



Board Meeting Minutes

Date: 15-16 May 2024

Location: Community Government of Gamètì Boardroom, Gamètì, NT

Board Members:

Janelle Nitsiza (Tłıchǝ Appointee)

Travis Washie (Tłıchǝ Appointee)

Isabelle Duclos (Special Advisor)

Tom Lafferty (Tłıchǝ Appointee)

Stu Niven (Federal Appointee)

Suzanne Carrière (GNWT Appointee)

Steve Matthews (GNWT Appointee), Zoom (May 15)

Staff:

Laura Meinert

Jody Pellissey

Interpreters:

James Rabesca

Violet Mackenzie

Guests:

Brendan Malley, DFO

Kevin Bill, DFO

Bobbie Jo Greenland-Morgan, DFO

Rhiannon Pankratz, ECCC

Laurelie Menelon, ECCC

Nive Sridharan, TG

Phoebe Rabesca, TG

Brad Woodworth, ECC-GNWT

Jan Adamczewski, ECC-GNWT

Judy Williams, ECC-GNWT

Regrets:

Joseph Judas (Chair)

Eddie Chocolate (Tłıchǝ Appointee)

Appoint Chairperson

Motion #914-15-05-2024

To appoint Janelle Nitsiza as Chair for the 15-16 May 2024 meeting

Moved:

Tom Lafferty

Second:

Isabelle Duclos

Motion Approved

Call to Order: 9:35 a.m.

Opening Prayer: James Rabesca

1.0 Agenda and Previous Minutes

1.1 Approval of Agenda

Motion #915-15-05-2024

To approve the 15-16 May 2024 agenda as presented

Moved:

Suzanne Carrière

Second:

Stu Niven

Motion Approved

1.2 Approval of Minutes

13-14 February 2024

Motion #916-15-05-2024 To approve the 13-14 February 2024 minutes as presented

Moved: Steve Matthews
Second: Tom Lafferty

Motion Approved

1.3 Review of Action Items

Tabled for review by the Board Members.

2.0 Business

2.1 Review of TG/GNWT Response to WRRB Recommendation for Joint Management Proposal for Kòk'èetì (Bathurst) Ekwò Herd

In response to the WRRB's recommendations from its January 8, 2024 letter for Kòk'èetì (Bathurst) Ekwò Herd, TG and GNWT responded on April 5, 2024 with the following:

- Accepted recommendation for no June 2024 reconnaissance or calving ground survey.
- No comment provided regarding requested submission of December 2024 joint management proposal.

Additionally:

- TG and GNWT collaborated with the WRRB to develop the Request for Proposals for the External Review of WRRB Kòk'èetì Ekwò management and GNWT data analysis; reviewed & provided comment on proposals received; participating in interview portion of external review.
- No comment provided regarding the development of a plain language summary of the joint management proposal and calving ground survey using the July 2022 calving ground survey report and the December 2024 joint management proposal (2022 WRRB recommendation).

Board discussion included: the need to be very specific about what should be included in the December 2024 joint management proposal submission as there will not be a new population estimate. It should include an analysis of all available monitoring information and discussion on what mechanisms could be driving the data (i.e., Why are we seeing what we're seeing?). The joint management proposal should explore additional management actions that could be used to reverse the Kòk'èetì Ekwò population trend, and if they are not being proposed, then an explanation as to why.

2.2 Review & Approval of Tłıchq Reforestation Management Proposal

Tłıchq Government aims to plant one million trees on Tłıchq lands to help combat the effect of climate change related forest fire activity as well as to actively support the regeneration of habitat preferred by *Tqdzı* (Boreal Caribou) and *Ekwq* (Barren-ground Caribou) in the region. One million trees are enough to replant 6km². The proposed project is a pilot project through which TG hopes to study the effects of tree planting on habitat restoration timelines and learn about the process of tree planting on a large scale.

In October 2023, TG collected black spruce and birch cones and seeds. The seeds were extracted from the cones at a processing plant in Saskatchewan. The seeds were sent to a nursery in Northern BC where they will be germinated and grown to a size where they can be planted. That growing phase will take place over 2024 so that the seedlings are ready for planting in 2025.

Proposed work in 2024: TG will spend time on the land in the proposed planting areas to take soil and vegetation samples to assess soil types, moisture levels, and topography of the areas. This information will be used to develop a detailed planting recipe for the area. TG will collect white spruce and tamarack cone and seeds. The cones and seeds will be processed, grown, and then planted summer 2025.

