



# Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board Meeting Minutes – Fall Board Meeting

November 28-30<sup>th</sup>, 2023

**Board:** Robert Charlie-Tetlich, Doug Doan, Roger Fraser, Burt Hunt, Ron Allen, and Margaret Begg

**Regrets:** William Koe

**Staff:** Leigh-Ann Williams-Jones, Darren Campbell, Jackson Sung Hoon Joo, and Cheryl Greenland

**RRCs:**

Nihtat – no presence

Edihtat – Crystal Koe, Danny Greenland, Randy Edwards, and Eliza Greenland

Gwichya Gwich'in – George Niditchie Jr.

Tetlit – Laura Nerysoo, Doug Wilson, and Richard Wilson

**Others:** ECC – Tracy Davison

## 1) Introductions

GRRB Chairperson Robert Charlie-Tetlich called the meeting to order at 9:06 a.m.

Quorum was recognized.

Margaret Begg was sworn in and welcomed back to the Board.

Conflicts of interest are to be declared as they arise.

## 2) Agenda

**Motion GRRB #2023-017**

To approve the agenda as presented.

Moved by: Ron Allen

Seconded by: Burt Hunt

Motion **CARRIED**

## 3) Minutes

### a) Review & Approval of the Minutes

The minutes from the November 9<sup>th</sup>, 2022, November 30, 2022, February 7, 2023, and November 17<sup>th</sup>, 2023 meetings were provided in the meeting package.



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## **Motion GRRB #2023-18**

To approve the minutes from November 9, 2022.

Moved by: Roger Fraser      Seconded by: Doug Doan

Motion **CARRIED**

## **Motion GRRB #2023-19**

To approve the minutes from November 30, 2022.

Moved by: Ron Allen      Seconded by: Doug Doan

Motion **CARRIED**

## **Motion GRRB #2023-20**

To approve the minutes from February 7, 2023.

Moved by: Burt Hunt      Seconded by: Doug Doan

Motion **CARRIED**

## **Motion GRRB #2023-21**

To approve the minutes from November 17, 2023.

Moved by: Burt Hunt      Seconded by: Doug Doan

Motion **CARRIED**

## 4) Review of the Outstanding Action Items

Table of action items provided in meeting package. Reviewed and no changes to be made. All actions either completed or nearing completion.

## 5) Reports

### a) Chairperson's Report

Robert Charlie-Tetlichich provided a verbal update on his actions since he started the role in September 2022 and then since ED role was filled. His focus has been on new ED's (Leigh-Ann) orientation and training. He has also been focusing on overseeing funding contributions and



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financial reporting. Robert also provided an update on the Dolly Varden catch numbers and listed the meetings he has attended.

## **b) Members' Reports**

All members welcomed new ED and new staff. Board appointments were discussed. Most notably the challenges faced by the Board throughout the appointment process and the length of time it takes for reappointment. Margaret Begg mentioned that it took one year and five months for her re-appointment to finally go through. Members highlighted the unnecessary burdens on the Board caused by the delays, most notably lack of quorum and/or lack of balance representation. Members also highlighted the inadequate remuneration afforded to the GRRB.

Several current board members appointments are coming to an end on the 26<sup>th</sup> of August 2024. Robert conducted a roundtable canvas of current board members to see whether they plan to run for reappointment. Only Doug Doan indicated that he would not be seeking reappointment. Burt Hunt also indicated that he would like to step into an alternate member status appointment and let someone new have a chance.

Ron Allen thanked Robert for all the work he had been doing as the Acting ED and recognition of all the challenges faced with limited staff capacity. Rone provided the Board with an update on recruitment and highlighted the delays due to Covid and lack of qualified applicants.

## **c) Staff Reports**

Staff reports were provided in the meeting binder. ED also provided an update on upcoming travel for staff.



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## 6) Agency Updates

### a) Species at Risk Updates and

GRRB Species at Risk Biologist presented the Board with an update on total allowable harvest for the Bluenose-West barren ground caribou. Darren also updated the Board on the ongoing litigation between ECC and Sahtu. Presentation provided in binder.

#### Questions and Comments:

Q: Ron Allen asked what would happen to ACCWM if litigation is successful in Sahtu's favor. How will the herd be managed if one party is not following the agreed upon harvest limits?

A: It was stressed that the ACCWM is a consensus-based committee and that everyone around the committee table is wondering the same thing.

