



Gwich'in Renewable Resource Board

News from the Executive Director



Summer finally arrived in Inuvik and the Board Staff is busy preparing for another field season. Radio telemetry work will continue in Travaillant Lake. Our Fisheries Biologist, Les Harris, is going to fly to Travaillant Lake and along adjacent rivers trying to locate those 50 Broad whitefish that are carrying radio transmitters. Some index netting is also taking place later this summer in the lake.

Dall's sheep work continues in the Richardson Mountains. GRRB Staff are going to spend most of July in the Mountains to do vegetation and habitat work. There are still five radio collared Dall's sheep rams producing location information on a daily basis. We are not doing any new collaring work this summer.

The Board started an interview study among Gwich'in beneficiaries this spring. The Board wants to know what concerns, if any, Gwich'in beneficiaries have that are related to the Mackenzie Gas Project. This knowledge will help the Board in its work as an intervener to the MGP Review Process. A similar study was done last summer among the Inuvialuit. Raila Salokangas was hired to conduct the research and knock on peoples' doors to ask questions about the project. The study started in Inuvik in the end of May and continued until the end of June. Bobbie Jo Greenland and Ruth Wright are helping Raila in Inuvik. In Fort McPherson the survey was done on June 6-9 with the help from Mariah McSwain. Raila was in Aklavik in mid-June with Jim Kaye and carried out more interviews in Tsiigehtchic.

You will find more information about GRRB projects elsewhere in this newsletter. On behalf of the GRRB, I wish everyone a good and productive summer. My office is open to anyone who would like to get information or have ideas for the Board, or just wants to chat.

Mussi Cho,
Jari Heikkila

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For more information contact us!

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News from the Enviro-Biologist (Jennifer Walker-Larsen)



Mackenzie Gas Project:

We have been busy with the review of the Mackenzie Gas Project. The GRRB is a registered intervener in the Joint Review Panel process to review the environmental impacts of the



proposed Mackenzie Valley Pipeline. We have looked at the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) submitted by Mackenzie Gas Project, asked for more information about impacts to renewable resources, and will participate in the EIS conference organized by the Joint Review Panel at the end of June. After the conference the Joint Review Panel will decide if there is sufficient information to proceed to Public Hearings.

Summer Researchers:

We have researchers from Concordia University in Inuvik this summer looking into ways to improve spruce tree regrowth after clearing. This is the final year of a three-year study funded by the GRRB and the Pipeline Readiness Office. You may see two students, Crissy Rannellucci and Veronique Vendette, with GRRB and ENR staff wandering around the bush this summer raking up soil, planting spruce seeds, and measuring tree seedlings.

Forest Management:

Work continues on Forest Management planning with all the Renewable Resource Councils signed off on the 1-year and 5-year forestry workplans proposed by the draft Forest Management Plan this spring. This is an important step because it means that forestry work carried out by the GRRB, GTC, and Inuvik Forest Management Division (Dept. of Environment and Natural Resources) will follow the Plan. The next step is to finalize the Plan. We hope to have the final revisions made this year and submitted for final approval by the GRRB, GTC and GNWT.

Forest Education:

We are also finalizing a Forest Education Kit for teachers. We received funding last year from the First Nations Forestry Program to develop classroom and field activities for elementary and junior high school students. We are doing some test runs of the field trips over the summer and will put together a nice package for schools in the GSA for fall. These materials will also be available on our website.

News from the Fisheries Biologist (Les Harris)



Tracking Radio-tagged Fish:

All the reports from last year's field work have been completed, and once again, the field season is upon us. This summer and fall, I will continue tracking radio-tagged fish in the Travaillant Lake system for the second year. Relocating the radio-tagged fish will

continue to provide valuable insight into the migrations of broad whitefish in the lake system and help to confirm important habitats (such as those used for spawning, feeding and overwintering).



Les Harris doing fish surgery and standing by receiver station that picks up fish signals.

Population Analysis :

Analysis of Harvested Fish Species in Travaillant Lake will continue for the third year, allowing us to continue collecting baseline information on the biological characteristics and life history traits of these fish. The data will be used to observe trends in these populations over consecutive years and detect changes in their population in future years.

