



MEETING MINUTES

WMAC(NS) Quarterly Meeting

Whitehorse, Yukon
Westmark Whitehorse
January 28 – 29, 2007

Sunday, January 28

Lindsay Staples Chair • **Doug Larsen** Yukon Government (Member) • **Ron Larsen** Parks Canada (Member) • **Danny C. Gordon** Inuvialuit Game Council (Member) • **Ernest Pokiak** Inuvialuit Game Council (Member) • **Evelyn Storr** Inuvialuit Game Council (Alternate) • **Dorothy Cooley** Yukon Government (Alternate) • **Wendy Nixon** Canadian Wildlife Service (Alternate) • **Michelle Sicotte** Secretariat

A. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 10 am.

B. Review and Approval of Agenda

The following items were added to the agenda under Ongoing Business: (1) Review of the North Slope Conference, (2) grizzly bear research update, and (3) muskox management. The following items were added under New Business: (1) report from the Caribou Summit, and (2) joint meeting with WMAC(NWT).

Motion to approve the agenda for the January 28 – 29 meeting as amended

Moved: Danny C. Gordon

Second: Ron Larsen

Motion Carried

C. Review and Approval of Minutes

1. September 28 – 30, 2006

Members reviewed the minutes of the meeting held September 28 – 30, 2006 in Whitehorse, Yukon. The following requests for changes were made:

Page 3: change to “... **on** the North Coast. Imperial has suggested using the North Coast to transport materials may lower costs. Danny mentioned the frequent changes in the **proposed design of the MGP**”

Motion to adopt the minutes from the September 28 - 30, 2006 WMAC(NS) meeting as amended.

Moved: Ernest Pokiak

Second: Doug Larsen

Motion carried

2. November 23, 2006

Members reviewed the minutes of the meeting held November 23, 2006 in Aklavik, NT. The following requests for changes were made:

Page 2: change to “... **considerable** amount of time and resources that the Council has committed to the development of the muskox plan for the Canadian range.”

“... **a coordinated management strategy should be implement across jurisdictions.** Currently management bodies are supporting the goal of the **draft plan: to maintain a healthy, productive and sustainable population of North Slope muskoxen**”.

“**Inuvialuit harvesters** need to be made aware...”

Motion to adopt the minutes from the November 23, 2006 WMAC(NS) meeting as amended.

Moved: Danny C. Gordon

Second: Ron Larsen

Motion carried

Action 07-01-01: The time meetings are called to order and adjourned will be added to the meeting minutes.

D. Ongoing Business

1. North Slope Conference

Michelle and Lindsay provided an update on the North Slope conference, including registration, panels, time allocated for discussion, budget, communication workshops, and poster session. Species status reports and the WCMP action items were updated for the conference. As well, a review of IFA research on the North Slope was completed. Issues with contractors related to organizing speakers were resolved. The time slot of the communication workshops was changed.

2. IPY Update

Michelle provided an update on the IPY program. There has been no official response from IPY on funded projects. There has been communication between the IPY program and successful projects to request budget revisions.

3. Stokes Point Committee Update (Ed McLean)

Ed McLean provided an update on the activities of the Stokes Point Committee. He gave information on the background of the Stokes Point site, including details about the DEW line station, the exploration camp and the potential contaminants.

The council reviewed a map showing areas of concern (in binder). Two rounds of community meetings are planned for the Spring of 2007 and 2008, as well as a meeting to plan activities for 2008 with the communities of Aklavik/Inuvik, and the IGC. Ed asked the Council if there is a need to involve other ISR communities. The Council recommended sending a letter to the Community Corporations to determine if they want to be involved and what role they would play. People who live in the ISR and worked at Stokes Point will be involved.

The dumping of garbage and debris in the ocean is not being addressed in this program, but other contaminant sources offshore must be kept in mind. There is a good foundation of cleanup criteria established by DND and Inuvialuit already. It was decided that the land be dealt with first, and offshore will follow.

Other ISR communities will be notified about the progress because they are affected by DEW line sites. This project will be an excellent capacity building activity and improve their level of understanding.

