



## DRAFT MEETING MINUTES

WMAC (NS) Quarterly Meeting  
Inuvik, NWT, Parks Canada Board Room  
Feb 29- March 3, 2016

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**Lindsay Staples** (Chair) · **Chris Hunter** Government of Canada (Member) · **Danny C. Gordon** Inuvialuit Game Council (Member) · **Ernest Pokiak** Inuvialuit Game Council (Member) · **Mike Sutor** Yukon Government (Alternate) · **Jennifer Smith** (Secretariat) · **Christine Cleghorn** (Secretariat)

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Feb 29, 2016

The Chair called the meeting to order at 3:20 and acknowledged that this is Christine's last meeting.

### **A. Review and Approval of the Agenda**

The Chair reviewed the agenda and asked for any revisions. There were none.

Danny asked about the Grizzly bear project and said he has a concern about raising the quota. Over the past couple years he has been seeing less bears and less bears have been harvested.

#### Motion 03-16-01

*To accept agenda as presented*

*Moved by: Chris*

*Seconded by: Danny*

*Motion Carried.*

*\*\*\*2:15 Jenn Parrott and Kendra Tingmiak joined the meeting and Rob Florkiewicz and Todd Powell called into the meeting\*\*\**

Lindsay welcomed Kendra and Jenn to the meeting.

### **B. Community Based Monitoring and GIS Platform Presentation – Jenn Parrott and Kendra Tingmiak**

Kendra introduced herself and explained that she has been in the Acting Coordinator position since April 2015. She provided a presentation on the ISR CBMP.

IRC is a huge supporter and her position was established originally out of those funds.

She explained the audience and three tiers of users and the focus now on the first two tiers: IFA organizations and government partners. Lindsay explained that governments who sit on co-management bodies are included in tier one.

In 2016 the priority has been to design and implement a long term monitoring program of Inuvialuit harvest-based observations. The initial focus is the implementation of a “kill survey.” The intent is to replicate the previous harvest study.

Kendra has visited all the six communities and did presentations in all the schools. The HTC had already identified community resource technicians to collect harvest statistics and those people attended a training program. Data collection has begun now. The training program has gone well. Putting the administrative regime in place has been a large component of the work. This covers contracts, WCB etc. 16 participants were brought in to Inuvik: two from each community and the HTC RPs so that they would know what to expect. The training started with physical maps and paper data forms and has now made the full move to digital tools and media.

Kendra said bringing all the community representatives together was a good move and people took to things really well and learned easily.

HTCS were asked to develop a harvester list and then develop a master active harvester list. Currently there are about 1000 active harvesters in the ISR, which compares closely to the previous 1988 harvest study.

Lindsay suggested adding another reference from the IFA from section 14 to her presentation– which is the requirement for HTCs to provide harvest data.

Danny suggested people could insure their equipment in order to protect against loss.

CRT’s are the community resource technicians, part time hires to collect data, review datasheets, and prepare monthly summary sheet, and then share the information with the HTC. The HTC reviews it for completeness and then they submit it to Kendra. There are 9 hunting codes that summarize the harvest.

CRT’s are reporting monthly. Kendra will compile three months at a time and provide quarterly reports. An annual report will then be produced and distributed. Local data records will be housed at the HTCs and the compiled records will be at the JS.

Kendra indicated that there are data user agreements. Inuvialuit have direct access to their personal data, and all others need permission. Confidentiality agreements are signed with

all interviewees. A harvester identification number is used for each person. Identification info is only used to contact the hunter.

This info will be used for TAH quotas, and estimates of annual harvest and eventually could provide detailed biological data, hunting and fishing efforts and more.

This data can be linked to the historical data and trends amongst the harvesters and new species of interest and how harvesting practices have changed over time and how it varies between communities.

Harvester concerns get voiced directly to the HTC and all reports are available to interviewees through the HTC (monthly, quarterly, and annually).

Harvester incentives include: two monthly draws worth \$100 in gas. Interviewees also get copies of their monthly records.

Ernest asked whether the gas incentives were too low. Kendra said they are mirroring the old study. Ernest indicated that \$100 doesn't go very far in a place like Tuk.

Ernest thinks that each draw should be more like \$200 to encourage participation. This could be adjusted over time. This is a sensitive discussion because you don't want it to bias your reporting. Don't want to be "buying" data, but some incentives are required. How you position and 'market' the program are important as the data can be used for wildlife harvester compensation purposes if needed in the future.

