

**Draft Meeting Summary
Bathurst Caribou Herd
NWT Wildlife Federation Public Meeting**

December 2, 2009

ENR Staff:
Susan Fleck, Director, Wildlife
Jan Adamczewski, Wildlife Biologist

(NWT Wildlife Federation will forward recommendations to ENR after this meeting.)

Opening Remarks: Calling this meeting to address the joint proposal put forward stating eliminating resident and outfitters hunting and shutting down certain exploration areas during the caribou calving season.

ENR: Presented information about caribou herd populations.

Question: A lot of us have read past reports that Ahiak and Bathurst herds were the same and someone divided the two herds?

ENR - Explained movement of the caribou herds.

Question: My understanding is those 2 calving grounds overlap.

Question: How do you explain the fact that in 1985 they were at an all time high? How did they get to an all time high?

ENR: Showed that in the modelling demonstration. In 1979, 1980 and 1982 we only did visual surveys. Didn't start using photo method until 1984. We underestimated by about 30 percent when doing a visual estimate compared to a photo survey.

Question: Do you use counters?

ENR - Do a visual count to determine the limits of the calving area, and then take photos to get an accurate count.

Question: Do you have images of calving grounds for Bathurst calving grounds?

Question: Was the criteria in the 1985 survey the same as it is today?

ENR: Yes. We have tried to define it so we can bring the variance down. Have a little more confidence in the outcome but the method stays the same.

Comment: Might be the same methodology but your geographical areas have changed.

ENR: We are guided by where the caribou are, that hasn't changed.

Question: What was budget in the 80s for flying?

ENR: Rather than talk about budget, let's talk about the amount of time. We flew same amount of hours, always. Usually had 2 aircraft and flew between 50 to 75 hours to do it.

Question: You made reference to the Porcupine herd in the Yukon - could not get a count because of the weather. Did you just get lucky each year when you did these or did you have failed weather?

ENR: Problem with surveying the Porcupine herd, they haven't had the right weather for the last few years and can't do the survey.

Question: Has there been opposition to putting collars on the Bathurst herd?

ENR: Yes. Can't put more than 20 collars out. In the environment here, most of our harvesters are aboriginal. Strong cultural values and one of them is putting things on wildlife. You don't need a lot of collars to get information.

Question: Why do you need community approval?

ENR: We are working in a land claim environment. There are commitments in that you have to involve people and work with co-management boards, land owners. We work as closely as we can with communities. In the case of the Bathurst herd, there is more opposition to collaring. We agreed we will limit. When you are doing a calving ground survey you do not require the same amount of collars. In the western area we have to have more collars on bulls and cows.

Question: What is the life of the caribou? Seems to me you have an aging group that is quite old. Did you talk about that?

ENR: There is some indication from the Bathurst herd that in the last few years we have had a bit of increase in the older class. That could play a part in the decline. Last few years pregnancy rate has been high in the old cows. Highest calving productivity is in the middle year.

Question: How do you get those harvest numbers?

ENR: In land claim areas where there is a settled claim they had a harvest study.

Question: Do they do that each year?

ENR: Up to 7 years. Those are over now so the numbers are not as good as we would like.

Question: Do they report harvests if in an area where the claim is not settled?

ENR: We have a pretty good idea what the resident number is. Aboriginal harvest numbers are not as good as we would like and that is a problem.

Question: Do these numbers include the calves:

ENR: Not in the population survey. Harvest would be minimal.

ENR: Re pregnancy rates – taking a breeding cow has a heavier impact on the herd.

Question: How many cows did the residents and outfitters take in the last few years?

ENR: Resident and outfitters' hunting has been closed in those 3 areas.

ENR: Non residents can't take cows. Residents until 2 weeks ago could take cows. Just getting a break down today for previous years.

Question: Have you done a projection on that with respect to wolves?

ENR: Will address that later.

Question: How many cows can a bull service?

ENR: 1 bull to every 15 females. Aboriginal community say we need to leave prime bulls out there for breeding.

Question: You know how many bulls are harvested?

ENR: Have a good idea of outfitters' and residents' range of numbers.

Question: Given the area you are working with, and only 20 collars, is there a chance you are missing caribou?

ENR: Will address that later.

Comment: The chances of getting collared animals in that area, if there are only 20, is limited.

Question: Have any collared calves shown up in different calving grounds?

ENR: Yes, at a low rate. Consistently over time, 2 or 3 percent.

Question: Do all collars show up? Not in someone's freezer? Can you track them on an annual basis, 20 showing up in one year?

ENR: Sometimes some collars don't show up, then they do a special flight to find that animal.

Question: 3 – 4 percent moved to the Bathurst herd, according to the collars?

ENR: Odd ones will switch.

Question: One of those collars represents how many animals?

ENR: Same rate of exchange – 5%.

Question: Do you put 20 collars on each ear, or are the collars good for years?

ENR: About 3 years, every 2nd or 3rd year. When numbers drop we put out more to bring it up to 20.

Question: How many wearing collars have died?

Question: What we are seeing is a very small time frame. We are looking at this as a snapshot. You are seeing the Beverly herd moving up and being part of the Ahiak herd. In the time we have been looking at this there has been movement of the Bathurst. These animals should be looked at in larger numbers. Should we not be looking at the overall numbers? Are we jumping to a conclusion?

ENR: Defining on the calving grounds. Animals keep moving.

Question: In 1996 you decided anything to the right of the Inlet is not Bathurst?

Question: It is obvious the hunting harvest has no big affect, so what is affecting them?

ENR: Research is looking at insect harassment, another looking at winter range. Agree harvest did not knock herd down to the current numbers. We are saying if we reach a decline and keep hunting it will affect the herd.

ENR: Trips to the communities is to talk about the joint proposal, we are going to all of the users. Joint proposal says there is a difference in views between Tlicho and government.

Question: Asked about proposed emergency measures.

ENR: Minister is looking at options.

Question: What does that mean? What does the emergency act come under?

ENR: Under the Tlicho land claim agreement, after the 2006 survey, ENR proposed, to the WRRB, some limits to harvesting. Proposals have to go to the Tlicho first and then to WRRB. It was rejected on issues of process, under the new land claim.

Question: Are the Tlicho coming back with continuous changes - how do we find out about changes?

Comment: We are intervening on a proposal and the proposal is changing. Half of the recommendations have been cut out. Only about harvesting now.

