

Porcupine Caribou Management Board Minutes of Meeting

January 22-24, 2008
Old Crow, Yukon

In attendance

Members

Joe Tetlich, Chair
Liz Wright, Gwich'in Tribal Council (Alternate)
Georgie Moses, Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation
Dick Mahoney, Nacho Ny'ak Dun (Alternate)
Doug Larsen, Government of Yukon
Danny C. Gordon, Inuvialuit Game Council (Alternate)
Ian McDonald, Government of Canada
Ron Morrison, Government of Northwest Territories (via teleconference for portions)

Deana Lemke, Secretariat

Regrets

Steve Taylor, Tr'ondëk Hwech'in

Presenters

Dorothy Cooley, Regional Biologist, Yukon Department of Environment
Nick Gray and Dennis Frost, North Yukon RRC
Shawn Francis, North Yukon Land Use Planning Commission

Introductions and Opening Prayers

Joe Tetlich, Chair, welcomed participants to the meeting and the meeting was opening with prayer. Esau Schafer, Deputy Chief, welcomed participants to Old Crow.

Review Agenda

The Agenda was reviewed by the Board.

Motion to accept agenda moved by Doug Larsen
Seconded by Ian McDonald
Carried

Review of minutes

The minutes of the September 22-24, 2007, Board meeting were reviewed and approved.

Motion to accept minutes as presented moved by Georgie Moses
Seconded by Doug Larsen
Carried

Review of Action Items

Action items were reviewed and ongoing or outstanding items were discussed and reported on. Regarding Action Item 07-05, Deana was asked to draft a brief policy statement related to PCMB contract hires and distribute to members for review. This will be put on the next meeting agenda.

Chair's Report – Joe Tetlich

The Chair reported on Board business since the last meeting.

The Chair is in regular contact with the Secretariat and various groups and the public. Joe attended the HMS Workshop in Inuvik in October and has met with the HMS Working Group since then. An Oil and Gas Best Practices workshop was held in Inuvik at which Joe provided a presentation regarding the mandate of the PCMB and its position on development in the range of the herd.

Joe participated in a media relations training in November. He also attended a meeting of the Dena Nation in Yellowknife in December and made a presentation on behalf of PCMB. They are looking at options for establishing a caribou management board in their area. The annual Dena Nation meeting will be held in Fort McPherson in July.

CARMA Update – Joe Tetlich

Joe Tetlich and Deana Lemke attended the CircumArctic Rangifer Monitoring and Assessment (CARMA) workshop in Vancouver in November.

Prior to the next North American Caribou Workshop, CARMA may arrange for First Nation representatives to participate in a pre-workshop related to how traditional knowledge can be incorporated into the CARMA IPY project.

There are 14 reference herds that are participating in the CARMA IPY project. There are four components of the project:

- Body condition monitoring
- Remote Sensing
- Population Dynamics
- Community involvement

A letter of support from PCMB for the CARMA International Polar Year (IPY) project, identifying PCMB as a partner was submitted.

Yukon *Wildlife Act* Amendments

Environment Yukon is undertaking consultations to bring the *Wildlife Act* into conformity with the land claims final agreements. All sections of the *Wildlife Act* that the Department thinks need to be changed to make the act consistent with the land claims agreements are outlined in a package that has been distributed to all user groups.

There are two references to the *Porcupine Caribou Management Agreement*, dealing with total allowable harvest restrictions. The UFA and land claims allow the total allowable harvest to be addressed by the *Wildlife Act*.

The consultation process was originally scheduled to go until December 21. This deadline, however, was extended to February 21, 2008.

Action 08-01: ***Deana to draft letter to GNWT/Yukon Ministers re their respective government's position on the paramountcy of PCMA related to the UFA and the GCLCA.***

North Yukon RRC – Nick Gray and Dennis Frost

Nick Gray is the Executive Director for the North Yukon RRC. He and some of the NYRRC members were in attendance at the meeting. Nick spoke about the mandate of the NYRRC.

