



**Wildlife Management Advisory Council (North Slope)**

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**Minutes**

**WMAC(NS) QUARTERLY MEETING**

**Council Chambers  
Aklavik, NWT**

**December 6 and 7, 2004**

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**Monday December 6, 2004**

**Present:** Lindsay Staples – Chair  
Herbert Felix- Member- Inuvialuit Game Council  
Ernest Pokiak- Member – Inuvialuit Game Council  
Harvey Jessup – Member - Yukon Government  
Dorothy Cooley - Alternate- Yukon Government  
Ron Larsen – Member- Government of Canada (Parks Canada)  
Aileen Horler- Secretariat

**Guests:** Richard Gordon - Herschel Island Territorial Park

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**A. Call to Order**

The Chair called the meeting to order at 2:30 PM. .

**B. Review and Approval of Agenda**

***Motion***

*To adopt the agenda, as revised.*

Moved: Harvey Jessup

Second: Ernest Pokiak

Motion carried

### **C. Review and Approval of Minutes of October 2004 meetings**

The Secretariat noted that Wendy Nixon had requested changes to the minutes. On page 26, under the section on the Resources Managers Information Exchange, the last two sentences should read, "Its goal is to coordinate how information is managed, determine ways to collaborate on fieldwork and identify geographic areas and species that are priorities for investigation. Although no specifics have been identified to date there is an interest in considering woodland caribou as a species to collaborate work on and the Peel Plateau as a geographical area of priority."

No other changes were requested.

#### ***Motion***

*To adopt the minutes of the October 2004 meeting, with noted changes.*

Moved: Herbert Felix  
Second: Harvey Jessup  
Motion carried

### **D. Review of Action Items**

**Action 04-10-01:** The Secretariat will work with Ron Larsen to expand the regulation and enforcement summary table to include the RCMP, DFO and others, as required, and to produce a poster that summarizes the responsibilities and authority of the different agencies.

**Ongoing.** The Secretariat and Ron Larsen have discussed how to proceed with this action. The community wants more information on who is responsible for enforcing various regulations and who to call with problems or questions. Ron proposed holding a workshop in Aklavik and inviting representatives from various agencies with law enforcement responsibilities, such as Parks Canada, Herschel Island Park, DFO, GNWT, Transport Canada and YTG. The summary table can be expanded in preparation for the workshop. The poster should be prepared after the workshop so that it reflects questions raised by the community. Ron agreed to take the lead in organizing a workshop for later in the winter.

**Action 04-10-02:** The Secretariat will add the "Flora of Herschel Island Territorial Park" brochure, the updated Herschel Island visitors' guide and a link to the Herschel Island monitoring information on the Cantex website to the WMAC(NS) website.

#### **Outstanding.**

**Action 04-10-03:** The Secretariat will contact the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board to find out how they have decided to proceed with their regulation proposals.

**Ongoing.** The Secretariat reported that she had spoken to Christine Cleghorn, the Executive Director of the Board. The Board is meeting later this week to decide how to proceed. Members agreed to wait and see what the Board decides to do before making any decision regarding the Council's actions.

**Action 04-10-04 :** The Secretariat will reformat the list of initiatives and priorities identified at the August 2004 planning meeting. These items will be presented as 'Strategic Initiatives' and their progress updated for every meeting.

**Complete.**

**Action 04-10-05:** The Secretariat will obtain and circulate a copy of YTG's Environmental Protocol to Council members.

**Outstanding.**

**Action 04-10-06:** The Council will review all protocols related to the management of fuel caches on the North Slope at its December meeting.

**Outstanding.**

**Action 04-10-07:** Harvey Jessup will work with the Secretariat to ensure that two extra grizzly bear tags are issued to the Aklavik Hunters and Trappers Committee. One of these tags is for use in the Yukon and one in the NWT.

**Ongoing.** Harvey Jessup commented that there is still a lot of confusion around this issue. Although Minister Kenyon did agree to the increase in the number of tags (one for the Yukon and one for the Aklavik Grizzly Bear hunting area in the NWT), he has no authority in the NWT. A tag issued by the Yukon Government for use in the NWT is not valid. See further discussion under Action 04-10-08.

**Action 04-10-08:** Harvey Jessup will find out if there is a mechanism to allow for the distribution of three tags across the two parks (Ivvavik and Herschel Island)

**Ongoing.** The Chair reviewed and explained the background to the recommendations made by the WMAC(NS) and the WMAC(NWT) for a total allowable harvest (TAH) in the Aklavik Grizzly Bear Hunting Area (AGBHA) and the distribution of the harvest quota.

In December 2000, the recommended TAH and resulting allocation of the harvest quota was as follows:

	<b>INP</b>	<b>Yukon - East of Babbage</b>	<b>NWT</b>	<b>Total</b>
Total Allowable Harvest	<b>11</b> (10 recommended by NS + 1 recm'ed by NWT)			<b>11</b>
	<b>5</b> (recm'ed by NS)	<b>5</b> (recm'ed by NS)	<b>1</b> (recm'ed by NWT)	
Harvest quota	<b>3</b> (2 moved to AGBHA-NWT)	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b> (2 from INP + 1 recm'ed by NWT)	<b>11</b>

In May 2003, WMAC(NS) passed a resolution supporting an increase in the TAH of two bears in the Aklavik Grizzly Bear Hunting Area (AGBHA). WMAC(NWT) passed a similar resolution later in the year. One of the tags is allocated to the Yukon portion of the area (recommended by WMAC-NS) and one to the NWT portion (recommended by WMAC-NWT).

