



DRAFT MEETING MINUTES

WMAC (NS) Quarterly Meeting
Vancouver
Dec 5- 7, 2015

Lindsay Staples - Chair, Danny C Gordon (IGC), Member, Ernest Pokiak, (IGC) Member, Mike Sutor, (Yukon Government) Alternate, Craig Machtans, (Government of Canada) Alternate, Todd Powell (Yukon Government), Member, Christine Cleghorn & Jennifer Smith, Staff

Guest: Patrick Gruben

A. Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 9.05 a.m. and welcomed everyone. He noted that it is the first time we have ever held a meeting south of 60° in the Council's history.

He explained that Patrick Gruben, new chair of the IGC, would be joining us for our meeting. Todd Powell will be joining us this afternoon, as well as Stephanie Muckenheim.

Patrick arrived and thanked the council for inviting him. He is pleased to be here to learn about the North Slope and the Council's work.

Motion 12-15-01: to approve the agenda as presented

Moved by: Ernest Pokiak

Seconded by: Craig Machtans

Motion carried.

Ernest noted the relationship between CITES uplisting proposals and polar bear hide prices. We will learn at the end of April whether the US will put forward a proposal to uplist for the next CITES. Prices may not be affected this year because the season will be over by the time this announcement is made, though harvesters may hold onto their hides to see if they can get higher prices.

Patrick asked if we ever have problems with appointments and Lindsay explained that we don't typically, but at this point in time we are missing one alternate appointment from IGC.

B. Review of the minutes

a. Sept 14th teleconference

Motion 12-15-02 to approve as revised.

Moved by Mike Sutor

Seconded by Danny Gordon

Motion carried.

b. Sept 27th minutes-

c. *Motion 12-15-03 to accept as amended*

Moved by: Ernest Pokiak

Seconded by: Craig Machtans

Motion carried.

d. WMAC(NWT) meeting record. No changes where suggested.

e. July WMACNS meeting minutes

Motion 12-15-04 to accept as presented

Moved by Danny Gordon

Seconded by Chris Hunter

Motion carried.

Page 4- IUCN letter re TK . Dag is stepping down this year. Track this item , don't loose sight of this.

Action Item 12-2015-01: Draft a letter to PBSG regarding traditional knowledge and its utility as a line of evidence. Encourage Makivik, Nunavik Tungavik Incorporated, and North Slope Borough to sign on.

C. Action Items

Christine reviewed the action items from previous meetings.

07-12-07: Todd indicated that the results of the grizzly bear study are still under review.

Mike Suitor noted that YG is recording all of their captures on go-pros now, which creates an excellent record of successes, challenges, and encounters.

D. Correspondence

Lindsay reviewed incoming correspondence and reminded Council members of the context for various letters.

Outgoing Correspondence

Re: correspondence to EC about wolverines: Danny suggested using the word “harvest” instead of “trap” on future correspondence on this issue.

*** Todd arrived 1:30pm***

E. Chair’s Report

CBM – This kill survey will replicate the 1994-2004 Inuvialuit Harvest Study, and is scheduled to commence in January 2016. Kendra is compiling active harvester lists of who is to be interviewed, and working with the HTC’s to discuss training that will be required for the interviewers. Todd asked if it is the HTC Resource People who will be doing the actual collections – Lindsay replied that the HTC’s will engage a person to collect the information. The HTC’s responsibility will also be to validate the information. Todd queried how we encourage Inuvik to participate more fully in harvest reporting. Patrick replied that he wants to learn from Aklavik about how they got people on board with the harvest reporting. Ernest suggested that the existing structures are there for harvest reporting in Inuvik; it is just a matter of getting people to participate. Lindsay commented on the decisions and tradeoffs that have been made in the project planning. Ernest noted that the Council has always supported good harvest reporting, and that the cost of harvesting continues to rise. He wondered how the Game Council could support harvesters and at the same time promote harvest reporting. Patrick noted that it is so important on initiatives like this one to stay moving ahead alongside the HTC’s. Council members discussed the merits of a financial incentive for harvest reporting. Craig reiterated the importance of having solid methodology. Lindsay will get a briefing from Kendra next week and send a note to Steering Committee regarding our particular focus on a strong methodology.

Donihee Opinion re. EISC Screenings of North Slope Development Proposals – This legal opinion was received earlier this year. Lindsay raised it at the last JS Board meeting in September to see if the rest of the Board was onside with this opinion, including that *all* developments on the Yukon North Slope must be screened. All JS Board members accept the legal opinion. The implication of the opinion is that we now need to look at how the EISC addresses low-level projects that are likely to have no impact, or are supported by WMACNS – for example the use of electric bear fencing at Ivavik. It is the definition of development that is the challenge – the definition is very broad. We will continue to work to help the EISC apply appropriate screening and assessment tools to projects on the North Slope, and investigate administrative procedures that suit the circumstance. Chris noted that this will be especially important for Parks, and offered support for our work in this area. Stephanie noted that this

applies to Herschel as well. Craig pointed to IFA 11.14 as a starting point for an administrative solution.

Lindsay noted the importance of having the JS staff at the IFA workshop day in September. We need more of this kind of education in the JS and in the ISR so people understand the agreement and can safeguard it.

Stephanie passed the message that people were happy they had an opportunity to come and sit in on the meeting. Todd said that the perspective from the negotiator, Bob DeLury, was especially helpful.

