



GWICH'IN RENEWABLE RESOURCES BOARD

news

Fall 2021



Gwich'in Wellness Camp

in this issue:

Executive Director's update	1
Farewell to Amy Amos	4
Meet our new Executive Director!	7
Board Member appointments and updates	8
GRRB Teleconferences recap	9
September Board Meeting recap	9
Staff Updates	
Wildlife Biologist news	11
Species at Risk Biologist news	13
Fisheries & Forestry Biologist news	15
Environmental Coordinator news	17
Finance and Administrative Manager news	18
Office Assistant news	18
Upcoming Events	19
Get in Touch	19
Regional RRC Contacts	19

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 and Climate Change Canada (ECCC), 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 does this in a respectful, transparent, communicative and inclusive manner, using the best available traditional and scientific 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.

Amy Amos executive director (outgoing)

Personal Mission Statement: 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.

I am a Nihtat Gwich'in Participant who was born in Inuvik and grew up in Halifax, Nova Scotia, with my father, Wallace Thompson. My mother is Susie Thompson (Linklater/Kay) from Aklavik. My Jijii (grandfather) is the late Jim Kay from Tetlit Zheh (Fort McPherson) and my Jijuu (grandmother) is the late Betty Kay (Stewart) from Aklavik. I am related to the Kay and Stewart families. I moved back to Inuvik in January 2006 to work at the GRRB and to reconnect with my roots. I was hired as a biologist and then 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. This newsletter is largely a progress report for work activities from February through September, 2021.

COVID-19 update In alignment with the Northwest Territories (GNWT) **Emerging Wisely Plan (EWP)**, GRRB staff are fully equipped to work from home, as needed. We have purchased disinfectant, sanitizers and personal protective equipment, including face masks and shields. All staff are fully vaccinated. Staff and guests wear masks when entering and exiting the buildings and in hallways and other common areas. We continue to discuss COVID-19



and other safety considerations at monthly staff meetings.

Personnel management I strongly believe that a positive work environment goes a long way. I am proud of our staff and of how well we work together. We are a dedicated and hard-working team. I encourage you to read all of our staff reports.

Permanent staff Cheryl Greenland (Finance and Administrative Manager) has been with us since 2009. Her job title was updated from Office Manager to better reflect her job description and financial duties. Kaytlin Cooper (Species at Risk Biologist) has been with us since 2015. Sarah Lord (Fisheries & Forestry Biologist) has been with us since 2017. Steve Andersen (Wildlife Biologist) started in April 2020 as our Stakeholder Liaison, which was changed to Environmental Coordinator to better reflect the job description. Steve officially started as our new Wildlife Biologist on April 26, 2021.

The Environmental Coordinator position remained vacant until

September, when Jessi Pascal was hired. Jessi was previously filling a term contract with us as the Technician, focusing on the harvest survey. Jessi is Gwich'in and Inuvialuit. She was born and raised in the region, has her Environment & Natural Resources Technology Program Diploma and has been working at the community level in this field for several years. We welcome her to our team!

Term staff The new Executive Director, Wanda McDonald, was hired under a one-year term. Wanda is Gwich'in and comes with over 22 years of work experience. Her start date was September 27, 2021, giving her and I one week of overlap. Melanie Bonnetplume remains our Office Assistant until March 31, 2022. Melanie's position is being paid by Gwich'in Tribal Council (GTC), Government of Northwest Territories (GNWT) and GRRB. The funding requires skill development. Cheryl is training her in finance and administrative skills. Hope McDonald was hired as our Summer Student and is continuing part-time

...continued on next page



until March 31, 2022. Hope has been working on digitalizing our paper library and shredding old financial records that the GRRB is no longer required to keep. Both Melanie and Hope are supervised by Cheryl.

Casual staff Ian Matari provides us with after-hours computer services. Chelsea Hermus continues to manage our website remotely and assist with other communication items, as needed.

Staff initiatives A new employee recognition and compensation program was implemented in April 2021. This included updates to salary, leave and other benefits. We also implemented a new recognition program that acknowledges length of service. On August 20, 2021, we had a staff picnic on Black Mountain. This was an employee incentive to

recognize the hard work of the staff and give them the opportunity to see the beautiful resources they work so hard to conserve each day.

We encourage staff input. During this reporting period, we updated our Job Risk Analysis document. We keep a “healthy” amount of candy and other treats in the office to help with mid-afternoon energy boosts. We also continue to hold monthly staff meetings.

Financial management Financial management and administration is important to ensure that we operate efficiently.

Finance Committee We held two Finance Committee meetings (May 3 and August 3, 2021) prior to the September Board meeting. The May meeting focused on reviewing the

year-end finances. The August meeting reviewed the first quarter and the draft financial statements. Recommendations from these committee meetings are presented at the following GRRB meeting. The current membership on this committee is Sam Bullock, Burt Hunt and Doug Doan, with support from GRRB staff. The Chair is *ex officio*. Roger Fraser is an alternate. A meeting took place in late October to review the mid-year financials.

Project management Staff serve as project leads with my oversight. They help confirm project accounting and we work together to ensure they are presented properly.

Wildlife Studies Fund (WSF) The WSF is managed by Royal Bank of Canada. We have financial advisors that provide reports to us (monthly, quarterly and annually), which the Finance Committee reviews. The investment fund is currently doing well at generating interest on its investments.