	<b>INP</b>	<b>Yukon - East of Babbage</b>	<b>AGBHA - NWT</b>	<b>Total</b>
Total Allowable Harvest	<b>13</b> (11 + 2 new)			<b>13</b>
	<b>11</b> (10+ 1 new recm'ed by NS)		<b>2</b> (1 recm'ed by NWT + 1 new recm'ed by NWT)	
Harvest quota	<b>3</b> (2 moved to AGBHA-NWT)	<b>6</b> (5 + 1 new recm'ed by NS)	<b>4</b> (2 from INP + 1 recm'ed by NWT + 1 new recm'ed by NWT)	<b>13</b>

WMAC(NS) also made a recommendation to remove the zero quota for Herschel Island and re-assign the quota of 3 bears for Ivvavik National Park to include Herschel Island.

Harvey Jessup explained that as Inuvialuit have exclusive rights to harvest on Herschel Island it may not be necessary to open up the Herschel Island

game management zone to hunting. Harvey noted that YTG issues one permit for all 9 tags designated for harvests in the Yukon. This permit is not technically valid in the national park.

Ron Larsen commented that the Western Arctic Field Unit has proposed a regulation change to allow Parks to issue tags for any species where a quota has been recommended by the Wildlife Management Advisory Council (North Slope) in the national park. Parks is now waiting for the request to go through the legal process. Once Parks Canada regulations are in place, the Superintendent has the authority to amend them as appropriate. It is difficult to link Parks Canada regulations to other by-laws in case the by-laws change and become hard to enforce. A solution would be for Parks to have regulations that allow the Minister to endorse the local by-laws.

Harvey noted that Inuvialuit already have the right to harvest in Ivvavik or anywhere else they choose on the North Slope. Harvesting according to the tag allocation it is really a voluntary compliance. However, if there is a quota by-law in place and an Inuvialuit shoots a bear without a tag, then the hunter could be charged with possessing a bear without a tag, even though the bear was shot legally.

Harvey added that there is no problem increasing the quota for the North Slope from 8 to 9 bears. But there is a question as to whether a regulation change is needed to allow for an Inuvialuit harvest on Herschel Island, considering that Inuvialuit already have exclusive rights there. The issue of an Ivvavik tag being allocated for Herschel Island is more complicated. A 'Parks Canada' tag can't be used on Herschel Island because Parks has no authority in the territorial park.

The Chair commented that issue of flexible tags for muskox also needs to be addressed. A tag issued for muskox will need to be valid across the entire North Slope. It is important to put a mechanism in place that allows for this. Members agreed that whatever system is developed it has to be straightforward and be administered by the HTC.

**Action 04-12-01:** The Secretariat will obtain a copy of the most recent Aklavik Hunters and Trappers Committee grizzly bear by-law.

**Action 04-12-02:** The Secretariat will determine if the additional grizzly bear tags were issued by the appropriate authority for the Aklavik Grizzly Bear Hunting Area in the NWT and for the Yukon North Slope in 2004.

## E. Ongoing Business

### 1. 2005- 2006 Wildlife Management and Research Proposals

The Chair reminded members that IFA wildlife research funds are provided to meet the additional costs associated with agency obligations under the agreement and to work toward its implementation. The priority for research funding should be matters related to the objectives of the IFA and those provisions that pertain to the Yukon North Slope's special conservation regime. This includes species-specific and habitat research and priorities identified in the YNS Wildlife Conservation and Management Plan and the YNS Long Term Research Plan.

Ron Larsen reported that, for this year only, Parks Canada is able to contribute extra funds bringing its total contribution up from \$35,000 to \$60,000.

The Chair summarized the funding available for 2005-2006 is as follows:

Yukon Government	129,000
Parks Canada	60,000
Canadian Wildlife Service	15,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>204,000</b>

The Chair noted that the Council also has some funding available in its own budget to support projects, when appropriate.

Dorothy Cooley distributed an additional proposal, submitted by Catherine Kennedy, titled "Yukon North Slope Vegetation Change Measurements."

Members reviewed the following proposals submitted for consideration:

#### **a) YNS grizzly bear research project**

The Chair welcomed Ramona Maraj, Yukon Government, Department of Environment, to the meeting. The Chair noted that there hasn't been a population study on North Slope bears for thirty years. Bears are an important harvestable species and a priority for research. YTG, Parks Canada, the AHTC and WMAC(NS) are working in partnership on this study.

Ramona reported that the study began in May 2004. It will provide information on population size, birth rate, death rate, where bears are found at different times of the year, and how much they move around. It will also include a review of harvest activity. Ten bears were fitted with radio collars in June. After returning from the field work Ramona was informed by the collar manufacturer (Telonics) that the collars all have faulty batteries and will only transmit the locating radio signal for a few more months. This means the collars will be useless if they are left on the bears and need to be replaced as soon as possible. An attempt was made to

replace the collars in October but it was only possible to replace two of the ten due to poor weather conditions. However, locations of the dens of the other eight bears were established. It will be possible to return to these locations in the spring to recollar the bears as soon as they come out of their dens.

The original plan was to start a marked recapture study in the summer of 2005. However, in response to interests expressed by Danny C. Gordon, YTG has decided to try an experimental flight-resight program to see if bears can be counted from the air. Activities for 2005-2006 also include deploying 15 new GPS collar and the 15 VHF collars. Telemetry flights will be conducted once every 2-3 weeks throughout the active season to get information on grizzly bear habitat use and survival. Local and traditional knowledge work scheduled to begin in February 2005 will continue with Aklavik community members. Information will be collected on harvesting activities and residents will be asked to record their observations of bear activity.