Proposed work in 2025: During the summer and fall, planting camps will be developed to house up to one hundred planters and camp staff who will plant one million seedlings over the course of 3-4 weeks. These planting camps will be temporary in nature and any equipment that is brought in to support planting activities will be removed when the planting project is complete.

Proposed work in 2026-2029: Following the planting activities, project partners will return annually to assess growth and mortality of the newly planted trees. Tłıchq citizens will be involved throughout and will learn how to assess and maintain the new growth forests. After 3 years, trees are considered "Free Growing", and the monitoring and maintenance activities will become the responsibility of TG. Staff note that the current management proposal term expires December 31, 2025

Board discussion included: concerns related to peak snowshoe hare year(s), impacting natural regrowth (provide link to northern tree growth graph), invasive plant species accidentally brought in during replanting, how will invasive species be mitigated if they appear, and record low water levels.

The Board made the following recommendations and requirements:

- Elders should be consulted with on planting prescription, reforestation location, and timing and location of seed collection.
- The WRRB should be updated when significant changes are made to the project including changes to the site locations and timing or work.
- Steps should be taken to ensure bird nests are not disturbed on the ground or in trees. Samuel Hache, Environment and Climate Change Canada, should be contacted for information on working within the migratory and nesting bird seasons

- Presentation to the WRRB after the 2024 field season (before summer 2025) by a project member in person. The WRRB would like to see a report on the work completed, including results and outcomes (both positive and negative), and information provided by elders. Also, which species of birch was collected, detailed plan for 2025.
- Presentation to the WRRB after the 2025 planting season by a member of the project team in person. The WRRB would like to see a report on the work completed, including results and outcomes (both positive and negative). The Board would also like updates on the removal of the camp location.
- All reports related to this work should be shared with the WRRB.
- In order to have a reforestation management proposal, including monitoring of the plot, approved for July 2026, the WRRB would need a management proposal submitted to it in January 2026.

Motion #921-16-05-2024 *To approve the Tłı̄chʔ Reforestation Management Proposal as a pilot project only for 2024 and 2025*

Moved: *Stu Niven*
Second: *Tom Lafferty*

Motion Approved

ACTION #657-16-05-2024 (ED): To write letter to TG to approve the Tłı̄chʔ Reforestation Management Proposal as a pilot project for 2024 and 2025, including recommendations, requirements, and concerns noted.

2.3 Review & Approval of Timber Cutting Permits

Timber Cutting Permits are valid for up to one year but are used to facilitate the commercial sale of up to 5,000 m³ of timber products. In addition to the \$20 application fee, harvesters pay additional stumpage dues, based on targeted species, timber condition, end products, and where in the NWT the harvesting is occurring.

Three timber cutting permit applications have been submitted for May 2024 to May 2025.

- John Rocher has applied to cut up to 200 cords of green spruce/pine fuelwood from kms 185-188 of Highway #3.
- Mitchell Wierenga has applied to cut up to 150 cords of dead spruce/pine fuelwood from kms 170-210 on Highway #3. This excludes areas from km172-174 and 185-188 on East side of Highway 3 due to Land Use Permits associated with Commercial Harvesting.
- Daylen Weber has applied to cut up to 150 cords of dead spruce/pine fuelwood from kms 170-210 on Highway #3. This excludes areas from km 172-174 and 185-188 on East side of Highway 3 due to Land Use Permits associated with Commercial Harvesting.

Motion #917-15-05-2024 *To approve the timber cutting permit application for John Rocher as presented*

Moved: Stu Niven
Second: Travis Washie

Motion Approved

Motion #918-15-05-2024 *To approve the timber cutting permit application for Mitchell Wierenga as presented*

Moved: Tom Lafferty
Second: Stu Niven

Motion Approved

Motion #919-15-05-2024 *To approve the timber cutting permit application for Daylen Weber as presented*

Moved: Isabelle Duclos
Second: Travis Washie

Motion Approved

ACTION #654-15-05-2024 (ED): To write letter to ECC to approve the Timber Cutting Permit applications for John Rocher, Mitchell Wierenga, and Daylen Weber.

2.4 Review & Approval of Wildlife Research Permit Application – Bank Swallow Genoscape

Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC), Canadian Wildlife Service submitted a Wildlife Research Permit (WRP) application titled “*Bank Swallow Canadian Genoscape*”. The application is for work occurring between June 1 to July 30, 2024. The WRP application requests support to conduct the following work at sand pits along Highway 3 between Yellowknife and Fort Providence:

- Capture a maximum of 20 adult Bank Swallows at breeding colonies using mist nets;
- Take two tail feathers from each bird, which will regrow in ~2 weeks;
- Each bird will receive a US Fish and Wildlife Service aluminum leg band; and,
- Take physical measurements of the birds (wing chord, mass and tarsus length, and fat score).

