



WMAC NS Meeting Minutes

May 28, 2020

By Teleconference

Attendees: **Dave Tavares** (Parks Canada), **Tyler Kuhn** (Yukon Government), **Billy Archie** (IGC Representative), **Craig Machtans** (Canada Alternate), **Kaitlin Wilson** (WMAC NS staff), **Allison Thompson** (WMAC NS staff), **Lindsay Staples** (WMAC NS Chair), **Danny C. Gordon** (IGC Representative), **Mike Suitor** (Yukon Government)

The meeting was called to order at 9:10am.

A. Agenda

Lindsay provided an overview of the agenda.

Motion 2020-05-01 to accept the agenda as presented – Moved by Danny C. Gordon, seconded by Tyler Kuhn.

Billy would like to see population estimates for focal species. This is something that could be reflected in the Companion Document to the Wildlife Conservation and Management Plan.

B. Minutes

Motion 2020-05-02 to accept the April meeting minutes as presented – Moved by Billy Archie, seconded by Dave Tavares.

C. Action Items

Comment on Action item 2020-04-01 - staff will follow up with Michelle to see if AHTC had any comments on the summary of the Feb 10th WCMP meeting.

Dave provided an update on Action item 2020-04-02 - the Parks Canada archaeology project lead can present the last two years of work this summer. An update on the bird recording units project can be presented to Council, too.

Comment on Action item 2020-04-06 - Billy is interested in disease impacts on other wildlife species as well, e.g. grizzly bears, sheep, muskox, etc. It was noted that disease tends to affect

herbivores more than predators. Normally health-related monitoring in the ISR is question-driven, rather than broad scope monitoring. Yukon does a lot of health monitoring on PCH and any other collared species (taking blood samples and doing health screenings). Harvest reporting, Guardians and community-based monitoring are all potential venues for documenting wildlife health and disease observations.

Comment on Action item 2020-04-09 - both staff and Mike Sutor have been working on planning for the Porcupine Caribou Herd (PCH) collaring workshop.

Action item 2020-05-01 Lindsay will request an update on the Community Based Monitoring Program at the next Joint Secretariat Board Meeting.

D. Discussion Items

Round River Conservation Studies (RRCS) Products

Kait provided an overview of the documents from Round River Conservation Studies for Council's review.

Climate Change Gap Assessment

- Canada:
 - The wildlife chapter relies heavily on published work and there is a lot of unpublished work that is very important (e.g. on muskox and Dall sheep) but not captured in this report. RRCS has the data but could benefit from input on how to incorporate these data.
 - The report provides a good overview. The next step is to consider how the Council wants to guide, prioritize and inform research on the YNS going forward, based on what we know and community priorities. The research plan is a becoming a priority and will require a deliberate exercise to consider how this work and other sources will inform its next iteration.
- Yukon:
 - The report takes a limited scope to 'wildlife' - e.g., it doesn't consider specific plant species or insects. This is because the scope of the report comes out of the focal species workshop in Aklavik.
 - *WMAC NS will request that RRCS be more explicit about their scope and what's been excluded in the introductory portion of the gap assessment.*
 - Concerns about implementing this gap assessment - funding, capacity, mandate of Yukon. WMAC NS could seek external funding for implementing this report.
 - Yukon is working toward growing the already collaborative research regime on the YNS. This brings to the table many different forms of expertise and the opportunity for more significant funding.
 - *WMAC NS will suggest to RRCS that they build in some language in Chapter 6, Conclusions and Summary, that speaks to the already existing research partnerships on the YNS and that in the future, building on these research partnerships will be critical.*

Billy Archie:

- Suggested that ArcticNet could fill some of the identified data gaps, but it was clarified that Arctic Net has not contributed much to research on the YNS.

- Consider how this work links to human capacity for monitoring change on the YNS as well as the interaction between climate change effects on humans and wildlife.
- Our biggest resource is our people on the land; youth capacity is very important.
- Consider new technologies for monitoring changes - e.g. wildlife cameras that captured a coyote in the Gwich'in Settlement Area recently.

