



GWICH'IN RENEWABLE RESOURCES BOARD

# news

Fall 2015



*Photo credit: GRRB*

## who we are

The **Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board (GRRB)** was established under the guidance of the Gwich'in Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement (GCLCA) to be the main instrument of wildlife, fish and forest management in the Gwich'in Settlement Area (GSA).

## who we work with

The GRRB works with its co-management partners - Gwich'in Tribal Council (GTC), Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT), Environment Canada (EC), Fisheries & Oceans Canada (DFO) - to communicate with the public and encourage conservation of renewable resources in the GSA. The GRRB works in collaboration with the four Renewable Resources Councils (RRCs) in the four communities (Inuvik, Tsiigehtchic, Fort McPherson, and Aklavik) to educate and promote sustainability of resources within the GSA.

## our mission

The GRRB works in cooperation with the Gwich'in people, governments and stakeholders and in accordance with the GCLCA to effectively protect, conserve and manage renewable resources in the GSA. It will do this in a respectful, transparent and inclusive manner, using the best available scientific and traditional knowledge.

## our vision

The GRRB is a model of renewable resources co-management. Working with its partners, the Board plays a leadership role in ensuring that the fish, forests and wildlife of the GSA remain healthy and sustainable.

## our mandate

The GRRB is the main instrument of wildlife, fish and forest management in the GSA. The Board acts in the public interest, representing all the parties to the Gwich'in Comprehensive Land Claim Settlement - the Gwich'in, the people of the Northwest Territories, and all Canadians.

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## GET IN TOUCH!

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## Amy Amos executive director

A Nihtat Gwich'in participant, I was born in Inuvik and grew up in Halifax, Nova Scotia with my father, Wallace Thompson. My mother is Susie Thompson (Linklater/Kaye) from the Kaye & Stewart family.

I have been with the GRRB since 2006. I was hired as a biologist and was promoted to Executive Director in 2009. My main job is to ensure that the Board's direction is implemented at the staff level. My job description can be broadly categorized into personnel management, financial management, Board administration and liaison activities.

**Personnel management** I am always proud to praise our talented and dedicated staff support team. You will see the evidence of their hard work in their updates throughout this newsletter. We have maintained the same cohort of permanent staff for over four years. This really helps with relationships with the communities and our partners, but also for knowledge growth in our organization that helps work toward the Board's vision.

Our term and casual staff have grown over the past year. Kaytlin Cooper remains on term as our Species at Risk Biologist. Her term has recently been extended until August 26, 2015 and we continue to seek permanent job security for this position. The GRRB received an outside wage subsidy support to help cover the costs for a Summer Student (Jozef Semmler). DFO hired a Technician (Ryan McLeod) who worked jointly at our office and the DFO office. His term expired on October 30, 2015. You can find individual staff updates later in this newsletter.

**Financial management** I am responsible for ensuring that the Board's finances are managed appropriately. This has been done successfully over the time I have been in the Executive Director role. We meet all our financial reporting deadlines and have managed to secure outside funds to help us deliver additional projects and programs that support the Board's mandate.

Office Manager Cheryl Greenland and I work very closely together on financial management and are always trying to find ways to be more efficient.

On a personal note, I have taken advantage of some opportunities during my personal time that have helped me gain more accounting skills. I believe this has helped me with my job at the GRRB.

**Board administration** I am responsible for the coordination of all Board meetings and for following up on Board actions and motions. In 2015, the Board held two face-to-face meetings:

- February 17-19 in Inuvik
- October 6-7 in Fort McPherson

and three teleconferences:

- March 12
- July 8
- October 29

This newsletter will highlight some of the outcomes from these meetings, especially the recent face-to-face meeting.

In addition, I am overseeing the development of a Safety Policy for the GRRB. We have made great progress. The Health & Safety Committee will meet to review and finalize this document prior to seeking Board approval.

*...cont'd on next page*



*Photo credit: GRRB*



I am involved with the following committees:

- *Wildlife Act* Working Group (last met Oct 2015)
- Conference of Management Authorities (last met Oct 2015)
- Species At Risk Stewardship Committee (a Call for Proposals will be released in the new year, with a March 1 deadline)
- Arctic Borderlands Ecological Knowledge Society (meets monthly)
- Advisory Committee for the Cooperation for Wildlife Management (last met Aug 2015).

**Liaison activities** We all have a role to play in helping to work together better. I attend meetings to help deliver the Board's messages, and we communicate these messages through other venues, such as: this newsletter, our annual Conservation Calendar, our website and our Facebook page. Please contact our office if you have any questions.

