



Board Meeting Minutes

Date: 7-8 December 2021

Location: WRRB Boardroom, Denendeh Manor, Yellowknife, NT

<u>Board Members:</u>	<u>Staff:</u>	<u>Interpreters/PIDO:</u>
Eddie Erasmus (Tłıchq Appointee)	Jody Pellissey	James Rabesca
Stu Niven (Federal Appointee)	Aimee Guile	Jonas Lafferty
Joseph Judas (Chair)	Randi Mousseau	Jeff Pitre
Charlie Jeremick'ca (Tłıchq Appointee)	Shalyn Norrish (Dec 8 only)	
Suzanne Carrière (GNWT Appointee) (Zoom)		
Isabelle Duclos (Federal Appointee) (Zoom)		
Steve Matthews (GNWT Appointee)		
<u>Regrets:</u>	<u>Guests (via Zoom):</u>	
Chris Football (Tłıchq Appointee)	Dean Cluff, ENR, GNWT	
Eddie Chocolate (Tłıchq Appointee)	Karin Clark, ENR, GNWT	
	Naima Jutha, ENR, GNWT	
	Jan Adamczewski, ENR, GNWT	
	Lawrence Lewis, ENR, GNWT	
	Lauren Wiens, DFO	
	Brendan Malley, DFO	
	Samuel Hache, ECCC	
	Stephanie Behrens, TG	

Call to Order: 9:08 a.m.

Opening Prayer & Comments: Joseph Judas

1.0 Agenda and Previous Minutes

1.1 Approval of Agenda

Motion #786-07-12-2021

To approve the 7-8 December 2021 agenda as presented

Moved:

Suzanne Carrière

Second:

Steve Matthews

Motion Approved

1.2 Approval of Minutes

25-26 May 2021

Motion #787-07-12-2021

To approve the 25-26 May 2021 minutes as presented

Moved:
Second:

Stu Niven
Isabelle Duclos

Motion Approved

1 September 2021

Motion #788-07-12-2021

To approve the 1 September 2021 minutes as presented

Moved:
Second:

Isabelle Duclos
Eddie Erasmus

Motion Approved

1.3 Review of Action Items

Outstanding action items list was tabled and reviewed.

2.0 Business

2.1 Review of 2021 Annual Wolf Management Report, Karin Clark, Dean Cluff & Naima Jutha, ENR-GNWT

PowerPoint Presentation, entitled “2021 Wolf Management Program”, tabled

Questions included: although they didn’t support the wolf harvesting program, was Łutsel K’e a part of the training workshop? (yes, training program run through North Slave office, general training program that was not specific to wolves, limited training in Łutsel K’e due to Covid-19); when will GNWT start managing caribou herds as one herd vs individual herds? (the future of the Bathurst herd is cloudy, seeing more mixing of the herd with Beverly, even in breeding season in 2021 Bathurst caribou were mixed with Beverly caribou, keep close eye on things and adapt as required); produce a map showing change in density of wolves by season and match with density of caribou by season and see how this changes over time, report the data as is rather than by how we expected to see it (carnivore biologist to be hired, biologist from US reviewed data and suggested to flip thinking to a landscape of predation, look at caribou and wolf density and try to measure change using that frame, meant to be learning over time, need to be adaptive and responsive); suggest that density estimate no good? Offer more data than we have ever had before on wolves, are the caribou herds doing better? Where are the refugia for caribou from wolves, climate change? Should not base entire research program on assumptions made at the beginning (thought more wolves would be associated with BEV, survey support the conclusion that there are fewer wolves out on the land, kill sites and ravens were not seen when out collaring, wolves are territorial, use that to estimate number of wolves, certain territory size and can come up with population size though this breaks down here due to size of territory and during winter in migratory system).

