



Board Meeting Minutes

Date: 10-11 May 2022

Location: Katamavik B, Explorer Hotel, Yellowknife, NT

Board Members:

Joseph Judas (Chair)
Eddie Erasmus (Tłıchq Appointee)
Stu Niven (Federal Appointee) (Zoom)
Steve Matthews (GNWT Appointee)
Suzanne Carrière (GNWT Appointee) (Zoom)
Eddie Chocolate (Tłıchq Appointee)

Staff:

Aimee Guile
Jody Pellissey
Simon Whitehouse

Interpreters/PIDO:

Violet Mackenzie
Jonas Lafferty
Ryan C

Regrets:

Isabelle Duclos (Federal Appointee)
Chris Football (Tłıchq Appointee)

Guests (via Zoom):

Eric Reed, ECCC
Hayley Roberts, ECCC
Rhiannon Pankratz, ECCC
Lawrence Lewis, ENR

Call to Order: 9:08 a.m.

Opening Prayer & Comments: Joseph Judas

1.0 Agenda and Previous Minutes

1.1 Approval of Agenda

Motion #815-10-05-2022 *To approve the 10-11 May 2022 agenda as presented*

Moved:
Second:

Steve Matthews
Stu Niven

Motion Approved

1.2 Approval of Minutes

7-8 December 2021

Motion #816-10-05-2022 *To approve the 7-8 December 2021 minutes as presented*

Moved:
Second:

Eddie Erasmus
Stu Niven

Motion Approved

8-9 February 2022

Motion #817-10-05-2022 To approve the 8-9 February 2022 minutes as presented

Moved: Stu Niven
Second: Steve Matthews

Motion Approved

1.3 Review of Action Items

Outstanding action items list was tabled and reviewed.

ACTION #592-10-05-2022 (ED): To bring Charlie Jeremick'ca to future meeting to present a Board Member thank you gift.

2.0 Business

2.1 Review & Approval of Recommendations for Bathurst Joint Management Proposal

PowerPoint Presentation tabled, entitled "*Kòk'èetì Ekwò Joint Management Proposal Review and Recommendations*"

Board Members discussed the following:

- When will the decision be made about whether to go ahead with the 2022 calving ground survey? Currently monitoring collared caribou and will make decision soon.
- Collars help to know where the caribou are traveling, helping animals by hunting wolves but still getting low, add more collars? Then we will know if joining with other herds like the Beverly herd. Board approved up to 70 collars for Bathurst and Bluenose-East caribou, some caribou are lost to predators or harvested by people, collars added in the winter, not assigned until after calving for cows, and after rut for bulls.
- Survey flown outside the core area, do they use only the core area to determine the actual estimate? The photo core is where the majority of the collars are, photo plane flies this area, able to fly and cover 35% of area, visual survey blocks also are included into the estimate using extrapolation, reduces precision and makes for larger CI, makes more difficult to detect trends in the future.
- Cows in 2018 included in the Bathurst caribou estimate, cows in 2021 were not? 2021 cows were "lost" to Beverly herd and not included in the estimate. A population estimate in 2022 will only happen if there is a clear distinction between the Bathurst and Beverly herds.
- As peak of calving is later for Beverly and they are further east, the Bathurst photos are done first, and then go east to do BEV photos, Beverly population estimate planned for 2023.
- What does "consider farming with fire approach" mean? By lighting smaller forest fires strategically, can prevent larger more dangerous catastrophic fires

on the future. Leaving fire alone can burn caribou food and it can take awhile to come back, dog trails from Behchokò to Wekweèti can no longer use as burnt.