Another important component of liaison skills is leadership. The Board supported my participation in the 2015 Governor General's Canadian Leadership Conference (May 22 - June 5), where the theme was Leadership and Innovation. After meeting in Ottawa, delegates split into 14 study groups to tour different areas of Canada. I was assigned to the study group for PEI and Magdalen Islands, Quebec. We visited government, politicians, entrepreneurs, business owners, and individuals with innovative ideas, and observed how each person was using leadership and innovation. We presented our observations to the Governor General in Ottawa at the closing plenary, in the form of a comical TV competition show called "The Islands' Next Innovators." I came away greatly inspired, with new leadership skills and new friendships.

I hope you enjoy our newsletter. Please let us know if you have any questions.

*Hai Cho (thank you).*



## Eugene Pascal board chairperson

It has been a different year for me. I spent 8-10 months out of the region, but I was able to participate in most of the GRRB meetings and calls.

We worked on the *Wildlife Act*, and the Cape Bathurst, Bluenose-West and Bluenose-East Barren-ground Caribou Herds Management Plan.

I want to thank the staff and the Board for allowing me to continue to be able to participate while being out of the region. I am back in the region now and don't plan to leave anymore. Thanks to the Board and the staff for their patience and understanding and for their participation while I was out of the region.



Executive Director Amy Amos and delegates visit the Library of Parliament in Ottawa as part of the 2015 Governor General's Canadian Leadership Conference Photo credit: A. Amos





**Cindy Allen**  
gtc alternate member



Since I was last up here in March or April, I was appointed to the Species At Risk Committee to represent the GRRB. I really enjoy that. I've commented on a bat report and on grizzly bears.

As a person who is not a biologist and with a legal background I take a different approach: making sense of the reports and what they say with technical terms. The public should be able to make sense of these reports, so my comments often relate to that. I enjoy that and am grateful to represent the GRRB in that function.

*Mahsi.*

**Sarah Jerome**  
gtc alternate member



I was appointed to this Board this past winter. There is a lot of information to keep track of; a lot of information that is really important to our local people and to our elders. We were designated as keepers of the land. We were told to take care of our environment, the animals, the birds, the fish.

This is a big responsibility for us, for me to sit on this Board. I am happy to sit on it. There is so much reading to be done, so much information that is coming at us, so we have to keep on top of it. I really appreciate people having patience with me at this time. Thank you very much.





Photo credit: GRRB

## October Board Meeting

The GRRB held its fall face-to-face meeting in Fort McPherson on October 6-7. At this Board meeting, Day One of the agenda included: Board and staff updates (provided in this newsletter); a discussion with GRRB's Wildlife Studies Fund investment advisors; Environment Canada updates on Species at Risk; DFO update and review of Rat River Harvest Monitoring and other Dolly Varden programs; and an Environment and National Resources staffing, operations and wildlife files review.

GTC member Tsatsiye Catholique gave a presentation on fracking and reminded the Board that the GTC passed a resolution at their 2014 AGM that bans fracking until it is proven to be safe.

Day Two of the meeting included a discussion on the Bluenose Caribou herds; an overview of *NWT Wildlife Act* compliance; a presentation on the Mackenzie Delta Muskrat Project; RRC session; a progress report on GRRB Research Priorities; and an opportunity for members of the public in attendance to speak.

### Bluenose Caribou Management

Following the 2014 submission of the management plan to government, the working group is attempting to meet a December deadline to complete action plans for all three

herds. Marsha Branigan and Tracy Davidson of ENR presented the results of the photo survey. Amy Amos led a discussion on Advisory Committee for Cooperation on Wildlife Management (ACCWM) meeting topics and herd status. *See Page 8 for a more detailed update.*

### NWT Wildlife Act Compliance

Compliance with the Wildlife Act is obtained by more than enforcement! Education and prevention play very important roles. *See Page 9 for more information.*

### Mackenzie Delta Muskrats

Jeremy Brammer from McGill University reviewed progress on the research he and Chanda Brietzky (UVic) are doing in partnership with the GRRB through habitat surveys, interviews, and carcass examinations. Carcass collections

of muskrats and predators for this research will continue in 2016. Look for more information from your local RRC, or contact the GRRB.

### Renewable Resources Council (RRC) Session

The GRRB seeks advice from the RRCs to help it make the best-informed decisions representing community views and interests. The RRCs are the 'eyes and ears of the land.' The goal of the RRC session is to ensure an effective relationship between the GRRB and RRCs.

A number of RRC concerns were brought forward, including problems with the fibre optic line; 25-year ferry landing license renewal; improper culvert installations; group trapping areas; a Native User Agreement permitting traditional activities along highways and byways; and concerns over not seeing caribou.

