

# **Porcupine Caribou Management Board Minutes of Meeting**

**October 13 and 14, 2015  
Fort McPherson, NWT**

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## **In attendance**

### **Members/Staff**

Joe Tetlich, Chair  
Steven Buyck, Nacho Ny'ak Dun  
Nicole McCutchen, Government of Yukon  
Art Christiansen, Trondek Hwech'in  
Ian McDonald, Government of Canada  
Marsha Branigan, Government of the Northwest Territories  
Wilbert Firth, Gwich'in Tribal Council

Deana Lemke, Executive Director  
Matthias Lemke, Assistant

### **Regrets**

Billy Storr, Inuvialuit Game Council  
William Josie, Vuntut Gwitchin

### **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 9:30 a.m., after which he offered an opening prayer.

Joe welcomed Nicole McCutchen, Yukon government (YG) representative, and acknowledged Jamie McLelland's absence due to an unfortunate accident during the summer, and expressed well wishes toward Jamie's family for Jamie's betterment.

Chief William Koe welcomed participants to Fort McPherson and he provided some introductory comments for the meeting. Chief Koe expressed relief and gratitude that the caribou have come back to the area this year instead of going back to Alaska as they have been for the past few years. His community relies heavily on the caribou so there was much excitement about the caribou returning. Chief Koe also noted his concern about the access that the highway provides to harvesters from other areas. Since other caribou herds have been

declining, more people are coming to the border area for harvesting. Now people from Inuvik, Tuktoyaktuk, and Whitehorse have easier access to the caribou. This did not happen often in the past. Control over the traditional lands is not working well and this is an issue that also needs to be addressed.

In conclusion, Chief Koe thanked the Board for the work it does in planning and in managing the caribou.

## **Review Agenda**

A review of the Species at Risk Report for barren ground caribou in NWT was added to the agenda.

The Agenda was reviewed by the Board and approved, as amended.

***Motion to accept agenda  
Moved by Marsha Branigan  
Seconded by Ian McDonald  
Carried***

## **Review Minutes**

The Minutes of the May 15 and 16, 2015 meeting were approved by the Board.

***Motion to accept Minutes of the May 15 and 16, 2015 meeting as distributed  
Moved by Art Christiansen  
Seconded by Steven Buyck  
Carried***

## **Chair's Report**

Chair Joe Tetlichy provided an update as follows:

- Joe attended the Midway Lake festival near Fort McPherson in August. During the festival some people with ATVs were going out and harvesting. This caused some animosity with people who don't have trucks or ATVs and are at a disadvantage. People also commented that they used to be able to get caribou in the mountains south of the border but haven't been able to do that for 20 years. The majority of the harvest is by people coming from the delta. There will be challenges regarding this.
- The WMAC (NS) Yukon North Slope conference was attended by Joe and a number of Board members. The focus was on traditional knowledge, and Joe felt the content was similar to the Two Eyes: One Vision conference facilitated by Doug Urquhart in 1999. A noteworthy point brought forward at the conference was that some traditional knowledge from 50 to 60 years ago is not working well now because everything has changed so quickly.

- The International Porcupine Caribou Board (IPCB) meeting is scheduled for mid-November in Yellowknife.

## **Administrative and Financial Report**

Executive Director Deana Lemke provided an administrative and financial report. The communications budget is currently underspent but the work is on track and just hasn't been billed yet.

Meeting expenses up to the budgeted amount will be incurred for the Annual Harvest Meeting and for contracting Lindsay Staples.

\$20,000 has been allocated for support on the Harvest Management Plan (HMP) Native User Agreements. Deana has made efforts to contact parties and get the process started; however, it is up to the First Nations to move things forward. Joe will likely attend the next IGC meeting to talk about Native User Agreements.

## **Herd Update**

### **Government of the NWT Update**

Marsha Branigan provided the following update to the Board:

- The check station was not operated this summer/fall. A contract was in place with the Tetlit RRC to do patrols instead.
- Only very limited hunting took place and very few samples were received.
- There are still issues with harvest data collection. Aklavik has been doing it; Inuvik has not. A new harvest study is starting in 2016 through the Joint Secretariat and the hope is this program will provide the needed data.

### **Government of Yukon Update**

Mike Sutor provided the following update to the Board:

- The Alaskans tried to do standard monitoring work like the calving and post-calving surveys, and the census, but due to weather and mixing with the Central Arctic Herd, none of these could be completed.
- The PCH returned to the 1002 lands to calve there and stayed on the North Slope for the summer.
- Some body-condition work was completed in Old Crow between two busy harvesting periods, and approximately 15 samples were obtained.
- The Alaskans are starting range-wide telemetry this week, and will begin on the Canadian side on October 26. YG will do the telemetry on the lower Dempster.
- The check station may be mobilized in short order if the caribou come to the Dempster Highway.
- Northern Cross' proposal to extend flow testing in the Eagle Plains area is still before YESAB. Northern Cross has until October 30 to provide

adequate responses to information requests. It does not appear that the project will be happening this winter.

- BBC is pleased with the video footage they have captured and have recently asked for caribou movement data to create migration animations. Part of the agreement with BBC is that they will provide five minutes of footage and will send us copies of the final production. The documentary is in production now and will likely be concluded this year.

## **Harvest Management Plan Update**

Responses to the AHM recommendations were reviewed. No replies from Inuvialuit Game Council or Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation have been received yet.

