

# Porcupine Caribou Management Board

## Minutes of Meeting

January 24-25, 2009  
Whitehorse, Yukon

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### In attendance

#### Members

Joe Tetlich, Chair  
Billy Storr, Inuvialuit Game Council  
Sonny Blake, Gwich'in Tribal Council  
Lorraine Peter, Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation  
Steven Buyck, Nacho Ny'ak Dun  
Doug Larsen, Government of Yukon  
Marsha Branigan, Government of Northwest Territories  
Ian McDonald, Government of Canada  
Steve Taylor, Tr'ondëk Hwech'in

Deana Lemke, Secretariat

### Presenters

Shawn Francis, Cumulative Effects Management Consultant

### Welcome and Opening Prayer

The Chair welcomed participants to the meeting. Sonny Blake offered the opening prayer.

### Review Agenda

The Agenda was reviewed by the Board and approved with the following addition:

- Discuss approval process for the HMP

***Motion to accept agenda as presented***

***Moved by Sonny Blake***

***Seconded by Steven Taylor***

***Carried***

## **Review of minutes**

The minutes of the September 4-6, 2008, Board meeting were reviewed and approved.

***Motion to accept minutes as presented***

***Moved by Steven Buyck***

***Seconded by Lorraine Peter***

***Carried***

## **Review of Action Items**

Action items were reviewed and ongoing or outstanding items were discussed and reported on. Action items will include more information regarding how an item may have been completed or disposed of. The outstanding action items were separated from the ones already disposed of.

## **Preparation for Meeting with Minister of Environment, Hon. Elaine Taylor**

The Board discussed some issues that members wanted to raise with the Yukon Minister of Environment during her meeting with the Board. Specific points were discussed related to the following:

- Land Use Planning – how will that be dealt with
- HMP – progress and timelines
- Relationship building
- Ask questions for her to follow up on later
- Follow up with a letter from Board, thanking her for attending, recap points of discussion

Marsha said there are plans to do a body condition study with intensive collection of samples in the spring.

The Board is very concerned about climate change and its negative effect on the caribou and its habitat. It was suggested that the Board should be including its concern about climate change in its public messaging. Food security is a significant issue with First Nation communities.

## **Meeting with Minister of Environment, Hon. Elaine Taylor**

The Chair welcomed the Minister and her staff to the meeting, followed by introductions. Joe talked about the Board's role and mandate and some of the challenges it faces in terms of management of the Porcupine caribou herd and its habitat. The Board makes recommendations to the ministers in NWT and Yukon.

Joe spoke about some issues of concern for the Board, as follows:

- The Board had significant challenges coming up with recommendations for Dempster Highway hunting. The health of the herd is of paramount concern to the Board. Community members are concerned about climate change and its effect on the caribou, its migration and its habitat. Two years ago the Board passed a resolution regarding the conservation of the herd. Harvest management has been a primary focus of the Board. A Harvest Management Protocol was signed by all signatories and a Harvest Management Plan Working Group was struck, including representatives from all signatories. Subsequently, a workshop was held in Inuvik two years ago where over 100 people from various stakeholder groups and Porcupine Caribou user communities participated. Time is of the essence to finalize a Harvest Management Plan; however, this must be done properly. Adequate communication and consultation with user communities is critical.
- Land use planning must be taken very seriously. The Dawson plan, the Peel plan and the North Yukon plan must be taken seriously as they are in the range of the Porcupine Caribou. If there are any recommendations regarding the well-being of the caribou, the land use plans must be taken seriously. Cumulative effects in the range of the herd must be assessed and managed. Shawn Franics has been contracted to do a cumulative effects assessment project for the Board.
- The absence of a caribou census since 2001 has been troubling for the Board. The Porcupine Caribou Technical Committee has been considering other methods of getting a population count.
- Premier Fentie spoke previously about a wildlife information database. It would be good to know how we can effectively work together on this and what actually it is expected to look like.
- Food safety and security is important.

Minister Taylor responded by thanking the Board for the invitation to attend the meeting. Consider this an informal dialogue to hear various perspectives. The Board has worked very effectively over the years because all eight parties have been at the table and working cooperatively. There should be no question about Government of Yukon's commitment to Board. There has been ongoing monitoring and other technical work with Board as well as financial support of the Board.

