

Communities and Caribou in the Sahtu Region

A Sahtu Region Traditional Knowledge Research and Monitoring Workshop

March 31, 2009

Contact information

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Introduction

Project Background and Objectives

In 2006, the Sahtu Renewable Resources Board (SRRB) launched a traditional knowledge (TK) research program in partnership with University of Manitoba to understand Dene and Métis perspectives on caribou monitoring and stewardship. This has been a response to community concerns that the two caribou herds that migrate through the region, the Bluenose West and Bluenose East herds, are in decline. The SRRB aims to work with Renewable Resources Councils (RRCs) to support strong community-based TK management and educational measures for caribou stewardship to complement science-based measures. Community-led studies have taken place and are ongoing in the communities of Déline, Fort Good Hope, Colville Lake and Tulita. A fifth study is planned for Norman Wells in 2009-2010, in conjunction with a regional synthesis to complete the four year program. An important complement to this program has been the SRRB's role in development of the CIMP TK Framework. The SRRB's Caribou TK Study was reviewed as part of the initial Discussion Paper commissioned by CIMP in 2007. The SRRB also sponsored delegates to the Yamózhá Kúé Society's workshop on TK cumulative impact monitoring in February, 2008. As well, a strategic planning effort aimed at strengthening the role of community RRCs in land stewardship and monitoring has been initiated. This was initiated at a regional *Taking Care of the Land* workshop in August, 2007, where caribou were seen as a central priority (see Appended plain language summary). A workshop of RRC delegates was held in Tulita on March 25-26 with a specific focus on TK and caribou stewardship as the basis for a pilot community-based TK monitoring and stewardship framework and workplan. This pilot project can directly contribute to the development of CIMP's TK Monitoring Framework.

Objectives

Objectives of the workshop directly followed from recommendations in the *Taking Care of the Land* workshop report (2008). The objectives also addressed the recommendation from the CIMP TK Monitoring Framework Discussion Paper (2007) that a pilot project approach be taken to developing the framework. The objectives are:

- Communicate results to date of the SRRB's community-based caribou TK studies and evaluate the regional implications.

- Communicate and evaluate key messages and recommendations from the first two phases in the development of a TK Monitoring Framework (the Discussion Paper and TK Practitioners Workshop) in terms of their implications for a Sahtu Caribou TK Monitoring Program.
- Develop a framework and strategic workplan for a Sahtu Caribou TK Monitoring Program with clearly defined objectives (what), methodology and methods (how), timelines (when), and responsibilities (who).
- Strengthen the capacity and role of community Renewable Resource Councils in cumulative impact monitoring and caribou stewardship.

Participants

Invited participants included two delegates from each community (an elder and an RRC delegate), one SRRB delegate, one facilitator, and one interpreter. Where possible, it was requested that RRC delegates who had attended the 2007 RRC workshop be asked to attend in order to provide continuity in the discussions (see the attached invitation letter). Adelle Guigon of AMG Word Processing Services was hired to document the proceedings verbatim to ensure that narratives are properly captured in context.

Facilitator

Dr. Deborah Simmons is Assistant Professor in Native Studies at University of Manitoba, and Senior Social Scientist with SENES Consultants (Yellowknife). Working for the Sahtu Land Use Planning Board and Deline Uranium Team during 1999-2004, she trained community researchers and facilitated participatory research processes with communities. She aims to support community objectives in the Sahtu Region by maintaining a research relationship over the long term; she also engages in dialogue and collaboration with other researchers in the social and natural sciences to ensure that research in the Sahtu Region are of the highest standards. She is now working on traditional knowledge projects with each of the five Sahtu communities, as well as the Yamózhá Kúé Society, and the Cumulative Environmental Management Association of the oilsands area in northern Alberta. Her role with this project is Project Manager and Facilitator.

Methodology

This workshop was designed according to a participatory strategic planning methodology, with a focus on the final work planning stage. This approach facilitates review of research and strategic planning activities to date, and identification of specific solutions and priority actions related to the Caribou TK Monitoring Pilot Project. Because they are actively engaged in the process, participants are more likely to take ownership of workshop results. Team building and relationship building are important aspects of this methodology, so that participants gain a shared understanding and are motivated to work together in implementing the plan. The emphasis is on working in Dene language where possible, with simultaneous interpretation. Dene ways of knowing are respected and affirmed; key messages often emerge through stories.

