

Porcupine Caribou Management Board Minutes of Meeting December 5 and 6, 2014 Whitehorse, Yukon

In attendance

Members/Staff

Joe Tetlich, Chair
Steven Buyck, Nacho Ny'ak Dun
Billy Storr, Inuvialuit Game Council
Marsha Branigan, Government of the Northwest Territories
Jamie McLelland, Government of Yukon
Ian McDonald, Government of Canada (Alternate)
Billy Storr, Inuvialuit Game Council
David Frost, Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation
Wilbert Firth, Gwich'in Tribal Council
Torie Hunter, Environment Yukon (Alternate)
Stephen Charlie, Government of the Northwest Territories (Alternate)

Deana Lemke, Executive Director

Presenters

Mike Sutor, Environment Yukon
Rob Florkiewicz, Environment Yukon
Shannon Stotyn, Canadian Wildlife Service

Regret

Art Christiansen, Trondek Hwechin

Welcome and Opening Prayer

Chair Joe Tetlich welcomed members and called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. An opening prayer offered by Steven Buyck.

Review Minutes and Action Items

The Agenda was reviewed by the Board and approved.

***Motion to accept agenda
Moved by Marsha Branigan
Seconded by Billy Storr
Carried***

The Minutes of the October 6 and 7, 2014 meeting were reviewed and approved by the Board.

Motion to accept Minutes of the October 2014 meeting as distributed

Moved by Billy Storr

Seconded by Steve Buyck

Carried

Chair's Update

Joe Tetlich, Chair, related that user communities are expressing more than the usual concerns about where the caribou are. The absence of caribou is causing hardship for some because of limited harvesting opportunities. Old Crow had a small harvest, but overall there has not been a significant harvest on the Canadian side this fall.

Some harvesters are confused about the Hart River herd closure. It would be good to provide a better explanation of the need for closures, especially to help elders understand. Jamie McLelland noted that emergency closures are not a great approach and that there is interest from YFWMB and YG to use a different tool to put the closures in place.

Joe recently gave presentations about Porcupine caribou for classes for grade 8 and 12 students using the large wooden model of the caribou range. These were received very well and positive interest was shown by students.

Administrative and Financial Report

Financial update

Deana Lemke, Executive Director, reviewed the financial variance report. There has not been a lot of activity yet this year since this is only the Board's second meeting.

AANDC funding has decreased slightly from the previous year.

A discussion arose around funding to support progress on Native User Agreements. Deana explained that \$10,000 had originally been set aside for this but this amount was decreased this year to \$5,000 due to a lack of work being done and the Board's desire to make a realistic allocation. The three Yukon First Nations have met and drafted terms of reference and discussed contracting Lindsay Staples to facilitate the process. Erika Tizya from VGG contacted Deana in late-August to inquire whether the Board would provide funds and administrative support over a two-year period. Deana requested a cost estimate be submitted for the Board's consideration but there has been no word since then.

David Frost pointed out that he is the new Fish and Wildlife manager for Old Crow. He has the terms of reference and is looking forward to working on this.

Yukon Non-Resident Hunting

Rob Florkiewicz reviewed the non-resident hunting presentation previously shown by Mike Sutor at the October Board meeting.

Information in the presentation covered allocation tables, outfitter hunting concessions, outfitter hunting statistics, and information about special guided hunting. It was noted that due to the periodic nature of Porcupine caribou being in the hunting area, outfitters don't advertise or focus on Porcupine caribou hunts. YG is working on putting outfitters who are currently not on a quota on quotas based on historical information.

Marsha Branigan suggested that a fact sheet about special guiding be put on the Board's website.

Herd Update

Yukon

Mike Sutor explained that not much new has happened since the last update in October. All collars are between Arctic Village and Venetie. A check station was not set up because there were no caribou on the highway. Body condition monitoring was not possible this year due to lack of availability of caribou.

BBC now needs to work with Alaska Fish and Game because the herd is there, but AF&G is not willing to have BBC attend capture work.