Every person has their own opinion as to how to manage wildlife in the territories. There will be differences, but the common goal of having a sustainable herd and conserving the herd is important. The work of this Board is of critical importance for the conservation of the herd. The Working Group has been working hard on a

task that is not easy. The Dempster Highway is but one issue that highlights the differences of opinions on how to manage the herd. Coming up with the Plan and the Native User Agreement is important to continue to move ahead. The Government of Yukon remains supportive of this process. It is important to go through this process and attempt to get consensus as best as possible. If we don't, there won't be a herd for generations to come. It's incumbent upon all our governments to continue to work together. The Government of Yukon looks forward to receiving the HMP and proposed recommendations for our government's consideration.

Premier Fentie and the three Yukon Chiefs in the signed a letter re commitment to this process. We have had discussions with FN chiefs as recent as December on moving that commitment forward. Premier Fentie wrote letter last year urging everyone to continue with the process, to do expeditiously but properly. It is recognized, however, that time is of the essence. Some interim conservation measures should be considered that can be implemented collectively within our boundaries as early as the fall of 2009. There have been some initial discussions on what we can do in the interim, consistent with what the plan has been calling for all along, but things we can do immediately (perhaps looking at a tag system or bull only harvests). There is a duty to consult enshrined in treaties and Government of Yukon recognizes those obligations and is committed to that process. To have something in place in fall will be a necessary goal. The fact is the herd is declining; it has been for 10-plus years. Although we haven't had an accurate count of herd recently, other indicators tell us it's on the decline. NWT herds have also been on the decline. There is an impetus to act now, thoughtfully and responsibly.

Environment Yukon has started those discussions with NND, TH and VGFN to talk about what can be done in the interim. Discussions will continue.

Last fall, Premier Fentie issued a similar letter to Premier of NWT reiterating our government's commitment to process for conservation purposes. When the plan is received, we need to work together to bring it in with continuity and consistency with NWT.

The Board discussed the need to have correspondence to a party related to management of the Porcupine Caribou Herd to be copied to all parties so they are kept informed.

With the recent inauguration of President Obama, there appears to be some renewed optimism about the protection of critical habitat of the Porcupine Caribou Herd. The Yukon Premier just signed a letter with Chief Linklater to Prime Minister Harper and President Obama in support of VGFN leading the efforts to raise concerns about the critical habitat of the herd.

Government of Yukon remains committed to working with Alaska to see if we can get a count this year. Alaska is still on board and resources are still there. Government of Yukon resources (human) remain committed. Government is always open to looking at alternatives although a count is most accurate.

Regarding wildlife inventories, Government of Yukon has increased resources and given officials adequate resources to expand its list of inventories throughout Yukon. This will benefit the Porcupine herd. Last year, \$500K was added. This provides a much better ability for government to do its job in terms of land use planning — being fully equipped and better informed. Department officials are willing to make a presentation on what work has been done to date and how Government of Yukon can work together with other partners.

Minister Taylor said she worked with many Board members at a political level and enjoyed that. Some she hasn't yet had the opportunity to work with but she looks forward to doing so. All Board members bring a wealth of experience and expertise. All are very committed and some very passionate about this issue of importance. The Porcupine Caribou are of critical importance to this country and America, not just Yukon. The Minister said she is open to feedback and suggestions on how to help support better the Board's work.

General discussion ensued with Board members (Q) and the Minister (A), summarized as follows:

Q: PCMA – how do you foresee becoming a possibility of opening up the agreement?

A: I haven't given it too much thought. I haven't heard much on that. Open to hearing suggestions for improvement. I know it is dated. It would take the commitment of a number of parties.

Q: We're not a political organization, we provide recommendations. In HMP it has a political tone especially regarding harvesting rights and allocation. These are sensitive issues. How do you see the government working with other native user communities and governments on those issues?

A: Not an easy task. Our government in working with three FN governments in Yukon. As indicated in a letter to you a year ago and in recent discussions, we remain just as committed as we have in the past. When we receive recommendations, will work with other self-governing FNs in Yukon on those recommendations. Subsistence harvesting rights changes (impacts) will have to be consulted on, working together. Takes time but it's necessary under law. We are committed to working with self-governing First Nations right now to see if we can implement some immediate conservation measures this fall in the interim. Even looking at some of those will require consultation and we are looking at embarking on that as well. Not an easy task.

