



Board Meeting Minutes

Date: 24-25 May 2023

Location: Council Chambers Boardroom, Kò Gocho Sportsplex Centre, Behchokò

Board Members:

Joseph Judas (Chair)
Travis Washie (Tłıchq Appointee)
Isabelle Duclos (Federal Appointee)
Stu Niven (Federal Appointee)
Janelle Nitsiza (Tłıchq Appointee)
Eddie Chocolate (Tłıchq Appointee)

Regrets:

Suzanne Carrière (GNWT Appointee)
Steve Matthews (GNWT Appointee)

Guests:

Amy Amos, DFO
Anna Ryan, DFO
Christina Howell, UofSask
Eric Reed, ECCC
Stephanie Haddad, ECCC
Robert Gubiani, ECCC
Kevin Marple, ECCC
Rhiannon Pankratz, ECCC
Stephanie Behrens, TG
Mark Poskitt, TG

Staff:

Aimee Guile
Laura Meinert
Simon Whitehouse
Jody Pellissey

Interpreters/PIDO:

Violet Mackenzie
James Rabesca

Call to Order: 9:48 a.m.

Opening Prayer: Joseph Judas

Roundtable Introductions

1.0 Agenda and Previous Minutes

1.1 Approval of Agenda

Motion #858-24-05-2023

To approve the 24-25 May 2023 agenda as presented

Moved:

Janelle Nitsiza

Second:

Stu Niven

Motion Approved

1.2 Approval of Minutes

7-8 February 2023

Motion #859-24-05-2023

To approve the 7-8 February minutes as amended

Moved:

Eddie Chocolate

Second:

Isabelle Duclos

Motion Approved

1.3 Review of Action Items

Outstanding action items list was tabled and reviewed.

Board Members reviewed the current Board Member terms worksheet, noting that Joseph Judas' term expires on January 6, 2024.

Motion #860-24-05-2023 *To nominate Joseph Judas for another five-year term as WRRB Chairperson, starting January 7, 2023*

Moved:
Second:

Stu Niven
Travis Washie

Motion Approved

ACTION #624-24-05-2023 (ED): To write letter to CIRNAC, GNWT, and TG to nominate Joseph Judas as WRRB Chairperson for another five-year term.

2.0 Business

2.1 Update on Recent Caribou and Wolf Monitoring – Collaring, Spring Recruitment, Fall Composition

Fall Composition Survey tells us about summer calf survival and provides the bull:cow ratio, which helps us understand the overall health of the herd and extrapolate herd size. The survey was conducted on October 17-25, 2022 and November 1-3, 2022, with the peak of rut about October 20. For the Sahti Ekwò, there 2884 caribou classified with a 52.3:100 calf:cow ratio and a 64.8:100 bull:cow ratio. For the Beverly Ekwò, there were 6369 caribou classified with a 46.5:100 calf:cow ratio and 62.8:100 bull:cow ratio. For the Kòk'èetì Ekwò, due to significant mixing, the calf:cow ratio was 38.4:100 and the bull:cow ratio was 105.6:100. Survey is conducted by helicopter by looking for groups of caribou. Small groups are classified (bull, cow, calf) from the air. With large groups, the helicopter lands and caribou are classified from the ground.

Kòk'èetì and Sahti Ekwò Spring Recruitment Survey tells us about calf survival. In March 2023, 9917 caribou were classified. However, the herds were very mixed and so it will be a challenge to get herd specific information. Survey results are not yet available.

Dìga Collaring was in March 2023 with 4 females and 2 males collared (added two collars to new pack, added two collars to existing packs, and added two new collars to existing packs that have collars dropping soon). Dìga fell to sleep in 4-6 minutes, handled for about 25-30 minutes, wake up time about 4-6 minutes. Dìga Harvesting has a total of 118 carcasses submitted to ECC from the incentive zone. This was a mix from Tìchqò Government, Kugluktuk, winter road harvesters, and outfitters.