### GRRB Research Priorities

Renewable Resources Manager Janet Boxwell led a presentation on the identification of GRRB research priorities. She also described new advice for research from RRC members and GRRB staff and discussed potential dates for the next workshop. *Refer to Page 14 for further details.*



Photo credit: GRRB





**Kristen Callaghan**  
wildlife biologist  
since February 2008

**Management Planning Taking Care of Caribou: the Cape Bathurst, Bluenose-West and Bluenose-East Barren-ground Caribou Herds Management Plan.** My participation in the ACCWM Working Group continues, following the completion of the management plan in 2014. I attended several teleconference calls and in-person meetings as the group works toward a December deadline to complete action plans for all three herds. [See Page 8 for a more detailed update.](#)

**Northern Richardson Mountains Dall's Sheep Management Plan.** There is more work to be done on the management of this declining sheep population. Notification of population status and GRRB recommendations for management action were included in the Spring 2015 GRRB newsletter, and in website and Facebook posts. Visits to the RRCs and Aklavik Hunters & Trappers Committee regarding the 2015 pilot monitoring project included reminders of the survey results and GRRB management actions. We have received limited replies from plan partners regarding management actions approved in our 2014 motion.

**Research Caribou Collaring.** On March 21-22, I assisted ENR as part of a three-person crew doing caribou capture and collaring of the Tuktoyaktuk Peninsula (TP) and Cape Bathurst (CB) caribou herds that took place March 6-23. My roles on the crew were to provide navigational direction to caribou locations (via earlier reconnaissance flights), spot caribou, monitor and record capture and handling times, assist in handling, record field data, collect hair and fecal samples, provide assistance and equipment to collaring personnel, and help ensure that all handling and capture protocols were closely followed. This was an exhausting and enjoyable experience. In the two days that I assisted, we captured and collared 30 caribou. I also learned that caribou can smell sweet, like Labrador Tea!

**Caribou Photo Survey.** In July, I participated as a crew member in the photo surveys of the TP, CB and Bluenose West caribou herds. Conditions were not always optimal for photography, extending survey activities from July 2-19, but in the end we completed the surveys. As in past surveys, my main roles during flights were telemetry and navigation. I also counted caribou on the survey photos of the TP and CB herds to assist with herd estimates.

**Pilot Project: Community Monitoring of Dall's Sheep.** Workshops were held in Aklavik on May 12 and in Fort McPherson on June 9. Tracy Davison (ENR) and I discussed research needs with workshop participants and brainstormed how to monitor sheep trends in the GSA in the future. On June 18, I visited John Carmichael who used a GRRB spotting scope to collect information for the project while he was at his char camp this August. We also visited other locations along Husky Channel to evaluate visibility of sheep on Chigwazraii for future monitoring.

On July 23, Tracy, Dennis Semple, Larry Koe and I set up two cameras to monitor sheep on the mountain. John's information & camera data will be examined for inclusion in a report along with workshop input.

**Liaison** At the fall meeting, the Board recommended increased communication around caribou hunting and management in the GSA. As part of this outreach, I adapted these messages into a *Let The Leaders Pass* bumper sticker and a poster of Gwich'in elders' quotes. They will be distributed in GSA communities through RRCs, schools and other organizations. [See Page 16 for examples of these new media.](#)



Photo credit: K. Callaghan, GRRB





Photo credit: K. Callaghan, GRRB

## Barren-Ground Caribou

ENR photo surveys completed this summer on the Bluenose East (BNE), Bluenose West (BNW), Bathurst, Cape Bathurst (CB) and Tuktoyaktuk Peninsula (TP) barren-ground caribou herds in the NWT show that the herds continue to decline. The surveys, done in June and July, indicate that the number of animals in all herds have dropped significantly since the 2012 and 2013 surveys. ENR noted that the number of breeding cows, a crucial indicator of herd health,

has dropped by 50% in the BNE and in the adjacent Bathurst herd. The number of breeding cows was not assessed for TP, CB, or BNW herds in 2015.

The Advisory Committee for Cooperation on Wildlife Management (ACCWM) was created to share information and coordinate wildlife management between inter-jurisdictional wildlife management boards, with a particular focus on the management of trans-boundary caribou herds. In November of 2014, *Taking Care of Caribou: The Cape Bathurst, Bluenose-West, and Bluenose-East Barren-Ground Caribou Herds Management Plan* was signed and put into effect. The Plan will act as the primary guidance on monitoring and management of the Cape Bathurst, Bluenose-West and Bluenose-East caribou herds.

The ACCWM Working Group is drafting Action Plans for the BNE, BNW and CB caribou herds, in that order. The Plans are based on the actions and framework laid out in the approved management plan which was written based on community, traditional and scientific knowledge. The working group's activities on the action plans address:

- Current status of the herds
- Criteria for assessing the status of the herds and their habitat
- Determination of current threshold
- A detailed management action list
- A schedule for completing the management actions
- A schedule for community engagement
- A budget
- A communication plan.

To complete these Action Plans by the December 2015 deadline, the ACCWM now needs to consider herd status recommendations and set herd status at their annual meeting, as outlined in the Plan. Herd status is set based on an estimate of the overall size of the herd; the current population trend (increasing, decreasing, or stable); and additional monitoring indicators that supplement that interpretation.

