

## **Tibbitt Lake to Contwoyto Winter Road**

### **Monitoring Station Report**



**June 14, 2006**

**North Slave Region  
Environment & Natural Resources**

## **BACKGROUND**

Prior to 2003 little or no information was collected as to how people were utilizing the Lupin Winter Road for non-commercial purposes. Due to increased use on the winter road The Department of Environment & Natural Resources (ENR) established a check station on Ross Lake in 2003 to monitor activities by collecting data from non-commercial road users. The Bathurst Caribou Management Plan (BCMP) and the Barren Ground Caribou Management Strategy (BGCMS) have identified winter road monitoring as a tool to determine how the winter roads impact the herds by documenting harvest numbers.

All non-commercial users are asked to stop at the check station to answer a questionnaire (attachment 1). The data collected is put in to a database and gives insight as to why people use the road and may help determine what impacts the road users have on surrounding wildlife and the environment. This questionnaire also records valuable caribou information that may be used by the BCMP and BGCMS, including information such as harvest numbers, sex of the caribou harvested, health and condition, pregnancy rates as well as numbers of caribou sighted along the winter road.

Since the check station has been in operation, ENR has compiled data on the issues of concern. Examples of information collected are: how many and what type of wildlife was harvested, why people are using the road and what communities they come from.

## **PARTNERS**

ENR works in partnership with the Yellowknives Dene First Nation (YKDFN) to man the check station. Rachel Crapeau with the YKDFN Land & Environment Office hires the monitors who work on a two-week rotation at Ross Lake. The monitor stays at a cabin next to the winter road and signs are erected that instruct non-commercial vehicles to check in.

Partial funding for winter road monitoring comes from parties with interest in environmental monitoring concerns. The West Kitikmeot Slave Study (WKSS) provides \$20,000 in funding, also the Winter Road Joint Venture Committee (JVC) provides \$10,000.

ENR also meets with the JVC to discuss survey results and address concerns. The JVC also shares road information with ENR, which allows us to prepare for operation of the check station. Nuna Logistics builds and maintains the road and ENR stays in contact with them throughout the season to discuss any concerns in regards to wildlife issues. In the past Nuna has built a turn-off leading up to the cabin, creating a driveway for vehicles checking into the station. Nuna also gives the monitors access to their camp at Dome Lake.

## **SURVEY RESULTS**

We have compiled the last three years of data and provided the numbers for wildlife harvested by hunters, the number of non-commercial vehicles traveling the road, why people were using the road and what community they came from (Attachment 2).

Information collected by harvesters regarding pregnancy rates show that 31% of females were pregnant this is low compared to 75-80% pregnancy rates taken from community hunts throughout the 2006 season (statistic provided by B. Croft). This low percentage could be a result from lack of experience from the winter road monitors as some information regarding caribou sex and pregnancy was not recorded. Pregnancy rates for previous season are unavailable.

Overall numbers from the last three years show a decline in all aspects of the survey. Reasons for this include a shorter operating season, attached are comparisons of the official operating dates from the JVC and our opening date. Although our dates generally show that we open earlier and operate past the official dates, road users typically travel when the road is open. Below are the dates:

### **Open & Closing Dates of Winter Road and Ross Lake Check Station**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Official Date Opened</b>	<b>Ross Lake Opened</b>	<b>Official Date Closed</b>	<b>Ross Lake Closed</b>
2004	January 28	January 09	March 31	April 09
2005	January 26	January 19	April 5	April 4
2006	February 5	February 4	March 26	April 12

Official Opening dates provided by the JVC

Other reasons for decline are the fact that caribou numbers along the road have been fewer resulting in lower harvest numbers. There are instances when vehicles are missed, this is due to the fact that this past season we had problems finding a monitor and there are also times when the monitor is away from the station. ENR is however, confident that the data gives a realistic number as to how many people are utilizing the winter road.

The Ross Lake check station will continue to operate and steps are being taken to improve the check station.

Attachment I

**Winter Road User Survey – Tibbitt to Contwoyto Road**

**Vehicle Information**

Description of vehicle: \_\_\_\_\_

Vehicle license place origin (Territory/Province): \_\_\_\_\_ License plate no: \_\_\_\_\_

Accessory vehicles?(Snowmobiles/ATVs) **NO**  **YES**  How many? \_\_\_\_\_

Number of people in the vehicle: \_\_\_\_\_ Monitor's name: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Northbound** Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ AM PM **Southbound** Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ AM PM  
(Spell out month) (Spell out month)

**Community representation (indicate the community for EACH person in the vehicle)**

Yellowknife	_____	N'Dilo	_____	Ingraham Trail	_____
Dettah	_____	Rae/Edzo	_____	Wha Ti	_____
Gameti	_____	Wekwetli	_____	Ft. Providence	_____
Other (specify)	_____				