Kòk'èetì and Sahti Ekwò Collaring occurred in March 2023. All collars were put out as follows: Kòk'èetì Ekwò – 39 female, 15 male; Sahti Ekwò – 22 female, 15

male; Beverly Ekwò – 23 female, 16 male. ECC won't know until calving whether targets were met.

Sahti Ekwò Population Survey will be happening June 2-11, 2023, based out of Kugluktuk, NT. Aimee Guile to participate on behalf of the WRRB.

Board discussion included: i) possible Tłıchǫ name for Beverly Caribou (Łıhtsok'è gokwò (Łutsel K'è Ekwò), suggestion to check with Tłıchǫ Government or communities to determine if appropriate term, looking for an easier term for Tłıchǫ elders to understand which caribou are being discussed, important for possible future discussions with Łutsel K'è about Kòk'èetì and Beverly Ekwò; ii) develop a better way to explain calf:cow ratio, suggestion to use money as elders do not think in percentages, seeing upward trend for the Sahti Ekwò calf:cow ratio, but not for the Kòk'èetì Ekwò.

ACTION #625-24-05-2023 (Biologists): To develop a graphic representation of calf:cow and bull:cow ratios.

2.2 Review & Approval of Bathurst Caribou Advisory Committee's 2023 Proposed Status and Action Plan

The *Annual Review of Bathurst Caribou Herd – 2023 Action Plan* summarizes the presentations and discussions that were had at the 2nd Annual Review Meeting in January 2023. In 2022, the estimated population was 6,851 individuals (95% CI: 3,895–12,050). This is significantly below the threshold of 30,000 individuals that would move the herd's status into the next category. While there were some positive observations reported in both the community and scientific presentations, the population estimate combined with community reports of limited numbers of caribou, led the Bathurst Caribou Advisory Committee (BCAC) to designate the Bathurst herd status as "Critical Low".

Based on this status the working group recommended a suite of management actions on harvest, predators, research and monitoring, habitat and disturbance, and communication and education.

Board discussions included: concern about level of disturbance on the range, particularly helicopters; concern about climate change and the impacts on caribou; concerns about forest fires/flooding and impact on food availability for caribou, do not let the green burn; suggestion to slow down harvest for 2-3 years (hunt via skidoo only, no trucks, no winter road harvesting).

Motion #861-24-05-2023 *To approve the proposed status and 2023 action plan for the Bathurst caribou herd as presented*

Moved:
Second:

Janelle Nitsiza
Stu Niven

Motion Approved

ACTION #626-24-05-2023 (ED): To write letter to BCAC to approve the proposed status and 2023 action plan for the Bathurst caribou herd.

2.3 Review & Approval of Tłıchq Highway Wildlife Management & Monitoring Plan, V.6.1

The GNWT first provided the WMMP version 6.0 for annual review on the Wek'èezhì Land and Water Board's (WLWB) Online Review System (ORS) for public comments. WRRB Staff provided comments on the WLWB's ORS on March 20, 2023. The GNWT also received minor comments from the WLWB.

The WMMP was revised, incorporating the comments received on the ORS. Version 6.1 was submitted to the WRRB on April 13, 2023. The WMMP was posted to the WRRB's Management Proposals website page on April 13, 2023 and open for comments until May 15, 2023. No comments were received. No significant changes between Version 5.1 and 6.1.

Motion #862-25-05-2023 *To approve the Tłıchq Highway Wildlife Management & Monitoring Plan, V.6.1 as presented*

Moved:	Stu Niven
Second:	Janelle Nitsiza

Motion Approved

ACTION #627-25-05-2023 (ED): To write letter to INF to approve the Tłıchq Highway Wildlife Management & Monitoring Plan, V.6.1.

2.4 Review & Approval of Commercial Timber Cutting Permits – Tanner Monckton-Milnes, Jeffrey Bell, John Rocher

Three commercial timber cutting permit applications have been submitted for May 2023 to May 2024.

- Tanner Monckton-Milnes has applied to cut up to 150 cords of dead spruce/pine fuelwood from kms 140-170 and kms 190-200 on Highway #3.
- John Rocher has applied to cut up to 60 cords of dead spruce/pine fuelwood from kms 185-188 of Highway #3.
- Jeffrey Bell has applied to cut up to 50 cords of dead spruce/pine fuelwood from kms 140-210 on Highway #3.