ENR: There is no change to the joint proposal.

Question: I don't understand the difference, don't understand why Quebec's government outlook can be a total 180 swing from us on sport harvesting. Are their biologists that wrong? Where is the justification?

ENR: Not sure that I see there is such a divide. (Susan will contact them to find out the numbers.)

Question: If you only have 20 collars, could you be missing caribou?

ENR: Referred to the deployment of collars in 2005 and 2006.

Comment: There is a lot of country and you can miss a lot. Such a massive area. With 20 collars it is conceivable you are not getting all the data you need.

ENR: Count is in the area calving area. Counts are based on animals in the calving grounds.

Comment: Collars could be moving to other regions.

ENR: We have looked at all the calving areas.

Question: Wondering if wolf numbers have gone down at the same ratio as caribou?

ENR: Wolf numbers are down as well.

Question: What is the reason - what is the cause? Have you looked at exploration, diamond mines, disturbance?

ENR: The monitoring program over the past 10 years show there are areas around each of the diamond mines where caribou are not going into the area. Other causes could be climate patterns, summer range conditions.

Back to my question: You said you have data from the mines. Going back 20 years when you went to Gordon Lake in the spring that lake was covered with caribou. Now

you don't see that happening. Do they go somewhere else? Is the road affecting them?

ENR: Looked at the issue of avoidance in the road area. When caribou hit lower numbers they use smaller areas.

Question: If we were to accept your numbers the only solution would be a complete ban. So why aren't you banning it?

Discussed numbers of caribou being taken by aboriginal, resident and non resident hunters.

Question: Majority is aboriginal hunting. If you cut out our hunting and sport hunting, and aborigines stay the same, will the herd recover?

Discussed the land claims and aboriginal right to hunt.

Question: You said the minister has the ultimate decision, so why is he not doing it?

ENR: Either do something now, or in a few years we will not have caribou.

Comment: Still question the sciences. Have to look at a bigger picture.

Question: Re exploration as shown in the joint proposal recommendations. If the number of exploration dollars is not increased in the NWT, no one will be living here in 20 years. Shutting down exploration in a post calving ground in a huge area, added to a very short exploration time here, it is going to affect everyone.

Closing: Might be good to chill for awhile and get together again before January.

Question: What are you going to do about the hunters from Saskatchewan?

ENR: GNWT will work with Nunavut and Government of Saskatchewan. We will do a survey to see what action we will take.

Closing: Information that has been circulating has come from another source. We want to continue working on protection of the caribou with you. There are a lot of synergies we should work on .. (Referred to sharing of information to increase our knowledge level.)

NWT Wildlife Federation and members of the public stayed to discuss recommendations to be submitted to ENR. Advised the recommendations will be forwarded to ENR.

ENR staff left the meeting.

Draft Meeting Summary
Bathurst Caribou
Fort Resolution
Friday, December 4, 2009

ENR Staff:
Bruno Croft, Manager, Research & Monitoring
Danny Beaulieu, Renewable Resource Officer

(Bruno agreed to send copies of the presentations to Garry Bailey, President, Fort Resolution Métis Council.)

Recommendations and Comments

- Would it be when the diamond mines started? Shortly after mines started to go in production, and burning fossil fuel, this is what you should be looking at, what is left by the mines. It is not industry that is being blamed. There is no feed for them to go back there. You should tell people that.
- Could be wolves.
- If you don't stop them (Tlicho) from hunting they are defeating the purpose.
- I can't say I am prepared not to hunt anymore when the Dogrib people are still doing it.
- You are only doing the agreement with the WRRB board. Maybe there is something that needs to be drawn up for us for hunting
- Maybe there is something that needs to be drawn up for us for hunting. Need both cows and bulls. If they are going to agree WRRB can go hunting, it is not fair to us.
- I do support we don't hunt but it has to be everybody. They need to be mandated not to hunt. Maybe one caribou and it should be a bull. Not 5 – 10 caribou.
- We need training about the different herds.
- Government needs to step in if they want to stop hunting, go to our schools and organizations on how we can train the youth to identify the herds.
- Instead of maybe saying it is this or that, the real problem is the diamond mines. People are saying all this mine activity is smack in the middle of their migration route. Government is not saying that.
- Would be nice to involve us in those studies (referring to sampling of vegetation and checking for contaminants). Take our people out to help you do the studies and we can bring home that message.
- We recommend you look at the WRRB board and give us representation on the board.
- We need to be part of this board. We should be the ones making the recommendations.
- We are willing to back up but not if the species at risk act kicks in.

- They have to take into consideration if they let the WRRB people continue to hunt those herds there has to be compensation to the rest of the Aboriginal people who cannot hunt. If they treat us differently we have to be compensated for our loss.

Bruno explained the photo census survey of the Bathurst Caribou herd calving grounds in June 2009. Explained the joint proposal with WRRB for recovery and management of the herd.

Danny Beaulieu presented A Story of a Bull Caribou.

Presented graph at the end of the presentation showing peak numbers of caribou from 1890 to 2005. Stressed we should not hunt the caribou for the next 5 years. If we don't put something together now, our kids might not have any caribou.

Question: 2 years ago the caribou went through Lutsel K'e for 9 days. Never saw that herd after that. Where did that herd go?

Danny: This herd we are talking about is straight north. Those are the ones. This herd goes to Lutsel K'e but there is another herd there with lots of caribou. They are north east of Lutsel K'e. They are still around. 30 thousand caribou is lots if you see them all in a bunch. But when there used to be .5 million, 30 thousand left is not much and they will die off. From 2 years ago it went down over half the herd.

Question: How do you count the caribou? We don't even know how many buffalo there are.

Danny: Now they use photo planes. Will let Bruno do a presentation explaining how they count caribou.

Bruno explained the process for the 2009 photo census of the Bathurst herd calving area.

Comment: Have staked claims past Contwoyto Lake and saw wolves waiting for the calves to be born. They pounce on them.

Bruno: When there were lots of caribou there were lots of wolves. We flew the entire calving area and did not see more than 6 wolves in an entire year, in the 80's and 90's.

Continued with survey presentation.

Pete King: Are you talking about only the calves that are born there? Some caribou were born on Simpson Island in May, 1991. They didn't make it back to the calving ground.

Bruno: We could take a look in this area next summer.