2.2 Review of 2021 Bathurst & Bluenose-East Caribou Calving Ground Surveys, Jan Adamczewski, ENR-GNWT

PowerPoint Presentation, entitled “June 2021 Bathurst & Bluenose-East Calving Ground Surveys, Overview of Results”, tabled

Questions included: appears that as the population of the Bathurst caribou decreases, there is more mixing over time, what conclusion would you draw? (mixing on winter range often happens so that is not new, but in previous years the caribou typically separate out into their separate calving grounds, seeing mixing during spring migration and on the calving ground, also during breeding season, mixing is getting more intense as the herd declines); based on harvesting over the last couple of years, when would we expect to see an increase in the Bathurst herd if in fact we are decreasing the wolf population to increase caribou population? (both the Bathurst and Bluenose-East herds were in rapid decline in 2018, then in 2018-2019 the caribou demographics began to improve, which predates the wolf removal program, natural improvement likely due to cool wet summers, not many bugs, lots of questions about whether the wolf population has declined substantially, lots of exchange between the three herds esp. on winter range when lots of mixing, still learning a lot about wolves and their abundance, need to run program for 5 years with substantial effort to reduce wolves in order to see a measurable effect, challenge is there is no control, there are other things impacting caribou that are still in place (weather, parasites, etc) so difficult to really say that wolves have been impacted or not); is the landscape supporting the number of caribou on the land, carrying capacity? (population size follows carrying capacity, alternative explanation, population estimates are measuring habitat recovery, could suddenly see an increase); are we able to model carrying capacity for the landscape? (Eric Bongelli and Mitch Campbell undertaking work for the Bathurst herd, submitted to Rangifer and under peer review); do we know when there will be a survey for the BEV herd? (Mitch Campbell to conduct population estimate for Qamanirjuaq herd in June 2022 and Beverly herd in June 2023); is wolf removal being conducted for other herds? (in effect there has been a wolf control program on the late winter range of the Qamanirjuaq herd, not government program, but large range with access to several Inuit communities, very efficient wolf harvesters, harvest ~200 wolves per year).

2.3 Review & Approval of Interim Wek'èezhìi Boreal Caribou Range Plan

To adhere to the Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board's (MVEIRB) Environmental Assessment (EA) Report Measure 6-1 for the Tłıchq Highway, a range plan for ṯḏzı was required be in place and operating a minimum of 90 days before the road opens. With the opening of the Tłıchq Highway on November 30, 2021, an interim Wek'èezhìi Boreal Caribou Range Plan was created to meet the EA Measure 6-1 and submitted to the WRRB on August 17, 2021. ENR also posted the document for a six-week review period, which closed on October 1, 2021. GNWT-ENR submitted the final version of the Interim Range Plan to the WRRB on November 3, 2021.

Based on the framework and the current levels of fire and human disturbance within the territory, Wek'èezhìi was placed in Tier 1. The Working Group agreed

to a final division of management classes as follows: 55% of habitat in the Basic management class, 30% in the Enhanced management class, and 15% in the Intensive management class in the Wek'èezhì range planning region.

Management actions are focused on four primary development sectors, which are believed to affect the greatest area of the NT1 tǫdzì range: 1) oil and gas (including geophysical exploration), 2) forestry, 3) linear infrastructure (roads, pipelines, seismic lines, and utility corridors, including associated borrow sources and quarries), and 4) mineral exploration and mining. Management actions related to sensory disturbance (such as loud noises or smells) are intended to apply to all development sectors. Any land uses or activities that are already permitted or licenced are exempt from the management actions, but any new developments will be required to adhere to the interim plan.

Additional work, primarily traditional knowledge inclusion, is required to finalize the Wek'èezhì Boreal Caribou Range Plan. It is expected to be completed in 2023.

Motion #789-08-12-2021 *To approve the Interim Wek'èezhì Boreal Caribou Range Plan as presented*

Moved:
Second:

Steve Matthews
Stu Niven

Motion Approved

ACTION #576-08-12-2021 (ED): To write letter to ENR to approve the Interim Wek'èezhì Boreal Caribou Range Plan.