Issues around the PCH are the most prominent issues for the NYRRC and the people of Old Crow. There are significant concerns when the health of the herd is jeopardized. Census of the herd is important and RRC will assist in any way possible.

NYRRC Chair, Dennis Frost, spoke about how the community relies on the community to comply with local restriction on the harvest of cows in spring when they are pregnant or in the summer when cows have their young traveling with them. We would like to see no cow caribou harvesting until calves are weaned. US participation in management of the herd is essential. Lack of caribou in Old Crow this year has had a huge impact on the community. More should be done to educate the children in the schools. Communities must provide advice to the PCMB and then the Board should discuss the issues and respond to the communities.

It was suggested that the PCMB meet in Old Crow next year during the Gwich'in Gathering.

There was extensive discussion among the Board members and community members regarding holding a meeting with user communities and Alaskan user communities. Shel Graupe from VGG spoke about how a Caribou Forum hosted by VGFN was planned to take place; however, this was deferred to focus on HMS discussions. It was suggested that this might be revisited at the VGG so leadership puts more focus on a gathering. The starting point on all of this is communication.

Porcupine Caribou Herd Update – Dorothy Cooley

Dorothy Cooley updated the Board on various aspects of work with the PCH:

- The PCH wintered in two areas this year: near Arctic village and in the upper Ogilvie/miner River area. Although about two-thirds of the satellite collars are in Alaska, a higher proportion of the conventional collars are there. Harvest along the Dempster was quite low.
- Dempster check station was administered this year again by the DDRRC. Four staff kept the station open for 16 hours/day. The station opening October 24 and closed on December 2. Only a few questionnaires were returned this year.
- Dorothy attended the CARMA meeting in Vancouver in November. There are now 14 reference herds including the PCH. In North America, the PCH and Bathurst herds will be key for parasite studies. Numerous action items formed the workplan for the next year. There will be work done to help develop and to contribute to a metadatabase and tissue archive, help finalize PCH plans for expanding the body condition monitoring, and work with a UAF grad student to study land uses and caribou.
- The PC Technical Committee met on October, November and December to discuss how biological information could be improved to support the HMS. Two options were explored: 1) improve the regularity of population counts and 2) improve the computer population model. Also discussed was the feasibility of using other counting methods. Anne Gunn from NWT showed the PCTC the method that was used to count the NWT herds. The current census method is still the recommended method to estimate the herd size for the PCH. In considering the computer model, there are two factors that are used in the model that greatly affect herd growth: adult cow survival and calf survival. Dorothy distributed the handout “Alternate Ways to Count the Herd,” which provided additional information. The photocensus is still considered the best and most reasonable way to count the herd.
- The Dempster snowmachine vegetation study is still ongoing – this is the second year of the study. Snowmachine trials started in early October and ended in early December. There was not enough snow to trigger the eight-inch transects. Data entry will be done over the winter and a progress report will be prepared in the spring.
- Upcoming activities will include an annual March composition count and captures for Yukon and Alaska; preparation of two proposals (larger body

condition sampling, and land uses) and commenting on several other proposals for CARMA funding; work with WMAC(NS) project on caribou information collected in Aklavik; annual harvest data collection in Aklavik; continued examination of how weather has affected caribou aggregations and census attempts; PCTC will be working on an update of the PCH status reports.

Harvest Management Plan Update

The PCMB was updated on activities around the HMS and the work of the HMS Working Group (WG).

The WG will be meeting next week on January 30 and 31, 2008, in Whitehorse. The second draft of the draft Harvest Management Plan is being worked on by the WG. At the upcoming meeting, they will be discussing key issues, potential show-stoppers and how the final draft plan will be taken to the communities for feedback.

The WG needs to ensure it adheres to the HMS Protocol that was agreed to and signed off by all Parties. The WG should not be straying from the scope of their mandate. Joe will remind the WG that it needs to work within the parameters of the Protocol.