In 2006, there was a detailed site assessment over several weeks. Further details are provided in the binder. During the assessment, community members were hired for field work and Inuvialuit companies (Stanton, Aklak, etc.) were used also. The assessment included surface sampling of contaminants in the soil and water, plant and animal collections, sculpin evaluation in the offshore regions. These were combined with other sites on the North Slope, and the results will be returned in the spring of 2007.

Ed provided an overview of 2007 field work. There will be the project archeologist this year. They have found artifacts in an area that is already disturbed, and it has not been decided what to do with these items. The difference between cultural artifacts and human remains was noted.

It was suggested to send experts (from Yukon Government, etc) to the site to get them familiarized. If students are hired, parents need to be advised against the risk.

The use of the area and its risk to people must be determined to help ascertain the kind of cleanup. 80 % of the project funding comes from the Federal Contaminated Site Action Program and 20% comes from the Western Arctic Field Unit. It will cost \$700 000 to determine the scope of the project, and millions of dollars for the cleanup itself. Government funding would provide the financial support needed for this project.

There is little evidence of contamination thus far. After the buildings in the area were removed the site was re-graded. It is unclear if the site is clean or the contamination has been moved.

To conclude, Ed outlined the next steps for the project. He asked the Council to reconsider appointing a member to the Steering Committee.

Action 07-01-02: Reconsider the request to appoint a WMAC(NS) member to the Stokes Point Steering Committee.

4. Grizzly Bear Research and Management (Ramona Maraj)

Ramona Maraj provided an update on the grizzly bear project. She reviewed the study objectives, project planning team, boundary, and design and timeline. She also reviewed the annual project cycle. Biopsy darting will begin in 2008. Preliminary results show that females have a range of 190km² and males 1020km².

The Council discussed the financial needs of the project. Currently the project costs three times more than the allocated IFA funding. Ramona may be required to do grizzly bear work elsewhere in the Yukon, which would provide an issue for staffing on this project.

There was a discussion on the analysis of the hair samples collected. Ramona outlined the cost options between commercial, forensic, and university analysis.

Ramona reviewed the focus on Shingle Point, including waste management and defense kills. She stressed that we do not want to understate the importance Shingle Point has on population dynamics. In Alberta, the loss of 1-2 females influenced the entire bear population.

Waste management at Shingle Point is an ongoing issue. Incinerators at Shingle Point pose an issue with ongoing maintenance. There needs to be a waste monitor at Shingle Point. Waste management issues at Shingle Point are currently illegal under the Wildlife Act. The community has indicated they want more enforcement.

There have been reports of grizzly bears shot as defense kills at Shingle Point that were not reported. Additional work needs to be done to understand the extent of the problem. To date, there has been no investigation or enforcement of the bears that were shot. Without reporting, there is not a good sense of how many bears are being killed. Defense killing is not illegal, but the kills must be reported. This is a very complex issue. The Council suggested holding another enforcement workshop. There is a need for direction from the Council on actions for Shingle Point.

The Council asked about harvesting bears with collars. It is legal to harvest bears with collars, however there is education material in the tag kits asking people not to shoot bears with collars.

The traditional knowledge component of the project was discussed. This work should be published to get something back to the community.

Monday, January 29

Lindsay Staples Chair • **Doug Larsen** Yukon Government (Member) • **Ron Larsen** Parks Canada (Member) • **Danny C. Gordon** Inuvialuit Game Council (Member) • **Ernest Pokiak** Inuvialuit Game Council (Member) • **Evelyn Storr** Inuvialuit Game Council (Alternate) • (Alternate) • **Michelle Sicotte** Secretariat

5. Wildlife Programs

The Council reviewed 2007 – 08 candidate programs for IFA wildlife research funding submitted by YG, PC and CWS. Project descriptions are included in the meeting binder.

Action 07-01-03: Meet with the IFA Secretariat at Yukon Government to discuss all budget items with respect to YG IFA implementation.

Action 07-01-04: Obtain WMAC(NWT) IFA funding recommendations for 2007 – 2008.

i. Yukon North Slope Grizzly Bear Project

This is a multi- year project that the Council has committed to supporting. It's purpose is to update some North Slope population data that is older than 25 years. The project is a priority for YG. The Aklavik HTC is a major participant in the project. There may be a need to increase the funding to support the DNA analysis and to account for additional pressure on other funding sources (e.g. Polar Continental Shelf Project) due to IPY activities. The Council agreed that it is important to have the DNA analysis completed as soon as possible. The Council will not make final decisions related to surplus funds until Ramona finds out about external project funding.