Q: Roger Fraser asked how many tags are generally filled each year for Bluenose West and stressed the need for more harvester input on the situation and the need for stronger enforcement to prevent overharvesting.

A: It was identified that Gwich'in receive 34 tags per year and they have never all been signed out or used. On average the number reported for harvests have been in the single digits. May be due to lack of reporting, location of the herd and lack of interest or awareness on tagging system.

### b, c) Harvest Reporting and Discussion

Environmental Coordinator Jackson Sung Hoon Joo presented an update on the Harvest Study data. Jackson highlighted that Nihtat has not participated in the Harvest Study for more than three survey periods. He also highlighted a number of challenges, namely: delays in 2022 Survey created a lag, and data for the full 2022 year was provided in the November 2022 survey period; June 2023 also saw delays due to wildfires and flooding across the region, but that November 2023 appears to be on track.



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## Questions and comments:

Q: Ron Allen pointed out that this lack of participation from Nihtat is cause a growing data gap in the Survey results which could have a rippling effect in herd management.

A: Jackson agreed and stated that GRRB is working closely with the NRRC to help find a solution to the growing data gap. However, he also pointed out that the NRRC is currently under a tremendous staffing shortage and that the lack of an RRC Coordinator is extremely challenging for both the RRC and the GRRB. The hope is that NRRC is able to hire an RRC coordinator soon, so that we can work with the individual to re-establish the Harvest Study. In the meantime, GRRB is working with the NRRC Vice President, Simon Hagen, to find alternate ways to collect the data, e.g. hybrid online survey, mail out survey, etc.

## BREAK for lunch

Robert Charlie-Tetlichy called the meeting to order at 1:06 p.m.

## 7) Research Updates – Wolf, Moose and Porcupine Caribou Updates

*Mike Suitor, Yukon Government presented.*

### *Porcupine Caribou:*

Mike provided an update on North Slope and Migratory Caribou, which he also provides to the Inuvialuit Game Council. Mike stated that he has provided packages/reports in the past and would be willing to do so again if GRRB wishes. Mike highlighted that the data is showing Porcupine Caribou bulls moving towards Brook Range, but do not seem to be aggregating as they have in the past. Currently, only two tagged bulls out of 24 were observed close to the highway/Richardson Mountain areas. Large portion of the herd were observed along or close to the Dalton Highway and the Herd in general appears to be moving further west within Alaska than previous years.

Mike stated that PCMB does publish an Annual Summary Report that covers a lot that is being presented, but overall, 2023 showed slightly lower rates of survival of calves, cows were generally in less greater shape than previous years with only 83% having calves with a 77% calf survival



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rate. In the 3-year-old cohort, around half were getting pregnant, but pointed out that pregnancy rates are highly dependent on environmental conditions. Overall, the herd has been deemed to be stable, if not increasing, based on cow survival rates over 85%.

Mike also showed a number of videos to demonstrate the impacts of environmental factors on caribou, e.g. flying insects, bot flies, etc.

## **Questions and Comments:**

Q: Ron Allen asked what impact smoke has on insects and related pests to caribou.

A: Has not been looked at yet. Recent hot temperatures across the Herd range, specifically the more than two weeks of really hot weather along the North Slope, did help to reduce insects nuisance, which undoubtedly benefitted the herd.

Q: Roger Fraser asked why the calf survival rates were dropping?

A: Cows were not in great shape, often thinner, so either could not carry to term or could not fall pregnant.

Q: Collars – How many and will there be more?

A: 24 Bulls are collared, and 80-100 Cows are collared. Larger amount for females as they make up half the herd, 20-25% are calves and the rest are bulls. These numbers are statistically significant. Calves that are just over 1 year old are collared and the collars remain on the animal for their whole life span ( $\pm$  15 years).

Q: Burt Hunt asked about burn sites and why one graphic in the presentation showed caribou close to the burn site areas.

A: One graphics shows caribou presence within 10 km of active fires, still something we are trying to understand, but possibly due to the Herd using the smoke and heat as a bug deterrent.

Q: Ron Allen asked a question about the Dalton Highway and whether caribou didn't cross because of the traffic or whether the highway was just a physical barrier.

A: Highlighted the differences between the NWT/Yukon and Alaska - hunting along the highway is highly regulated and enforced within Alaska. There is no hunting allowed within 5 miles of the highway, and only traditional hunting is permitted, which excludes the use of ATVs, skidoos and vehicles for harvesting. Plans are underway to look at the effects of oil and gas (pipeline



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runs along highway), traffic and noise. Will also be looking at shrub growth on caribou movement.

