

Porcupine Caribou Management Board Minutes of Meeting

March 27 and 28, 2012
Whitehorse, Yukon

In attendance

Members/Alternates

Joe Tetlich, Chair
Marsha Branigan, Government of the Northwest Territories
Kelly Milner, Government of Yukon
Molly Kirk, Government of Canada
Steve Taylor, Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in
Steven Buyck, Nacho Ny'ak Dun
Lance Nagwan, Vuntut Gwitchin
Billy Storr, Inuvialuit Game Council
Wilbert Firth, Gwich'in Tribal Council
Roberta Joseph, Alternate, Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in
David Frost, Alternate, Vuntut Gwitchin
Darby Blake, Alternate, Gwich'in Tribal Council
Charles Pokiak, Alternate, Inuvialuit Game Council
Jimmy Johnny, Alternate, Nacho Nyak Dun
Deana Lemke, Executive Director

Welcome and Opening Prayer

The Chair, Joe Tetlich, called the meeting to order at 9:10 a.m. and welcomed everyone to the meeting, including alternates and those in attendance to observe the meeting. Jimmy Johnny offered an opening prayer. New members and alternates were welcomed and all in attendance were introduced.

Review Agenda

The Agenda was reviewed by the Board and approved.

***Motion to accept agenda
Moved by Steve Buyck
Seconded by Billy Storr
Carried***

Review Minutes and Action Items

The Minutes of the December 14 and 15, 2011 meeting were approved by the Board and the action items were reviewed and discussed.

Motion to accept Minutes of the December 14 and 15, 2011 meeting as distributed

Moved by Marsha Branigan

Seconded by Steve Buyck

Carried

The action items were reviewed and discussed.

10-19: Board is currently working on revisions to its Operating Procedures and Members' Manual.

11-02: Research Needs List – will be dealt with when the Strategic Framework is updated.

11-08: Chair appointment procedure will be revised in the coming months.

11-10: Kelly Milner indicated that the Peel Land Use Plan has not yet been approved. However, regulatory changes would be required no matter what was approved in the final plan.

11-14: Kelly Milner said GY is looking at developing a Fish and Wildlife CE assessment; there may be potential to work this into the Board's CE project.

Chair's Update (Joe Tetlich)

The Chair provided an update on activities since the last meeting in December. He attended the Dawson Land Use Planning workshop held in Dawson in January. The theme of the workshop was "The boom and beyond". Roberta Joseph and Steve Taylor were also in attendance at this workshop. Roberta added that Trondek Hwech'in has been concerned about the ecological sustainability of the Dempster. They would like to see the Dempster protected from any industrial activities that would create an imbalance.

There was discussion about future studies on the herd and its habitat – for example, vegetation studies.

There was discussion about a food-sharing agreement among First Nation user groups. Lance Nagwan was wondering if there are regulatory requirements for Arctic Village to hunt and share food with Vuntut Gwich'in, for example. Kelly Milner will look into this cross-border sharing and advise William Josie at VGG.

Administrative and Financial Report (Deana Lemke)

Administration

The Executive Director provided an administrative report on activities since the last meeting:

- The Board's website has been updated with all the AHM information and Board recommendations.
- ED participated in a course at Yukon College in January entitled "Social Media for Business".

Finance

The financial variance report was reviewed. The funding agreements for this fiscal year and the upcoming fiscal year were discussed.

CWS funding this year was expected to be at its usual \$31K; however, only \$15K was provided. There had been an indication from Mike Gill that the further \$16K may be provided later in the fiscal year, but he has confirmed that this funding is, in fact, not available.

There is an indication from AANDC that due to overarching funding cut-backs, the proposal-driven funding to the Board may be affected for the upcoming year. They will be able to commit to the \$13,950 in core funding but may not be able to top that up as they have done for several years (approx \$41K). The proposal funding generally pays for a portion of the Executive Director's contract fees (\$18,750 of \$75,000 annual amount), the Board's website fees and maintenance (\$5,000 of the \$6,000 annual amount), travel and participation in conferences and workshops (\$10,175 annually), and audit/phone/copying expenditures (\$7,181). Confirmation regarding this funding should come to the Board within the next few weeks.

The Board discussed the arrangements for the three governments to provide core funding to the Board on an annual basis, at an amount of \$75K each. Government of Canada's portion was agreed to be provided as follows: PCA: \$30,050; CWS: \$31,000; and AANDC: \$13,950, for a total of \$75,000 from the Government of Canada.

Action 12-01: ***The Board will send a letter to CWS regarding their portion of Government of Canada funding to the Board.***

The proposed budget for 2012-13 was discussed and approved in principle. It was agreed that even if the AANDC funding does not come through to the Board, the work that is to be undertaken related to that funding should not be affected (admin, website maintenance and conference travel/honoraria). It would have to

come out of the Board's core funding somehow. The overall budget will be revisited at the next meeting, at which time we should have confirmation from core funders regarding funding amounts.

