



GWICH'IN RENEWABLE RESOURCES BOARD

# news

Spring 2016



*Photo credit: K. Callaghan*

## 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.

## in this issue:

Executive Director's update	3
Message from the GRRB Chair	4
Board Member appointments and updates	5
February 2016 Board meeting recap	6
"Taking Care of Caribou"	7
Orientation Reference Guide Workshop report	8
Wildlife Studies Fund Applications 2016/17	9
Wildlife Biologist news	10
Fisheries Biologist news	12
Renewable Resources Manager news	13
Species at Risk Biologist news	15
Insect Traditional Knowledge Workshop	15
Office Manager news	16
Regional RRC Contacts	16
Upcoming Events	16

## GET IN TOUCH!

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## Amy Amos executive director

*As the Executive Director for the GRRB, I lead a team of dedicated experts to implement the Board's decisions and responsibilities in accordance with the land claim agreement. I am committed to building strong relationships with respect, compassion and integrity.*

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.

This marks my 10<sup>th</sup> year with the GRRB. 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 responsible for managing the staff of the GRRB. This is something that I take very seriously, as I believe a positive work environment and

good teamwork are the foundations of a successful workplace. We have a very talented and dedicated staff support team. You will see the evidence of their hard work in their updates throughout this newsletter. I am pleased to report that we have had the same permanent staff for over six years. This helps our relationships with the communities and with our partners. This also helps grow knowledge within our organization, working towards the Board's vision.

Kaytlin Cooper's term as our Species at Risk Biologist has been extended until August 26, 2016 and we continue to seek permanent job security for this position.

The GRRB has received outside funding to hire a Summer Student and a Technician Trainee. We will be targeting senior high school students for the Summer Student position and college students or 2016 high school graduates for the Technician Trainee position. To be eligible to apply, you must be a full-time student (attended school full-time in 2015-2016) with the intention to go back to school full-time in September 2016. You must be between 15-30 years old at the time of hire. Advertisements will be going out soon. Please look for them and pass the information around.

We also continue to offer our Youth Work Experience Program, a program that provides youth with an opportunity to get experience working direct with researchers. This program is focused on youth between the ages of 13 and 20. You must apply by filling out an application form (available on our website or by contacting our office). I plan to visit each school this June to promote our summer programs.

**Financial management** I am responsible for ensuring that the Board's finances are managed appropriately. This has been done successfully while 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.

We formed a Wildlife Studies Fund (WSF) Committee which met three times (November 3 and 19, 2015 and January 8, 2016) to discuss a socially responsible investment policy and review the GRRB's investment fund. I am pleased to announce that the Board approved the recommended policy at their February meeting. This will ensure that the Board's investments are only in corporations that operate in an environmentally sustainable manner.

Office Manager Cheryl Greenland and I attended a Finance workshop in December 2015, where we learned many tools that we can apply to our daily work. One of the recommendations from the Workshop was to form a Finance Committee. Approved at the February Board meeting, this Committee will include the work of the current WSF Committee, but expand to include the general operating fund financials and work

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Finance Workshop. Photo credit: GRRB

with Cheryl and me on quarterly financial updates. The first Finance Committee Meeting was held by teleconference on May 6, 2016.

**Board administration** I am responsible for the coordination of all Board meetings and for following up on Board actions and motions.

Since our last newsletter, the Board held teleconferences on December 17, 2015 and May 17, 2016 and a face-to-face Board meeting February 23-26, 2016 in Inuvik. This newsletter highlights some of the outcomes from these meetings.

The Safety Policy that I have been overseeing for the past year and a half was approved at our most recent Board meeting. My goal is to include a job risk assessment in the next revision, but it is exciting to finally have a policy in place.

I am involved with the following committees:

- *Wildlife Act* Working Group
- Conference of Management Authorities (CMA)
- Species At Risk Stewardship Committee
- Arctic Borderlands Ecological Knowledge Society
- Advisory Committee for the Cooperation for Wildlife Management (ACCWM)
- Integrated Fisheries Management Plan Steering Committee
- Arctic Research Institute Steering Committee
- NWT Board Forum.

I applied for the GTC mentorship program. I was selected to be the mentor to a recent Environment and Natural Resources Technology program graduate, Bella Charlie. We meet monthly.