Q: Ron Allen – asked about pipelines impact to caribou movement due to the noise and vibrations from the pipeline potentially deterring caribou.

A: Interestingly, caribou were shown to approach right up to the pipelines, so may not be so much of a deterrent as one might expect.

Q: Roger Fraser asked about enforcement along the Dalton Highway.

A: Heavily enforced under State Laws and seem to be very successful in gaining compliance amongst harvesters.

## *Moose Survey:*

Mike presented on his Moose Survey Program. Survey was conducted in March 2023, showed that the Moose population has increased and indications of better habitat due to the presence of calf twins. Mike showed an interactive graphic that provided the Board with a visual representation of Moose population movements across the Delta. Schematic showed herds congregating in large amounts around the Bell River in late Winter and then moving across the Delta in the Spring. Survey just started, but looking forward to collecting more data to understand Moose movements.

## *Wolf Collaring Program:*

The program is less than 2 years old and is being conducted to better understand what wolves are eating, how they move and other factors that affect their population size and movements, e.g. wolf diet when there are no caribou, are moose playing a larger role in wolf diets, and what could this mean for wolf populations? Survey showed 676 clusters, of which 210 were visited, 96 were kills. Overall observed increase in moose kills by wolves. In 2022, 76 scat samples were analyzed and showed that on average the main diet was caribou, ptarmigan and moose.

## **Questions and Comments:**

Q: Burt Hunt asked for further elaboration on the collaring process, e.g. which wolves within the pack do they collar, etc. Asked about standard pack size.



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A: Try to get at least two wolves per pack, and try to get the Alpha collared. Standard pack sizes range depending on range and diet – packs that kill Moose are generally between 10-12 and those that kill caribou are generally 6-8 individuals to a pack.

Q: TRRC Doug Wilson asked what the population estimate is for wolves in the area.

A: Data is not there yet and cannot make an accurate prediction on population size. Survey focus is more on pack structure and dynamic, rather than monitoring population size.

Mike requested to present on Muskox to the Board at the next meeting.

## 8) RRC Open Discussion

Nihtat – no presence

Edihtat – Crystal Koe, Danny Greenland, Randy Edwards

Gwichya Gwich'in – George Niditchie Jr.

Tetlit – Laura Nerysoo, Doug Wilson, and Richard Wilson

**Edihtat RRC** asked about Sport Hunting stating that they reached out to GTC, ECC and GRRB and haven't heard back yet.

Board stated that there is ONLY one registered sport hunting outfitter in the GSA, but will follow-up.

**Tetlit RRC** stated that they have been unable to meet on a regular basis due to the recent deaths in the community and only opened their office doors on Monday (Nov 27<sup>th</sup>). Stated that they are looking forward to GRRB visiting their community.

**Gwichya RRC** stated that they have had good experience working with the registered sports hunting outfitter out of Arctic Red, and receive around 2000lbs of meat for their community from outfitter. Stated that fishing was good this year, but slow in the summer due to the heat.

Questions surrounding next RRC Regional Meeting – GRRB will reach out to RRCs to see who will be hosting.





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**Tetlit RRC** – Doug Wilson mentioned that a Gwich'in Participant told him that he heard a woodpecker around Husky River and that it was the first time he had ever heard of the presence of woodpeckers in the Delta.

**Meeting adjourned at 3:17pm.**

**Day 2 – GRRB Chairperson Robert Charlie-Tetlich** called the meeting to order at 9:14 a.m. Quorum was recognized.

## **7) Research Updates (cont...)**

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

*Helen Wheeler, Anglia Ruskin University presented.*

Helen presented on her 2023 field season. Helen explained that she was unable to get into Jackfish Creek this year for her field season (scheduled for August 15<sup>th</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup>) due to NWT wildfire season and the state of disrepair of the ECC Cabin that is used for the fieldwork. NWT State of Emergency was declared on August 15<sup>th</sup>, followed by Aurora Research Institute suspending all research support for all researchers on August 16<sup>th</sup>.

Helen then went on to provide an overview of her project. Jackfish Creek provided an optimal study site for her project on beavers, as it builds on a previous study that was done in the 1960s. Helen went on to explain how she has incorporated dendrochronology to help indicate historical Beaver populations at the site and how this technique can also be used to indicate differences in beaver activity (i.e. short-term versus permanent). Helen also discussed looking at muskrat and beaver interactions, the use of drone-based mapping, as well as different applications that have been used in other areas (i.e. EMSA and SIKU Apps). She also highlighted Inuit funded projects that were looking at range expansion, impact on people and impacts from Climate Change as it relates to beavers. Interviews are planned in Aklavik in February/March 2024.



