

Porcupine Caribou Management Board

Minutes of Meeting February 10, 2014 Dawson City, Yukon

In attendance

Members/Staff

Joe Tetlich, Chair
Steven Buyck, Nacho Ny'ak Dun
Jamie McLelland, Government of Yukon
Billy Storr, Inuvialuit Game Council
Roberta Joseph, Trondek Hwech'in (Alternate)
Mike Gill, Government of Canada
Marsha Branigan, Government of the Northwest Territories
Wilbert Firth, Gwich'in Tribal Council

Deana Lemke, Executive Director

Regret

William Josie, Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation

Presenters

Mike Sutor, Environment Yukon
Kelly Milner, Communications Consultant

Welcome and Opening Prayer

Chair Joe Tetlich welcomed members and called the meeting to order at 4:20 p.m., after which he offered an opening prayer.

Review Agenda

The Agenda was reviewed by the Board and approved.

Motion to accept agenda
Moved by Marsha Branigan
Seconded by Steven Buyck
Carried

Review Minutes and Action Items

The Minutes of the December 19 and 20, 2013 meeting were approved by the Board and the action items were reviewed and discussed.

Motion to accept Minutes of the December 19 and 20, 2013 meeting as distributed

Moved by Steven Buyck

Seconded by Marsha Branigan

Carried

PCMB Communications Plan (Kelly Milner)

Kelly Milner attended the meeting by phone to discuss the final draft of the Board's communications plan she prepared with input from the Board. Kelly stated that the quality and the amount of feedback received from the Board regarding communication-related priorities was very good and has been captured in the revised communications plan. An update of the PCMB website was clearly the highest priority for everyone. Branding and videos as well as social media were also rated high as priorities. Kelly mentioned that cost estimates she provided were from contractors who have a reputation for providing good value.

The proposed plan included a budget for the creation of three short videos by Kieran O'Donovan who is a videographer/biologist who has made excellent videos for BBC's Earth series. He would be willing to accompany Mike Suitor to document activities of the school program in Old Crow, how to conduct a census, respectful harvesting and the like. Kyron provided a low price for this quote due to his personal interest in northern biology. Similar work by other contractors would likely be significantly more costly.

The branding, website and social media components of the workplan could be started as soon as possible and significant progress made by the end of this fiscal year in order to utilize this fiscal year's funding.

In response to a request by Board members, Kelly offered to explore what a comparative estimate would be for video production from Northern Native Broadcasting.

Action 14-01: ED to email Kelly Milner's proposed communication budget to the Board.

Chair's Report

Chair Joe Tetlich provided an update as follows:

- Joe attended the Regional RRC meeting in Fort McPherson on January 22 and 23, 2014 where he presented information on the PCMB's mandate and current activities, specifically the Harvest Management Plan.
- Harvesting on the Dempster Highway is still a concern to Fort McPherson community members and frequent encounters with grizzly bears near the highway were raised as a safety concern.
- Tetlit Gwich'in would like to have a greater role in harvest monitoring activity and doing the harvest count on the Dempster. They may do this via a check station on the ferry.
- Harvesters are apparently meeting their needs with caribou this season due to easy access of the PCH. People have seen caribou migrating early this year, arriving at the Dempster as early as July.

Mike Sutor clarified that the actual count of caribou on the Dempster in July was nearly 20,000. Jamie McLelland commented that if this migration pattern happens several years in a row, the Board may have to take additional action regarding communication around the mixing of herds and help to ensure closer tracking of the Fortymile herd.

Herd Update

Government of Yukon Update

Mike Sutor provided the following update to the Board members:

- Mike made presentations at the regional RRC meeting and for the Aklavik RRC and HTC about what happened with the Fortymile herd this fall and how this relates to the PCH.
- Regarding the upcoming field work, Mike explained that a large deployment of collars is planned for March. Most of the collars will be satellite GPS collars obtained through IFA funding. Other partners have provided further funding for this as well. By increasing the number of satellite GPS collars on all herds, specifically the PCH, more precise data can be collected.
- The Alaskans will do some high-level telemetry in the coming weeks to locate existing collars. They will also come over into our area once they are done in Alaska.
- Conservation Services Branch took on the PCH Hunter Education package and have made significant progress on it. A contractor who specializes in education materials has been hired to take the existing content and turn it into an educational package. He is working on completing a semi-finalized product by the end of March.