Board administration Current vacancies are the GNWT-nominated seats for full and alternate member and the Gwich'in Tribal Council (GTC)-nominated alternate member. Reach out to the GNWT or GTC if you are interested in being a GRRB Board member!

Liaison General Liaison This continues to be challenging during COVID-19. There has been a switch from in-person to virtual meetings. We attend in-person meetings when it's safe and otherwise try our best to keep in contact with all of our partners, including the communities, by email and phone.

- Participated in initial discussions with GTC and Environment and Natural Resources (ENR) around

...continued on next page



Renewable Resource Council (RRC) engagement and RRC workshop (held in October)

- Met with the GTC Department of Cultural Heritage (DCH) to discuss the science camp they used to run
- Met virtually with Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) to discuss species at risk engagement processes
- Met with ENR to discuss waste and wildlife management (grizzly bears at the dumps)
- Sat on two committees for the proposed Aurora Borealis journal
- Presented virtually at the Women in Leadership Gathering
- Participated as a panelist to discuss problem-solving and decision-making with students in Aurora College's Northern Leadership Development Program

Communication Our last newsletter was released in May 2021 to highlight work between September 2020 and February 2021. We are starting work on the 2022 Conservation Calendar; Jessi will take the lead on this project. Our website was redesigned and modernized and is still in the process of being updated. It is now easier to update and view on different platforms, such as cell phones. Our Facebook page remains active. It is mostly used to share information and meeting details.

Professional Development In March, I completed the GNWT's Mentor Apprentice Program (MAP) for learning my language with Winston Moses. This was a humbling experience. Now, I just need to keep practicing so I don't lose what was learned. I also attended a MAP workshop in Yellowknife in March focusing on lessons learned.

In September, I attended the virtual conference "Human Resources Management for Indigenous Communities". The conference was an interesting perspective on human resources management. The highlights for me were new ideas for employee engagement and how to better connect with youth.

This will be my last newsletter report as Executive Director. Sadly, my last day with the GRRB was October 1, 2021. I have grown both professionally and personally during my time here. I remember an incredibly steep learning curve when I started in the Executive Director position. The Chairperson

and the Board always provided support and guidance. I am thankful for their confidence in me. It was a very difficult decision to leave my home at the GRRB. I have always been very happy here. My decision was purely based on the desire to continue to grow professionally. I am staying in Inuvik. My new job is with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) as the Director of Arctic Operations. I wish you all the best and hope to see you around town or at meetings in the future, but from my new role. Take care and keep safe.

Haii, Mahsi, thank you!



Farewell, Amy and thank you!

The GRRB would like to thank our long time Executive Director, Amy Amos, for 16 years of service.

Amy began her career at the GRRB as a Biologist in January 2006 and was promoted to Executive Director in 2009.

Amy is a Participant of the Nihtat Gwich'in. She was born in Inuvik and was raised in Halifax, Nova Scotia by her father Wallace Thompson. Amy's Gwich'in roots stem from the Linklater/Kay families: her mother is Susie Thompson from Aklavik, her Jijii (grandfather) is the late Jim Kay from Tetlit Zheh (Fort McPherson), and her Jijuu (grandmother) is the late Betty Kay (Stewart) from Aklavik.

Throughout her time with the GRRB, Amy demonstrated personal passion, commitment and dedication to her role as Executive Director. She believed strongly in the importance of involving community members in every aspect of the organization's work, incorporating traditional knowledge into our decision-making whenever possible and providing education and work experience opportunities to youth. She fostered very strong relationships between the GRRB and the Renewable Resource Councils, which we will continue with pride. Amy also cared deeply about her staff and always went the extra mile to set them up for success and celebrate their achievements.

A few of Amy's many notable achievements over her 16 years with the GRRB include: the Loche Liver study, enrolling staff in Registered

Retirement Savings Plans (RRSPs), obtaining increased funding for the Species at Risk Biologist position and commencing the work on the Commercial Use file.

Amy has moved into a new position as Director of Arctic Operations at Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO), based out of DFO's Inuvik office. This was a natural career progression as Amy continues to grow professionally. We are excited to be able to work with her in her new role.

On behalf of the GRRB Board and staff, we thank Amy for her many contributions to wildlife, fisheries and forestry management in the Gwich'in Settlement Area and beyond. We look forward to continuing our work with her at DFO. Mahsi cho, Amy. Congratulations and best wishes from all of us!

Amy with John Carmichael during her early days at the GRRB



Amy poses with her leaving gifts - a beaded vest and slippers







Visit us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/grrb.nt.ca

Wanda McDonald executive director (incoming)

Drin Gwinzii (good day). My name is Wanda McDonald. I am a Gwich'in Participant and have lived most of my life in Inuvik.

My daughter is Julienne Chipesia. Julienne is currently enrolled in a Law degree program at the University of Bristol, UK.

I have been involved with the homelessness file for Inuvik and, more recently, have been cooking and serving food while the Emergency Warming Shelter has been closed for the summer months.

I sit as the Director at Large for the Aboriginal Sports Circle board.

A few of my hobbies include creative writing, basic photography, scrapbooking and maintaining a healthy lifestyle through regular exercise.

work experience Gwich'in

Nation: I have had the pleasure of working with the Gwich'in Tribal Council for over ten years, under four Presidential administrations. I held the position of Chief Operating Officer and Manager Business Development.

