



## Board Meeting Minutes

**Date:** 25-26 May 2021

**Location:** Katamavik C, Explorer Hotel, Yellowknife, NT

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**Board Members:**

Eddie Erasmus (Tłıchq Appointee)  
Stu Niven (Federal Appointee)  
Joseph Judas (Chair)  
Charlie Jeremick'ca (Tłıchq Appointee)  
Suzanne Carrière (GNWT Appointee) (Zoom)  
Isabelle Duclos (Federal Appointee) (Zoom)

**Staff:**

Jody Pellissey  
Aimee Guile  
Randi Mousseau  
Shalyn Norrish

**Interpreters/PIDO:**

James Rabesca  
Jonas Lafferty  
Ryan

**Regrets:**

Chris Football (Tłıchq Appointee)  
Eddie Chocolate (Tłıchq Appointee)  
Steve Matthews (GNWT Appointee)

**Guests (via Zoom):**

Heather Sayine-Crawford, ENR, GNWT  
Naima Jutha, ENR, GNWT  
Bruce Laurich, ECCC  
Rob Gau, ENR, GNWT  
Petter Jacobsen, TG  
Stephanie Behrens, TG  
Xinhua Zhu, DFO

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**Call to Order: 9:13 a.m.**

**Opening Prayer & Comments: Joseph Judas**

### **1.0 Agenda and Previous Minutes**

#### **1.1 Approval of Agenda**

***Motion #766-25-05-2021***

*To approve the 25-26 May 2021 agenda as presented*

***Moved:***

Stu Niven

***Second:***

Eddie Erasmus

**Motion Approved**

#### **1.2 Approval of Minutes**

**3-4 December 2020**

***Motion #767-25-05-2021***

*To approve the 3-4 December 2020 minutes as presented*

***Moved:***

Charlie Jeremick'ca

**Second:**

Isabelle Duclos

**Motion Approved**

10-11 February 2021

**Motion #768-25-05-2021**

*To approve the 10-11 February 2021 minutes as presented*

**Moved:**

Stu Niven

**Second:**

Isabelle Duclos

**Motion Approved**

1.3 Review of Action Items

Outstanding action items list was tabled and reviewed.

**2.0 Business**

2.1 Review GNWT & TG Response to Wolf Reasons for Decision Report

On August 25, 2020, GNWT and TG submitted a revised joint management proposal, entitled "*Revised Joint Proposal on Management Actions for Wolves (diga) on the Bathurst and Bluenose-East Barren-ground Caribou (ᑭᑭᑭᑭ) Herd Winter Ranges: 2021 – 2024*" ("the Revised Proposal"). On September 4, 2020, the WRRB gave notice that following an initial assessment of the Revised Proposal, the Board determined that a Level 2 review was appropriate, as per its Rule for Management Proposals. The Board conducted its proceeding and closed the record on October 23, 2020. The Board submitted its final Wolf Reasons for Decision Report on January 8, 2021. On March 12, 2021, TG and GNWT sent their responses to the Board's recommendations. A spreadsheet has been developed to track implementation of the Board's recommendations.

Board Members discussed: the use of UBI to estimate diga abundance and other possible alternative methods, important to have a base population number; the TG wolf harvester training program; recommendation #10 to have the wording "sufficiently representative sample of diga removed" to ensure it matches the rationale; correct title on recommendation #15; collection of stationary collared caribou and wolves, harvest of collared caribou or wolf to return collar to GNWT; upcoming TG elections and the need to educate new leaders about the WRRB and its mandates/decisions; diga harvested up to April 2021, 130 diga harvested in incentive area, 32 were from TG training camp, 15 along winter road, 83 harvested by Nunavut harvesters, possible that Fort Smith harvester harvested outside of the incentive zone or after we received update or part of the 15 harvested along winter road; and reminder about recommendation #7, TG and GNWT have indicated that "*aerial removals should remain an option in subsequent years if ground-based harvesting is unable to achieve wolf removal targets*", the Board should have evidence presented that supports the continued use of aerial removals instead of other management options, prior to implementing any additional actions.