Kelvin: will be more than just three Yukon First Nations. Other governments also need to be consulted. Government of Yukon will respect that and follow the due process.

Board members expressed appreciation for sending letter off to Obama; excellent news.

Q: It would be interesting to have a meeting including both ministers.

A: I will be seeing my counterpart later in February when we host meeting with Ministers of Environment. Any proposed dates would be good – excellent suggestion.

Q: There is concern also about the winter habitat, not just summer. What are implications of development in the wintering grounds of the Porcupine Caribou. It doesn't look good if we're trying to protect the summer area only.

A: Onus is on respective parties to come up with a plan and make recommendations. The HMP would be good model to take to Alaska to show to US to show we are serious about this — we're doing our part and seeing what we can achieve, now we're asking for you to come on board as well. This would help to better make the argument to the US. They seem to have an open ear now and that gives me lots of optimism that the door is open. This has been and will be a very active file.

Q: The community of Old Crow is always very concerned about the caribou, ANWR and climate change. There have been lots of studies through IPY and hopefully some good information will come out from those studies. Need to consider the information as Board and governments and look at how we can deal with these challenges in the future. The HMP will help guide us through some of those processes.

A: I agree, there is so much work being undertaken on research. In Old Crow area it's phenomenal the amount of scientific research, also involving traditional knowledge. It will be critical to use that information to our benefit. In terms of trying to bring together all that information, one initiative we've been working on over the past years is the Yukon Centre of Excellence through Yukon College; it's to be a one-stop shop. Those who come up here to work can register and share information. We are feeling the effects of climate change here in the north. We need to better coordinate some of the results.

Q: The International Porcupine Caribou Board has essentially been non-existent for many years. It needs to be reinvigorated. 15 percent of harvest on herd is by Alaskans and they need to be onside with the HMP. This should be done through the international board.

A: Canada's member appointments are up to date but the US ones are defunct. The time is good right now to get movement going. I will follow up on that regard.

Kelvin Leary added that during a recent meeting with the Alaskan Governor, she was quite supportive of the international board and making appointments to that board.

The Board members thanked Minister Taylor and her staff for attending this meeting.

## **Chair's Update – Joe Tetlich**

Chair, Joe Tetlich updated the Board on various aspects of his work with the Board.

- Attended the annual CARMA conference in Vancouver at the end of November.
- Attended the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board 20:20 Vision Symposium in November.
- Attended the Peel River Land Use Planning Commission meeting to discuss values along the Peel watershed.

Joe also frequently receives phone calls from community members who have concerns or comments about management of the Porcupine caribou herd. Lorraine mentioned that she would like the Board to be informed of what types of concerns people have and what communities they are coming from so that the members are aware of the concerns raised in their respective communities.

## **Harvest Management Plan Update – Doug Urquhart**

The PCMB was updated on activities around the HMS and the work of the HMS Working Group (WG) by Doug Urquhart, WG Facilitator. The most recent draft HMP was provided to the PCMB members. Doug reviewed the background respecting how we arrived at this point. Much work has been done to get to this stage. The WG is working on finalizing its last draft. There appear to be two significant outstanding issues to address and come to consensus on: mandatory bull-only harvest in "yellow zone" and the 75/25 percent Total Allowable Harvest split (FN/licensed hunters in Yukon).

Steve T: If caribou are on wintering grounds when we are in yellow zone (bulls only harvest), bulls will be in rut and won't be edible. TH and NND yellow zone could imply red actions because no one should be hunting inedible bulls. After they rut, bulls are still in poor shape. Maybe we should start getting used to the fact that there maybe should be no hunting at all in certain times. The caribou are in a unique situation and they won't recover like other herds do. They recover very slowly and we may have to make drastic measures. We should have a plan

and use it. Only reason for not having a plan is that we can't handle that at some point in time we may not be able to hunt.

Darius Elias: Just because you negotiate a right doesn't mean you have to exercise it. There needs to be negotiations on the parties about this. Some compromises can only be done at higher levels. We shouldn't weaken the plan by watering it down.