## Eugene Pascal board chairperson

Over the winter, I participated in an extensive series of meetings and calls on a variety of subjects. I attended the Porcupine Caribou Management Board (PCMB) Annual Harvest Meetings in Dawson City this February and in Aklavik this May. The Inuvialuit Game Council (IGC) and the GTC have committed to work on a user agreement for the Porcupine caribou herd.

I am active on the following Committees and Working Groups:

- *Wildlife Act* Working Group
- CMA
- ACCWM
- Rat River Working Group (Chair)
- West Side Working Group (Observer)

**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.



I want to thank Amy and the staff for their work to support the Board and also for supporting me in my role as Chairperson.

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

*Hai Cho (thank you),  
Amy*

## TRAPPERS!



**The RRC/ENR will pay \$20 for muskrats, and \$25 for fox, mink, and otters without fur.**

We want fox, mink, and otter that died quickly so they have full stomachs. We will pay an extra \$25 if we find their stomachs are full!

THERE IS A **LIMIT** TO THE NUMBERS OF EACH SPECIES WE NEED.

Visit RRC/ENR office for details.

HTC members go to ENR, RRC members go to RRC.

# GRRB Board appointments

**Eugene Pascal**  
Chairperson (GRRB)



**Johnny Charlie**  
Member (GTC)



**Bobbie Jo Greenland Morgan**  
Member (GTC)



**TBA**  
Member (GTC)



**Burt Hunt**  
Member (DFO)



**Doug Doan**  
Member (EC/CWS)



**TBA**  
Member (GNWT)



**Charlie Snowshoe**  
Alternate (GTC)



**Cindy Allen**  
Alternate (GTC)



**Sarah Jerome**  
Alternate (GTC)



**Ron Allen**  
Alternate (DFO)



**TBA**  
Alternate (EC/CWS)



**Jozef Carnogursky**  
Alternate (GNWT)



## board member updates

Our Board members have been busy this period! Here is a summary of some of the meetings that they have attended, committees they have been involved in, and training courses they have undertaken:

### Committees/Working Groups:

- Safety Policy Development Committee
- WSF Committee
- Species at Risk Committee
- ACCWM
- NWT Board Forum
- IFMP Steering Committee

### Meetings/Training:

- October 12-14, 2015 – *Wildlife Act* (Section 15) meeting, Yellowknife
- October 14, 2015 – Initial meeting with Sahtu Renewable Resources Board and Wildlife Management Advisory Council (NWT) regarding Bluenose-West caribou, Yellowknife
- October 15-16, 2015 – CMA meeting, Yellowknife
- October 29 and December 17, 2015 – GRRB teleconference
- November 3, 2015 – WSF Committee conference call
- November 17-18, 2015 – Special collaborative meeting (Bluenose-West caribou), Inuvik
- November 19, 2015 – WSF Committee meeting, Inuvik
- December 12, 2015 – PCMB meeting, Whitehorse
- December 18, 2015 and January 8, 2016 - ACCWM teleconference
- January 20, 2016 – Bluenose-East allocation meeting, Yellowknife
- January 21, 2016 – Safety policy review teleconference
- February 8, 2016 – WSF Committee conference call
- February 10-11, 2016 – NWT Board Forum, Yellowknife
- February 16-17, 2016 – Administrative Law training, Yellowknife
- February 23, 2015 – IFMP Steering Committee lunch meeting
- March 30-31 – Orientation Reference Guide Workshop, Yellowknife (see page 8 for a report)

## February Board Meeting

The GRRB held its winter face-to-face meeting in Inuvik on February 23-26. At this Board meeting, Day One of the agenda included: Board and staff updates (provided throughout this newsletter); an update from the Rat River Working Group; a Board discussion on issues surrounding caribou; and an open discussion with the Renewable Resources Councils (RRCs).



Highlights of the final day of the meeting included a discussion on the development of a Finance Committee, and the review and approval of the GRRB Safety Policy.

of the Advisory Committee for the Cooperation of Wildlife Management (ACCWM) on the "Taking Care of Caribou" management plan and its implementation to address actions for the Cape Bathurst, Bluenose-West and Bluenose-East caribou herds; GRRB follow-up on caribou management issues; and consideration of a broader caribou management strategy. [Read more about the caribou discussions on pages 7 and 8.](#)



Photo credit: K. Maier, GRRB

**Renewable Resources Council (RRC) Session** Held at every GRRB face-to-face meeting, these sessions provide opportunity for open discussion between the RRCs and Board members. Amy Amos began with a presentation that reviewed the Board's mandate, GRRB and RRC roles, and the goal of the session. After this presentation, Councillors discussed various topics and community comments and concerns with the GRRB.

