



Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board Meeting Minutes – Winter Board Meeting

February 7 & 8, 2023

1 Present: (February 7)

Board: Robert Charlie-Tetlich, Doug Doan, William Koe, Burt Hunt, Tracy Davison

Staff: Steve Andersen

RRCs: Nihtat – Barry Greenland, Trevor (TJ) Pascal; Gwichya – Philip Blake, John Norbert;
Ehdiitat – Crystal Koe; Tetlit – Dougie Wilson, Laura Neryso

Others ENR – Ernie Francis, Steve Baryluk; GNWT – Michele Grabke, Rob Gau; OKT Law – Larry Innes, Ariel Holmwood-Bramwell

1) Introductions

GRRB Chairperson Robert Charlie-Tetlich called the meeting to order at 9:10 a.m.

Quorum was recognized.

Conflicts of interest are to be declared as they arise.

2) Agenda

Motion GRRB #2023-01

To approve the agenda as presented.

Moved by: Burt Hunt Seconded by: William Koe

Motion **CARRIED**

3) Minutes

a) Review & Approval of the Minutes from February 2022

The minutes from the February 17, 2022 meeting were provided in the meeting package.

Questions or comments:

Margaret Begg's name is misspelled on page 15



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Motion GRRB #2023-02

To approve the minutes from February 17, 2022, with the correction noted.

Moved by: William Koe Seconded by: Doug Doan

Motion **CARRIED**

b) Review & Approval of the Minutes from November 2022

The minutes from the November 9, 2022 meeting were provided in the meeting package.

Questions or comments:

There is a typo on page 1; the date should be July 2022.

Action Item 23-01: Defer approval until next meeting (only Doug Doan was present on November 9).

c) Review & Approval of the Minutes from December 2022

The minutes from the December 16, 2022 Finance Committee meeting were provided in the meeting package.

Questions or comments:

None

Motion GRRB #2023-03

To approve the minutes from the December 16, 2022 Finance Committee meeting.

Moved by: Burt Hunt Seconded by: Doug Doan

Motion **CARRIED**

4) Review of the Outstanding Action Items

No report.

Action Item 23-02: Defer this item to the next meeting.



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5) Reports

a) Chairperson's Report

Robert Charlie-Tetlichy provided a verbal update on his actions since he started the role in September 2022. His focus has been on recruiting new staff (Executive Director, Fisheries Biologist, Environmental Coordinator). He has also been focusing on financial activities, such as submitting our annual workplan to CIRNAC by March 31. A summary of the meetings he has attended is provided in the binder.

b) Members' Reports

Reports are provided in the binder – everyone can review.

Sam Bullock's term has expired. He was the lead on the Finance Committee. Roger Fraser will likely be appointed to this committee now.

Robert thanked Ron and Doug for working on recruitment; hard to fill the ED position because there is so much competition. Many applicants are not suitable. Funding does not give us enough money for competitive salaries.

William recognized Charlie Snowshoe for all of his work as a Board member for many years. He was on several Boards and was a strong advocate for lands and waters in the GSA. The GRRB will try to do something to recognize him in the future.

Discussion about Regional RRC meetings. Changes to the agenda and meeting structure have been proposed with Neil Pascal. No meeting scheduled yet, Neil to hopefully update in March.

c) Staff Reports

Staff reports were provided in the meeting binder.



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6) Agency Updates

a) **Government of the Northwest Territories, Environment & Natural Resources**

ENR's report was provided in the meeting binder.

Ernie Francis, ENR Forestry, presented the Forest Management section of the report.

Questions and Comments:

Burt commented on working as a bark stripper when he first came to Inuvik.

John Norbert asked about building log homes. Any individual can harvest to build a cabin; no permit is required to cut trees in the bush. In the community, a transport permit would be required (at no cost) to use the road system. A woodmizer can be used to make lumber (may be available through ITI).

Doug asked for an update on a willow harvesting project (to make wood pellets). Ernie thinks the project has been passed to the Fort McPherson community.

Steve Baryluk, ENR Wildlife Management, presented the Research & Monitoring Programs section of the report.

