



## MEETING MINUTES

### WMAC (NS) Quarterly Meeting<sup>[1]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>

July 7-8, 2017

High Country Inn, Whitehorse, YT

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**Lindsay Staples** (Chair), **Ernest Pokiak** Inuvialuit Game Council (Member), **Todd Powell** Yukon Government (Member), **Craig Machtans** Government of Canada (Alternate), **Danny C. Gordon** Inuvialuit Game Council (Member) **Kelly Milner** (Staff), **Jennifer Smith** (Staff), **Carrie Mierau** (Yukon Parks) **Mike Suitor** (North Yukon Regional Biologist), **Dave Tavares** (Government of Canada)

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#### July 7, 2017

##### A. Call to Order<sup>[1]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>

Lindsay Staples (Chair) called the meeting to order at 9:05 am and welcomed the new Canada member, David Tavares, to the meeting. Lindsay thanked everyone for diverting the meeting from Herschel Island. He thanked Carrie for being able to join us.

##### B. Review and Approval of Agenda

The chair reviewed the agenda, highlighting the key items.

**Motion 2017-07-01: Motion to accept the agenda as tabled**

**Moved by Dave Tavares. Seconded by Danny Gordon.**

##### C. Herschel Island Management Plan Review- Carrie Mierau, Yukon Parks

Carrie Mierau, Chair of the group reviewing the Herschel Park management plan, briefed the Council on the group's progress. A draft of the new plan has been completed and is currently being reviewed by the parties, including WMACNS. A new planner, Brian

Johnston, has been hired to complete the plan review process.

Council discussed the key goals of the plan and provided some general comments.

- Revise the vision. It is too long and wordy.
- The entire preamble needs revision.
- Important to keep Inuvialuit use separate from other uses (public, research, etc...)
- Plan should also acknowledge the connection of other Inuvialuit communities to Herschel Island (e.g. Tuktoyaktuk).
- Plan should include a mechanism to measure success and track progress.
- Park permits should be used more strategically and could be a method of tracking activities or requiring different actions (e.g. hiring cooks).
- The difference between the budgets available for Herschel and Ivvavik is significant. More effort should be made to increase the budget for Herschel to reflect the management needs for the island to bring it in line with “national park” management.
- Cruise ship management is a key activity that should be covered in the plan. A real strategy for this needs to be developed to ensure Inuvialuit can benefit from cruise ship activities. Connect with the ISR Cruise Ship strategy.
- The historic buildings on the island are not designated as historic resources. This needs to be addressed.
- Partnership is a key element and needs its own goal/objectives. The plan may need a new goal around engagement.
- The economic benefits section is a great improvement.
- Goals need to be more explicit and add more description as to what is meant. A good editor could improve the plan.
- Plan should include an annual meeting of partners to review the plan and its activities and develop work plans for the upcoming year.
- Researchers should be able to refer to the new Yukon North Slope Wildlife Conservation and Management Plan to identify key research needs.
- There is no approved interpretation plan for the park. The current plan is still a draft.
- Implementation of the plan needs to recognize the ongoing role of WMACNS.
- There are sensitivities around Inuvialuit names. More care needs to be taken to ensure at least two Inuvialuit review any names that are incorporated. Consider referring the place name review to the Inuvialuit Cultural Centre.

Comments on the draft will be reviewed and incorporated into a draft that will be sent out for public review in September. A final draft will be ready for WMACNS review in late fall. The intention is to have WMACNS make its final recommendation on the plan to the Minister at the December 2017 meeting.

**Action Item 2017-07-01: WMAC review draft Hershel plan and provide comments to staff by July 21.**

**Action Item 2017-07-02: Staff to follow up with the new Parks planner regarding previous comments on the plan.**

**Action Item 2017-07-03: Council to review new Herschel Interpretation Plan and prioritize the items in the plan during the review. Provide comments to staff to be reviewed as a group in September.**

WMACNS will ensure IRC is apprised of plan and that the Inuvialuit and the agreement have strong standing, culturally, historically, and economically.