Workshop activities involved a mixture of educational presentations, semi-directed discussions, breakout groups, and experiential exercises. The workshop was audio recorded and transcribed. Notes and transcripts on public input from interviews, open houses, focus groups and other forms of input including emails were thematically coded using QSR NVivo qualitative analysis

software. This is especially appropriate in indigenous cultures where key messages are often embodied in narratives and need to be kept in context.

Project Context

As explained above, this project follows upon several ongoing processes within and beyond the Sahtu Region: the SRRB's Caribou TK Study and *Taking Care of the Land* strategic planning process with RRCs, and the Yamózhá Kúé Society's project with TK Practitioners of the five regions to assist in development of a TK Monitoring Framework in the NWT.

Methods

A workshop was held on March 25-26 at the Hamlet meeting room in Tulita. The meeting agenda is appended. Sahtu Renewable Resources Board office manager Lori-Ann Lennie assisted with coordination of delegate travel and catering. Dora Grandjambe was interpreter. The meeting involved a combination of presentations by participants, and group discussion. It was audio recorded and summary notes were taken by Jody Snortland, the SRRB delegate. Notes on key messages were also documented by the facilitator, and were clustered on the wall as a tool for verification and analysis of discussion outcomes (see appended summary results posted during the workshop). The entire proceedings were transcribed from the audio recording.

Community Involvement

This project was sponsored by the Sahtu Renewable Resources Board which is a co-management board established by the Sahtu Dene and Métis Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement. Partners were the community Renewable Resources Councils of Colville Lake, Déline, Fort Good Hope, Tulita and Norman Wells. RRCs are also established by the land claim. Unfortunately, at the last minute Colville Lake was unable to send delegates. The Déline RRC was only able to send one delegate. The Fort Good Hope, Norman Wells and Tulita RRCs volunteered to send delegates in addition to the two invited delegates at their own cost. Participants were as follows:

Organisation	Delegate(s)
Sahtu Renewable Resources Board	Jody Snortland, Executive Director
Déline RRC	Russell Kenny, President
Fort Good Hope RRC	Roger Boniface, President Harry Harris Joe Orlas Lawrence Manuel
Norman Wells	Dennis Jackson Edward Oudzi Rhea McDonald
Tulita	Archie Lennie Sr. Joseph Bernarde Maurice Mendo

Traditional Knowledge

This is a step in developing a TK research and monitoring program for caribou in the Sahtu Region, involving participation of elders and harvesters. TK was documented during the workshop. This will be shared upon verification and by permission of the participating RRCs.

Results

Results outlined in this report are preliminary. Final results will be shared in a detailed technical report with workshop photos, along with a plain language summary in newsletter format. Summary results displayed during the workshop are included in the appendices to this report.

CIMP Categories

This project supports both the CIMP categories Monitoring and Research and Capacity Building.

Valued Components

Two valued components are the focus of this project: **caribou** and **community health**. Caribou has been identified as a core valued component for the communities of the Sahtu Region. However, our research to date also indicates that the health of caribou and their habitat, and people's maintenance of their traditional ways of harvesting and respecting the caribou have a direct impact on community health.

Capacity-Building

This project specifically aims to build the capacity of community Renewable Resources Councils and elders, and to strengthen Sahtu Renewable Resources Board understanding of TK and RRC perspectives on caribou monitoring and stewardship. A total of 11 RRC delegates from four of the five Sahtu communities participated in the workshop. Capacity-building objectives and results from the workshop are as follows:

Capacity-Building Objective	Result
1 Establish a best practice model for regional RRC forums in monitoring and management.	RRC delegates were provided with a facilitated process for engaging in productive regional discussion about monitoring and management issues.
2 Identify best practices among RRCs in monitoring and management.	RRC delegates had an opportunity to learn from experiences in caribou TK studies in Déline, Fort Good Hope and Tulita. The idea of a "research and monitoring approach" to RRC mandates was introduced and discussed. The leadership role of RRCs in caribou monitoring and management was explored.
3 Strengthen the relationship between the RRCs and the SRRB in monitoring and management.	The RRC and SRRB delegates developed a stronger understanding of their respective roles, and the value of working together.
4 Develop confidence about the role of TK in monitoring and management.	Understanding of the value of TK perspectives as an important basis for community participation in monitoring and resource management was strengthened.