- Harvesters from other areas including across the lake, how to keep track of it all? Should help one another, should only get to go out once, used to be monitoring at Marian Lake, but now just one monitor at Wekweèti, what about the other communities? Each group has their own harvest monitors on the Tibbitt to Contwoyto winter road, working together but continue to grow (in place for only 2 years). Bathurst caribou are mixing with Beverly which makes a large mobile zone, no tags required for Beverly caribou but mixing with Bathurst results in a large no-harvest mobile zone, community harvests are important. Pre-empt people from harvesting in the fall by giving them meat that has been stored in the freezers from community hunts, interesting harvest strategy.
- 19% of the herd emigrates, seems high? Technical assessment will do what? Assessment will determine what we do understand about emigration/herd switching according to science and TK and the effects of emigration on the herd to date. The standard rate is 1% between healthy herds, in recent herds between Bathurst and Beverly herds there has been a higher rate. While there is acknowledgement that emigration is happening, there is no discussion included in the proposal about how this has impacted the herds, what future implications are, why it is happening, when will rates of emigration lead to the loss of the Bathurst herd?
- Moose moving to barrenlands, more animals from the south moving north, mines are in the way of migration routes, there are only 6000 animals and keep joining up with Beverly.
- Beverly herd is monitored by Nunavut, but Bathurst herd is monitored by NWT, as the Bathurst herd emigrates to Beverly herd, they are leaving the NWT so we no longer are a part of the decision making process for monitoring. Nunavut holds the information and says when the NWT gets the data, when and where caribou are monitored. If we want a determination at which point the Bathurst has moved to Beverly, then may want to take over monitoring of the Beverly herd. Caribou will adapt. Allowing ourselves to become blind and not having any information about the Beverly herd as others are collecting the information with their own timelines and priorities. Rather than GNWT take over survey of Beverly, suggest collaboration between GN and GNWT? Suggest caveat that if Nunavut doesn't want to collaborate, then GNWT step up.
- Recommendation currently not specific enough about sharing costs and running the survey, conduct the calving ground survey at the same time, more monitoring, safety for animals added, population estimates in 2023 should be done at the same time for Bathurst, Bluenose-East, and Beverly herds.
- Need to work with the people first, from Board perspective, what happens if Bathurst herd is lost to Beverly herd? Caribou herd is stable but 19% emigration issue, need communications ready to go so prepared.

Motion #818-11-05-2022

To approve the recommendations for the Kòk'èeti Ekwò (Bathurst Caribou) Joint Management Proposal as presented

Moved:
Second:

Steve Matthews
Eddie Erasmus

Motion Approved

ACTION #593-10-05-2022 (WMB): To share maps at future meeting to show calving ground surveys over time (photo core).

ACTION #594-10-05-2022 (ED): To determine if a Tłıchų name for the Beverly barren-ground caribou herd exists.

ACTION #596-11-05-2022 (ED): To write letter to TG and GNWT to provide recommendations for the Bathurst Caribou Joint Management Proposal.

2.2 Review & Approval of Recommendations for Bluenose-East Joint Management Proposal

PowerPoint Presentation tabled, entitled “*Sahti Ekwò Joint Management Proposal Review and Recommendations*”

Board Members discussed that the TAH of 193 includes Nunavut and the Tlichø portion of 76 tags is shared between the four communities. Tags are managed and distributed by the community governments with the most recent harvest out of Wekweèti only. Generally, photo surveys are conducted in the same year, though for Bathurst and Bluenose-East herds a calving ground survey is conducted while for Bluenose-West and Cape Bathurst a post-calving ground survey is conducted. The WRRB does receive information when illegal harvests occur but, due to confidentiality and open legal cases, the information is generally limited to allow for assessment of the effectiveness of the mobile zone. Good for communities to participate in studies, such as fecal pellet collection that occurs from Nov to calving each year and providing information about caribou water crossings and land bridges. Bathurst and Bluenose-East caribou do not come through Wekweèti at the same time, go through rivers and some are not frozen so caribou take longer to come to Wekweèti. TG went to Point Lake and saw migration trail for Bluenose-East caribou, but lots of bush, if caribou not using trail a lot the bush can fill in. Need good communications with communities so they know what areas are most used by caribou and other animals (maps), where been traveling, which areas need tag to harvest.

Motion #819-11-05-2022

To approve the recommendations for the Sahti Ekwò (Bluenose-East Caribou) Joint Management Proposal as presented

Moved:
Second:

Stu Niven
Eddie Erasmus

Motion Approved

ACTION #597-11-05-2022 (WMB): To share maps at future meeting to show where different wildlife species are found, areas they use, and where they travel.

ACTION #598-11-05-2022 (ED): To write letter to TG and GNWT to provide recommendations for the Bluenose-East Caribou Joint Management Proposal.