Day Two of the meeting was devoted to Wildlife Studies Fund (WSF) proposal presentations. [Refer to page 9 for more information.](#)

**"Taking Care of Caribou"** The Board examined three main areas of concern around caribou management: The focus



Photo credit: K. Maier, GRRB



Photo credit: K. Maier, GRRB



## “Taking Care of Caribou”

**Advisory Committee for Cooperation on Wildlife Management (ACCWM)** The ACCWM is a venue for discussions with other boards that share wildlife management of transboundary species. Currently, the ACCWM is focused on the “Taking Care of Caribou” management plan and its implementation, to address actions for the Cape Bathurst (CB), Bluenose-West (BNW) and Bluenose-East (BNE) caribou herds.

The GRRB continues to be a member of the ACCWM, sharing responsibility for management of these three caribou herds (historically known as the Bluenose herd). The GRRB discussed the requirements in the GCLCA for management of Bluenose caribou and the process of management being followed by all parties to the plan in the recently signed *Taking Care of Caribou* management plan for these herds.

There are challenges involved in management of the three herds

by so many groups, including the movement of caribou across so many management boundaries, uneven enforcement, lack of full understanding of harvest levels, and lack of agreement (in some cases) on actions to take and degree of cooperation, or lack thereof by all users and management bodies. In November 2015, the GRRB, SRRB and WMAC NWT held a joint meeting to discuss these concerns and come up with a path forward.

Changes to the Memorandum of Understanding and to the Correspondence Procedure of the ACCWM required Board comment and/or approval.

### Communications Strategy

**Wastage** The GRRB discussed concerning reports of caribou wastage and wounding during the fall 2015 harvest of Porcupine caribou on the Dempster highway. The GRRB will continue work on educational materials and messages to promote responsible harvesting. The Tetlit RRC coordinated a caribou education workshop in Fort McPherson for

its harvesters (see Janet Boxwell’s update on page 13).

**Letting the Leaders Pass** Hunters used to let the first group of caribou that arrived pass by and would hunt from the middle of the migration, leaving the rest alone. This was done to allow the caribou to continue learning and using their traditional migration routes, and to access their traditional wintering grounds. Hunters have begun to hunt as soon as the Porcupine caribou arrive on the Dempster highway in late summer. There is a concern that this early hunting may affect caribou migration and reduce their use of traditional wintering grounds east of the highway. The message of *Let the Leaders Pass* is not unique to the Gwich’in; other regions have similar traditions. Some RRCs expressed interest in having this message encouraged. The Board and RRCs discussed communication needs, the potential for involvement of Gwich’in monitors, and the role of the RRCs in talking to their communities.

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## orientation reference guide workshop

On March 30 and 31, 2016 Board members Sarah Jerome (Alternate Member) and Doug Doan (Full Member) participated in an Orientation Reference Guide workshop in Yellowknife.

Sarah reports that all of the topics presented were very interesting, especially the Pilot Board Orientation, Land Claims, and the General Responsibilities of the Board. Topics related to the Boards, how they operated, and how they deal with Territorial and Federal governments.

There was much discussion among all of the groups. The participants from the Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board (MVLWB) and the members of the Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board (MVEIRB) provided a lot of information in the workshops.

The Chairperson of the MVEIRB provided a great deal of information during the discussion. Many of the participants expressed their appreciation for the training session. They believe that it would have been so much easier to understand their roles as Board members if they had taken the session when they were first appointed.

The presenters did a very good job in the training sessions. Everyone was encouraged to participate in different group discussions throughout the two days.

Sarah and Doug are thankful for the opportunity to participate in this workshop. They are confident that other Board members will appreciate the training package once it is finalized.

**Harvest Reporting** The importance of harvest reporting was discussed, including how to report all harvests taken through community hunts and ensure that there is no double reporting.

**Land Damage and Habitat Impacts from ATV Use on the Dempster During Caribou Harvest** Photos had been sent around showing the damage ATVs are doing to the land when they are used before adequate snowfall and ground freezing. There is not a caribou conservation concern that the GRRB could act on to manage this issue. The Board discussed the environmental impacts of this and the role of the GRRB, as well as the mandates of other parties who can be involved in such discussions and decisions. The Board further discussed how it can include this

item in its communications strategy about respect for the land.