Education about Cumulative Impacts

Education Objectives	Results
1 Communicate results to date of the SRRB's community-based caribou TK studies and evaluate the regional implications.	Process and key messages from caribou TK studies in Colville Lake, Déline, Fort Good Hope, Norman Wells and Tulita were summarized and discussed. Objectives of other community-caribou studies currently being initiated in Déline and Fort Good Hope by University of Alberta (Dr. Brenda Parlee, Principal Investigator) were presented, along with the 2009-2010 plan for the caribou TK study with the Norman Wells RRC.
2 Communicate and evaluate key messages and recommendations from the first two phases in the development of a TK Monitoring Framework in terms of their implications for a Sahtu Caribou TK Monitoring Program.	The results of the 2008-2009 TK Practitioners workshops were orally summarized.
3 Develop a framework and strategic workplan for a Sahtu Caribou TK Monitoring Program with clearly defined objectives (what), methodology and methods (how), timelines (when), and responsibilities (who).	The report and plain language summary from the 2007 RRC delegates workshop were distributed and results were orally summarized. Jody Snortland summarized the results of the November 21-23, 2007 Bluenose West caribou hearing in Fort Good Hope, and presented the recommendations put forward by the SRRB and approved by the responsible Minister of INAC. The role and objectives of RRCs in caribou stewardship to supplement other caribou protection measures were identified. A research and monitoring approach was introduced as a basis for strengthening the role of the RRCs.

Discussion/Conclusions

This workshop was an important step in strengthening the role of the RRCs in caribou monitoring and management. The workshop facilitated sharing of experiences and key messages from the four communities participating in the caribou TK study sponsored by the SRRB. It also provided a first opportunity for RRCs to understand the new management framework for the Bluenose West caribou herd, and their role in caribou stewardship within and beyond that framework. Discussion was initiated about the value of a research and monitoring approach to implementing the RRC mandate. Progress was made in building a collaborative approach to caribou stewardship between the RRCs and the SRRB.

Next Steps

The Sahtu Renewable Resources Board has initiated a Sahtu Caribou-Communities Research Network coordinated by Dr. Deborah Simmons. The objective will be to hold another RRC delegates meeting in 2010 involving academic and community researchers from the Network.

The SRRB is also initiating a youth program in caribou monitoring and stewardship using digital storytelling as a tool. This is a response to community input through the caribou TK study and comments at both the 2007 and 2009 RRC delegate meetings. It is also founded in positive experiences with recent youth programs involving podcasting and digital storytelling in Déline and Colville Lake.

Communication

The workshop was a forum for communicating among RRC delegates and with the SRRB. It is expected that the workshop proceedings will be orally reported back to the RRCs in each community. As well, a full technical report and plain language summary will be printed for distribution by RRCs. The report and summary will be available on the web both on the SRRB website, www.srrb.nt.ca, and on the CIMP website, www.nwtcimp.ca.

Long Term Progress

This workshop was a step in synthesizing results and outlining research, monitoring and management recommendations following from community-based activities related to the multi-year caribou TK study initiated by the SRRB in partnership with University of Manitoba and community RRCs in 2006. To date, projects have been undertaken with RRCs in Déline and Fort Good Hope (2006-present), Colville Lake (2007-present), and Tulita (2008-present). Appended is a diagram showing the iterative process in which projects in each community have evolved. The synthesis is only partially complete – awaiting completion of ongoing projects as well as the Norman Wells project for 2009-2010. As well, it will be important to understand results of the caribou TK study in relation to other caribou-communities projects in the Sahtu Region and elsewhere in the NWT, and in relation to knowledge based on scientific monitoring and management processes.

Appendices

Taking Care of the Land Camp Newsletter 2007
Letter of invitation
Workshop agenda
Workshop group photo
Diagram illustrating Caribou TK Study process
Summary results posted during workshop
Workshop handouts: Plain language workshop summaries



June 2008

Taking Care of the Land in the Sahtu Region

*Workshop at Łurek'ale Túé
August 7-9, 2007*

Workshop Participants

Facilitators

Norman Yakeleya, MLA

Colville Lake

Richard Kochon, Phillip Codzi, Roland Codzi

Déline

Alfred Taniton, Dolphus Tutcho, Doris Taniton

Fort Good Hope

Harry Harris, Anne Marie Jackson, Joe Orlas

Norman Wells

Edward Oudzi, Wilfred MacDonald
Melvin Blondin

Tulita

Joe Bernard, Edward MacCauley

Resource Management Organisations

Jody Snortland and Walter Bayha, SRRB
Keith Hickling, Sahtu Region ENR
Susan Fleck and Danny Beaulieu, NWT ENR

Camp Cooks

Mary Louise Clement, Shirley Bernard

Camp Attendant

Michael Etchinelle

A Strategy for Renewable Resources Councils

Renewable Resource Councils (RRCs) are important stewards of the land and have unique knowledge to share. But they face many challenges during this time of rapid change. Last summer, delegates from the five communities of the Sahtu Region gathered to talk about the changing role of the RRCs. The purpose was to define Dene and Métis ways of taking care of the land, and to develop a strategy for strengthening the RRCs.

