

Porcupine Caribou Management Board Meeting Minutes

November 4 and 5, 2006
Aklavik, Northwest Territories

IN ATTENDANCE

Members

Joe Tetlich, Chair
Georgie Moses, Vuntut Gwich'in First Nation
Sonny Blake, Gwich'in Tribal Council
Steve Buyck, First Nation of Na-cho Ny'ak Dun
Steve Taylor, Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in
Ian McDonald, Government of Canada
Ron Morrison, Government of Northwest Territories
Doug Larsen, Government of Yukon
Billie Archie, Inuvialuit Game Council (Alternate) (first day only)
Dorothy Cooley, Government of Yukon (Alternate)

Deana Lemke, Secretariat

Presenters

Chief Darren Taylor, Tr'ondëk Hwech'in
Stewart Breithaupt, Yukon Fish and Game Association
Wendy Nixon, Canadian Wildlife Service, Environment Canada

Saturday, November 4, 2006

Opening and Welcome

Joe Tetlich, Chair, called the meeting to order at 8:40 a.m., and he welcomed attendees. The meeting was opened with a prayer from Elder Annie B. Gordon.

Carol Arey, Chair of the Aklavik Community Corporation, welcomed the Board members and attendees to Aklavik.

Chief Charlie Furlong welcomed the Board to Aklavik. He stated that the community is comprised of Metis, Gwich'in and Inuvialuit people and they have learned to work together for the benefit of the community. Inuvialuit and Gwich'in both have management roles in the community, as well as the territorial and federal governments. They want to continue the preservation and protection of various species that inhabit traditional lands. They would like to empower our representatives to speak for the people on co-management boards to ensure that our cultural and traditional values are

reflected and integrated in decision making. Chief Furlong said his community hopes that all laws will reflect traditional principles of protection, conservation and respect for the animals. The people of Aklavik have always protected the caribou, taken great value in protecting the migration routes and respected each other's hunting areas. They have collaborated when there was a decline in animal populations. Sharing was a fundamental part of local traditions.

"Caribou don't need management; it's the people who need management" are words that were spoken long ago by a respected community person.

Joe Tetlichy welcomed members, and each introduced themselves and briefly related a few introductory comments.

Community Updates

Fredrick (Sonny) Blake, Jr., related that harvesting practices must be considered. Education is important, and First Nation traditions should be taught to others more often.

Ron Morrison related that there has been a decline in some caribou herds in the Northwest Territories. He indicated that there will eventually be pressure on the Porcupine Caribou herd because of the lack of availability of other herds.

Steve Taylor said that he has been involved for many years in native politics.

Steve Buyck stated that the number-one goal for his First Nation people is to make sure caribou are here for future generations to harvest, just as people today have been able to harvest. Aboriginal rights must be protected. We all have to work together through this body and make sure that we look after our caribou.

Billie Archie related that there weren't as many beluga for Aklavik residents, so they harvested cow caribou. Hunter education is a challenge for the HTC, and the community wants to work with the Board on education to make sure the younger hunters learn. He indicated that he saw some PCMB educational information in the school and he liked it. The decline in numbers of caribou in the Northwest Territories is a concern.

Georgie Moses stated that he is a land user, spending as much time as possible on the land. He looks forward to working with the members at this meeting.

Doug Larsen indicated that he is concerned about the decline in the caribou in the Northwest Territories. The Board needs to focus on the Harvest Management Strategy more now than ever.

Review and Approve Agenda

The agenda was reviewed and approved, with the following additions:

- Update on Trade and Barter – from the sub-committee
- More time will be allocated for the issue of the Porcupine Caribou herd regulations/consultation

Motion

It was moved that the agenda be accepted as amended.

Moved by Ron Morrison

Seconded by Ian McDonald

Carried

Approve Minutes

The Minutes of the February 27 and 28, 2006, Board meeting held in Whitehorse, Yukon, were reviewed and approved.

Motion

It was moved that the Minutes of the Board meeting held on February 27 and 28, 2006, be approved.

Moved by Doug Larsen

Seconded by Ron Morrison

Carried

Actions List

Action items were reviewed and progress and status of each was discussed. It was agreed that the action items from Lindsay Staples' workshop with the Board would be included in the Board's action chart.