## a message from the GRRB Conservation Calendar

*The GRRB puts value in educational activities. Each June, staff of the GRRB visit the GSA communities to host Nature Day with Grade 3 students. This fun day full of learning includes interactive games about forests, wildlife and fish. We encourage you to engage the youth in your life and help pass on your knowledge of nature.*



Photo credit: K. Callaghan, GRRB

## Wildlife Studies Fund Applications 2016/17

Day Two of the February Board meeting was devoted entirely to Wildlife Studies Fund (WSF) presentations. Researchers who had previously received WSF support reported on their past research. Those requesting support for the 2016-2017 fiscal year previously submitted written applications to the Board. They gave presentations on their proposals. The Board supported the following project proposals:

### **Dolly Varden Ecology** **Kimberly Howland** & **Colin Gallagher (DFO)**

The 2015 objectives were to collect Rat River char population information to assist with Rat River Working Group (RRWG) decisions. The new proposal will continue to collect time series information at the Fish Hole by continuing seining work to support decision making of the GRRB and RRWG and to continue live sampling and tagging of char to get inter-annual abundance.

### **Dolly Varden Management** **Kris Maier (GRRB)**

The project's main objective is to assess juvenile habitats of char stock. The ideal long-term goal is to have a model to predict adult population status in advance using that juvenile information.

### **Wildlife Management - Dall Sheep Management Planning** **Kristen Callaghan (GRRB)**

This proposal is to bring the GRRB and RRCs up to date on sheep management; to bring parties to the management plan back to the table at a meeting in Inuvik; and to address specific education actions in the community of Aklavik in the interim.

### **Harvest Data Collection** **Janet Boxwell (GRRB)**

The RRCs in Aklavik, Inuvik, Fort McPherson and Tsiigehtchic, with support from the GRRB, propose to continue the Gwich'in Harvest Data Collection Study (GHS). GHS is a community-based monitoring program that was initiated in all four communities in 2009 with the support of funding from the WSF.

Harvest reporting needs to improve for better accuracy of estimated harvests.

### **Arctic Borderlands Community Monitoring**

#### **Kelly Milner (Arctic Borderlands Ecological Knowledge Society)**

Since 1996, The Borderlands Co-op has conducted a community-based monitoring program in Porcupine Caribou Herd user communities. Interviews with local experts are conducted each year by community researchers. Observations about caribou, fish, berries, unusual animal sightings, weather conditions, and other aspects of the environment, are recorded. These observations are presented and discussed at the annual gatherings and or at community meetings.

This application is to contribute to Gwich'in wage costs in Aklavik, Ft. McPherson, Tsiigehtchic, and Inuvik.

### **Muskrat Population Monitoring** **Jeremy Brammer, (University of Victoria/McGill University)**

Residents of Aklavik, Inuvik, Tsiigehtchic, and Fort McPherson have expressed concerns that muskrat populations are declining in the Mackenzie Delta region. Muskrats have been an important source of food and income in this area, and changes in their numbers are of concern.

The study will survey muskrat density across the Mackenzie Delta, and compare muskrat density today with densities observed in reports from the 1950s and 1970s

### **Muskox Ecology West of the Mackenzie Delta**

#### **Mike Suitor (Yukon Government), Marsha Branigan & Tracy Davison (ENR)**

The study will provide an updated biological and ecological assessment of North Slope muskox, including those found in the Richardson Mountains of NWT and along the Yukon North Slope. The project will investigate muskox population numbers, herd composition, habitat use, and will examine potential interactions between caribou and muskox. It will help to address some research gaps and concerns about muskoxen in this region, including those expressed by the GRRB and RRCs.

### **Youth Work Experience Program** **Amy Amos (GRRB)**

This is an ongoing program that offers youth the opportunity to get direct work experience with researchers. The program is designed to promote youth interest in this field with the ultimate goal of increasing the number of participants choosing an education and career in this field.