A discussion was held about funding for the project. Funds will not be needed to pay for the collars deployed last May if these defective are returned to the manufacturer. Otherwise, the budget will be short \$55,000. If all the collars are returned the project is still short about \$10,000 of the estimated costs for 2005-2006. More funding is being sought from both within the government and from external sources.

#### **b) YNS Muskox Studies**

Dorothy Cooley reported that the Yukon Government started to do muskox surveys on the North Slope in 1994. In 1999, a three-year satellite tracking program was begun in order to learn more about where the muskox like to live at different times of the year and how much they move around. The program was extended in 2002 for another three years. There are currently only two muskox fitted with satellite collars. A census and composition count will be done by YTG in the survey area in April 2005. Parks Canada will do another composition count in July 2005. The two collars remaining on the muskox must also be removed in July 2005. YTG will continue to log satellite locations until the collars are removed. These locations will be used to determine annual and seasonal range use. The budget for all of these activities is \$41,335.

Dorothy referred to the options for future muskox research and the seven satellite collars given in the meeting binder. The first option is to refurbish the seven collars and put them back onto the muskox for another three years. It will cost about \$7,000 to refurbish the collars plus an additional \$17,600 to deploy them and retrieve the data for the year. It would also mean a multi-year financial commitment of about \$29,000 per year to cover the costs of late winter surveys and data recovery. The second option is to refurbish the collars and deploy them on muskox in the Richardson Mountains. This would cost about \$28,550 and would also mean an ongoing financial commitment. It also requires cooperation from other jurisdictions that have yet to be discussed in detail. A third option is to

donate the collars to ANWR, if they want them. And the final option is to donate them to the Porcupine caribou satellite program.

Members recognized the need for funding the April and July surveys and the removal of the two collars. The two options for refurbishing and deploying the collars would be difficult to fund in light of the financial commitments associated with the bear research over the next few years. Other activities directed by the Muskox Management Plan will need funding at some time as well.

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## **Meeting with the Aklavik Hunters and Trappers Committee Board of Directors**

### **Present:**

HTC Directors: Donald Aviugana, Danny C. Gordon, Evelyn Storr (President), Pat Kasook, Don Storr and Gerry Arey

WMAC(NS): Lindsay Staples (Chair), Harvey Jessup, Ron Larsen, Herbert Felix, Ernest Pokiak, Dorothy Cooley and Aileen Horler.

Herschel Island Territorial Park: Richard Gordon

The meeting was open to the public. About 15 additional residents of Aklavik attended the meeting.

Lindsay Staples began the meeting by thanking Danny C. Gordon for all his contributions to the Council, as a representative of the Inuvialuit Game Council and the community of Aklavik. Danny was an active and important member of WMAC(NS) from 1993 until September 2004. Lindsay presented Danny with a plaque in appreciation of all his years of hard work.

### **1. Minutes- December 2003 and September 2004 meetings**

Lindsay noted that the minutes of the December 2003 and September 2004 meetings of WMAC(NS) and the AHTC Board of Directors were distributed with the meeting agenda for general reference.

### **2. Yukon North Slope Research Projects**

Lindsay commented that there are a number of research projects on the North Slope. The Council is always interested in hearing about Aklavik's research priorities. Updates were given on the North Slope muskox and grizzly bear research, as follows:

#### **a) Muskox studies**

Dorothy Cooley reported that the Yukon Government began a three-year satellite tracking program on North Slope muskox in 1999. The program was extended in 2002 for another three years. The program was done to learn more about where the muskox like to live at different times of the year and how much they move around. YTG and Parks Canada work together to do population surveys in the

spring and summer. A census and composition count will be done by YTG in the survey area in April 2005. Parks Canada will do another composition count in July 2005. There are now only two muskox fitted with satellite collars and these will be removed this summer.

Lindsay reported that representatives from WMAC(NS), the Aklavik Hunters and Trappers Committee, Parks Canada and the Inuvialuit Game Council met with U.S. federal, Alaskan state and Inupiat representatives in Anchorage in November to discuss common muskox management issues and concerns. There is a decline in the numbers of muskox in Alaska. At the same time they are spreading out more, so overall the density of muskox is much lower in certain areas. The discussions with the Alaskans were good. It was important to find out how they are managing the population on their side as the population numbers drop. The discussions provided a lot of useful information that will assist WMAC(NS) in revising the YNS Muskox Management Plan. The plan should be finished this year and then WMAC(NS) will be able to make a recommendations for a North Slope muskox quota.

#### **b) Yukon North Slope Grizzly Bear Management**

Lindsay introduced Ramona Maraj, the Yukon Government biologist who is leading the grizzly bear research project. The research is partly funded with IFA implementation funds.

Ramona reported that the research was started in order to learn more about grizzly bears on the Yukon North Slope. The objective of the study is to learn about population size, birth rate, death rate, how much they move around and where they can be found at different times of the year. The study area is located between the Firth and the Blow Rivers.

The first bears were radio collared last June. The biologists were able to put GPS collars on ten bears (6 males and 4 females) that were found in different parts of the study area. The GPS unit in each collar records the bears' location every four hours. The collars will be removed in three years. If there are any problems and the bears can't be located then, the collars are designed to drop off automatically. After returning from the fieldwork in June, Ramona found out the manufacturers of the collars had put in faulty batteries. This meant that the collars will only transmit the locating radio signal for a few more months and will be useless if they are left on the bears. Ramona tried to replace the collars in October but because of poor weather conditions it was only possible to replace two of the ten. However, locations of the dens of the other eight bears were established. Ramona plans to return to these locations in the spring to recollar the bears as soon as they come out of their dens.