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## Questions & Comments:

Q: Doug Doan asked about general population trend over the four years?

A: No evident trend, data shows more of a fluctuation in the population from year to year.

Q: Roger Fraser asked about the impacts of water levels on Beaver populations?

A: Water level impacts have been more of a focus point in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region studies.

Q: Spoke about the potential impacts of water levels on beavers, specifically that the current water levels seen the year are the lowest since the early 80s. He questioned the ability for beaver to survive large impacts due to water levels (i.e. perched beaver houses, access to food sources due to bank instability, changes in ice formation and freezing events, etc.). Asked how Helen's study would account for these impacts?

A: Helen highlighted that her project focuses more on shrub work and the linkages to population changes rather than water levels. Also emphasized the importance of why she uses the same area – most historical data to compare current trends to.

Q: Doug Doan asked whether and why in years of low water, whether there was a move from lakes to rivers by beaver populations?

A: Helen pointed out that this is likely due to the fact that there is less of a chance of rivers freezing right through than it is for lakes, making rivers more habitable for beavers in the winter.

Q: Ron Allen asked what the implications were for predators during periods of low water levels (i.e. wolverine, etc.)?

A: Unsure – outside of scope of study.

Q: Tetlit RRC – Doug Wilson asked why Helen chose Jackfish Creek?

A: Due to the previous (1950s/60s) studies done in the same area, makes it easier to compare.



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## **b) Rat River Harvest Monitoring**

*Colin Gallagher, Department of Fisheries and Oceans*

Colin presented on the Harvest Monitoring Program and Fall seining/tagging program. Colin presented data showing 212 fish sampled (July 22-Sept 9<sup>th</sup>, 2023), 535 fish captured with 184 released. He noted that 2023 was an exceptional year as the water levels were low, but monitors reported very healthy fish. Monitors also noted a lot of sandbars, the likes of which haven't been seen in 15-20 years. Colin pointed to some challenges faced during his fieldwork season, namely the limits on helicopter hours and weather. Although the aim is to sein at least 500 fish, during the September 2023 seining program, 318 fish were seined, 308 of which were tagged and 9 were recaptures. Colin highlighted the upcoming fish stock assessment that will be held in Winnipeg in January, as well as meeting with the Dolly Varden Steering Committee. Colin stated that funding will likely not be requested for the 2024 fiscal year.

### **Questions & Comments:**

Q: Ron Allen asked about whether water quality and temperature could be playing a role in lower numbers?

A: Colin explained that during peak fishing and sampling seasons, water is generally cooling down – late July to early September.

Q: Tetlit RRC – Doug Wilson thanked Colin for his presentation and continued good work.

## **c) Arctic Salmon Project**

*Karen Dunmall, Department of Fisheries and Oceans*

Karen provided a presentation, updating the Board on her project. Project started in 2000, but not much Salmon was recorded in the couple of years. Karen explained the existence of a corridor for Salmon between the Chukchi Sea and Beaufort North Slope where the sea surface temperature, if sustained above 2 degrees for an extended period of time, will create a corridor



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for Salmon to move along the coast and into the Delta. More specifically, if the Chukchi sea warms up early enough and long enough and the North Slope follows suit, a corridor will be created. Karen also briefly touched on Salmon diets and the interplay between freshwater and salt water, stating that salmon generally cease eating once in freshwater, and those that do continue eating will tend to eat different things than when out in saltwater.

Karen ended her presentation with a request to the Board to defer \$10,000 received from the WSF in 2023 to 2024. She also asked the RRC's to consider her request to be co-authors on a publication.

## **Questions & Comments:**

Q: Ron Allen asked about otolith sampling and relevance to age of fish being observed?

A: Pacific Salmon sampling tend to use scales for aging. Pink Salmon samples have shown 2 year olds (life cycle), whereas Chum Salmon data have shown 3-4 years olds.

Q: Ron followed up by asking more information on the return rates and whether there is any indication of successful spawning?

A: 2019 was the last year that a large enough population of Salmon was seen. There was an expectation that we would see another increase in 2023, but was not the case.

Q: Roger Fraser asked how much the water temp needs to be to have increasing in Salmon?