The idea for a workshop on the land was proposed by Sahtu MLA Norman Yakeleya. The event was sponsored and coordinated by the Sahtu Renewable Resources Board (SRRB) and NWT Environment and Natural Resources (ENR).

Three delegates came to the workshop from each of the five communities. Each RRC selected one of their elected council members as well as a younger person and an elder.

The workshop was planned as a retreat at



the ENR forestry camp on Łurek'ale Túé (Kelly Lake). Participants defined a common vision, and began to define what it would take for the RRCs to become strong leaders in resource management.

The RRCs are not as strong as the old Hunters and Trappers Associations (HTAs) once were. But in working together and building on the strengths of Dene heritage, they can renew their leadership role.

The Land, Our Heart

A Vision for the Sahtu RRCs

"Our vision is for strong RRCs that harness the knowledge of the elders and harvesters to build respectful relationships with the land."



The land is like our heart. Our creator put everything on the land to provide for us. No one owns anything on the land. It all belongs to the creator. We're not even boss of one strand of hair. Thus elders say we have to respect everything. If we're going to use land, then we need to use it carefully. ► Alfred Taniton

The Role of the RRCs

The Sahtu land claim defines the role of the RRCs. The RRCs and the Sahtu Renewable Resources Board have a partnering relationship, advising and supporting each other.

Key aspects of the RRCs' role as defined in the land claim are:

- Education about the land and wildlife
- Conservation – keeping the land the way it is
- Harvesting policies and guidelines for using the land or taking from it
- Research and monitoring
- Wildlife management, which is also people management

Taking Responsibility

People shared their ideas about what more needs to happen so that their vision for the RRCs can be fulfilled. Each of the three generations has something important to offer—elders, adults and youth. Strengthening people's relationship with the land means renewing the Dene/Métis principle of respect, knowing how to survive on the land, and remembering that the land is central to who we are.

Dene/Métis must find a way to balance the indigenous and mōla worlds. This requires teamwork and taking responsibility as stewards of the land.

The RRCs need to work with elders in supporting and controlling harvesting, planning, enforcement, and teaching youth about respectful and safe practices on the land.

Exercising this role requires sufficient funding support. Currently RRC funding supports the bare minimum in staffing and RRC activities.

What's Next?

It will take some time for the RRCs to finish their strategic planning. Everyone wanted to get together again to develop a workplan. Youth need to have more of a voice so that they can become the land stewards of the future, so there should be a Regional Youth Committee meeting. Recommendations from this meeting can be used by the RRCs and the Sahtu Renewable Resources Board (SRRB). The SRRB and ENR will work to support these recommendations from the workshop.

Hunters and Trappers Associations: POWER FROM THE PAST

HTAs were a unified voice to bring together concerns about the environment and wildlife, and opportunities to travel on land. They were responsible for trapper training and youth outdoor skills. They had large meetings that went on for a long time. HTAs got guidance from people who were out on the land. Senior managers used the information from HTAs to direct policy for wildlife management. HTA members were mostly bush people and community leaders. A big concern was the fast pace of development from industry coming in. Back then HTAs were taking care of the land just like what we are doing now. They monitored the land.

► Keith Hickling



Dancing at Łurek'ale Túé
AJ Kenny, Alfred Taniton, Edward Oudzi

"I learned more about RRCs and HTAs. Canada should know we are a beautiful, distinctive, caring and loving people. I want to see this happen every year to teach younger people what you taught me, and include elderly women. They know the other side of the game."

► Anne Marie Jackson



Youth Reps: Melvin Blondin, Anne Marie Jackson, Doris Taneton, Rosa Etchinelle

For more information, contact
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We're on the web!