Pete King: In Simpson Island area north. They have caribou there year around. They kill 40 caribou a year. Caribou are born there. Pilots from the North phoned me and said there were caribou on Simpson Island. They were coming across from the North shore. I saw caribou had been around. I never went to Simpson Island after that. But I saw tracks last year when I flew there. Could be wolves. I will show you on a map where to look around.

Bruno: Somebody said the same thing at the Dene Nation meeting at Lutsel K'e in July. We will go and take a look.

Question: Asked about the calving range of the Ahiak herd.

Bruno: Ahiak for the most part are an eastern migration herd and spends most of its time in the barrenlands.

Question: Referred to the Bluenose East.

Bruno: Bluenose East were down to 66,000 in 2006. Could not do a survey this year so we don't have recent numbers. Ahiak indication is not good.

Question: Asked about the Beverly herd.

Bruno: The Beverly herd is gone. Here is what may happen. We didn't monitor and have no idea what happened to that herd.

Question: What about the caribou in Saskatchewan?

Bruno: Qamanirjuaq herd is doing the best, estimated at 250,000 animals. That is the one close to northern Saskatchewan and northern Manitoba. We can find out where that herd is from.

Danny: You asked about the collars. In 2006 when everyone was nervous about the Beverly herd, we said let's put collars on the cows over here and see where they are going to go.

Arthur Beck: How many collars do you have on the Bathurst?

Bruno: We are down to 13. Try to stay at 20. 7 collars are missing.

Arthur Beck: Have you got any collars back? Do you know where all 7 of the missing collars are?

Bruno: Sometimes we can. We can see them beeping.

Tommy Unka: Do you know which herd they belong to?

Bruno: We know which herd collared caribou are from when they go back to the calving ground (by frequency).

Question: What is the contributing factor to the decrease? In your opinion.

Bruno: What we think happened in the 90's, when the decline started, what contributed, triggered the decline in the beginning was the poor conditions of the caribou in the summer. Maybe poor weather patterns.

Tommy Unka: Would it be when the diamond mines started? Shortly after mines started to go in production, and burning fossil fuel, this is what you should be looking at, what is left by the mines. You aren't pointing at the cause. Are you capable of addressing the real issues? We have been dancing around for 2 years now, and it is not industry that is being blamed. There is no feed for them to go back there. You should tell people that. You are the ones who signed the agreement.

Danny: That is a natural trend. This year is the year it should have been going up, but it is not.

Question: You are saying it is not going to go up if it is this low now. They are not going to shut the mines down in 5 years. What is your solution?

Bruno: The Métis this side of the lake said they are not going to hunt caribou for the next 5 years.

Comment: When we agreed to stop hunting I was hoping the Dogrib and all others would follow. But it would be unfair (re the joint proposal). We get the odd jobs at the mines, they are not great. But you look at the Dogrib, and their impact agreements, they are doing well at the mines. Then you look at hunting, they have their cake and eat it too. If you don't stop them from hunting they are defeating the purpose. They will get the last of the caribou. I can't say I am prepared not to hunt anymore when the Dogrib people are still doing it.

Danny: It is a volunteer thing and you will not get charged if you go hunting. These meetings have been held in the Dogrib communities and a lot of them are saying we should stop hunting. It is a matter of time, I think eventually something is going to happen. Right now we are going to all the communities and getting information. People are saying the same thing, we have to do something. There is always going to be somebody in the crowd who is going to say I have these treaty rights and will not stop hunting. Maybe they have to be forced to stop hunting. The more communities that agree to stop hunting, maybe the government will do that.

Recommendation: That is what we asked them to do. Force them to stop. But you are only doing the agreement with the WRRB board. Maybe there is something that needs to be drawn up for us for hunting. Need both cows and bulls. If they are going to agree

WRRB can go hunting, it is not fair to us. We have given up a lot already. Not acknowledged properly by the mine. We are historic and have used that territory. Spent winters there. This is the oldest community in the Northwest Territories. I do support we don't hunt but it has to be everybody. They need to be mandated not to hunt. Maybe one caribou and it should be a bull. Not 5 – 10 caribou. Another thing, we need training about the different herds. Government needs to step in if they want to stop hunting, go to our schools and organizations on how we can train the youth to identify the herds. It is expensive to go that far for hunting. Should do some training and education.

Bruno: This is the proposal for which we want recommendations from you.

Tommy Unka: Like I told you what I thought regarding diamond mines, you want us to cut back hunting. That is my way of life. Instead of maybe saying it is this or that, the real problem is the diamond mines. People are saying all this mine activity is smack in the middle of their migration route, yet government is not saying that. Are you telling people this is why the caribou numbers are down?

Bruno: We take samples in the spring and fall of each year and so far have not found any contaminants. Referred to sampling vegetation.

Recommendation: Would be nice to involve us in those studies. Take our people out to help you do the studies and we can bring home that message.

Tommy Unka: You are using caribou as an indicator for testing vegetation but they move all the time so you probably won't pick it up in caribou. Maybe in the fish.

Bruno: How about vegetation?

Tommy Unka: You won't find it east of the mines.

Tommy Unka: Mines don't fish the fish or feed it to people. If you told them they would have to get your water from the lakes around the mines, you won't get them to take a glass out of there. They have blasts sometimes twice a day. Saw around there in winter snow is coloured. All that melts and goes into the water and land around the area.

Bruno presented the migration animation.

No restrictions suggested for the Ahiak. It is okay for you go to and hunt the Ahiak. We want to shut down all harvest on the Bathurst, for everyone.

Question: What about outfitters? They take the biggest breeders.

Bruno: They are the first one to go.

Bruno agreed to send copies of the presentations to Garry Bailey, President, Fort Resolution Métis Council.

Reviewed the joint proposal.

ENR and Tlicho people disagreed on some points. We are saying the safest way, until we get the next survey done, is no hunting on all herds. But Tlicho want access to the Ahiak and Bathurst. So we said eliminate all harvest on the Bathurst herd but allow hunters to harvest some animals from the Bluenose East. They say elders like cows in the winter. We may be able to help with harvesting Bluenose East and Ahiak. But Tlicho people said no, they do not want restriction. When you talk to the Tlicho people they don't want to be seen on record as saying anything that will infringe on aboriginal people's rights.

Your recommendations will be added to this proposal, to say what kind of harvest should be taken on this herd. Once the board listens to all recommendations there will be a decision.