Action 06-15 *Deana to include action items from workshop with Lindsay Staples in the action chart.*

Regarding Action Item 06-9, Ron Morrison indicated that a request for a legal opinion on the interpretations of the *Gwich'in Final Agreement* and how it relates to the PCMA will still be going forward to GNWT.

Doug Larsen added that he received a legal opinion from Government of Yukon on this matter. In their opinion, the PCMA takes precedence over the other agreements in cases where there would be a potential conflict.

Roles and Responsibilities of Board Members

Joe Tetlich reviewed the summary of information that was discussed at the workshop facilitated by Lindsay Staples in February.

Sonny added that GTC feels that it is not up to them to determine whether there is a safety issue. He notes that he feels there is a definitely a safety issue on the Dempster.

Ian McDonald related that communication is critical between the Board and the communities. It was agreed that the Board should draft a summary and send the information regarding roles and responsibilities to the communities.

Action 06-16 ***Ron Morrison agreed to develop and print a pamphlet summarizing the roles and responsibilities of the PCMB to distribute to all the communities.***

Sonny suggested that there should be additional funding to travel to the communities to communicate Board information and seek input from the community members. Joe Tetlich confirmed that funding is an issue. This will be addressed in the letters going to the governments requesting increased funding.

Update on Bluenose Herds

Ron Morrison presented information to update the Board about the declining caribou herds in the Northwest Territories. Because the Bluenose herds are declining, there will be increased hunting pressure on the Porcupine Caribou Herd, and strategies should be developed to deal with that expected pressure. There is also expected to be an impact on moose. There is a concern about the social impacts to the First Nation and Inuvialuit people as well.

A four-percent harvest level of the Bluenose East herd was agreed to by the co-management boards in consultation with the communities. This is not seen as a sustainable harvest, but it is a compromise to ensure the traditional lifestyle suffers the least impact possible.

All caribou herds in North America are declining, although the reasons are not known.

Steve Buyck questioned whether development impacts have been considered as a factor to the possible decline of the PCH. Ron confirmed that development impacts are being considered but it is felt that development does not have a significant impact on the herds.

Wendy added that there is a natural cycle to caribou populations. The concern is that if the natural declines are also affected by other factors such as increased hunting pressure and climate change, populations may get to a point in which it would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, for them to recover.

Caribou Impacts Workshop

Ron Morrison presented information from the Caribou Impacts Workshop held in Inuvik on November 1 and 2. There were representatives from all relevant communities and organizations. The participants considered what impacts would be experienced as a result of the declining caribou populations. Potential mitigation measures were also considered.

It was clearly felt that the Porcupine Caribou herd will be impacted the most by the lack of availability of the other herds. Now is the time to push forward with the Harvest Management Plan that the Board is currently working on.

Sonny Blake related his concerns about the increased pressure on the Porcupine Caribou herd. Joe Tetlich added that some groups at the workshop talked about the benefit of community hunts.

The facilitator will be compiling the information, including recommendations that came out of the workshop, and this information will be distributed to the communities, participants and co-management boards.

Harvest Data Update

Dorothy related that she has been discussing the issue of obtaining harvest data in preparation for the Harvest Management Strategy. She has been speaking at an operational level with the GRRB regarding collaborating to include their data in a Canadian harvest report. A formal request for collaboration will be forthcoming.

Government of Yukon currently works with the Aklavik HTC to obtain harvest data from Aklavik Inuvialuit hunters, including caribou.

Ron Morrison indicated that he will be collecting harvest data from the Northwest Territories, especially related to the NWT caribou declines.

Ron Morrison updated the Board regarding the plans to install a check station for Northwest Territories. There was a delay in the procurement process, but there is the intention to get the check station in place as soon as the ice bridge is in. There will be a focus on education at the station.

In response to the Board's request for harvest data last year, the Board received data from Vuntut Gwich'in First Nation, and it was verbally reported last year from Tr'ondëk Hwech'in.

Harvest information is still missing from Alaska native harvesters. There will be no Gwich'in data available because the Gwich'in Harvest Study has ended and they are no longer compiling the data. Steve Buyck indicated that harvest data will be forthcoming from Na-cho Ny'ak Dun. Mostly moose are harvested, but at times there will be an

increased need to harvest Porcupine Caribou. Dorothy will send letter to request the harvest information.

The acquisition of really accurate harvest data was discussed at the Caribou Impacts workshop. This needs to be a high priority for the Board.