Jamie explained that once a final draft is ready for internal review it will be shared with Marsha, and once GNWT agrees with it, it will be brought to PCMB for review and discussion.

Discussion arose around the content of the hunter education package and the necessity for it to be viewed as a collaborative product that includes feedback gathered from the communities. The Board was concerned that the final product should not appear to come from government. Rather, the Board, as a co-management body, should be seen as rolling it out. Jamie explained that nothing has been changed in the content; YG is simply taking the initiative to move this forward.

It was agreed that the draft package would be shared with the Board and all the Parties and that the review process needs to be handled in a way that allows ownership by the parties/communities, with the PCMB in a key communication role.

Action 14-02: Jamie McLelland will ensure a copy of the draft Hunter Education Plan is sent to the Board.

- Mike Sutor continued the herd update by reviewing the history of Northern Cross' activities to date, which include bi-weekly conference calls of a technical working group which involves TH, NND, VG, PCMB (Deana) and Mike Sutor, as the YG regional biologist. While there was initial success and cooperation, currently there are some disagreements about what are appropriate actions as outlined in the mitigation plan.
- The immediate area surrounding Northern Cross' seismic activity may have several thousand caribou in it, and there is some overlap of the herd's location and the activity area.
- Northern Cross had committed to cease operation if a large group of caribou comes into area, but no successful definition of the term "significant number" has yet been agreed upon. However, even if the program does not need to shut down, the mitigation plan is clear about other actions that are required if there are any caribou in the project, with no specific number being mentioned in the plan.
- Mike informed the Board that the final PCH census number was not ready to be released because the minimum count still needs to be double-checked, but the current estimate is well within the Green zone. The preliminary estimate is around 200,000 animals. He also related the good news that the Alaska government has committed \$1 million to upgrade than existing photocensus equipment from film to digital.

Action 14-03: Mike Sutor will forward the final report with Dempster check station information.

Administrative and Financial Report

Deana Lemke provided an administrative and financial report. The variance report for 2013-14 to date was reviewed. The budget to date is underspent on several items. The proposed communication plan budget was not included in the variance report.

After discussions around one-time costs versus potential ongoing costs associated with social media updates, it was decided to proceed with the top three priorities: branding, website, and social media development. The Board would also like to get a cost estimate for the development of a calendar from other groups who have produced calendars.

Motion to allocate \$15,000 of funding toward the top three communication-related priorities identified in the communication plan: branding, website, social media.

Moved by Marsha Branigan

Seconded by Mike Gill

Carried

Draft Budget for 2014-15

Deana provided a draft 2014-15 budget for review. INAC funding for next fiscal year is not certain. Mike Gill pointed out that some positions at INAC have been workforce adjusted; consequently, obtaining funding may be more complicated for next year. It was noted that if there are issues with this the budget will have to be adjusted.

The draft budget was reviewed and approved by the Board.

Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board/PCMB MOU

ED reviewed progress on the MOU after having met with Joe Tetlich, Harvey Jessup, Graham Van Tighem and Dan Lindsey. Dan made some comments on the draft. Deana will send these to PCMB members who were requested to think about the comments and provide feedback via e-mail.

Action 14-04: ED to send out Dan Lindsey's comments on draft YFWMB/PCMB MOU.

Harvest Management Plan

The schedule of events, agenda and the list of attendees for the following day's Annual Harvest Meeting were reviewed.

It was noted that Troy Hegel's presentation about the population model would be presented first, followed by presentations from Parties.

Next Meeting and Closing Prayer

The next Board meeting will be held in Whitehorse, Yukon in May, pending confirmation with members.

A closing prayer was offered by Steven Buyck.