Board discussions included: concern about overlapping kilometers for cutting, woodcutters have to sort out the area where they will harvest, permit does not give rights to any areas/land.

Motion #863-25-05-2023 *To approve the Commercial Timber Cutting Permit for Tanner Monckton-Milnes as presented*

Moved:	Travis Washie
Second:	Isabelle Duclos

Motion Approved

Moved: Travis Washie
Second: Janelle Nitsiza

Motion #865-25-05-2023 *To approve the Commercial Timber Cutting Permit for Jeffrey Bell as presented*

Moved: Stu Niven
Second: Travis Washie

ACTION #628-25-05-2023 (ED): To write letters to ECC to approve the Commercial Timber Cutting Permits for Tanner Monckton-Milnes, John Rocher, and Jeffrey Bell.

A multi-species management plan exists for all bats in the Northwest Territories, The Management Plan for Bats in the NWT outlines management approaches to meet objectives which have been agreed upon by management authorities. The WRRB approved this plan in 2019 and agreed to a number of actions.

Currently the Government of the Northwest Territories, Department of Environment and Climate Change (ECC) runs the “Bat Monitoring in the Northwest Territories” program, deploying acoustic recording units (ARU) to non-invasively monitor for the presence of the eight different bat species found in the NWT. ECC carries an active Wildlife Research Permit (WRP) for this work, and the WRRB has supported their WRP applications. There are no ARUs for bat monitoring currently located on the new Tłıcho Highway to Whatı.

ECC, in conjunction with the Wildlife Conservation Society, is also running a Bats and Bridges project to check bridges for bat guano and collect it into an envelope with a shovel if it is found. This work contributes to the GNWT white-nose syndrome surveillance program and provides information on bat species distribution and use of bridges in the region.

WRRB Staff are proposing funding, managing, and completing the field work for a Bat Acoustic Program, run under the active WRP held by ECC. ECC are interested in the WRRB adding ARU stations to their program. WRRB staff have communicated with Tłıchq Government, Tłıchq Research and Training Institute, who have indicated that they would support the work and could have their monitors complete the field work with WRRB staff and check on the ARUs. The proposed budget is \$7412.48.

From Species at Risk consultations in 2017, the Tłıchq̓ term for bat is *dl̓l̓q̓ k'et'aa* (flying mouse).

Motion #866-25-05-2023

To approve funding for the Bat Acoustic Recording Unit Proposal to a maximum of \$8000 as presented

Moved:
Second:

Janelle Nitsiza
Isabelle Duclos

Motion Approved

- 2.6 Review & Approval of Wildlife Research Permit Application – Migratory connectivity, contaminant exposure, demographics, diet, and behaviour of boreal treeline passerines during the breeding and migration seasons

Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC), Canadian Wildlife Service has submitted a Wildlife Research Permit (WRP) Application titled “*Migratory connectivity, contaminant exposure, demographics, diet, and behavior of boreal treeline passerines during the breeding and migration seasons*”. This is a new project. The application is for work occurring over ten days between July 1-15, 2023.

The WRP application requests support to: 1) Set up a motus tower (bird tracking tower) at two sites on the Tibbitt to Contwoyto Winter Road (one by the Lockhart Camp and one by Mackay Lodge); 2) Capture a maximum of 300 breeding birds and fit metal and colour bands on their legs; 3) Birds will be captured in a grid of approximately 20 mist nets; 4) Take physical measurements of the birds, collect fecal and blood samples from 20 individuals from 4 species; and 5) Fit radio transmitters to this subset of 20 individuals from 3 species and 30 Harris’s Sparrow (more urgent need for info on this SAR).

This research would provide valuable information on several species that have undergone steep declines over the last 50 years and are expected to be impacted further by climate change. Harris’s Sparrow is a species of Special Concern under SARA, COSEWIC has scheduled Grey-cheeked Thrush for a status report preparation for November 2023, and Blackpoll Warbler and American Tree Sparrow are on the candidate assessment lists as mid-priority and low-priority, respectively. This work would also occur on the theoretical all-season road to Nunavut, making it potentially beneficial as baseline information for that project.