Action 06-17 ***Dorothy Cooley will provide a chart outlining which harvest data has been received and which are outstanding.***

Action 06-18 ***Discussion about the development of an Eligibility List will be identified as an agenda item at the next meeting.***

Resolutions

Two draft resolutions were reviewed and discussed, one pertaining to Board member representation and the other pertaining to identifying the Porcupine Caribou herd as a conservation issue.

Conservation Resolution

The Board should be looking at other methods that could be used to get an indication of population. As time passes since the last census and as the other herds decline, the risks increase for the Porcupine Caribou herd. As responsible managers of the herd, the Board has to take that into consideration.

Billie Archie raised concerns about the fact that there have been plans in place for other herds and other species that don't seem to be working. The Board doesn't want to make mistakes like that with the Porcupine Caribou herd.

Steve Buyck stated that if the herd is declining, there will probably be conservation concerns. Since there is uncertainty about the population numbers, Na-cho Ny'ak Dun believes there is a need to be proactive rather than reactive regarding any measures that may need to be taken. It is important to ensure that the caribou are around for our future children and their grandchildren.

Ron Morrison emphasized that the situation with the Bluenose West herd and the crisis now being experienced is because of the drastic decline. Five years ago the count showed around 60,000 animals (not including calves), and now they are at 18,000 animals. The Board doesn't want to deal with a similar crisis situation with the Porcupine Caribou herd.

Communications will be critical – informing hunters of the Board's recommendations regarding conservation and potentially a total allowable harvest. Involving the communities needs to be a priority.

Resolution 06-02 — Conservation of the Porcupine Caribou Herd

WHEREAS the *Porcupine Caribou Management Agreement* (PCMA) was established to ensure the conservation of the Porcupine Caribou Herd with a view to protecting the harvesting rights and providing for the ongoing subsistence needs of native users while acknowledging that other users may also share the harvest;

AND WHEREAS the rights of native users as set out in the PCMA are subject to laws of general application with regard to conservation and public safety;

AND WHEREAS the size of the Porcupine Caribou Herd has declined steadily between 1989 and the most recent count in 2001;

AND WHEREAS there has been four unsuccessful attempts to do another count since 2003;

AND WHEREAS many barren ground herds in North America such as the Cape Bathurst and Bluenose-West caribou herds in the Northwest Territories are declining;

AND WHEREAS there is increased harvest pressure on the Porcupine Caribou Herd due to shifts in hunting pressure away from the NWT herds;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the PCMB believes that it is now necessary to take immediate steps to ensure the conservation of the Porcupine Caribou Herd;

AND FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the PCMB recommends that the Parties to the PCMA work with the PCMB to jointly undertake a comprehensive assessment of the status of the herd at the earliest opportunity;

AND FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the PCMB recommends that the Parties to the PCMA provide the necessary support to annually collect complete and accurate harvest data and to participate in the development and implementation of a Harvest Management Strategy.

Moved by Doug Larsen
Seconded by Steve Buyck
Passed unanimously

Action 06-19 Board members will follow-up regarding a subsequent resolution that potentially identifies immediate steps referenced in the Conservation Resolution.

Suggested next steps following Conservation Resolution:

- Implement the Harvest Management Strategy
- Refine population projections model
- Present information at the regional RRC meeting in January (Sonny and Ron)
- Get better harvest data (include user agreement with Alaska)
- Identify needs level
- Present information at Gwich'in Tribal Council Board meeting (Ron)
- Hold meetings with user groups ASAP, where possible
- Present information at CYFN Leadership meeting at the end of November (Joe and Deana)
- Consider modeling scenarios at the next meeting (Dorothy and/or Technical Committee)
- Establish eligibility list (Deana to draft request letter)

Resolution 06-03 — Board Member Representation

WHEREAS the *Porcupine Caribou Management Agreement* (PCMA) states the objective of the PCMB is to conserve the Porcupine Caribou Herd and its habitat through international cooperation and coordination so that the risk of irreversible damage or long-term adverse effects as a result of use of caribou or their habitat is minimized; and

WHEREAS the PCMA further states the objective of the Board is to encourage cooperation and communication among governments, users of Porcupine Caribou and others to achieve the objectives outlined in the PCMA; and

WHEREAS the responsibility of each member is to represent and speak for the future of the caribou, to speak for current and future generations of users from the user communities as well as non-aboriginal users, to represent the broad knowledge and interests of all appointing parties and stakeholders and the general public, and to represent the broad objectives of the land claim agreements;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the PCMB members, in discussions at the meetings, will put the wellbeing of the Porcupine Caribou Herd as their first priority.