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February 6, 2009

Richard Kochon, President
Behdzi Ahda' Renewable Resource Council

Russell Kenny, President
Deline Renewable Resource Council

Roger Boniface, President
Fort Good Hope Renewable Resource Council

Norman Hodgson Sr., President
Norman Wells Renewable Resource Council

Wilfred Lennie Sr., President
Tulita Renewable Resource Council

Via Facsimile

**Re: Regional RRC Delegates Meeting, 25-26 March 2009, Tulita
*Dene/Métis Perspectives on Caribou Stewardship***

The Sahtu Renewable Resources Board (SRRB) is sponsoring a gathering of Renewable Resource Council (RRC) delegates on **25-26 March 2009 in Tulita**, and would like to extend invitations to **two delegates** from each RRC. This is a follow-up to the strategic planning meeting at Kelly Lake in August 2007. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss results and next steps in the caribou traditional knowledge study led by Dr. Deborah Simmons that the Board has supported with the University of Manitoba over the past several years. The study has been underway in partnership with four of the five Sahtu RRCs, with Norman Wells RRC starting their study in the coming year.

Caribou were a central topic of discussion at the Kelly Lake workshop, and we understand from the TK study that Dene/Métis elders and hunters have a strong interest in finding ways to educate about the traditional stories and rules for being respectful to the caribou so that the herds will continue to come back in the future. This meeting will be a chance for people to talk about what has been learned with the four communities that we've worked with so far, and how the study results can be used to strengthen the role of RRCs in caribou stewardship.

Travel days will be the 24 & 27 of March. The SRRB will pay for two members to attend the workshop (travel, accommodations, meals and honoraria). We urge you to send two of the same

delegates that participated in the Kelly Lake trip – it will be best if the same people can continue the discussion that was started over a year ago, with ***one elder and one current hunter***. The list of participants in the Kelly Lake camp is as follows:

Kelly Lake Delegates August 2007

Colville Lake	Richard Kochon, Phillip Codzi, Roland Codzi
Déline	Alfred Taniton, Dolphus Tutcho, Doris Taniton, AJ Kenny
Fort Good Hope	Harry Harris, Anne Marie Jackson, Joe Orlias
Norman Wells	Edward Oudzi, Wilfred MacDonald, Melvin Blondin
Tulita	Joe Bernard, Edward MacCauley, Rosa Etchinelle

Unfortunately our budget is limited so if the RRC wishes to send a third person, they will have to pay for the costs of travel, honoraria, accommodations, and per diems. Our office will be in touch with each council on or before ***February 18th*** to make arrangements to attend the workshop. You will be required to give two attendees names, how travelling (flight/truck), and who attendees would like to billet with.

If you have any questions, please contact our office at (867) 588-4040 or director@srrb.nt.ca. We look forward to continuing the great work started at Kelly Lake.

Sincerely,

Jody Snortland
Executive Director

Cc Walter Bayha, Special Representative, SRRB
Keith Hickling, Superintendent, Environment & Natural Resources
SRRB Board Members & Alternates

Sahtu Renewable Resources Councils Caribou Stewardship Workshop

Sponsored by the Sahtu Renewable Resources Board

March 25-26, 2009, Tulita, NT

Funded by the NWT Cumulative Impact Monitoring Program
and NWT Education, Culture and Employment

Agenda

DRAFT March 22, 2009

Purpose

The purpose of this workshop is to provide Renewable Resources Council delegates with an opportunity to define the role of RRCs in caribou stewardship.

Objectives

- Communicate about the Caribou TK Study and other Community-Caribou Research in the Sahtu Region
- Communicate about cross-regional work toward a TK Monitoring Framework for the NWT.
- Develop a framework and strategic workplan for a Sahtu Caribou TK Monitoring Program.
- Strengthen the capacity and role of community Renewable Resource Councils in cumulative impact monitoring and caribou stewardship.

Day	Time	Objective	Process
March 25 (Wed)	9:00-9:30	Introduction	• Opening prayer • Introductions • Background: Kelly Lake workshop • Purpose and objectives • Review of agenda • Housekeeping items
	9:30-10:15	Caribou TK Study	• Activities in four communities and the planned Norman Wells project • Discussion
	BREAK		
	10:30-Noon	<i>Watching the Land:</i> TK Monitoring Framework in the NWT	Summary of key messages from cross-regional TK Practitioners meetings, 2008 and 2009 • Discussion
	LUNCH (Catered?)		
	1:00-3:00	<i>We watch the caribou, the caribou watch us:</i> The role of stories	• Kinds of stories • How stories were told • Stories into text • Role of the RRC
	BREAK		
	3:15-4:30	<i>We watch the caribou, the caribou watch us:</i> Surviving with caribou	• The role of hunters • Hunters, elders, youth • Women • Community hunts • Role of the RRC
	4:30-	Wrapup	• Summary of key messages