Doug U: You legally can't make someone do something they legally don't have to do. Someone is bound to challenge those things.

Doug L: there are other principles to use. I don't like to see a management plan that manages for a decline. Suggest leave mandatory bulls in orange zone. The need to do more sooner was consistently heard in communities. Other thing – on Yukon side – must be consultation process that has to happen for TAH. When do you engage in that process? Need to move very quickly.

Steve T: shouldn't be long, drawn-out process in the decision making. If something needs to be done now we need the ways and means of doing that. It's been done in other processes and can be done here (i.e. the salmon).

Sonny: for TAH, we have harvest data and tools in place to do that. Others don't have that and should put something in place. It's simple if we have the background info to work with.

Doug U: It's not that the Gwich'in can't do it.

Roberta: With salmon management, there is a very short response time necessary to implement actions.

Billy Storr: based on harvest information, TAH is based on a percentage of total harvest, divided up by user groups/communities.

Lorraine: Are we going to get hung up on number issues when conservation of the herd is more important? We need to start right now by making decisions where the zones are. The well-being of the herd and the numbers are what are important to me today. I know there are different legalities regarding claims we need to deal with but we really need to start making decisions in a timely way before the Government of Yukon steps in to take actions, albeit interim.

Steve B: Conservation has always been a priority. Let's get on with it and move this strategy along, getting in place a Native User Agreement before Government of Yukon steps in.

Sonny: when herd starts declining, it declines at a faster rate when it hits a certain point. It will take even longer to start to rebound and increase. We need to



emphasize that to the user groups. A lot don't understand that but it's really important.

Roberta: many communities are providing education. Some have volunteers to reduce harvest already. There has been education on harvesting bulls only. A number of things have been done by communities and they have become more and more responsible to come up with more ideas re harvest management.

Doug U: When the final HMP comes to the Board from the WG the Board should carefully consider that it was put together very painstakingly and it really shouldn't be tinkered with later by the PCMB.

The other issue is the 75/25 percent Yukon TAH split. Government of Yukon prefers a proportional split right down to zero harvest when we get to the red zone.

Doug L: Another option is to deal with the split outside of the HMP.

The 75/25 split is a percentage is what is negotiated consistently in land-claim agreements. Neither the WG nor the PCMB should not be renegotiating land claims. It should be a proportionate sharing right down to the last animal. There is some flexibility there but that is a prerogative of the governments, not to be negotiated in this process (250 animals).

Doug L: could park the 250 on this side; sharing is a fundamental cornerstone of all the agreements.

Steve T: The WG is still out there and trying to finish up here; don't want to get in too deep. Shouldn't get too complicated and jeopardize the work the WG is doing. They are doing a good job and we should encourage them to continue on with their good work. Second point: we will still have a problem determining TAH if we don't know the population. If we say 50 percent of harvest, people can individually figure out what that is personally for them and implement it. We can say we are going to cut back 50 percent of what we took the previous year. Every entity would ensure that would be the case. That would take the pressure off the TAH being an actual number.

Marsha: If we don't put some of these determinations in the plan, we are deferring the decisions to someone else. I think we should put something in about the allocation and how it's going to happen. Needs to be put on paper, pre-agreed how we think we are going to do this.

Sonny: Most of us have good idea of how harvesting works. We have minimum-needs level — take that number and know we can survive using that number. Divide up among user groups, based on basic needs.

Doug L: I think it is as simple as Steve T just mentioned. Tough decisions are really the social decisions. When to cut off harvest can be almost strictly a social decision. The decision that has to be made is primarily a social decision.

The WG felt that the Dempster Highway issues were too complex and consensus could not be achieved. Therefore, the Dempster Highway section was limited to a "Best Practices" section.

Doug L: Glad these best management practices are in here. PCMB could turn them into regulation recommendations. Other point: addressing Dempster is essential in managing harvest on the PCH. Depending on what comes out of the HMP, may not be a need to address issue of hunter safety. We could deal with safety issues with another tool in plan. Let leaders pass. Government of Yukon wouldn't be anxious to implement unless unanimous agreement among FNs.