You mentioned education earlier. It is a big part of it. Education with hunters and weekend hunters. To take what you need and do it the right way. The way the elders have been saying. Don't waste and bring it all back to the community. Saying where we should and should not hunt.

The department and the Tlicho are willing to put more wildlife officers into those hunting areas during the winter. And a monitor for each side of the lake to monitor the harvest and ensure rules are met.

Danny: Monitors in Lutsel K'e and the Dogrib communities.

Question: What about us as monitors?

Bruno: Compulsory reporting system is one thing we all agree on. Would be easy to do on the south side of the lake.

Arthur Beck: Any hunting we do would be on the Ahiak herd.

Bruno: At the end of the day it is a conservation thing for the Bathurst herd and the minister may make it interim emergency measures.

Comment: They have to live with what they kill. You are not saving it just for them. You are saving it for us.

Bruno: The last thing I was asked to mention - we were hoping the WRRB would have a public hearing by mid December to hear all of this and come out with recommendations before the harvest which is starting now. Hearings won't take place until mid February.

Explained the co-management board put in place in the context of the Tlicho land claim.

Arthur Beck: What happened to the Akaitcho, Métis and Dehcho?

Arthur Beck: We recommend you look at the WRRB board and give us representation on the board.

Tommy Unka: What are you hoping to get from us?

Bruno: What would you do?

Tommy Unka: We don't hunt the Bathurst herd. What applies to the Dogrib does not necessarily apply to us.

Bruno: There has been hunting north of the lake.

Arthur Beck: Some Bathurst come into our area.

Bruno: We have to protect them.

Recommendation: With our aboriginal rights we can go hunt anywhere. We need to be part of this board. We should be the ones making the recommendations.

Bruno: Once the Akaitcho land claim comes into place you will have your own board.

Bruno: I would recommend you come to the hearing and do your presentation. Tell them what you like and don't like.

Arthur Beck: We are telling you. We want representation on the WRRB board. There is no representation from 3 groups. That is why I asked the question. What kind of authority does that board have over the Wildlife Act.

Bruno: WRRB will make final recommendations.

Arthur Beck: That is why we should be there.

Bruno: You have to be there to say your piece.

Comment: If you want us to go to these meetings we will go with you. WRRB is representing only their communities. Canada made that agreement with the Dogrib. Dogrib still have to deal with us.

Bruno: It is important that we finish this. It won't be until March until the Board comes out with something. Because we don't want cow harvest on the Bathurst herd this

winter, I think the minister is considering interim emergency measures on the Bathurst herd.

Arthur Beck: I hope he does not go through the species at risk act. They may never open it again. Us as Aboriginal people have the aboriginal right. We are willing to back up but not if the species at risk act kicks in.

Danny: The interim emergency measures is just for now, until the board makes a decision. Nothing to do with species at risk.

Comment: They give us funding (ITI) to go for a community hunt. We received that funding and are trying to decide on our hunt.

Tommy Unka: Don't include Bluenose and Ahiak when you are talking Bathurst. Just talk Bathurst.

Bruno: We want to stop all harvest on the Bathurst herd and go into Bluenose East and Ahiak, in order to minimize hardship on aboriginal people.

Tommy Unka: So all management plans can't be applied to all the herds.

Arthur Beck: Maybe split them up, separate Bathurst herd from Bluenose and Ahiak on paper.

Bruno: We can change order of it if that is what you want.

Garry Bailey: Before you got this to the WRRB you should have been here first, this was developed for the WRRB.

Bruno: It is going back to the board, this is a draft and by no means done.

Tommy Unka: Be consistent with terms used for Tlicho Government (referring to the joint proposal).

Arthur Beck: This year our hunt will be on the Ahiak so that is not really a problem.

Garry Bailey: Would there be a way to access funding to go harvest, record it, education for the youth (Bruno bring this back to the department, it is possible). Can I go direct to Gary Bonnet?

Bruno: Yes

Tommy Unka: Is this an information meeting, or consultation on the proposal?

Garry Bailey: They have to take into consideration if they let the WRRB people continue to hunt those herds there has to be compensation to the rest of the Aboriginal

people who cannot hunt. If they treat us differently we have to be compensated for our loss.

Danny: We talk about Dogrib do it, why can't we do it. I see this all the time. The bottom line is the caribou, especially the Bathurst herd. They are in serious trouble. If we don't do anything, the mines will not stop. We have to stop hunting those caribou. The decline is so drastic. They are going to go off the map.

Arthur Beck: You are right. Mines have a lot to do with it and we have to stop ourselves. Mines are not compensating Ft. Resolution for what we are losing. Compensation has to be looked at.

Garry Bailey: There may be compensation issues.

Meeting Summary
Bathurst Caribou Herd Meeting
Kugluktuk, NU
December 7, 2009

Recommendations and Comments

- Could have something to do with the mines.
- Need to consult our elders who are hunters.
- Would be better if they didn't put collars on the calves. I think sometimes they get the disease from the collar.
- Herd is declining from the wolf herd.
- Do you have a quota for shooting caribou? You don't have to make the numbers smaller for Inuit people to get their caribou.
- Shut the outfitters down completely.

Meeting was opened by Floyd Kaitak, Chairperson of the Kugluktuk Hunters & Trappers Organization.

Jan Adamczewski, Wildlife Biologist, ENR, presented a global overview about what is happening with caribou herds. What we are seeing in northern Canada is not unique to this area but across the range caribou, for the most part, are going down in numbers. Exceptions are some herds in Labrador, Alaska and Liberia. Weather is what most people look at as the kind of thing that can affect caribou and reindeer. Careful not to generalize because some herds are doing well, some are not.

Jan presented population numbers for herds in the Northwest Territories and Nunavut.

Reviewed graph showing caribou populations.

Showed map of weather patterns affecting caribou.

Looked more closely at the numbers for each herd and trends for decline in populations:

- Low calf to cow ratios on the calving ground
- Low calf survival
- Poor calving ground conditions
- Harvesting

Explained steps management boards have taken to help caribou stabilize the herd, and move towards recovery of the herd. Showed the fire sign method used by the Porcupine Caribou Management Board where all harvesting of the herd was shut down when the population declined to 45,000.

Referring to the low population of the Bathurst herd, if the harvest stays where it is now, the herd will be finished in 4 – 5 years. If harvesting is closed, weather cooperates and calves are doing well we could go to stabilizing and maybe a small increase.