**Action Item 03-16-01: Provide the CBMP harvester datasheet template to the Council.**

Mike asked how the Porcupine caribou harvest study data will be integrated into this.

Jenn Parrot provided an overview of the spatial and technological components of the project. She reviewed the data collection model and noted that her ability to troubleshoot with this system is superb. One of the first components was to develop community specific geodatabases featuring domains and dropdowns, mandatory fields, automatic archiving and monthly backups, and ensuring that the data is comparable to historical data. Historical data recovery efforts have been quite positive.

Through a consolidation effort, the Inuvialuit Settlement Region Platform has been launched. It is being used by a number of people. There are interactive mapping windows. Jenn passed around an ipad with the app on it. There are online and offline versions of the app. The ipads are set to automatically synch automatically when the ipad visits the HTC office. In the future, harvesters will be able to download the app on their phone as well. For now, the technicians do the data input.

She reviewed workloads and responsibilities for various parties in the Harvest Study project. Preliminary results – data is being actively collected in 3 of the 6 communities. Tuk has had 9 harvests by 3 harvesters, and Aklavik has had 48 harvests by 21 harvesters

to date. Spatial component is working effectively – technicians are completing the forms accurately and very little follow up is needed. Quality control is ongoing.

The initial interview takes an hour as it requires going through the informed consent and disclosure forms. Uluhuktok held a community meeting with a translator and went through this for 15 people at the same time.

Lindsay noted that the program seeks ongoing support. Oceans North is prepared to contribute \$150k for the next year. The JS is planning to include a line item in their Implementation Funds budget to support the needs of this program in its entirety.

Jenn went through the GIS Support services Update and Outlook presentation with the group. She explained how she supports the JS and IRC for their spatial needs. She explained initiatives happening in the ISR and asked about the Council needs and priorities. Current priorities are to meet business requirements, secondly to carryout operations related to the IFA, and thirdly to support a culture of innovation. She provides technical support, technical writing, provides guidance and advice, and training and mentoring.

She reviewed the recovery effort for the historical kill survey. She estimates 18,000 data records for the survey have been recovered. She is also working on Best Practices Documentation, including data sharing and privacy policies. She is getting good momentum with the collection and storage of GIS data for projects that have happened in the ISR but were led by other agencies. She also undertook a platform merger to consolidate the GIS infrastructure. She is also liaising with external Inuit partners such as ITK and ICC.

Jen asked the group how she can best support the needs of the Council. The revised WCMP was discussed and how to streamline efforts. Mike Sutor noted that his office houses all of the survey data. Jenn noted that the platform is capable of storing spatial and non-spatial data.

Jenn said she wishes to be proactive about the data coming in for the harvest study. What decisions is the Council planning on leveraging this information with? Lindsay suggested leaving this question with the Council, although he noted that part of our mandate involved Inuvialuit use of the North Slope, and harvest study data is a way to track land use patterns and harvest effort. He further noted that with the Ecological Land Classification (ELC) we can monitor habitat and how wildlife respond to these changes. These two datasets (IHS and ELC) give us two lines of evidence to document environmental change.

Jenn queried whether we could link the ELC to the platform? Mike responded that this is likely possible. Todd said he could see the value in linking the two.

Lindsay noted that linking Jenn Parrot to Round River regarding the next iteration of the WCMP is important.

**March 1, 2016**

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**Lindsay Staples** (Chair) · **Chris Hunter** Government of Canada (Member) · **Danny C. Gordon** Inuvialuit Game Council (Member) · **Ernest Pokiak** Inuvialuit Game Council (Member) · **Jennifer Smith** (Secretariat) · **Christine Cleghorn** (Secretariat)

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*\*\*\*Mike Sutor attempting to fly into Inuvik today (weathered out yesterday). Todd Powell to join by telephone later this morning. \*\*\**

The Meeting was called to order at 8:40

The Council reviewed the needs of our council with respect to the CBMP and GIS services offered by Jenn Parrott. Chris commented that training for staff on the ISRP would be useful and important. He noted that the Parks Canada GIS person is up to speed with the platform. At a high level he saw the WMAC(NS) our role as that of liaison.