2.4 Review & Approval of Wildlife Research Permit Application – Boreal Caribou and Wolf Monitoring Program for the Tłıchǫ All-Season Road Project

The GNWT submitted a Wildlife Research Permit application for collaring up to 10 GPS collars on boreal caribou (tǫdzì) in the TASR study area, up to 5 tǫdzì in the Mackenzie study region, and 5 GPS collars on wolves (diga) in the North Slave portion of the tǫdzì range on November 5, 2021. This work is to be conducted in February 2022, with the collar deployments requiring 4-5 days. Following this, a tǫdzì recruitment survey will be flown in February or March 2022 to provide additional information about the proportion of tǫdzì calves that survived their first year.

Staff were provided with a copy of the GNWT Wildlife Care Committee's application and approval forms. Staff have no concerns with the proposed methods.

Motion #791-08-12-2021 *To approve the Wildlife Research Permit Application, entitled "Boreal Caribou and Wolf Monitoring for the Tłıchǫ All-Season Road Project", as presented*

Moved:

Stu Niven

Second:

Eddie Erasmus

Motion Approved

ACTION #578-08-12-2021 (ED): To write letter to ENR to approve the WRP application, entitled “Boreal Caribou and Wolf Monitoring for the Tłıchq All-Season Road Project”.

2.5 Review of Grizzly Bear Biological Assessment Document

The Grizzly Bear and Wolverine Biological and Management Feasibility Working Group was established to meet the recommendations of the Wek'èezhì Renewable Resources Board's (WRRB) Recommendation #4B-2016 (Bathurst), Recommendation #4B-2016 (Bluenose-East), and Recommendation #6-2019 (Predator). These recommendations called for a *Sahcho* (grizzly bear) biological assessment to be completed to summarize current information on sahcho abundance, movement, and diet for the Sahtì (Bluenose East) and Kòk'èetì (Bathurst) ekwò (caribou) herds' seasonal ranges.

The Working Group has completed the biological assessment of sahcho including current information on abundance, movement, and diet and identified management techniques in the annual range of the Kòk'èetì and Sahtì ekwò. Although management options are listed, the Working Group did not assess feasibility, costs, and potential effectiveness of different management techniques for those options. If a sahcho management program is considered in the Northwest Territories and/or Nunavut, then this document may be used for developing specific options and criteria for evaluation. It is noted that additional traditional knowledge research is required as well as scientific research to have a more accurate grizzly bear predation rate and better understanding of diet related to the Bathurst and Bluenose-East caribou herd ranges.

The report has been submitted to Governments for consideration and is available on the WRRB's website. The Grizzly Bear and Wolverine Biological and Management Feasibility Working Group is now working to complete the *Nògha* (wolverine) biological assessment.

2.6 Review & Approval of Tłıchq All-Season Road Wildlife Management & Monitoring Plan Version 5.1 (GNWT)

As the Tłıchq Highway (TH), formerly the Tłıchq All-Season Road, is likely to result in significant disturbance to wildlife, to cause substantial damage to wildlife habitat, and to significantly contribute to cumulative impacts on wildlife or habitat, a Wildlife Management and Monitoring Plan (WMMP) is required.

As the GNWT is Party to the Tłıchq Agreement, they are required to submit the TASR WMMP to the WRRB as a Wildlife Management Proposal under Section 12.5.1 of the Tłıchq Agreement. The GNWT is required to annually submit the WMMP for review, as per Measure 10-2, Part 3 of the Mackenzie Valley Review Board's *Report of Environmental Assessment and Reasons for Decision* for the TASR. The Board previously approved the WMMP version 4.1 in December 2020.

Moved:
Second:

Eddie Erasmus
Stu Niven

Motion Approved

ACTION #579-08-12-2021 (ED): To write letter to CIRNAC to approve the Rayrock Wildlife Management & Monitoring Plan Version 2.0.

