

November 16, 2009

Fred Mandeville
Manager Wildlife, North Slave Region
Environment and Natural Resources, GNWT
Box 2668
Yellowknife, NT X1A 2P9

Dear Mr. Mandeville,

Information Request – Supporting documents for Joint Proposal on Caribou Management Actions in Wek'èezhìi

The Wek'èezhìi Renewable Resources Board (WRRB) acknowledges receipt of the joint proposal submitted November 5th, 2009 and commends your efforts in coming to agreement with Tłı̨chǫ Government on many of the proposed actions. In order for the Board to fully understand and carefully consider the proposed management actions during its proceeding, it requires background information and supporting rationale for each action.

All information that the Board uses in its consideration of the proposal must be posted on the public registry, available to all interveners. The Board therefore requests from ENR reports pertaining to the Bathurst, Bluenose East and Ahiak caribou herds as per the attached list be provided for posting on the public registry.

Further, there are a number of joint recommendations and ENR recommendations that would be better understood if additional rationale is provided. For this purpose, please provide complete responses to the following questions:

Appendix A: Proposed Management Actions 1 - 5

- What consultation and with whom took place during the development of management actions related to the Bluenose East and Ahiak herds?
- What are the proposed geographic boundaries for Management Actions 1 to 5?

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- How do various harvest levels (ranging from 0 to level of current harvest) influence recovery time (i.e. time when numbers start to stabilize and/or increase) of the Bathurst herd?
- How does the sex ratio of the harvest (ranging from an all bull to an all cow harvest) affect recovery time of the Bathurst herd?
- Based on the population model developed by consultants to ENR what has been the estimated hunter harvest from 2006 – 2009?
- What are the current management actions for the Bluenose East herd?
- What are the current management actions for the Ahiak herd?
- Given that the Bluenose East herd is in decline, how do harvest levels affect the recovery of the herd? What is the risk to herd recovery of maintaining harvest of this herd?
- Given that the Ahiak herd has declined 60% since 2006, how do harvest levels affect the recovery of the herd? What is the risk to herd recovery of maintaining harvest of this herd?
- How does ENR determine appropriate harvest levels for declining caribou populations?
- What would be the population size of Ahiak and Bluenose East that would result in a recommendation of no female harvest?
- What are the options under consideration for providing funding to Tłıchǫ hunters to access other herds?

Appendix A: Proposed Management Actions 7

- What are the legislative options for establishing a no-hunting zone on either side of the winter road?
- How might the effectiveness of the winter road check stations be improved upon?

Appendix A: Proposed Management Action 8

- Please provide a summary of status of discussions with Government of Nunavut with respect to protection of caribou calving grounds.

Appendix B: Proposed Actions to Monitor

- Please provide a clear explanation of how each of the monitoring actions 1 through 11 is linked to assessing the efficacy of the management actions and how management actions will be adjusted to the results of such monitoring.
- Please provide a justification for the sampling frequency for health and condition parameters (e.g. both spring and fall).

- How often will birth rate be determined? What is the rationale for this sampling frequency?
- What does ENR considered a "healthy" sex ratio in barren ground caribou herds? How is this used to manage caribou herds in other jurisdictions?
- Please provide statistical rationale (e.g. power analysis) for justifying an increase in number of collars from 20 to 50 on the Bathurst herd.
- Please provide a proposed number of collars to be placed on bulls and the statistical rationale for this number.

We request that these documents and responses be provided to the Board office on or before November 30th, 2009 in digital format. As we are currently reviewing the proposal and will be reviewing all the information that comes into our office, we reserve the right to ask further questions.

If you have any questions related to this request I can be reached at 873-5740 or gpryznyk@wrrb.ca.

Sincerely,



Grant Pryzyk
Interim Chair

Attachment

cc. Eddie Erasmus
Director, Lands Protection
Tłıchq Government

ATTACHMENT – Information Request

- Alberta Research Council report
- Report on 2009 Bathurst calving ground census **or** presentation/posters used to provide survey results to communities
- Report on 2006 Bathurst calving ground census
- Report on 2003 Bathurst calving ground census
- Report on 1996 Bathurst calving ground census
- Report on Bluenose east 2009 photo census attempt **or** presentation/posters used to provide survey information to communities
- Report on Bluenose east 2005 and 2006 photo censuses
- Report on Bluenose east 2000 photo census
- Reports on Bluenose east surveys back to 1996
- Report on Ahiak 1996 survey
- Report on Ahiak reconnaissance surveys **or** presentations/posters used to provide survey information to communities including estimates of cow numbers and how they were determined
- Preliminary Ahiak trend analysis conducted by John Boulanger
- Report(s) on spring composition counts on Bathurst, Bluenose East and Ahiak herds since 1996
- Reports(s) on fall composition counts on Bathurst, Bluenose East and Ahiak herds since 1996
- Reports on winter road check stations
- Report(s) on wolf den site occupancy and pup survival since 2000 **or** presentations/posters used to provide survey information to communities
- Bathurst Caribou Management Plan
- Report on 2007 Caribou Summit
- ENR response to Outfitters report
- Report(s) on assessment of cumulative effects of mining activities (including any outputs from the Cumulative Effects Demonstration project)

IN ADDITION:

- Current Regulations under the NWT *Wildlife Act* pertaining to caribou harvesting in Wek'èezhii
- Summary of consultation with Government of Nunavut and/or Nunavut Wildlife Management Board and Sahtu Renewable Resources Board
- Listing of all community meetings hosted by ENR or Tłıchǫ Government to discuss caribou status since 2003 (include summary of results of meeting where available)
- Reports on winter road check stations
- Summary of resident harvest information since 1996 including hunter numbers, tags sold, estimated harvest by sex, and timing of harvest
- Summary of Tłıchǫ harvest information collected through calendars and interviews since 2003
- Summary of Outfitter harvest since 1996
- Summary of health and condition data collected on Bathurst caribou since 1996 including pregnancy rate
- Summary of number of active collars on each herd since 1996 (graph monthly or quarterly). Please include fate of collars where possible and calving ground assignment.

MAPS

- Map of Winter Roads upon which a 200m corridor is proposed and location(s) of communities and check stations
- Map of collared caribou distribution by herd affiliation (Bathurst, Bluenose East, Ahiak or unknown) during winter hunting season (December through end of March) for each year since 2000. Include winter roads on Map.
- Map of collared caribou distribution by herd affiliation (Bathurst, Bluenose East, Ahiak or unknown) during fall hunting season (August/September) for each year since 2000. Include location of outfitter camps and mines.

- Map of Tłıchǫ harvest by grid cell for years 2003 to present with overlay of winter (December through end of March) collared caribou distribution by herd affiliation (Bathurst, Bluenose East, Ahiak or unknown)