

# Porcupine Caribou Management Board Minutes of Meeting

Via Zoom

March 5, 2021

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## In attendance

### Members/Staff

Joe Tetlichi, Chair  
Robert Charlie, Gwich'in Tribal Council  
Alice McCulley, Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in  
Karen Clyde, Government of Yukon  
Billy Storr, Inuvialuit Game Council  
Steven Buyck, First Nation of Na-cho Nyäk Dün  
Ian McDonald, Government of Canada (Alternate)  
Norman Snowshoe, Government of the Northwest Territories (Alternate)  
  
Deana Lemke, Executive Director  
Matthias Lemke, Assistant

### Presenters

Mike Sutor, Environment Yukon  
Jennifer Smith, Consultant

### Regret

Harold Frost Jr., Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation

## Call to Order

Chair Joe Tetlichi called the meeting to order at 1:35 p.m.

***Motion to approve agenda***

***Moved by Billy Storr***

***Seconded by Steven Buyck***

***Carried***

## Review Minutes

The minutes of the November 27, 2020 and December 18, 2020 meetings were reviewed and approved.

***Motion to approve minutes of the November 27 and December 18, 2020 meetings***

***Moved by Billy Storr***

***Seconded by Alice McCulley***

***Carried***

## Chair's Update

Joe Tetlichy related that he was invited by the Old Crow Development Corporation to meet in Old Crow during February 5 to 9 regarding the snowcat winter road project. The project has been delayed due to a lack of snow. Snow and ice measurements are being taken via snowmobile to determine when the activities can begin. Some flooding may be required. When the project begins, wildlife monitors will travel ahead of the snowcats to address concerns about disturbing caribou.

Joe also attended community meetings regarding the Conservation Plan (CP) with Jennifer Smith in Old Crow on March 2 and 3. He stated that there was a very good response and that meaningful input was gathered. In addition to CP-related discussions, community members also shared concerns about the commercialization of Porcupine caribou.

Joe stated that a large number of caribou have been and are still located within a half hour's travel of Old Crow this winter. There are also significant numbers of caribou in the Pine Creek area on the way to Eagle Plains.

Robert Charlie related that at a GTC meeting held on February 23 and 24, concerns were raised about the number of caribou being harvested and the apparent wastage of meat. The sale of caribou meat was also raised as a serious current issue. Joe acknowledged these concerns and stated that because bartering is permitted it is difficult for Conservation Officers to lay charges. People who are witnesses of unacceptable practices need to come forward to provide proof. Joe asked members to think about what Board communication and education about this issue would look like.

Robert stated that it is known in advance when the caribou will arrive each year and that educating the communities in advance would be a good step. He felt that the PCMB should have a plan for getting messages out and that reminders such as "take only what you need", "share if you can", and "no commercialization" would be helpful around the time of the Midway Lake festival or even prior to that.

Norman Snowshoe related that there has been an increase in the number of calls to the Inuvik office regarding the commercialization of meat. Apparently, some people are using the sale of meat as a way to make money. He stated that his office is discouraging people from advertising on Facebook and that making meat available for purchase to the general public is wrong and that it has to be addressed. Norman felt that the issue is getting more serious and that the PCMA needs to carry more weight than land claims when it comes to the barter and trade of Porcupine Caribou meat.

Deana Lemke suggested that it may be appropriate to add additional wording about advertising to the Sale, Trade and Barter Guidelines, since advertising is considered to be commercialization. Karen Clyde stated that there are many aspects of communication around this issue and that a contractor could potentially assist with identifying and tracking these communications.

Norman suggested that the Board could also consider referencing provisions in the NWT and Yukon legislation to limit any commercialization of the PCH.

Deana stated that the CP will also need to address commercialization and that Jennifer may know someone who could assist with communication related to this.

Steven Buyck agreed that it would be appropriate to amend the Sale, Trade and Barter Guidelines to reflect that advertising is not allowed. He felt that the Parties should be asked to support these changes but that PCMB could take the initiative on this.

The Board agreed that the discussion about commercialization be deferred and continued in the future.

