well along with University of Victoria, McGill, University of Edinburgh, Parks Canada, United States Geological Service.

Mike is looking for an indication from Council that this is a project WMAC NS is interested in supporting and that the program is in the right direction.

**Motion 2021-06-04** to support the Canadian Mountain Network Knowledge Hub for the Porcupine Caribou Herd and Summer Range project. Moved by Colleen Arnison, seconded by Evelyn Storr.

#### Polar Bear Survey - Jessica Norris

Jessica provided a brief update on her graduate studies - she's completed her first term. Jessica provided a presentation and a video about the spring 2021 genetic mark-resample survey and her experience.



Michelle noted that Jessica's video shows exactly how the survey is done. This is great information for the HTC membership.

Mike: before posting publicly, share with ENR (Steve Baryluk) as they are the Canadian project lead.

Staff will send the video to Steve for review and then post it online.

## **6. Chair and Staff Updates**

### CBMP Update

Addressed during the Canadian Mountain Network project discussion.

### Chair Appointment

Billy provided an update on his meeting with IGC regarding the Chair appointment. IGC has supported the YG recommendation that Jennifer Smith be the new Chair appointment for WMAC NS.

Tyler spoke to the process within Yukon going forward. It's not clear if the letters need to go back to cabinet. A motion from WMAC NS would be helpful - because the IFA specifies that it is the IGC and Canada members on WMAC NS who provide consent, not the appointing bodies.

Colleen updated the Council that Canada provided a letter in support of the nomination directly to Yukon Government.

Tyler asked the Council if there should be a term for the Chair appointment.

Staff noted that they have been working with Lee Vincent on updating the Council's Operating Procedures. A Chair term could be worked into the updated Operating Procedures. Staff have been working with Lee on the idea of a "contract" with the new Chair, which could work in annual or regular reviews of the situation.

Q: If there is a term, what is the process to extend the term?

A: It would likely be a new term, and the incumbent could apply to continue for a subsequent term.

Q: Does WMAC NS have by-laws and how many?

A: No formal by-laws, but we do have operating procedures.

Evelyn Storr: put this to the new Chair - what by-laws are there, what needs to change.



Mike: PBMC has a detailed process on re-appointing Chair or extending the term. Could also look to WMAC NWT.

Tyler: it would be helpful to have a letter or statement of consensus from WMAC NS, about the appointment and if there is a preference for a term length. Need that for the appointment letter to go out.

Evelyn: Did IGC discuss a term when discussing the Chair appointment?

Billy: No

Evelyn: Can we recommend a five-year term with an evaluation and possible extension?

Billy: Could appoint for five years, with evaluation and possibility to extend the term.

Tyler: to be clear, the idea of putting forward a term from Yukon's perspective has nothing to do with the names being put forward, just a process piece to bring the appointment in line with other Boards and Councils and provide comfort that this is an appointment that can be re-evaluated.

Mike: Sounds like agreement that folks are interested in a term. Could there be language where we appoint the person, for five-year term, subject to conditions that Council comes up with?

Allison suggested a motion or resolution that can be sent to Yukon very quickly, rather than writing a letter.

**Resolution 2021-06-01** The Inuvialuit Game Council and Government of Canada appointees to the Wildlife Management Advisory Council (North Slope) ("the Council") support the Government of Yukon recommendation to appoint Jennifer Smith as the Chairperson of the Council for a five-year term, to be considered for re-appointment, subject to the Council's recommendation. Moved by Tyler Kuhn, seconded by Michelle Gruben. Carried.

#### Polar Bear Update

Allison provided a summary of the various aspects of the polar bear file. There is a rolling briefing note that provides information about the different organizations and what is being discussed at those tables. Refer to briefing note for file details; the briefing note provides updates from the latest PBTC and PBAC meetings, as well as recent research updates and polar bear related correspondence.

#### Companion Report

Allison gave an update on where the companion report is at. Everything is drafted with the exception of the Aullaviat/Aunguniarvik chapter. Most of the chapters have been edited by Kirsten Madsen. Staff would like to extend Kirsten's contract to accommodate that last bit of work - this would cost about \$2500 and would include Kirsten writing the executive summary for the Plan. We would like to complete this by August.



No concerns raised by Council.

#### ISR Grizzly Bear Management Plan

Chanda is looking to hold a co-management workshop to discuss goals and priority setting. Council already has three representatives who will go, and they have the materials for the workshop.

#### Aklavik Staff Position

Kait presented her briefing note about staff options. The Council approved funding for a temporary Aklavik position in their notional March 2021 budget. There is also overlap with Mike's Canadian Mountain Network project and the Aullaviat/Aunguniarvik Inuvialuit Conservation Area. There is lots of uncertainty at play here, and the Council will also likely have a new Chair in the near future. Staff recommend that Council don't make any decisions today but have a discussion/field some questions.

Billy: the Aklavik position is needed in the community. As acting Chair, it would have been helpful to have staff in the community.

### **7. Correspondences**

None of the correspondences were discussed.

### **8. Upcoming Meetings**

Grizzly bear workshop – July 6

Polar bear IK in Integrated Population Models project update – June 30

**Motion 2021-06-05** to adjourn the meeting moved by Colleen Arnison, seconded by Tyler Kuhn.

Meeting adjourned at 3:30pm.