Questions and comments:

Doug brought up beavers changing the landscape by moving north. Inuvialuit and Gwich'in are working with Helen Wheeler. Helen and ABON held a workshop last fall, ENR attended.

Discussion about Mike Sutor (WSF funding applicant)'s project. His survey is somewhat coordinated with ENR but they don't overlap. ENR uses a geospatial method developed in Alaska; Mike's project goes up and down the valleys looking for moose.

Tracy provided more information on ENR muskox work. 2021 transect survey east of the delta. Muskox have increased in the region but have changed distribution, moving from the east towards the GSA, north of Tsiigehtchic. Can tell them apart from the eastern stock based on DNA (if anyone harvests a muskox, ENR will take a tiny piece of flesh for genetic work). Also good success with fecal pellets.

John Norbert suggested training young people to go trapping to keep animals from coming into town.



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Norman Snowshoe, ENR Beaufort Delta, presented on Operations, Water Division and Environmental Protection

Questions and comments:

Norm explained the caribou check station activation process, which begins in late summer/early fall but is not activated if there are no caribou. If the herd is close, there is also a monitoring program where community members talk to harvesters about safe hunting practices and letting the leaders pass.

Discussion on incorporating TK in wildlife studies; ENR works closely with the RRCs to get feedback on who to talk to regarding TK. Workshops are held in the community to gather information, community members assist in the surveys. Doesn't always show up in the updates provided, but it is used in the survey design.

Rob Gau's presentation was deferred until later in the day.

BREAK for lunch

Robert Charlie-Tetlichy called the meeting to order at 1:02 p.m.

7) Forestry – Draft Forest Act

Larry Innes and Ariel Holmwood-Bramwell of OKT Law presented.

The presentation is provided in the meeting binder.

This *Act* will replace the *Forest Management Act* (1988) and consider modern treaties and co-management systems. In the event of conflict between the new *Act* and the Land Claim, the Land Claim prevails. There is significant overlap between the roles of ENR and GRRB. The Minister/GNWT would be required to work with the GRRB. This *Act* has provisions which require GRRB or RRC participation, which will require staff resources. Issues raised by the GRRB and other RRBs after the previous draft (2019) have been addressed by the new *Act*.

Questions and Comments:

None



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8) Species at Risk

Michele Grabke, GNWT, reviewed the presentations that were included in the meeting binder.

a) Northern Mountain Caribou (NWT SAR)

Questions & Comments:

Follow-up on the ERRC; they were looking for information about how much outfitter harvesting was taking place. Kaytlin Cooper provided them with that information and they were happy with it.

John Norbert expressed concern that many animals are destroyed by letting fires burn.

Motion GRRB #2023-04

To approve in principle the Northern Mountain Caribou Management Plan in the Northwest Territories, provided no further concerns are received.

Moved by: Burt Hunt Seconded by: Doug Doan

Motion **CARRIED**

b) Boreal Caribou

Questions and comments:

Robert asked about SARC funds that could be contributed to the GRRB doing a GSA survey of boreal caribou (there hasn't been one done). SARC works for the management authorities – we would need to talk to ENR about funding.

Motion GRRB #2023-05

To approve in principle the re-listing of Boreal Caribou in the Northwest Territories as Threatened, provided no further concerns are received.

Moved by: Doug Doan Seconded by: William Koe

Motion **CARRIED**



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c) Peregrine Falcon

Report provided for information only.

Questions and comments: None

6) Agency Updates (continued)

b) GNWT Headquarters

Rob Gau presented the GNWT Headquarters update.

Wildlife Act Section 15 meeting was held in Yellowknife last fall. Indigenous governments and RRBs attended. Updates on caribou workshops, surveys, cumulative effects work. At this year's meeting we are hoping to engage co-management partners and have more information from them as opposed to being so ENR-heavy. Would like to hear about the GRRB's novel harvest monitoring program and highlight it in front of other groups from the NWT.

We are working with co-management partners to collect knowledge on berries. We have heard concerns about declines in berries in some areas. Worries about climate change and shrub encroachment. This is not a GNWT project, but we have staff contributing. Outside researchers are also taking part.