The Council recommends \$100,000 to the Yukon North Slope Grizzly Bear Research Project.

Motion recommending unspent funds in 2006-07 wildlife program budget are assigned to grizzly bear DNA work.

Moved: Ernest Pokiak

Second: Ron Larsen

Motion Carried.

ii. Porcupine Caribou Satellite Program

Currently there are 12 caribou with collars. The program obtained free collars this year as there has been a 40% failure rate on collars. The GNWT are discussing removing satellite location information that is obtained from collars off the internet.

Preparing a harvest management strategy is a priority for the Porcupine Caribou Management Board, and obtaining an updated and accurate census of the Porcupine Caribou herd is a management priority, especially in light of the current population counts that have been generated for other herds in the Western Arctic.

The Council recommends \$9,000 to the Porcupine Caribou Satellite Program.

iii. South Beaufort Sea Polar Bear Surveys

The majority of the cost for the survey will be covered by the Alaska Fish and Wildlife Service. WMAC(NS) and YG have not contributed to this work in the past.

The Council agreed that the population information provided in the draft polar bear status assessment report prepared for COSEWIC was not sufficient. Additional information on previous work, management implications and communications is required. In addition, pursuant to the federal Species at Risk Act, YG is interested in becoming more involved in polar bear management.

The Council recommends \$15,000 to the South Beaufort Sea Polar Bear Surveys in principal. The Council requires a revised proposal from the proponent that addresses previous work, management implications and communications.

iv. Herschel Island Ranger Training in Bird Identification and Survey Methods and Black Guillemot Monitoring and Nesting Success at Herschel Island, Yukon

The Council expressed concern about the long term plan for this program, and the availability of multi-year funding. The program offers a good training opportunity for park rangers, and the future of the program may well rest with the capacity of the rangers to implement it. YG has changed the proposal to make it more cost-effective. Both projects will be carried out at the same time, utilizing one round-trip flight between Inuvik and Herschel.

The Council recommends \$6,000 to the Herschel Island Ranger Training in Bird Identification and Survey Methods and Black Guillemot Monitoring and Nesting Success at Herschel Island, Yukon.

v. Marmot Distribution in the Northern Yukon

Having committed funds to this project last year, and given uncertainties associated with other funding sources and the implementation of the program, members suggested an alternative sources and the implementation of the program, members suggested an alternative approach to the proposed project in identifying marmot distribution on the YNS: producing a brochure for park visitors and the HTC office to encourage travelers on the YNS report any marmot sightings.

Action 07-01-05: Michelle will request that a final report for the 2005-2006 marmot study be sent to WMAC(NS) and the Aklavik HTC.

The Council recommends not pursuing the Marmot Distribution in the Northern Yukon project with IFA funding at this time.

vi. Herschel Island Ecological Monitoring

The Council recommends \$3,000 for Herschel Island Ecological Monitoring.

vii. Aklavik Harvest Data Collection

Catherine Pinard completed a review of this program. The proposal submitted assumes the changes Catherine has suggested are implemented. There is a need to discuss changes with the Aklavik HTC.

The Council suggested completing a summary report of data collected through this program.

The Council recommends \$2,000 for Aklavik Harvest Data Collection.

viii. Arctic Borderlands Ecological Knowledge Co-op

Michelle gave an update on the current status of the Co-op. The Council is concerned about the current state of the Co-op. The Council acknowledged that it has not followed up formally with previous concerns discussed related to the Co-op. Currently the organization has funds to complete the interviews and gathering but is not in a position to do additional work.

The Council agrees to recommend funding for the program for this year. If the concerns raised by the Council are not addressed within the next year it is expected the Council will not recommend funding for subsequent years. WMAC(NS) will need to develop a work plan to ensure monitoring data is collected if funding is not allocated to the work of the Co-op. The Council also discussed hosting a special meeting to assist in addressing concerns with a view to facilitating the work of the Co-op.