#### **D. Regional Biologist Report – Mike Sutor**

- 1. Muskox** - Photographs of muskox satellite collar groups were taken this spring to look at calf productivity. This was a quick project because planes are already in the area looking for caribou. A muskox composition survey was carried out at same time to ground truth the photos. The results showed good calf productivity but a high yearling mortality. Over time, photos could be a useful method for keeping track of the groups.
- 2. Caribou** – This year the calving, post calving and photo census surveys were successful. The results are still being processed, but things are looking very positive and the herd appears to still be growing. There is a plan to do a rut survey this year that will help provide an excellent baseline.

Several other research programs are underway. A graduate student is working on a project to determine how important specific locations are for calf survival. Mark Hebbelwhite from the University of Montana is working on a habitat model for the Porcupine Caribou herd in support of the Wildlife Conservation and Management Plan. University of Fairbanks is developing a large scale lichen model for the Porcupine herd.

Native user agreements under the PCMB are being developed. Draft agreement should be completed by December. There is general agreement to generate an understanding that allows user groups to overcome some of the language challenges in the PCMA.

Sensitive Habitats document revision work is being completed by the PCTC.

- 3. Sheep** – A survey of sheep in the Richardson Mountains was carried out in partnership with GRRB and GNWT. This survey saw a much higher number of sheep as well as a higher ewe/lamb ratio, and a higher ram ratio. GRRB wants movement on the sheep plan, and to finalize it.

A sheep survey was carried out in Ivavik Park in partnership with Parks Canada. In total, over 200 sheep were detected, up from 85 seen 17 years ago. There are lots of cracks and caves in the mountains, so it is easy for sheep to hide, so there is a chance they were not detected before. It looks like there is reduced hunting

pressure on the border due to the lack of full curl rams observed there.

## **E. Chairs Report**

There has been a significant focus on reorganizing and structuring the Joint Secretariat board over the past year. This work is now coming to a close. A new Executive Director is in place and staff seems to be adjusting to changes well. A full set of financial statements has been produced and is being reviewed. A new overtime policy will be coming into effect and an implementation plan has been developed to work through the rest of the recommendations from the organizational and senior management reviews conducted by Stratos. Overall there is a greater commitment to organizational transparency. Canada has indicated it will be providing an increase of \$1,222,222 per annum subject to FDDIPI to the Joint Secretariat to carry out its business. It was left up to the committees and the Joint Secretariat Board to determine how the money would be allocated amongst the Committees.

There is a new commitment for the committees to collaborate more. WMAC(NS) already has a good relationship with the WMAC(NWT) and will be working to establish one with Fisheries Joint Management Committee. Each year, the committee chairs will table their priorities at the Joint Secretariat board level for review and identification of potential areas for collaboration.

Under the new funding arrangement, Canada has committed \$260K per year to the Community Based Monitoring Program. There is a need to work with the Community Based Monitoring Program in order to clarify the process for WMACNS to get access to harvest data. Inuvialuit commitments under the Porcupine Caribou Harvest Management Plan are still not being met through this project.

**Action Item 2017-07-04: Mike S, Jenn P, Marsha B and WMACNS staff meet with CBMP to work out reporting requirements for the PCHMP. Invite new CBMP coordinator to our Sept meeting.**

**Action Item 2017-07-05: WMACNS Staff to provide CBMP documents to Craig M/David T.**

A meeting was held with the Porcupine Caribou Management Board (PCMB) Executive Director to discuss WMACNS's decision to not fund Arctic Borderlands Ecological Knowledge Society (ABEKS). Lindsay was able to clarify WMACNS's concerns and provide more insight to PCMB. Environment Canada will need to have more of a discussion internally and with PCMB to try and determine next steps for ABEKS.

**July 7, 2017**

**Chairs Report Continued**

The Chair of the Inuvialuit Game Council (IGC), Patrick Gruben, has resigned. An election will take place on July 24 and there are nine potential candidates. The IGC is meeting in Whitehorse in September and has sent a letter to Yukon Government encouraging them to send representatives.

Lindsay met with Yukon Environment Minister Frost to update her on WMACNS priorities. The meeting briefing note and follow-up correspondence are included in the meeting package.

Information on the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency regulatory review of CEAA 2012 is included in the information package. The draft discussion paper has not been well received by indigenous groups. There is a follow up bilateral meeting with federal officials and IGC/IRC and co-management representatives in early August among kto discuss concerns arising from the federal regulatory reviews.

## **F. Staff report**

**COSEWIC** - The Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) met in Whitehorse in April and held a one-day meeting with wildlife boards and committees. A focus of the discussion was how to bring Traditional Knowledge more meaningfully into wildlife assessments.