**Moved by Steve Buyck
Seconded by Doug Larsen
Passed unanimously**

Harvest Management Strategy

The working group is comprised of Doug Larsen, Ron Morrison, Ian McDonald, Joe Tetlich and Deana Lemke. Doug related that the Board has received written confirmation for support from all relevant organizations except Gwich'in Tribal Council and Tr'ondëk Hwech'in. Those support letters are expected to be received within the next two weeks. Without the support from all signatories up front, the Board will not be in a position to proceed with the strategy.

Doug briefly reviewed the history of the Harvest Management Strategy and updated the Board on recent activities of the working group. The protocol agreement was drafted and provided to Board members for review and discussion.

Motion

It was moved that the Protocol Agreement be accepted as amended. The Protocol Agreement will be forwarded to each signatory for review with a deadline for signatures being set for January 15, 2006.

Moved by Ron Morrison

Seconded by Doug Larsen

Carried

Action 06-20 Secretariat will distribute Harvest Management Strategy Protocol Agreement to all signatories for review and approval.

Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board

Robert Charlie, Chair of the GRRB, expressed that the declining caribou populations is a serious situation. Caribou populations are declining. The PCMB has to have some mechanism for taking action and identifying the triggers for that action. The situation involving the Bluenose herd went on too long, and it is now at a dangerous level. The Caribou Impacts Workshop in Inuvik was important and very timely. The Board needs to be proactive instead of reacting in a crisis situation. It is in the Board's best interest to be proactive even if there are no hard numbers to confirm the population of the caribou. The Board needs to communicate well with the First Nation communities so they understand the situation and so they can help the Board to solve the problems. It is critical for the Board to obtain harvest data. Sometimes the Board has to make tough decisions, even though, unfortunately, they can impact our own people. Future generations should be able to enjoy these resources, as well. With respect to conservation, the Board was urged to start making those hard decisions and be proactive.

Public Meeting/Open House

The public open house was held at 6:00 p.m. Saturday, November 4, 2006, followed by an evening of drum dancing.

Herd Update

Calving survey and census results 2006

The annual calving surveys were conducted by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game and the US Fish and Wildlife Service (report distributed earlier). The late winter composition count is planned for March 2007 to estimate how many calves survived the winter. For the fourth year in a row, no census was possible due to cool weather, which resulted in few biting insects emerging and the consequent failure of the caribou to aggregate. The Alaskan agencies will try again in July 2007.

Collaring and satellite program

There have been contributions from the Canadian Wildlife Service, Government of the Northwest Territories and Ivvavik National Park to purchase 21 conventional collars for deployment in March 2007 and to pay for satellite system fees and data retrieval. Updates will be done on the Web site (www.taiga.net/satellite/index.html) and data will be contributed to Signals of Spring (www.signalsofspring.net). Five free collars were provided by Telonics last year as compensation for collar problems, and these will be deployed. The US Fish and Wildlife Service also refurbished four collars which may be deployed.

March 2007 composition count

Gwich'in Renewable Resource Board contributed \$11,500 to do the composition count next March.

Adult cow survival estimate

The field work for this study is now finished, and results were presented at the Wildlife Society in Anchorage, Alaska, this fall. A final report should be completed by early next year.

Short yearling survival study

This is the fourth year of this study where nine-month old female calves are captured and collared. The objective of the study is to combine five years of data to estimate how well calves survive from nine months old to three years old. These caribou will continue to be recaptured in order to have known aged animals in the collared population.

Dempster hunter snow machine study

The weather station was set up, and the initial vegetation and permafrost measurements were done this summer. The first snow machine treatments started on schedule when the ground froze to the rooting depth of plants but before permanent snow fell (October 18). Treatments will continue weekly until early December, with additional lanes being treated at three, six, and eight inches of snow. Pascale Roy-Leveillee's project to document the pattern of ground freezing and snow accumulation in fall is also well underway.

One week hunting closure and snow machine season

The caribou were late starting their migration, not moving until almost mid October. The satellite collars and one telemetry flight by the Alaskans in early October showed that most of the collars were north of Old Crow, with some collars in the Richardson Mountains. A few thousand caribou showed up near Sheep Creek, so the Dempster Game Management Subzones were closed for one week to let the leaders pass starting on Friday October 27. There was a significant snowfall in Dawson starting October 25, but there was still very little snow north of the Tombstones.