I have a good understanding of the Gwich'in Comprehensive Land Claim from a regional and community perspective and understand the challenges and success of land claim implementation. I have been mentored by past leaders and elders to understand:

- the values that guide us
- the importance of the Land, protection and management of renewable resources
- preservation of Gwich'in culture and language



- the importance of unity under the Land Claim

Territorial Government: I recently completed my employment with the Department of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE) as the Regional Superintendent. During these seven years with ECE, I gained a valuable understanding of the importance of social and economic programming to help clients work towards self-reliance and more importantly, the call to serve our clients and at the same time build individual and community capacity.

Provincial and Private Sector: I worked for the BC Oil & Gas Commission and for a couple of oil and gas companies. My private

sector experience has allowed me to understand the importance of consultation with First Nations and the economic opportunities available to First Nation companies.

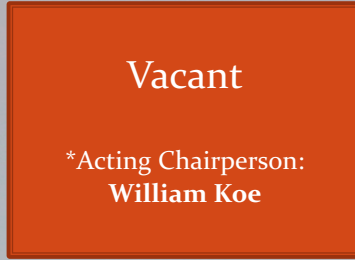
I am very pleased to have the opportunity to work as the Executive Director for the GRRB. I look forward to making a positive contribution while fulfilling the mandate and vision of the Board with the support of the staff and strong working relationships with our partners.

Mussi,

Wanda

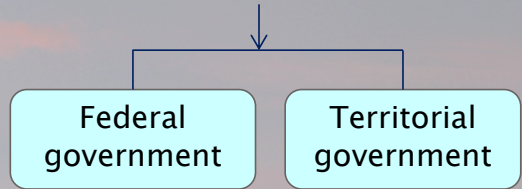
GRRB Board

Vacant
Chairperson (GRRB)



Order in Council
appointments

Nominating
Agency



Margaret Begg
Member (GTC)



Sam Bullock
Member (GTC)



William Koe*
Member (GTC)



Burt Hunt
Member (Canada)



Doug Doan
Member (Canada)



TBA
Member (GNWT)



Charlie Snowshoe
Alternate (GTC)



Roger Fraser
Alternate (GTC)



TBA
Alternate (GTC)



Ron Allen
Alternate (Canada)



Myra Robertson
Alternate (Canada)



TBA
Alternate (GNWT)



Photos: Black Fly Studios, Nick Westover Photography

board member updates

To form the thirteen-member Board, three members and three alternate members are appointed from nominees put forward by each of the Gwich'in Tribal Council (GTC) and the Government (federal and territorial). Nominees are jointly appointed by the federal and territorial governments. The Chairperson is nominated by the Board members and jointly appointed by the federal and territorial governments.

Once appointed, our Board members act in the public interest. They are independent, not beholden to the agency that nominated them.

There were fewer meetings for Board members to attend this period due to COVID-19. All meetings listed below were attended virtually via video- or teleconferencing.

Our Board members are busy working in many different areas, including the following:

Committees/Working Groups:

- Conference of Management Authorities (CMA)
- Integrated Fisheries Management Plan (IFMP) Steering Committee
- Finance Committee
- Hiring Committee

Human Resources:

- Assisting with recruitment processes for new staff positions
- Providing HR support/advice
- Compensation review/salary adjustments

Meetings:

- Virtual Board meeting
- GRRB regular and special teleconferences
- GRRB Finance Committee teleconferences and calls

Training:

- Board forum training



Visit us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/grrb.nt.ca

GRRB Teleconferences

The Board held two teleconferences between our face-to-face meetings:

April 28, 2021 Teleconference

- Approved transferring unused project funds to the Wildlife Studies Fund investment account
- Support for regulation amendment for restricting drone use under the *Wildlife Act*
- Support for the West Side Working Group's terms of reference
- Approved staff compensation and benefits
- Approved updates to leave policies

August 5, 2021 Teleconference

- Approved the audited financial statements
- Direction to use surplus funds before the Administrative Fund
- Approved amendments to the "Taking Care of Caribou" management plan
- Direction to reconvene the annual GRRB-Fisheries and Oceans Canada meeting, but hold it in the north
- Approved posting the Collared Pika management plan (Federal *Species at Risk Act*)
- Approved posting the Bank Swallow Recovery Strategy (Federal *Species at Risk Act*)
- Approved the ministerial order to protect bank swallow critical habitat on federal lands (Federal *Species at Risk Act*)
- Approved Suckley's Cuckoo bumblebee listing as threatened (Federal *Species at Risk Act*)
- Support for an online cash management system



September 2021 Board Meeting Recap

The GRRB held its fall Board meeting by teleconference September 21-22. Due to the pandemic, this was the second fully virtual Board meeting. Board members and staff presented updates on their activities since the last virtual Board meeting in February.

Norman Snowshoe, Marsha Branigan and Ernie Francis provided agency updates on behalf of the Government of NWT Department of Environment and Natural Resources (ENR). Rob Gou presented the Wildlife & Fish Division update.

Leigh-Ann Jones and Christina Martin gave an update on behalf of the Gwich'in Tribal Council (GTC).