### **a message from the GRRB Conservation Calendar**

*Hunters (including resident hunters) are encouraged to harvest overabundant snow geese to avoid damage to habitat by overgrazing. Surplus harvested geese should be shared and not wasted.*



Photo credit: Jen Lam

**Kristen Callaghan**  
wildlife biologist  
since February 2008

**Management Planning Caribou Harvest Messaging** After the Porcupine Caribou herd's migration placed it close to the Dempster Highway in October of 2015 and intensive harvesting began, the GRRB discussed the importance of urgent messaging about caribou harvesting practices.

We showed you a sneak peak of some of the communications materials I have made for the GRRB on this topic in our fall newsletter. Posters of quotes and directions from Gwich'in elders about responsible harvesting were included in the Words of the Elders poster. Large-scale versions were shared with the GTC, GCSI and RRCs and schools throughout the GSA. Electronic versions can also be requested from the GRRB. Look also for copies of our new Let the Leaders Pass bumper sticker at our office and your local RRC this summer. The GRRB will be distributing 1,000 copies throughout the GSA to help convey this message before fall caribou hunting starts. If you have a sharp eye, you may notice that the landscape in the sticker shows the profile of the highway and the mountains just before the NWT/YT border when driving south. This is

an area that is favoured by caribou on their fall migration and where harvesting is often concentrated.

**Cape Bathurst, Bluenose-West, Bluenose-East Caribou Herds.** Management planning activities for these herds have continued since the fall Board meeting, with the November 17-18, 2015 joint meeting of the GRRB, SRRB and Wildlife Management Advisory Council (WMAAC) NWT in Inuvik, GRRB teleconferences and discussions, Advisory Committee for Cooperation on Wildlife Management (ACCWM) teleconference and Working Group

December 17 teleconference, along with staff recommendations prior to the ACCWM herd status decisions.

My participation continues in the Working Group. In addition to helping to draft the action plans and action table, I also joined the sub-committee that drafted the Communication Plan, as an appendix to the action plans. The first Action Plan for the Blue-nose East caribou herd is now out for review by members of the ACCWM. RRCs have also been sent copies. Action plans for the Cape Bathurst and Bluenose-West herds will follow a



activities. I participated in all but the ACCWM teleconference. I helped Amy to plan, coordinate and deliver the joint meeting in mid-November to discuss shared issues around Bluenose-West caribou management.

The ACCWM needed to set herd status for the three herds for completion of the action plans to take place. To assist the GRRB in its discussions and decision making prior to the ACCWM decisions on December 18, in late November and December I visited all Gwich'in RRCs to present information on management planning and herd information, and to seek RRC comments and input on status decisions and herd management. I presented a summary of the RRC input to the Board at its

similar format but are not yet ready for distribution and review. We will notify all RRCs when they are ready and as always, appreciate the feedback received.

**Dall's Sheep Management**

The GRRB approved funding to help support my WSF proposal this year. The aims of this project are: for the RRCs and the GRRB to familiarize themselves with the draft management plan for this sheep population; to learn about challenges this population is facing (it dropped ~30% in size from 2010 to 2014); and to help work together on management actions and planning moving forward. I will be visiting all RRCs to help Councils get up to speed on the plan this year, with

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potential meeting of parties to the plan after this process is completed – likely in late 2016 or early 2017. I will also be working with the ERRC on a small sheep education event in Akavik to help address some of their concerns on this topic locally.

**Research Pilot Project: Community Monitoring of Dall's Sheep.**

This project is not quite complete. The goals were to gather information and to evaluate community-based methods of assessing sheep population trends in years between surveys. Remote cameras on *Chigwazraii* (Black Mountain) were one facet of this project. These cameras were left out through the fall and winter, to further evaluate their utility for monitoring work in different seasons. The two cameras were retrieved with the help of the ERRC in March 2016. A camera placed on a trail near a water source was in a great location for getting some stealthy photos of sheep that passed by. It also survived investigation by two bears who took some interest in it. A second camera nearby that overlooked a sheep grazing area did not perform quite so well, but also recorded sheep presence on the mountain. The goal was to see how well cameras helped to detect trends in population growth by looking at numbers of lambs to adults in the photos. One year alone won't allow us to get



Photo credit: K. Callaghan, GRRB

trend information. Based on results so far, method improvements can be made. I plan to visit RRCs with initial results and will likely be asking for approval to try again. A highlight of the RRC visit will be seeing photos and video from the cameras.

**Muskox Survey.** Jessie Pascal, Robert Semple and I assisted with an April muskox survey in the northern Richardson Mountains and across the North Slope that was led by YTG and ENR. The GRRB expects that results will help with management planning for muskoxen in the GSA. We will share the field report with RRCs when it is available.