Of the two bears that were recollared in October the one bear that weighed 400 pounds in May had only gained 50 pounds and the 300 pound bear had gained 100 to 150 pounds. Both bears are about 450 pounds, as they get ready to go

into their dens. Ramona showed a slide of the condition of the fur on a bear that had been wearing a collar for 4 months. The fur showed no sign of any rubbing under the collar.

More bears will be collared in the spring as part of the 2005 fieldwork. In addition, the biologists are going to do a survey of the study area to see if they can count the bears. YTG will be starting a local and traditional knowledge study in Aklavik in February. The first thing will be to look at what information has already been collected about grizzlies in Aklavik. Ramona will be working with Marsha Branigan and Barney Smith on this project.

Several meeting participants raised questions about compensation for damaged hides or the death of a bear because of research activities. Lindsay responded by saying that WMAC(NS) has been discussing this issue. The Council would like to see a compensation policy developed that covers appropriate species throughout the entire ISR. WMAC(NS) has written to the IGC to suggest such a policy be developed cooperatively by the relevant parties. The Council will be raising this issue as well when it meets with the WMAC(NWT).

One meeting participant raised a concern about collaring the bears and added that many people in the community don't know what's going on. Evelyn Storr responded that Ramona has consulted with the HTC many times. The HTC members are all up-to-date with what has been going on and should be letting people in the community know about it. Community members should also be asking HTC members if they want to know something. In five years at the end of the study, the biologist will have the information needed to know if it is possible to increase the quota on the bears and by how much.

Lindsay reported that WMAC(NS) made a recommendation last year to increase the grizzly quota by two bears as an interim measure. The Yukon Minister of the Environment gave his support to the recommendation and agreed to the increase. Any problem bears that are killed have to be counted as part of the quota. This is because the quota is based on the number of bears that can be removed from the population each year and still maintain a healthy population. However, at the end of the year any unused tags from anywhere in the ISR are assigned to problem bears. That means that a problem bear shot in the Aklavik area does not necessarily use up an Aklavik tag.

Evelyn commented that Aklavik doesn't want to see any delay in getting the grizzly bear tags for the coming season. Evelyn also commented that it is important to try to get talks underway to settle the issue of overlap agreements with other parties.

Aileen Horler introduced the Grizzly Bear Research Project Community Participation Strategy that has been developed by WMAC(NS). The objective of the strategy is to make sure that residents of Aklavik and other interested people

are able to be involved in activities related to the grizzly bear research. WMAC(NS) is interested in hearing the views of the community about the proposed activities.

### **3. Herschel Island Territorial Park**

Richard Gordon gave a presentation on recent activities related to Herschel Island Territorial Park.

- The revised Herschel Island Territorial Park Management Plan is almost complete. It is currently being reviewed by the Yukon Government Cabinet. The Yukon Parks Branch did a lot of consulting with the Wildlife Management Advisory Council (North Slope), the Aklavik Hunters and Trappers Committee and other interested parties to bring the plan up-to-date and make sure it reflects the many changes that have happened in the park since it was established.
- The Park Rangers continue to support research programs conducted on the island. These include vegetation, climate change, permafrost and erosion studies. All of these studies provide important information for managing the park.
- Ian Sterling (Canadian Wildlife Service) used Herschel Island as a base to do polar bears surveys in the early spring. He will be doing two more seasons of surveys.
- There were 530 visitors in total and 69 plane landings. One hundred and one visitors arrived on a cruise ship. Some decisions need to be made about cruise ships and airplane landings on the island in the future.
- Park Rangers have begun measuring tides on a daily basis. Many other observations are recorded on a regular basis such as birds and wildlife. The weather is recorded four times a day. All observations are entered into a database so that information can be compared from year to year.
- A crew from the Yukon Government Heritage Branch came to Herschel in the summer and moved some of the buildings that were in danger because of high water and erosion.
- Two new pamphlets were developed for the island – “Flora of Herschel Island Territorial Park” and an updated visitors’ guide.
- There were no bear problems this year. Everyone is trying hard to keep the island clean. Garbage is either being burned or packed out.

### **4. ISR Research Day**

Lindsay reported that there will be a one-day workshop in Inuvik on December 8 for all researchers who receive funding under the IFA. The researcher will be presenting information on their studies to the Inuvialuit Game Council and the other

### **5. Parks Canada**

Ron Larsen presented some information on the activities of Parks Canada, Western Arctic Field Unit.

- The downsizing of facilities at Sheep Creek in Ivvavik National Park began this summer. The facilities were considered to be too big for a wilderness park so a lot of the buildings are being dismantled and removed.
  - A small fuel leak was discovered at Sheep Camp. The situation is being assessed now to determine how to clean it up.
  - Parks Canada is interested in opening up a landing strip on the Babbage River so that there can be a place for day use in Ivvavik National Park. Parks is trying to develop a day use program and has been thinking about how to involve Aklavik residence.
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## **Tuesday December 7, 2004**

**Present:** Lindsay Staples – Chair  
Herbert Felix- Member- Inuvialuit Game Council  
Ernest Pokiak- Member – Inuvialuit Game Council  
Harvey Jessup – Member - Yukon Government  
Dorothy Cooley - Alternate- Yukon Government  
Ron Larsen – Member- Government of Canada (Parks Canada)  
Aileen Horler- Secretariat

**Guests:** Richard Gordon - Herschel Island Territorial Park

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### **E. Ongoing Business (continued)**

#### **1. 2005- 2006 Wildlife Management and Research Proposals (continued)**

##### **a) YNS grizzly bear research project**

The Chair briefly reviewed the funding requirements for the program as presented by Ramona the previous day. The request for IFA funding for 2005-2006 is \$100,000.