Northwest Territories

Marsha Branigan noted that there were no updates to report since the last meeting.

Billy Storr related that approximately 50 caribou were harvested north of Aklavik in the Shingle Point area.

PCTC Update

Shannon Stotyn presented information about PCTC's recent activities. The committee met in person in Fairbanks, Alaska on November 25 and 26, 2013 and via teleconference on October 20, 2014.

Current members of the PCTC are: Government of Yukon, Canadian Wildlife Service, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Government of Northwest Territories, Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, U.S. Geological Service, and Parks

Canada Agency. Porcupine Caribou Management Board and Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board have tenured observer status.

PCTC terms of reference regarding the purpose, structure, work and meetings of the committee were recently adopted and a five-year work plan was approved.

Current projects the PCTC is working on include the creation of a new PCH range map, using all available caribou location data and the updating of the Sensitive Habitats Report (1993). It was noted that the work on updating this report is important because the report is used and referenced frequently by organizations like Northern Cross.

Another major project in progress is a caribou data entry and retrieval database which will allow both the entry and updating of information as well as creation of reports based on the available data.

Development of online caribou herd location maps is being considered with a 10-km buffer and one-week-old GPS information, but final approvals are still required.

Ongoing PCTC work includes the Annual Summary Report about population size, demographics, harvest data, body condition and habitat, and the coordination and completion of PCH surveys which includes the census, collaring, calculation of birth rate and survival, and a rut count.

The next PCTC meeting will be held in mid-May or October in Whitehorse or Dawson City. The next IPCB Meeting will be held in the fall in Inuvik, with the intention of it coordinating with the PCMB meeting.

HMP update

AHM-related information and correspondence has been sent out.

The 2014-15 milestones on tab 6 of the meeting information binder were reviewed by the Board.

Harvest data was received from all except IGC and VG.

YESAB submission re Northern Cross project update

Northern Cross Yukon currently has an application before YESAB for a 20-well drill program for extended flow testing, including construction of new winter roads. Water use for road construction and well drilling and the conversion of some winter roads to all season roads are also part of the project.

The Board reviewed a presentation previously viewed at the October meeting in Aklavik and Mike Suitor provided an overview of the project scope and additional

information such as the area map of drill locations, projected traffic levels, identified effects on caribou, and proposed mitigations.

The impact to First Nation harvesting rights was discussed by the Board in response to Northern Cross' assertion that First Nation harvesters can hunt elsewhere. The Board also noted that a specific number of caribou and specific proximity to the project which would be the trigger for mitigation actions has to be determined.

Board members shared concerns around ensuring that access roads are not going to become public and that they are to be decommissioned one year after not being used.

Mike Sutor reviewed the requirements in Environment Yukon's submission regarding access points and roads, aerial surveys, and suspension of activities due to caribou presence. It was noted that under the *Wildlife Act* there would be no hunting allowed within one km of a residence or camp, but there is no provision which gives NCY the right to limit hunting in the project area.

The Board reviewed PCMB's draft submission to YESAB and finalized it.

PCH Hunter Education program

Printed copies of *Hunting the Porcupine Caribou Herd: An Educator's Guide* and *The Porcupine Caribou Herd: A Hunter's Manual* were provided in the meeting binder.

It was noted that the local and traditional knowledge section of the manual can be adjusted to the preferences of each user group.

All Board members agreed to take the information back to their Parties for approval. Once approved, the manual can be put forward and supported by all with their logos on it.

Action 14-06: Send a letter to Parties, seeking their approval of the draft PCH Hunter Education Program, requesting responses at the AHM.

Review of Sale, Trade and Barter Guidelines

As per the three-year review clause of the 2011 Sale, Trade and Barter Guidelines, the Board discussed whether any changes needed to be made.

Commercialization of the PCH is not as much of a concern as it used to be; however, conservation officers do use the guidelines for making determinations

regarding use of harvested caribou. If Native User Agreement discussions trigger any concerns, any Party can initiate a review of the guidelines.

