



Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board

Strategic Plan 2018-2023

Final Draft



Submitted to:

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Introduction

The Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board (GRRB) is the main instrument of wildlife, fish and forest management within the Gwich'in Settlement Area. The GRRB is responsible for working with Gwich'in communities and the public to ensure renewable resources in the Gwich'in Settlement Area (GSA) are managed in a sustainable manner.

The GRRB is 25 years strong

Established as a result of the *Gwich'in Comprehensive Land Claim Settlement Agreement* (GCLCA) in 1992, the Board is entering its 25th year of operation with strengthened relationships with local, territorial, and transboundary management and research partners.

Building on its previous five-year strategic plan (2013-18), the Board met on September 21, 2017 in Aklavik to review accomplishments reached and challenges faced over the last five years, and to set its focus for the next strategic plan cycle (2018-2023).

Working closely with community stakeholders and co-management partners

The GRRB strives to work closely with the Gwich'in community stakeholders and co-management partners in the strategic planning phase.

The Strategic Planning Workshop brought together a Working Group formed of Board members, staff, representatives from the four Gwich'in Renewable Resources Councils (RRCs) and community members. The Working Group participated in structured, facilitated discussions. The results of these discussions form the basis for this document.

The Board sought input from its co-management partners in pre-engagement stages; this input was considered during the Research Priority-setting Workshop held the day prior to the Strategic Planning meeting. Discussions pertaining to the Research Priority-setting Workshop are detailed in separate report.

Strategic planning process

The 2018-2023 Strategic Plan is intended to guide the work of the GRRB over the next five years. The Strategic Plan sets out broad directions for the GRRB by listing the organisation's strategic priorities. It aims to help GRRB employees identify how their work fits into the bigger picture. It provides a means for community stakeholders to understand the direction that the GRRB is headed and how the organization is aligning its activities with the communities' larger planning when relevant to the GRRB mandate. The Strategic Plan's purpose is to support the GRRB in continuing to achieve high levels of performance. When aligned with the Strategic Plan, the organisation's activities will deliver intended results.

The GRRB Strategic Plan is intended to:

- support a more integrated approach to how resources are allocated and operational direction is provided;
- communicate the GRRB's strategic direction within the organization and with partners and stakeholders;
- describe the opportunities and challenges arising in the GSA;
- provide overarching vision, mission, and values to serve as guiding principles to the GRRB activities.

The Strategic Plan is an evolving, living document that is formally reviewed every five years.

Who We Are



Settlement Area (GSA).

The Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board (GRRB) is a public co-management board composed of representatives nominated by the Gwich'in Tribal Council (GTC), the Government of Canada, and the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT). The 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 within the Gwich'in

The composition of the GRRB is prescribed in the GLCLA (section 12.8.3). The Board is made up of a Chairperson, six members, and six alternates, although not all positions are currently filled. There are up to three members and three alternates appointed by the GTC, as well as up to three members and three alternates appointed by the territorial and federal governments (Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO), Environment Canada (EC) and the GNWT).

Powers and responsibilities

The GRRB has a wide range of powers and responsibilities which are detailed in Chapters 12 and 13, Vol.1 of the GCLCA. These are:

- Establish policies and propose regulations concerning:
 - harvesting of wildlife (including fish, birds, plants, and animals) by any person within the GSA;
 - commercial harvesting of wildlife;
 - commercial activities relating to wildlife, including processing, marketing and sale of wildlife, guiding and outfitting, and hunting, fishing, or naturalist camps and lodges;
 - forest management.
- Develop and approve plans for the management and protection of wildlife and wildlife habitats, including conservation areas, territorial parks, and national parks in the settlement area;
- Approve the designation of conservation areas and species at risk;
- Approve interim management guidelines, park management plans, and policies;
- Approve government regulations;
- Establish rules and procedures for consultations;

- Review any matter referred to the GRRB by government;
- Provide government with timely advice on draft legislation, land use policies, or provincial or international agreements that might impact wildlife or wildlife habitat, and on the creation of new national or territorial parks in the settlement area;
- Advise government on public education plans on wildlife, harvesting, and habitat, on policies concerning research and research evaluation; and on plans for cooperative management and research on species and populations not wholly within the GSA; and
- Advise government on plans for training Gwich'in in management of wildlife and related economic activities.

Main activities

The Board's main responsibility is management planning, which includes development, approval and implementation. The following are four broad categories that fall under management planning:

- Research-related;
- Public outreach and engagement;
- Community consultations and communications; and
- Harvesting planning allocation and regulatory.

Strategic Planning Workshop

In the spirit of continued collaboration and teamwork, critical to the achievement of its mandate, the Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board (GRRB) encouraged the presence of key stakeholders at the Strategic Planning Workshop. The workshop approach focussed on opening dynamic, inclusive, and respectful dialogue with all members of the Strategic Planning working group.