F. Staff Report

Trade workshop in Ottawa - Christine reported that the ITK-hosted workshop provided a very clear overview of what is happening with international trade in arctic marine mammals, particularly narwhal ivory, walrus ivory, and polar bear hides. The new ITK president, Natan Obed, attended the workshop and committed to moving forward with this discussion.

There was also an evening meeting to advance the discussion about TK protocol for polar bear. The original presentation of the idea was large and unwieldy. The group landed on a more modest effort to advance PBTC efforts to include TK.

The planning was also advanced on hosting of the PBTC meeting in Whitehorse where there will be a day dedicated to TK.

TK Guidelines- Other committees are currently reviewing these to see if they want to sign on to these guidelines to make them applicable to the entire ISR or just the Yukon North Slope. The idea is that all of the committees could recommended this to researchers to consider in their project planning.

Traditional Use study- We continue to advance this project. Christine showed and explained an early map that Stephen provided to the Council that shows the combined responses from participants.

Peter will return to Aklavik this winter or spring to present the information to the community and next summer we will produce the report. We will produce an atlas and then each participant will get an individual life map. The layers produced from this work will go into the tool that Round River Conservation Studies is producing, the DST (Decision Support Tool). This project is to document Inuvialuit use and occupancy. A companion piece to this work is the Ecological Land Classification that YG is taking the lead on completing.

Jen provided a short update on the biophysical components of the WCMP revisions. With the focal species workshop results in hand, we are developing the methods and proposal for TK interviews about those focal species.

G. YG Update:

NS Grizzly Bear Project: A formal peer review was undertaken and raised several questions. The modeling that was used was quite complex and the part of the Park that was sampled suggested very high density in the British Mountains. How does this relate to the overall extrapolation in the study? These questions were responded to and then the report was sent for external review. Same questions came back. Now we will work (through a contract) and pull apart the actual data and look at it – explore the data in relationship to the models that were used. Should be done by January 8th. Depending on the results we may undertake a re-analysis (would likely take 3 months). Todd noted that this is a 2006-2007 population analysis. What will we do with a 10-year-old dataset? Need to work that out in the community. The Council noted that there are a number of components of the study, including the TK work and the contaminants work. These have been concluded. Ernest talked about grizzly/caribou interactions and his experience in this regard. Grizzly bears are excellent at taking opportunities to eat. Mike talked about how quickly bears can move wolves off a kill.

Action 12-2015-02: Todd to report back on contaminants analysis component of the grizzly bear study.

Grizzly Bear Management Plan: The Council asked Todd to comment on the reason for the development of a grizzly bear plan. From a wildlife management perspective or a conservation standpoint, how does managing grizzly bear on the YNS benefit from a Yukon-wide management plan? Craig commented that this species is assessed as Special Concern. If this goes through the system to be assessed by COSEWIC it will need a management plan. This is likely to look like the polar bear plan process where Canada adopted jurisdictional plans. Todd commented that the process for the new plan is still under development. The letter was designed to invite this discussion. Right now YG is looking at a 2 year time horizon. Datasets from Kluane, Southern Lakes, and NS are the primary sources of data for the science part.

Bromhagin South Beaufort Polar Bear Subpopulation Re-Analysis – Ramona and Marsha working on this. Think the population models are highly unstable. They see a high correlation between point population estimate and amount of area surveyed – this relationship across the border is unclear. It is likely that some population change in the South Beaufort is related to emigration to North Beaufort. Next step is to look at movement between populations, simulate random population and change study area size to see if this results in a

trend. Some investigation of the effort and study area size to understand the adequacy of sampling. Ramona and Jodie are currently writing a summary of issues with the Bromhagin paper.

Ernest commented on the need to be mindful of looking further offshore for bears.

Lindsay commented that it is going to be critically important that we are well prepared for the PBTC conversation. This will likely include the need for a face-to-face meeting in early January. Yukon government will need to be at this meeting and so will ENR. Hold this meeting between January 7 - 14.

Todd reported that EMR found an old fuel cache for 38 barrels, with 11 still full. Environment is working with EMR to identify resources to remove these barrels. Patrick noted that they found a fuel cache once of 400 barrels on the Tuk peninsula.

December 6, 2015

Lindsay Staples - Chair, Danny C Gordon (IGC), Member, Ernest Pokiak, (IGC) Member, Mike Sutor, (Yukon Government) Alternate, Craig Machtans, (Government of Canada) Alternate, Todd Powell (Yukon Government), Member, Christine Cleghorn & Jennifer Smith, Staff

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H. Research Project Reports from 2015/16

Peregrine survey- Found that more breeding pairs and the evidence of recovery of peregrines on the NS is still in a positive trajectory. Potentially looking at changing methodology. There was a Parks Canada, Yukon College and Yukon Government person on the flight. Was a very successful survey. Patrick asked about the population. Todd said they looked at productivity to indicate trend. 50% of known sites were occupied. The results show that the productivity is still on an upward swing. It is difficult to determine if there are young and the age of those from a helicopter fly –by so in the future we may not look at productivity like this and instead identify whether or not the nest sights are full.

Porcupine caribou use of eastern north slope. Mike presented caribou movements from this year. Almost the whole herd wintered in Alaska, there were very few caribou in Canada over the winter, only a few hundred. As a result, the Alaskans did all of our field work this past year. Normally when this happens there are arrangements for money transfers for projects. When they winter in Alaska there routes tend to be predicable. They follow a consistent route. They end up entering Canada right near Margret Lake. This year was the first year we have ever had

collars on bulls. We did not have good previous documentation on this - it was a really interesting year to see the bull movements.

