

# News

from the



Winter 2004

## Gwich'in Renewable Resource Board

### New Executive Director



The Gwich'in Renewable Resource Board (GRRB) welcomes Jari Heikkila as its new Executive Director. Jari has a strong background in renewable resource management and community development. He is from Finland but most recently worked for the Cariboo Tribal Council in British Columbia. Jari plans to stop by each community during the next Renewable Resource Council (RRC) meetings. He is looking forward to meeting with community members and developing new partnerships.

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### For more information contact us!

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### Conservation Calendar 2004

The Conservation Calendar looks a bit different this year; it is bigger to provide more room to write down harvest details. The calendar includes a lot of information related to conservation concerns. It also features short quizzes about the land and its resources, and a new collection of photographs! The photos on the back cover can be used for identifying animals in both English and Gwich'in.



### Gwich'in Harvest Study

The Harvest Study interviews will now be taking place during the months of February, May, August and November. As the interview rate has changed from every month to four times a year, we encourage you to use the Conservation Calendar and Harvest



Study pocket-sized notebooks to keep track of your harvests in-between interviews. The Harvest Study will continue to give out prizes in 2004 to people that are participating in the Study.

### **GRRB Board Meeting**

The GRRB gathered in Inuvik on February 17 and 18 for its semi-annual meeting. GRRB members and staff, RRC representatives and agency staff discussed management and research issues related to renewable resources in the Gwich'in Settlement Area. The GRRB allocated \$224,000 of its Wildlife Studies Fund to 19 projects.

#### **Wildlife Projects**

- *Ducks Unlimited*  
Peel Plateau Project  
Middle Mackenzie Project
- *Yukon Department of Environment*  
Porcupine Caribou Satellite Tracking
- *Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development*  
Caribou Population Dynamics
- *Gwich'in Renewable Resource Board*  
Boreal Woodland Caribou Habitat  
Dall's Sheep Ecology Study  
Dall's Sheep Management Plan

#### **Fisheries Projects**

- *Department of Fisheries and Oceans*  
Rat River Charr Biological Assessment  
Rat River Charr Monitoring
- *Gwich'in Renewable Resource Board*  
Arctic Red River Index Netting  
Travaillant Lake Fish Movement and Population

#### **Culture and Education Projects**

- *Tetlit Renewable Resource Council*  
Rat River Trip  
Oglivie River Trip  
Moose Hunting Trip  
Protecting the Peel River Watershed
- *Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society*  
Flowing Generations
- *Arctic Borderlands Ecological Knowledge Co-op*  
Community-Based Monitoring
- *Gwich'in Renewable Resource Board*  
Nature Day  
Youth Work Experience

### **Forest Management Plan**

The Forestry Working Group (DRWED, GTC, RRCs and GRRB) drafted a forest management plan. The draft will be given to each RRC for review and the community consultations will be conducted later this spring by the GTC and DRWED.

### **Seismic Regrowth**

The GRRB and DRWED have worked for the past three years to determine forest regeneration and growth rates following fires and seismic line cutting. Pippa Seccombe-Hett, Special Project Biologist, will provide RRCs and community members with the results of the study by the end of March.



Justin Frost was one of the youth hired as field assistant for the Seismic Regrowth Project.

### **Peel River Fish Study**

The five-year Peel River Fish Study was completed last year. Over the years, the monitors collected information about the fish they caught. Jen Walker-Larsen, Fisheries/Forestry Biologist, is now analyzing the information collected and hopes to finish the final report by June.



## Arctic Red River Index Netting Study

The Index Netting Study is entering its third year. The study is monitoring population trends, and will help detect changes in fish stocks over time. The GRRB hires a community monitor from Tsiigehtchic to fish and collect information about the fish that are caught. The net locations are determined through community consultation.

## Travaillant Lake Fish Study

Over 400 fish were floy-tagged over the past two years. The study depends on community members to return the tags from the fish they catch. If you catch a tagged fish, please contact your local RRC or the GRRB. Each tag you return will entitle you to a reward.

