

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 determining 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

| Year | Official Date Opened | Ross Lake Opened | Official Date Closed | Ross Lake Closed |
|-------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 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: _____

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 | _____ | Wekweti | _____ | 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 Person | # 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 |
| Total | 2289 | 1136 | 1529 | 676 | 1108 | 490 |

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 |
| Total | 2289 | 1136 | 1529 | 676 | 1108 | 490 |

Harvested Wildlife

| | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 |
|----------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Wildlife | # Harvested | # Harvested | # Harvested |
| Caribou | 538 | 494 | 255 |
| Grouse | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Hare | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Ptarmigan | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| Moose | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| Wolf | 9 | 3 | 3 |
| Wolverine | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| Total | 552 | 502 | 260 |

Caribou Harvested by Hunter Type

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