The herd calved on the edge of the foothills off the coastal plain in Alaska. The bulls during this time were on the eastern North Slope. Often in the past we have seen the bulls following the cows during migration for calving, but recently we have seen that the bulls aren't really following the cows; they are off on their own. Mike described the movement that the majority of the herd makes almost annually from Alaska over back to the Yukon and along the ISR boundary. As fall approaches the herd starts dispersing across the eastern North Slope and then heads west. Then the herd changed direction and the herd hit the Dempster highway. It was very dramatic. Thousands of caribou were roadside and as a result there was a large harvest this year.

There was no population estimate this year as a result of poor weather and then the PCH mixing with the central Arctic herd.

The number of collars on the herd hasn't changed. We are directed to keep about 80 collars on the herd. We have about 100 collars on cows and started with about 20 bulls and now have about 12 collars on bulls. The number of collars hasn't changed but the technology has so we are getting a lot more information from our collars.

Richardson mountain dall sheep- There was an attempt to do ground based surveying this year, but it didn't materialize. There are some cameras out on mineral licks. Still a declining population. The management plan is still not complete, GRRB are taking the lead, with GNWT, and VG. The council has communicated that if the plan does go forward, we will participate in it, but we are not going to lead it. Mike showed the population numbers over the past 20+ years. We are also seeing low ewe numbers, which is a concern. The Brooks Range in Alaska has also seen very low numbers, icing events and bad weather. The Council speculated what might be happening with the population trend and weather. Mike spoke about how bad icing events are for sheep, especially if there is ice and then snow on top.

The highest number in 1991 was just under 1400; now the population is at around 500 in 2014. Ernest spoke about the difficulty of counting sheep. Mike looked at the flight lines and felt that the numbers were representative. Patrick asked if, when the surveys are done, Inuvialuit come along. It is a standard practice, if there is space in the helicopters (if they are doing captures they generally do not take community members due to safety and liability issues). Todd spoke about policy liability challenges YG faces in placing undue risk on people not employed by department. Chris shared some of the models that PC has used in similar constricting circumstances like contracting through the Community Corp and HTC.

Muskox Collar Project - Was pulled together quickly this year, with PC leading. Pete Sinkins and Todd Shury (Veterinarian from PC) and Martin Kenzler from YG were involved. The work was largely driven by the meeting that happened in Aklavik in 2015 expressing concerns about the muskox-caribou interaction. We know we need a population count soon. The collars will help us with that and we also want to start looking at caribou muskox interactions. PC and YG are collaborating and the USFWS to a lesser degree.

We want to work closely with the AHTC on this. Pete Sinkins has also been working with ABEKS to try and pull out any knowledge that exist there. Mike explained how they want to use the collar information to try to pull apart some of the issues and dive deeper into the methodology and finer scale research.

Danny said he has seen muskox 25 miles out on the ice.

Ernest said that in the early 80s when he was living in Sachs muskox was beginning to be an issue. The quota went from 25 to 2000 when Ernest was there, and then it went wide open. Now caribou are starting to come back. In Sachs the younger generations grew up eating muskox and really enjoy it and actually prefer it to caribou. Now it is hard to get muskox.

Lindsay explained that on the mainland the muskox situation is different from an Arctic Islands situation. In Alaska the population has crashed; in the Yukon the maximum number is likely less than 200 animals.

Eight 8 collars have been placed on cows, with drop off mechanisms. Both ears have been tagged. Muskox are drugged when tagged, so for 30 days they shouldn't be eaten.

USFWS has purchased collars and want to participate. The management number in Alaska is 300 before they would allow a harvest. All of the captures went really well this year with no injuries or deaths and all animals were back with their herd in short order. The collars were deployed in the following areas: 2 have gone into the Upper Firth area, 1 into the Upper Malcolm, 1 on Lower Malcolm, 1 on Herschel and 2 on the Babbage.

Status and trends of the PC and the Bathurst herd. Craig reported that Don Russell recently gave a talk to the Porcupine Caribou International Board. Craig explained the differences in back fat as it relates to winter range conditions and how they are inversely related. So if winter range conditions are good caribou do not need as much back fat. The other key point is that herds east of the delta are not doing well and west of the delta are. Body weight for cows in the fall is paramount to understanding whether cows will become pregnant. Porcupine Caribou and Central Arctic Herds are more resilient when it comes to body weight

and having a successful pregnancy. The resilience on the PC range has stayed intact and they have a diversity within their range that helps resiliency.

Danny talked about how the more back fat the caribou has the better it is and the better the meat is.

This year there have been reports that bull PC caribou were fat, but cows were thin.

Wildlife cameras in Ivavik Park: Chris Hunter reported that 28 cameras are installed now, and PC is still looking at ways to use that data. Still not quite there yet and the program as you add cameras, helicopter time gets more costly. Whole program is worth around \$60k. Still evaluating whether or not we can achieve the objectives with the funding we have. Cameras are focused on the Firth River Corridor.

Permafrost Probe Installation: Collaboration with Chris Burn 2014 - 2 probes installed near Whale Cove. Last year 1 installed lower Babbage and 1 Margaret Lake. Babbage probe is not collecting data yet. This will make a nice complement to the probes on Herschel. The timeline for trend information from these probes is quite long, but the focus of this monitoring program is very long term.

ABEK - continuing to support TK work in the range of the PC herd and validate and report on events within the herd, contributing towards managing and sharing that data. More fulsome presentation planned for March.