Dempster Check Station and questionnaire

The Check Station should be opened if and when significant numbers of caribou and hunters arrive at the Dempster Highway. The Dawson District Renewable Resources Council was contracted again to administer the station. Blaze orange hats and vests provided by the PCMB will be available at the check station again. The questionnaire will be distributed again this year, and the PCMB is providing the \$400 draw prize for questionnaire respondents. Although the station is opening late, it is expected that it will be closed in late November as usual.

PCH hunter education package

Little progress has been made on the package over the summer. Focus groups will hopefully be held with native hunters and elders in Old Crow, Dawson and Mayo to collect any traditional teachings they want included in the package.

Dempster shooting workshop

Another shooting workshop on the south end of the highway during November is planned for the long weekend. Although he is trying to retire, Larry Leigh will be back for the event.

Porcupine Caribou Technical Committee

A meeting of the Technical Committee is anticipated to be scheduled when most committee members will be in Whitehorse for the Yukon North Slope Conference in late January 2007. Agenda items so far include establishing research priorities, especially given the results of the adult cow survival study, outlining continued collaboration between agencies in research and preparation for the Harvest Management Strategy and possibly discussion on the implications of the NWT caribou declines. Ideas for additional items are welcome.

Action: Board members to provide suggestions on potential issues for the Technical committee to consider at upcoming meeting.

Elisabeth Robins, graduate student at UAF

Elisabeth reported that she has completed 29 interviews this summer and is now writing her report. She has asked about an idea to gather more information on hunting

practices on the Dempster regulations (see email). The Board might want to take this opportunity and work with her to develop a project that takes advantage of her interest and skills.

Hart River Herd

Last fall 30 radio collars were deployed on Hart River Caribou to help count the herd this year. In late September, a survey was completed in the Hart River range before the Porcupine Caribou arrived in the range overlap. A plane located all the collars to determine the area to be surveyed. Then, two helicopters were used to count and classify caribou in the survey blocks. The plane located the radio-collared caribou again once the helicopters were finished.

Summer student

This year the Board hired a Dawson City resident Simon (Spruce) Gerberding. Spruce worked with the Board from May until late August and was able to participate on a number of projects including the North Slope Grizzly Study and the Herschel Island Ecological Monitoring. Spruce is now back at school in Edmonton and will graduate in December.

CARMA meeting

Wendy Nixon explained that the CircumArctic Rangifer Monitoring and Assessment Network put in a proposal for International Polar Year funding for this year, and the Board should know soon whether that funding has been approved. Porcupine Caribou research will benefit greatly by participating.

Body Condition Monitoring

In partnership with the North Yukon Renewable Resources Council, Dorothy Cooley is continuing to administer the program in Old Crow. The fall migration this year was scattered and late, so few samples were taken. Hunters can continue to sample any caribou they get until March. GNWT is working with Fort McPherson hunters (funded by GRRB) to get samples from the Dempster Highway.

Wendy Nixon added that many factors are studied when assessing caribou body conditions, including, among other things:

- Various fatness measures of caribou, such as backfat, marrow fat and kidney fat
- Size of jaw bones
- Diseases, parasites

From the annual calf counts, including birthrate and survival rate, and the adult mortality study, the herd is believed to have continued to decline to approximately 115,000 or 110,000.

Calving Distribution

In the 1980s, a few of the caribou were calving in the 1002 lands; many caribou made it to the 1002 lands in the 1990s. Since 2000, again there have been a reduced number of caribou calving in the 1002 lands. Vegetation has been monitored, and it is clear that the green-up was slower and not as dense in the 1980s, quicker in the 1990s and slower again since 2000.

The *Summer Ecology of the Porcupine Caribou Herd* report needs to be updated to reflect the recent years.

Action 06-21 ***Secretariat will follow up with CWS on updating the Summary Ecology of the Porcupine Caribou Herd Report.***

Action 06-22 ***Secretariat will include wording in letter to the federal government re increase of funding to request confirmation of commitment of resources from Canadian Wildlife Service.***

Hart River Herd Update

Doug Larsen stated that the census of the Hart River herd completed this fall. The full analysis needs to be done but preliminary work indicates there are about 2,200 animals in the herd. A proposal from Tr'ondëk Hwech'in and the Dawson RRC has been submitted to the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board for review.