Wildlife health program: If you ever hear about sick or injured wildlife, please let the local ENR office know.

Small Mammal Survey: We monitor small mammals because they are important food for furbearers like martin. We have updated the results and created a poster. Hare numbers in Inuvik in 2021 were very low. Small mammals appear to be on the rise.

Wildlife Act Regulations: I realize there have been staffing changes at the GRRB but we would still like to move forward with the commercial use regulations. If you have not already received the latest version of the regulations, I can send them to you. The *Wildlife Act* came into effect in 2014. There were additional regulations in 2019. We are going to embark on phase three, which will look at updating outfitting regulations. This is a chance to review what is going on.



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This is going to be a long complex discussion that will reconvene our *Wildlife Act* Working Group starting in the next fiscal year.

Questions and comments:

Burt asked whether chronic wasting disease has been discovered in the NWT and if the checkstop at the Alberta border was still working. It is operating and GNWT is collecting deer heads and sending them for testing.

Doug asked for an update on feral pigs moving north. No pigs in the NWT right now. Potentially doing a monitoring flight this year. Concerns that monitoring efforts in northern Alberta are not great. There is a population north of High Level, 200km from the NWT border. Farmland peters out past there. While we know pigs can live in the boreal forest, they seem to prefer farmland. Robert requested an email from Rob on upcoming events we should be aware of.

9) RRC & Public Session

Open discussion between the RRCs, the public and Board members.

Questions and comments:

Aklavik – nothing at this time

Fort McPherson (Doug) – with no ED, who do we contact with questions/concerns? Contact the Chairperson or phone the office and Cheryl will take down your concerns.

Inuvik (Barry) – nothing at this time

Tsiigehtchic (Phillip) – Asked about transboundary issues with management plans with the Inuvialuit

Tsiigehtchic (John) – Regional RRC meeting. A lot of new RRC councilors. It would be good to have a refresher on the RRC responsibilities. Could get GLUPB and GLWB involved.

External representatives departed. GRRB Board and Staff members remained. Skipped ahead to Day 3 of the agenda.



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12) Finance

a) Finance Committee Report and Recommendations

No report. Currently underspent, discussion on how to allocate funds.

Action Item 23-03: Staff to work with Chelsea Hermus to purchase promotional items

Action Item 23-04: Staff to request that Ian Matari determine whether any of the GRRB's computer equipment needs to be upgraded

b) Appointment of Roger Fraser to Finance Committee as main member

Motion GRRB #2023-06

To appoint Roger Fraser to the Finance Committee.

Moved by: Burt Hunt

Seconded by: Doug Doan

Motion **CARRIED**

c) Discussion & Approval

Appointment of Auditor

Motion GRRB #2023-07

To appoint Paul Teoh as GRRB Auditor for the 2023/24 fiscal year.

Moved by: William Koe

Seconded by: Burt Hunt

Motion **CARRIED**

WSF Withdrawal Amount

See Day 2, Motion GRRB #2023-11.



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d) Budget & Work plan

Discussion about budget from CIRNAC. Need to work on a budget with Cheryl and put together a workplan for CIRNAC. This amount is renegotiated with CIRNAC every 10 years. Evaluation of salaries a few years ago revealed that ours are quite low. Inflation has increased 7% in the past year and salaries haven't. Having trouble recruiting under current wage scale and don't have the funds to increase. Need to put together a budget with the values we actually need to show that there is a deficit.

13) Policy

a) Operating policy changes

An action item was created at the November 9 Board meeting, assigning this work to the new ED once they are hired.

b) Strategic planning

We have a contract for \$70,000, but the funds are unsecured. Could we advance money from this fiscal? Review agreement with STRATOS.

14) Safety Committee

a) Update on safety incidents

No report.

b) Appointments to Safety Committee

Should be ED, Cheryl and one other. Until an ED is hired, Chairperson is to meet with Cheryl. It would be good to add safety issues to the staff meeting agenda.