Recovery of the herd will take longer if we shut down cow harvest and maybe allow some bulls to be taken. Get a strong sense from the communities saving bulls is important. We are talking to lots of people about how to manage this herd, consulting every aboriginal group that harvest the Bathurst herd. More communities in the NWT hunt this herd than any other herd.

In terms of the management situation, talked about the WRRB that has responsibility within the land claim area. They asked for a management proposal for the Bathurst herd. WRRB has agreed to closure of commercial and resident harvesting. There is no agreement at this point to Aboriginal harvesting of the herd. The Tlicho do not agree to restricting Aboriginal harvesting.

Discussion

Comment: Most of the mines are there. And a large exploration camp around the calving area. Could have something to do with the mines.

Jan: Tried to look at the affect of the mines and found out caribou avoid them. Stay away from them. Workshops and meetings dealing with decline of the Bathurst Caribou herd are still going on. WRRB does not have authority outside their land claim area. GNWT will hold hearings in February to decide on the caribou. May at some point come to talks at a more senior level – to talk with Nunavut about the caribou.

Comment: We are close to the NT Management Board, share the same herd, and try to work closely together.

It would be better if when you have your meetings with the board in Yellowknife, you tell the elders because they sometimes forget to tell the elders when they are going to have those meetings. Need to consult our elders who are hunters.

Mattieu: Explained the presentation here is from the people in the NWT who did most of the work to find out how the herds are doing. It is for information, to show the results of the studies that were done on the caribou. Not a consultation to ask you what you want to do with management. There will be meetings later on with the government of Nunavut.

Jan: The Nunavut Wildlife Management Board was invited to workshops in Yellowknife this October but unable to attend.

We have tried to get some indication from all of the communities about alternatives for getting meat. Most of the communities have other sources except Lutsel K'e, Wekwezi and Gameti. GNWT is looking at providing alternatives for food sources.

Jan: We are hoping to do the first survey on the Ahiak calving ground next year. Nunavut will be funding this. Recognize the caribou management study might give us more resources.

Jan explained the surveys and amount of flying.

Comment: A long time ago, before they started having lots of mines, there used to be a lot of calving grounds. Now there are so many mines there are less calving grounds. In the Contwoyto area, her ancestors, those big lakes around that area, before the mines, there used to be a lot of caribou. Now the calving grounds are less. She saw this on TV, the bulls, sometimes calves, had collars. I have pity for those animals, why do they put collars on the young calves. A few months later they are found dead on the ground with collars. Would be better if they didn't put collars on the calves. Most of those calves die out. Put collars on those caribou, they choke on them, maybe when it is too tight. I think sometimes they get the disease from the collar. A long time ago, they used the meat for their dogs because they did not have other food. I think the population of the wolf is growing because hardly any people hunt them. Herd is declining from the wolf herd.

Jan: Explained a biologist who studies wolves identified a bunch of wolf dens. He checks those every year in the summer. For the last 5 years the wolf numbers are down. There are few of them. As their food is disappearing their numbers will go down. In this calving ground we flew about 14,000 km this summer and saw 4 wolves. On the collar issue, there was not anyone in Canada who has put collars on small calves. Alaska has done some studies like that. But we have the same situation as you here, if somebody wants to do a study he has to have agreement from the community. Tlicho elders have never agreed to more than 20 collars on the Bathurst herd.

Comment: Do you have a quota for shooting caribou? You don't have to make the numbers smaller for Inuit people to get their caribou.

Jan: I am not sure where that is going to end up. For us, and probably the same here, the Aboriginal harvest is a sensitive subject and we realize it has to be handled carefully. In the end it is common sense - if you keep taking a lot of animals out of a herd that keeps getting smaller sooner or later you are going to run out of caribou.

As far as how things go from here with the harvest we are doing our best to work with communities and Aboriginal governments so it becomes our solution, not just the governments.

Comment: Inaudible (referred to total harvest per year?)

Jan: There are a number of land claim areas and harvest studies came out of the land claim. Those are all done. Now at a time when the harvesting records really matters we are not getting the numbers.

Mattieu: Just to mention on this side of the board, we have been doing things with the HTO. A workshop in 2007 and since then the HTO has implemented action to try to help the herd. Musk ox hunting instead of caribou hunts. The government will also be doing some community consultation this winter to talk about caribou and what we are doing in Nunavut to help the herds.

Jan: Received a letter from the Northwest Territory Métis Nation recommending all the harvesting be shut down. Chiefs of YKDFN cancelled their fall hunt. They are not waiting for government to do things. That makes it a bit easier for everybody. Hearing about some of these things from here will help our side.

Mattieu: We can apply some of the things we saw to the Bluenose and Island caribou. For the Bathurst herd most of their harvest is hunting. That is something that could be easily fixed. Most of it is through the outfitting, sport hunting.

Jan: Gwich'in has stopped all resident and commercial harvesting.

Recommendation: Shut the outfitters down completely.

Floyd Kaitak, Chairperson of the Kugluktuk Hunters & Trappers Organization: I have a letter here saying the HTO want to do something to help the caribou, Bathurst, Island and Bluenose East and West. Before we stop hunting for our own people, stop sport hunts, hold off on community harvests for a few years. We will do a musk ox harvest in late January. We will try to come up with a calendar that we will present to people in our community to find out what everybody is hunting (all animals).

Comment: Sometimes people talk about the caribou. Find where they are going to do their calving. Sometimes there are caribou in one place, and then go to another place, where they migrate. They travel all over. Some say there is no caribou in that area, because they travel all over. If they are going to have a big meeting in YK they should get lots of elders because the elders know about these things. She mentioned they have a code of honour for the people to hunt. Try not to bring these quotas lower, we have been hunting for so many years. This is the only main meat we have. We grew up on those. Don't make the numbers lower for people to hunt.