The Board and the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board agreed to do joint consultation and joint recommendations with respect to overlap areas. Since the recommendations going forward involve some subzones in the range of the Porcupine Caribou herd, the Board can provide input.

Action 06-23 ***Secretariat will contact the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board and discuss how we should proceed with the Hart River recommendations that would affect the Porcupine Caribou herd range.***

Action 06-24 ***Doug Larsen and Ron Morrison will provide charts outlining the public consultation process and how the Board makes recommendations to the Ministers for the next meeting. In addition, a chart will be provided outlining the PCMB recommendation process and how it relates to the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board process.***

Mackenzie Gas Project Joint Review Panel (JRP) Proceeding

The Secretariat related that she made a presentation on behalf of the Board on October 5 regarding potential impacts of development or activities within the range of the herd. The Mackenzie Gas Project JRP is conducting hearings throughout the north to assess the impacts of developing three natural gas fields and a pipeline through the Mackenzie Valley to deliver natural gas to the southern market. This includes social, economic and environmental impacts – referred to in their study as “biophysical impacts.” Their Environmental Impact Statement indicates they do not anticipate any significant negative effects on land, water, wildlife, fish, marine mammals or birds from the Project. There are plans to manage the negative effects.

In the presentation to the JRP, the Secretariat noted that developments in the range of the herd concern the Board if:

- They cause increased traffic on the Dempster Highway
- They affect migration patterns and/or range use
- They damage habitat
- They introduce human activities to the calving grounds
- The influx of people coming to work on projects increases hunting stress on the herd
- There are activities in areas adjacent to the herd that may have an effect on the herd and its habitat

The JRP requested that the PCMB advise the panel whether the Board will be assessing the potential impacts of the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline on the Porcupine Caribou herd or its habitat. The Board was requested to respond to this undertaking by November 14.

According to the PCMA, part 2(g) states, “When evaluating the environmental consequences of a proposed activity, the Parties will consider and analyze potential impacts, including cumulative impacts, to the Porcupine Caribou Herd, its habitat and affected users of the Porcupine Caribou.”

The Board discussed whether it should review the environmental impacts with respect to this project and what its capacity is to undertake such a review. It was decided that the Board would draft a response to the JRP advising that it would be listing what the potential environmental impacts would be and what the concerns are related to the Porcupine Caribou herd and its habitat.

Action 06-25 ***Secretariat will draft a response letter to the JRP advising that it will be providing a submission regarding the potential environmental impact of the Mackenzie Gas Project on the Porcupine Caribou herd and its range.***

Action 06-26 ***Secretariat will request input from the Technical Committee regarding a submission for the JRP.***

Chair and Administrative Report

Joe Tetlichy related that he attended the North American Caribou Workshop and the Gwich'in Gathering this summer. PCMB also had a booth at the gathering which was attended by the Chair and Ron Morrison. The Caribou Impacts Workshop was attended by the Chair and Secretariat as well as several other Board members (in various capacities). The Chair also made a trip to the Dempster Highway to monitor hunting activity and promote awareness.

The Secretariat provided her administrative report (attached) and financial report.

Action 06-27 ***Secretariat to solicit letters from user communities indicating their support for the Board's request to governments for increased core funding.***

Action 06-28 ***Board members will review and suggest any changes for the one-pager information sheets distributed at the meeting.***

Action 06-29 ***Board members will review and suggest any changes draft 2005-06 Annual Report distributed at meeting.***

Consultation on PCH Regulations

Steve Buyck read the October 23, 2006, letter to Minister Fentie from the IGC, Gwich'in Tribal Council, Tr'ondëk Hwech'in, and the First Nation of Na-cho Ny'ak Dun. All members were provided a copy of the letter for information purposes.

Chief Taylor added that this letter does not mean that they do not agree with conservation of the herd. It emphasizes that consultation at the community level must be done. The signatories to the letter would like to have more of a say in the application of the regulations. They still value the Board and its mandate but there needs to be more active involvement in the recommendations that go forward.

RRC Resolutions – Update

Sonny Blake clarified that the resolutions that went forward from the last regional RRC meeting were forwarded to the Gwich'in Tribal Council to follow up on at that level. They were provided to the PCMB for information purposes. The next regional meeting will be held in Tsiigehtchic mid-January.