Motion #867-25-05-2023

To approve the Wildlife Research Permit Application, entitled “Migratory connectivity, contaminant exposure, demographics, diet, and behaviour of boreal treeline passerines during the breeding and migration seasons”, as presented

Moved:
Second:

Stu Niven
Janelle Nitsiza

Motion Approved

ACTION #629-25-05-2023 (ED): To write letter to ECCC to approve the Wildlife Research Permit Application, entitled “*Migratory connectivity, contaminant exposure, demographics, diet,*

and behaviour of boreal treeline passerines during the breeding and migration seasons”.

2.7 Review & Approval of COSEWIC Designation for Horned Grebe

The Canadian population of Horned Grebe is estimated to comprise 200,000 to 500,000 mature individuals. Range-wide population trend information is not conclusive. The Breeding Bird Survey of the southern breeding range estimates a 57% decline over the last 49 years. eBird data shows a 3-generation decline of over 30% across the winter range. In contrast, the Christmas Bird Count estimates an increase of 21% over the last 51 years.

Permanent loss of wetlands to agriculture and development threatens the Horned Grebe. Up to 70% of wetlands within the Prairie Region have disappeared since European settlement, with some loss ongoing. Temporary drying of wetlands during droughts can also displace Horned Grebe. Oil spills on the wintering grounds can also negatively impact the population.

On March 24, 2023, the WRRB provided an in-principal support of the special concern designation. If listed as *Special Concern* under SARA, a management plan will be required.

Motion #868-25-05-2023 *To approve COSEWIC designation of special concern for Horned Grebe as presented*

Moved:
Second:

Travis Washie
Eddie Chocolate

Motion Approved

ACTION #630-25-05-2023 (ED): To write letter to COSEWIC Birds Species Specialist Committee to approve the designation of special concern for Horned Grebe.

2.8 SARC & CMA Updates

a) Update on Species Assessments – Dolphin Union Caribou and American White Pelican

Tabled for Board Member information.

b) Review & Approval of SARC Alternate Member – Aimee Guile

The Species at Risk Committee (SARC) is an independent committee of up to 15 experts responsible for assessing the biological status of species at risk in the NWT. Members of SARC have significant traditional, community or scientific knowledge about northern species and act independently from their appointing agencies.

In 2018, Aimee Guile was appointed as an Alternate to the SARC for a five-year term. Aimee's appointment expires in July 2023.

Motion #869-25-05-2023

To approve nominating Aimee Guile for another five-year term on the Species at Risk Committee

Moved:
Second:

Travis Washie
Janelle Nitsiza

Motion Approved

ACTION #631-25-05-2023 (ED): To write letter to SAR Secretariat to nominate Aimee Guile for another five-year term on the SARC.

2.9 Update on Caribou Guardian Coalition

Tabled for Board Member information.

2.10 Update on Tłıchq Government Caribou Workshop & Regulatory Workshop

Tabled for Board member information.

2.11 Update on the Tłıchq Highway Woodcutting Provisions & Cabin Management Protocols, Mark Poskitt, Tłıchq Government

PowerPoint Presentation, entitled “*Tłıchq Tłıdeè Hwy 9 Interim Protocols – WRRB Update*”, tabled

Board discussions included: final draft Wek'èezhì Forest Management Plan will be brought to communities for review and comment, will there be the addition of buffer zones of areas that are no-cutting, safety concern as well as visual, thinking about it and trying to sort out how to make work, who would pay for this?; standard wording in woodcutting permits, consider larger signage to indicate areas of cutting, including Indigenous only cutting areas, important part of the management plan will be a communication tool; access road to Gamètì and Wekweètì, have to veer back 30km to get access to Wekweètì road, why alignment not included in plans for TH?; burns along the highway, any new growth? No plans to plant new trees along this highway, talks to plant test plots after fires to improve Tòdzı habitat, plan for now is for the forest to regenerate on its own; TG conducting dust study in Whatì, can be used for baseline for Gamètì and Wekweètì.