Motion to approve in principle the 2012-13 budget as presented

Moved by Marsha Branigan

Seconded by Kelly Milner

Carried

Herd and Check Station Update

GNWT Update

Marsha Branigan provided the following update:

- HMP signs are completed but not yet erected on the highway.
- Annual updates have been done in all user communities in January/February, including an update on the Porcupine Caribou Herd and the AHM.
- GNWT is working with the Gwich'in Tribal Council and Tetlit RRC to have the check stations opened again during the spring.

Yukon Update

Kelly Milner provided the following update:

- Martin Keinzler is working with Alaskans to do field work: collar work recovery and captures. Alaska telemetry has been completed in cooperation with the Alaskans.
- In process of hiring North Yukon Regional Biologist position to replace Dorothy Cooley.

Annual Harvest Meeting Recommendations

The Board's recommendations were sent to Parties on February 21, 2012. According to the IP, the Parties then had 30 days to respond to the recommendations.

The Board discussed the status of responses:

- To date, responses have been received from Vuntut Gwitchin Government and Government of Yukon.
- Billy Storr reported that the Inuvialuit Game Council just had its meeting earlier this month and a response should be forthcoming. He will check on the status of the response.
- Marsha Branigan reported that GNWT's response was emailed today. Copies will be distributed to the Board.
- Wilbert Firth will check on the status of Gwich'in Tribal Council's response.

- Molly Kirk stated that the EC and AANDC responses are currently being drafted and will be issued shortly.
- Roberta Joseph indicated that its response will be done by the middle of April.
- Steven Buyck said that Nacho Nyak Dun's response should be to the Board by next week.

The Board discussed the importance of adhering to the timelines outlined in the Harvest Management Plan Implementation Plan. Members will remind their respective Parties of the deadlines. The IP "Milestones" chart was distributed to Parties when the recommendations were sent out.

Upcoming IP tasks:

- Communications plan is to be done by May 31.
- There was discussion about development of the Native User Agreement. According to the Harvest Management Plan Implementation Plan, the Parties are to develop the Native User Agreement. The Board could assist with logistics, if called on by the Parties to do so.

The Board debriefed about this year's AHM held in Dawson from February 7-9. The Board discussed and agreed with the comments emailed by Mike Gill regarding future suggestions for AHMs. It's also important to have the Parties clarify which year their reported information refers to.

Strategic Framework

The Board sent a letter to the Parties on January 30, 2012, regarding the Porcupine Caribou Herd Strategic Framework. Input has been requested by April 20, 2012. To date, responses have been received from governments of Yukon and NWT.

A two-day Board meeting in Inuvik during the week of June 25 will be dedicated to developing the Strategic Framework. The Strategic Framework will outline what the Board is planning to do and coordinate the activities of other agencies and making sure the work is aligned.

Steven Buyck said he has discussed this internally with Nacho Nyak Dun and there seem to be issues raised that are outside of our control: e.g. climate change and predation. Alternates may be in attendance if they are funded by their respective Parties.

Arctic Borderlands Ecologic Knowledge Co-Op

Michael Svoboda and James Andre were in attendance to present information about the Arctic Borderlands Co-op. A handout was distributed.

The Co-op started about 15 years ago, coordinating interviews of local experts in communities in Northwest Territories, Yukon and Alaska. A new survey was redesigned in 2010 and deployed last year. There is now an on-line data-entry component, keeping most of the work in the communities. The annual gathering was held in Inuvik the second week of March. Approximately 91 out of the 160 total interviews included caribou questions/responses.

The Co-op will be looking at doing an executive summary type of document each year to highlight major findings.

This year, the first annual Youth Conference was held in conjunction with the gathering. About 16 youth attended each day. A report will be prepared about the youth component.

Steve Taylor attended the gathering in Inuvik. He was impressed with the gathering and how the information was gathered and presented. This is a forum to pull together traditional knowledge. Attendees included people between the ages of 14 and 23.

North Slope Geoscience studies

The Board discussed the information regarding the Yukon Geological Survey's project description to the Environmental Impact Screening Committee. The project description appears to be out for public comments currently.

The Board agreed that it should have comments on the record if the public consultation is currently underway. PCMB's comments should include:

- The Board is concerned why YGS would need to assess the mineral and hydrocarbon potential of a region that is Category D and E in the Community Conservation Plan, in a national park, and is currently under a land withdrawal.
- Consideration should be given to potentially delay project until the beginning of August, depending on when and where calving occurs.
- Aircraft disturbance to caribou during post-calving period.
- Mitigation measures should include not landing or working in areas where caribou are present; maintaining minimum flight altitudes per the Inuvialuit Game Council guidelines, and ensuring a local wildlife monitor is in place and with them at all times; and maintaining communications with Aklavik HTC to minimize the impacts on harvesting.
- Camp cleanup should be undertaken following the work.
- PCMB's submission should be copied to Parks Canada Agency.