Helen Wheeler (Anglia Ruskin University) presented on her research project on beaver populations in the Gwich'in Settlement Area (GSA). There is concern over increasing numbers.

Sydney Goward (University of Victoria) spoke about the Divii Project. In partnership with the GRRB

(pictured above), it is a community-based project monitoring Dall sheep in the northern Richardson Mountains.

Chanda Turner (University of Victoria) presented an update on her muskrat research in the Mackenzie Delta. There was discussion about possible reasons for the muskrat population decline. There may be a combination of factors responsible.

Darcy McNicholl and Karen Dunmall (Fisheries & Oceans Canada - DFO) reviewed their presentation on Arctic salmon research. No salmon have been reported in the NWT for 2021.

Rachel Hovel (University of Maine) reviewed her project update on the Lower Mackenzie Whitefish Monitoring Program. The project is looking at the movement of fish in the Delta, at matching water to otoliths and analyzing water chemistry and contaminants.

The meeting resumed on Day 2 with a DFO agency update from Kevin Bill. The new boundaries for the Arctic Region were discussed. The Inuvik office remains closed to the public

...continued on next page



Some of our September Board meeting participants



due to COVID-19. Access for licensing can be arranged as required.

Deana Lemke and Jennifer Smith (Porcupine Caribou Management Board) reviewed a presentation on the PCMB activities and the Traditional Knowledge Data Mobilization Project. There was a discussion of traditional knowledge data ownership and issues around sharing traditional knowledge. The PCMB is considering how best to incorporate traditional knowledge with other information sources. They will continue to consult the communities involved to ensure that they are doing it right.

Rob Gau (ENR) gave an operational update on the commercial use of wild meat. ENR wants to move forward collaboratively with the GRRB on this issue.

Amy Amos presented a review of the GRRB Research Interests and Priorities. This interim review was to decide whether any recent community research interests should be added to the GRRB's research priorities. These are reviewed every five years, with the next review in fall 2022 (for implementation in 2023). At this time, none of the research priorities warrant being added to the list, knowing that it will be reviewed

next year.

During the Renewable Resource Council (RRC) and Public session, the Chair opened the floor to questions from the RRCs and members of the public. There was discussion about harvesting of grizzly bears in Inuvik before they fence the dump.

Jozef Carnogursky, Board Chair, closed the open portion of the meeting by thanking the RRCs, Board members and the communities. He said: "If you need any assistance, please don't hesitate to contact us. We look forward to meeting face-to-face again in the future. Resource management is important to everyone."

The remainder of the meeting was dedicated to administrative items. Motions were made to update GRRB signing authority, pending Amy Amos' departure. A motion was passed to add September 30, National Day for Truth & Reconciliation, as a new statutory holiday. Safety incidents were discussed and the Board passed a motion to update the safety policy to include mandatory helmet use on motorized vehicles for GRRB staff and fieldworkers.

The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for February 16-18, 2022 in Aklavik (or virtually via Zoom).



Steve Andersen
wildlife biologist
since April 2021*

***Change of Roles** In April 2020, I started with the GRRB as the Stakeholder Liaison. A year later, I moved into the role of Wildlife Biologist.

Management Planning Shih (Grizzly Bears) I followed up with all stakeholders to request their feedback on the draft management plan in May and received comments from several organizations. Laurence Carter incorporated those comments into the draft plan. The GRRB's previous wildlife biologist, Édouard Bélanger, has been hired as a contractor and is now organizing a final round of consultations with the RRCs, which will take place in December 2021 and January 2022.

Wildlife and Solid Waste Management Environment and Natural Resources (ENR) and Municipal and Community Affairs held an information session in June to present Beaufort Delta communities with methods of reducing conflict with wildlife at landfills, which was well received. Inuvik is planning to install an electric fence around its landfill in 2022. In the long term, this will reduce conflict with bears, but in the short term it will displace bears and result in more encounters in and around town.

The GRRB has been working with the Wildlife Management Advisory Council (NWT), Inuvialuit Game Council, Nihtat Renewable Resource Council (RRC), Inuvik Hunters & Trappers Committee, ENR and the Town of Inuvik to determine how best to avoid problems with bears in Inuvik next year.



Research Sheihtsoo Vee (Bank Swallow) Surveys Species at Risk Biologist Kaytlin Cooper received funding for bank swallow surveys this year. I ran the fieldwork portion of the project for her. We spent six days surveying for bank swallows along the Peel, Arctic Red and Mackenzie Rivers and at gravel pits along the Dempster. The data we collected will be shared with the Birds Canada and BirdLife International and will be used by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) and the Conference of Management Authorities when they assess the status of the species.

Tsee' (Beaver) Helen Wheeler from Anglia University was unable to be here in person due to the pandemic, so I helped run the project. I organized ten days of fieldwork based out of ENR's Jackfish Creek cabin. We had an excellent field crew who collected a ton of information on where beavers are currently active, as well as samples of the shrubs they have been eating. Helen and I are now working on plans for next summer's fieldwork.

Divii (Dall's Sheep) Research Project I helped arrange the logistics of Master's student Sydney Goward's three-week visit in August. Sydney and I gave a presentation on the Divii Project to Parks Canada's Inuvik office. She will talk to the RRCs remotely this fall or in the spring when she next visits. She also helped service several of the wildlife cameras. Technician Jessi Pascal and I conducted an aerial sheep survey in the Mount Goodenough study area in September.