## **Yukon regulation change proposals**

Two proposed regulation changes were reviewed by the Board and the wording adjusted for clarity.

One proposal relates to the Yukon Minister of Environment's ability to decrease the bag limit for licensed hunters if the herd's population zone changes, consistent with the HMP and recommendations from the PCMB.

The other proposed change is regarding the closure of hunting from October 31 to January 31 in five game management subzones (GMS) on the southern Dempster where PCH and Hart River caribou may overlap. If PCH migrate into those GMS in sufficient numbers to negate conservation risks to Hart River caribou prior to or after October 31st, they will be opened for caribou hunting until January 31st. This proposed change will help protect the much smaller Hart River herd from over harvest and is consistent with season dates with other woodland caribou herds in Yukon. Some concerns were expressed about the need for consultation with NWT aboriginal groups on this proposal under Section 35.

The Board supports the changes as discussed. The two regulation change proposals will go through the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board (YFWMB) regulation change cycle and will be part of their consultation process, with PCMB co-sponsoring both proposals. The bag limit regulation is seen to be merely an administrative change. The Board will assist with communicating any regulation changes to Parties and stakeholders once the consultation process has concluded and recommendations have been responded to by the Minister.

## **Population Model Workshop**

Members discussed educating stakeholders about the use and function of the new population model. The intention of creating the model was to share it among all PCTC members, and for all Parties and technical people to have access to it.

The importance of having harvest data to use the model in a meaningful way was emphasized.

At the next PCMB meeting, the Board will discuss how best to use the population model to make the linkage more transparent between harvest data and management (e.g. via scenarios, etc.). Troy Hegel will attend so that he can participate in the discussion as someone who uses the model and as a member of the PCTC. PCMB members would do some "dry runs" on the approach with Troy Hegel and Mike Suitor in January so the approach for the February meeting can be determined.

## **PCMB Communications Update (Kelly Milner)**

Kelly Milner provided the following update on communication activities:

- New content has been introduced on the pcmb.ca website: new graphics, new maps, and new information. Satellite collar information has also been partially integrated. A space for the map with satellite collar locations has been added. An old map from this summer is being used as a placeholder. New maps can replace the older maps as soon as Martin produces them, pending direction on how recent the maps should be. The site can set it up so new maps can easily be uploaded.
- Progress has been made on the puppet show. It will be going into production this coming weekend. A sample will be available by the December Board meeting.
- There were some timing challenges with getting to Old Crow when caribou were in the process of being butchered. The butchering and cooking workshop will now be held during the week of October 19. One day will be spent on the recording of butchering, and a community cooking workshop will be held on Friday and Saturday. Both traditional and modern cooking styles and recipes will be documented.
- There has not been an opportunity to record field dressing, but now that the caribou are on the highway, this might be achievable.
- A new PCMB folder with general information about the Board is being designed, as well as updated, printable information on identifying cows vs bulls, muskox-caribou interaction, and the HMP.
- A best practices guide for hunting, using animation style illustrations instead of text is being considered.

Mike Suitor related that after the IPCB and the PCTC exchanged information, it was decided to use one-week-old data with a 20-km buffer for the caribou location maps on the website. The Alaska Department Fish and Game is fine with this. The Board now just needs to decide if it is comfortable with it.

Ian stated that it was great to see the new population chart on the website, since this is the most frequently asked question he receives. He noted that the second most frequent question is what the population has been in the past, and that it would be nice to have previous population charts available as well.

Joe wondered if it would be possible to add audio files with comments from elders about why it is important to care for the caribou. Kelly replied that she will explore this idea.

## **Discussion with local Elder**

Fort McPherson Elder Mary Teya spoke to the Board about how important caribou were to her family and their lifestyle in the past and the respect that used to be shown for caribou. She expressed concern about the lack of care and respect displayed by some today and appreciates that the Board is interested in protecting and managing the Porcupine Caribou Herd.

## **Harvest Management Plan (HMP) and Implementation Plan (IP) Five-Year Review**

Replies from the Government of Canada, Government of Yukon, and Trondëk Hwëch'in to the Board's recommendation regarding the process for conducting the five-year review were reviewed and discussed.

Board members felt that a full review of the HMP and IP were not a good use of time and resources at this time. It was decided that it would be best to undertake an administrative review and update the task list at this time, and that a full review should be conducted in 2020. It was agreed that a follow-up letter would be sent to extend the deadline for comments and to update Parties' expectations for the workshop to be a limited review and updating of tasks, based on the feedback received so far. Members pointed out that the workshop should also be used to highlight and discuss challenges like adhering to milestones, harvest data collection, and progress on Native User Agreements.

## **PCMB Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board MOU**

The Board reviewed the proposed revisions to the PCMB-YFWMB MOU provided by the YFWMB. Further minor revisions will be suggested by the Board.

Yukon government's role in the process was also discussed, and it was agreed that that proposals which affect PCH should come to PCMB first and then be brought forward as a joint proposal with PCMB.

## **Species at Risk report on barren-ground caribou in NWT**

A draft reply to GNWT regarding their draft Barren-ground Caribou status review was discussed and finalized. The Board agreed that PCH should be treated separately in the report, and not grouped together with other herds in NWT.

## **Next Meeting and Closing Prayer**

The next Board meeting will be held in Whitehorse, Yukon on December 11 and 12, 2015.

A closing prayer was offered by Joe Tetlich and the meeting was adjourned at 11:45 a.m.