**Action Item 03-16-02: Write a letter to CBMP reiterating the priority of the PC harvest data for the Council, and its role as liaison regarding the TU project and the WCMP revisions. Understanding harvest assists the Council with its mandate: where it is occurring, harvest levels, which species (including muskox, caribou, & grizzly bear). Indicate that staff are interested in receiving the training modules for the ISRP.**

Danny asked about harvest levels this year for Porcupine Caribou. The Council discussed harvest reporting and the integrity of the data. Lindsay noted that the PCMB is supposed to produce its recommendations from the 2016 Annual Meeting soon. One of those is that management actions reflect that the herd remains in the green zone. Kelly Milner will be here on Thursday morning and we can ask her about harvest levels and reporting. Lindsay noted that Patrick Gruben was at the Porcupine Caribou Annual Harvest Meeting, and communication is an important focus for him. Lindsay attended for one day on behalf of the Council and then for two more days to facilitate a meeting of the Board and the signing parties in order for them to review the implementation plan. A number of changes were made to the HMP and Implementation plan. In 5 year's time there will be a major review of the HMP and Implementation Plan. In this particular discussion two big issues emerged: 1 – the need to improve harvest reporting, and 2 – the need for native user agreements. At this point there are no signed agreements. It would be timely to conclude these agreements now, while there is not the pressure of a declining herd.

Ernest commented that he thought the last caribou hunt with dogs was in the 1960s. It has been a long time since someone hunted caribou without a snowmobile.

Note: Danny or Ernest to accompany Lindsay when he goes to report to Game Council in September to promote accountability and communication between the IGC and its appointees. Also in regards to the PC AHM in the future, it will be standard procedure for the Aklavik WMAC(NS) member to attend that meeting, and if funding allows to have our second Inuvialuit member also attend.

Ernest wondered about approaches to encourage HTC Chairs and others to connect with youth. Lindsay noted that the CBM is working closely with the HTCs, and they might be able to do some education work.

### **C. Correspondence**

Lindsay reviewed incoming correspondence:

Billy Archie wrote to the Council in mid-December regarding a possible research project identifying potential risks to wildlife that use the coastline from Shingle Point to Kay Point. Lindsay reviewed how information from the TU study and CBM initiatives could fulfill this information need. He further noted that the upcoming TK work by Kim Heinemeyer at Round River could also provide information for this. The Council had a number of reflections:

- project design for something like this would be very important.
- occupancy modeling in Ivvavik with 30 cameras is challenging. They have a \$60,000-70,000 maintenance cost per year
- BREA 2 could be a source of expertise and funding for this
- interesting idea and seems like some information that would be warranted. Great to see it coming from the community.
- no major rush on this given the state of affairs in the Beaufort, but would be good to start collecting info to establish a baseline sooner than later of course, particularly if partners like Aklavik and industry are keen.
- projects like this should be industry driven usually – i.e., industry should be paying for this since they will have this specific need for their project. The funds required would be modest compared to their bigger programs. Has industry been approached for funding?
- what would be the scope of the study area? The entire YNS coast line? Some of Cameron Eckhart's work could fit nicely with the project.
- Most important though: VERY careful thought needs to be put into what will be gathered by the cameras and how the information will be used. Simply documenting the presence of a species along the YNS will not be sufficient in the calculation of compensation in the event of an oil spill. The metrics and how they can be used to estimate impacts is critical in this instance.
- could be a project led by the community in collaboration with industry and government.
- careful thought needs to be put into how data will be screened, entered, and analyzed.
- Is this is a year-round project or focused on ice? Not sure what maintenance of the cameras will be required along the actual coastline where salt spray, high winds,

and driving snow can be expected. Coastal erosion and storms could also create a real challenge in keeping things working.

- the project could create an opportunity to get Aklavik community members out on the YNS more frequently which is a priority for the community. Are there linkages here to CBMP?

**Action Item 03-16-03: Reply to Billy Archie's research proposal.**

Danny discussed nesting birds on the YNS. He talked about a tripod that was set up at the Blow River that various birds have used to nest in subsequent years. He would like to walk from Kay Point to Shingle and observe nesting birds.

Hughes Lantuit Permit- Hughes has initiated the permitting process in Ivvavik, which includes snowmobile access to the coast in Ivvavik park. Parks Canada would like to permit this activity given the research interest of the Council. Although motorized activity would normally not be allowed in the park, in this case it could be permitted given that it is the very fringe of the coast and the research interests of the Council. Parks has requested AHTC support for the project and an Inuvialuit wildlife monitor for the project.

**Action Item 03-16-04: Write a letter to Yukon Government to include Parks Canada in grizzly bear management plan.**

Tuk Road/ Husky Lakes- Since last fall the EIRB has been contemplating how to manage use of Husky Lakes. In the IFA there is a requirement for a management plan for this area, with criteria to be developed by the EIRB and the plan to be developed by ILA. ILA did develop a draft management plan without incorporating these criteria about 10 years ago. Ernest commented that with the road being completed soon, there should at least be an interim plan. It will be more difficult to do anything after the road is open.