**Purpose for using the winter road (check all that apply):**

Sight-seeing: \_\_\_\_\_ Camping: \_\_\_\_\_ Trapping: \_\_\_\_\_ (Licence #) \_\_\_\_\_  
Cutting wood: \_\_\_\_\_ (Licence #) \_\_\_\_\_ Fishing: \_\_\_\_\_ (Licence #) \_\_\_\_\_  
Hunting: \_\_\_\_\_ (Licence #) \_\_\_\_\_

**Hunter classification:** GHL \_\_\_\_\_ Special GHL \_\_\_\_\_ Resident \_\_\_\_\_ Non-Resident \_\_\_\_\_  
(Use one ✓ per hunter) Non-Resident Alien \_\_\_\_\_

**How many days for hunting?** 1 2 3 Other \_\_\_\_\_

**What animal species are/were you hunting?** (check all that apply)

Caribou	_____	Moose	_____	Grouse	_____
Wolf	_____	Wolverine	_____	Ptarmigan	_____
Other (specify)	_____				

**Did any of you kill any wildlife this trip? YES / NO** If YES, what species and how many?

Caribou \_\_\_\_\_ Moose \_\_\_\_\_ Wolf \_\_\_\_\_ Wolverine \_\_\_\_\_ Grouse \_\_\_\_\_

Ptarmigan \_\_\_\_\_ Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Where? \_\_\_\_\_

**For Caribou Kills:**

How many were : Male: \_\_\_\_\_ Female: \_\_\_\_\_ Were any females pregnant?: \_\_\_\_\_  
Adults: \_\_\_\_\_ Young: \_\_\_\_\_

How healthy were the caribou? Were they: Skinny \_\_\_\_\_  
Not so skinny \_\_\_\_\_  
Fat \_\_\_\_\_  
Really Fat \_\_\_\_\_

Did you notice any disease or injury with these? **YES / NO**

**What wildlife did you see?** (Indicate how many): Caribou: \_\_\_\_\_ Moose: \_\_\_\_\_

Wolf? \_\_\_\_\_ Wolverine? \_\_\_\_\_ Other? (Specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Where were these sightings? (identify lake or portage #, if possible) \_\_\_\_\_

Were any of them lame or injured? **YES / NO** (please specify details below):  
\_\_\_\_\_

Did you see any infractions, e.g., meat wastage? **YES / NO** If Yes (identify where) \_\_\_\_\_

Did you see any contaminant spills? **YES / NO** If Yes (identify where) \_\_\_\_\_

**See reverse side for any additional comments**

Attachment II

**Main Purpose of Road Users**

Activity	2004		2005		2006	
	# of Persons	# of Vehicles	# of Persons	# of Vehicles	# of Persons	# of Vehicles
Camping	109	55	77	30	82	39
Fishing	384	180	334	135	157	62
Hunting	1206	573	731	326	640	284
Other	12	8	6	8	1	1
Sight Seeing	420	201	337	144	190	78
Unknown	134	102	30	25	30	24
Wood Cutting	19	13	14	8	8	2
Working	5	4	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>2289</b>	<b>1136</b>	<b>1529</b>	<b>676</b>	<b>1108</b>	<b>490</b>

**Person Count by Community**

Community	2004		2005		2006	
	# of Persons	# of Vehicles	# of Persons	# of Vehicles	# of Persons	# of Vehicles
Dettah	106	51	84	48	32	16
Fort Providence	8	3	0	0	0	0
Fort Resolution	5	3	16	7	0	0
Fort Simpson	8	4	0	0	0	0
Fort Smith	27	9	68	30	22	14
Hay River	34	15	55	19	14	5
Lutsel K'e	0	0	6	2	0	0
N'Dilo	80	28	34	12	34	8
Behchoko	18	8	4	2	2	1
Rae Lakes	0	0	4	2	0	0
Unknown	141	109	34	28	35	26
Yellowknife	1848	897	1188	514	931	406
Out of Territory	6	3	30	10	33	13
Out of Country	8	6	6	2	5	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>2289</b>	<b>1136</b>	<b>1529</b>	<b>676</b>	<b>1108</b>	<b>490</b>

### Harvested Wildlife

Wildlife	2004 # Harvested	2005 # Harvested	2006 # Harvested
<i>Caribou</i>	<b>538</b>	<b>494</b>	<b>255</b>
Grouse	0	1	0
Hare	0	1	0
Ptarmigan	5	0	0
Moose	0	2	0
Wolf	9	3	3
Wolverine	0	1	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>552</b>	<b>502</b>	<b>260</b>

### Caribou Harvested by Hunter Type

Hunter Type	2004 # Harvested	2005 # Harvested	2006 # Harvested
GHL	236	312	148
Resident HL	143	88	90
Unknown	159	94	17
<b>Total</b>	<b>538</b>	<b>494</b>	<b>255</b>