Fin Sampling:

I will still be collecting fin samples from broad whitefish caught anywhere in the Mackenzie Delta and surrounding area to be used for future genetic analysis. If anyone is interested in collecting fins, please contact the GRRB.

Enjoy the summer!

Les Harris

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News from the Wildlife Biologist (Catherine Lambert)



Hello everyone!

As the new wildlife biologist for the Gwich'in Renewable Resource Board, I spent the last four months familiarizing myself with wildlife issues in the Gwich'in Settlement Area (GSA), meeting with the communities, pursuing work previously undertaken, and cogitating about future projects... This spring has been quite busy, and a lot more will be accomplished in the summer! Here is a summary of the work done so far:

Dall's Sheep Local Knowledge Study:

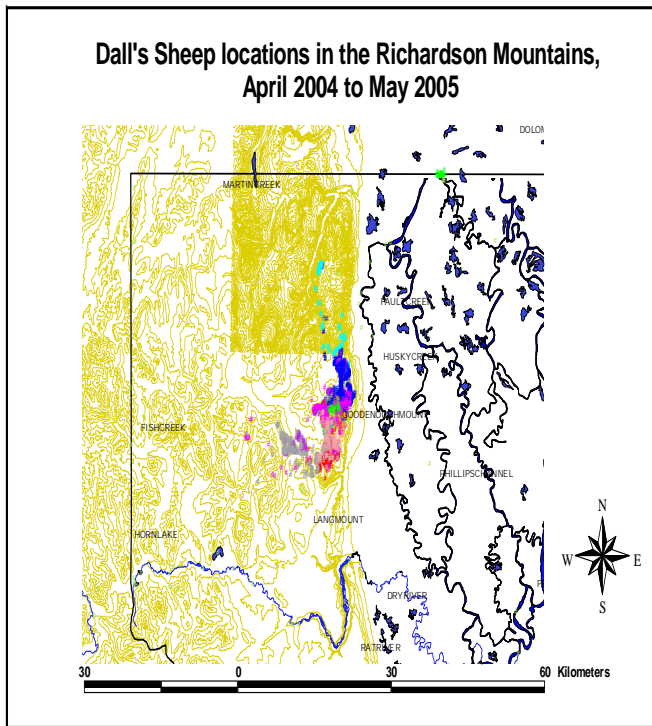
In 2000 and 2001, Jennifer Shaw and Bryon Benn started a study to collect local knowledge on Dall's Sheep. They interviewed 18 elders and harvesters from Aklavik, Fort McPherson, and Inuvik about their travel routes, sheep harvest, sightings, predators, and health. They then started to compile interview results and drafted a report, but the process was never completed. Shortly after my arrival,



we finalized the Dall's Sheep Local Knowledge Study report, which is now available as the GRRB report 05-02.

Northern Richardson Mountains Dall's Sheep Ecology Project:

As you may already know, two and six rams were respectively equipped with GPS collars in April and September 2004, as part of our ongoing study on Dall's Sheep Ecology in the Northern Richardson Mountains. Daily locations are sent to us through the satellite system, thus providing important information regarding sheep movements and habitat use.



Locations of collared Dall's sheep rams in the northern Richardson Mountains; each coloured dot represents a different individual location.

Three of the collared rams unfortunately died this spring; two ended at the bottom of steep cliffs in March -we suspect accidental falls, while another was shot in April after the hunters noticed an infected wound on its hindquarter. That sheep apparently suffered from reduced mobility and sample tissues were sent to a pathology laboratory for further analysis.

This coming July, we will sample vegetation and monitor sheep habitat in the northern Richardson Mountains, which will complete fieldwork started in 2004.

Dall's Sheep Interjurisdictional Management Plan:

A management plan for Dall's Sheep in the GSA is currently being developed. We visited the four communities in May and June in order to share the information available regarding population status and to collect community views on this issue. Simultaneously, we were also contacted by the Vuntut Gwitchin to establish a co-management plan for the northern Richardson population.