Based on 2012 survey results, herd status for BNE was set to orange in January 2015. GRRB representatives will participate in upcoming ACCWM discussions to set herd status for all three herds for inclusion in the action plans and management into 2016.



Photo credit: ENR



# NWT Wildlife Act Compliance

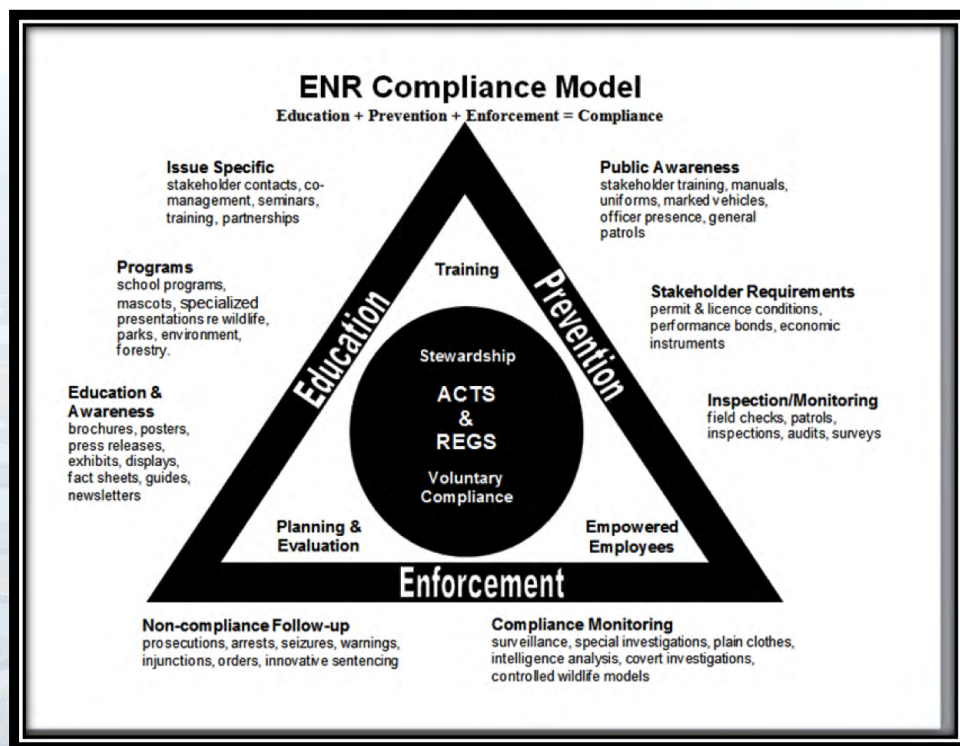
This content was taken from information presented at the GRRB public meeting by Jamie Chambers, ENR.

**Compliance** is when behaviour conforms to the laws of the Northwest Territories and Canada. It is much more than enforcement. Education and prevention play equally important roles.

**Education** might include school programs (career fair and classroom presentations); Bear Awareness (posters in communities, scrolling ads, newspaper ads); Trade Shows (Inuvik); brochures and pamphlets (Inuvik Visitor's Guide); and Sight Your Rifle (Aklavik, Fort McPherson).

**Prevention** programs from ENR staff are: scheduled field patrols (boats, skidoos, trucks); inspections (partnership with DFO on Tuk Highway); public awareness and general patrols (marked vehicles, uniforms); and information packages (letters, reminders).

ENR officers undertake prevention patrols as part of their **enforcement**



activities. They may also investigate complaints and infractions that are against the new *Wildlife Act*. The table below shows recorded occurrences of non-compliance in the Inuvik region over the past two years. Under the new *Wildlife Act*, an officer has one year to lay charges, from the date the officer becomes aware of the offense.

There are a number of NWT-based initiatives in place to support compliance with the *Act*. ENR will

continue to coordinate compliance actions and approaches regarding the implementation of tags for all caribou management units in the NWT requiring tags or conservation measures. Officers may use a combination of compliance tools: education, warnings, seizing meat, or laying charges. Charges will be laid when an investigation supports the charge with sufficient evidence. Violators will face penalties already set out in the *Wildlife Act*.

## What Can Cause ENR to Start an Investigation?

- Someone notifies ENR staff to make a report
- Someone notifies ENR staff and gives a statement
- Something is seen on Facebook or other social media
- Rumours or stories in the community, everyone "knows" something (including radio)
- First hand observations - someone phones the Report a Poacher Line to report an infraction (must be reasonable information).