A: Chukchi Sea must have average surface water temps of 2 degrees, whereas the Beaufort/North Slope is dependent on the number of days that temperatures remain above 2 degrees.

Q: Roger followed up stating that it appears that Climate warming may be good for Salmon.

A: That does appear to be the case.

## **d) Divii (Dall's Sheep) Project**

*Sydney Goward, University of Victoria*

Sydney provided a presentation that included an overview of her project. More specifically, she presented results showing a stable herd, with increases in 2019, a decrease in 2020, and another increase in 2021. May to July showed a higher risk to the nursery group for predation than the ram groups. Sydney showed various wildlife camera footage, where multiple



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predators are seen in the frame, interestingly the presence of coyotes were seen 10 times over the three year study. Sydney thanked the Board for all their support and was excited to get back into the communities in February to present on the study results.

## **Questions & Comments:**

Q: Ron Allen asked whether the wildlife cameras picked up any humans/harvesters?

A: Zero humans were detected at the camera locations throughout the entire study period.

## **e) Impacts of permafrost degradation on luk dagaii habitat in the Peel River Watershed Project**

*Trevor Lantz, University of Victoria*

Trevor provided a presentation on the impacts of permafrost on whitefish habitat in the Peel River. Trevor highlighted the work that Jackie Ziegler had done on the project, as well as referenced the work that Steve Kokelj had done on slumping along the Peel in 2021. A large component of the study was to collect Gwich'in Traditional Knowledge through interviews with local knowledge holders about: fish and fish habitat in the Peel; identifying important fish habitat; and how slumping is affecting those habitats. More specifically, community knowledge holders were asked to identify current, traditional and historical fishing locations in the Peel. Study highlights the importance of cumulative effects of slumping on fish habitats, especially Stoney Creek, Vittrekwa River, Caribou River and Snake River, which are all rich in ground ice – slumping more pronounced.

Trevor's team is planning to be in Fort McPherson in Jan-Feb 2024 for further TK meetings.

## **Questions & Comments:**

Q: Ron Allen asked what would happen to the habitats once permafrost disappears?

A: Unsure, but will take some time.

Q: Burt Hunt asked whether there were any plans for a fish stock assessment to measure the impacts over time and whether Trevor's team had any plans to monitor?



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A: Trevor agreed with Burt's assessment and stated it would be helpful, they would need a Fisheries Biologist and funding for long-term monitors.

## **f) Traditional Knowledge of Permafrost**

*Emma Street, University of Victoria*

Emma provided a presentation showcasing Gwich'in and Inuvialuit traditional knowledge of permafrost. Using that data to map permafrost thaw/change in Gwich'in communities, that can help to then highlight document and showcase concerns with traditional ways of storing food (i.e. ice houses), infrastructure (i.e. roads, gravesites, etc.), impacts to traditional travel routes, changes in vegetation growth, warming water and impact to fish, and caribou migration changes due to permafrost dynamics.

### **Questions & Comments:**

C: Ron Allen – glad to see a focus on fisheries resources impacts, specifically water impacts and fish habitats, as well as sites of historical significance.

C: Burt Hunt commented that it would be good to quantify the impacts of permafrost using baseline data.

Q: Roger Fraser asked about lakes drying up and the impacts to insects.

A: 2 interviewers mentioned increases of mosquitoes due to increased ponding and also noted changes in the types of insects being observed.

Q: Doug Doan asked about water levels/volumes in lakes when permafrost melting under lakes cause increases in lake water volumes.

A: No one interviewed mention that, however some did mention changes to barriers (i.e. lakes draining due to structural collapse, etc.)



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## **g) Gwich'in Words about Animals**

*Kristi Benson, Department of Culture and Heritage, GTC*

Video presentation played – highlights included the 2022-2025 longstanding relationship and funding support from GRRB to study muskrats, cranberries and birds. In 2023 nine local Gwich'in knowledge holders were interviewed. Also highlight the ongoing collaboration with Clara Singer on Gwich'in knowledge about berries.

### **Questions & Comments:**

C: Ron Allen stated that it would be interesting to know what happens to Muskrats in low water years and asked that GRRB reaches out to Kristi to better understand impacts to Muskrats in high or low water-level years.