Day	Time	Objective	Process
	5:00		Agenda for Thursday

Day	Time	Objective	Process
March 26 (Thursday)	9:00-9:15	Introduction	- Objectives/agenda - Housekeeping items
	9:15-10:15	<i>We watch the caribou, the caribou watch us:</i> How we understand changes	- How do hunters and elders learn about changes? - How do youth learn? - What do the women notice? - Changes in caribou, changes in community - Learning from other regions - Role of the RRC
	BREAK		
	10:15-Noon	Using what we learn	- Deciding what needs to be shared - Making an impact – the SRRB - Role of the RRC
	Noon-1:00		Lunch (catered?)
	1:00-2:00	New conditions for caribou stewardship	- Outsiders - Youth - Development - Other regions
	2:00-3:00	What we don't know	- What are the questions? - How can they be answered? - A research approach to caribou stewardship? - Role of the RRCs
	BREAK		
	3:15-4:00	Making a plan	- Caribou research projects - Community caribou monitoring in 2009-2010 - What kind of support do we need? - Next steps
	4:00-4:45	Wrapup	- Roundtable evaluation and last words - Summary of key messages
	4:45	Closing prayer	



Communities and Caribou Workshop 2009 Participants

Front row, L-R: Edward Oudzi, Rhea McDonald

*Middle row, L-R: Dennis Jackson, Dora Grandjambe, Roger Boniface, Lawrence Manuel,
Joe Bernard, Maurice Mendo, Deborah Simmons*

Back row, L-R: Archie Lennie, Joe Orlias, Harry Harris, Russell Kenny, Jody Snortland

Photo credit: Grand Chief Frank Andrew



Grand Chief Frank Andrew presents on the role of Renewable Resources Councils.