Sample of Occurrences in the Inuvik Region December 2013 – August 2015

Abandoned Wildlife	1
Bear Reports	104
Dead Wildlife	11
Discharge of Contaminants	8
Diseased Wildlife	4
Forest Fire Report	1
Problem Wildlife	9
Public Complaint	3
Request for Assistance	1
Wastage of Big Game Meat	10
Wildlife Sighting	3



**Kris Maier**  
**fisheries biologist**  
**since March 2010**

**Management Planning** The Integrated Fisheries Management Plan for Dolly Varden Char continues to show progress. Conservation of char populations using science and traditional knowledge is ongoing under the Rat River Working Group (RRWG) process and the Rat River Char Monitoring Program. **See Page 11 for more information on the RRWG.**

**Research** This spring, I applied for and received funding totalling over \$60,000 from the Gwich'in Land Use Planning Board, the Aurora Research Institute (ARI) and the GRRB.

I received research permits for both Rat River and Arctic Red River projects (ARI & DFO scientific licences, Animal Care Committee animal use permit, GTC land access authorization).

In May and June, I planned and consulted on habitat monitoring and juvenile population investigation of the Rat River char stock. I visited each RRC for comment and feedback. Special focus was put on



*Photo credit: K. Maier, GRRB*

describing and educating about the use of electrofishing and addressing concerns about the method.

In July, I planned and consulted on a proposed Arctic Red River project with the Tsiigehtchic RRC.

August was a great month for field work. Starting with the Rat River, I recorded the spatial distribution of juvenile char occupancy in the Fish Creek headwaters; and collected benthic invertebrate samples, water chemistry samples and water temperature data. We improved our general knowledge of Fish Creek and how Rat River char use this habitat, and are working towards a model to predict juvenile population abundance and survival.

I also undertook fieldwork in the Arctic Red River. Our main priority for this research was to establish baseline knowledge of the

headwaters area. This was the first time the headwaters had ever been surveyed for fish species. Water chemistry and habitat monitoring techniques were employed, in addition to the installation of a weather station. Results from this research are forthcoming. Information collected included preliminary identification of Dolly Varden, Arctic Grayling, and Slimy Sculpin; water chemistry samples; water temperature data; and weather data.

In September, I helped complete the Rat River fall seine and population assessment with Colin Gallagher of DFO.

**Technical Advice** I participated in the Tuk-Inuvik Highway Corridor Working Group meeting and the Beaufort Sea Partnership.



*Photo credit: Ellen Lea*



*Photo credit: K. Maier, GRRB*



# Rat River Working Group (RRWG)

## what does the RRWG do?

We meet once per year in late winter to review scientific information and Traditional Knowledge. Based on these reviews, we recommend voluntary sustainable harvest levels for the Rat River char stock. We consult with communities for local feedback and communicate harvest levels to fishermen. We also review and provide feedback on proposals for Rat River research projects.

## where does the RRWG get their information?

Most of our information comes from the Rat River Harvest Monitoring Program. Contributors to this



Photo credit: GRRB

program are John Carmichael, Billy Wilson and Selwyn Kay. The Program provides the RRWG with information on:

- Population estimates
- Char biology
- Age
- Length
- Sex
- Maturity
- Diseases/parasites

DFO conducts a Science Population Assessment each year in the form of a fall fish seine and shares that information with us, including:

- Population estimates
- Char biology
- Length
- Sex
- Maturity
- Injury rates

## recommendations

Based on the data collected in the previous fishing year, the RRWG makes a harvest recommendation for the upcoming year. The harvest recommendation is voluntary and follows the guidelines set out in the Dolly Varden Integrated Fisheries Management Plan (IFMP). For the Rat River stock, the IFMP goal is to keep annual harvest levels below 5% of the most recent population estimate. In most years, this goal has been achieved.

## harvest reporting

A key factor for decision-making by the RRWG is knowing how many char are being harvested. Without accurate harvest numbers on which to base decisions, the RRWG will be less confident in the sustainability of the harvest and the status of the population. Encourage fishermen to report their char harvests!



Photo credit: GRRB



## Janet Boxwell

### renewable resources manager

since August 2010

**Research** I coordinate GRRB research priorities in consultation with staff, RRCs and co-management partners. I maintain a research summary database that helps me monitor the progress of research priorities and report back to the communities. I continue to refine this process and update the research interests list annually. I also maintain a spreadsheet tracking research and regulatory land use applications.

This summer, I provided in-kind support (field and laboratory work) for muskrat researcher Chanda Brietzke. I involved four youth in this field work through the Youth Work Experience Program.

I enjoyed assisting GRRB staff with Bank Swallow surveys. I communicated with operators concerning quarry access, and provided field support along with three youth assistants.



Photo credit: K. Cooper, GRRB

**Technical Advice Regulatory Review** I review regulatory and research applications in the GSA, assess possible impacts on renewable resources, and coordinate responses with the assistance of the Board, staff, and RRCs. These can be single or multi-year proposals, and range from access permits to license renewals to wildlife studies.