## **9) Agency Updates (continued)**

### **a) Gwich'in Tribal Council**

*Nolan Rainville, Program Coordinator, Gwich'in Tribal Council*

Nolan presented on the Climate Change Monitoring and Gwich'in Guardian Programs. Nolan stated that community engagement was completed in 2023 and that a workshop was being planned for 2024. He is hoping that monitoring season can begin over the summers of 2024 and 2025. The hope is that the Community-Based Climate Change Monitoring Program will help to lay the foundations for the more longer-term Guardian Program. The goal of the Guardian Program is to help GTC with compliance on Private Lands, land and water quality monitoring, monitoring of Protected Areas, and monitoring of larger scale development projects. GTC is eager to collaborate with GRRB on these programs and would be happy to hear from the Board how GRRB would like to collaborate, and help in identifying specific areas that GTC should include in the development of the Guardians Program.

### **Questions & Comments:**

Q: Ron Allen stated that the Board would be very interested in the water quality monitoring and asked how big of a Guardian Program is GTC planning (i.e. # of staff, scope of work, etc.)?



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A: GTC is currently working with ECC on water quality monitoring, but program is still in its early stages to determine staffing and scope.

Q: Roger Fraser asked how GTC sees GRRB participating? Financial?

A: Expectation would not likely be financial, but more from an expertise side, especially on wildlife, fish and plants.

Q: Robert Charlie-Tetlichi stated that it would be good to see more water quality and quantity monitoring done across the GSA, especially given the recent tailings pond release and the lack of contaminant studies. Also, the need to monitor non-Gwich'in persons accessing resources within the GSA. Asked whether this would be part of the Guardian Program?

A: Nolan pointed to the number of enforcement issues tied to the mentioned problems, and what the redress would look like and went on to emphasize the importance of working together and looking at being a part of the solution.

Q: Doug Doan asked whether GRRB would be invited to the Workshop planned for 2024?

A: Most definitely.

## **b) Department of Fisheries and Oceans**

*Amy Amos and Bobbie-Jo Greenland, DFO*

Amy and Bobbie-Jo provided the Board with regional updates. Amy discussed the changes to the Arctic Region and the aim of DFO to better align programs and services within the newly developed region (i.e. Arctic Region). Amy identified the main priorities in implementing the Arctic Region, namely: increasing capacity and service delivery; co-development and climate change adaptation; increased northern research; and policy making to be led by Northerners. Emphasized the goal of ensuring that decision-making would be for the North, by the North and in the North. Amy discussed the regional boundaries and presented an organizational structure diagram to help showcase the departments and lines of authority.

Bobbie-Jo provided an update on the New Indigenous Knowledge Unit within DFO, highlighting the need for better ownership and control of Indigenous Traditional Knowledge by Indigenous people, and ensuring that Federal decisions and policies are in line with the Land Claims and Final Agreements and local Traditional Knowledge.





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Amy went on to provide an overview of each department, job postings and vacancies, key contacts and transition. GRRB receives implementation funding from DFO in the amount of \$57,000 which is all used to fund the Dolly Varden Monitoring Project. To date there are 14 people who work within the Inuvik DFO office, 12 DFO employees of which 4 are Gwich'in and 4 are Inuvialuit, and 2 Coast Guard employees. Transition over to Arctic Region is scheduled to be completed by April 1, 2024. DFO is currently working on joint initiatives to address employment barriers, and is working with GTC to develop regional Governance Frameworks that would advance regional priorities. Community engagement coordinator positions are being advertised, and the hope is to hire 7 staff, with at least 3 positions located within the NWT.

Amy finished her presentation by offering her regrets that Sarah Lorde couldn't make the meeting due to illness, but committed Sarah to providing a report summary to the Board.

## **Questions & Comments:**

Q: Burt Hunt pointed out that Bobbie-Jo was not listed in the org chart. And questioned where CMP fit in?

A: Bobbie reports to Kevin under Arctic Operations. CMP still reports to Ontario/Prairie Region.

C: Ron Allen highlighted a number of concerns, namely: capacity of CMP to do /address issues in the Region when based out of Yellowknife when it should really be in Inuvik; capacity and response time is severely lagging and there is a strong need to improve lag times; and pointed out the lack of expertise/knowledge about the northern context/area/structures at the local level.

A: Amy committed to passing Ron's comments along.

C: Roger Fraser commented that he was happy to see decision-making for the North and by the North, as well as the hiring of community engagement coordinators and suggested that the college in Smith could be a good option for recruitment.