**ACTION #558-25-05-2021 (ED):** To write letter to GNWT and TG to confirm receipt of responses to Wolf Reasons for Decision report, follow up on Recommendations #7 and 10, and share implementation spreadsheet.

## 2.2 Update on Wek'èezhì Boreal Caribou Range Plan

On March 19-20, 2021, the GNWT and Zoetica Environmental Consulting held the fifth Wek'èezhì working group meeting to discuss the finalizing of the basic, enhanced, and intensive management classes throughout the Wek'èezhì boreal caribou range as well as complete a final review of the draft interim plan written by the GNWT-ENR.

A map identifying the basic, enhanced, and intensive management classes was agreed upon and will be included in the final draft, which will be distributed to the working group for review by May 31, 2021. Once all the Working Group comments are incorporated, the finalized draft will be sent to Cabinet for GNWT internal approval. By August 13, 2021, the WRRB expects a copy of the finalized draft to be submitted as set out in the Tłıchǫ Agreement. During the Board meeting in September, the WRRB will be going through the Interim Boreal Caribou Range Plan for review and approval.

Board discussed offsetting requirements that are referenced in the Section 7 management actions and will be applied on a case-by-case basis.

## 2.3 Review & Approval of Revised Taking Care of Caribou Management Plan

The Advisory Committee for Cooperation on Wildlife Management (ACCWM) completed and submitted to governments the *"Taking Care of Caribou: the Cape Bathurst, Bluenose-West and Bluenose-East Caribou Herds Management Plan"* in November 2014. The Taking Care of Caribou management plan is to be reviewed at the five-year mark and every 10 years thereafter. The ACCWM agreed that the management plan is still relatively new and, as such, should only have minor revisions for this first review period. A more fulsome review and engagement with communities will occur, beginning in 2024.

The ACCWM Working Group has completed revisions to the management plan. Revisions include: improved representation of relationships between people and caribou, more explicit explanation of the management plan goals from a community perspective, recent implementation of the plan, information about ACCWM website, addition of 2020 management setting, addition of information about community conservation planning, revisions to herd exchange and movement hot topic box, addition of information about guardian programs, revisions to assessing herd status with addition of community-based monitoring items, addition of competitors to monitoring, revisions to caribou collaring hot topic box, revisions to perspectives on harvest and harvest monitoring hot topic box, additions to the decision making section, revisions to predator control programs hot topic box, and a 2020 communications update. The revised management plan has now been submitted to Member Boards to undergo their review and approval processes. Once completed, the final revised management plan will be submitted to governments for implementation.

**Moved:** Eddie Erasmus  
**Second:** Stu Niven

**Moved:**  
**Second:**

Stu Niven  
Eddie Erasmus

**Motion Approved**

**ACTION #568-26-05-2021 (ED):** To write letter to GNWT to approve the Wildlife General Regulation amendments to prohibit the use of drones for harvesting.

2.5 Review & Approval of Wildlife Research Permit Application – Wolf Collaring in the North Slave Region AMENDMENT

An amendment request was sent to the WRRB on April 30, 2021. This amendment asks for capture efforts to be extended to June or July near active den areas, or on other areas of the range in late summer or during the fall, beginning June 2021 and continuing for the next four years. Chemicals may be used for immobilization to facilitate capture and collaring. The standard operating procedures for the live capture of digi states that digi captures should be avoided from late February to early May when females may be pregnant because the stress of capture and handling may increase the likelihood of reproductive failure.