Steve T: Still should be cognizant and look at the let leaders pass scenario. Reason it's not good on the Dempster is because they're already on their wintering grounds. I heard some of the elders In Aklavik talk about letting leaders pass as they begin their migration once they leave the 1002 lands, not when they already arrive at their destination. At TH we discussed this at length and that's how we see it happening.

Sale, trade and barter of caribou issue is a matter that the WG will defer back to PCMB as it couldn't be resolved at this WG level.

Doug L: thinks PCMB can work to develop guidelines based on feedback received during the community engagement meetings.

Lorraine: Sale of caribou meat issue has been a real concern for the people in her community. Education of traditional knowledge and values is key — how to be responsible harvesters, especially when the herd is in decline.

Sonny: HMP doesn't take into consideration cumulative effects.

Dorothy Cooley reviewed the "What we Heard" summary – (included in binders).

Closing comments:

Lorraine: Appreciate all the hard work that has been done. Need to stay true to what I've been taught and think about the TK and how the people before us took care of this herd.

Steve B: Thanks to everyone for comments during discussion. Need to get ready to start making decision ASAP next month. Would like us to move onto the next phase with the Native User Agreements very soon. We want to continue to strive

to keep population up so our children can benefit as well. Thanks to the WG for their work; let's get on with it.

Ian: been a great exercise to get Board up to date on status of HMP and work of WG. WG still needs to do some work; this gets us prepared for what is coming down the pipe.

Steve T: WG needs to continue and finish their job. Still want to talk about the LUPs and how they relate to caribou. Think PCMB could do more/better on this, providing input to the Commissions. Need to insist to YESAB that the LUPs are used throughout their processes.

Robert Charlie: Thanks to Board for taking on this important initiative. Caribou is an important resource. It's even more difficult when dealing with the jurisdictional responsibilities. Sometimes have to forego rights to manage resources. WG has done an excellent job of brining all materials together in an easy-to-read format. Important is communication. Many people don't read written documentation. Use other avenues so they understand it. Some are more visually minded (posters and other visual aids).

Marsha: Agree with Ian that it's good we brought the Board up to speed on where WG is at and issues they are having. It's harder for NWT reps to get out to all their user communities. Still need to get another draft out to people in NWT again, at least to the management boards. Need to recognize we are doing something here that has never been done before: recommending where we are going to take management actions.

Doug L: There's a lot of substance to this HMP. Good to have this discussion. It's an excellent precursor to the next PCMB meeting. WG has done an amazing job. I know difficulties they face with diverse views. It's a very difficult process at times. We are still all here and that is really encouraging. I think this is going to happen now; just have to bring it to the final stages.

Roberta: Where we are at today is fairly significant related to where we were at two years ago — without a plan at all. Even the discussions around the Board have changed. There has been a lot of growth. Moving along with the plan has provided a lot of education to the communities and the Board to manage/collaborate in a different fashion (education versus regulations). We mailed draft plan to all citizens, met with elders and kept council up to date. Handing responsibility back to communities is a good thing. If others carry responsibility for us, we won't act responsibly. We have now taken that responsibility of management on when that needs to happen.

Billy S: HMP was a little late in coming. Good to see they're at where they are. Shouldn't be too concerned about the thorny parts, not worry too much about that

for implementing. Documents can be revised. This is a good starting point. If one holds back until everything is resolved, it will never be out.

Sonny: It's in our best interest that we have the HMP ready for the summer so it can be presented to the GAs — best time to present to the GTC, to have ready for when all communities get together and make decisions. That's where we want this to be passed, at the community levels. Best time to bring to the Gwich'in — at the General Assembly. Thanks to WG for their hard work and commitment on plan.

Dorothy: been a really interesting process. Hard for the three of us to go on that community tour. Best part of my year was listening to everyone talk about Porcupine Caribou and how things should look in the future. It's coming together and I feel optimistic that we will get something the Board could use.

Doug U: Got lucky — WG doesn't have one bad apple on it. Best group to work on the HMP. That's why this plan is as good and unique as it is. Appreciate working with these people. It's been one of the best experiences in my career.

## **Administrative and Financial Report – Deana Lemke**

The Secretariat, Deana Lemke, provided an administrative and financial report, as presented. The Board's draft 2007-08 Annual Report was provided to members for review. Any changes should be forwarded to Deana by January 30.