Billy Storr added that the sale and wastage of meat has been a recurring topic. He related that he recently spoke about this topic at the IGC meeting and emphasized the importance of continuing to follow responsible harvesting practices. He explained to members that Aklavik supplies other communities with meat by means of community hunts, but that hunters from other communities are also coming to the Aklavik area to hunt. Billy stressed the need for hunters to retrieve wounded animals. He stated that a few key harvesters from Aklavik do most of the hunting for the community. These tend to be very accurate marksmen and some of the accusations made about improper harvesting practices may not be accurate.

## **Administrative and Financial Update**

Deana Lemke reviewed the current financial variance report and advised that she is requesting approval from some funders to reallocate amounts in some categories so as not to let any unspent funds from travel-related categories lapse.

Board members agreed that Deana should reallocate budgeted amounts as needed toward communication-related expenses, promotional items, and program supplies. Peter Mather will be asked to provide a quote for video footage that can be used on the PCMB website. Deana will also explore purchasing hand-made items from PCH user communities which can be used as promotional items. Electronic tablet options for Board members will also be considered.

***Motion to appoint McKay & Associates as auditor for 2020-21 financial audit***

***Moved by Noman Snowshoe***

***Seconded by Karen Clyde***

Regarding pcmb.ca website updates, Deana informed the Board that there is still an opportunity to provide feedback on the updated website and that any suggestions from members would be welcome. Aasman has been asked to work with Jennifer Smith to add an additional page on pcmb.ca that will be used to provide CP related information and to get input from the public.

Mike Sutor noted that some BBC video footage is available for the Board to use and that CBC is willing to share a considerable quantity of video from their 2019 project.

Deana informed members that the Chair appointment process needs to be undertaken again as the current term expires in six months. Joe Tetlich is willing to let his name stand for reappointment of a further term at the will of the Board and Parties. Parties and Stakeholders will be sent correspondence outlining the Board's Chair appointment guidelines, inviting nominations of new candidates or providing support for Joe's reappointment.

Deana reminded members to let her know whether they would like to attend the 2021 North American Caribou Workshop which is scheduled to be held virtually from May 3 to 6. Early bird registration is available until April 9.

## **Herd update**

### NWT Update

Norman Snowshoe related that there is very little caribou activity along the Dempster Highway. On the other hand, a lot of harvesting is taking place around Aklavik. Therefore, patrols are being focussed on that area. More harvesting is expected on the coming weekend due to the warm weather. Norman also noted that it has been his intention to attend RRC meetings to stay up to date about any concerns, but due to COVID-19 restrictions this has been challenging.

### Yukon Update

Mike Sutor confirmed that there are still groups of caribou near Old Crow and Aklavik. He is currently preparing for the spring field season which will begin the following week and will be based out of Old Crow. Mike anticipates that the work will take place close to Aklavik if the needed permissions are received. Due to COVID-19 restrictions they cannot work directly out of Aklavik, however. Calving surveys will take place in May in Alaska.

### Dempster Hunting brochures

Mike updated members on the hunting brochures that were developed specifically to assist with clarifying harvesting rights along the Dempster Highway corridor. Since various final agreements are involved, the brochures help to clarify a complex situation. The update of the previous brochures began approximately five years ago and after much consultation with Parties they are now considered complete. Mike noted that Kirby Meister has expressed his preference for releasing the brochures as soon as possible because they are very useful to Conservation Officers.

Board members agreed that PCMB should send a notification to the Parties confirming that the brochures are now being considered final.

### Eagle Plains/Chance Oil and Gas Ltd update

Mike explained that the proposal for a winter road in the Eagle Plains area is only a minor project and that appropriate mitigations are part of the project. It is anticipated that the winter road will be used annually instead of an ice road. It will be a small road and have a low amount of traffic. The road is related to an application currently being reviewed by the YESAB in which Chance Oil and Gas is seeking to perform maintenance on several wells in the Eagle Plains area. Well heads need to be tested for stability and it is planned to abandon three wells. In order to get a sense of volume and quality, they also wish to conduct extended flow testing, which simulates production for a period of three weeks. Two wells will subsequently be turned into injection wells through which the extracted products will be put back into the ground. Most of the wells will be accessed from an existing access road while a few can be accessed directly from the Dempster Highway. Any new access roads will have to be cleared, but only to a winter road standard.