The Board agreed that the review is concluded. Any future concerns can be brought forward on an individual basis.

Strategic Framework

The Board reviewed the list of activities starting at table A.1.1 on page 7 of the Strategic Framework, with a view to determine what to focus on as priorities for next year.

Marsha Branigan will create a table for Board members to review and update and members agreed to be prepared to discuss and identify priorities at the next Board meeting in Inuvik, immediately prior to the AHM.

Action 14-07: Members to review the Strategic Framework document and consider priorities and actions for discussion at the next Board meeting.

Communication Strategy

Kelly Milner reviewed the Board's general communication objectives as well as the specific external and internal communication goals that were previously identified by the Board to form the current communication strategy.

Quite a few of the tasks have already been completed, including:

- ✓ Create consistent "look" and "feel" (logos, colors, and typeface)
- ✓ Create consistent "visuals"
- ✓ Create template for member's reports
- ✓ Establish social media presence
- ✓ Repackage existing information for distribution
- ✓ Update/revise website
- ✓ Hunter education materials

Progress has also been made on producing a newspaper/magazine column and scoping out the development of videos for podcasts, etc. Yukon North of Ordinary magazine is willing to run a feature article about the HMP and a profile series of a PCH harvester in spring 2016. Kelly is exploring video projects. Ideas include videos about harvest reporting, collaring, census, and a possible partnership with VGFN on field dressing. She also showed the Board a sample of a video (Storm and Tinde) using puppets to educate children and adults about the endangered arctic fox. Based on positive feedback from members, Kelly will obtain a quote for doing something similar about Porcupine caribou.

The member reporting template was reviewed and good feedback received.

Action 14-08: Forward a copy of the Members' reporting template to members

Kelly gave an overview of the Board's new website and provided information about the Board's Facebook presence and the Facebook feed to the website.

A potential new satellite collar website was discussed because the taiga.net site will expire at the end of October 2015.

The Board discussed and agreed that the Board could provide some initial assistance with supporting a future International Porcupine Caribou Board (IPCB) website, but the cost and maintenance would have to be responsibility of the IPCB.

Harvest reporting posters were reviewed and discussed. Marsha suggested asking local RRCs about adding their logo when posting in communities.

The Board discussed options for the communications budget and agreed on the following:

- Recipe book/butchering guide: \$12K (cost share with VGG)
- Video on butchering: \$3K (cost share with VGG)
- Puppet video: \$3K, pending an outline of the project
- Satellite collar website: \$7K
- Photo organizing and digitizing: \$5K
- Stationery and promotional supplies with new logo: \$10K

Motion to accept budget reallocations, as noted above

Moved by Marsha Branigan

Seconded by Jamie McLelland

Carried

Cumulative Effects Project

Don Russell shared a Powerpoint presentation that he recently showed at a conference in Norway. The presentation explains a protein energy model which assesses the effects of disturbances on a caribou herd.

Don also discussed the CARMA integrative model which adds a spatial/landscape component to the energy protein and population models. It adds collar movement data and climate data to calculate population scenarios. Probability of pregnancy relative to body weight is a key indicator in population scenarios based on the energy protein model.

Future steps in developing the model include adding a component to assess costs and efficiencies of mitigations.

Don will spent time next fiscal year inputting similar types of data for the PCH into his model. The Board agreed to wait until next fiscal year to consider bringing stakeholders together to further discuss cumulative effects and the future direction of this project.

Next Meeting and Closing Prayer

The next Board meeting will be scheduled for February 10, 2015, immediately prior to the AHM which is scheduled for February 11 and 12. Members will travel to the meeting on February 9 and depart on February 13.

A May 2014 Board meeting will be coordinated in conjunction with Caribou Days in Old Crow. The fall 2015 Board meeting will be coordinated with the IPCB meeting in September, if possible. PCMB will suggest the week of September 14 or alternatively late during the week of September 7.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 p.m. and a closing prayer was offered by Joe Tetlich.