Danny C. Gordon:

- It would be good to use the ArcticNet network to promote research on the YNS

Lindsay:

- How do we convey this report to a broader audience?

Action item 2020-05-02 Dave to provide RRCS with feedback on how to improve the wildlife data gaps in the climate change gap assessment (specifically the table of wildlife data).

Action item 2020-05-03 Staff will relay the Council's feedback on the Climate Change Gap Assessment to RRCS.

Action item 2020-05-04 Staff will consider how to circulate and communicate the Climate Change Gap Assessment so that it can inform future research.

Climate Change Proposal

Kait provided an overview of the climate change proposal and key considerations for the Council (which can be found in the briefing note).

Dave:

- A Traditional Use vulnerability assessment could be quite compelling but we need to defer to the community
- Consider opportunities to streamline the proposal: Not much value in year one work plan - 50k feels like a lot of money for the value, could blend years two and three, focus on more practical outcomes
- Developing a research plan that provides guidance on implementing the WCMP seems like a more worthwhile expenditure this year

Billy:

- This proposal brings to mind the last climate change plan for Aklavik (Friendship, 2011); it's worth considering how these types of plans get implemented (or not) over time.
- Consider this in the broader scope of climate change monitoring

Danny:

- Good with the direction of the discussion

Tyler:

- Agree with Dave.
- Is there room to pivot away from TU right now since we can't be in the community, and do something in year one that is focused more on the scientific knowledge side, looking at just wildlife?
- When considering a three-year proposal, want to know the total costs up front for all three years
 - Must consider WMAC NS office capacity too

Craig:

- Agree with others. Priority is wrapping up the WCMP and then prioritizing from there according to budget. Consider role of WMAC NS and others (IGC, IRC) in implementing this work. Don't see this as a priority.

Mike:

- Not sure much would be gained from the phase one (vulnerability) exercise - there may be too many data gaps so the results would be generic. Suggest instead doing specific work for the YNS that addresses specific interests and then links into the WCMP, IPCA and potential for community-based monitoring. Putting this money toward research design or planning makes sense.

Action item 2020-05-05 Staff will convey WMAC NS feedback to RRCS that the Council is not interested in pursuing the climate change proposal at this time, given other more pressing priorities (WCMP, Research Plan) and the complexity regarding other groups being implicated in future TU vulnerability work.

Grizzly Bear Report

Mike

- Has not yet reviewed in great detail

Dave

- Agree with Kait's comments regarding the highly technical nature of the document
- Will review in detail to ensure that past comments on seasonality have been incorporated - pending a re-read on that specific comment, good with the overall document

Tyler

- For the plain language summary, consider engaging someone that is not RRCS, someone gifted in science communication
- We should carefully consider the idea of using the scientific framework to interpret or be informed by Indigenous knowledge (IK), implying that's what gives the model relevance or application - issues can arise from these types of exercises. The messaging is complex and we should consider it carefully.

Lindsay:

- Issue of relationship between science and IK in Bayesian modeling and these observations will be attached to other work as well - e.g. polar bear work.

Craig:

- This work does bring up how to treat western science and IK - separately, together, etc.? As a Council there is interest in explaining the approach that was taken and the pros and cons of that methods, with regards to both knowledge streams. Through time, the standard for doing IK work has evolved. The JS 2015 polar bear report, *Inuvialuit and Nanuq*, really modeled the Council's perspective on how to undertake IK work in the ISR. Now we can consider with this integrated model, what the takeaways are.
- The report doesn't discuss in depth how well the approach to applying IK worked or not.

Billy:

- Local observations are critical

Lindsay provided a summary:

- Close out report as technical report, with staff + Mike and Dave comments.
- Staff produce a statement of work on a plain language piece, circulate to Council as a small project. This piece would bring both bodies of grizzly bear research together - the results of the six year YNS study + the Round River modelling report - (linking to previous action item).
- The idea of the evolution of IK best standards as well as methods for 'integrating' IK and science knowledge is worthy of future consideration. Maybe work with WMAC NWT and FJMC to have someone produce a piece on this question. This could raise the type of questions that would be helpful to be explored through future work. There is a growing literature on this subject. Groups like AHTC, IGC, would be interested in this work.
 - Mike: plain language, loop into bigger grizzly bear research piece. Work with a lot of Bayesian models - this work is very complex. It's so hard to bring any type of population model to the community.
 - LS: could look to follow up with some phone calls to put together small advisory group to look at sketching out what a SOW or questions would look like in a way that would promote discussion.