Gwich'in Harvest Survey I purchased baseball caps, playing cards and pens to promote the harvest survey. I also bought jackets with the harvest survey logo to give to the most frequent survey participants. I wrote our annual harvest survey report, which I submitted to ENR in May as part of our grant reporting. I coordinated the GRRB's side of the June harvest survey until Jessi Pascal was hired in the Technician role and could take over. I trained Jessi on how to run the harvest survey, analyze the data and perform reporting.

...continued on next page

Other I assisted ENR with their aerial muskox and caribou surveys on March 16 and 17. Also in March, I initiated discussions with our biologists on best practices for long term storage of the data we collect. In August, I helped with the initial setup of ENR's small mammal survey.

Technical Advice Research & Regulatory Reviews Since our last newsletter, I completed 17 research permit reviews and 10 regulatory reviews. At the request of the Gwich'in Tribal Council (GTC), I provided them with a review of WMAC's *Yukon North Slope Wildlife Conservation and Management Plan*.

Liaison Sahtu Renewable Resources Board (SRRB) Public Listenings I have been keeping up to speed on the public listenings in the Sahtu. The second of five planned listenings is scheduled for February 1-3.

General Liaison I have written three letters of support since our last newsletter. I regularly encourage researchers to present their work to local schools. Several expressed interest and I provided them with contact information for the principals.

Other Training Tracy Davison from ENR took me on a practice flight and taught me how to do radio telemetry in June. Édouard (our previous Wildlife Biologist) met with me several times to share information on the Wildlife Biologist role before he left at the end of April. He continues to be an excellent resource whenever I have questions.

I took Wilderness First Responder training from October 1-8.



Conferences & Meetings

- PCMB annual harvest meeting (February 9-10)
- McLennan Ross LLP Labour & Employment Year in Review, on Amy's behalf (March 2)
- Public presentations given during the Legislative Assembly's review of the *Wildlife Act* and *Species at Risk (NWT) Act* (April 27)
- North American Caribou Workshop (May 3-6)
- Presentation by Mike Sutor and colleagues on a Porcupine Caribou habitat selection model they have developed (May 13)
- Federal Grizzly Bear Management Plan Workshop (May 14)
- Cumulative Effects Assessment Project for the Cape Bathurst, Tuk Penn, Bluenose-West and Bluenose-East caribou herds (Aug 20)
- Arctic Borderlands Ecological Knowledge Society (ABEKS) Board meetings
- Advisory Committee for Cooperation on Wildlife Management (ACCWM) Communication and Education Working Group
- ACCWM Alternatives to Collars Working Group

Operational

- Acting Executive Director March 1-4
- Worked with Chelsea on purchasing new promotional items for the GRRB
- Provided technical assistance for several virtual meetings held by the GRRB
- Helped revise our Job Hazard Analysis and Risk Assessment (April 13, June 17)
- Helped develop an interview assignment for the Environmental Coordinator hiring process (April)
- Checked the condition of our AED (defibrillator) and ordered replacement parts (June)
- Worked with staff and summer students on a major cleanup of the warehouse; also helped to install new lighting (September)
- Helping train Jessi in her new role as Environmental Coordinator (ongoing)

Personal I took two weeks off in July and went hiking in the Yukon. I visited Tombstone, Kluane, Dawson, Haines Junction, Carcross and Whitehorse. It was a great trip and I had a lot of fun.



Kaytlin Cooper

species at risk biologist since January 2015

As Species at Risk Biologist, I work with local communities, Renewable Resource Councils (RRCs) and governments (both Federal and Territorial), assisting with species assessments and listings, developing management plans and recovery strategies and administering species at risk programs and research projects (science and Traditional Knowledge) in the Gwich'in Settlement Area (GSA).

Management Planning Northern Mountain Caribou Northern mountain caribou was listed as a species of special concern in July 2021 under the *NWT Species at Risk Act*. A management plan must be developed within two years of listing. There is already a national management plan and a regional (Sahtu) community-based planning process that could help fulfill this requirement. GRRB, Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) and Sahtu Renewable Resources Board (SRRB) have met several times to discuss this and create a workplan and outline for the management plan.

Boreal Caribou Range Planning Working Group Under the NWT recovery strategy for boreal caribou, the range plan framework broadly outlines how each NWT region can manage disturbances such as development and fire to ensure that boreal caribou continue to be self-sustaining. Work on a GSA-specific range plan began in September 2020 and continued into 2021. Further meetings will be held over the next few years, involving GRRB, GNWT, Gwich'in Land and Water Board, Gwich'in Land Use Planning, RRCs and Gwich'in Tribal Council (GTC).



Photo credit: Black Fly Studios

Grizzly bear (Western population) The Canada-wide management plan for grizzly bear is being written, as it was listed as Special Concern in 2018. While this is being led by federal species at risk biologists, a northern working group has been developed consisting of organizations from Yukon, NWT and Nunavut. I will continue to attend these meetings on behalf of GRRB.