In addition to this WRP Application, ECCC is required to also hold the following permits: National Animal Care Permit, National Bird Banding Permit, and an NWT Animal Care Permit.

Motion #920-15-05-2024 *To approve the Wildlife Research Permit application, entitled “Bank Swallow Genoscape”, as presented, pending approval of additional permit requirements*

Moved:
Second:

Stu Niven
Suzanne Carrière

Motion Approved

ACTION #655-15-05-2024 (ED): To write letter to ECCC to approve the Wildlife Research Permit Application, entitled “*Bank Swallow Genoscape*”, pending approval of additional permit requirements.

2.5 Review & Approval of Wildlife Research Permit Application – Collaring of Bathurst Barren-ground Caribou at Summer Water Crossings on the Tundra

PowerPoint Presentation entitled, “*Collaring of Bathurst caribou at summer water crossings on the tundra*”, tabled

Board discussions included: any mortalities or issues from collaring done in past examples, Western Arctic Herd crossed river twice year so a program was established with many captures over the years, overall stress at the water crossings was less than with net gunning (2% mortality rate with net gunning), not being chased by helicopter, not getting caught up in net and tumbling to the ground, only one mortality noted in an animal that died a few weeks after the capture due to possible injury during collaring, collaborative effort with local community; separation between herds is quite clear for females in calving in June, bulls are most clearly separated in July, holds until early August, chance of targeting Bathurst caribou at Contwoyto Lake is quite high based on existing collars, limited success in recent years to put out collars on Bathurst caribou during the winter; is there a concern about low water levels at Contwoyto Lake, is there a depth needed to do this work? Water levels are very low across the territory, will be unable to determine success until on the ground, dependent on animals crossing and being in the right place at the right time, will have experience and advice from ENK program on sites that will have reasonable chance of animals crossing the water, must consider safety of capture crew and animals before doing work, looking at alternative collaring methods moving forward, it is possible this work may not happen this year; what about calves? When collaring cows with a calf, only the cow would be handled, the calf would not be handled by the collaring crew and would be left to continue the water crossing, the intent is for a very quick processing time to minimize the distance and time of separation and facilitate the cow-calf pair meeting up again on the opposite shore. in the unlikely event of a cow mortality, no action would be taken with the calf; 4-year program, identified as pilot project.

Motion #922-16-05-2024 *To approve the Wildlife Research Permit application, entitled “Collaring of Bathurst Barren-ground Caribou at Summer Water Crossings on the Tundra”, as presented, pending approval of Wildlife Care Committee*

Moved:
Second:

Stu Niven
Travis Washie

Motion Approved

ACTION #658-16-05-2024 (ED): To write letter to ECC to approve the Wildlife Research Permit Application, entitled “*Collaring of Bathurst Barren-ground Caribou at Summer Water Crossings on the Tundra*”, pending approval of Wildlife Care Committee.

2.6 Review & Approval of Eddie (Ediwa) Erasmus Memorial Scholarship Application

The Board did not receive any scholarship applications by the March 31, 2023 deadline; as such, the deadline for submissions was extended until April 30, 2024. The Board received one application.

1. Erin Goose: Royal Roads University, Bachelor of Arts in Environmental Practice, plans to move on to a Master’s degree and hopefully Environmental Law, eventually working with a northern Indigenous Land Claim group with Environmental issues, two reference letters provided.

Motion #924-16-05-2024 *To approve the Eddie (Ediwa) Erasmus Memorial Scholarship Application for \$1000 for Erin Goose as presented*

Moved: Tom Lafferty
Second: Travis Washie

Motion Approved

ACTION #660-16-05-2024 (ED): To write letter to Erin Goose approving Eddie (Ediwa) Erasmus Memorial Scholarship Application.

2.7 Update on Species at Risk Committee

The SARC met May 24-26, 2024, to re-assess the status of hairy braya (*Braya Pilosa*) and assess the status of red-sided garter snake (*Thamnophis sirtalis parietalis*) in the NWT.

SARC determined that Hairy Braya is a *Threatened* species in the NWT. Hairy Braya was first assessed as *Threatened* in 2012. This reassessment reflects the continued decline in already limited habitat (96km²) through coastal erosion. SARC determined that red-sided garter snake is a species of *Special Concern* in the NWT. This assessment reflects the relatively small area of the NWT where the species occurs, and the increasing threats of drought and wildfires linked to climate change.