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11) Fisheries

Rat River Working Group (RRWG) Meeting

Results from the fall seine were not good. They couldn't catch enough fish to tag – numbers could be dropping. Who has capacity to coordinate the RRWG meetings?

Action Item 23-05: Robert Charlie-Tetlichy to ask Ron if he could be paid to coordinate the RRWG meetings.

Whitefish Grant

Trevor Lantz from UVic and his postdoc Jackie Ziegler have been studying the effects of permafrost thaw on fishes (Whitefish Project). Current funding is for five years but he expects Jackie's work to wrap up with one year remaining on the grant. He would like to contact the granting agency to request that the scope of the project be expanded to include the effects of permafrost thaw on wildlife/birds. He has a new PhD student starting who is interested in taking the work in that direction which would allow the last of the money to be used up.

Action Item 23-06: Steve Andersen to request further details from Trevor Lantz regarding his proposed project to study the effects of permafrost thaw on wildlife, including the resources that he will need from the GRRB.

Request from Terry Stein (DFO)

Request for input into DFO annual plan.

Action Item 23-07: Steve to send Robert the community research interests related to fisheries.

Data Request from Kiyoko Campbell (FJMC)



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Request for data from 2007-8 related to burbot from Aklavik area. Robert has prepared a data sharing agreement and the Board agrees they are in favour of sharing the data.

Action Item 23-08: Robert to approve the request by Kiyo Campbell (FJMC) for access to the GRRB's 2007-2008 burbot data. Staff to assist Kiyo with accessing the data.

Appointment of Sam Bullock to NWT Species at Risk Committee

SARC is recommending the appointment of Sam Bullock to their board for a term of Jan 2023-2028. The GRRB Board supports the appointment.

Scholarship Applications

Only one application, Rayna Vittrekwa. She is enrolled in the Aboriginal Access program at UBC Okanagan.

Motion GRRB #2023-08

To award the 2023 Jim Edwards Sittichinli Scholarship to Rayna Vittrekwa.

Moved by: Burt Hunt Seconded by: Tracy Davison

Motion **CARRIED**

Action Item 23-09: Staff to inform Rayna Vitrekwa that she has been chosen as this year's recipient of the Jim Edwards Sittichinli scholarship and issue a cheque.

Passing of Charlie Snowshoe Senior

Discussion about how to commemorate Charlie. Suggestion to get a plaque and do a presentation to his wife, thanking his family for all of his work and years of knowledge. Suggestion to create a Charlie Snowshoe scholarship to memorialize him. Could be on-the-land or environmentally focused, since the current scholarship is more general in scope.

The meeting prorogued at 4:21 p.m.



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Present: (February 8)

Board: Robert Charlie-Tetlich, Doug Doan, William Koe, Burt Hunt, Tracy Davison

Staff: Steve Andersen

RRCs: Nihtat – Barry Greenland, Trevor (TJ) Pascal; Gwichya – Philip Blake, John Norbert; Tetlit – Dougie Wilson, Laura Nerysoo

Others: WSF applicants – Helen Wheeler, Kristi Benson, Sydney Goward, Karen Dunmall, Mike Suitor; DFO – Sarah Lord, Colin Gallagher (afternoon only)

Robert Charlie-Tetlich called the meeting to order at 9:08 a.m.

10) WSF Proposals

WSF applications and presentations were provided in the meeting binder.

a) Tsee' (Beaver) Project: Understanding beaver population change in the GSA

Helen Wheeler presented.

Helen has been working with GRRB since 2019. Kept going with community members during the pandemic. Plans to look at interactions between beavers and other species this year, in addition to previous objectives.

\$5,000 in funding remaining from current year due to only being able to find 2 community members this year rather than 3. Saved a lot of money in wages and meant that only one boat was required rather than 2, but wasn't good since Helen would normally have broken the team up into two groups to do twice as much work.

In-kind support from GRRB includes Steve's time, use of the GRRB truck, GPS units and other GRRB equipment.

Results should be published in 2024.