Rusty Blackbird SAR Draft Report- Chris noted that this bird uses boreal forest and most of the threats at in the USA in their winter range.

*\*\*\*Todd Powell joined the call 9:30am\*\*\**

**D. Report from the Chair**

PBTC

The Council hosted this year's PBTC meeting this year in Whitehorse. It went extremely well logistically and the members appreciated the efforts of our committee. Todd Powell, Tom Jung, and Nicole McCutcheon all attended parts of the meeting, along with Ramona who is the YG member. Prior to the formal business of the meeting, the first day was devoted to a workshop about the use of TK in PB Status Assessments. Dr. Brenda Parlee from U of Alberta came and gave a presentation as did Dominic Henri from Environment Canada. Moshi Koterik from NTI also provided expertise. The Committee was briefed on the ISR TK study. A set of guidelines that PBTC could adopt when it comes to assessing TK studies were developed in advance of the workshop and used in the course of the

meeting. Next year these guidelines will be finalized, based on comments from the members.

With regard to South Beaufort, last year the discussion on SB and the Bromhagin paper was deferred to this year. Todd Atwood from USGS gave a presentation on the Bromhagin paper, after which there was a response from YG and GNWT. The discussion left off with a decision to defer a determination on status until next year, when a full day will be dedicated to this topic. After the PBTC meeting the Inuvialuit - Inupiat Agreement Commissioners met to discuss the merits of doing a population survey for the North and South Beaufort. The parties agreed to pursue an aerial program. It was left to develop a research design for this program, and try to identify sources of funding. Jodie, Marsha, and Ramona will look at a written rebuttal to the Bromhagin paper.

Lindsay briefly touched on the issue of a conflict between the the western SB Boundary, as identified by the US-Russia Chuchki Sea Agreement (extending to Barrow) and the western boundary as established by Inupiat-Inuvialuit commissioners, the IGC and IFA co-management partners . This was raised at the PBTC meeting and at the I-I meeting. The USFWS is under direction to establish regulatory boundaries for the Chuchkhi Sea that would extend over to Barrow. The new planned aerial survey will be the existing South Beaufort population area: Icy Cape to east of Ulukhaktok.

The aerial survey is proposed as a multi-year study so that variations in weather could be accounted for.

Eric Regher provided a presentation at the I-I meeting that discussed his paper concerning the feasibility of a harvest on a declining polar bear population.

#### Joint Secretariat Board meeting

Lindsay provided a briefing from his attendance at the JS Board meeting in Edmonton in February.

#### Round River Conservation Society

The Council has a workplan, proposal and a budget to undertake a traditional knowledge project to document TK on focal species that were identified in Akalvik by the HTC. Kim Heinemeyer has developed an interview guide and agreed to follow the ISR Guidelines for the Conduct of TK studies. There is a large focus on range and habitat use by season. Kim would like to collect TK info about wildlife habitats to project across the landscape that the ELC describes across the entire North Slope. This program would be the last big data collection piece in Aklavik for the YNS wildlife conservation and management plan. The Council would then have the ELC, TU and TK information that would feed into the Round River analysis of YNS conservation requirements.

Danny cautioned that wildlife are changing habits now. Two examples are caribou and geese.



RRCS still requires money to carry on with this work and conversations are being lined up with funders and foundations.

**E. ISR polar bear management plan**

The Council has submitted comments to the GNWT but has not reviewed the threats section. Todd will provide comments.

**F. Grizzly Bear Management Plan Engagement**

The intent of the letter the council send was to indicate how management arrangements under the IFA are quite different than other land claim agreements and this might lend itself to a separate section in the plan.

Lindsay reminded the council how Ivvavik Park has a different management regime as well and wondered how this would be treated in the planning process.

Todd described the process that is envisioned for collecting information to feed into the planning of this document. After this process, a version of the plan would be drafted which would go back out for comment.

The formal invite for YNS input would be PC, AHTC, Yukon Parks, and possibly others.

Chris said that for the Ivvavik park management planning process they are looking at pulling together a smaller group of management partners like a steering committee which could be an option to consider.

Todd suggested a regional workshop with our management partners could be considered. There will be high-level management goals that come out of the consultation process. Each Yukon region should have the opportunity to lay out its unique concerns. Not planning a big public workshop at this time. Danny thought it would be a good idea to have the meeting open to general members from Aklavik. Christine mentioned that through the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board process there was some opportunity for public comment that didn't include Aklavik, so there is an argument to have a public meeting.