C: Burt Hunt highlighted the barriers preventing norther employment, namely the obstacles faced by northerners to fit into national standard. Offered that a solution worth exploring for DFO is the possible relaxation of national standards and begin recognizing northern training and expertise. Stated that he hopes CMP will change view and be more sensitive or open to the Northern context, especially within the Arctic Region.



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A: Amy committed to circulating the document on Northern Recruitment and referenced equivalency options that were being explored, as well as efforts to reclassify positions to remove some of the National requirements preventing successful recruitment.

C: Roger Fraser commented on affirmative action and compared current DFO struggles to those experienced by ENR in the past and how ENR worked with their HR to develop packages on how to apply and how to do an interview, etc. Seemed to be somewhat successful.

C: Darren Campbell commented on the section in the GCLCA 12.8.38 that speaks to affording the Board to have independent research capability.

A: Amy agreed and referenced the notion of data sovereignty and the importance of the work that Bobbie-Jo will be doing.

Q: Robert Charlie-Tetlichy asked where the Yukon fits? Is it part of the Arctic Region?

A: Wanted to stay with Pacific Region.

C: Burt Hunt stated that Yukon North Slope should really be included in the Arctic Region, but also recognised that the Pacific Salmon Watershed within the Yukon aligned better with the Pacific Region.

C: Ron Allen commented that perhaps the administrative structure should be based on watershed boundaries as opposed to jurisdictional boundaries.

A: Amy recognised the challenges with the current boundaries, especially with TK from some regions contradicting TK from other adjacent regions.

**Meeting adjourned at 3:46pm.**



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**Day 3 – GRRB Chairperson Robert Charlie-Tetlich called the meeting to order at 9:07 a.m. Quorum was recognized.**

## **9) Agency Updates (continued)**

### **a) Government of Northwest Territories, Department of Environment and Climate Change**

*Tracy Davison, ECC*

Tracy offered regrets on Steve Barlyk's behalf for being unable to attend the meeting due to a scheduling conflict. Tracy presented on the Moose Survey conducted in March 2023. Highlighted some of the changes seen in the last five years, most notably the changes to the 2017 survey areas from the 2011 survey. 2011 survey areas were used for the 2023 survey. Generally, decreases since 2017 were noted in Inuvik/Tsiigehtchic block and Delta Block. More significant decrease seen in the Mackenzie Gas Project Block ( from 3.31 in 2017 to 0.91 in 2011 and 0.61 in 2023). Mackenzie River block saw a decrease from 13.99 in 2017 to 3.94 in 2023, as well as decreases in Arctic Red and Peel River survey blocks. Yukon Government conducted a Moose survey in March which also showed decreases within the Richardson Mountains since 2017.

#### **Questions & Comments:**

Q: Burt Hunt pointed out that the presentation provided by Mike Sutor the day before showed Moose populations increasing, but ECC is showing the opposite?

A: Mike Sutor's survey focuses on the migratory Moose population, whereas the ECC survey focuses on resident Moose populations.

Q: Burt Hunt followed up by asking about the differences in the surveys from 2017 and 2023, namely whether ECC was confident that the conditions, survey parameters, etc. were the same for both surveys?

A: Weather was really good in 2023, but possible that new person on the survey team in day one may have lacked the experience to ensure proper counting.

Q: Burt Hunt asked whether the significant decrease seen in the Mackenzie Gas Project block was due to higher use?

A: Not a highly travelled/used area.



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Q: Ron Allen pointed to the high deviation error and questioned whether that was typical?

A: Yes, pretty typical standard error.

C: Roger Fraser commented that comparing harvest numbers with population survey between 2017-2023 may help to determine if increased hunting pressure played a part in the decrease.

Q: Margaret Begg asked whether ECC had looked into why Moose are in herds or why they bunch up?

A: Bunches of Moose are called a yard of Moose, but the bunching up is typical behavior for Moose in the winter.

Tracy then continue to present on Project Plans for the upcoming year, highlighting: Barren Ground Caribou (BGC) distribution surveys planned for February/March, BGC and wolf collaring program planned for March/April, but is restricted to the ISR at the moment. No wolves will be collared within the GSA. In 2020-2023, 35 wolves were collared, 13 are currently still active. Tracy went on to discuss the proposed plans for ECCs sampling/monitoring programs, namely caribou body condition and health/genetics through sampling of teeth and leg bones, wolf sample collections/harvest monitoring, caribou collaring to continue monitoring movement and then request that the Board consider the discontinuation of the wolverine sampling program due to the currently thriving population. Tracy highlighted challenges ECC is facing with volumes of samples that require refrigeration/freezing/storing and the lack of storage space.