**Liaison** I continue to be in contact with GRRB partners and RRCs about wildlife research and management issues, as well as with other affiliated organizations and individuals. In addition to those already described, some of the recent activities and

communications I've had since the fall board meeting are:

**Harvester communication.** I communicated with a Gwich'in hunter who wished to use a grizzly bear tag in an area overseen by another Gwich'in RRC. This hunter sought clarification about how tags were distributed and used in order to hunt a grizzly bear. The GRRB will be re-engaging with RRCs on this topic to help come to a satisfactory method of following the bear management agreement in a way that allows for bear conservation and RRC roles without restricting harvesting rights.

**Lynx parasites.** I played go between with Brett Elkin, ENR veterinarian, when Ryan McLeod contacted me requesting assistance identifying parasites he found in the stomachs and stomach lining of many of the lynx he had trapped. Brett felt that the parasite was most likely *Cylicospirua felineus*, a common roundworm in the stomach of lynx. Ryan noted that the infected lynx all looked healthy. Harvesters concerned about parasites they find can contact ENR to get advice on how to collect and send samples. In the case of these parasites, they can be frozen or put in an alcohol solution to preserve them before formal identification in a lab.



Photo credit: K. Callaghan, GRRB



Photo credit: Ellen Lea

## Kris Maier fisheries biologist since March 2010

**Management Planning** I actively planned and coordinated the most recent meetings of the Rat River Working Group (RRWG - March 7, 2016) and West Side Working Group (WSWG - March 8, 2016).

**Rat River Working Group** The RRWG meets yearly to recommend a voluntary sustainable harvest level for the Rat River char stock. It then consults with communities to get feedback and lets harvesters know the recommendations. The RRWG relies on data provided by harvest monitors and DFO science assessments at the Fish Hole for their recommendations for sustainable harvest levels each year.

This year, for the first time there was a discrepancy between population levels estimated from monitors (showing an increase) and from the seine assessment (showing a decline). The reasons for this discrepancy are not clear. Because there is a portion of the population that does not migrate to the ocean every year, it is possible that the char monitor estimate was biased high (not all tagged fish were available to the fishery). The seine assessment

estimate may be biased low due to the timing of the seine surveys and char movement during late fall (more tagged fish in a concentrated area than in previous years). The seine assessments are likely closer to the true population size. A decline in the population is unexpected, based on other biological indicators.

Due to a robust migration, char monitors caught and harvested more char this year than was agreed to at the 2015 RRWG meeting, resulting in a high harvest. Discussions with the char monitors will take place to try and minimize the number of char harvested when the run is strong.

At the March 7, 2016 RRWG meeting, the group discussed recommended 2016 harvest levels. The Integrated Fisheries Management Plan (IFMP) recommends a 5% safe harvest level, but the 2015 harvest was 9.5% of the 2014 estimate. The population appears stable, but this level of harvest is a small concern. As a result, and because of the diverging population estimates, the RRWG opted for a precautionary approach of maintaining the same harvest level as 2015 - 450 char. 210 are allocated to the harvest monitoring program and 240 are to be divided between the communities.

Photo credit: K. Maier, GRRB



**Research** This winter, I performed data analyses on my summer field research. These analyses fell into three broad categories: biological, water chemistry, and modelling. Results so far indicate that our model to predict juvenile Dolly Varden occupancy will be effective, but we will need at least one more year of sampling to finalize our results.

I reported to DFO on fisheries research licensing. I also reported on the Arctic Research Institute (ARI) Research License. I have partnered with Karen Dunmall and Rob Bajno (University of Manitoba/DFO) on an eDNA research proposal that will hopefully allow us to detect fish in a water body by detecting DNA from the water without actually sampling the fish. I have also partnered with Pete Cott and NWT Cumulative Impact Monitoring (CIMP) researchers to collect fish for contaminants analysis. Results from this research will be available in fall 2016.

**Technical Advice** I participated in the regional RRC meeting, met with multiple RRCs on several occasions to discuss research and management objectives, and provided advice on several research and industrial development proposals.



**Janet Boxwell**  
**renewable resources**  
**manager**  
**since August 2010**

**Management Planning** I work with our webmaster to maintain an online and a manual Public Registry of all information related to public hearings, the Gwich'in Harvest Study, management plans, communication material and technical advice. I provide advice on the review of management plans, land use plans, policies and reports.