Deana participated in two web-based seminars: one on Aboriginal Law and Consultation in the Communities and the other on Social Marketing: Tools for Change.

## **Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board – Robert Charlie**

Robert Charlie was in attendance to update the Board on activities of the GRRB. He feels it is important to attend Board meetings as we have joint management responsibilities, although GRRB doesn't have direct jurisdiction in Yukon.

The GRRB was established as the main instrument of wildlife for the GSA, as mandated by the Gwich'in Agreement. It is a public body and must take into consideration public concerns. People in the GSA are responsible for using, protecting and conserving their resources. The claim gives GRRB a wide range of responsibilities within the claim. They are involved in research and allocation of funding. It received of \$2 million in their wildlife studies fund and they use the interest accumulated from that to fund projects based on priorities for each year. Public outreach is an important function of the board.

In 2008, GRRB underwent a strategic planning process including many stakeholders and developed a five-year plan with seven broad goals and several objectives:

- 1) establish and maintain strong positive relationships with stakeholders
- 2) complete settlement area harvest study area
- 3) determine total allowable harvest and allocation of harvest levels among user groups
- 4) ensure effective capacity to develop wildlife management plans and respond to proposed federal or territorial plans concerning wildlife, conservation areas and parks for board approval
- 5) strengthen the Gwich'in role in renewable resource planning
- 6) provide responsive advice to government agencies and GTC on legislation, policies and plans that may affect wildlife or wildlife habitat in the settlement area
- 7) provide quality public service in wildlife and wildlife habitat management

There have been some concerns raised by community members. Originally, the PCMA NWT Gwich'in signatory was the Dene Nation. This was then delegated to the GTC. The PCMA needs to be reflected to consider modern day realities such as the GRRB having the mandate for wildlife in NWT.

Harvest Management Plan is a good document to ensure the long-term stability of the Porcupine caribou herd. There needs to be ongoing review and potential revisions to plan where required. There is still much work to be done but hopefully things will keep moving forward to address outstanding issues.

Principles and objectives in the land claim agreements establish management responsibility for wildlife. Education and communication is key as we try to ensure sustainable resources for the future. Important to involve the youth and parents. Elders have a key role to teach us traditions some may not know. There is a big disconnect between the youth and elders and on-the-land programs help to educate others. Parents much play a bigger role in that activity.

There should be more focus on the development of materials for the children in schools.

Collaring caribou provides important information for researchers to obtain necessary information to make decisions. Some don't feel that collaring is appropriate – ie Dena Nation resolution recently.

Let the leaders pass is important for all corridors, not just Dempster. Respectful hunting practices should be adhered to i.e. not wasting caribou. Setting up programs to teach young ones how we traditionally used all parts of caribou would be beneficial.

Last fall, there was a negative article in the paper speaking to hunting practices on the Dempster. Much of that information was untrue. There was no slaughter

on the Dempster. This type of media sensationalism pits people against each other unnecessarily.

The GRRB is concerned about the Bluenose caribou decline. Stakeholders have formed a working group to develop a Bluenose Management Plan. The next meeting is in May.

The GRRB is also involved in Wildlife Act review in NWT. First meeting was two weeks ago.

The GRRB is involved in the Dall's sheep management plan and the Rat River working group to manage fish, collecting samples and doing monitoring.

The GRRB is working on a moose management plan and grizzly management plan. Grizzlies are becoming a safety concern on the Dempster.

Aboriginal rights are protected but sometimes you have to forego rights for the long-term sustainability of wildlife. We have to take action otherwise governments will impose their will on us for "conservation" purposes. We want future generations to have access to these important resources.

Lorraine spoke about the need to keep the lines of communication open among the user communities. The September newspaper article that printed untrue and exaggerated information on the "Dempster slaughter" was very unfortunate. We need to manage our own affairs and wildlife responsibly, just as we have always done traditionally.