Administrative and Financial Report – Deana Lemke

The Secretariat, Deana Lemke, provided an administrative and financial report (attached).

Deana provided members with a draft of an information pamphlet for a concentrated “Bulls Only Campaign”. Revisions will be made to simplify the brochure based on feedback received. Distribution of the pamphlet will be to all community households in the range of the herd, government offices, RRCs, and HTC. A public service announcement (PSA) will also be done and taken to the communities. PCMB needs to work with RRCs and HTCs in the communities so they can assist with the local distribution of the PSA.

Deana also provided an update on the Board’s budget and financial expenditures to date.

Two proposals were distributed to the Board members that they were requested to review and endorse:

- Sharon Katz from the Aurora Research Institute
- Susan Kutz, University of Calgary

The Board supports the Sharon Katz's contaminants research project in principle, on condition that she reports results to the PCMB and the user communities.

The Board supports Susan Kutz's IPY project proposal to develop a video and a caribou atlas.

Action 08-02: *Deana to draft response indicating the Board's support for the research projects.*

Deana reviewed the website with the Board via a Website tour. The Website is updated regularly with information on the PCH, the Board and the Board's activities.

Action 08-03: *Deana will prepare simple post-card style mail-out promoting PCMB Website (similar to recent WMAC(NS) mail-out).*

PCMB Communication Guidelines

Board members discussed the draft PCMB Public Consultation Guidelines distributed. Revisions will be done to the draft guidelines and then they will be redistributed to members for review.

Communications strategy for the Board will be drafted, reviewed by the Board and then distributed to HTC's and RRC's for review and comment. A subcommittee was struck to work on drafting communications strategy including: Ian MacDonald, Doug Larsen, Liz Wright and Deana Lemke.

Action 08-04: *Subcommittee will draft PCMB Communications Strategy and bring back to Board for review and then to send to RRC's and HTC's for review and comment.*

North Yukon Planning Commission – Shawn Francis

Shawn Francis was invited to brief the Board on North Yukon Planning Commission activities.

A preliminary draft land use plan was distributed to the governments early this summer. PCMB submitted comments to the NYPC, based on Board members' feedback.

Cumulative Impacts Management – Shawn Francis

Shawn Francis was invited to discuss cumulative impacts management with the Board. He spoke about various concepts and application aspects of cumulative effects management. Information from Shawn's presentation included:

- Yukon land claims are comprehensive (social ecological and economic)

- Sustainable development is when there is socio-economic change that does not undermine the ecological and social systems upon which communities and societies are dependent and there is integrated management
- Sustainable development cannot be achieved without managing cumulative effects
- Northern land claim agreements provide a legal and constitutional foundation for sustainable development principles (it's not optional)
- Cumulative effects management requires integrated land management (ILM)
- Currently, public land disposition and rights issuance decision-making is ad hoc and decisions are made independent of each other; existing legislation and government decision-making processes entrench this reality

Cumulative effects are defined as, “Environmental and socio-economic change that results from a land use activity in combination with other past, present and future activities. While one land use activity may have only a small impact, the combined effect of a number of activities may have a significant impact. Negative effects are called “cumulative impacts”.

The Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board has a very narrow mandate to conduct cumulative effects assessments. It is a joint responsibility to management cumulative effects. Management includes an integrated set of actions such as assessment, mitigation, government policy, and planning. ILM is an integrated, whole-system approach to planning, conservation, management and use of land and water systems. The focus is on establishing future desired landscape conditions.

The Board would like to see more cumulative effects assessments done in the range of the herd. It is concerned about the management of such effects in the face of increased development and activity in the herd's range.

Set next meeting date and location

The next meeting will be held in Northwest Territories (Fort McPherson, tentatively). Members will be canvassed for availability in the new fiscal year.

Closing prayer

Joe Tetlich closed the meeting with a prayer and the meeting was adjourned at 5:45 p.m.