##### **b) YNS Muskox Studies**

The Chair reviewed the budget for muskox research in 2005-2006. The funds required for the April and July surveys, the removal of the two remaining collars in July, and data retrieval until that time are about \$41,335. There are two additional options for refurbishing and redeploying the satellite collars that would require funds.

##### **c) Aklavik harvest data collection**

The objective of this YTG project is to document the harvest of moose, caribou, sheep, swans and furbearers in the Yukon and NWT by Inuvialuit hunters in Aklavik, from January to December 2005. YTG proposes to contract a local person, in partnership with the Aklavik HTC, to conduct recall interviews twice

during the year during- at freeze up and break up. Harvey Jessup and Catherine Pinard will be supervising the project. The total cost for the project is \$3,000. The majority of these funds will be used for local interviewer wages.

**d) Blow River breeding bird and habitat survey**

This project will be supervised by Cameron Eckert, Conservation Biologist with the Yukon Department of Environment. The Chair reminded members that Cameron gave the Council a presentation on this work at the meeting in October. This project has three objectives: 1) to inventory the full diversity of bird species breeding in the Blow River area; 2) to document habitat use, nesting chronology, and productivity for all bird species in the Blow River area, with emphasis on species of conservation concern and; 3) to establish current estimates of population and nesting densities for all bird species breeding in the Blow River area. Breeding bird surveys have been conducted along most of the major drainages of the Yukon's North Slope including the Clarence, Firth, Babbage, and Running rivers. To date, the Blow River has not been intensively or systematically surveyed and remains the largest gap in what is known about North Slope bird population. This project would provide a field training opportunity for an individual from Aklavik. The request for IFA funding is for \$5,000 of the \$35,000 total funding required.

**e) Rare plants and animals along Beaufort Sea coast**

The Chair noted that Council was also given a presentation about this project at its meeting in Whitehorse in October. The objective of this NatureServe Yukon project is to determine the presence and distribution of rare species along the Yukon coast. Yukon North Slope Wildlife Conservation and Management Plan and the Yukon North Slope Long-term Research and Monitoring Plan both recognize that it is important to learn more about rare species. These two plans also identify the coastal zone as a priority area for getting more information. NatureServe Yukon is proposing that biologists and community members spend 8 days (between July 15<sup>th</sup> and August 5<sup>th</sup>) on the Beaufort coast working between Stokes Point and the NWT border. Efforts will concentrate on finding rare plants, butterflies, birds, slugs (that may carry caribou parasites) and mice. The fieldwork will be boat-supported. The field crew will work from established camps along the coast, spending time at sites where rare species are expected to occur. Rare plant inventory work west of Stokes Point will be carried out by Parks Canada. The study will gather some baseline inventory information that is essential for monitoring any change in the environment. The total budget for the project is \$31,300. Residents of Aklavik will be contracted to provide boating, base camp and cooking services for the project. NatureServe requested \$4000 in IFA implementation funds to support this project.

**f) Herschel Island fieldwork**

Dorothy Cooley explained that this project has two objectives. The first is to purchase and re-install a soil temperature data logger that was destroyed in 2004. Soil temperatures recorded by data loggers are related to plant phenology

patterns monitored by the Herschel Island Rangers in the CANTTEX phenology transects. The second objective is to estimate species composition and density of snails and slugs. YTG is cooperating with Dr. Susan Kutz (Western College of Veterinary Medicine, Saskatoon) on a study to examine the role of climate change on disease and parasite relationships in arctic and subarctic ungulate populations. In July 2004, a fast survey for snails and slugs was done on Herschel Island to see if any were present. Three slugs were found and identified as *Deroceras leae*. In the summer of 2005, YTG will do some structured sampling on Herschel Island to determine the species composition and relative density by species. The results from the snail and slug survey will add to the knowledge of current distribution and relative abundance across the north. The total budget for the field work is \$6,230 to cover the costs of air charters, additional staff travel, the purchase of the data logger and field camp supplies.

#### **g) YNS vegetation change measurements**

The objective of this project is to continue documenting the vegetation change that has been observed on the coast of Ivvavik and on Herschel Island. Dorothy Cooley explained that, in the summer of 2005, Catherine Kennedy wants to collect vegetation data at selected locations on the coast of Ivvavik and on Herschel Island and compare it with data she collected during initial park inventories of 1987/88 and 1985/86 as well as during the most recent survey in 2001. This survey would be conducted by helicopter and on foot. The total budget for the project is \$7,000. The request for IFA funding is for \$4500 to cover the costs of the helicopter time. This proposal is being put forward this year to take advantage of the helicopter already being on Herschel in association with other projects taking place in the region.

#### **h) 2005 Yukon North Slope raptor survey**

Ron Larsen reported that this project is being proposed by Parks Canada and the Yukon Government. The objectives of the project are to document the number of peregrine falcons and other species of raptors breeding on the North Slope in 2005, and to contribute information about the North Slope peregrine falcon population to the Canadian Peregrine Falcon Survey. The Canadian Peregrine Falcon Survey is a national effort to monitor the status of peregrine falcon populations in North America every 5 years. The last survey was conducted in 2000. The 2005 North Slope survey will be conducted in early to mid-July, concentrating initially on areas of known past raptor activity and expanding as possible to new areas. All coastal drainages (including the lower reaches of the Firth, Malcolm, Trail and Babbage rivers) will be surveyed up to 30 kilometres inland as well as Herschel Island. The Firth River portion of the survey will be conducted by river raft to reduce aircraft disturbance of visitors traveling the river. Parks Canada will be co-ordinating all survey activities in the National Park and Tom Jung will be co-ordinating the portions outside of the park for YTG. The IFA funding request is for \$24,450. This is the full amount required for this project.