Western Arctic Field Unit (WAFU) update

Chris reported on staffing – there are two positions currently open. With regards to Visitor Experience Visits to Ivavik, this year the WAFU is planning for 7 of these trips. All but one of the trips will have both a cook and a cultural host from Aklavik. Looking at piloting a stopover in Aklavik en route to Ivavik. Planning on installing the 6 MacPherson tents in May/June 2016, to be used primarily for visitors and youth during youth camps. Also planning on some work on the cook shack this year – removal of the two back bedrooms to create more space for cooking, food preparation, and dining.

Ivavik Park Management Plan is in the very early stages, with consultation and engagement planning underway. Chris expressed WAFU's desire to work closely with the Council and IRC in this process, as well as the community of Aklavik. Lindsay asked if there would be a scoping exercise for this. Chris replied that they anticipate 1-3 very focused workshops with key perspectives. Lindsay noted that there is a parallel pathway regarding

Herschel Management Plan that should be considered. Todd committed to raising this with Parks Branch. The Management Plan is for 10 years. Key issues are likely to include:

- better integrating Traditional Knowledge
- coastal erosion / climate change
- economic considerations including opportunities for Inuvialuit and the cost of park visitation.

WAFU is hoping that the plan would be sent to the CEO for approval by October 2016 for tabling. Legally, we have until October 2017 to complete the plan. Therefore WAFU is hoping that the bulk of the drafting will be completed early on.

Ernest asked about the airstrip. Chris reported that the airstrip has not been lengthened, and that the risk assessment has been shared with Council. The feasibility report is not yet finalized, but when it is finalized we will share it. In the past year we added material to the runway surface to level out the existing airstrip (footprint was not expanded). We also relocated a shed that was too close to the airstrip, and put new markers in place. We topped and removed brush and trees adjacent to the runway.

Pete Sinkins will attend the Council meeting in March in order to discuss research and monitoring work. WAFU trialed monitoring panels on the Firth River this year on a trip with Neil Hartling. Many sample sites have been added in order to increase the statistical powers of these measures. This trial is considered quite successful.

Nelson Perry (Parks Canada) should be invited to the March meeting to discuss a contaminated site (leaking well) where Roland Sarouk had his camp. People in Aklavik are quite concerned about this, because it is close to a creek. This cabin is located close to Stokes Point – a well that seems to be leaking.

Craig reported that the Bird Book is coming along – layout is scheduled for January. Any comments are welcome on the draft in the package. Craig will ensure that copies are sent directly to Danny and Ernest for their review.

ABEK –There is a PowerPoint and summary report from PCTC in the package regarding information about caribou and the status of the herd. Mike added that ABEK has started to think more about their work in terms of clients and how to deliver products. Issues with timing of getting interview data reported so that it aligns with the PC AHM.

Lindsay expressed concern about research products and how available they are to the Council, and how timely these projects are. Todd echoed that ABEK struggles with communicating with its partners. With a new coordinator working at ABEK comes an opportunity to shift these

communication patterns. Craig noted that the Alaskans continue to attempt to develop their own harvest reporting system. Craig indicated that it might be smart for the CBM project to have a check-in 2 years and 4-years out and not wait for 10 years. Lindsay agreed that embedding these kinds of requirements in the funding envelope will be critical.

Craig also indicated that the EC polar bear folks are focused on the CAP, PIT tags, and SARA Management Plan. National Conservation Plan will likely be the front-end of this plan, followed by the jurisdictional plans.

SAR Status Report: Craig updated the Council on various species that are in the SAR process, and next steps. Horned Grebe, Buff Breasted Sandpiper, and Collared Pika are all Special Concern and the Council is likely to receive new correspondence on these species.

Red-necked phalarope: This will be next up in SAR cycle. Council will likely receive a letter on this in January. Distributed all across the Yukon. Assessed as Special Concern.

Danny commented that he is seeing less and less of the Red-necked phalarope.

Arctic Land Cover Change Initiative – CAFF released this report this fall looking at landscape change in the circumpolar arctic. In the analysis, the North Slope features prominently. This information might be usefully pulled into the WCMP revision initiatives. It could be a different look at the NS that is useful.

I. 2016/17 Research Proposals

Chris presented the 4 Parks Canada projects.

ABEKS- Despite some challenges with the direction, we are still supporters of ABEKS. David Hagoak is trying to get more involved.

PC monitoring- 7k toward satellite fees and data

Wildlife cameras- current program is 28 cameras, looking at adding 7 cameras this year of which the bulk of the funding is for flights to get to cameras. Each camera gets visited 2 times per year – to download images, change batteries etc. There has been a discussion about expanding a camera program to Herschel as well. This year we would draft a report that looks at the past three years as a pilot program.

This is not part of the core EI monitoring program at this point. It could become a part of it eventually.

Craig asked about the design choices for laying out the cameras. Chris said that the cameras were laid out on a grid- basically a stratified random sample. Craig asked if we could get examples of camera use from other areas at the March meeting so we can understand where this project can go.

Craig presented the EC proposal-

The contribution would support the coop this year. Before we are fully committed to supporting the full amount for this fiscal year it would be valuable to see what comes out of the project in March. So notional approval could be an option.

Lindsay raised that the deliverables as they are drafted are very vague and Lindsay would like to know more about what this would look like. For each one of the deliverables it would be nice to see something more concrete. Mindful of the survey instrument that is being used is there something more specific we would like. He suggested that the staff connect with Michael or Kelly to further that conversation or book a face to face discussion with the two of them.

Muskox population survey- There are 8 collared animals that Parks Canada are tracking. Trying to gain some momentum to coordinate a survey with Alaska and GNWT. The collars can help us find the animals, and to get people in the field to collect samples like feces.