Working together to plan for the next five years

The GRRB, as part of its strategic planning, needed to examine and find consensus on its values. They asked the question “In the decision-making process, what are the GRRB’s guiding principles?” In an interactive exercise, participants discussed the values that rose from their education, community, and aspirations. Then, the group made linkages and identified the higher values that were to be retained as the GRRB’s values.

The Strategic Planning working group included GRRB Board members, staff, and Renewable Resources Council (RRC) coordinators. It also included any community members who were willing to participate in discussions.

The following GRRB Board members who were present at the Strategic Planning Workshop:

- Eugene Pascal (Chairperson);
- Burt Hunt (Member - DFO);
- Doug Doan (Member – EC);
- Margaret Begg (Member - GTC);
- Tracy Davison (Alternate member - GNWT); and
- Sarah Jerome (Alternate Member - GTC);

All GRRB staff members were present for this session. They shared their considerable technical and on-the-ground knowledge to the strategic planning exercise. They are:

- Amy Amos, Executive Director;
- Édouard Bélanger, Wildlife Biologist;
- Janet Boxwell, Renewable Resources Manager;

- Kaytlin Cooper, Species at Risk Biologist;
- Sarah Lord, Fisheries and forestry Biologist; and
- Cheryl Greenland, Office Manager.

The GRRB also works in conjunction with RRC coordinators. Each of the four Gwich'in communities in the Gwich'in Settlement Area (GSA) have a coordinator who lives/works in the community. The four RRCs were represented at the Strategic Planning Workshop:

- Gwichya Gwich'in Renewable Resource Council (Tsiigehtchic): John Norbert, Richard Wilson;
- Ehditit Renewable Resource Council (Aklavik): Robert Buckle, James Edward;
- Nihtat Renewable Resource Council (Inuvik): Sterling North Firth; and
- Tetlit Renewable Resource Council (Fort McPherson): Georgina Neyando, William R. Koe.

Jared Gonet, a University of Alberta student working with the GRRB, also attended.

The following community members also participated:

- Shirley Kaye, Elder;
- Susie Thompson, Elder;
- Inge Gardlund;
- Chris Bonnetplume;
- Philip Ross; and
- Liz Wright, representing MLA F. Blake Jr's office.



Strategic Plan 2018-2023

Mandate

The Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board (GRRB) is the main instrument of wildlife, fish, and forest management in the Gwich'in Settlement Area (GSA). The Board acts in the public interest, representing all the parties to the *Gwich'in Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement* (GCLCA) – the Gwich'in, the people of the Northwest Territories, and all Canadians.

Vision

The GRRB is an exemplary 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 Gwich'in Settlement Area remain healthy and sustainable.

Mission

The GRRB works in cooperation with the Gwich'in people, governments and stakeholders, and in accordance with the *Gwich'in Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement* to effectively protect, conserve, and manage renewable resources in the Gwich'in Settlement Area. It does this in a respectful, transparent, communicative, and inclusive manner, using the best available traditional and scientific knowledge.

Values

Members of the 2017 Strategic planning workshop recommended that the GRRB, with its mandate, its community, and its land at its core, adhere to the following values:

- Respecting the land and the Gwich'in people;
- Communicating with communities respectfully, clearly and continually;
- Encouraging teamwork throughout our activities; and
- Respecting and embracing traditional and scientific knowledge.

Strategic Planning Context: Opportunities and Challenges

By scanning the current planning environment and looking forward, the working group identified the following opportunities and challenges in the next five years. Each item is identified as “O” for opportunity and/or “C” for challenge.

Land and animals:

- Global warming (C);
- Forest fires (C);
- Lower population - mosquitoes, flies, birds (C);
- Rising population – beaver (C);
- Low water levels (C, O);
- Changes in migration patterns - Porcupine caribou (C); and
- Concerns for water health and habitat (C); increasing human impacts, impacts of pollution on water, air, upstream and downstream i.e. there is no waste management plan in communities.

People and community:

- Loss of Elders – with the loss of the Elders in the community, traditional Knowledge of land skills and life skills is being lost (C);
- People are not respecting traditional ways - we need to educate youth, share traditional knowledge and elders’ teachings (C);
- People’s material needs are much higher than before - they are leaving an imprint of their passage on the land, there are change in attitudes people are becoming less concerned with caring for the land (C);
- There is a lack of understanding of our mandate and our activities among the general public, (i.e. other than Gwich’in) in the GSA and other surrounding areas; and Gwich’in youth are not choosing science or conservation as careers (C).