Consultation Log
Bathurst Caribou Herd Community Meetings

Date: December 9, 2009

Time: 11 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Company: Lutsel K'e Wildlife Committee

Project: Bathurst Caribou Herd Community Meeting

ENR Representatives: Ernie Campbell

Bruno Croft

Fred Mandeville

Notes: **ENR did a presentation on survey methods and results that were gathered June 3 – 12, 2009. The purpose of the survey was to estimate the number of breeding females in the Bathurst herd on the calving grounds (1986-2009). In addition, there were calculations of breeding cows (minus detailed statistics), estimates of Bathurst herd size from breeding females, and the overall population size. The total herd size is based on photo census, which is based on breeding cows and the ratio of cow/calf and cow/bull.**

AUDIENCE COMMENTS:

Recommendations and Comments

- Would it be when the diamond mines started? Shortly after mines started to go in production, and burning fossil fuel, this is what you should be looking at, what is left by the mines. It is not industry that is being blamed. There is no feed for them to go back there. You should tell people that.
- Could be wolves.
- If you don't stop them (Tlicho) from hunting they are defeating the purpose.
- I can't say I am prepared not to hunt anymore when the Dogrib people are still doing it.
- You are only doing the agreement with the WRRB board. Maybe there is something that needs to be drawn up for us for hunting
- Maybe there is something that needs to be drawn up for us for hunting. Need both cows and bulls. If they are going to agree WRRB can go hunting, it is not fair to us.
- I do support we don't hunt but it has to be everybody. They need to be mandated not to hunt. Maybe one caribou and it should be a bull. Not 5 – 10 caribou.
- We need training about the different herds.
- Government needs to step in if they want to stop hunting, go to our schools and organizations on how we can train the youth to identify the herds.
- Instead of maybe saying it is this or that, the real problem is the diamond mines. People are saying all this mine activity is smack in the middle of their migration route. Government is not saying that.

- Would be nice to involve us in those studies (referring to sampling of vegetation and checking for contaminants). Take our people out to help you do the studies and we can bring home that message.
- We recommend you look at the WRRB board and give us representation on the board.
- We need to be part of this board. We should be the ones making the recommendations.
- We are willing to back up but not if the species at risk act kicks in.
- They have to take into consideration if they let the WRRB people continue to hunt those herds there has to be compensation to the rest of the Aboriginal people who cannot hunt. If they treat us differently we have to be compensated for our loss.

Draft Summary
Bathurst Caribou Herd Meeting
Salt River First Nations, December 9, 2009

ENR Staff:

Bruno Croft, Manager, Research and Monitoring

Fred J. Mandeville, Manager, Wildlife and Environment

(Members of Smith Landing First Nation were at the meeting.)

(Bruno said he would send copy of the joint proposal.)

Recommendations:

- GHL has to be ceased; monitoring – to know the numbers. Important you define Aboriginal. Aboriginal means those who have treaty rights. Government says 1/10th is aboriginal.
- What I would recommend at this point is let's cut off everyone who does not have a GHL, not the Dene. Should be able to hunt for 5 years.
- You have to start protecting the winter range. Start protecting our forest.
- Get rid of wolves to give a chance to the calves. Kill the wolves on the calving grounds.
- Here our biggest problem is they have no feed on the winter range.
- Very simple, protect the winter range in the summer, restrain hunting, no 3 year residency right to hunt
- Take moose license away too. Hunt moose and it is a chain reaction on the moose.
- Shut down resident and non resident. Should happen tomorrow.
- Wanted to suggest the ones who do not need a GHL to hunt with, for each community, if they were to kill 20 or 30 caribou, their harvest for the year. Most of that meat is fed to the elders. Maybe 50 at the most and that would be for the communities. And the federal government subsidize the native people, bring in meat for them. Help out with the grocery bill.
- If you still allow people to hunt, there should be a permit to get only 5 caribou for example.
- Sport hunters and game outfitters should not be allowed to hunt.
- Should be more monitoring of what is going on out there. Officers check closer.
- A lot of it has to do with industry happening in that area.
- Maybe it is time for the leaders of the communities to take over and manage for themselves.
- They (WRRB) should have different representatives from each of the regions. Can't be representatives from just the range.
- I would feel better if the board was made up of all Aboriginal people, especially in a co-management scenario. The two federal people, there are aboriginal people in the federal department. GNWT representatives should be aboriginal people.

- It should be a co-management thing that the Dene people have a say in, not only Dene in that area.
- There has been no moose survey since 92. Would like to see a survey to see how many moose are in this area.

Bruno explained ENR is meeting with Aboriginal groups hunting the Bathurst Caribou herd to get their recommendations for recovery of the declining herd. Recommendations from these meetings will go to the WRRB.

Bruno presented animated migration map.

Question: What is the main river the Bathurst herd crosses starting from the North Slave region?

Bruno: Will have to cross the Coppermine, Burnside and Hood rivers which are frozen.

Bruno: will have to cross the Coppermine which is frozen. Next would be the Burnside and Hood rivers.

Question: What is the level of the high water mark on that river? If a pregnant cow has to swim across the river she is probably going to abort her calf by the time she gets to the other side. Are there certain places where they cross?

Bruno: Varies from year to year. Traditional knowledge tells us where they have been crossing the river. But going North, I have yet to see open water.

Comment: With climate change, freeze up is shorter. There will be more open water for them to cross going to their calving grounds.

Bruno: One headache we can't account for. Another reason to be careful with recovery options. Climate change compounds that. We better think about it.

Question: Is there anything set in place with regards to recovery of animals if they fall into the water?

Bruno: It has happened, has been documented. It is a time of year. We cannot be everywhere.

Comment: The crossings should be noted.

Bruno: There are some areas in mid to late summer where they are quite predictable. What could be a problem is early spring, late spring, early fall, late fall. They always seem to make their way, not drowning. No problem for calves to swim across.

Bruno reviewed the calving ground survey.

Question: What is total population of the herd?

Bruno: 32,000

Question: Were there any major fires in those areas there they migrate?

Bruno: No fires in the barrenland. No major fires in the NWT for a long time.

Question: Why the decline?

Bruno: Not the only herd that is declining. Herds in the east and west too. If you track back, the decline probably started in late 90's early 2000. Major decline linked to health and condition of the caribou. Cows are not healthy, mortality for calves. Food is not good enough in the summer time. There is a combination of that that took place in the first part of the decade. Insect seasons were probably worse than they are now. Snow conditions in winter time. Climate change. What triggered the whole thing is health and condition of the calving cows. Now we have reached a stage where harvest did not trigger the decline, now it has become part of the solution.

Question: Why did you want this long since the decline?