This year, the study area will include the entire Travaillant Lake drainage, taking into consideration all the lakes surrounding Travaillant Lake itself. More traditional knowledge research will be done on the area, and fish will be radio-tagged in order to track their movements. As with previous years, the GRRB will be hiring a community monitor to help with the fieldwork.



Contact your local RRC or the GRRB if you catch a tagged fish. Each tag return entitle you to a reward

## Rat River Charr

The annual Rat River Fishing Plan Meeting was held in Fort McPherson on February 21. Representatives from the Tetlit and Ehdiiat RRCs, Aklavik HTC, GRRB, DFO, FJMC and community members were in attendance.

Fisherman and researchers have a strong indication that the Rat River charr population has been declining over the last 4-5 years. Currently the harvest guideline is 2000 charr per year, which is about 15% of the latest population estimate. It was suggested that the harvest guideline for Rat River Charr in the Fishing Plan be reduced in order to preserve this valuable resource. The RRCs and HTCs will be presenting results and discussions from the meeting to their communities in the near future. The harvest guidelines will be amended after these consultations, pending community support.



Boreal Woodland Caribou

## Boreal Woodland Caribou Habitat

The Study was initiated in 2000. To date, nine woodland caribou have been collared and 20 more animals will be collared this winter. This will help determine important aspect of their habitat. Caribou locations will be compared with maps and aerial surveys will be done to determine what type of habitat Boreal Woodland Caribou use. More detailed ground surveys will also be done this summer on known caribou locations. The surveys will include vegetation identification, geographic characteristics, pellet counts and pellet collection.

## Dall's Sheep Habitat Research and Monitoring in the Richardson Mountains

This project started in 2003. This year, the project has expanded to take a more in depth look at Dall's



sheep ecology. Biologists and community monitors will continue performing vegetation surveys and collecting pellets to determine what sheep eat and if they carry a large amount of parasites. Up to 15 Dall's sheep will also be fitted with GPS collars to help understand their movement and how they use their habitat. When the animals are collared, blood sample will be taken to evaluate their health.



Dall's sheep

### Dall's Sheep Management Plan

Community consultation is a key factor in the development of this plan. The GRRB staff welcome community members to provide information and suggestions for the management plan. A consultation was held in Aklavik in February. Fort McPherson, Inuvik and Tsiigehtchic will be consulted in the near future. Stay in contact with your RRC to ensure your participation.

### Ducks Unlimited

Ducks Unlimited is coming back this summer to continue their research on black ducks and scaup (blue bills). Ducks Unlimited staff will be working in the field all summer but will be based out of the GRRB office during the field season. They are seeking a Research Technician. For more information about this position, contact Kris Norstrom at (204) 467-3268 or [k\\_norstrom@ducks.ca](mailto:k_norstrom@ducks.ca) before March 12.

### Jim Edwards Sittichinli Scholarship

Congratulations to Donald Andre, Larry Greenland and Catherine Jorstead. The GRRB has awarded them each with a 2004 Jim Edwards Sittichinli Scholarship. Each recipient received \$1,000 to help them pursue their education in renewable resources.

### Summer Students

This summer, the GRRB will be hiring one or two summer students to help with office and fieldwork. The positions will be based in Inuvik and students will be involved in different types of projects and research. The work tasks could help students gain better knowledge of plants; wildlife and fisheries research processes; geographic references; camping; computer programs; and general office procedures.



Catherine Jorstead, 2003 summer student and 2004 Jim Edwards Sittichinli Scholarship recipient

### Nature Day

The GRRB staff will be offering the program in June to the grade 3 students of the GSA. Nature Day teaches kids about animal habitat through playing games. By offering this program, we hope to encourage youth, both to learn more about their environment and to pursue studies in renewable resources.

### Youth Work Experience

The Youth Work Experience is back this year. The GRRB will hire junior high students (\$50/day) to offer "hands on" work experience and create interest in renewable resource careers. Applications will be available starting in May at the GRRB and RRC offices.