Action item 2020-05-06 Staff, Mike and Dave will provide final technical comments on the grizzly bear report.

Action item 2020-05-07 Staff to produce a statement of work for a science communication piece summarizing the RRCS grizzly bear report and other grizzly bear YNS work. Consider the messaging as it relates to how Indigenous knowledge and science knowledge interact.

Map Atlas - **deferred**

Conservation Final Assessment - **deferred**

Companion Document - **deferred**

E. Reports

Chair

- The Joint Secretariat is modernizing its personnel policies. WMAC NS needs a personnel policy overhaul as well. There is also a need for HR support for WMAC NS. Lastly, there is the question of WMAC NS' legal status. These administrative and policy issues necessitate a dedicated Council meeting later in the summer.
- Wilms & Shier have produced a briefing note summarizing the legal opinions on the withdrawal order. Almost complete - needs one update, the status of the Withdrawal Order south of the ISR.
- Working on a piece to communicate concerns to IGC regarding their process for arriving at certain decisions - e.g. collaring of PCH, YNS screening legal opinions.
 - Craig in support
 - Billy – the IFA is about rights and responsibilities, maintaining culture and way of life, intent of the agreement is about mutual respect, this has eroded over the

years. Growing up I had lots of respect for Elders and their knowledge. Grew up with lots of respect for the animals. At the end of the day it's about culture and when do we draw the line about all the data and population monitoring. Inuvialuit will have to stand firmer with PCMB - the Board came out of the IFA. The intent of the claim was to have rights and voice. –Since being back on HTC, two resolutions were made that were then overturned by a handful of individuals, minimizing the ability for all to have a voice. IGC appointees will have to sit with IGC and address this issue.

- Lindsay - when looking at the IFA that introduced a system of joint management, it works in a number of ways - between science and IK holders, elders and youth, across different cultures with different ways of making decisions. How are we all working together to ensure that whatever the decision is, there's been ample opportunity to engage?
- Dave in support of the approach Lindsay proposed.
- Danny - lots of questions. What is coming from IGC? At the December IGC meeting, the vote to not support collaring was unanimous. Why do we now need to clarify IGC's position? They voted for Aklavik. There's a perspective that PCH are doing so well because they are most researched. I cannot support this perspective.

Staff

- Allison provided an overview of the polar bear work thus far.

Action item 2020-05-08 Allison to circulate the draft briefing note and letter that was tabled at the Polar Bear Advisory Committee regarding the Polar Bear Specialist Group.

Members

- CWS isn't doing any field work, USGS is not doing pellet collections on YNS. The IFA money that would have supported that work is in limbo. Wanted to get Council's permission to move that money to YG to assist with collar pickup in the fall. Council is in support, no motion needed because it falls under the same project umbrella.

F. Correspondences

No comments or questions.

G. Upcoming Meetings

Items for June 10th Meeting (1-4pm):

- Map atlas
- Final conservation assessment Table of Contents (Round River report)
- Finalizing the WCMP
- Companion Report
- IPCA update

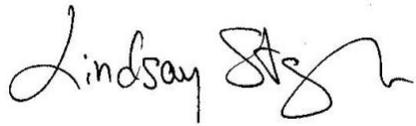
Items for June 24th Meeting (1:30-3:30pm):

- Financial update
 - Nature Fund
 - 2020-21 Council budget
 - Close out 2019-20 books

Items for July 22nd Meeting (1:00-4:00pm):

- HR Update
- Update Kayla
- Caribou Collaring (Recommendation on IFA funding and workshop)

Motion 2020-05-03 Motion to adjourn – Moved by Danny C. Gordon, seconded by Tyler Kuhn.



Lindsay Staples, WMAC (North Slope) Chair

July 14, 2020

Date



Allison Thompson, Staff

July 14, 2020

Date