Economic development:

- There is a need to balance economic opportunities and conservation, and to support sustainable living for people living off-the-land (C);
- Peel River Watershed development – what are impacts on wildlife, fish, and forest? (C);
- Concerns about impact of construction (C), for:
 - Inuvik -Tuktoyaktuk Highway;
 - McKenzie Valley proposed Highway; and
 - Fibre optic line and proposed route;
- Transportation of fuel by air and road – concern for spillage (C); and
- Local development – Stony Creek and James Creek, for example (C).

The Organization:

- Continue with competent leadership and administration; (O);
- Focus on continued success with creating and improving relationships with partners (O);
- Acknowledge challenges working with Transboundary partners (potential partners): different views = difficulty working together (C,O);
- New staff means new energy and competency (C); and
- Increase in funding which increases capacity (C).

Political opportunities and concerns

- Arctic National Wildlife Refuge: Concerns with the possibility of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska (calving grounds of the Porcupine caribou) being opened up to oil and gas exploration and drilling (C);
- Opportunity to access funding through the current federal government (O);
- Headwaters of Arctic Red River:
 - Heritage status has been achieved – is there an opportunity to ensure conservation (O);
 - More baseline data needed (C);
- Protected areas:
 - Opportunity to put forward to federal and territorial partners (O);
 - More baseline data needed (C);
- Managing private lands – concerns on use and regulations (C) * this is an RRC issue

Strategic Goals

The following goals encompass the Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board (GRRB's) strategic priorities, and form the focus for the next five years. These priorities result from discussions and analysis of community visions, resource needs, and the current operating environment.

These six strategic goals will be the basis from which the GRRB will develop objectives and workplans.

1. Identify and prioritize needs, and develop and implement renewable resources management plans and research

The GRRB is the main instrument of wildlife, fish and forest management in the GSA. The GRRB will continue to monitor research and management needs, work with partner organisations to best respond to these needs, prioritize the work involved in supporting implementation, and carry out meaningful implementation of the actions in each plan. The GRRB has succeeded in establishing a clear, transparent process to set priority research and management needs, and has implemented this process with community and partners. Central to the GRRB's mandate, this goal is to remain a focus. This goal has been refined to encompass the GRRB's work in managing emerging research and management needs.

2. Strengthen Gwich'in participation and use of traditional and scientific knowledge on matters that affect wildlife, fish, forest, habitat, and environment

Carried forward from the previous strategic plan, this goal echoes the will and the need to see more Gwich'in input and participation in the GRRB's research and management initiatives. Collaboration and teamwork with the Gwich'in people and institutions at all levels remains critical to achieve the GRRB mandate. Community representatives for the Gwich'in RRCs are key partners in all research and management initiatives; the GRRB will continue to support the RRCs in their efforts

to engage with communities. The GRRB will strengthen, support, encourage and promote Gwich'in education and training in the area of renewable resources research and management. The GRRB will continue to work with Gwich'in institutions, including the Gwich'in Tribal Council and the Gwich'in Tribal Council Department of Cultural Heritage, to gather and integrate traditional knowledge in wildlife and habitat research and management activities.

3. Provide quality advice to governments on matters that affect wildlife, fish, forest, habitat, and environment, in accordance with GRRB's Consultation Policy

The goal is to ensure that the Board has the ability and resources in place to respond in an effective, timely way to government requests for advice, based on GRRB priority needs. The GCLCA identified a long list of initiatives that the federal and territorial governments are required to seek the advice of the GRRB on, including laws, regulations, plans for research, training proposals, etc. Communicating and using the GRRB's Consultation Policy will be critical to achieving this goal.

4. Strengthen and maintain strong, positive and respectful working relationships with Gwich'in participants, co-management partners, and stakeholders

The GRRB will focus on fostering teamwork at all levels of operations and maintaining on-going two-way communication with Gwich'in partners. The GRRB will also create and maintain collaboration with government agencies and other stakeholders whose activities might contribute to or have an impact on wildlife and wildlife habitat management in the GSA. In the last five years, the GRRB has shown its abilities in the area of creating partnerships and bridging needs and means; it has further targeted these efforts going forward.

5. Maintain an effective, efficient, exemplary administration

The GRRB will continue to strive to be competitive and highly effective. The GRRB has become a well-respected organization, recognized across the country for its collaborative model and effective operations. This goal pertains to the Board's ability to provide high-level, quality public service. To do so, the GRRB will continue sharing data, providing advice, and bridging the gap between needs and the research community, as well as broadening relationships with stakeholders and partners. In its relationship with Gwich'in communities, the GRRB will continue to focus on strengthening an open, two-way communication that is inclusive, transparent, and respectful, and fosters teamwork and collaboration.