Board discussions included: information from the elders state that snakes have been located near the south side of Great Slave Lake on the way to Whitebeach Point, people avoid the area, snakes are found in holes in the ground.

2.8 Update on Wek’èezhì Boreal Caribou Range Planning

The Wek’èezhì Range Planning Working Group formed in 2019 and has completed and implemented the interim Wek’èezhì range plan in March of 2022.

During the most recent Working Group meeting in March 2024, a newer management class map for the full Wek'èezhìi range plan was developed, incorporating additional local and traditional knowledge. The final range plan is in the drafting process. Once completed, the Working Group will meet again to review the draft. If there is a need for revisions, they will be made and approved before being sent for public review. Then the full Wek'èezhìi range plan will come to the Wek'èezhìi Renewable Resources Board for approval.

2.9 Update on Cumulative Effects Assessment of Barren-ground Caribou Herds Project

The Cumulative Effects Assessment of Four Barren-Ground Caribou Herds in the NWT is a project which aims to collaboratively develop a decision-support tool with wildlife co-management boards to examine the cumulative effects of land-use, harvest management, natural environmental, and climate change scenarios on the Bluenose West, Sahti Ekwò (Bluenose-East), Cape Bathurst, and Tuk Peninsula barren-ground caribou herd habitats and population dynamics. The WRRB is a partner in this project.

Funding has recently been acquired to expand this program to include the Kòk'èetì (Bathurst) Ekwò herd. WRRB staff attended the kickoff meeting to expand the cumulative effects assessment project to the Kòk'èetì herd in April 2024. Work is ongoing. The Board will be shown the project and its outputs when it has been completed and staff have been trained as analysts.

ACTION #661-16-05-2024 (ED): To send link to Board Members for the project page on ACCWM website.

2.10 Party Updates

a) Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Brenda Malley, Kevin Bill, Bobbie Jo Greenland-Morgan

PowerPoint Presentation entitled, "*Current Lake Whitefish Research on Great Slave Lake, NWT*" and "*Arctic Region Update*", tabled

Board discussions included: DFO has two sectors, science and fishery management, which meet to have science advice put into policy for fishery management; request for Arctic Region contact list to be provided to the WRRB once available.

b) Environment & Climate Change Canada, Rhiannon Pankratz, Laurelie Menelon

PowerPoint Presentation entitled, "*Species at Risk Update*", tabled

Board discussions included: hoary bat migration, do not overwinter in caves or hibernacula in Canada, breed in forested areas in the NWT, then migrate in the fall to wintering areas, impacted by wind turbines, northern end of distribution, few sightings in the NWT, possibility of adding ARUs to Mosquito Creek hill area.

Motion #923-16-05-2024 *To approve the listing of Hoary Bat as endangered to Schedule 1 of the SARA as presented*

Moved: Tom Lafferty
Second: Suzanne Carrière

Motion Approved

ACTION #659-16-05-2024 (ED): To write letter to ECCC to approve listing of Hoary Bat as endangered to Schedule 1 of SARA.

c) Tłıchq̓ Government, Nive Sridharan, Phoebe Rabesca

PowerPoint Presentation entitled, “*Nàı̄ ı̄ı̄Wek’èhodı̄ – Whatı̄ Falls Protected Area Initiative*”, tabled

Board discussion included: Whatı̄ Deè is upriver of the falls, protects fish and fish habitat (spawning area) as identified by elders, elders do not want noise disturbance at the falls so a basic campground will be built away from the falls (closer to the main road), currently a day use area exists; will the strategic plan come to the WRRB for review? The strategic plan has been approved by the CEC, some final technical edits required and then the final product will be shared with the WRRB.

ACTION #656-15-05-2024 (ED): To write letter to TG to provide comments on the Nàı̄ı̄ı̄Wek’èhodı̄ – Gah Nàowa K’e Eghalats’eedaa Nı̄htı̄’è (Whatı̄ Falls Protect Area Strategic Plan, 2024-2029).

d) Environment & Climate Change, GNWT, Brad Woodworth, Jan Adamczewski, Judy Williams

PowerPoint Presentation entitled, “*Collaring of Bathurst caribou at summer water crossings on the tundra*”, tabled (see item 2.5 above)

ECC Wildlife Management Division Headquarters Update tabled

3.0 Financial

3.1 Review & Approval of Financial Statements as of 31 March 2024

Motion #925-16-05-2024 *To approve the financial statement as of 31 March 2024 as presented*

Moved: Tom Lafferty
Second: Isabelle Duclos

Motion Approved

3.2 Review & Approval of Yellowknife Office Lease

The WRRB's office lease with Denendeh Manor G.P. Ltd expires on May 31, 2024 (five-year term). The lease includes Suite 102 A & B on the first floor of the Denendeh Manor, which is 1580 square feet. The current monthly rent is \$3900 plus GST.