## **Wildlife Management Advisory Council (North Slope) – Lindsay Staples**

Lindsay Staples was in attendance to update the Board on WMAC(NS)'s activities. Four activity areas were highlighted:

1) Porcupine Caribou traditional knowledge study – we've sponsored and hired someone to conduct survey in Aklavik respecting traditional knowledge about the Porcupine caribou herd. We will be interviewing 10-16 individuals identified by the HTC who have a long extensive history of harvesting Porcupine Caribou. A questionnaire/survey has been developed and a permit has been obtained from Aurora Research Institute.

Lisa Christianson, who has a social science background, has been hired and is in Aklavik interviewing people currently. A draft report is expected by the end of March. Then it will be reviewed with the Aklavik HTC and published for distribution.

This questionnaire doesn't really focus on how herd is doing now but what people know and knew about the herd 50 years ago or as far back as they can remember. We're interested in change associated with the herd over time (migration, calving areas, uses of caribou, hunting practices). Hopefully this information will be helpful to the PCMB and other communities may be suggested to do something similar. Cost was approximately \$20K (not including the report and survey development), includes hiring a local person to be involved in the interviews as well as a student. Honoraria is also provided to the participants.

WMAC NS also wants to do a TK study on grizzly bears.

It was suggested that the Board undertake a study at some point similar to this project.

2) HMS – we sent our comments into the WG re the HMP. What are the next steps and how is PCMB involved?

3) Arctic Borderlands Ecological Knowledge Co-op. WMAC has been involved with Arctic Borderlands since the establishment of the Co-op. The interest has been in ecological monitoring from a community perspective. Over 10 years much information was collected from interviews. We were concerned that this information should be analyzed. We should have been more vigilant with the information that was collected over the years. Arctic Borderlands was anticipated doing a 10-year review but that was not undertaken. We hired a contractor to review some of the data collected in Aklavik that was compiled by the Co-op. He produced a report that is posted on our website raising some concerns about some of the interview questions (clarity of questions, subjectivity of response) and the individuals being interviewed over the course of time. There was also a change in questions over the years making it hard to compare data. The Council is supportive of this kind of work the Co-op is doing but given the effort of the people participating in surveys, need to make sure their time is well used.

Survey had become a two-hour interview — too long for anybody to go through an interview. Focus should be on specific questions of importance and not so many.

There are many organizations and stakeholders involved in the Co-op and it's not evident that they are all on the same page. WMAC wants to make sure the information obtained helps them in doing their job.

WMAC not supporting financially Arctic Borderlands any longer. Their focus now is on getting reports completed, published and distributed.

It was suggested that a meeting among the Chairs of co-management boards and councils discuss TK work including work of Arctic Borderlands.

4) Cumulative Effects study on Porcupine caribou – interested in work we are doing with Shawn Francis. Tools for managing cumulative effects are woefully inadequate. From an ecosystem standpoint, it's the valued component of the ecosystem that should be the starting point of a land use plan. WMAC could assist in small way financially or assist to find funding from other sources.

## **Cumulative Effects Assessment – Shawn Francis**

Shawn Francis was invited to the meeting to discuss his involvement in the potential cumulative effects assessment project. He provided a written update that was available in Board members' meeting packages.

Shawn attended the CARMA meeting for a couple days in Vancouver in November. He had an opportunity to interface with some of the PCTC members about the project and get up to date on other relevant activities. We're focusing on the modeling approach we are thinking of using and developing the necessary information or datasets we will need to complete the project (habitat maps, human footprint mapping, caribou satellite location information).

Shawn said he has been working with the Bathurst project for the past few months. They are looking to integrate two very different approaches: 1) energetic approach based on energetics models; and 2) special habitat approach. They chose to use the ALCES cumulative effects simulation tool. They are now working through bugs of how to link the two different models. It is definitely worth maintaining our participation in that as it will have direct relevance and application to work being done for the PCH. He can forward more detailed meeting notes if requested.

Shawn has been looking at a number of different habitat and footprint data sources in the range of the herd. There are many products out there. Canada Centre for Remote Sensing is producing a land cover map for the entire range of the PCH range. This will save us much work if this meets our needs. This will be determined once CCRS has completed their map.

Marsha suggested getting the historical harvest data available and make that into a polygon for use by the Board (PCMB would need to write to GRRB for approval).

## **Porcupine Caribou Herd Update**

Dorothy Cooley was not able to attend this meeting in person; however, she provided a written update on work related to the Porcupine caribou herd. Dorothy



participated in the meeting on Saturday afternoon by phone to answer questions related to her written report.