Research Bank swallows I applied for funding through the NWT Species Conservation and Recovery Fund (SCARF) to conduct bank swallow surveys. Surveys were done in 2014 and 2015 on the Mackenzie and Arctic Red rivers near Tsiigehtchic. Surveys of the gravel pits from the NWT/Yukon border to Inuvik were added in 2015. This year, the surveys extended to the Peel River near Fort McPherson. The results will be instrumental in determining population trends and identifying Critical Habitat (habitat the species requires for survival). This Critical Habitat is protected under the federal *Species at Risk Act* as bank swallows are listed as Threatened. The species is due for re-assessment in 2023.

Bees Several species of bumble bee in the NWT have been assessed as At Risk. These assessments have identified knowledge gaps in the northern part of their ranges. Therefore, a new insect research partnership has been created between GRRB, Wildlife Management Advisory Committee (Inuvialuit Settlement Region) and Environment and Natural Resources (GNWT). Recent consultations with the RRCs have shown great interest and support for this project. Blue vane traps were set in and around Inuvik. All insect specimens have been collected and sent south to a bug specialist for identification. The hope is to transition this to a community-based monitoring program in all four GSA communities.

...continued on next page



Bee trap contents

Bats Community members have reported bats in the GSA for many years. Bat detectors were purchased with funding from SCARF in 2017 and placed in all four GSA communities. While no bats were detected, occasional sightings are still reported to us. Three detectors were installed this summer and I am currently going through the data. I finally saw my first bat in Inuvik, flying down my driveway at the end of July.

Technical Advice I am a member of the Conference of Management Authorities (CMA), the group of wildlife co-management boards and governments that share management responsibility for the conservation and recovery of species at risk in the NWT. I am also a member of the Species at Risk Committee (SARC), a group of science and traditional knowledge experts who assess the biological status of species that may be at risk in the NWT, identify threats and positive influences to species and their habitats and may recommend conservation actions. I am also involved in the development and review of documents for the federal (Canada-wide) *Species at Risk Act*. These NWT and federal documents

include species assessment reports, management plans and recovery strategies for several species at risk. Since our last newsletter, this has included peary caribou, boreal caribou, short-eared owl and horned grebe status reports, peregrine falcon threat assessment, polar bear assessment, suckley's cuckoo bumble bee listing, grizzly bear, dolly varden, and collared pika management plans, barn swallow and bank swallow recovery strategies.

As a member of the NWT Wildlife Care Committee (WCC), I provide technical advice on wildlife handling applications and review wildlife handling reports and other documents. These applications outline the planned animal handling activities of proposed research, while wildlife handling reports provide a summary of the handling of wildlife once the research has been conducted. At the application stage, the NWT WCC provides recommendations on how to be respectful of the animals involved, ensuring that animal welfare is considered in the procedures and that humane handling (and euthanasia, if required) occurs. Proposed animal handling procedures must comply with WCC Standard Operating Procedures, as well as the *Guidelines on the Care and Use of Wildlife and the Guide to the Care and Use of Experimental Animals* developed by the Canadian Council on Animal Care. The NWT WCC approves research projects throughout the NWT, not just in the GSA. Recent applications include: wolf collaring on the central barrens, migratory connectivity and contaminants in grebes, dolphin and union caribou collaring, porcupine caribou herd satellite collaring, western arctic snow goose management, banding lesser snow geese in the western Canadian arctic, arctic shorebird monitoring program, herring gull egg monitoring in Dinàgà Wek'èhodi, deploying GPS collars on black bears in the South Slave and North

Slave Regions 2021-22, bioelectronic monitoring of peregrine falcons to determine population, muskox captures in Richardson Mountains and boreal caribou captures in the South Slave Region.

I also review research and development applications on behalf of the GRRB from the perspective of impacts on species at risk.

NWT Council on Invasive Species, Pests and Pathogens I was appointed to the Council on behalf of GRRB in December 2020 and appointed to the Board of Directors at the June 2021 Annual General Meeting. This new council operates as an independent non-government organization that provides advice to decision makers about threats, best practices, planning, prioritization and emerging concerns related to invasive species, pests and pathogens.

Liaison Unfortunately, I suffered an injury this spring so was unable to travel to communities for meetings. However, I consulted with RRCs via video conference on the bank swallow recovery strategy and critical habitat identification, suckley's cuckoo bumble bee proposed listing, collared pika management plan and dolly varden management plan. These were all for the federal *Species at Risk Act*. We received funding from Environment and Climate Change Canada to hold these meetings. I hope that I will be able to get to the communities and attend face-to-face meetings again soon.

I met with Christina Martin, Lands and Resource Coordinator for GTC and have had email correspondence with Leigh-Ann Williams-Jones, Manager for Lands and Resources, regarding collaboration on species at risk documents.



Blue vané bee trap



Sarah Lord

fisheries & forestry biologist
since January 2017

Management Planning Forestry Management The Gwich'in Forest Management Plan Steering Committee has revised its Terms of Reference and is working on updating the management plan. We met several times over the past year and when COVID-19 considerations allow, the working group will do a round of in-person meetings in the communities with stakeholder groups to provide direction and input.

Fisheries Management The Species at Risk group at Fisheries & Oceans Canada (DFO) is developing a Species at Risk Management Plan for Dolly Varden in the Western Arctic. DFO is taking a regional approach to cover the entire range of the species, so they intend to consult with GRRB on the draft Plan alongside many other groups in Yukon and NWT. There was a virtual workshop on March 9. With Kaytlin, we have reviewed the draft management plan and sent technical advice and comments to DFO. Amy and I have met with the team organizing



Photo credit: Black Fly Studios

these consultations to discuss the best approaches for consultation. We are hoping to see a second draft soon.