**Liaison Communication** I attended and participated in a moose hide tanning pilot project coordinated by Margaret Nazon in Tsiigehtchic. We recorded images at different stages of the process. I will assist Margaret in developing a proposal for Traditional Skills teacher training (Spring 2016). I attend public and community events such as Science Rendezvous

(coordinated by Aurora Research Institute) and Oceans Day (coordinated by DFO) to assist our community and co-management partners. This increases the profile of the GRRB and lets the public know about our programs.

I have been active as a participant in Water Stewardship focus groups discussing aquatic monitoring, TK and local knowledge, and aquatic education. The results of these discussions will be included in the Water Strategy Action Plan 2016-2020.

**Education/Youth** I develop and lead environmental education youth activities, including: Science Rendezvous, coordinated by the Arctic Research Institute (ARI); Nature Day; Camp Kivuni summer camp in Inuvik; and Tetlit RRC Summer Camp in Fort McPherson.

I am updating our Education Unit to reflect the results of our pilot program.

I also coordinated the Youth Work Experience Program (YWEP) with ARI and directly with researchers, resulting in 8 youth placements (6 Inuvik, 1 Ft. McPherson, 1 Aklavik). I worked with our Executive Director to improve YWEP communications, application and reporting process, including researcher pre-trip communications and safety plan and post-trip follow-up reporting.



Tanning moose hide. Photo credit: C. Cunada





**Kaytlin Cooper**  
**species at risk biologist**  
**since January 2015**

**Management Planning Boreal Caribou Recovery Strategy** Boreal Caribou was listed as Threatened in February 2014. The Conference of Management Authorities has two years from the time of listing to develop a Recovery Strategy within the NWT, and this time is almost up. However, the development of the Recovery Strategy has been delayed by a maximum of one year due to the complex nature of their management and the receipt of significant and substantive comments during consultations that require additional time to address.

I worked on the wording for the Recovery Goal and Objective. I also led a staff review of the proposed Recovery Strategy and spearheaded community consultations. I expect to be involved in future reviews and community consultations regarding revisions to the Recovery Strategy.

**Research Gwichya Gwich'in Renewable Resource Council – SARA Stewardship Fund Bank Swallow Surveys** This was the second year for Bank Swallow (*Riparia riparia*) surveys in the

Tsiigethchic area. We hired a boat driver and three youth from Tsiigehtchic, and repeated the river surveys Natalka conducted last year on the Mackenzie and Arctic Red Rivers. Although fewer colonies were found, there were more burrows, ranging from 2-200 burrows per colony. Fewer birds were seen due to the delay in surveying – most birds had recently migrated.

Surveys were extended to include gravel pits between Inuvik and the NWT/Yukon border. Burrows per colony there ranged from 2-67. Our goal is to acquire yearly funding and create a Baseline Dataset for this federally-listed, Threatened species.

Work ahead includes entry of survey data into e-Bird and Bird Studies Canada; completion of a report to distribute throughout the Tsiigehtchic Community and the GSA; providing an overview of results to the Ontario Bank Swallow Project, who provided survey protocols and forms; completing the SAR Stewardship Fund report; and completing the Wildlife Research Permit report.

**Technical Advice** I have reviewed the Barren-ground Caribou Status Report (territorial); Short-Eared Owl Draft Management Plan (federal); Little Brown Myotis Recovery Strategy (federal); Boreal Caribou Recovery Strategy (territorial); Peregrine Falcon Management Plan (federal); Olive-sided Flycatcher Recovery Strategy (federal); and Northern Mountain Caribou, Gypsy Cuckoo Bumble Bee and Wolverine species listings (federal).

**Liaison** In my role as SAR biologist, I attend RRC meetings in the communities. I am also involved in public meetings for the Boreal Caribou Recovery Strategy, and teleconferences for the Amphibian Work Plan and Conference of Management Authorities.

From March through June of 2015, I participated in a series of youth-focused events as a representative of the GRRB: Nature Day in Aklavik, Inuvik, Fort McPherson and Tsiigehtchic; Career Fairs in Inuvik, Fort McPherson, and Aklavik; a Science Fair in Inuvik; and an Open House in Aklavik.



*Bank swallows active at their burrows. Photo credit: J. Boxwell, GRRB*





**Cheryl Greenland**  
office manager  
since February 2009

I am a Nihtat Gwich'in participant from Inuvik.

The employee representative for a newly-formed Safety Committee for the GRRB, my role is to bring employee concerns about safety issues to the Committee. I have been involved in:

- creation of a detailed work plan;
- printing Acts and Regulations;
- obtaining quotes for safety equipment;
- posting in-house signs;
- assisting with hiring casual staff for policy drafting.

Financially, the GRRB has to submit a mid-year report by November 1. There is funding to do an interim audit and this can be done within a couple of days once the books are updated. I started working with the auditor on an interim audit after the Board meeting.