A revised lease has been prepared for the Board's review. It has a four-year term and an increase in rent of \$600/month. The 15.4 % increase in rent is to account for increased costs in utilities (electricity, water, and heat). Denendeh Manor G.P. Ltd will consider a five-year lease, which will require a change to clause 3.02 and 3.03.

Motion #926-16-05-2024 *To approve the office lease with Denendeh Manor GP Ltd for a four-year term as presented*

Moved: Travis Washie
Second: Stu Niven

Motion Approved

ACTION #662-16-05-2024 (ED): To write a letter to Denendeh Manor GP Ltd to approve the office lease for a four-year term.

4.0 Operations

4.1 Review & Approval of Rule for Management Proposals

The Rule for Management Proposals is a document used to provide guidance to any person or organization making an application to the Board or required to consult the Board, including Parties to the Tłıchq Agreement. The Rule for Management Proposals was last approved on October 16, 2018.

Staff have been working with Chuck Birchall and John Donihee, Legal Counsel, to revise and expand the current Rule to better include proposals for forest, plants, and protected areas in addition to wildlife as well as provide more clarity and consistency throughout the document. Following approval, the Rule will be sent to Parties of the Tłıchq Agreement for their information. The Rule will be reviewed at five-year intervals from the date of approval.

Motion #927-16-05-2024 *To approve the revisions to the Rule for Management Proposals as presented*

Moved: Tom Lafferty
Second: Stu Niven

Motion Approved

ACTION #663-16-05-2024 (ED): To write a letter to the Parties to the Tłıchq Agreement to provide the revised Rule for Management Proposals.

4.2 Review & Approval of Rule of Procedures

The WRRB's Rules of Procedure are related to the conduct of proceedings before the Board and help to ensure that proceedings meet the requirements of fairness and are efficient and focused. The Rules of Procedure was last approved on June 14, 2017.

Staff have been working with Chuck Birchall and John Donihee, Legal Counsel, to revise the current Rule to provide more clarity and consistency throughout the document and reflect the processes detailed in the Rule for Management Proposals. Following approval, the Rule will be sent to Parties of the Tłıchǫ Agreement for their information. The Rule will be reviewed at five-year intervals from the date of approval.

Motion #928-16-05-2024 *To approve the revisions to the Rule of Procedures as presented*

Moved: Travis Washie
Second: Tom Lafferty

Motion Approved

ACTION #664-16-05-2024 (ED): To write a letter to the Parties to the Tłıchǫ Agreement to provide the revised Rule of Procedures.

4.3 Update on Conservation Biologist & Communications Officer Positions

Both job descriptions were revised prior to running advertisements for the positions. Advertisements were run in the News/North and Yellowknifer from March 6 to 19, 2024 as well as posted on the WRRB website and Facebook page, with a deadline of March 22, 2024. There were four applicants for the Communications Officer and five applicants for the Conservation Biologist.

All applicants completed the exercise portion of the competition during March 28 to April 4, 2024. Based on the exercise portion, three applicants for each position were shortlisted and interviewed between April 11 to 15, 2024. Job offers were made on April 15 and 16, 2024.

Mary Drake accepted the Communications Officer job offer on April 17, 2024 and signed the formal employment contract on April 24, 2024. Her start date is May 21, 2024. Amanda Weltman accepted the Conservation Biologist term job offer on April 19, 2024 and signed the formal employment contract on April 23, 2024. Her start date is May 21, 2024.

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, including Janelle for filling in as Chairperson, interpreters, and staff for a good meeting. Members appreciated the good hospitality provided by the community of Gamètì and the good turnout at the WLWB/WRRB supper and engagement. Members appreciate all the information provided, knowledge and humor shared, the ability to move back and forth between cultures, and the ability to navigate colonization and imposed procedures. Excited to have new staff starting their positions next week. Members send prayers for Joseph’s recovery. Members looking forward to the upcoming meeting in Whatì.

6.2 Next Meeting

The next meeting dates are:

- August 13-14, 2024, Whatì
- December 17-18, 2024, Yellowknife

Closing Prayer: James Rabesca

Adjournment: 1:47 p.m. (Motion #929-16-05-2024)

Minutes Approved:

ORIGINALS SIGNED

August 13, 2024

Chairperson

Date