There was a voluntary no-hunting period for the Gwich'in people between August 1 and September 15. This is intended to be an annual request from the Gwich'in Tribal Council. More communication about this would have been beneficial.

Steve Buyck agreed that education and communication are critical before any closures are implemented.

Doug Larsen suggested that the Board should develop and distribute a one-pager describing the closures and including a map outlining where the closure is in effect.

Action 06-30 ***Secretariat to coordinate the development of a one-pager describing the closures that includes a map of the area of the closure(s).***

Action 06-31 ***The Board needs to develop a map of the range outlining areas in the traditional territories of the First Nations and Inuvialuit where the leaders should be allowed to pass uninhibited, similar to the Dempster Highway closure.***

Maryanne Ross, Vice-President of the Gwich'in Tribal Council, spoke about how they would like to see the First Nations within the range of the herd impose their own restrictions on themselves so the regulations can be eliminated. She mentioned that the Gwich'in Tribal Council would like to work more with education programs as an alternative to regulations.

Gwich'in Tribal Council would like to see signs erected along the highway, especially areas where the caribou cross, to warn truckers that they are entering areas where caribou frequently cross.

Northern Yukon Economic Development Partnership Agreement

Chief Taylor related that the Northern Yukon Development Partnership Agreement was signed this summer by the Vuntut Gwich'in First Nation, Tr'ondëk Hwech'in, the First Nation of Na-cho Ny'ak Dun and the Department of Economic Development. This will ensure that all the parties are involved in discussions and all planning that is proposed for the North Yukon (defined in this agreement as 50 km either side of the Dempster Highway). Decision making will ensure there is appropriate consideration of traditional and cultural values and environmental considerations.

Tr'ondëk Hwech'in Wildlife Act

Chief Taylor related that the *Tr'ondëk Hwech'in Wildlife Act* has been enacted. Copies were provided to the Board members. Conservation of the herd is critical. As a government, Tr'ondëk Hwech'in has to take on responsibility for our wildlife in our traditional territory. This act empowers the First Nation officers to ensure compliance with their laws. It also gives the First Nation the power to impose fines for non-compliance.

VGFN Resolutions

The Vuntut Gwich'in First Nation resolutions regarding the Porcupine Caribou herd were provided to the Board members for their information.

Yukon Fish and Game Association

Stewart Breithaupt and Ross Leef were in attendance to present information from the Fish and Game Association. The association represents between 700 and 800 resident hunters and fishers in the Yukon.

The Board can submit information or articles to print in the association's publication. Education and relationship-building is one of the association's priorities. Stewart emphasized the association's commitment to contribute to the ongoing preservation, conservation and wellbeing of the Porcupine Caribou herd. They feel that they can contribute significantly in a number of areas such as education, safety and conservation.

Chair Appointment

It was decided that Joe Tetlichy would be appointed as Chair for an additional five-year term.

Motion:

It was moved that Joe Tetlichy be appointed as Chair for a five-year term.

Moved by Sonny Blake

Seconded by Doug Larsen

Carried

Action 06-32 *Secretariat to draft and distribute letter to governments and user communities regarding the Chair appointment.*

Draft Guidelines for the Appointment of PCMB Chair were reviewed and approved.

Motion

It was moved that the Guidelines for the Appointment of PCMB Chair be approved.

Moved by Ron Morrison

Seconded by Steve Buyck

Carried

Action 06-33 *Secretariat to distribute Guidelines for the Appointment of PCMB Chair to the signatories.*

Set Next Meeting Date and Location

The next Board meeting will be scheduled as a teleconference within a month. A subsequent meeting was scheduled for February 2-4, to coincide with the North Slope Conference in Whitehorse January 30 to February 1, 2007.

Agenda items for next meeting will include:

- Draft Trade and Barter Guidelines
- Eligibility List
- Technical Committee Information
- Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board – joint recommendation process
- Next steps re Conservation Resolution
- Update on Harvest Management Strategy

It was suggested that three Board meetings be held next fiscal year, if finances permit. It was proposed that one of those meeting be held on the land at Old Crow, in August, 2007.

Closing Comments and Adjournment

Following closing comments from the Board members, Joe Tetlich thanked members and observers for attending the meeting and the meeting was closed with prayer.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:15 p.m.