**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.

**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.

Applications of concern at this time include an access permit for the proposed Stoney Creek quarry and the Eagle Plains multi-well exploration program.

**Liaison Communication** I consult with RRCs, government and co-management partners on a regular basis regarding research priorities, GRRB policies, and harvest studies.

**The three-day harvester education workshop in Fort McPherson** featured speakers on caribou conservation topics, posters and presentations, as well as hands-on meat preparation demonstrations. The workshop focused on positive messages of taking what you need, retrieving wounded caribou and using all the animal parts harvested. There were hands-on demonstrations of how to cut and prepare the meat using traditional and modern recipes. I learned that you can use many more parts of the animal that I

hadn't considered useful. I even had a bowl of caribou head soup! Staff member and avid hunter, Kris Maier, caught the attention of the crowd with his more modern sausage making techniques - and all the garlic he used in his recipe!

The highlight for many sharp eyed harvesters was the Sight-in-Your Rifle event led by staff of Environment and Natural Resources, including a target shooting competition. Congratulations go to the Tetlit RRC and staff for organizing such a great event! Thank you to ENR for your sponsorship and participation. We look forward to the next one.

**Education/Youth** I develop and lead environmental education youth activities. Community members and teachers have expressed interest in a caribou-themed program. I have piloted a caribou photo survey activity appropriate for Grades 7-12 and a caribou migration game for Grades 3-6. I will update our Education Unit to reflect the results of this pilot program.

*...cont'd on next page*



Harvester Education Workshop. Photo credit: J. Boxwell, GRRB

Did you know that 2016 marks the 100th anniversary of the signing of the Migratory Birds Convention between Canada and the US? This was the first ever international wildlife management agreement. The theme for this year's **National Wildlife Week** April 10-16 was 'Giving Wings to Wildlife Conservation'. The theme in the NWT was **'Bees'**. There are 110 species of bees in the NWT, 21 of which are bumble bees. All are important pollinators. We couldn't enjoy berries without bees!

I worked with staff of our co-management partner, ENR, to design and deliver 'The Buzz on Bees' programs to several Grade 6 classes in Inuvik. After a discussion about pollination and how the work of bees directly affects our food choices with students, we played the 'Which Pollinator Am I' game and had to roll our dice to 'Find Your Way Back to the Hive'. We all had fun and the teacher wants us back in the classroom and the Inuvik greenhouse to demonstrate how to make a bee-friendly garden. We are



*The Buzz on Bees. Photo credit: J. Boxwell, GRRB*

looking forward to bringing the bee program on the road to some of the other communities too later this spring!

GRRB staff were again invited to participate in career fairs in Inuvik, Fort McPherson and Aklavik where we spoke to youth of all ages about

the types of careers that are available in the natural resources field.

While we were there, we had them answer skill-testing questions in our EnviroQuiz for fabulous GRRB-themed prizes (biodegradable pens, pencils, calendars and cool 'Get Wild About Nature' pins).



*Photo credit: J. Boxwell, GRRB*



*Career Fair. Photo credit: J. Boxwell, GRRB*





## Kaytlin Cooper species at risk biologist since January 2015

### Research Bank Swallow Surveys

At our October 2015 Board meeting, I was tasked with researching funding for the NWT Species At Risk (SAR) Stewardship program for the inclusion of the Tetlit RRC and Peel River. I emailed the RRCs this information in February.

I have corresponded with Mike Cadman, a Songbird Biologist (Canadian Wildlife Service) from the Hudson Bay Lowlands area, regarding Bank Swallow survey methodology. Upcoming work on this project includes data input to e-Bird and Bird Studies Canada; completion and distribution of my report throughout the Tsiigehtchic community and the GSA; completion of the SAR Stewardship Fund report and Wildlife Research Permit report; and a school event. Other upcoming research work includes a TK workshop on insects ([see sidebar](#)).

**Technical Advice** I am in the process of reviewing status reports for Grizzly Bear (NWT); five species of bats (NWT); Transverse Lady Beetle (federal); Rusty Blackbird (federal) and Harris' Sparrow (federal). I am also reviewing a

proposed listing for the Red-necked Phalarope (federal).