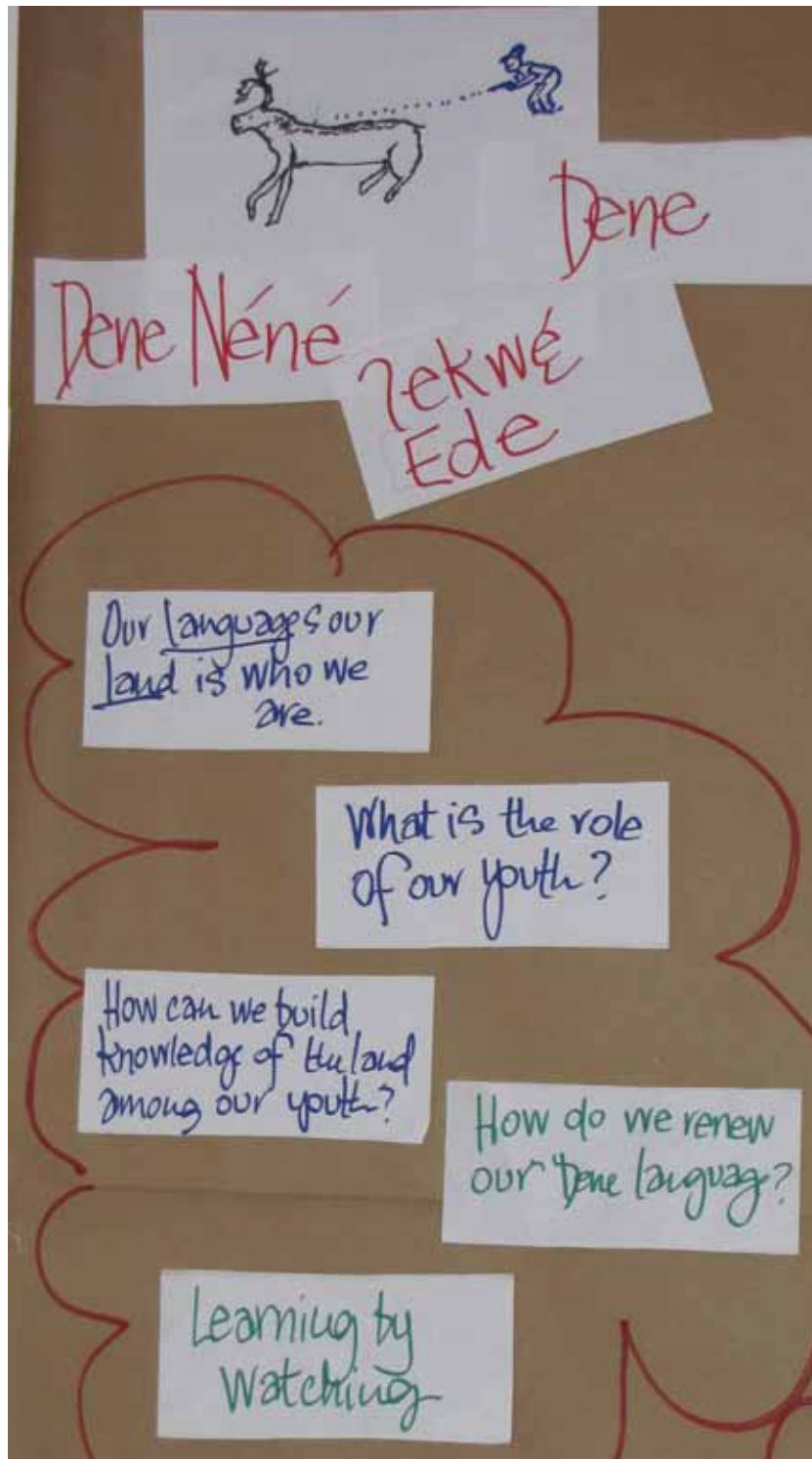


Caribou Traditional Knowledge Study Process



A Framework for Caribou Monitoring and Stewardship

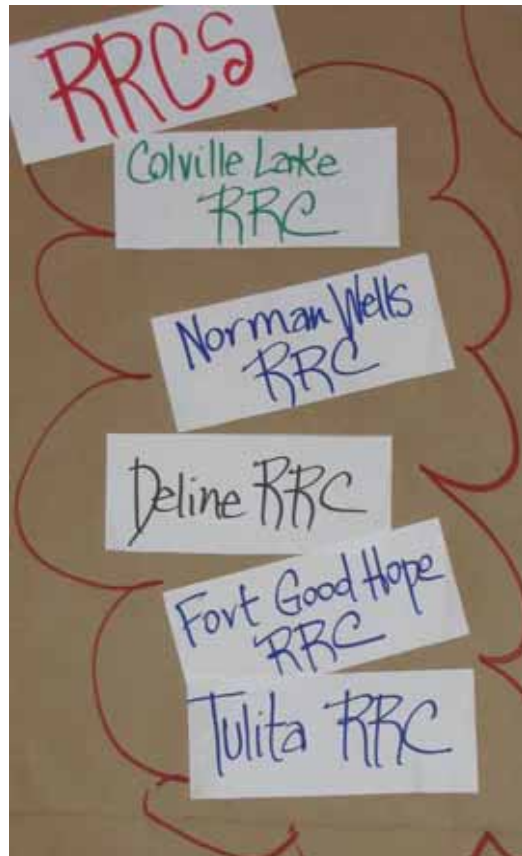
Rhea McDonald contemplates key workshop messages.

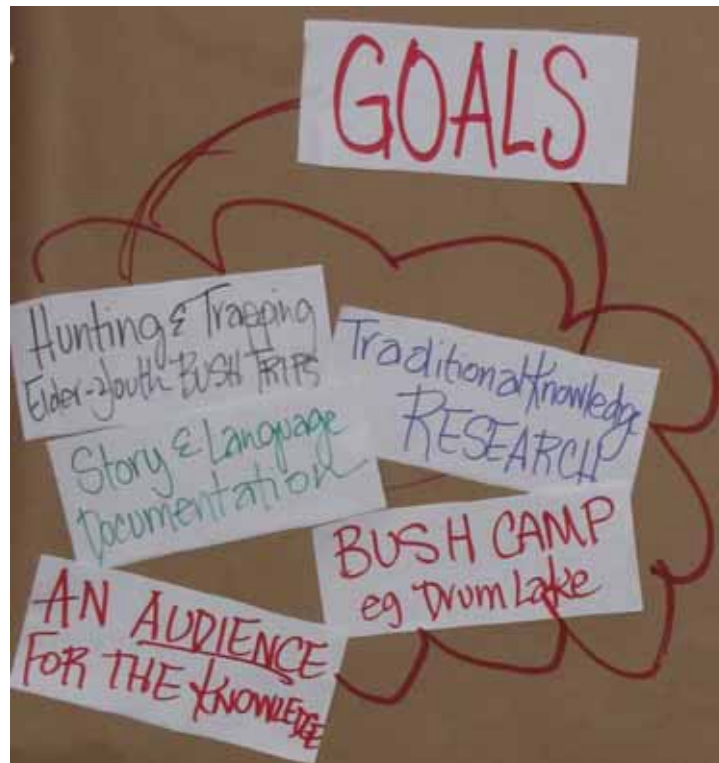


People, Land and Caribou

Key issues.