2.3 Update on Advisory Committee for Cooperation on Wildlife Management (ACCWM) Decisions

The ACCWM Member Boards met on March 10, 2022 and agreed to the Bluenose-West (ORANGE) and Cape Bathurst (YELLOW) statuses. The individual Action Plan Tables were finalized and shared with governments on March 11, 2022.

Unfortunately, the Member Boards were unable to come to a consensus on the Bluenose-East status. Following a lengthy discussion on April 5, 2022, the Member Boards were in agreement of continuing with RED management actions for the Bluenose-East herd. In order to move forward and take into account all perspectives discussed, the Member Boards agreed to a RED/YELLOW status with RED management actions. This ensured a ACCWM consensus and no requirement for a GNWT and GN Ministerial decision. The Bluenose-East Action Plan Table was finalized, including details from the Annual Status Meeting, March 10, 2022, and April 5, 2022 meetings, and was shared with governments on April 29, 2022.

Further discussion about the Bluenose-East status will happen during the November 2022 Annual Status Meeting, including a possible workshop to discuss caribou population dynamics and how they relate the bigger overall barren-ground caribou picture. It is hoped that more regional/community knowledge about the Bluenose-East caribou will be shared to better support a more balanced approach to decision making.

2.4 Update on Species Assessments by Species at Risk Committee

The SARC met May 2-5, 2022, to assess the status of *Tatsea* (Peregrine Falcon), and re-assess the status of *T̄q̄dz̄ı* (boreal caribou), and Peary Caribou in the NWT. The assessments were based on the approved status reports, which contain the best available information from both Indigenous and Community Knowledge (ICK) and Scientific Knowledge (SK) sources.

There was not enough available information to assess *Tatsea* using the ICK criteria. Using the SK assessment criteria, SARC determined that *Tatsea* is *Not at Risk* in the NWT. This assessment reflects that populations have rebounded from historical lows resulting from the banning the use of DDT globally.

Using both ICK and SK assessment criteria, SARC determined that *T̄q̄dz̄ı* is a *Threatened* species in the NWT. *T̄q̄dz̄ı* were first assessed as *Threatened* in 2012. This re-assessment reflects the fact that although tremendous work is being done for *t̄q̄dz̄ı* conservation across the NWT, population levels are still low and the threats to *t̄q̄dz̄ı* habitat remain of concern.

Using the SK assessment criteria, SARC determined that Peary Caribou is a species of *Special Concern* in the NWT. Using the ICK assessment criteria, it was determined that Peary Caribou is a *Threatened Species* in the NWT. SARC

chose to use the precautionary principle, and made a final decision to assess Peary Caribou as *Threatened*. Peary Caribou were first assessed as Threatened in 2012. This re-assessment reflects the fact that although Peary caribou numbers have been increasing over the last 30 years, population levels have not returned to historical levels and the species is prone to population fluctuations and may experience severe declines in the future due to ongoing threats.

ACTION #599-11-05-2022 (ED): To share presentation at future meeting about t̥odzı habitat work.

2.5 Update on Mackenzie Wood Bison Management Meeting

Tabled until next meeting.

2.6 Party Updates

a) Environment & Climate Change Canada

i) Update on Horned Grebe Project & WRRB Priorities for Waterfowl Research, Monitoring, and/or TK Gathering, Eric Reed

PowerPoint Presentation, entitled “*CWS Waterfowl Program Update – Horned Grebes and Scoter Surveys*”, tabled

Board Members noted the following:

- Scoters sometimes go into small little ponds during muskrat season, this time of the season used to have black ducks and pintails, pintails used to go all over the north and nest, pintail flies really fast, black duck with red mark above the eye, go all over the north, migrate when the ice is still there.
- Conduct studies for waterfowl and chickens/grouse to test the eggs of the grouse, sample for contaminants as have a lot of abandoned mines, concerned about birds, don't want to eat contaminated.
- Scoters study areas, one in Wek'èezhìi and one in Ramparts, collecting genetic data to see where they come from and any contaminants they may have? This work is currently not done in Wek'èezhìi.
- Using gillnets to catch grebes in small ponds, likely no fish in small ponds as freeze to ground, curious if any incidental catch of fish? No fish have been caught. There was a concern about catching muskrat but none caught.
- Important to gather TK from people in Wek'èezhìi and Sahtu, used to harvest eggs in the past but recently reluctant to harvest waterfowl and eggs during Covid. Good to educate ourselves about waterfowl and small game to help maintain the health of the species.