Action 12-02: ***PCMB to send letter to EISC regarding the Yukon Geological Survey's proposed project outlining the Board's comments.***

Dempster Hunting Regulations

The Board discussed the status of the Dempster Highway hunting regulations and the input that has been received from Parties, providing direction to the Board.

Lance Nagwan related that a community meeting was held on March 1 in Old Crow. It is felt that the Dempster regulations should be kept in place, except the off-road vehicle use regulation, for which VGG would support more discussion.

Roberta Joseph reminded that Trondek Hwech'in recommended that more education be done. Harmonization of regulations between territories is not appropriate because there are different requirements and governance structures on both sides. TH is opposed to the regulations being implemented in its traditional territory. It is not opposed to any other Party implementing these regulations in their respective territories. TH would appreciate other Parties not trying to promote the implementation in its traditional territory.

Billy Storr stated that it is important to do adequate education on each side of the border with respect to what the requirements are. Wilbert Firth added that some of the regulation-related issues could be dealt with when the Native User Agreement is developed.

The 500-metre corridor regulation was put in place on the Yukon side, and was implemented primarily for safety reasons. There are factors to consider that currently help to address or challenge those safety reasons – for example, education that has been done regarding safety issues; blaze orange safety vests and toques distributed by the Board; best hunting practices were developed through the Harvest Management Plan; grizzly bear occurrence that makes going 500 metres from the highway its own safety issue.

Kelly Milner said that we should take into consideration the history of each of these regulations and why they were put into place. She suggested having John Russell come to speak to what each of the regulations is in detail. The Board agreed that this would be useful. The Board will dedicate a day to deal with the Dempster Highway Hunting regulations at the next Board meeting in the fall.

Marsha Branigan and Kelly Milner will determine what the process is for changing or removing the Dempster Highway hunting regulations by their respective governments.

Action 12-03: ***Kelly Milner to make arrangements for John Russell to present background information regarding the Dempster Highway hunting regulations at the Board's fall meeting.***

Action 12-04: *Marsha Branigan and Kelly Milner to determine what the process is for changing or removing the Dempster Highway hunting regulations by their respective governments.*

Operating Procedures and Members' Manual

The Board's Operating Procedures were reviewed and revised. Executive Director will finalize revisions into a draft document that will be distributed to members for review. The document will be finalized and approved at a future Board meeting.

The Board discussed the Members' Manual and agreed requested the Executive Director to make revisions to bring forward to the next Board meeting for further discussion.

Action 12-05: *Executive Director to revise the Operating Procedures and Members manual based on discussions at this meeting.*

Cumulative Effects Project

The Board discussed the CE project status and future planning. A letter needs to be written to potential partners to outline the CE project summary — what has happened to date, what the plans are for this fiscal year, how the work may fit into their processes, and exploring future partnership potential.

Action 12-06: *Kelly and Marsha to draft letter to potential partners; Deana to contact Don Russell asking for help with outline.*

Action 12-07: *Executive Director to check with Don Russell re deliverables and timelines for his outstanding work.*

Action 12:08: *Executive Director to draft letter to advise stakeholders and Parties that the Board has the CE project going on, what the anticipated deliverables are, and originated from NYLUP discussions.*

Annual Report

The Annual Report is still being worked on. Unfortunately, some content from the draft has been lost and will need to be redone.

Computer model

Kelly Milner reported that Government of Yukon does not have the final computer model from Craig Nicolson. He has not been responding to requests and has not fulfilled his contract terms. GY is in the position now where it is pursuing how to deal with the work Craig has been paid for but has not completed. GY will also be looking into contracting an alternative person who might be able to do this work. It will likely take a couple of months to pull this together.

Next Meetings and Closing Prayer

The next Board meeting will be held June 26-28, 2012 in Inuvik to deal with the Strategic Framework (include admin/finance, CE project update if available). Travel dates will be June 26 and June 28.

Upcoming meetings:

- NACW – Sept 24-28 Fort St. John
- IPCB – April 18-19, Fairbanks (reviewed agenda, Joe to present on Harvest Management Plan)
- Caribou Days coming up in May in Old Crow
- North Slope Conference – October 2-4, 2012 Whitehorse
- Gwich'in Gathering – Fort McPherson, end of July
- Gwich'in Assembly – Fort McPherson, first week in August
- Yukon Regional RRC Meeting will be held in Whitehorse in November

The following Board meeting will be held in Old Crow on October 24 and 25, 2012.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:00 p.m. and a closing prayer was offered by Wilbert Firth.