2.8 Advisory Committee for Cooperation on Wildlife Management (ACCWM)
Decisions

Herd Status

The ACCWM met on November 23-25, 2021 for the 6th Annual Status Meeting to discuss community-based monitoring and scientific information for the Cape Bathurst, Bluenose-West and Sahti Ekwò (Bluenose-East) caribou herds. Based on the information provided, the ACCWM proposed the following statuses for each herd: Cape Bathurst herd is in the YELLOW zone, the Bluenose-West herd is in the ORANGE zone and the Sahti Ekwò herd is in the YELLOW zone.

Specifically, for the Sahti Ekwò herd, the ACCWM noted that the population appears to be slowly recovering based on the community observations presented. This was the second year in a row where community knowledge indicated that the status of the herd was improving. The new data from scientific sources suggests that the herd may have stabilized, and the demographic information suggests improvement as well. Based on the available information, the majority of ACCWM Member Boards felt that there was sufficient evidence that the status for the herd should be upgraded to YELLOW. However, the WRRB noted that there is no statistical difference between the 2018 and 2021 population surveys and felt that RED status should remain in place.

Each Member Board is required to get approval for the proposed statuses within 30 days. The Member Boards share their decision to ensure consensus. If consensus is not initially reached, the ACCWM Member Boards will hold a conference call in January 2022.

Motion #793-08-12-2021 *To approve the proposed statuses as Bluenose-West Herd – ORANGE, Cape Bathurst Herd – YELLOW, Bluenose-East Herd – RED*

Moved:
Second:

Stu Niven
Suzanne Carrière

Motion Approved

ACTION #580-08-12-2021 (ED): To write letter to ACCWM to approve the proposed statuses as Bluenose-West Herd – ORANGE, Cape Bathurst Herd – YELLOW, Bluenose-East Herd – RED.

Taking Care of Caribou Management Plan

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 WRRB reviewed and approved the Taking Care of Caribou Management Plan as it was presented in May 2021. However, during the 6th Annual Status Meeting, the Member Boards decided to add one additional line to the monitoring criteria table to assess the herds: “additional information”. This row was added as the Member Boards recognize that there is valuable information being presented at the annual status meetings that may not fit under the existing monitoring table criteria sections. As this information may influence the herd status decisions, it was felt that it should be included in the monitoring table.

This information is often, but not limited to, biocultural data that provides insight and context to the more quantifiable observations that are found in the other sections of the monitoring criteria table. In previous years, this information was summarized in the Annual Summary Report.

Motion #794-08-12-2021 *To approve Version 11 of the Taking Care of Caribou Management Plan as presented*

Moved: Suzanne Carrière
Second: Isabelle Duclos

Motion Approved

ACTION #581-08-12-2021 (ED): To write letter to ACCWM to approve the Taking Care of Caribou Management Plan Version 11.

Community Stewardship Award

The 2021-2022 Communication-Education Strategy outlines the key objectives to ensure the ACCWM Member Boards are engaging and communicating with everyone who has an interest in the herds in the most effective and efficient way.

The Communication-Education Working Group has developed the ACCWM Community Stewardship Award criteria and nomination form. The program is established to encourage, recognize, and reward leadership in caribou conservation and caribou habitat protection of the Cape Bathurst, Bluenose-West, or Bluenose-East caribou herds. Examples of initiatives include caribou conservation, knowledge holding and sharing, ecosystem preservation, and climate change adaptation and/or mitigation. The award is for recognizing both individuals and groups.

Motion #795-08-12-2021 To approve the ACCWM Community Stewardship Award as presented, noting that the award should

be presented every two years and require a nominee to sign the nomination form

Moved:
Second:

Suzanne Carrière
Stu Niven

Motion Approved

ACTION #582-08-12-2021 (ED): To write letter to ACCWM to approve the ACCWM Community Stewardship Award as presented, noting that the award should be presented every two years and require a nominee to sign the nomination form.