Bruno: We have been on record since 2006, when we detected the decline. Government came up with management actions and it hit the fan. Decreased number of tags, tried to come up with management options without following due process and ended up in court. In the meanwhile we were hoping the herd would recover. When we got out there this summer

Question: Some groups say there is no decline. Where do they get this information from?

Bruno: Mostly from one individual. At one time he thought the Bathurst and Bluenose were all one herd. We don't manage caribou on that principle. Everything we have seen and done supports what we see today. We have 2 herds and have to manage that way. He is saying one big group of caribou so it doesn't matter if you over hunt in one range.

Question: You are saying caribou actually go with other herds. There is no way to determine what herd is what?

Bruno: They have different signals on their collars. They go to a specific calving ground.

Question: What I am saying is they give a different signal for each group. And you went on to say a major factor is climate change. There aren't wolves, bears?

Bruno: I am hesitant to use the term climate change. Certainly change in weather.

Comment: I don't believe it is climate change, I don't believe that. But your whole department is saying that.

Bruno: Change in population cycles is linked to change in weather. Predators, number of wolves increase with caribou increase. We know where the wolf dens are located on the Bathurst herd range. We visit those dens very summer and see since 2005 the number of active wolf dens on the range has come down quite a bit. Which seems to indicate the herd is going down as well.

On the calving ground in the last 4 years I don't think we see more than 5 wolves. We have seen bears, 8 – 13 each year. We track the number of calves born on the calving ground and calf survival. Last 4 years survival rate has been normal.

Question: Any studies done on female caribou that are not getting pregnant? Seems a lot of them are not having calves.

Bruno: The last 4 years have been good. Seems we don't have enough young females coming in to take part of it.

Question: There is high over harvesting too. You never touched on that. Over harvesting won't be done by Dene people. Most will take what they need. It is the other ones that I am worried about. What are the recommendations? (joint proposal review)

Question: I was going to ask the same thing, 1995 to 2003, population dropped 100,000. Is that from over hunting?

Bruno: I don't think so. Cause is hard to tell.

Question: In 1995, 2000, you go back to leadership meetings, they started talking about this a long time ago. About government controlling the non aboriginal hunters and cutting down on the caribou hunts. But you guys did not listen. You wanted the outfitters out there to continue to hunt and forgot about the need and fear of what was going to happen. And it did. If you take a look at Yellowknife alone, Yellowknife seems to get a lot of stuff from different places. It has happened with the caribou. If there are 10,000 hunters in that region and you gave 5 – 3 tags, that is a lot of caribou taken each year. The Dene people, we talked about that in the 90's. Even though there were recommendations, you never went ahead with that. This whole thing, now we are in a crises, now you want to cut off everybody. What I would recommend at this point is let's cut off everyone who does not have a GHL, not the Dene. Should be able to hunt for 5 years. We in the south are not as dependent as people in the Lutsel K'e. Believe there will be a community hunt. We have to look at this in a way that what are we going to do. Hunters here and people outside, especially people hunting caribou for the past 30 years, are saying the numbers are different. Especially when we don't know if we should believe the biologists. The ones that worked with you people destroyed an

animal and you did nothing about it. That guy is still working for you. So what is going to happen here?

Question: Looking at your numbers, can you tell me what year exploration started in the Bathurst area?

Bruno: Mid 90's.

Question: Would you say that is part of the decline?

Question: You never came up with reasons for the numbers not to be reproducing. You are only counting breeding cows on the calving area. There are thousands more behind that have aborted their calves. What percentage of cows bring their calves to birth? They are not reproducing. You have to start protecting the winter range. First thing fire burns is the caribou moss. 80% of this range is burnt up. 40 years to wait till it is reproducing. Then after 3 or 4 years, well last year was not bad, did not have many fires. Forestry has best equipment in the world and do not want to use it. Start protecting our forest. Recommendation to the board.

Comment: Only treaty should be hunting, no GHL.

Recommendation: Get rid of wolves to give a chance to the calves. Kill the wolves on the calving grounds.

Look at what they did in the Yukon. They stopped hunting. Put a bounty on wolves. People themselves came up with a plan. Took 6 – 7 years and caribou came back. Here our biggest problem is they have no feed on the winter range.

Bruno: Forest fires on the winter range comes up all the time.

Recommendation: Very simple, protect the winter range in the summer, restrain hunting, no 3 year residency right to hunt. Get rid of that. Take moose license away too. Hunt moose and it is a chain reaction on the moose. Shut down resident and non resident. Should happen tomorrow.

Recommendation: Wanted to suggest the ones who do not need a GHL to hunt with, for each community, if they were to kill 20 or 30 caribou, their harvest for the year. Most of that meat is fed to the elders. Maybe 50 at the most and that would be for the communities. And the federal government subsidize the native people, bring in meat for them. Help out with the grocery bill.

Comment: I disagree with you on that. Paying lots for meat in northern communities.

Bruno: Government wants to help some communities go to adjacent herds to hunt.

Recommendation: If you still allow people to hunt, there should be a permit to get only 5 caribou for example. Sport hunters and game outfitters should not be allowed to hunt.

Recommendation: Should be more monitoring of what is going on out there. Officers check closer.

Recommendation: Get the Renewable school here and get those guys out there in the spring time.

Bruno: That is part of the package to help.

Recommendation: When caribou started to decline in 85, that is when you started changing the way you fight fires. That is when the scale started declining. The Dene people at that time started to push government to fight fires on the caribou range. In the early 90's again they started fighting but it cost too much. In the 90's, it coincides with what took place in the early 70's, when things started happening in the Beaufort seas, concentration on aircraft, a lot of activity and movement. The elders during that time were saying the migration of the birds, they were actually dropping their eggs before they landed because they had to take different flights paths. Same thing happening here with caribou, they are starting to spread out. Would not be able to tell difference between the herds. There is a pattern. Government is starting to get on track of what is happening in the territories. Important when it comes to this kind of thing. Industry leaving a deposit. Government is slowly starting to get the picture of how valuable this whole areas is. A lot of it has to do with industry happening in that area.

Bruno: It is called the cumulative affect thing. We have to get much better at it. Little bit we know now is how it affects the population level. Everywhere I have been all the elders link what is happening to the caribou to mining activity. Have to be really careful with exploration in calving grounds.

Question: What is the cost of one of these studies?

Bruno: This survey cost \$350,000.

Question: Will they continue to monitor until there is no money or are they going to take action?

Bruno: Government will go on their own with interim emergency measures.