Todd presented the YG proposals-

Muskox survey for 22k in a collaboration with partners. On the coastal plain there will be transects and in the mountains flight routes follow the main river valleys; it is not safe to do transects in the mountains. Trying to do this with the GNWT, and it will include a conversation with the AHTC. It would be a shame not to include this part; though it's a small area, it is important to understanding what the population is doing.

PC use of the YNS- This money is largely for collar expenses for the new collars on cows and some on bulls and to support the census. For the collar program, the IFA funds account for about 1/3 of the total budget. We are continuing to collect data every year, but are working now on the sensitive habitats report. This will be one of the first major outcomes that will use this data. It will be the first deliverable from this data. Mike wants to connect with Round River Conservation Studies to ensure outputs work for both.

The group talked about how much caribou can move in a day. It is far. Patrick said that he has tracked caribou for more than 100 miles in a day. The bull collars have a stretchy part in it so

that the collars cannot strangle the animal. The collars are also sized big to begin with. Mike said that the total number of collars hasn't changed, but the ratio from satellite to VHF has.

Use of cameras Avadlik spit- This project is to help us better understand the use of the spit, timing of wildlife use to potentially reduce impact on the wildlife from increased human use. The cost of this project is the purchase of cameras.

Linking vegetation communities to wildlife values- This project is to dovetail with the PC projects and to understand more about veg communities. This should help us with baseline info and monitoring – this is to deploy 36 cameras. This is a three year proposal.

Danny said that he doesn't think that many people use Avadlik spit.

Polar bear analysis – looks like the money will be spent out and we wouldn't have any more money attached to this.

Yukon North Slope Diet and ground based survey – the idea for this it to look at muskox when caribou are in the area. It is a difficult thing for timing to do data collection around this. Proposing to drop people off and leave them for a week to watch muskox and caribou to see what happens.

Need to sit down with HTC in Aklavik to work out design details. Lindsay suggested building a small TK project to talk to people about what they have seen over a lifetime. This is a new opportunity because there are satellite GPS collars on both herds.

Grizzly Bear workshop funds to be spent out instead of being carried over for a year.

South Beaufort polar bear population survey – didn't bring a proposal forward this year. The council talked about the planning underway in the short term for a new population estimate. Would be important to show even a notional amount for this. Supplemental funds for this project?

Discussion about projects:

Avadlik spit does have value, it has been 40-50 years that Danny has been using that land. Avadlik spit has not deteriorated; it is building up. Caribou use this area. It is an important area for wildlife to escape insect harassment and the heat.

Polar bear are always of interest Ernest. It is a big issue in the South Beaufort right now. About 5 years ago YG became more interested in polar bears, more research could be done further off shore to get the numbers better. Maybe they are not declining, maybe they are moving further north. There should be an effort between the United States and Canada to coordinate efforts on studies. A lot of the bears in Alaska feed from the bowhead harvest. There is no species right now that is more under threat of affecting Inuvialuit harvesting rights than south Beaufort polar bear. In some cases it may be nothing more than writing a cheque to show support.

The ELC work will be done and there is no more financial ask for this, but more work can be levered from this new knowledge.

Sensitive areas can be looked at coming out to the ELC. It would be nice to have a list of projects coming forth of work that can be done on this. Updating key areas on the North Slope.

Recommendations –

The council supports the PCH collar work

Support the camera work in INP, however the evaluation piece is really key – support with the condition that the evaluation come forth on this program as soon as possible.

Borderlands- additional info with respect to concrete deliverables and to encourage the conversation between CBM and ABEKS. Notional support, and reevaluate in March.

Muskox population survey – In line with the Alaskans – support

Porcupine caribou use of the YNS- support, with Mike providing information to the council about bigger picture near term and long term. Mike to provide the research implications of suspending collaring for 1, 3, or 5 years. What is gained, what is lost.

Caribou is more scattered now than they used to be Danny told us. Danny wondered if the caribou are being harassed through research. Why are the caribou acting different than 50 years ago? All wildlife is changing habits, geese don't use the flats anymore, there is a lot unknown. For 42 years there have been collars on caribou. Mike said he can pull together material that was presented at the collaring workshop. Do this at the summer or fall meeting, no later.

Linking vegetation communities to wildlife values - suggest a more developed study design to link with the parks program. Hold off to March 2016.

Craig cautioned that the North Slope wildlife conservation plan should be wrapped up in three years and that is the project we want to spend the money on.

Come back to March meeting to confirm research priorities.

YNS muskox diet and ground based survey- The model we are pursuing is working with a graduate student and have that person do further work in Aklavik.

Chris said that they have a high interest in this project and there is a great opportunity for TK and also for community involvement. This is an innovative approach to an issue. How well this works out is another case in point. There was a ground based muskox survey about 15 years ago with Aklavik. Support. Ernest indicated his support.

Motion 12-15-005 to accept the table as revised (see below)

Moved by Chris Hunter

Seconded by Danny Gordon

PROJECT	PC	EC	YG	TOTAL	STATUS
	\$35,000	\$19,000	\$136,000	\$190,000	
PCH Satellite Project	\$7,000		\$5,000	\$12,000	Support
Wildlife Monitoring With Remote Cameras in INP	\$11,000			\$11,000	Support
Arctic Borderlands	\$5,000	\$19,000		\$24,000	Evaluate in March
Muskox Population Survey	\$12,000		\$22,000	\$34,000	Support
Porcupine Caribou Use of the YNS			\$46,600	\$46,600	Support, with requirement for long term plan
Wildlife Use of Avadlek Spit			\$3,000	\$3,000	Support
Linking Vegetation Communities to Wildlife Values			\$59,400	\$59,400	Evaluate in March
YNS Muskox Diet + Ground Based Survey			\$15,000	\$15,000	Support
Total	\$35,000	\$19,000	\$151,000	\$205,000	

North Slope Conference debrief

Lindsay thanked all the members for being involved with this conference. The Council talked about the cycle – every three years, or every 5 years. Location and timing are not tied in. If we wanted to do this we would make a recommendation to Yukon, IGC and Canada.