2.9 Review & Approval of Application for Outfitters Licence – Trinity Tactical Consulting Ltd.

Environment & Natural Resources recently publicized the availability of outfitter licences in wildlife management units “U” and “R”. Trinity Tactical Consulting is currently a licenced tour operator in the North Slave Region and would like to expand their business to offer hunts for *Diga* (wolf), *Hozì ejie* (muskox), & *Nògha* (wolverine) in unit “R”.

On September 27, 2021, Ian Ellsworth contacted the WRRB to ask for a letter of support regarding the expansion of their company to include outfitting in Units U & R. Outfitter License are required for them to operate. Trinity Tactical Consulting Ltd will be requesting 5 hozì ejie, 20 diga, and 5 nògha tags. Previously, the company has not offered any harvest related activities, but, due to Covid-19, trying to expand operations.

The outfit would not have any permanent structures or a base camp and would use mobile tent camps, which will change location based on the location of animals. The outfit would only hunt in permitted areas and would not interfere with any existing operator. The licence would be for one year only.

Motion #796-08-12-2021 *To approve the Trinity Tactical Consulting Ltd’s application for outfitters licence in Unit R as presented*

Moved:
Second:
Abstain:

Isabelle Duclos
Stu Niven
Eddie Erasmus

Motion Approved

ACTION #583-08-12-2021 (ED): To write letter to ENR to approve Trinity Tactical Consulting Ltd’s application for outfitters licence in Unit R.

2.10 Party Updates

a) Tłıchǵ Government

i) Diga Harvesting Program, Stephanie Behrens

PowerPoint Presentation, entitled “*Diga Harvesting Program 2019-2021*”, tabled

b) Environment & Climate Change Canada

i) Landbird Monitoring Programs in the Tłıchq Region, Samuel Hache

PowerPoint Presentation, entitled “*Landbird Monitoring Programs in the Tłıchq Region*”, tabled

Questions included: possible to connect with Boots on the Ground to put out ARUs and trail cameras? (always looking for more contacts to put out recorders so can expand program, try to leverage as much as possible, something that guardians can include in their arsenal for watching the land, want to branch out and get out onto the land, how can we work together as the information is valuable to community and ECCC, want to co-produce the data); plans for ARUs at Daring Lake as doing breeding bird surveys (plan to work at Daring Lake, research on tundra birds, setting up ARUs there, work between Wekweètì and Great Bear Lake, trying to understand the dynamic of the treeline); national parks interested in doing the work with ARUs? (have ARUs scattered throughout different territorial and national parks, though with a different mandate as required to look at everything, can't focus solely on landbirds and soundscapes, don't want to compete with PRISM, but want to collaborate/blend the two data); ARUs collect other wildlife sounds? (bears during rutting season make really weird noise, mammals are on the recordings too).

c) Fisheries & Oceans Canada

i) Genetics of Inconnu in Great Slave Lake, Lauren Wiens

PowerPoint Presentation, entitled “*Genetics of Inconnu in Great Slave Lake*”, tabled

Questions included: with eDNA, can everything be done in the NWT? How is sample preserved? (no labs in the NWT that can process the samples, have to be sent to Winnipeg to DFO labs with specialized equipment, preservative that dries out the sample and then frozen (-80C); information shows genetic differences with inconnu through stock structure, how does this come back to manage fisheries? (with eDNA, not enough DNA in samples to be used for the stock structure, need to take a physical sample of fish, help to determine whether or not inconnu are actually in a river system, future work to collect fin clips to look at genetics, uncertain what the implications would be for management); inconnu an important commercial or community fishery? (not a targeted species in commercial fishery but a by-catch species, inconnu harvested for subsistence)

ii) Acoustic Telemetry Tracking of Fishes in Great Slave Lake, Northwest Territories, Brendan Malley