ACTION #595-11-05-2022 (ED): To Invite Eric Reed to a meeting for a more fulsome discussion about waterfowl and priorities for Wek'èezhìi.

ii) Update on Avian Influenza, Eric Reed

PowerPoint Presentation, entitled “*Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza*”, tabled

ii) Update on Species at Risk, Hayley Roberts & Rhiannon Pankratz

PowerPoint Presentation, entitled “*Species at Risk Update*”, tabled

Board Members commented on the how the downlisting of the barn swallow demonstrates the integrity of the Species at Risk program (positive story).

b) Environment & Natural Resources, GNWT

ENR Wildlife and Fish Division Headquarters Update tabled for Board Member information.

i) Tłıchq Highway Interim Wood Harvesting Agreement, Lawrence Lewis

PowerPoint Presentation, entitled “*Wek’èezhì Forest Management Update*”, tabled

Board Members asked about use of the highway maintenance camp as a buffer and whether any safety concerns about pull outs or parking along the highway. Lawrence noted there is still more work to be done regarding forest management in *Wek’èezhì* and along the Tłıchq Highway. He noted that parking along the highway is not a good idea and that there is not much wood around maintenance camp. Board Members were happy to hear about the ongoing development of both forest and fisheries management plans for the Tłıchq Highway, noting that sensitive areas near the road, i.e., gravesites and other special areas, should be noted in management plans.

3.0 Financial

3.1 Review & Approval of Financial Statements as of 31 March 2022

Motion #820-11-05-2022 *To approve the financial statement as of 31 March 2022 as presented*

Moved:

Eddie Erasmus

Second:

Steve Matthews

Motion Approved

4.0 Operations

4.1 Revoke the Covid-19 Exposure Control Plan

On May 15, 2020, the GNWT published its *Emerging Wisely Response Plan*, which identified allowable activities based on the implementation of adequate protocols to reduce the risk of transmission of Covid-19. Workers’ Safety and Compensation Commission (WSCC) required employers to have an *Exposure Control Plan* in place that identified the risk of COVID-19 transmission in their workplace. The WRRB’s Epidemic Disease Initial Response Plan and the Covid-19 Exposure Control Plan were reviewed and approved in September 2020.

The WRRB's Covid-19 Exposure Control Plan states "... when either a vaccine is broadly available for use in the NWT or an effective treatment is established, this plan will no longer be active as the NWT will no longer be in a Public Health Emergency." As of March 2021, Covid-19 vaccines were made available to the general public in the NWT. As of April 1, 2022, the Public Health Emergency in the NWT was lifted. As such, the Covid-19 Exposure Control Plan is no longer needed.

Motion #821-11-05-2022 *To revoke the Covid-19 Exposure Control Plan as recommended*

Moved: Steve Matthews
Second: Eddie Erasmus

Motion Approved

4.2 Meet Communications Officer, Simon Whitehouse

Simon Whitehouse joined the meeting via Zoom to meet the Board Members.

5.0 Information Items

5.1 Working Group Table

Tabled for review by the Board Members.

5.2 Permit Tracking Table

Tabled for review by the Board Members.

6.0 Other Items

6.1 Round Table

Board Members thanked one another, interpreters, sound engineer, and staff for a good meeting. Members happy to have Eddie Chocolate back at the table and look forward to working with new Communications Officer, Simon. With new Board Members attending the next meeting, Members look forward to working together and learning from one another. Members hoping to get back into the communities for meeting soon.

6.2 Next Meeting

The next meeting is for September 13-14, 2022, combined in-person (Yellowknife) and Zoom meeting.

Closing Prayer: **Joseph Judas**

Adjournment: **2:35 p.m. (Motion #822-11-05-2022)**

Minutes Approved:

ORIGINAL SIGNED

December 13, 2022

Chairperson

Date