Council comments-

Chris: Themes that are chosen are on target, and people anticipate it. Good job on getting it done.

Mike: Breakout groups were too large, but they went really well. People really appreciated it. Reporting back was a bit painful. The Breakout groups were a good forum.

Todd: Breakout sessions were key, most of the learning that he got was from them. Appreciated the style and format, reporting back was a bit painful.

Craig: I enjoyed it. I thought it was the right amount of presentations. Appreciated the balance. Goals of the conference were suitably lofty. Conversations need to be advanced as a collective. I appreciated the whole thing. It went well. Some of the talks were fascinating.

Ernest- It is hard to catch all the conversation. The food and the flags were good. Really enjoyed some of the speakers- John Ward and Boogie.

Danny: I liked the apple pie! The conference was something to be proud of.

Lindsay- We involved a facilitator for the first time this year- Bryan Evans - and this was a good move for us. We really like the work that Bryan does. Liked the living room environment.

December 7, 2015

Lindsay Staples - Chair, Danny C Gordon (IGC), Member, Ernest Pokiak, (IGC) Member, Mike Sutor, (Yukon Government) Alternate, Craig Machtans, (Government of Canada) Alternate, Todd Powell (Yukon Government), Member, Christine Cleghorn & Jennifer Smith, Staff

Guest: Patrick Gruben

*****Cameron Eckhert joined the meeting at 9am *****

*****Lolita Hughes joined by telephone*****

Cameron commented on the ISR Research Funds proposal regarding Avadlek Spit. He noted that every August he is on the Spit 1 or 2 times. Herschel Island tends to be managed in 2 zones – the Historic Zone (Pauline Cove) and the Wilderness Zone. People can hike in the Wilderness Zone, but in the past number of years he has noticed that there is a biodiversity zone around Pauline Cove and Avadlak Spit. We have good knowledge of the biodiversity situation at Pauline Cove, but much less so at Avadlak Spit. Independent travellers are increasingly using Avadlak Spit. For example, last year a kayaker was camped on Avadlak spit for over a week. Having better information about what is happening there will help us understand if there are seasonal concerns or issues that we should be managing. The Management Plan is coming up for review shortly, so if we had more information about this area it would help us to address it properly in the Management Plan.

Cameron agreed with Lindsay that spits in general are likely important from an ecological standpoint. He further noted the direction in the management plan about connecting with Ivavik, and this would make a nice complement to the camera project there.

Cameron's presentation focused on research and researchers on the island. He noted that the management of the park focuses on preserving the wilderness character of the area, as well as the historical legacy.

Stressors on the park ecosystem are climate change, ecosystem processes (interaction between climate change and natural ecosystem function), human use, and park operations. YG works very hard to mitigate stressors from park management and human use.

Overall goal is to maintain ecosystem integrity in the long run. Part of this program includes work that Parks undertakes like wildlife observations and surveys, collection of harvest data. Since 2003, key messages with WMAC were:

-link research with other research in the Park and on the coast.

- improve the relationship between Parks and researchers on the Island. Where can researchers on the island support our activities and priorities? Historically, (last 10-15 years) includes McGill University, Carleton University, Alfred Wagner Institute, University of Edinburgh. Prior to 2013 the Park Rangers monitored slumps in the Park. We've suspended Ranger involvement with this and the researchers do this currently.

Also in the last few years there are 2 types of vegetation monitoring – long term vegetation plots. Researchers have always taken a role in doing these plots beyond managing researchers on the island. We don't do the data analysis or data management. In the past year we've focused on the vegetation phenology monitoring. This requires visitations to 3 transects for 3 species indicator plants every 2-3 days doing a suite of measurements on the 3 transects. This takes upwards of 2-3 hours every 2-3 days. It is the biggest item on the monitoring program. Last year we developed a project with Meagan Grabowski, with \$ from Parks and Yukon Fish and Wildlife Enhancement Trust to work with the Rangers to see exactly how they are doing the work, look at the data we've collected for the past 10 years, and then analyze it to come back to tell us what the data tells us. This relates directly back to the management plan and the primary stressors on the park. Coastal erosion and vegetation change are identified in the mgmt. plan as stressors. Meagan did excellent work involving the Rangers in all aspects of the work, including presenting a poster about the work at ArcticNet.

Increasingly Herschel is being presented as an Arctic Research Facility. It is not really this; it is a park that is managed for wilderness values. I am often asked how research projects are prioritized. Our porthole into controlling access to the island is through the park permit process. Richard is careful to ensure that there is always a benefit to the Park from research activities. An example of this is the solar panels on the new Ranger building at Herschel Park. Other researchers are fit in as they can be in the travellers cabin or through their own (tent or weatherall) facilities.

Cameron asked the Council for feedback and guidance on how research should be managed on the island. From a park management perspective, we are probably at the limit of what we can handle as far as long term research programs go.