Recommendation: Maybe it is time for the leaders of the communities to take over and manage for themselves.

Question: Is GNWT prepared to implement immediate measures now and what is the WRRB prepared to implement?

Bruno: Because of the co-management process, by the time WRRB come up with the final recommendations is the end of the winter. Do not want harvest on the Bathurst herd this winter. Emergency measures is separate.

Question: Who is the Board? Is it a management board? Who sits on it?

Recommendation: They should have different representatives from each of the regions.

Bruno: People have suggested it should be an umbrella board.

Recommendation: Can't be representatives from just the range.

Bruno: There will be a public hearing in February in Behchoko. I would suggest you come up as an intervener and present your position. More voices we have the better.

Recommendation: I would feel better if the board was made up of all Aboriginal people, especially in a co-management scenario. The two federal people, there are aboriginal people in the federal department. GNWT representatives should be aboriginal people. It should be a co-management thing that the Dene people have a say in, not only Dene in that area. It affects a lot of people. Even Lutsel K'e are not represented on that Board, and not Akaitcho. They have a lot to lose here too. We are part of Akaitcho. I think it is time the GNWT recognize entrenched Aboriginal rights and enabling Aboriginal people to manage their own affairs, especially when it comes to wildlife.

Comment: Seems like when you put a management board together, they settled their claim and the same thing happened when they did the Gwich'in claim. Put management boards together which we have to live with now. They put it together over there and we did not have a say about our representatives. We do have one now but it took us a long time to get recognized on that board. I hope this board is not doing the same thing to people outside the WRRB.

Question: Regarding the survey, did you ever land some place and do a study on the health of the caribou?

Bruno: Not during those surveys. At the end of the summer, as they migrate back, we go along with the fall hunts and end of the winter and look at the caribou they shoot. And add a few cows and look for health conditions. Monitor conditions when they are going into the migration. And again in the winter and then see what took place over the year. Always trying to step up our monitoring and making it better.

Recommendation: Not only wildlife but everything depends on the forest. Even us. Forest fires is a big part of it.

Reviewed the flight lines.

Question: What is happening with the Ahiak?

Bruno: Have to be careful with the Ahiak herd too. Things are not looking good there now.

Fred presented the joint proposal.

Asked for a copy of the joint proposal and the map.

Fred explained the map can't be released it until it is signed off.

Explained the interim emergency measures will be effective January 1st.

Question: You were mentioning the Tlicho don't agree with anything. Are you going to have trouble with them?

Fred: They are slowly coming around. Think the leaders are willing to work with us on it.

Recommendation: There has been no moose survey since 92. Would like to see a survey to see how many moose in this area. I think there are animals other than caribou that we can go after.

Fred: That is another part of the interim emergency measure. They will increase bison tags in the North Slave as a another source of meat.

Recommendation: You are saying that you are giving incentives, subsidies for hunting. Would like to see that here too. We have to go 110 miles east.

Fred: If you look at the map you can hunt between here and Lutsel K'e. Wekwti is in the middle of the hunting zone and that is really all they have to harvest there. You have woodland, bison, moose.

Comment: Guys from Behchoko went to Lutsel K'e to hunt caribou because the herd moved east. We didn't say anything about them coming out to the east and now we are getting locked out. Government is putting pressure on everybody. Don't see we should get pressure.

Fred: Government is just trying to ensure Bathurst caribou will be there. Herd can't afford another harvest on cows. The herd can't sustain that. We are not blaming any one group or thing on decline of the herd. That is one thing you can have control over is the harvesting. That would be the biggest impact on the Bathurst herd, the harvesting.

Comment: If I said I killed Beverly you could not do one thing.

Fred: No hunting zone for barren ground caribou.

Recommendations: Two things to take into account – GHL has to be ceased; monitoring – to know the numbers. Important you define Aboriginal. Aboriginal means those who have treaty rights. Government says 1/10th is aboriginal.

Fred: Initially we suggested Aboriginal GHL holders. They wouldn't go for that. Said all GHL across the board.

Comment: The only one we say should be allowed to hunt would be the status.

Comment: You are using Earl Evans for information in your presentation and I don't agree with that.

Question: Is there going to be funding - some money to do harvesting?

Fred: As far as I know CAP funding is available.

Question: Did u go to each community in the Tlicho area?

Fred: Yes

Question: What did they think?

Response: You will get some agreeing with you but they won't agree in a public forum. Will say so after the meeting. The Elders pull a lot of weight there so what they say goes. Tried to get an increase in satellite collaring but they won't budge. Since 2006 must have been there 4 – 6 times giving them the same information. A week later they will ask the same questions.

Comment: The only thing I fear is look at what happened to Wood Buffalo National Park. Our elders say when the buffalo came in 1926, they told people there would be no hunting of buffalo for 5 years. Still is no hunting.

Response: In the Tlicho communities they don't want buffalo near them. Tlicho believe buffalo are part of the cause for the caribou to be gone. Slowly they are starting to like the taste of it. Also a safety concern for vehicles.

Comment: They should give some to our band. We can fence them in.

Question: What are the penalties in the no hunting zone?

Response: Varying degrees and levels of fines, depending on the offence. We will put up signage to ensure people understand the no hunting zone. Will be a public communication plan that will be going out.

Comment: Think you will have a rough time with the Tlicho.

Fred: Will be a core area of our problems. Okay until the winter roads open up. Biggest one will be around Wekweti when the road opens up. One of the big concerns we have had in past years was access to caribou on the winter roads. Hopefully this will help address that.

Question: What kind of fine?

Fred: About a \$500 fine. Object is not to penalize people. Have to have some form of penalty to keep people from going there. You can hunt moose, wolves, not caribou.

Comment: You can't restrict us legally. Aboriginal rights.

Response: If it is going to be challenged, fine. It is not about treaty rights, it is about caribou conservation. If people want to challenge treaty rights for the sake of the caribou that is fine. Hunt until there is no more caribou. If courts say yes, go ahead. From what we have been hearing most communities are saying time to do something.

Comment: I agree that is the best way to go. Challenging in court is not always the right thing to do. It is not going to save the caribou.

Question: How many years for the emergency measures?

Fred: Proposing an interim until the WRRB have their public hearing. They will come to us in March with recommendations. Go around again to all the communities to get everybody's approval. Looking at 2012. Middle of February is the public hearing.