I have also been assisting with the creation of our 2016 Conservation Calendar, most notably placing important dates throughout the year.

## GRRB Research Priorities

The current process by which the Board determines research priorities was developed in September 2014. This annual cycle consists of project decisions (February), data collection (summer), and priority updates (September). Every 3-5 years, major priorities are approved at a Research Priorities (RP) workshop.

Our current primary priorities and their current status are listed below. These priorities were set at the 2012 RP workshop and were approved at the February 2013 Board meeting.

Primary priorities (2013-2018)	Status update as of September 2015
Bluenose Caribou: implement management plan actions	Management plan approved in November 2014. Action planning is now underway.
Grizzly Bear: obtain baseline data on population and habitat	No population studies done. Continue to suggest this to ENR at their wildlife biologist meetings. Conducted pilot study on human interactions (2013 & 2014).
Dolly Varden Char: stock and habitat assessment	Ongoing, added more habitat assessment including the Arctic Red River headwaters in 2015.
Harvest monitoring: data collection and analysis	Ongoing, requested financial support from GTC in January 2014.
Lake Trout: impact of developments on Lake Trout at Airport Lake	Study completed in 2013 by Ben Kissinger with GRRB Fisheries Biologist assistance.
Forestry: implement Forest Management Plan actions	Ongoing, ENR tends to take the lead. GRRB helps with education and communication.

Secondary priorities were also identified and updated:

Secondary priorities (2013-2018)	Status update as of September 2015
Moose: population studies	Survey in 2011 and 2013, including a community ground survey.
Porcupine caribou: any studies	Yukon government and Alaska are taking the lead to conduct population studies. GRRB supported a rut count in 2013-2014, but it was unable to be done.
Otter: population studies	TK survey conducted by GRRB in 2012. Recent comments at meetings suggest that otters may not be as much of a concern as before.

New advice or interest from the RRCs during the 2015-2016 year (for work during the 2016-2017 fiscal year) include: Boreal caribou survey; fish contaminants study; and a Bank Swallow and SAR school program. GRRB staff recommend: Richardson Mountain muskox population surveys; developing a community monitoring program for sheep; TK research on SAR for upcoming assessments; continued Bank Swallow surveys; development and validation of standardized fisheries sampling protocols in partnership with DFO, GNWT and the NWT Cumulative Impact Monitoring Program (CIMP).



## Ryan McLeod technician (DFO joint hire)

I was born in Inuvik and raised in Aklavik, where from a very young age I was fully immersed in cultural on-the-land activities such as hunting, fishing, and trapping. I have a deep fascination, respect and appreciation for our land and its resources. I consider wise conservation practices to be instrumental if we are to continue utilizing our natural resources in a sustainable manner. I continue to hunt, fish and trap throughout the year and I place a high priority on educating youth on the traditional practices.

A recent graduate of the Environment and Natural Resources Program at Aurora Campus in Inuvik, I am fortunate to be in a position that allows me to combine traditional knowledge with modern Western science and be a valuable contributor to the GRRB. Despite the modernization of the North, I encourage youth to learn our traditional practices and not to lose sight of our past identity

as the original conservationists and stewards of the land and its resources. If we take care of the land, it will take care of us.

During my term with the GRRB I have taken part in a number of field projects, including:

- Small Mammal survey with Kristin Callaghan and Jozef Carnogursky
- Delta Muskrat study with Chanda Brietzky and her team from the University of Victoria
- Rat River Char and Arctic Red River Dolly Varden studies with Kris Maier
- Hendrickson Island and East Whitefish Beluga study with Lisa Loseto and her team of researchers
- Installation of earth anchors for a wind turbine at High Point near Inuvik.

I have enjoyed my term as the Fisheries Technician this summer and look forward to being a part of the productive team at the GRRB/DFO in future projects. I ask that all harvesters use our natural resources wisely so that our way of subsistence living can continue for many more years to come. *Mahsi.*



## Jozef Semmler summer student

I was born and raised in Inuvik. I am very pleased that I was selected to come back as the Summer Student for the second year in a row. During this time, I was part of a few projects and activities and had a different role in a couple of the same jobs, such as the Small Mammal survey. Last year, it was my first time doing this so I was led by Alicia McRae (2014 Technician Trainee). This year, I led the project by organizing the trips and supervised youth that were hired from the Youth Work Experience Program. I also assisted with Oceans Day in Aklavik; the Hare Pellet survey; Camp Kivuni; water and vegetation sampling; and more.