Todd asked if we have ever had to say "no" to a research program. Cameron replied that this has not happened to date. Part of this is that in order to do research on the North Slope, they have to have their permits lined up. You can't apply for a park use permit the day before you need it – we need some lead-time so that we can be organized for them. These hoops they need to jump through means they can't just show up – we always know in advance.

Lolita asked if we have a good library of research information on Herschel. This is a challenge in other parks. Cameron replied that this is an area for improvement, but the Park permits and Explorers licence process both require information to come back to the Yukon. A large number of researchers do not report back, but there is also not a concerted effort to follow up either.

Lindsay noted that there has been effort at the JS board level to try to avoid having research going on that no one knows about. On the Yukon side there is a lot that could be done.

Recognizing that there is a certain vigilance on our part that this issue demands, there are things we need to look at in the terms and conditions of permit requirements that would enhance the results of the research coming back.

Cameron noted that strengthening the communication with Todd might also help. Lolita indicated that Parks hasn't really caught up with Dave Ladret's retirement as far as supporting Richard.

Lindsay indicated that focusing more on reporting out from research and park activities could be a future direction. Cameron discussed collaborating more with Parks Canada and reports coming out on an annual basis.

Ernest said that often the HTC sees information, but they may not be aware that they can provide comments or understand the process well. Researchers really should report back to people in the region. He wondered how much earlier green up is now on Herschel. He also asked if Avadlik Spit is building up over time. Finally, the slump area near Pauline Cove, has it stabilized? Cameron noted that Hughes has focused on the dynamics of those slumps, and things are very dynamic so spits can disappear by half in one season but then very quickly grow again. This year a huge section of the spit washed out, but this is likely to change again soon. This is dynamic, and we can expect to see this continuing. Spring is coming earlier for willow and avens – willows are advanced 27 days from earlier than they used to.

Jennifer suggested that it would be important to ensure that operational needs are covered off in the next iteration of the Implementation funding submission.

Danny asked Cameron about Osborne Point and the effects of storms on spits. The incredibly dynamic nature of storm events impacts the use of spits for navigation.

Hughes Lantuit joined the meeting 10am

Hughes Lantuit – Alfred Wagner Institute

Hughes briefed the Council about his research on Herschel Island since 2003. He described the mandate and structure of AWI. Coastal erosion is a focus of their work. 1/3 of the earth's coasts are permafrost coasts. Despite this, there are very few coastal permafrost scientists. Nobody is currently looking at effects on marine wildlife from the degradation of coastal permafrost. His presentation is included in the meeting package for reference.

After the presentation, Ernest asked who takes ownership of the research, and the participation of the people of Aklavik? Hughes indicated that AWI is compelled to make their research available in international database and it goes in free open access journals. Disseminating the

research is done in a number of ways – including talking to the Rangers since they are from Aklavik. AWI made presentations to the AHTC two years ago. PANGAEA is the name of the place online that houses all of this data. GTNP is the database that houses the permafrost temperature data.

Danny thanked Hughes for his presentation and using maps and photos. He agreed that the land is changing. He noted that there used to be a harbor at King Point and schooners used to go in there. A block of ice once blew in and blocked the entrance to this harbor.

Mike asked if the data that is available is only raw data or products also. Hughes said, mostly it is the products as well.

Chris asked about shifts in feeding grounds on the marine environment. Is there any thinking on how to include community knowledge in the work. Hughes replied that one of the ArcticNet presentations is about impacts on ecosystems at large including the cultural sites and historical sites.

Mike asked about the conservation plan and the potential threats of development. The information that AWI are collecting could feed into this quite well as it describes the limitations of development. Lindsay talked about how the NS includes the coastal area and so AWI work is within the scope of what we have responsibility for.

How can we best have a working relationship on this? Its not just data access it is about dissemination of the information. Need to do a better job of making the institutional relationships happen. We need to connect better with Hughes on a regular basis. Face to face is critical. We would like to formalize this relationship.

Hughes said the point is we all love the island, we all want the best for it and to know more about it. Hughes said, "I have a lot of students that are eager and motivated to be involved. We need to make this happen; it is about communication. This can happen in Inuvik and Akalvik, we can't make it to all the meetings." Patrick said local people are asking, and people want to know.

One idea is to devote a North Slope Conference to Herschel Island.

Lindsay asked about what is the significance of Herschel in the global context. Hughes said that he has been promoting Herschel and so it is very much in an international context and the name Inuvialuit is getting well known. Herschel cannot take hundreds of researchers though, so we need to be smart about this.

Craig suggested generating project summaries for distribution in the ISR communities. This strategy has been useful for CWS. Hughes indicated interest in pursuing a strategy like this in partnership.

Jennifer indicated that we are getting great success with our podcast series.

The Council will reflect on ways to be more proactive in our relationship with AWI and ways to collaborate in the future.

Hughes Lantuit and Cameron Eckert left the meeting

Environment Canada – Canadian Wildlife Service

Kathy Graham , Katherine Bamben joined by telephone

Graham van Aggelen, Rachel Millano, and Joy Bruno joined the meeting

Kathy presented "Facilitating Compliance Verification and Supporting Conservation Efforts Through a 3 Pronged Approach." She reviewed the role of EC's enforcement branch, discussed non-compliance in trade of wildlife and related products, and shared a new approach to monitoring polar bear hides once they enter trade. She explained that harvest tags are the primary tracking tool used for hides, and have been since the 1970s.