2.12 Party Updates

a) Fisheries & Oceans Canada

Update on DFO Arctic Region and DFO Arctic Operations Program, Amy Amos & Anna Ryan

Board discussions included: collaboration with Tłıchq Government on the Tłıchq Aquatic Effects Monitoring Program?; new Tłıchq Highway Fisheries Management Plan for Lac La Martre, bigger picture fisheries management oversight to ensure that work is being done appropriately.

b) Environment & Climate Change Canada

i) Update on Horned Grebe Migratory Connectivity and Contaminants Study, Christina Howell & Eric Reed

PowerPoint Presentation, entitled "*Contaminants and migration routes of Horned Grebes in Canada*", tabled

Board discussions included: how are grebes captured? Submerged gill net, 52 geo-trackers deployed, catch and retrieve birds, only got five back, must catch birds to download data; collect eggs, find nests, use yolks for the contaminant study, kept shells to look at thinning; Tłıchq name nòhtà tsoa, diving bird, called it the "map" as would follow the bird by boat from one pond to another; animals that live in the water know the water, if anything wrong, they know it, this may be why we don't see as many birds in agricultural areas due to contamination; concerns about Avian Influenza, one seagull at YK, couple of ravens from Ft. Simpson.

ii) Draft Policy on Assessing Imminent Threats, Stephanie Haddad, Robert Gubiani, & Kevin Marple

PowerPoint Presentation, entitled "*DRAFT - Policy on Assessing Imminent Threats under Sections 29 and 80 of the Species at Risk Act – terrestrial species*", tabled

Seeking comments on the draft Policy on Assessing Imminent Threats under Sections 29 and 80 of the SARA – terrestrial species, deadline June 30, 2023.

iii) Update on Recovery Strategy for Barn Swallow & Update on Federal Species at Risk Status of Species, Rhiannon Pankratz

PowerPoint Presentation, entitled "*Draft Recovery Strategy for Barn Swallow*", and Spreadsheet, entitled "*Species at Risk Act update for WRRB*", tabled

WRRB will need to approve posting of the Barn Swallow recovery strategy at August 2023 meeting. ECCC to provide an updated spreadsheet in the future, include upcoming approvals.

Board discussions included: Tłıchq name yatì'qhda, lots of birds flying about crazy is a sign of rain; why population going down, not that many in Wekweètì? Lots of small birds are getting less, songbirds are getting less, don't hear them in the morning and evening anymore, it is like the world is dying, used to be lots of fun, maybe not hearing them cause stay in the house, used to stay in the tent.

c) Tłıchq Government

Diga Harvesting Program 2019-2023 & Ekwò Harvest Monitoring Program, Stephanie Behrens

PowerPoint Presentations, entitled "*Diga Harvesting Program 2019-2023*" and "*Ekwò Harvest Monitoring Program*", tabled

Board discussions included: Did it make any difference to have John Franklin on the wolf program? Inuit hunters are tenacious, drive skidoo fast and go into areas that Tłıchq harvesters wouldn't necessarily go; trying to help wildlife today, what is happening, is it because of transportation uses (airplanes, skidoos), other people south of the lake who are harvesting, not following our own rules, mines and roads, all the available routes, try to help caribou by removing wolves, what is it that we can do to make our numbers better?; we need to be monitoring more than we are now and better, always used wildlife to sustain us, started great program BOTG, researching everything about caribou behaviour, what it eats, should be thriving and should be very powerful, need to get more knowledge from out on the land to know what is happening out on the land, we need to use people that people will listen to; can we observe caribou for two years without using airplanes, helicopters, skidoos, vehicles, can harvest only in traditional ways?; need to let leadership know what is going on to fix things, lots of wastage and wounding, we need to hunt for less caribou, need to let our community members know, need to talk about our vision, what kind of solutions can be found, not one person can solve a problem, need many people working together, need to put our good ideas together; incorporated the school into the BOTG and on winter road monitoring this year, talking to principal about incorporating harvest techniques into the school.