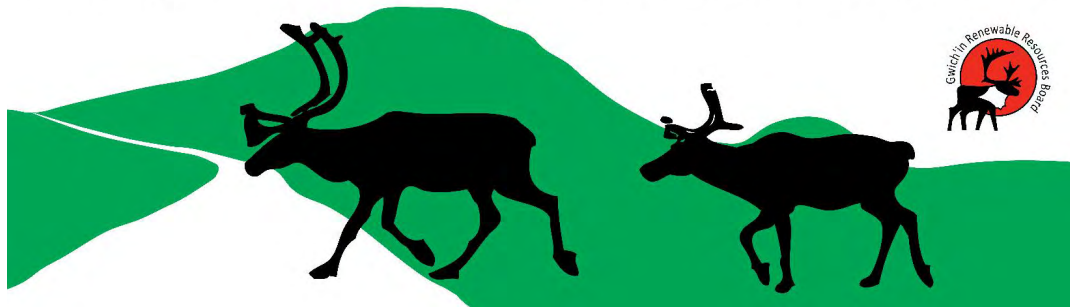
Working for the GRRB was a great experience this year, as I got to travel to the communities near Inuvik and also to places you can't easily get to - such as Rat River. I learned more on some of the projects I did last year, but I also got to learn something else on the Rat River Habitat Assessment because I missed it last year. I would like to thank the GRRB for giving me the opportunity to work for them again this summer.



Photo credit: C. Gallagher



# Let the Leaders Pass



**Caribou have arrived on the highway!** The GRRB are working hard on messaging that supports these words from our elders.

Please call your RRC for monthly meeting times:

Ehdiitat RRC (Aklavik)  
867-978-2336

Tetlit RRC (Fort McPherson)  
867-952-2330

Gwichya RRC (Tsiigehtchic)  
867-953-3608

Nihtat RRC (Inuvik)  
867-777-6650

## Nakhwa'anjò kat dàgwìnuu geenjit yìnjigwichìdhoh'èe

### Respect the words of our elders

#### Respect each other

**Share with each other** Whatever you killed long ago you didn't use it just for yourself. **You have to share.** That way you have good luck all the time. –Elizabeth Greenland

**Hunt safely** Watch how you shoot ...when you go around the caribou. You don't just fool [around]. **Know where everybody is and...watch what direction you shoot.** If you know somebody is in that direction, you try not to shoot that way. –Allen Koe Sr.

#### Don't harass caribou when hunting

I saw one year what I didn't like to see; I saw somebody chasing caribou with a big ski-doo. It's not right for them to do that because, these caribou their tongues were just hanging out. –Emma Kay

#### Retrieve what you shoot

If a hunter wounds a caribou and leaves it to die of its injury, later when they hunt they won't make a good kill. This is because they left a wounded caribou...

...They are not to be killed for nothing. It is not to be left where it is killed. Take it and use it. If you don't want it, give it to whoever wants it.

–Chief Johnny Charlie Sr.

#### Sight in your rifle

You got to learn how to shoot caribou. You can't shoot and aim and kill them; you got to shoot certain ways to get hold of it because the land is rolling hills sometimes and the bullet will drop or [be] too high. **You got to learn how to handle your rifle.**

–Allen Koe Sr.

#### Respect the caribou

#### Don't waste

You have to respect it after you shoot it, and **make sure you take everything.** I know it used to be that men when they shot caribou, they even covered the blood up with snow.

–Bertha Francis

#### Let the Leaders Pass

When hunting caribou, people used to let the first herd, the leaders, pass by. Then they would **hunt some caribou from the middle of the migration.** They would let the rest go unhunted.

–Alfred Semple

#### Tell about your harvest

Caribou populations are in decline and other groups are facing management actions. We have had limited access to caribou the past 2 years. Porcupine caribou are abundant now but to help the Boards with their management plans, we need all harvesters to "report what they harvest". This will help to ensure that we have caribou today but more importantly for future generations. **Please report your harvest.**

–Robert Charlie

#### Respect the land

**Look after our land and respect our land.** We used to walk all over the land, but not with all skidoos and 4 wheelers. Not only can it destroy the land, it destroys the plants that the animals live off of.

–Mary Effie Snowshoe

E. Greenland, A.Koe Sr., J. Charlie Sr., A. Semple, B. Francis quotes from Gwich'in Ecological Knowledge Project. 1997. GRRB; E. Kay quote from Gwich'in Knowledge of Woodland Caribou Project. 2010. GSCL. R.Charlie & M.E. Snowshoe quotes 2015 pers comm to the GRRB. Background photo K.Maler, GRRB. Caribou photo courtesy Alicia McRae.



## upcoming events

December 11-12  
**Porcupine Caribou Management Board Meeting**  
Whitehorse

January 12-14  
**Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act Workshop**  
Yellowknife

January (TBA)  
**Regional Renewable Resources Council Meeting**  
Inuvik

February (TBD - 1st or 2nd week)  
**NWT Board Forum Meeting**  
Yellowknife

February 8  
**Porcupine Caribou Management Board Annual Harvest Meeting**  
Dawson City

February 23-25  
**GRRB Board Meeting**  
Inuvik