Funds are required for air charters, helicopter time and fuel, and honorarium for an observer from Aklavik.

**i) Breeding shorebird survey**

This proposal was submitted by Pam Sinclair, Canadian Wildlife Service. The objectives are to document distribution and nesting densities of breeding shorebirds and to estimate overall numbers of shorebirds and other tundra birds on the Yukon North Slope, Mackenzie Delta, and Tuktoyaktuk Peninsula, as part of an Arctic-wide monitoring program. In June 2005, a crew of four will count birds on a total of 18 survey plots on the Yukon North Slope over 4 days. There will be 12 plots within Ivvavik National Park and 6 elsewhere on the North Slope. Surveys will be conducted on foot, using a helicopter to access the plots. A camp will not be required as the crew will stay at Sheep Creek or on Herschel Island. These surveys follow a standardized protocol, and are repeated every 10 years. This is an excellent opportunity for long-term monitoring of shorebirds and other tundra birds within the Inuvialuit Settlement Region. The total budget for the project is \$117,000. The majority of the funding will be contributed by CWS. The total cost of the Yukon North Slope portion of the project is \$32,000. The request for IFA funding is for \$5,000.

**j) Porcupine caribou herd satellite collars**

Dorothy Cooley reported that this project is an ongoing and cooperative effort to maintain satellite collars on Porcupine caribou cows in order to document annual migration routes and winter range use. YTG and Parks Canada are requesting \$2,000 and \$3,000 respectively from IFA funds to cover the cost of satellite fees and data recovery.

**k) Arctic Borderlands Ecological Knowledge Co-op**

CWS and Parks Canada would like to continue to support the activities of the Arctic Borderlands Ecological Knowledge Co-op. Funding is needed for the collection of Inuvialuit traditional knowledge through the Community-based Monitoring Program in Aklavik and other ISR communities, the tracking of environmental indicators and to hold the 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Gathering.

The Chair noted that the Council has contributed funds for many years from its own budget to support the work of the Co-op. For over ten years, Joan Eamer has been a very important contributor to the work of the Co-op as part of her job with CWS. As she is leaving her job in February, Council members felt that it would be good to have some more certainty about CWS's role in the future of the Co-op. Questions were also raised about what mechanism will be put in place to maintain the activities of the Co-op in light of Joan's departure. Members agreed that it would be good to have some of this information before making a funding recommendation.

Council members supported the allocation of \$15,000 from IFA wildlife program funding for the Borderlands Co-op. Members agreed to further consider the

recommendation of this amount once more information on the future of the Coop is available.

\*\*\*\*\*

The Chair reviewed each of the projects proposed. The total amount requested is \$238,115, as indicated below:

<b>Project</b>	<b>Funds requested</b>
Aklavik harvest data collection	\$3,000
Herschel Island Fieldwork	\$6,230
YNS vegetation change measurements	\$4,500
Arctic Borderlands Ecological Knowledge Co-op	\$15,000
YNS grizzly bear research project	\$100,000
Porcupine Caribou Herd Satellite Location Program	\$5,000
Breeding Shorebirds Survey	\$5,000
YNS Muskox Studies	\$41,335
Refurbishing and redeploying muskox collars	(minimum) \$24,600
Blow River breeding bird and habitat survey	\$5,000
2005 Yukon North Slope raptor survey	\$24,450
Rare plants and animals along Beaufort Sea coast	\$4,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$238,115</b>

A discussion was held about priorities for research. Harvestable species, such as muskox and grizzly bears are seen as a priority for research at this time. However, members acknowledged that it would not be financially possible support two expensive projects at the same time. Dorothy Cooley commented that the muskox have been satellite collared for 6 years. This project has supplied a lot of useful information that will assist management decisions. Dorothy added that, for the time being, enough is known about muskox movements to end the collaring program. The recovered collars can be stored until a decision is made as to what to do with them.

Members agreed that it is good to support projects that involved local people and decided to contribute \$4000 from the Council's budget to NatureServe's project to look for rare plants and animals along Beaufort Sea coast on the ground that this information could be useful in assessing potential impacts from future offshore development on the Yukon North Slope.

The total funds available from the Yukon Government, Parks Canada and the Canadian Wildlife Service are \$204,000. With the addition of a \$4,000 contribution by WMAC(NS) toward the rare plant and animal project and no funding required for the redeployment of the muskox collars, the funds available are only slightly short of what is required. The total funding required may be less than projected, as there are several projects that may have opportunities to share expenses.

### **Motion**

*To recommended the allocation of funds from IFA wildlife program funding to the following projects: Porcupine Caribou Herd Satellite Location Program (\$5,000); Aklavik Harvest Data Collection (\$3,000); Yukon North Slope Muskox Studies (\$41,335); Herschel Island Fieldwork (\$6,230); YNS Grizzly Bear Research Project (\$100,000); YNS Vegetation Change Measurements (\$4,500); 2005 Yukon North Slope raptor survey (\$24,450); Breeding Shorebirds Survey (\$5,000). WMAC(NS) will contribute \$4,000 from the Council's budget to the Rare plants and animals along Beaufort Sea coast project. The Council also recommends \$15,000 for the Arctic Borderlands Ecological Knowledge Co-op, subject to the Council obtaining more information on the future of the Coop.*

Moved: Ron Larsen

Second: Ernest Pokiak

Motion carried

**Action 04-12-03:** WMAC(NS) will write to Cameron Eckert to inform him of the Councils' decision regarding his request for IFA Implementation funds.