I participated in the annual Rat River Working Group and West Side Working Group annual harvest meetings, which were held virtually this year on March 2 and 3. The revised Rat River Working Group Terms of Reference were approved at the meeting, and we are aiming for formal approvals from each user group by the end of this fiscal year

Research I offer my support to researchers at many different organizations for projects that address GRRB research priorities.

Fall Seine Program In September, I co-lead the DFO fall seine program at the Rat River fish hole. We did an additional day to fly the migration pathway of the Rat River fish and took video footage.

Peat Moss Sampling for Past Mackenzie Water Levels In September 2020, we completed field work for this project. Charlie Snowshoe Jr. was my youth field assistant. The peat moss samples that we collected will be used to reconstruct past (1,000+ years) water levels in the Mackenzie Delta region. Jennifer Galloway and I drafted a plain-language summary of our summer field work, which was translated into Gwich'in and distributed to the Renewable Resource Councils (RRCs) in February. The peat moss samples are being analyzed in several different laboratories right now. We are expecting to hear the results next year.

...continued on next page



Community-Based Whitefish Monitoring

I continue to provide logistical and administrative support for this project, partnered with Dr. Rachel Hovel from the University of Maine. This is the fifth year of whitefish monitoring. The goal is to learn more about where whitefish go during their lives, so we can make sure that we are protecting the areas that are important for them. Next year, we will be finishing laboratory analysis of the last several years of samples (COVID-19 closed down many lab facilities, which has delayed getting our otolith results back) and then looking at all of our results to draft a summary report and plan next steps.

Arctic Salmon Project I work with Dr. Karen Dunmall and Darcy McNicholl from DFO Winnipeg to deliver this project. There have not been many salmon reported caught in 2021 so far. For more information, check out the project's Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/arcticsalmon/>

eDNA Sampling Rob Bajno (DFO Winnipeg) is finishing processing the remaining eDNA samples from my 2018 field work in the Rat River, Vittrekwa River and Arctic Red River headwaters, where we think there are Dolly Varden. We expect to receive preliminary results by the end of this year. We will discuss these results with the RRCs to plan additional work.

Permafrost Degradation on Iuk dagaii (Broad Whitefish) Habitat in the Peel River Watershed

This is a collaborative project with GRRB, Gwichin Tribal Council (GTC) Department of Cultural Heritage and the University of Victoria to look at how melting permafrost may be affecting fish habitat in the Peel River, using traditional knowledge



Photo credit: N. Bekolay, DFO

interviews to map important fishing areas and whitefish habitat, combined with an overlay analysis of permafrost thaw risk. The start of this project has been delayed by the pandemic, but in late 2020 we hired a research assistant (Bella Charlie, supervised by Sharon Snowshoe at the GTC) and in spring 2021 we brought on a post-doctoral fellow (Jackie Ziegler, supervised by Trevor Lantz at the University of Victoria). We are hoping to begin the interviews and data collection before the end of this fiscal year.

Technical Advice I responded to the DFO Ecosystems survey about how the GRRB wants to be engaged on upcoming proposals about Regulations related to the *Fisheries Act*. GRRB received many requests for review and comment from DFO, as the revised *Act* is being used to draft new regulations and policies. In January, I reviewed a proposed *Aquaculture Act* and submitted a response to DFO. We received five other items to review: the new *Fisheries Act* public registry, Standards and Codes of Practice, Prescribed Works & Water Regulations, Offsetting and Habitat Banking, and Cumulative Effects. I reviewed these items and brought them to special RRC meetings for

discussion in June, then drafted a response to DFO that included all the RRC comments and feedback.

I review and provide comments as needed on permit and research license applications and review research proposals to provide feedback, sometimes drafting Letters of Support for funding applications. I inform researchers about research and management needs in our region and connect them with resources in the Gwich'in Settlement Area.

Liaison I met with each RRC in June to discuss items related to the *Fisheries Act*, the draft Dolly Varden Species at Risk Management Plan, and various research updates and future plans. I continue to be in touch with all four RRC coordinators by phone and email, but I really prefer face-to-face meetings when it is possible!

Other Health & Safety I remain active on the Occupational Health & Safety Committee. I participate in meetings, type up minutes and complete safety-related action items.

Professional Development

I completed Wilderness First Responder training in October.





Jessi Pascal
environmental
coordinator
since September 2021*

***Change of Roles** I was hired by the GRRB in June 2021 as a Technician. I relocated to Inuvik from Aklavik at the end of July. On September 13, 2021, I started my new role as Environmental Coordinator.

Biography My mother is Inuvialuit (Gordon/Esau family) and my father is Gwich'in (Pascal/Pokiak family). Growing up in Aklavik, I spent a lot of my time practicing traditional values, hunting, fishing, and spending time on the land all months of the year.

I graduated high school in 2014 in Aklavik and entered the Environment and Natural Resources Technology Program, which I graduated from in 2018. I have previous work experience with the Ehdiitat Renewable Resource Council (RRC) as their coordinator for two years, resulting in accustomed relationships with the Gwich'in Renewable Resource Board and staff.