Mike stated that he does not have significant concerns about this project. In fact, the work could likely improve the overall quality of the project. The project is also of short duration and only requires winter access. The scope is therefore significantly more limited than the previous project.

Mike noted that an area that the Board may wish to provide comments on is related to hunting. Chance Oil and Gas claim to be able to restrict hunting; however, they do not have the ability to restrict hunting on public land. It would be advisable for them to focus on ensuring good communication to support hunter safety.

### Canadian Mountain Network proposal

Mike explained that the Canadian Mountain Network (CMN) is an organization that promotes knowledge collaboration focused on mountain areas. Norma Kassi and Murray Humphries are co-chairs. CMN recently put out a call for proposals or letters of intent and the PCMB has subsequently been selected for developing

a more detailed proposal. The project will help participants collaborate on research and knowledge gathering related to ecological change in the summer range of the Porcupine Caribou herd. If selected, the PCMB would be one of nine participating collaborators. The deadline for the proposal is May 3, 2021. Total funding available is estimated to be \$1 million over a three-year period and this funding would be available to support communities, academics, and fieldwork costs. Some participating organizations are the University of Victoria, the GRRB, Parks Canada, the Aklavik HTC, WMAC(NS), and others.

The goal of the initiative is to document changes in wildlife and vegetation and to develop predictive models. Studies will include not only caribou but also species such as wolves, beavers, and willows which affect caribou ecology and habitat. The work will be driven by traditional knowledge (TK) and scientific data, and the goal is to collaboratively consolidate all of the information.

Deana Lemke summarized that anything that affects caribou and that ties back to climate-change related food security issues is of interest to this collaborative study. The hope is to be able to anticipate changes and plan how to adapt to them. The initiative relies on collaboration and partnerships, and since it includes a TK component it connects nicely with other work that PCMB is already doing.

The Board agreed that participation in this project aligns with PCMB's mandate and that participation in it would be worthwhile. Mike stated that he would appreciate it if any members would like to participate in writing the proposal.

## **PCH Conservation Plan and TK Data Mobilization Project Update**

Jennifer Smith related that the community of Old Crow was willing to have her visit in person to hold a recent Conservation Plan (CP) workshop. Joe Tetlichi and Mike Sutor were present as well. The audience was provided an introduction to the CP and a follow-up workshop was held on an evening, which was attended by approximately 40 people. The group was given an introduction to the planning process and information about how PCMB anticipates working with them. Via active discussions, feedback was garnered from the group about preliminary CP categories. Both local and range-wide issues were discussed. Jennifer also informed the group about what the CP will include, what won't be included, and how various topics will be addressed. She stated that participants seemed to understand and support what we are trying to do. They also understood how the CP fits within the federal *Species at Risk Act* legislation and processes.

Jennifer noted that she appreciated Joe's participation in discussions that arose with respect to PCH harvesting and related concerns.

Jennifer now plans to follow up with similar sessions in other communities, hopefully by working with the HTC's and RRC's, as appropriate, taking into consideration COVID-19 travel and in-person gathering restrictions.

Since it will likely not be possible to do as much in-person work as desired, the PCMB website and local kiosk stations will be used to engage people in the consultation process. The kiosks will include a PC which can be used to read information and answer survey questions.

Ian McDonald raised a question about the timing of incorporating TK into the CP. Jennifer acknowledged that it is still unclear how long it will take to get the remaining data to Trailmark and that it will take more time to get a sense of how the two processes can be synchronized.

The Board thanked Jennifer for her good work which obviously had contributed to the success of this community engagement and also for her willingness to travel to Old Crow on short notice.

## **Next Meeting and Adjournment**

The next meeting will potentially be scheduled during May 2021. Deana Lemke will canvass members for availability.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 p.m.