Some of my other activities are:

- 2016 fiscal year community consultation budget
- Review of Batch 13 federal species to be assessed (Red-necked Phalarope and Yellow-banded Bumblebee)
- Revision of the *SAR in the NWT* booklet
- Researching the Gypsy Cuckoo Bumblebee and amphibians for upcoming reviews
- Assisting Amy with a letter requesting funding to extend the SAR Biologist position
- Preparing an Aboriginal Fund for Species At Risk proposal with Kristi Benson (GSCI) for the insect TK workshop
- Reviewing COSEWIC candidate species (Lesser Yellowlegs and Muscox)
- Corresponding with Sebastian Orue Herrera (University of Ottawa) regarding delays in listing of species under the federal SARA
- Reviewing amendments to Canadian Migratory Birds game hunting regulations
- Ongoing review of CITES–Canada's proposal to remove Wood Bison from Appendix II (controlled trade) and move Peregrine Falcon from Appendix I (trade permitted in exceptional circumstances only) to Appendix II
- Reviewing biographies for two new Species at Risk Committee (SARC) TK members; I approved the appointments of Alestine Andre and Dr Allice Legat and approved the reappointment of Joanna Wilson to the SARC.

**Liaison** In my role as SAR biologist, I attend RRC meetings in the communities. I am also involved

in meetings of the Conference of Management Authorities and the North American Caribou Workshop.

In November, I attended a course on the Canadian Arctic Terrestrial Biodiversity Monitoring Network in Inuvik. In December, I obtained my Firearms Possession and Acquisition License. I completed a Wilderness First Aid course this March.

## insect traditional knowledge (TK) workshop

The GRRB is excited to announce a two-day Insect TK knowledge-sharing workshop in Inuvik. We are sponsoring the attendance of two elders from each community. Information gathered at the workshop will be compiled into a report relating to the entire Gwich'in traditional use area.

The overall purpose of this project is two-fold: 1) to share information between biologists, GRRB, GSCI, and Aboriginal knowledge-holders; and 2) to record Gwich'in knowledge about insects and their habitats, with a focus on insects that may be sensitive or at risk. This project is needed due to the extensive gap in knowledge about insects in the area, both from a scientific and recorded TK perspective.

Funding has been obtained from the Aboriginal Funds for Species at Risk and the SAR Stewardship Program. In-kind support will be provided by the GRRB and GSCI. Project leads for this workshop are: Kristi Benson (GSCI); Kaytlin Cooper, (GRRB); and Crystal Ernst (Simon Fraser University).

This project is part of a larger multi-year project to record Gwich'in Knowledge about species at risk. To date, the project has produced reports on grizzly bears, Bluenose caribou, wolverine, and boreal woodland caribou.



As employee representative for the Safety Committee, in January I helped to review the draft safety policy and helped present it to the staff at our staff meeting on January 22, 2016.



**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

## Cheryl Greenland office manager since February 2009

I am a Nihtat Gwich'in participant from Inuvik.

Since our last newsletter, I have cleaned up the front office area and filing. I assisted with the development of the 2016 Conservation Calendar by providing community event dates. I also participated in the Wildlife Studies Fund Committee meetings.

I took an online course with Amy to help understand year end payroll reports. Amy and I also traveled to Calgary in December to participate in a Finance workshop. From what I learned in the workshop, I have cleaned up some financial entries. I have also created a spreadsheet of all of our projects with financial timelines from the Contribution Agreement, to help me know when cheques and invoices are expected. I participated in the first Finance Committee Meeting held by teleconference on May 6, 2016. I helped prepare the materials and participated in the discussions.



*Photo credit: C. Lambert-Koizumi, GRRB*

## upcoming events

### Nature Day (Grade 3)

June 8 - Aklavik  
June 10 - Tsiigehtchic

June 15 @ 5pm  
**Rat River Working Group  
Public Meeting and Dinner**  
ACRCC Hall, Ft McPherson

June 16 @ 5pm  
**Rat River Working Group  
Public Meeting and Dinner**  
Sittichinli Complex, Aklavik

### Nature Day (Grade 3)

June 16 - Inuvik  
June 17 - Fort McPherson

### Educational Visits

June 16 - Inuvik (Grade 6)  
June 17 - Ft McPherson (Grade 10)

Late September/early October  
(Two days - TBD)

**GRRB Board Meeting**  
Tsiigehtchic