3.0 Financial

3.1 Review & Approval of Financial Statements as of 31 March 2023

Motion #870-25-05-2023 *To approve the financial statement as of 31 March 2023 as presented*

Moved: Stu Niven
Second: Travis Washie

Motion Approved

4.0 Operations

4.1 Review & Approval of Eddie "Ediwa" Erasmus Scholarship Applications

The Board received three scholarship applications by the March 31, 2023 deadline.

1. Jessica Crowe: University of Alberta, Environmental Science Program, Major Conservation Biology (currently in Grade 12 at St. Pat's High School), plans to return to the North to work in the field, three reference letters, not a Tłıchq Citizen
2. Taylor Schear: University of Alberta, Bachelor of Arts in Recreation, Sport, and Tourism, Faculty of Kinesiology, Sport, and Recreation (currently in Grade 12 at K'àlemì Dene School), plans to return to the North to start her own land-based program, not a Tłıchq Citizen. Two reference letters provided.

Motion Approved

ACTION #633-25-05-2023 (ED): To update the WRRB OHS Policy and Operating Procedures Manual as required.

4.3 Update on WRRB Strategic Plan & Communication Strategy Revision

The 2019-2024 Strategic Plan and Communications Strategy are set to expire on March 31, 2024. The Board has a proposal from PlanIt North for facilitation of a strategic planning workshop (1.5 days) during the upcoming Board retreat in August 2023. PlanIt North has provided two options for the Board's consideration:

Option 1 – to attend Board meeting and facilitate strategic planning workshop, August 28 to Sep 1, 2023, \$29,554.43

Option 2 – to facilitate strategic planning workshop, August 30 to Sep 1, 2023, \$26,912.03

It is recommended to choose Option #1 as this allows the facilitators to observe the Board doing its work prior to the workshop. Staff will approach the Tłıchǫ Implementation Committee for specific funding to cover costs of the strategic planning workshop.

Motion #874-25-05-2023 *To approve Option #1 for facilitation as presented*

Moved:
Second:

Stu Niven
Janelle Nitsiza

Motion Approved

ACTION #634-25-05-2023 (ED): To follow up with PlanIt North to get contract in place for Option #1 facilitation.

4.4 In-Camera Session – Policy Discussion

Motion #875-25-05-2023 *To go in camera at 3:31 p.m.*

Moved:
Second:

Stu Niven
Janelle Nitsiza

Motion Approved

Motion #876-25-05-2023 *To come out of camera at 4:04 p.m.*

Moved:
Second:

Stu Niven
Janelle Nitsiza

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.

5.3 Communications Update

Simon's main activities since the February meeting have been as follows: 1) daily social media posts and media monitoring, 2) completed spring newsletter, 3) development of the 2024 WRRB calendar, 4) created and printed Eddie Erasmus scholarship brochures, 5) attended the Idaa Ts'ade (Moving Forward) Gathering Resource Fair, 6) lesson plan development for school visits, and 7) website updates as needed.

Board discussion included: numbers on calendar should be bigger, 12 Tłıchǫ months should be listed and associated with wildlife (possible 2025 calendar); bring Board Members & Staff to the schools during community board meetings.

6.0 Other Items

6.1 Round Table

Board Members thanked one another, interpreters, and staff for a good, positive meeting. Members noted: the importance for elders and older harvesters to share their knowledge so that the younger generation can continue to manage the animals, fish, land, and water into the future; the importance to have more information about the impacts of climate change; and the importance of clear communication with communities about our work.

6.2 Next Meeting

The next meeting dates are:

- August 28 – September 1, 2023, Board Meeting & Strategic Planning Session, Charlie Jeremick'ca's Camp, Whatì.
- December 14-15, 2023, WRRB Boardroom, Yellowknife.

Closing Prayer: Joseph Judas

Adjournment: 4:23 p.m. (Motion #877-25-05-2023)

Minutes Approved:

ORIGINAL SIGNED

December 15, 2023

Chairperson

Date