Lindsay talked about the grizzly bear management regime in place on the YNS that has been working well for a number of years.

**G. Grizzly bear research project**

Todd provided an update about where things were at in the population analysis. There are four recommendations that came from the reviewers. There are two recommendations that they are moving ahead with now towards a final report. There could be gains in doing additional modeling work to investigate the covariates used and the relationship to caribou to see if it would add anything. They are moving forward to finalize the report.

Recommendation #3 - complete the modeling of caribou as a driver in the system on a longer term basis.

Recommendation #4 clarify status of collared bears during that time.

Lindsay suggested that from a management standpoint the deeper analysis may not be necessary to meet harvest management requirements. The original intentions of the Yukon North Slope grizzly bear study appear to be overshadowed now with a level of technical analysis that is forestalling overdue updated management requirements. The current work is a great improvement on the previous research from the 1970s.

Todd said that it comes down to the confidence in the population estimate.

Lindsay spoke about the adaptability of the management regime to address confidence in the population number.

Todd agreed with Lindsay's comments, but noted that there are greater things here than the results of one study, and that YG is interested in bringing closure to the study and integrating it into the harvest regime and upcoming grizzly bear management plan. He noted that it would likely confound the issue to try to deal with the grizzly bear study at the same time as working on the grizzly bear management plan.

Danny reflected that Aklavik is being really patient. Every once in a while he gets a hard time about it. He believes strongly in the management regime and in the community's interest in making sure that grizzly bears are with us forever.

Ernest noted that for a 6 year grizzly bear study, maybe one year to write the report would be reasonable. Aklavik has waited a long time. Someone needs to go to Aklavik and tell them what is going on. Danny noted that at the start people said it would be 10 years to complete the study.

Chris reflected that the the work appeared close to being completed. He felt that the first 2 recommendations about the reanalysis of the data and the methodology might be worth pursuing immediately to increase the confidence in the population estimate. He asked if recommendation #4 could have a significant impact on the confidence interval. He noted that the data is already much better than the existing data from Nagy's 1970s work. As council, we need to understand the research and where the confidence and the weaknesses are. The Council could work with a report on this basis.

Lindsay reiterated that it is going to be very difficult to have a conversation about the proposed Yukon grizzly bear management plan in Aklavik without the results of the grizzly bear study being presented in the community. The Council needs to deal with this issue prior to dealing with the management plan.

Todd thanked everyone for their comments, and agreed that that we don't want to compromise the Yukon grizzly bear management planning process by confounding it with the study.

Management recommendations based on TK and the study will be generated by the Council. These would feed into the grizzly plan. These would be based on the best information available to us. The Council needs to address this matter prior to having the conversation about the Yukon-wide gizzly bear management plan.

Todd wondered how comfortable is Aklavik going to be if the Yukon doesn't convene a community workshop on the Yukon grizzly bear management plan at the same time they are occurring in other areas of the Yukon? Is there going to be additional level of consternation here?

Todd confirmed the process of having a workshop in Aklavik to convey the YNS study outcomes. Lindsay suggested that the Council may want to also include the WMAC(NWT). We may need two sessions to work this through and we want this to happen as soon as we can. Tomorrow when we meet with the AHTC we can tell them that as a council we are pressing to get the YNS grizzly bear report and discuss management recommendations.

Lindsay mentioned that over the last 5 years there is a significant under-harvest that is cumulative. From a management standpoint an ongoing under-harvest should buy some comfort on the management side.

Danny said even for himself he is thinking different that 5 years ago. In the last two years the have only got 4-5 bears in Aklavik. People aren't finding them or even tracks in some cases. Out of that Danny thinks he wouldn't support an increase in the quota, he is seeing less bears over past few years. Lindsay said this is a really important point: Inuvialut harvest reporting with grizzly bears on the North Slope is a complete count.

Todd clarified that the next step is to have a discussion on management recommendations. Lindsay added that we also need a plain language summary that talks about management implications and recommendation and findings.

Danny noted that the rest of the AHTC may not agree with his perspective on this issue. Danny notes he is speaking from conservation.

*\*\*\*3:00 Parks Canada joined the meeting- Diane Wilson, Pete Sinkins, ecologist for the park, Nelson Perry, Renee Wissink, Dave Tavares (Resource conservation manager)\*\*\**

The Council and Parks Canada did introductions.