Upon reviewing the amendment, staff identified the use of chemicals for immobilization as an issue. During the last Barren-ground Caribou Technical Working Group meeting, held May 17, 2021, staff brought up the issue of chemical immobilization with Dean Cluff (GNWT-ENR). The extension of the capture time window (June 2021 to fall) could possibly include lactating digi with pups. Dean indicated that there is no evidence of the suggested tranquilizer harming digi or having an effect on lactating or pregnant digi. Due to the number of digi that were killed during the 2020 collaring season, staff are concerned about extending the collaring time to later in the year when digi have pups to care for.

Board Members discussed: difficult to approve WRP application without report from WCC; SOP for wolf handling shared, timelines should avoid Feb to May (pregnant wolves, could lead to reproductive failure), should avoid May to early June (lactating wolves and pups), many of the drugs used in wolves are not recommended for use in pregnant or lactating animals as not adequately evaluated under these conditions; approve pending approval WCC, if not approved by WCC, then WRRB approval pulled, allows the WRRB to give permission for the parts of the application that have expertise on and rely on WCC for the remaining parts.

**Motion #772-25-05-2020**      *To approve the Wildlife Research Permit Application, entitled “Wolf Collaring in the North Slave Region - Amendment”, as presented pending Wildlife Care Committee approval*

**Moved:**  
**Second:**

Charlie Jeremick'ca  
Eddie Erasmus

**Motion Approved**

**ACTION #565-25-05-2021 (ED):** To write a letter to GNWT to approve the WRP Application, entitled “Wolf Collaring in the North Slave Region - Amendment”, pending WCC approval.

2.6 Review & Approval of Wildlife Management and Monitoring Plan for Tłıchq Fiber Line Project

The Tłıchq Government is constructing a Fibre Line along the Tłıchq Highway route and is calling this project the Tłıchq Fiber Optic Line Project (TFOL). As the TFOL may impact wildlife and wildlife habitat, a Wildlife Management and Monitoring Plan (WMMP) was developed for the project.

As the Tłıchq Government is Party to the Tłıchq Agreement, they are required to submit the TFOL WMMP to the WRRB as a Wildlife Management Proposal under Section 12.5.1 of the Tłıchq Agreement. The Tłıchq Government submitted version 1 of the TFOL WMMP to the Wek'èezhì Land and Water Board (WLWB) in March 2021. WRRB Staff provided comments on this version of the WMMP, and had our comments followed up with via email by Tłıchq Government contractors, and on the WLWB's Online Review System.

The WMMP was revised, and Version 2.0 was submitted to the WRRB on April 26, 2021. Staff feel that the Tłıchq Government has adequately addressed all of the concerns staff had identified from the TFOL WMMP version 1.0.

**Motion #773-26-05-2021**      *To approve the Wildlife Management and Monitoring Plan for Tłıchq Fiber Line Project as presented*

**Moved:**  
**Second:**

Eddie Erasmus  
Suzanne Carrière

**Motion Approved**

**ACTION #566-26-05-2021 (ED):** To write letter to TG to approve the WMMP for the Tłıchq Fiber Line Project.

2.7 Review & Approval of Commercial Timber Cutting Permit – Kerry Smith  
In the past, Kerry Smith has held a timber cutting license, but in more recent years has applied for a Timber Cutting Permit as he did not see himself operating for another 5 years. He has applied for 978 m<sup>3</sup> of dead wood, and 652 m<sup>3</sup> of green wood. The license is for 13cm or greater stump diameter outside bark, and 7 cm top diameter inside bark. The work will occur on Highway #3 at KM172.

**Motion #774-26-05-2021**      *To approve the Commercial Timber Cutting Permit for Kerry Smith as presented*

**Moved:**  
**Second:**

Stu Niven  
Charlie Jeremick'ca

**Motion Approved**

**ACTION #567-26-05-2021 (ED):** To write a letter to GNWT to approve the Commercial Timber Cutting Permit for Kerry Smith.