Slopes in the northern Richardson Mountains, May 2005

Along with Gwich'in Tribal Council, Renewable Resource Councils (RRCs), Vuntut Gwitchin, Inuvialuit and the Yukon and Northwest Territories governments representatives, both Jari Heikkila and I attended a meeting in Dawson City, where we initiated collaboration towards an interjurisdictional management plan for this transboundary sheep population. We would like the plan to be completed in April 2006. RRCs and community members will be consulted throughout this planning process.

Grizzly Bear Harvest:

Another grizzly bear 3 year harvest cycle will start on July 1st. A poster will soon be sent to each community to help track the number of grizzly bear tags available as well as the number of individuals being killed. We would like to thank the community members, RRCs, and wildlife officers for their contribution to the effective implementation of grizzly bear management in the GSA.



Grizzly bear tracks in the northern Richardson Mountains

Gwich'in Harvest Study:

The entry of harvest study interviews in our database was finalized last month, and the next step will involve data verification. We have to go through all records entered from the beginning of the study in 1995 to its end in 2004, after that we will produce a comprehensive report. This summer will keep us busy in the field, but we expect the verification to be completed next fall. The report should be available shortly after.

Contribution to Other Projects or Workshops:

Besides our own activities, we participated with the Bluenose West, Cape-Bathurst, and woodland caribou



surveys with the NWT Department of Environment and Natural Resources. I also spent a week in Calgary to attend a Northern Oil and Gas Development Workshop organized by the Pembina Institute. The workshop shared perspectives from different stakeholders involved in oil and gas activities, which has been very informative and provided insightful tools to approach the proposed Mackenzie Gas Project. Our summer activities will also include hare pellets transects in June and small mammal monitoring in August.

Coming Wildlife Projects:

As the summer welcomes us and the sun gets warm, ideas for future wildlife projects in the GSA start germinating... Recent Dall's sheep community consultations sparked interest to develop a sheep predation study in the Richardson Mountains, which would involve wolf and grizzly bear monitoring. We were also suggested by an Aklavik resident to undertake a research on beavers and muskrat habitat use and population dynamics. Many more research projects are currently being considered and research proposals will be developed next fall. Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have wildlife concerns or if you would like to propose a wildlife study in the GSA.

Thanks, Catherine Lambert
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News from the Communications Manager (Kathy Bibby)



Looking to the Future Youth Education Program:

The Board's new environmental education program commenced in Gwich'in classrooms this spring and will pick up 'speed' in the fall. The children appear to

really enjoy learning new things about the eco-system that surrounds them.

Nature Day:

Nature Day returned for its 5th season. In June, GRRB staff visited Grade 3 (some Grade 4) students in Inuvik and Aklavik and will be holding Nature Day at Tsiigehtchic and Fort McPherson



Nature Days Aklavik & Inuvik 2005

in September. Nature Day games center on obstacles facing char traveling to spawning grounds: scavenger hunts for objects found in nature: a predator-prey game where children pretend to be animals searching for food, water and shelter - and safety from predators, fire, disease and hunters. Despite the bugs, children, staff and volunteers enjoyed themselves!

Career Day:

In March 2005, along with other local and national agencies, the Board once again participated in Career Day held at the Recreation Centre in Inuvik. Students were able to gain information from GRRB staff regarding careers and renewable resources and enjoyed the assortment of dalls sheep horns, wolf skulls, and fish



Les Harris (Fisheries Biologist) and Dave Garlund, (Resource Technician) assist High School students with questions.

skeletons at the booth. Career Day offers a fun atmosphere for students to expand their knowledge of

career options.

Youth Work Experience:

The Youth Work Experience is back this year. The GRRB will hire youth between the ages of 13-20 years old (\$50/day) to offer "hands on" work experience and encourage interest in renewable resource careers. Applications are available at the GRRB and RRC offices.

Aboriginal Day Parade:

This year the Board participated in the parade to celebrate National Aboriginal Day. The staff decorated the Board Truck (and staff dogs!) and enjoyed the trek down mainstreet with other floats. Staff distributed copies of the Gwich'in Words About The Land (I & II), Conservation Calendars, bottled water and fruit treats. The entire event was enjoyed by all participants!



The Board during Aboriginal Day Parade

Have a wonderful summer,
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