#### **H. Parks Canada Contaminated Sites Update**

Nelson Perry provided an update on contaminated sites: Roland Bay and Spring River abandoned exploration wells. The work on these sites has been done by the Royal Military College (RMC).

The Roland Bay site is just inland and Spring River is 15km southwest of the Beaufort Sea.

Nelson explained the work that Kavik completed at Spring River found levels of metals and contaminants. RMC went back to delineate contaminants and to better determine levels and extent of contaminants. The results could allow Parks Canada to access other

federal funds for clean up. 55 soil samples were collected and assessed. Arsenic is naturally high in the area. Boron was also high which may also be natural occurring. Selenium could also be naturally high. Other containments are thought to be associated with batteries.

The only debris found was at the surface. It look like the site could be closed which means taking it off of the federal contaminated sites. There remains a possibility that remediation would take place.

Danny asked if there was a sump left on the site, as is often the case with abandoned older sites. Danny asked if there were any risks to wildlife. Nelson thinks there is likely a sump located there. Most wells drilled up here had the debris left in the well and buried.

Roland Bay site- Drilled in 1973 by Imperial. In 2010 kavik did the same preliminary work as Spring River. RMC did a sampling program to delineate contaminates: 46 soil samples showed exceedances. There were no containments found in the water. Roland Bay site had tar-like samples and plant samples were collected to see if this was getting into the food chain. Report for human health and risk assessment is still in draft. RMC has the reports drafted and now they are going through the health Canada and DFO processes on these reports.

The problem often with northern contaminated sites is that they we can't be closed due to the presence of contaminants, even though the human risk from exposure is low to non-existent and there is very limited risk to environmental transport.

There could be decisions to leave contaminates on site because there may be more risk in removing it and causing more disturbance.

Stokes and Komakuk contaminated sites in Ivvavik - DND doing long term monitoring on these.

Danny says he doesn't have concerns about Spring River sites. However, he wasn't aware about the Roland Bay scenario. There are broad whitefish in a lake behind there. Danny catches Broad Whitefish at Ptarmingan Bay and he thinks they come from that lake behind Roland Bay. He is concerned that contaminates might be draining into that lake. RMC doesn't think that the contamination is coming from the creek.

These reports will be done by end of March and then a presentation will be made in Aklavik.

Mike wondered about what is inhibiting the movement of contaminates. Nelson said that the clean sites are 40 years old, and Parks Canada thinks that contaminants are not moving anymore. Based on 22 sample of cotton grass no contaminants were found.

#### **I. Resource Conservation research and monitoring update -Pete Sinkins**

Pete explained the two tools that are employed to look at park health. 1) is the EI monitoring ( Long term, continually funded ) , and 2) conservation science project (additionally funding usually required, externally funded often) and designed to answer specific concerns or questions often raised by partners(see attached presentation). In the

tundra ecosystem the indicators are caribou population (through the collaring program, research with YG and other PC Technical Committee agencies, and through PCMB), breeding birds (through audio plots in spring), permafrost (data loggers on North Slope and Margaret Lake), vegetation change (river-based monitoring trip), and landscape-level vegetation change (satellite monitoring). For freshwater ecosystem the indicators are water quality, benthic macro-invertebrates, and water temperature (all monitored through rafting trip on the river), as well as streamflow.

Diane Wilson discussed changes to the Firth River-based monitoring for this year. There are seven bookings which involved paying guests participating in the river monitoring trip. There will also be a cultural host from Aklavik.

Pete described the river-based monitoring in detail.

Diane asked WMAC(NS) how the Council would like to hear back about the monitoring results.

Pete reviewed conservation science projects. The focus of these projects is to address issues emerging from the EI program, or to follow up on partner questions and concerns.

Raptor surveys- was conducted in partnership with YG last year, and is undertaken every 5 years. This was reported on at the Council's December meeting. The wildlife cameras project was reviewed. This winter the effectiveness of the project will be assessed. This report is in draft and is being reviewed by Pete and others. Motion-triggered data includes carnivore occupancy with a focus on bears, general movement of caribou, elusive species, and potential rare species. Daily photos can act like mini weather stations capturing extreme weather events and real snow-free days. The report tries to answer questions like, "Can we reliably detect changes in occupancy?" In Waterton National Park, they can detect a 25% decrease in occupancy with an 80% degree of confidence in bear. Ivvavik is ecologically different with different bear dynamics. Pete is working through this report to decide what next steps are.