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b) Nin Nihlinehci'l – Li ha Guk' Andehtr'inahti – Animals we are watching closely

Kristi Benson presented.

c) Divii (Dall's Sheep) Community-Based Research Project

Steve Andersen presented.

d) Divii (Dall's Sheep) Project – MSc Student travel to Present to Community and Youth

Sydney Goward presented.

Questions and comments:

Board members provided their appreciation for Sydney's project.

e) Arctic Salmon: Samplers & Coordination

Karen Dunmall presented.

f) Shifting wolf ecology and potential effects on moose and caribou

Mike Suitor presented.

Arctic amplification is causing climate change to occur much more quickly in the north (loss of sea ice, permafrost melt). Seeing dramatic increases in moose population in some areas of the Porcupine Caribou herd. Two types of wolves:

Migratory Wolves (Tundra)

- Caribou eaters
- Travel long distances
- Low denning success



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- Smaller, flexible packs
- Range above treeline

Territorial Wolves (Taiga)

- Moose eaters
- Hold small territory
- Higher denning success
- Large insular packs
- Range below treeline

Seeing a lot more moose being killed on the North Slope than ever before. Right now, the Porcupine Caribou population is quite strong and it's unlikely that wolves limit them. But if the population declines, that could change.

Questions and comments:

No questions from the Board.

g) North Richardson Mountain Moose Population Monitoring

Mike Sutor presented.

Heavy willow growth in a lot of areas. Seeing moose push way up in the tundra, where there's just small willow, especially bulls, but some cows too. As we see more and more willow, we should expect to see more and more moose. In 1989 there were 266 moose recorded, in 2013 there were 678. Can't think of any other area where there has been an increase like that.

Collar data showed moose leaving the delta around September 6 or 7 and moving into the mountains.

Collars have shown that there are some real pinch points on the landscape that moose funnel through, which could be monitored using wildlife cameras.

Questions and comments:

Barry (NRRC) expressed interest in making sure their membership sees this presentation at their community meeting.



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TJ Pascal (NRRC) asked about caribou declining at Shingle Point. Wondering if wolves and moose are the reason for that. Mike could not provide a response at this time.

h) Training Opportunities to enhance the Rat River Harvest Monitoring Program for dhik'ii

Sarah Lord and Colin Gallagher presented.

Questions and comments:

Doug asked if there was money available from ECE (NWT Education Culture and Employment) for short term training in communities. Sarah didn't know if it was available or if she could access it as a federal employee, but will look into it.

GTC has training money that could potentially fund youth training. DFO is hoping an equivalent federal fund will be introduced soon.

Doug Wilson (TRRC) expressed his concerns about the lack of char at Rat River.

6) Agency Updates (continued)

12) Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Arctic Operations

Sarah Lord presented on behalf of Amy Amos.

The Arctic Region was created in early 2019. DFO is still reorganizing. So far there are three sectors who report to the Arctic Region. In time that list will grow. One of Amy's priorities is to hire Indigenous and Northern people. A lot of her work focuses on how the department meets its reconciliation commitments. Working to improve engagement, including sharing a calendar of all their meetings and events. Working on documents to explain to her staff all of DFO's commitments under the different land claims. Also want to understand communities' priorities.

Amy says thanks for the great GRRB 2023 calendars. She's happy that DFO provides funding for that and wants to continue that.



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GRRB-DFO meeting: Needs to know location, date, and quote for any costs DFO needs to include. Normally four reps from the GRRB attend and DFO covers the cost of two.

Implementation Funding \$59,000/year in Gwich'in funds. That amount hasn't been increased in a very long time. DFO's cost for the RRWG char monitoring is about double that (additional funds from several other sources). Could do something different with the implementation funds if GRRB wants. Just let Amy know.

Please keep Amy informed in our plans for the Research Priorities/Strategic Planning.

Amy misses the GRRB and thanks the Board for her time here and everything she learned.

Questions and comments:

Some federal funding is indexed and increases every year. Why aren't other investments [like the implementation funds] indexed? Sarah to check with Amy.

13) DFO Fisheries Management

Sarah Lord presented.