**IFA 101** – The basic website structure of the annotated Inuvialuit Final Agreement (IFA) is now complete and live at IFA101.ca. The Inuvialuit Regional Corporation will take over its maintenance and will be responsible for next steps.

**Action Item 2017-07-06: WMACNS send a letter to IRC suggesting a course model or workshop for IFA education led by IRC or IGC. Send digital copy of Parks Canada course to Parks Canada and IRC.**

**WMACNS Website** – The website has run into operational issues around functionality. A letter will be sent to the developer documenting the failings and a new request for proposals will be sent out to re-start the process. The new contract will include a hold - back on payment and a testing phase.

**Herschel Island Books** – Several boxes have been shipped and more boxes are ready for send out. Council members are asked to provide any suggestions for distribution.

**Newsletter** - Imniarvik- meaning, “where sheep are harvested.” Redo in the next newsletter.

## **G. Administration**

**Review of Minutes** – The draft minutes from the March 2017 meeting were reviewed and a motion was made to accept them with no changes.

**Motion 2017-07-02:** Accept the March 2017 minutes as tabled. Moved by Craig Machtans, seconded by Ernest Pokiak.

**Review of Action Items** - The Council reviewed outstanding action items.

**Budget Review** – The Council’s current working budget was reviewed. The Council will continue to operate according to the existing contribution agreement until a new contribution agreement is finalized. It is expected there will be a significant increase in the Council’s budget based on discussions with the federal government. However, no formal notification has been received to date. WMACNS staff presented options for how the additional funding may be spent but the Council will have a more formal review once the new budget is confirmed.

**Action Item – Draft a letter to Aklavik HTC in response to their funding question. Confirm they will be receiving additional funds that they will be able to use to cover costs of special meetings and other activities.**

**Financial Statements** – the Council’s 2016/17 financial statements were reviewed. Several minor changes were noted.

**Resolution: Subject to final correction of the revenue income from YG for 2016/17, to accept the financial statements as revised.**

Moved by Todd Powell, seconded by Ernest Pokiak. Motion carried.

## **H. Report from Members**

### **Dave Tavares – Parks Canada**

Ivvavik Management plan is now out for public consultation with comments due by July 15. WMACNS can provide any comments now or when the final version comes back to the Council in September for final approval.

A new Superintendent will be in place by August. An update of Parks Canada work is scheduled for the December meeting of WMACNS. These projects include cooperative sheep survey, Dolly Varden surveys, Ecological Integrity monitoring, Firth River monitoring, permafrost monitoring, and cultural resources management. Through this work, Parks is looking to provide more opportunities for community members to see these cultural sites and have employment.

The remote camera project has been reviewed and appears to be working, but some minor changes are required. This year’s breeding bird survey indicates a decrease in song birds.

**Action Item 2017-07-09: Dave and Craig to review information on songbird numbers in Ivavik and report back at September meeting.**

Base camp trips are also going well. There has been an increased level of professionalism and they have hired staff with a guiding background. The Aklavik community members have experience now too and the feedback has been good. The facility is working well is better able to host visitors and hold meetings. However, it is now a lot more labor intensive to open, close and maintain the base camp.

### **Craig Machtans – Environment Canada**

Environment Canada currently is focused on caribou work and there are several funding programs this year related to barren ground caribou. This could be an opportunity for some bigger projects, possibly even a range-wide Traditional Knowledge study?

The existing shorebird data held by Environment Canada can be put into an Resource Selection Functional model to help support the Wildlife Conservation and Management Plan. Environment Canada is proposing the money identified for digitizing the bird book be put towards this project instead.

**Motion 2017-07-03: IFA Funds identified for bird book will be applied to RSF modeling instead.**

**Moved by Todd Powell, Seconded by Ernest Pokiak.**

### **Todd Powell – Yukon Government**

The Department of Fisheries and Oceans is leading a process to develop a Dolly Varden management plan required through the Species at Risk listing process. Rare ecosystem project is underway and through this process there will be an identification of rare ecosystems on the Yukon North Slope.

The Yukon grizzly bear plan is still under development. There will be a planning meeting in the next week (Todd and Kelly to attend). A public comment process was just completed and there was lots of support to stop the hunting of bears along roadsides. The workshop next week will lay the ground work for an initial draft to be circulated to participants.