PowerPoint Presentation, entitled “*Acoustic Telemetry Tracking of Fishes in Great Slave Lake, Northwest Territories*”, tabled

Questions included: is it possible to use this technology to determine limitations and impacts of climate change (this could be used for this type of research, gathering depth and temperature data as well as environmental data then link to movement patterns of fish); are fish tagged with a spaghetti tag (t-tag) for recreational fishers to spot (every fish tagged, will have t-bar tag explaining who to call, fish still edible but can also be returned, communications with posters and radio to be sure that people are aware to return information, incentivize with gift cards).

d) Environment & Natural Resources

i) 2021 Forestry Update, Lawrence Lewis

PowerPoint Presentation, entitled “*FMD-North Slave Region Update, December 2021*”, tabled

Questions included: concern noted by community of Whati about wood cutting along the Tłıchq Highway (currently in discussions with TG about how to manage area, no permits issued yet along Tłıchq Highway, the first 35 km of the road is forest fire, lots of firewood, past that is new green timber); will there be guidelines developed where cutting will be permitted along the Tłıchq Highway (issued permits prior to construction, but nothing during construction, Lands Department wants to do some planning before opening up permitting, may have trap lines that need buffers); concerns noted about cars/trailers parking along embankments and possibly leading to trouble with waterways (INF to do some more work on embankments next year, more discussions required, problem with people leaving big stumps in the winter, dangerous so more patrolling may be required).

ii) ENR Wildlife and Fish Division Headquarters Update, Karin Clark

Report, entitled “*ENR Wildlife and Fish Division Headquarters Update – December 2021*”, tabled

Noted that, as NWTCISPP is a lower priority item, the FMB did not provide much funding.

3.0 Financial

3.1 Review & Approval of Financial Statements as of 31 March 2021 and 31 October 2021

31 March 2021

Motion #797-08-12-2021 *To approve the financial statement as of 31 March 2021 as presented*

Moved:
Second:

Steve Matthews
Suzanne Carrière

Motion Approved

31 October 2021

Motion #798-08-12-2021

To approve the financial statement as of 31 March 2021 as presented

Moved:
Second:

Suzanne Carrière
Eddie Erasmus

Motion Approved

3.2 Review of 2020/2021 Annual Report

Tabled for Board Member information.

3.3 Review of 2021/2022 Interim Activity Report

Tabled for Board Member information. Surplus funds must be used prior to March 31, 2027; must inform CIRNAC of how wish to use surplus.

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

Tabled for Board Member information.

4.0 Operations

4.1 Review & Approval of Operating Procedures Manual

As of August 26, 2021, the GNWT issued an order to mark September 30th a holiday for the territory's public service, commemorating the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. The holiday is to provide public servants the opportunity to recommit to understanding the harmful legacy of residential schools in the Northwest Territories and to encourage them to take time to reflect and consider what they can do to advance reconciliation.

Section 4.3 of the Operating Procedures Manual has been revised to include the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation as a statutory holiday.

Motion #799-08-12-2021

To approve Operating Procedures Manual, dated December 2021, as presented

Moved:
Second:

Eddie Erasmus
Stu Niven

Motion Approved

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

Report entitled, "*Communications Officer Update – December 2021*", tabled

6.0 Other Items

6.1 Round Table

Board Members thanked one another, interpreters, sound engineer, and staff for a good meeting, work well together. Enjoyed the presentations and being back in the WRRB Boardroom. Work to have Eddie Chocolate join meetings by Zoom if he is unable to travel. Merry Christmas to all, stay safe and enjoy the holiday with family

6.2 Next Meeting

The next meeting is for February 8-9, 2022, combined in-person (Yellowknife) and Zoom meeting.

Closing Prayer: Joseph Judas

Adjournment: 2:47 p.m. (Motion #800-08-12-2021)

Minutes Approved:

ORIGINAL SIGNED

Chairperson

May 10, 2022

Date