He noted that the number of grizzly bear observations increased this year. This is from the cameras being wrapped with metal so they could withstand grizzly bear tampering. The camera post was also changed to be able to handle a bear or a muskox rubbing up against it.

#### Muskox- Caribou Interaction

1- examine the role of Muskox in what seems to be a change in caribou distribution on the coast and mountains.

2 – address concerns that recent muskox population counts have been underestimates.

It has been suggested that there appears to be a strong inverse relationship between caribou and muskox populations. This has been the experience with Peary Caribou but might not be the case with Porcupine Caribou. What happens when Porcupine Caribou and muskox interact at the local level has not been well documented in the scientific literature.

In 2015 Parks Canada deployed 8 collars on female muskox in Ivvavik and on Herschel. Data shows that this covered 7 groups. This collaring activity was over a 3-day period in the fall of 2015. Collars will help to find animals that are tucked into the mountains during the survey. Collars are scheduled to drop off in 2020. Mike Sutor pointed out that at the PCMB Annual Harvest Meeting the GRRB reported harvest on muskox. In addition, PC contracted ABEK to mine their database for information on muskox habitat, range and behavior. The ABEKS data was requested for the whole area, not just the North Slope. In 2016 Parks Canada is hoping to deploy another 6-8 collars to make sure that they are covering all the groups of muskox. Collar data will be used for the 2016 population and composition surveys for the NS muskox.

Pete is also working on a predator research project about daily, seasonal, and annual changes in wolf diet across barren-ground caribou habitat. This project is being led by Jodie Pongracz at ENR, using 311 wolf carcasses from across the ISR. She is doing stomach content analysis, and stable isotope analysis. 116 of the wolves were harvested in the Porcupine Caribou range.

Peter reviewed Dolly Varden work to estimate the population size for the Firth River and Joe Creek. Preliminary estimate is around 107,000 (for both rivers, combined). Dolly Varden under the federal Species-at-Risk Act is listed as “Special Concern.” There are significant declines in other systems.

Parks Canada has heard in Aklavik and with our management partners the following things, and we strive to respect these directions and to incorporate these into our work:

- Desire for community members to be more involved with research and monitoring
- Increase use and reporting of TK
- Focus on technologies that will minimize animal disturbance.
- Focus research on species important to the communities.

**March 3, 2016**

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The Chair called the meeting to order at 8:40am.

Muskox Plan – Mike Sutor and Lindsay Staples to have a short conversation about the management goal, then on to finalize the plan.

Chris Hunter provided an update for the Ivvavik Management Plan. 6 wall tents to be installed by June 4 at Imniarvik. Improvements to the bunkhouse, the cookhouse, and the

decks are underway and in the design phase. The construction contract will be completed by May. Parks met with IGC in December and discussed the agreement to cross-appoint Yukon Conservation Officers. The IGC did not raise significant concerns and suggested that the same presentation be provided to Aklavik and Inuvik HTC's. This meeting is scheduled in Aklavik on March 14.

Ivvavik NP Management Plan. The SOPR is signed off and approved. PC would like to form an advisory committee for the new MP. This committee would meet several times in Inuvik in April and May this year. Looking at 3 contractors who could facilitate this conversation, and then take the guidance and content that comes from those meetings to draft the management plan. The composition of the advisory committee could be about 10 people, with 5 of them being from Parks Canada, 1 IRC rep, 1 WMACNS rep, possibly a local guide outfitter, possible representation from YG Parks? Someone designated by ACC/AHTC? The Council supported this idea. Chris noted that they are hoping that the bulk of the content would be completed prior to the busy summer season.

*\*\*\*Todd Powell joined the call\*\*\**

**J. IFA Research Funds**

Todd withdrew the proposal for the Linking Vegetation Communities to Wildlife Values proposal. The value of this project is \$59,400. He noted that the ELC model building is to be completed in the summer and holds priority. Pursuing this project at this time is premature. Lindsay noted that yesterday there was some discussion in Aklavik about having a fall meeting there. This might be a time to present the ELC. Lindsay noted that the Council is hoping to present the completed YNS Traditional Use Study in Aklavik by December. There could be some possibilities for collaborating on a joint meeting in Aklavik in the late fall.

Todd indicated that YG's preference is to put \$25,000 into polar bear inventory work (likely as a contribution to Marsha's air contracts), and then allocate the remainder (19,400) to fuel support.

The Council supported this initiative. This would be a total allocation of \$136,000.