The Council recommends \$15,000 to the Arctic Borderlands Ecological Knowledge Co-op.

Action 07-01-06: WMAC(NS) will attach a letter to the Co-op recommendation that requests information on how the organization proposes to address concerns related to interview methods and capacity issues within the Co-op.

ix. Dust Deposition on Winter Range of the Porcupine Caribou Herd

Dust is a significant issue along the Alaska Highway. The Council agrees that it is beneficial to have baseline data if the MVP goes ahead and there is increased traffic on the Dempster. However, this work is outside the boundary of the YNS and would fall to the responsibility of the GRRB, WMAC(NWT) and/or department of transportation.

The Council recommends not pursuing the Dust Deposition on Winter Range of the Porcupine Caribou Herd work at this time.

x. Tracking Diet of North Slope Predators Using Isotopic Signatures

There is a need to work closely with the Aklavik HTC on this program. Harvesters are accustomed to compensation for participating in wildlife research. The concept for this work is good; there may be a challenge in implementation of the project as proposed related to acquiring samples from harvesters.

The Council recommends approval-in- principal for \$5,000 to the Tracking Diet of North Slope Predators Using Isotopic Signatures project. The Council requires additional information on how the project proponent proposes to facilitate and better ensure the participation of harvesters in the collection of biological samples of predators (wolves, wolverine, lynx, coyote and bears).

WMAC(NS) recommends the following wildlife program financial allocations for 2007 – 2008:

- *\$100,000 to the Yukon North Slope Grizzly Bear Research Project*
- *\$9,000 to the Porcupine Caribou Satellite Program*
- *\$6,000 to the Herschel Island Ranger Training in Bird Identification and Survey Methods and Black Guillemot Monitoring and Nesting Success at Herschel Island, Yukon*
- *\$3,000 for Herschel Island Ecological Monitoring*
- *\$2,000 for Aklavik Harvest Data Collection*
- *\$15,000 to the Arctic Borderlands Ecological Knowledge Co-op*

Moved: Ernest Pokiak

Second: Ron Larsen

Motion Carried

E. New Business

1. Offshore Development

The Council discussed a request by Yukon Government to the federal government regarding nominations for oil and gas exploration in the nearshore waters of the Yukon North Slope. The area has not been open for nomination for 25 years. The Council would like to identify past statements regarding oil and gas nomination in this area. The federal government is currently seeing interest from affected parties before opening this area up for nomination.

Action 07-01-07: Write a letter to the Energy Mines and Resources Deputy Minister requesting information on the Yukon Government interests in the offshore.

2. Enforcement

There was a discussion on meat waste and enforcement. There is concern that there is not sufficient enforcement on the North Slope. Yukon Government relies on the NWT Conservation Officer to enforce laws on the North Slope. When they do enforce the

community reacts in a negative way. The Council discussed holding another enforcement workshop.

3. Caribou Summit

Doug provided an update on the Caribou Summit. Members who attended learned the herd fluctuations are consistent with the traditional knowledge 30 year cycle. The NWT minister attended the summit. The summit illustrated the need for political pressure and action to protect the Porcupine Caribou Herd.

4. Polar Bear Status Report

The Council discussed the Draft COSEWIC Status Report on Polar Bear. The Council will discuss the WMAC(NWT) input into this report at the joint WMAC(NS) and WMAC(NWT) meeting.

F. Financial Report

The Council reviewed the WMAC(NS) budget and status of WMAC(NS) projects. The Ecological Monitoring workshop was deferred for this year. Publishing the grizzly bear traditional knowledge report is a priority for next year.

WMAC(NS) will allocated an additional \$8,000 for work on the new website.

Moved: Ron Larsen

Second: Danny C. Gordon

Motion Carried

G. Next Meeting

The Council will hold a teleconference to discuss additional agenda items. The next WMAC(NS) meeting will be held in the spring. Members will forward possible dates.

H. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 2 pm.

Motion to adjourn the meeting

Moved: Doug Larsen

Second: Danny C. Gordon

Motion Carried

Approved:

Chair, Lindsay Staples

Date

Secretariat, Michelle Sicotte