## 2.8 Review & Approval of Adaptive Co-Management Framework

In 2019, the WRRB recommended that an adaptive co-management framework for Kòk'èeti and Sahtì ekwò be collaboratively developed with ENR and TG, and the WRRB taking a lead role. WRRB staff have led the drafting of the framework with the Barren-ground Caribou Technical Working Group (BGCTWG). To avoid “re-inventing the wheel”, the framework was built on what has already been accepted in 2010. The key points in 2010 were to *“allow reconsideration of management actions without lengthy delays by having three assessments of monitoring information each year; ways of measuring success so that adjustments can be made if results are not achieved or if conditions change such that a different approach is warranted and including Tłıchq monitoring”*.

Staff will continue to work on the adaptive co-management framework with the BGCTWG with the goal of beginning implementation with the first assessment meeting in August 2021.

**Motion #776-26-05-2021**      *To approve the Adaptive Co-Management Framework for implementation as presented*

**Moved:**  
**Second:**

Charlie Jeremick'ca  
Isabelle Duclos

**Motion Approved**

**ACTION #569-26-05-2021 (ED):** To write a letter to BGCTWG to approve the Adaptive Co-Management Framework for implementation.

## 2.9 Review & Approval of COSEWIC Status Designation for Barn Swallow and Short-eared Owl

The Barn Swallow was assessed as Threatened in 2011. In April 2021, the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) assessed the status of the Barn Swallow as Special Concern in Canada. Although the Canadian population remains large and overall declines have abated, the species remains at risk of becoming Threatened again if threats are not managed effectively. If listed as special concern under SARA, a management plan will be required. On April 9, 2021, the WRRB provided an in-principal support of the special concern designation.

Short-eared owl was designated as Special Concern under SARA in 2012. In April 2021, COSEWIC assessed the status of the short-eared owl as *Threatened* in Canada. This is because the use of new atlas-based population estimation procedures suggests that the size of the Canadian population may be about 10% of previous estimates. The Canadian population is projected to continue to decline, based on assessment of future threats including reduced availability of nesting and wintering habitat due to crop conversion, urbanization, invasive plants, and shrubification. If listed as threatened under SARA, a recovery strategy

will be required. On April 9, 2021, the WRRB provided an in-principal support of the special concern designation.

**Motion #777-26-05-2021**      *To approve the COSEWIC status designation of special concern for Barn Swallow as presented*

<b>Moved:</b>	Stu Niven
<b>Second:</b>	Eddie Erasmus
<b>Abstain:</b>	Suzanne Carrière

**Motion Approved**

**Motion #778-26-05-2021**      *To approve the COSEWIC status designation of threatened for Short-eared Owl as presented*

<b>Moved:</b>	Isabelle Duclos
<b>Second:</b>	Charlie Jeremick'ca
<b>Abstain:</b>	Suzanne Carrière

**Motion Approved**

**ACTION #570-26-05-2021 (ED):** To write a letter to COSEWIC Bird Species Specialist Committee to approve the status designations for Barn Swallow (special concern) and Short-eared Owl (threatened).

2.10    Update on Species at Risk Committee

Tabled to next meeting.

2.11    Party Updates

a) ENR – Wildlife Division

i) HQ Update, Heather Sayine-Crawford, ENR – GNWT

ENR Wildlife and Fish Division Headquarters Update – May 2021 tabled

Board Members discussed: CISPP webinar well done, excellent job by Johanna Stewart; banning the use of drones for hunting, a lot of discussion about Indigenous rights and how impacting rights by denying use of drones, current regulation says that no licence holder can hunt any wildlife or bird within use of 12 hours, including GHL.

**ACTION #562-25-05-2021 (ED):** To invite ENR to bring presentation to next meeting re: caribou management in general, wildlife research, forest management and habitat research.

ii) Wildlife Care Committee and Thresholds of Disturbance, Naima Jutha, ENR – GNWT

PowerPoint Presentation, entitled “NWT Wildlife Care Committee”, tabled



Board Members discussed: guidelines for migratory birds only available, many guidelines can be extended to wildlife, plans to work more closely with Canadian Council for Animal Care and to be recognized, started by Brett Elkin, does not exist in many other jurisdictions, diverse array of experts, collaborative table to take ownership of wildlife, short term effects rather than long term population effects; WCC review happens concurrently with WRP application process, approach to work with applicant to make sure concerns are addressed, WCC have never denied an application.