## **Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board – Don Hutton and Graham Van Tighem**

Don Hutton and Graham Van Tighem were in attendance to update the Board on Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board activities, specifically the 20:20 visioning exercise. Long-range visioning for the Board started about two years ago. Last spring the Board started to put a symposium together with three main objectives:

- 1) Inform all Yukoners where we are in fish and wildlife management in the territory
- 2) Let public know who the Board is and what it does
- 3) Get out of reactionary mode and start looking to the future

The 20:20 Vision Symposium was held in late November, over 225 in attendance. There has been poor response from the public to the questionnaire that was distributed in an attempt to obtain feedback. FWMB has met in communities in conjunction with the RRCs to obtain local feedback from citizens. Some First Nations will be going door to door to get input from their citizens.

If PCMB is interested in providing input, that can be done even past the deadline. Where does the PCMB see things going? What are their concerns and where does it feel it would like to be going?

The FWMB is now working in more of a partnership relationship with RRCs. Where recommendations for regulation come forward from RRCs that deal with their respective traditional territories, the FWMB will always support it.

The regulation change cycle is too short — we're looking at working with Government of Yukon to make it a two- or three-year cycle. The Board has reduced its role in this cycle; more onus is on Government of Yukon, as they are the regulator.

Marsha suggested that questionnaires be sent to Aklavik, Fort McPherson and Tsiigehtchic to solicit their input as well.

## **Members' Concerns**

The Harvest Management Plan is a priority and everyone is anxious to see it finalized by the Working Group.

Sonny would like to ensure the HMP is completed this summer and presented to the Gwich'in Assembly. We should also be looking at alternative methods to obtain a caribou census.

Billy said his community is also anxious of getting a census, especially moving into a HMS, it's important to have accurate population information.

Doug wants to see the HMP done sooner rather than later. Encourage WG to finalize at its next meeting and we prepare as a Board to meet as soon afterward as possible and make recommendations. Hope the Government of Yukon interim measures will not be considered as going against the HMS process. Should be seen to be helping the process along.

Marsha: WG needs to be given time to finish HMP adequately.

Steve T: Last year TH hired a monitor to stay on the Dempster and check what people were doing. Results showed that during the season, there was hardly any activity. Most activities were in north end; not just FN hunters, but Whitehorse sport hunters were there too. The monitor didn't see any violations of any kind. Normal hunting practices were observed, nothing out of the ordinary. Hopefully TH will consider doing that again this year. With the HMP, certain things you have to more clear about and flesh out — i.e. red zone stuff. We seriously have to think that someday we might have to shut down hunting altogether. How and when can you do that? How would FNs do that in their communities? Need to think about this so we're ready to do it when we need to. TH is still interested in letting the leaders pass scenario, done in a meaningful, proper way in whole range of the herd, one week as migration begins — that would get big support.

Ian: Main thing is HMP. Preparation for the meeting with the Minister was good; more organized, better.

Steven B: I'm looking forward to February 6-7 HMP meeting, to seeing a final letter from the HMP WG. I know we can't change it, but we can make additions to tighten things up on certain matters (i.e. barter and trade). We should expect not to get census by next fall. Since Government of Yukon will be expected to implement interim measures, we should be planning for that — lots of options out there. Following our PCMB meeting, we need to make recommendations right away and move forward.

Lorraine: HMP is most important thing; need to get it out as fast as we can. Would not like us to have to deal with government's interim measures. VGFN will continue to lobby to protect the Arctic Refuge. PCMB should send member to the Wilderness Week. Census is important but if we don't get it we have to move forward — not put too much emphasis on getting it. Some stories about how we used to let the leaders pass are our own stories and it's our responsibility to let young ones know when the leaders are passing.

Joe: communication is important between members.

## **Set next meeting date and location**

The next meeting will be held in February (tentatively) pending the finalization of the draft HMP from the WG. This will be confirmed following the WG meeting. The agenda will primarily deal with the HMP; however, the following agenda items will be included at a future meeting.

- Invitation to Minister of Environment in NWT
- Appointment of Vice-Chair

## **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 5:20 p.m.