### **F. Upcoming meetings**

The Chair referred to the information in the meeting binders.

The Alaska Forum on the Environment will be held in Anchorage, Feb 7-11, 2005. The 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Gathering of the Arctic Borderlands Ecological Knowledge Co-op will be held in Old Crow, Feb 28 to March 2, 2005. The Chair asked Herbert and Ernest to forward their interest in going to either of these events to the Secretariat as soon as possible.

A discussion was held about the dates for the next Council meeting. Members agreed to hold a meeting in Whitehorse at the end of February, if necessary. An alternative would be to have a teleconference to address any essential business.

Members also expressed an interest in holding a meeting on the North Slope during the summer. One possibility would be to go to the Babbage River. Ron Larsen offered Parks Canada's support with logistics.

### **E. Ongoing business (continued)**

#### **2. Herschel Island Territorial Park**

The Chair began by thanking Richard Gordon for all his contributions to the Council. Council members really appreciate his attending the meetings to provide updates on Herschel Island and to contribute to the discussion about the North Slope in general.

Richard commented he would like to add some information to the items he raised at the public meeting the evening before.

- The advertisements for the new Park Ranger should be coming out early in the New Year. YTG is currently finalizing the revisions to the hiring protocol and preparing the job descriptions. Two new Rangers will be hired to start work in April. Richard would like to have a workshop in Aklavik to let people know about the positions and what kind of experience is required.
- The Herschel Island Management Plan should have Cabinet approval by Christmas.
- The Heritage Branch would like to see some of the buildings painted. There is also a need for some improvements at the Trappers' cabin and at the Rangers' living quarters.
- Richard wants to review the data that has been collected over the years. It is important to figure out how good it is as well as how useful it is. It's also important to think about what other data the Rangers could be collecting.
- Richard is assessing the boat situation to decide whether to buy a new boat or modify the existing one. It's important to be clear about what the boat is needed for.
- A timetable for the research programs on the island will be ready by April.
- Richard is trying to figure out how to preserve the icehouse. It might be possible to monitor the slumping. Richard is also very interested in trying to reconstruct a sod house on the island. A sod house would really increase the possibilities for the interpretation of Inuvialuit culture on the island.
- Richard wants to add to the collection of Inuvialuit artifacts on display on the island for the visitors. He and Dorothy are improving the plant displays and making some posters.
- Rangers are conducting an inventory of equipment on the island. Some of the older equipment can be removed.

### **3. Parks Canada Report**

Ron Larsen provided an update on activities related to Ivvavik National Park and Parks Canada, Western Arctic Field Unit.

- Parks will be running the Artists in the Park program in Ivvavik again next summer.
- Cathy Cockney, the Cultural Resource Management officer, is developing a CD - ROM of Ivvavik's artifact collection.
- The downsizing of Sheep Camp began last summer and will continue over the summer of 2005. Parks is also assessing a small fuel spill that happened at Sheep Camp in 2003. The clean up may involve trying to get the old loader running so that it can be used to dig up the contaminated soil. A report is being prepared that will determine what has to be done to clean up the site.
- Parks needs to install a new repeater at Margaret Lake
- Parks will be working with Public Works Environmental Services to conduct a Phase 3 assessment of the landfill at Stokes Point in 2005.

#### **D. Review of Action Items (continued)**

**Action 04-10-09:** The Secretariat will provide more information on budget, timeline and partnerships possibilities for the Grizzly Bear Research Project Communications Strategy.

**Complete.** An expanded version of the Communications Strategy was included in the meeting binder. The Secretariat noted that some of the budget estimates can be further refined. Partnership possibilities can also be explored further. Presentations and updates at the IGC meetings should be added to the list of activities. Members agreed that the Secretariat and partnership agencies should continue to implement the actions as outlined.

**Action 04-10-10:** The Secretariat will send the draft community involvement strategy to the Aklavik Hunters and Trappers Committee for their review with a request that it be discussed at our meeting with them in December.

**Complete.** The Secretariat reported that the draft was sent to the AHTC but there wasn't any time to review it during the meeting with the Board the previous evening.

**Action 04-12-04:** The Secretariat will write to the Aklavik Hunters and Trappers Committee to ask for their comments on the draft community involvement strategy. The letter will also ask which actions the HTC sees as the priorities and request their support in proceeding with them.

Questions were raised about the activities associated with the traditional knowledge study that YTG is proposing to begin in Aklavik in February. Members requested more information on what will be included and how it will be conducted.

**Action 04-12-05:** The Secretariat will circulate more information to the members on the grizzly bear traditional knowledge study that YTG is proposing to begin in Aklavik in February.

**Action 04-10-11:** The Secretariat will obtain more information about funding for student programs in the NWT.

**Complete.** The Secretariat reported that she discussed funding opportunities with Kevin Bill at the FJMC. The FJMC has supported student programs for a number of years. Students usually spend time working for a number of different agencies on a number of different projects. WMAC(NS) will be able to apply for a student position in

partnership the FJMC for the summer of 2005 to assist on the bear research project.

**Action 04-10-12:** WMAC(NS) will write to the Inuvialuit Game Council to relay the Council's interest in participating in a multi-agency workshop to develop an ISR-wide policy for wildlife compensation.

**Complete.** Copies of the letter were distributed at the meeting.

**Action 04-10-13:** The Secretariat will forward a copy of the Council's letter written to Deputy Minister Department of Environment regarding Dorothy Cooley's participation in the Anchorage muskox meeting to the IGC.