## **Questions & Comments:**

Q: Burt Hunt asked whether Tracy could provide any input on how GRRB can learn from ECC process to help overcome current challenges in getting the numbers.

A: Depends on the community, but ECC holds a one day paid meeting workshop, which has been fairly successful.

C: Ron Allen commented that he pleased to hear about ECC plans to increase collaring of wolves, but disappointed to hear of ECC's plans to discontinue Wolverine sampling program due to the strong ties to fish populations.

C: Roger Fraser commented that ENR faced the same challenges in Smith with too many samples and not enough space and never understood why samples couldn't be disposed of to make space.



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Q: GRRRC – George Niditchie Jr asked whether Wolverines were ever collared?

A: Not in the NWT, as they are extremely hard to catch and very aggressive.

C: George went on to state that 6 wolverine have already been harvested in and around Tsiigehtchic.

A: Tracy stated that the population is thriving and increasing, thus the question of whether they should still be monitored?

## **b) Government of Northwest Territories, Department of Environment and Climate Change Headquarters Update**

*Rob Gau presented the GNWT Headquarters update.*

Rob provided a presentation that highlighted key regional initiative updates, including: *Wildlife Act* Section 15 meeting was held in Yellowknife and had 53 attendees, Rob committed to sharing the presentation packages with the Board; Bluenose East population was announced to be increasing with a population that has almost doubled; invasive species continues to be an issue across the NWT with efforts by ECC to increase high pressure wash station at road entry points; development of the NWT Species and Habitat mapping project; and continued work on the Indigenous Knowledge on berries project (Robin Pollard). Rob updated the Board on the planned spring working group meeting and pending general status report which is a high-level ranking program that is done every 5 years (2026-2030) and indicated that GRRB will be engaged on that program. He also highlighted the two Species at Risk status reports that are currently out for comment, and the pause on regulation Amendments due to wildfire season, but hopes to pick up again in January and will include a comprehensive overview on outfitting that will be led by the Wildlife Working Group. Rob indicated that the commercial sales regulation will be reinvigorated and another round of consultations with RRCs and GRRB to draft regulations that would be specific to the GSA.

### **Questions and comments:**

Q: Doug Doan pointed to the demise of sheep and caribou in the Sahtu due to outfitters, and asked what is the GSA experience?

A: Only one licensed outfitter in the GSA, one Sahtu outfitter that is straddling the boundary.



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Q: Doug Doan followed up by asking whether regulations will only be applied to consumptive tourism?

A: yes, consumptive.

Q: Roger Fraser asked whether any consideration has been given to the increase in drymeat sales on social media?

A: 5 years ago, two rounds of engagement were undertaken, which outlined/set the formal regulations recommendations for ENR on the control of sales of game.

Q: Ron asked for more clarification on the timelines for the comprehensive overview on outfitting?

A: planned for next fiscal year

TRRC Doug Wilson asked Rob to re-state what was last stated, as the Tetlit RRC had lost internet connection halfway through his answer.

A: Illegal to harvest for sale, GRRB became aware of the increase in harvest for sale and reached out to ECC, GCLCA afford GRRB the ability to determine commercial sale, tied to Gwich'in values, ECC needs to continue work with GRRB and get further RRC input.

## ***External representatives departed. GRRB Board and Staff members remained.***

GRRB Board and staff heard presentation from both Paul Teoh on GRRB's audited financials and Phil Anselmo (RBC) on GRRB investments within the Wildlife Studies Fund. Board approved audited financials and requested another update from Phil on investment projections in the upcoming Winter Board meeting.

GRRB staff provided updates on safety incidents, strategic plan and research priority workshop planning, as well as recruitment and review of the Operating Procedure Manual Revisions (presentation by Cam McKillop). Board motioned to go in-camera at 1:54pm – motioned by Doug Doan and seconded by Margaret Begg). Board motioned to come out of camera at 4:33pm – motioned by Roger Fraser and seconded by Doug Doan.



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## a) Set Winter meeting dates

Winter meeting is tentatively set for the week of February 5<sup>th</sup> in Fort McPherson.

## b) Motion to adjourn

### **Motion GRRB #2023-029**

To adjourn the meeting at 4:33p.m. on November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023

Moved by: Roger Fraser

Motion **CARRIED**

**Minutes approved** February 7th, 2024 **(date)**

**Motion #** 2024-02