Sarah moved from the GRRB to DFO a year ago. Fisheries Management is one of the sectors of DFO which is directly part of the new Arctic Region. There are four biologists across the Arctic, including Sarah in Inuvik, and they each have technicians who work for them. They are adding a lot of staff right now as they grow. Several open postings for technicians - if you know people who would be good, please encourage them to apply.

Sarah works for the Operations group within Fisheries Management. They do the day-to-day tasks, licenses, working with communities. In the fall, DFO staff travelled around the Beaufort Delta and met with the RRCs, GRRB staff, and Inuvialuit groups. They really appreciate everyone taking the time to meet. It helps their staff to understand the communities' needs.

Questions and comments:

Discussion around the technician postings. They are full-time, not geared toward any age category. Primarily office positions. Staff are required to run the harvest surveys, maintain vehicles, do finances, etc. Training will be provided.



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11) Fisheries

a) Rat River Working Group recommendations

Colin Gallagher (DFO) provided an update.

Saw a lot of fish, but not a lot of Dolly Varden char. Caught 1491 grayling, but only 325 char. Haven't seen ratios like that in a long time. Only tagged 297 char and it took a lot more effort than usual. Normally get 500. Few male spawners this year as compared to past years. Harvesters reported poor catches and small fish. Population estimate decreased dramatically from 2018 to 2019 (no recent estimates available). Key message: stock status is likely poor.

Typically at this meeting, the GRRB Fisheries Biologist would present the preliminary data from the stock assessment. Colin has done that since that role is vacant. Then the Board will discuss internally what they feel the safe harvest level is, which would be brought to the RRWG meeting.

Questions and comments:

Colin has not had a chance to discuss the results in detail with the monitors, so is unable to speak to their thoughts on this issue.

Doug Wilson (TRRC) thinks we should be careful with how much people should harvest.

b) Changes to Whitefish CIMP Project

Report pending.



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17) In Camera Actions & Motions

Motion GRRB #2023-09

To go in camera at 4:08 p.m.

Moved by: William Koe Seconded by: Doug Doan

Motion **CARRIED**

Motion GRRB #2023-010

To go out of camera at 4:44 p.m.

Moved by: William Koe Seconded by: Burt Hunt

Motion **CARRIED**

a) WSF project allocations

Motion GRRB #2023-011

To withdraw \$90,000 from the RBC Wildlife Studies Fund to be transferred to the CIBC Wildlife Studies Fund.

Moved by: Doug Doan Seconded by: Burt Hunt

Motion **CARRIED**

Motion GRRB #2023-012

To approve the WSF allocation as follows:

2023 WSF-01 - Helen Wheeler - Beaver Project: **Approved in Full**

2023 WSF-02 - Kristi Benson - Species at Risk: **Approved in Full**

2023 WSF-03 - Steve Andersen - Divii Monitoring: **Approved in Full**

2023 WSF-04 - Sydney Goward - Divii Project Reporting: **Approved in Full**

2023 WSF-05 - Karen Dunmall - Arctic Salmon Project: **Approved in Full**

2023 WSF-06 - Mike Suitor - Wolf Ecology: **Declined**

2023 WSF-07 - Mike Suitor - Moose Population Estimate: **Approved in Full**

2023 WSF-08 - Colin Gallagher - Rat River Harvest Monitoring: **Approved at 50% (\$5000)**

Moved by: William Koe Seconded by: Tracy Davison

Motion **CARRIED**



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Action Item 23-10: Staff to inform WSF applicants of the Board's decisions and prepare financial agreements.

b) Scholarship allocations

See Motion GRRB #2023-08 and Action Item 23-09.

c) Any other items arising from in-camera

See Action Items 23-05 to 23-08.

18) Adjournment

a) Set Fall meeting dates

Fall meeting is tentatively set for the week of September 11 in Fort McPherson. Winter 2024 meeting will be in February in Aklavik. Then Tsiigehtchic, then Inuvik.

b) Motion to adjourn

Motion GRRB #2023-013

To adjourn the meeting at 4:54 p.m. on February 8, 2023

Moved by: Doug Doan

Motion **CARRIED**

Minutes approved November 27th, 2023 **(date)**

Motion # 2023-20