**Complete.** No response to the letter was received from the Deputy Minister.

**Action 04-10-14:** Harvey Jessup will modify the protocol that was developed for the Inuvialuit Harvest Study to suit to circumstances of the Aklavik study. As soon as this is complete, the Secretariat will distribute the draft to the members and to the HTC for their review and feed-back.

**Ongoing.** Harvey reported that he began to draft a protocol based on the one used for the Inuvialuit Harvest Study. However he now thinks that the protocol developed by Catherine Pinard for the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board's 'Yukon Co-ordinated Harvest Monitoring Program' is a more appropriate template. Harvey will adapt this protocol to suit the Aklavik situation and include the criteria for the release of information to third parties as well as the automatic release to any regulatory agency for the purposes of wildlife management.

**Action 04-10-15:** The Secretariat will review the HSP proposal guidelines and will develop a funding proposal for relevant components of the grizzly bear research project.

**Complete.** A copy of the proposal was included in the meeting binder.

**Action 04-10-16 :** The Secretariat will compile some ideas for the Council's involvement in the International Polar Year for discussion at the December meeting.

**Complete.** Council members held a discussion about potential projects for the IPY. Members expressed a lot of interest in developing a proposal related to ice and sod houses on Herschel Island. There could be several opportunities to combine scientific studies on the effects of the warming climate to the sustainability of traditional Inuvialuit houses. The construction

of a sod house on Herschel would be a wonderful community project and contribute to the interpretation of Inuvialuit culture in the park.

Members also expressed an interest in the Council developing a proposal to compile and summarize all the information collected by the Arctic Borderlands Ecological Knowledge Co-op. Before proceeding, the Secretariat needs to follow-up with the Co-op to see if they are considering submitting such a proposal.

**Action 04-12-06:** The Secretariat will prepare and submit a pre-proposal to the Canadian International Polar Year Committee.

**Action 04-10-17:** Wendy Nixon will ask Martin Raillard to provide the Council with a briefing on the issue of defining the role of the Co-management Boards in the Species at Risk recovery process.

### **Outstanding.**

### **G. Correspondence**

There was no new correspondence to review since the last meeting.

### **E. Ongoing Business (continued)**

#### **4. Muskox Management**

The Chair reported that he, the Secretariat, Evelyn Storr (as a WMAC(NS) alternate), Danny C. Gordon (representing the Aklavik Hunters and Trappers Committee), Stu Macmillan (Parks Canada) and Peter Esau (representing the Inuvialuit Game Council) met with Alaskan state, federal and Inupiat representatives in Anchorage at the beginning of November. The Chair deferred his report of that meeting to the joint meeting with the WMAC(NWT) to be held later in the evening.

### **H. Financial Report**

#### **a) November 2005 financial statement**

Members reviewed the Council's financial statement dated November 2004. There are still a number of projects that the Council will undertake in the next few months. There will probably be a surplus in the budget at the end of the fiscal year. This money can be carried over into the next year.

#### **b) WMAC(NS) credit card**

The Chair and Secretariat explained that it would be easier for them to pay for some of their Council related expenses with a credit card. The Secretariat has been in contact with the bank. Two cards can be issued- one for the Chair and

one for the Secretariat- with a combined limit of \$10,000. The Council will be liable for expenses incurred on the card.

**Motion**

*To authorize the Secretariat to apply for a credit card in the Council's name for use by the Chair and the Secretariat for Council related travel and expenses.*

Moved: Ron Larsen  
Second: Herbert Felix  
Motion carried

**E. Ongoing Business (continued)**

**5. Strategic Priorities**

The Chair referred to the summary of the Council's strategic priorities distributed to the members at the meeting. The summary gives the status and next steps for each listed priority. In reference to muskox management, the Chair commented that the Management Plan will be revised before the next meeting. Some items, such as the completion and publication of a summary report of information collected about the North Slope as part of the Borderlands Coop program, require funding. Council members agreed to review the budget for this project by teleconference once it has been prepared. The Council can consider any other funding required to implement items listed as strategic priorities as well in a teleconference.

**Action 04-12-07:** The Secretariat will prepare a budget and the Terms of Reference for a contract to prepare a summary report of information collected about the North Slope as part of the Borderlands Coop program.

**6. Porcupine caribou herd survey and census, 2005**

Dorothy Cooley reported that the Alaskans are proposing to undertake a calving survey and photocensus on the Porcupine caribou herd this summer. Every year the US Fish and Wildlife and the Alaskan Department of Fish and Game do the calving surveys. The Alaskans are also proposing to do a photocensus of the herd this year if the conditions are right. They tried to do a census last year but couldn't. Depending on where the caribou calf, there is a chance that all or part of the survey and photocensus will be conducted in the Yukon. It is important to have all the permitting in place in case this happens.

Members agreed to support the calving survey and photocensus, recognizing the importance of this work in estimating the size of the herd, assessing calf survival, and documenting calving locations. Council members also agreed to support the

expansion of the study area into the Yukon should the distribution and location of the herd make it necessary.

**Motion**

*to support the 2005 calving surveys and photocensus to be conducted by the US Fish and Wildlife Service and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, and to support the expansion of the study area into the Yukon if the distribution of the herd makes this a necessity.*

Moved: Herbert Felix

Second: Ron Larsen

Motion carried

**Action 04-12-08:** WMAC(NS) will write a letter to Dorothy Cooley conveying the Council's support of the 2005 Porcupine caribou herd caving survey and photocensus, and the expansion of the study area into the Yukon if required.

**I. Adjournment**

**Motion**

*To adjourn the meeting.*

Moved: Harvey Jessup

Second: Herbert Felix

Motion carried

\_\_\_\_\_  
WMAC(NS) Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
WMAC(NS) Secretariat

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date