Mike asked about the isotopes and the ability to get down to a sub-population level. Kathy indicated that there is no isoscape for polar bears at this time. Mike asked how long it would take to develop an isoscape – Kathy to reply once she has sourced this information. Todd noted that creating and maintaining the isoscape should *both* be considered given the rapidly changing environment. Kathy affirmed that EC Scientists are confident that we will be able to identify at the subpopulation level using isotope technology.

Challenges lay in being able to distinguish exportable vs. non-exportable hides. It is about minimizing and ensuring that weaknesses that have been identified are mitigated to the extent possible.

Todd asked if the DNA process relies on EC having the DNA databank or if it would suffice if the jurisdiction did the DNA work. Kathy replied that safeguarding the chain of custody of the sample is the biggest reason why the samples need to go to EC labs.

*** Kathy Graham and Katherine Bamben left the meeting ***

Graham circulated the manual for DNA collection, and showed the Council a sample kit.

Council members queried the completeness of the isoscape, the precision of the isotope work.

Council members noted that bears move a tremendous amount, and that conclusions should be drawn cautiously.

EC (except Craig) left the meeting

Catherine and Todd updated the Council on the ELC project. The Council discussed the success of the field season and the possibilities that now open up for the data. The discussion contemplated how this project integrates with work that has come before, as well as work underway by the Wagner Institute.

3:20 Vic Gillman arrived

*** Catherine Kennedy left the meeting***

Lindsay introduced Vic Gillman, FJMC Chair.

Vic commented on the importance of increasing communication and collaboration between the JS Councils and Committees. He noted that the effects of climate change are confronting and confounding arctic communities, and expressed his desire to share strategies and solutions with the WMAC (NS).

Vic conveyed the new opportunity for marine protected areas and their increased support from the new federal government. Vic described the consultation process that FJMC undertakes with HTC's each fall, and how that could open a door for collaboration. Lindsay offered that information arising from the Traditional Use study on the North Slope may be of interest to FJMC and will certainly be made available to them.

Danny thanked Vic and complemented FJMC for allowing the community to take 150 fish from Big Fish River for the last 2 years.

Lindsay turned his attention to the remaining items on the agenda.

ISR Polar Bear Management Plan – we will accept comments via Jennifer by Monday evening December 14.

Financial Update:

Jennifer provided the Council with an overview of the Council's financial position. Our total revenue this fiscal is \$514,667, including funding from YG for the North Slope Conference. Overall we are 46% spent on the year, and are tracking to have up to \$30,000 to carry over. She reviewed options for projects between now and the end of the fiscal year. Lindsay noted that we will not likely check back into the financials until early March. Stephanie supported breaking out the costs to the office for hosting the North Slope Conference. Lindsay flagged for a future meeting to discuss the frequency of the North Slope Conference.

Christine reviewed the Supplemental Funding request for next fiscal. Todd confirmed that the ELC product will be finalized with existing funds, but there is no budget for communicating those products. The Council encouraged YG to include a request for communications support for the ELC project products.

Staff committed to circulating our supplemental funding request to the Council prior to its submission.

Muskox Management Framework:

Todd reviewed YGs comments on the existing framework and any issues that are outstanding from Yukon's perspective. Lindsay articulated some of the thinking that got us to where we are in the muskox framework discussion. Todd noted that overall, the challenge of the framework is that some of the language (page 8). This is a really small population – any way we cut it there are not a lot of muskox out there. We want to recognize flexibility for harvest to a limited extent without being prescriptive about the harvest in the document.

Lindsay reviewed the 2011 meeting with AHTC and the circumstance of management across the ISR and in Alaska. What was loosely agreed to that day was that given the restricted management approach in Alaska for conditions that are comparable to the YNS, and that there is a wide open, unregulated harvest in the Delta, a zero quota on the YNS was defensible in meeting conservation requirements. It would be up to GNWT and WMACNWT to determine harvest management on the NWT side. It would be prudent to remove the quota discussion from the muskox management framework.

Todd noted that more recent discussions in Aklavik about harvesting on the North Slope, indicated a desire to harvest extensively on the North Slope. Danny commented that the AHTC has moved off their position about harvesting muskox, since that meeting and the education about rights and management as they apply to muskox.

Page 8 regarding the reference to a guided harvest vs. a Yukon harvest. The IFA, under preferential harvest, entitles the Inuvialuit to 100% of the take until their full subsistence needs have been met. It is a very different situation from the UFA. When you look at the numbers on the YNS, it seems inconceivable that there would ever be a guided hunt or a resident hunt would have on that population. Lindsay noted that the ecological circumstance is very different from Banks Island, and it doesn't make for a good comparison.

Todd contemplated the problem of having a small population that moves, and the consequences when the population moves into a risk area for harvest vs. staying in more inaccessible areas.

Todd: The first bullet in strategic considerations lays this out quite well. If we adapted IFA language here it would be much stronger.

Vic commented that framework documents, integrated plans, and community harvesting form a huge part of the work of the FJMC.

Framework – status, history, interest, concerns

Prescriptive part – tells you how you make decisions.

Todd and Lindsay to collaborate on a next draft and circulate it.

Upcoming Meetings

The Council reviewed upcoming meetings

Date for upcoming WMACNS meeting: March 1-3 if that works. Meet in Inuvik for 2 days and in Aklavik for 1 day? Parks Canada would like to do an extensive briefing for us. Also need to find time to have a meeting with Parks Branch (Yukon).

Jennifer briefed the Council on Upcoming meetings, noting that the staff would be in touch with Danny and Ernest when greater budget clarity on the Inuvialuit Participation budget is achieved.

Meeting adjourned at 5:38pm.