Old fuel caches were removed from the Blow River in March. Parks Canada helped to ensure the barrels were successfully removed. Mike and Dave identified two additional fuel caches (Barn Mountains and Komakuk).

## **I. Correspondence**

The Council reviewed incoming, outgoing and informational correspondence. All correspondence is included as an appendix to these minutes.

## **J. Wildlife Conservation and Management Plan**

Lindsay briefed the council on the workshop held in May with Round River Conservation Studies (RRCS). The intention is to complete the project within the next two years. There was agreement on the key elements for the Decision Support Tool and that WMAC NS would be primarily responsible for drafting the overall plan.

RRCS provided a revised budget and items that can be done by WMACNS or supported by one of the parties were identified. WMACNS contributions to RRCS work will be determined based on the pending final approved budget.

WMACNS staff will begin work on a revised Volume 1 of the plan and create a rolling draft of Volume 2 based on the approved Table of Contents presented to the council. The challenge will be to connect the themes identified through each of the main chapters so the plan is more integrated.

It was suggested that another document (Volume 3) should be developed that is a compendium of all studies compiled by the Council along with all other evidence based research conducted on the Yukon North Slope. This document could be developed by RRCS.

**Action item- WMACNS staff and Chair to develop engagement strategy for review at the September meeting. (add Ec Dev, ECO, Tourism, ADFG, Vuntut, GTC)**

**Action Item – WMACNS staff to begin drafting of Volume 1 and 2. Contact RRCS regarding Volume 3.**

**Action Item - Invite Maurice Colporn to WMAC on final results of the survey – email Maurice re final results.**

**Motion 2017-07-04 WMACNS will commit \$60K towards the RRCS work to initiate round 3 of the work plan before release of the funds. Funding needs to be linked to discrete deliverables (e.g. Grizzly Bear RSF) and have clear timelines and reporting milestones.**

**Moved by Craig Machtans, Seconded by Todd Powell.**

## **K. HTC Bylaws**

The Council received correspondence from AHTC requesting clarification if Yukon Government can enforce the grizzly bear quota. Conservation Services informed them that there is no regulation under the Yukon Wildlife Act and that would need to be created in order for the bylaw to be enforceable. WMACNS previously assumed there



already was a regulation in place. Under the IFA and Part 13 of the Yukon Wildlife Act, WMACNS must make a direct recommendation to the Minister of Environment to create the regulation. Since this will be the first time this process is triggered, the Council would like clarification on what the process will be for the Minister to consider the recommendation. It appears that the current regulation process established to meet UFA standards would not apply in this case.

**Action Item –WMACNS staff to draft letter to AHTC to confirm interest in establishing a regulation under the Yukon Wildlife Act to enforce HTC bylaws.**

**Action Item – Todd to work with Justice department to clarify the process for reviewing and approving WMACNS recommendations regarding regulations to the Minister.**

**Action item – Establish small working group to address this issue (Todd to lead, WMACNS staff support).**

## **L. Muskox**

WMACNS has a final draft muskox framework, but it needs to be reviewed by the AHTC and the community. A workshop and public meeting will be held in fall 2017 to complete this process. The Council discussed current community perspectives on muskox and how to engage with the community to move ahead positively to address all views. The plan is to go into to community, have a facilitated discussion and develop a research plan to address the concerns.

The main points are to highlight the value of the species on the Yukon North Slope including: research, qiviut, and a potential food source.

Workshop components will include:

- Explanation of work to date
- Framework Overview
- Management Overview
- Research Needs

Participants should include: WMAC(NS), WMAC(NWT), AHTC, Parks Canada, Yukon Government, GNWT, IGC, GRRB, Graduate Student (Mike?).

## **M. Upcoming meetings**

1. Inuvialuit-Inupiat Meeting (Barrow) – Danny and Jennifer to attend.
2. Beaufort Sea Partnership meeting – Danny and Ernest to attend.
3. IFA Research Day – WMACNS Chair and Staff, YG members and researchers, EC members and researchers
4. Next WMACNS meeting (Dec 5-7) Inuvik and Aklavik.

**Motion to adjourn at 7:00pm. Moved by Todd Powell, Seconded by Ernest Pokiak.**