I have an interest in media, creating documentaries and conducting interviews about our traditional lifestyle up north. I am currently working on a documentary on the Traditional Knowledge of Aklavik and how Climate Change is involved in the changes that we are noticing today.

Research Gwich'in Harvest Study With Steve's (Wildlife Biologist) assistance, I worked as the lead on writing the Gwich'in Harvest Study report to the Porcupine Caribou Management Board (PCMB). There were some issues with the time it took for some communities to complete and bring forward the data. However, I am planning to travel to each GSA community and meet up with the RRC and talk about ways to increase the participation rate and how to make this survey easier for harvesters to fill out prior to the November survey.

Fieldwork In June, I participated in the Bank Swallow survey with Steve. In early August, I helped Environment and Natural Resources (ENR) with their Small Mammal survey. September's fieldwork was

the Divii Survey count. I also helped Sarah Lord (Fisheries and Forestry Biologist) with Rat River Dolly Varden seining at the end of September.

We hired two students to assist in removing the garbage and unusable items in our cold storage facility. I helped organize the storage.

Other Conferences and Meetings I attended the Human Resource Management for Indigenous Communities Course from September 15-17, 2021, sitting in for Cheryl Greenland (Finance and Administrative Manager). It was very informative.

Future Work I would like to consult each RRC on the Harvest Survey and harvesters about the layout of the survey, importance of the data and how to continue to maintain a healthy relationship between GRRB and RRCs. I am hoping to complete this consultation by end of October prior to the November survey.

My overall goal is to branch out and network with as many stakeholders as possible. This will be done mainly by giving technical advice on research applications, providing stakeholders input by RRCs and their community goals.

I will continue assisting our Biologists with fieldwork when needed.

Personal I traveled to Shingle Point for a week in July to help my father harvest fish. I have been traveling to Aklavik as much as possible before freeze-up; I have a dog in there and helping winterize my parents house before I am unable to travel home on weekends anymore.

In September, I played in the 2021 Dawson City Slopitch Tournament and won Female MVP!

Cheryl Greenland
finance/administrative
manager
since February 2009

My job consists of Office and Finance Management. I keep the staff's energy and morale levels up by making sure there is a steady supply of candy, chocolate, tea and coffee. As of April 1, 2021 my title was updated from Office Manager to more accurately reflect my role.

I continue to be involved with the Finance Committee and ensure the reports are ready for the meetings. I work closely with the Executive Director during these times to prepare the financial reports. I ensured that the Audit was ready and prepared to be shipped to Calgary. I also completed year end adjustments for the Audit.

In April 2021, I participated in an online conference: Leadership Gathering for Women.



As of April 2021, I began supervising our Office Assistant. Melanie has been training in Sage Software to do A/R, A/P, bank/visa reconciliation, Payroll, File Management, Sun Life uploads and file management. She has caught on very well and seems to be enjoying this portion of her position. We work well together.

I also supervised our summer student. She mostly helped to shred paper and scan the library to convert it to the digital library. She also helped with the cold storage cleanup, which was quite the task. She enjoyed her position very much and enjoyed working with the staff.

I continue to help support our staff as needed.

Melanie Bonnetplume
office assistant
since October 2020

I am a Gwich'in Participant and beneficiary, born and raised in Inuvik. I have a five-year-old daughter named Alice who recently started kindergarten.

In October 2020, I started with the GRRB as a Digital Archive Assistant. My job was to scan the paper reports and save them into the digital library on the computer. This was easy to learn and very simple to do.

When my term ended in March 2021, Amy Amos (our previous Executive Director) offered me a one-year

extension as the Office Assistant, which I accepted!

It has been very awesome working here because I get to learn so many new things. Thanks to all the staff, especially to my manager, Cheryl Greenland, who took the time to teach me.

So far, Cheryl has been teaching me how to do invoices, purchase orders, bank reconciliation, filing management, learning the account codes and projects to all the invoices we do.



get in touch

Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board

PO Box 2240
Inuvik, NT X0E 0T0
Tel: 867.777.6600
Fax: 867.777.6601
www.grrb.nt.ca

Executive Director

Wanda McDonald
867.777.6600 ext. 2
wmcdonald@grrb.nt.ca

Finance/Administrative Manager

Cheryl Greenland
867.777.6600 ext. 0
office@grrb.nt.ca

Wildlife Biologist

Steve Andersen
867.777.6600 ext.3
sandersen@grrb.nt.ca

Fisheries and Forestry Biologist

Sarah Lord
867.777.6600 ext. 4
slord@grrb.nt.ca

Species at Risk Biologist

Kaytlin Cooper
867.777.6600 ext. 6
kcooper@grrb.nt.ca

Environmental Coordinator

Jessi Pascal
867.777.6600 ext. 5
jpascal@grrb.nt.ca

upcoming events

Christmas Office Closure
December 20 - January 3

Staff 2022/23 Work Plan Development Workshop
January 18, 2022

Advisory Committee for Cooperation on Wildlife Management Meeting
January 19, 2022

Sahtu RRB Public Listening
February 1-3, 2022

PCMB Annual Harvest Meeting
February 8-9, 2022

GRRB Winter Board Meeting
February 16-18, 2022
Aklavik, NT

Conference of Management Authorities Annual Meeting
February 22-23, 2022
Inuvik, NT



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