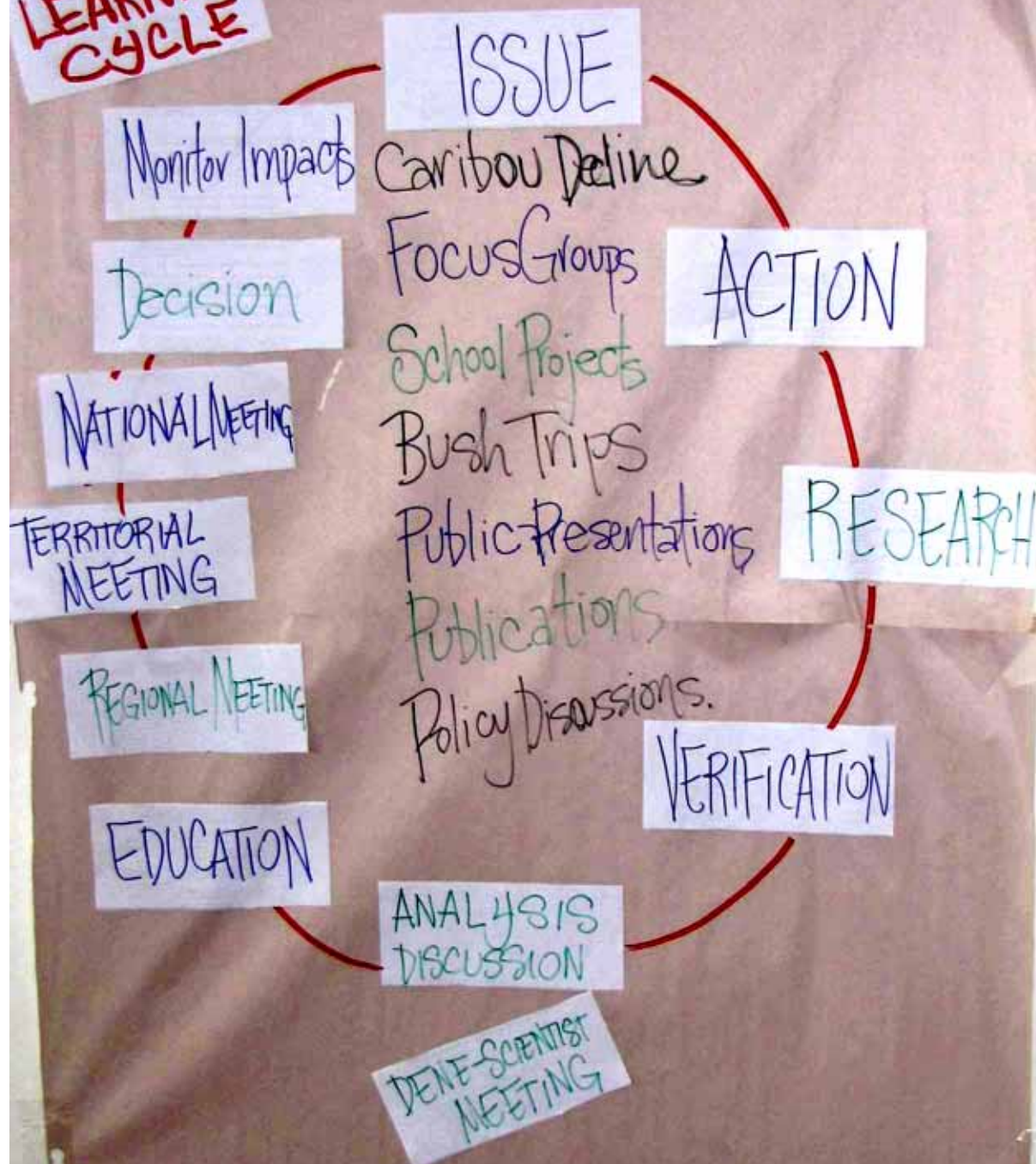
Drawing by Edward Oudzi







LEARNING CYCLE



CARIBOU MANAGEMENT COMMUNITY APPROACH

- Supporting enforcement
 - work with RR officer
 - wildlife guardian community officers. ~~CL~~
- Conservation education
 - review GNWT materials
 - do education activities
- Harvest data **Need funding**
- Regulation of development
 - review of license/permit apps.
 - caribou protection