6. Ensure a healthy, positive and respectful working environment where staff enjoys working

The GRRB will continue to support its staff and maintain the elements that make it a dynamic, positive, and sought-after employer, attracting competent, talented staff who, in turn, enhance the quality of services. It will promote teamwork, communication and a healthy workplace.

Appendix 1

Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board Values

With our mandate, our community and our land at our core, we live by these values

Respecting the land and the Gwich'in people

Our land is our culture. It is the land that makes us who we are, providing life for ourselves, our families, and our communities. The GRRB respects Gwich'in traditions. We have learned from our elders to share our harvest with others, to take only what we need, to teach our traditional knowledge to our children. The GRRB makes decisions for the benefit of Gwich'in people, and for future generations.

Communicating with communities respectfully, clearly and consistently

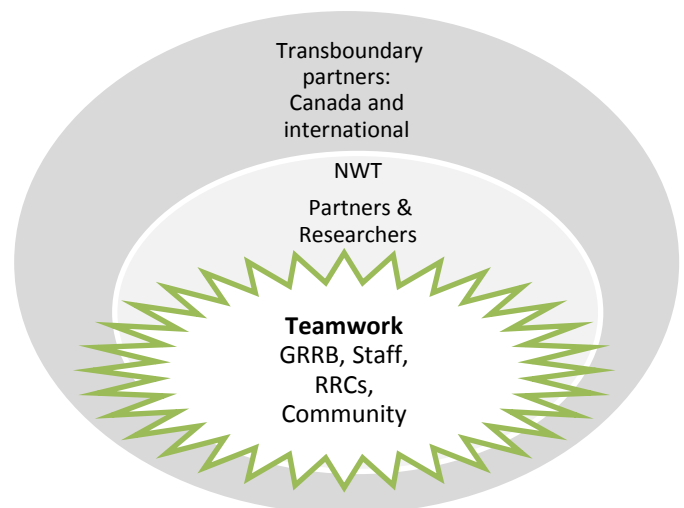
The GRRB invests in building a strong connection with Gwich'in communities. Communications are done in a respectful, clear, and on-going two-way conversation with communities. A holistic approach (physical, mental and spiritual) facilitates communication, research, and education.

Encouraging teamwork throughout our activities

Good work happens when all parties are equally invested in a common purpose and goal. The GRRB encourages a high level of teamwork throughout its activities: it fosters collaboration between communities, staff, and partners, and extends throughout its transboundary circle of collaborators.

Respecting and embracing traditional and scientific knowledge

The work in resource conservation and management will benefit from taking on a “two-eyed vision”; the GRRB strives to apply best practices that are based on a sound combination of traditional knowledge and science



Appendix 2

Additional meeting notes

Values & guiding principles exercise

The following points were made in the plenary discussion to identify common values and guiding principles.

- It is important to remember what we are managing; our land is our culture; for future generations.
- Respect: the land, the people, and one's self.
- Use traditional knowledge
 - teach others
 - talk to elders and include youth
- Use communication that is respectful, clear, continuous, and two-way. Keep in touch with stakeholders; make sure to maintain a strong connection with communities.
- Focus on teamwork and respect
 - maintain a high level of teamwork and respect throughout GRRB activities, and expand to our transboundary circle
- Use two-eyed vision, be 'strong like two people'.
- Respect and embrace both tradition and the scientific way.
- Embrace diversity (TK and science)
- Adopt a holistic approach (physical, mental, and spiritual) to research, teaching, and communication.

Closing remarks

At the conclusion of the session, working group members, including community participants, offered their comments on the workshop process and outcomes. These included statements such as:

- I felt welcome, included, and heard;
- I like the relationship between the RRCs and the GRRB;
- I know more about the GRRB now that I've attended these meetings;
- I think the GRRB should focus on helping communities build capacity and invest in work training;
- It is good to connect with communities and see the big picture, get past our everyday list of things to do, and remember our common goals and direction;
- Strategic planning is important and allows us to get together, work together;
- This was a good workshop, I enjoyed it a lot;
- Strategic Planning is very important. I'm glad that we had the opportunity;
- Thank you for your patience and taking the time to explain things to me;
- Got to know everybody and better understand;
- Glad I came;
- I liked all the laughter in these meetings;
- I appreciate the collegiality of the workshop;
- There was a high level of engagement in both days of workshops from RRC Reps, community members who came out, board members, staff. We can take that input to the bank;
- I appreciated the open communication, laughter, and spirit of collaboration all around;
- I would like to see the Strategic Plan be published in Gwich'in; and
- We were equals around the table. Your voice is heard. You are the eyes and the ears of the land. The wildlife and the land made us who we are today. These meetings allow us to make sure we are grounded. Thank you for being here and for your input.

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