Motion 03-16-02: to adopt the IFA Research table as revised, and defer \$24k from EC and PC for Borderlands and possibly CBM

*Moved by Ernest*

*Seconded by Danny*

*Motion carried.*

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 2016/17
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
Polar Bear Survey				\$25,000	\$25,000	Support
Fuel Placement				19,600	\$19,400	Support
YNS Muskox Diet + Ground Based Survey				\$15,000	\$15,000	Support
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$35,000</b>	<b>\$19,000</b>		<b>\$151,000</b>	<b>\$190,000</b>	

### K. Financial Review

Jennifer reviewed the financial position of the Council up to Feb 29. She discussed allocations to the end of the year, and demonstrated that we will likely have an \$8,000 surplus to carry into next year. The Council was supportive of this approach.

Motion 03-16-3: to accept budget as tabled, with note that the intent is to reduce the excess of revenues over expenditures to the greatest extent possible

Moved by Chris

Seconded by Todd

Motion carried.

\*\*\*Kelly Milner arrived at the meeting\*\*\*

Jennifer presented the 2016/17 notional budget. She showed what it would look like with and without supplemental funding, (\$215,000 base with \$190,000 additional supplemental funding).

Motion 03-16-04 to accept 2016/17 as presented

Moved by Ernest Pokiak



*Seconded by Todd Powell*  
*Motion carried.*

**L. Arctic Borderlands Ecological Knowledge Society – Kelly Milner**

Kelly presented emerging directions with ABEKS. She explained that ABEKS is a 20-year program with all user communities of the PCH. She indicated that there have been lots of questions with regard to the utility of the ABEKSs data with respect to wildlife management decision-making.

One of the big projects this year is to access data coming out of ABEKS for the Porcupine Caribou Technical Committee (PCTC). In 2010 Don Russell started an analysis to determine what is useful about ABEKS data for PCH management.

ABEKS doesn't want to be duplicating efforts and there may be other organizations positioned that better provide these services. The report to the PCMB will be done at fiscal year end.

Ernest asked if there is baseline information already in all the communities. Kelly said that the ABEKS data are good at showing trends, but it depends on the questions.

The strengths of the ABEKS data are that community observations are grounded and can be an early flag of environmental change and disturbances.

Kelly said that a way to look at what ABEKS does is that it provides a service to customers. Now the customer is PCTC.

Danny said that in the past few years there have been good changes in correcting who has been interviewed as active harvesters. Kelly said that ABEKS is looking for people who are active on the land, not just harvesting of wildlife species.

Interviews are shorter now: they used to be 2 hours and now are an hour; but are still long.

Kelly said that there are questions about the structure of the program and what is the best place for it. There are many pieces of data that are never looked at or used. Lindsay spoke about the challenge with governance of ABEKS and having a good hard look at it.

Danny asked how the coordination is going with Alaska. Arctic Village and Kaktovik are involved. They collect information, but not every year. There has been some renewed interest this year from them in reporting for Porcupine caribou.

Kelly said that ABEKS hasn't spent much money on analysis in the past and she thinks that this will be part of the service that ABEKS could provide. Mike said being clear about what the analysis and data can and cannot provide would be helpful.

The council talked about the budgetary picture with ABEKS and CBMP and the tradeoffs.

**Action 03-16-05: Further to the outcome of the ABEKS review to determine the utility of ABEKS data and the opportunities provided by the IFA-funded Community-Based Monitoring Program, the Council will draft a letter to the ABEKS and PCMB boards regarding PCMB sponsorship of the program in recognition of the merits of a refocused program that utilizes local knowledge in monitoring habitat changes across the PCH range**

\*\*\**Danny left the meeting at 11am*\*\*\*

\*\*\**Todd left the call at 10:30*\*\*\*

#### **M. Office transition**

Jen reported that a number of people have approached the office about the impending vacancy of one of the shared executive directors positions. The secretariat will post the position next week, and keep it posted for 2-3 weeks, and then conduct interviews. There is uncertainty in the amount of paid-time the Council can offer in the absence of supplementary funding. The posting will likely refer to 0.6 position with the likelihood of increased hours.

Hiring committee would be Ernest, Lindsay, and either Craig or Todd/ Christine.

#### **N. Upcoming meetings**

Summer meeting: Shingle or Imniarvik.

Teleconference possible March 15<sup>th</sup> afternoon to discuss:

- minutes, action items
- muskox management plan
- summer meeting planning.

*Motion 03-16-0 to adjourn the meeting*

*Moved by: Mike*

*Seconded by: Ernest*

*Motion Carried. Meeting adjourned*