**ACTION #561-25-05-2021 (ED):** To confirm understanding about WCC thresholds for disturbance with Board members not in attendance and follow up with ENR.

b) Environment & Climate Change Canada, Bruce Laurich

i) Review & Approval to Post Draft Bank Swallow Recovery Strategy to SARA Registry

PowerPoint Presentation, entitled “*Proposed Recovery Strategy for Bank Swallow*”, tabled

Board discussed the 90-day comment period noting that, if there are no major changes identified during the public comment period, the final recovery strategy will be posted to the SARA registry. It was also noted that no critical habitat was mapped in Wek’èezhìi, only nesting sites in the Gwich’in Settlement Area along the Mackenzie River.

**Motion #770-25-05-2021**      *To approve the posting of the Bank Swallow Recovery Strategy to the SARA Registry as presented*

<b>Moved:</b>	Charlie Jeremick’ca
<b>Second:</b>	Stu Niven
<b>Abstain:</b>	Isabelle Duclos

**Motion Approved**

**ACTION #563-25-05-2021 (ED):** To write a letter to ECCC to approve the posting of the draft Bank Swallow Recovery Strategy to the SARA registry.

ii) Review & Approval to List Suckley’s Cuckoo Bumble Bee

PowerPoint Presentation, entitled “*Suckley’s Cuckoo Bumble Bee*”, tabled

**Motion #771-25-05-2021**      *To approve the listing of the Suckley’s Cuckoo Bumble Bee as threatened under the SARA as presented*

<b>Moved:</b>	Stu Niven
<b>Second:</b>	Charlie Jeremick’ca
<b>Abstain:</b>	Isabelle Duclos & Suzanne Carrière

## **Motion Approved**

**ACTION #564-25-05-2021 (ED):** To write a letter to ECCC to approve the listing of Suckley's Cuckoo Bumble Bee as threatened under the SARA.

c) Tłıchq Government

i) Ekwò Nàxoède K'è Program Update, Petter Jacobsen

PowerPoint Presentation, entitled "*Ekwò Nàxoède K'è Tłıchq Caribou Monitoring*", tabled

ii) Ekwò Harvest Monitoring Program, Stephanie Behrens

PowerPoint Presentation, entitled "*Ekwò Harvest Monitoring Program*", tabled

iii) Diga Harvesting Program, Stephanie Behrens

Tabled until next WRRB meeting.

d) Fisheries & Oceans Canada

i) Sampling Program at North Arm of Great Slave Lake, Xinhua Zhu

PowerPoint Presentation, entitled "*Supportive Habitat and Fisheries Production in Great Slave Lake Ecosystem*", tabled

ii) eDNA Studies, Lauren Wiens

Tabled until the next WRRB meeting.

### **3.0 Financial**

3.1 Review & Approval of Financial Statement as of 31 March 2021

Tabled until the next WRRB meeting.

3.2 2020/2021 Audited Financial Statement Update

Tabled until the next WRRB meeting.

3.3 Cost Comparison of Board Meetings – Pre-Covid v. Covid

Tabled until the next WRRB meeting.

### **4.0 Operations**

### **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, Shalyn Norrish

Tabled for review by the Board Members.

**6.0 Other Items**

6.1 Round Table

6.2 Next Meeting

The next meeting is for September 1-2, 2021 in Yellowknife.

**Closing Prayer: Eddie Erasmus**

**Adjournment: 12:08 p.m. (Motion #778-26-05-2021)**

Minutes Approved:

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**ORIGINALS SIGNED**

Chairperson

**December 7, 2021**

Date