May 29, 2017

Dear Applicant:

Re: Your request for access to information under Part II of the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act FA/26/2017

On April 28, 2017, The Department of Fisheries and Land Resources (FLR) received your request for access to the following records:

"Any records related to communication with Innu Nation, Sheshatshiu Innu First Nation, or Mushuau Innu First Nation, regarding the Big Game Caribou Order, Labrador, NLR 17/13, or communication with them regarding the preparation of this order"

I am pleased to inform you that a decision has been made by the Deputy Minister for FLR to provide partial access to the information requested.

Access to the records, and/or information contained within the records, has been refused in accordance with the following exceptions to disclosure, as specified in the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (the Act) Section 40 (1) Disclosure harmful to personal privacy and Section 29 (1) (a) Policy advice or recommendations; pages 19-22 were redacted in its entirety as non-responsive.

The Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act requires us to provide an advisory response within 10 days of receiving the request. As this request has been completed prior to day 10, this letter serves as our Advisory Response.

Please be advised that you may ask the Information and Privacy Commissioner to review the processing of your access request, as set out in section 42 of the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (the Act). A request to the Commissioner must be made in writing within 15 business days of the date of this letter or within a longer period that may be allowed by the Commissioner.

The address and contact information of the Information and Privacy Commissioner is as follows:

Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner
2 Canada Drive
P. O. Box 13004, Stn. A
St. John’s, NL. A1B 3V8

Telephone: (709) 729-6309
Toll-Free: 1-877-729-6309
Facsimile: (709) 729-6500
You may also appeal directly to the Supreme Court Trial Division within 15 business days after you receive the decision of the public body, pursuant to section 52 of the Act.

Please be advised that this letter will be published following a 72 hour period after it is sent electronically to you or five business days in the case where records are mailed to you. It is the goal to have the letter posted to the Completed Access to Information Requests website within one business day following the applicable period of time. Please note that requests for personal information will not be posted online.

If you have any further questions, please contact me by telephone at 709-729-4797 or by email at rhondahickey@gov.nl.ca

Sincerely,

Rhonda Hickey
ATIPP Coordinator

Enclosures

Access or correction complaint

42. (1) A person who makes a request under this Act for access to a record or for correction of personal information may file a complaint with the commissioner respecting a decision, act or failure to act of the head of the public body that relates to the request.

(2) A complaint under subsection (1) shall be filed in writing not later than 15 business days

(a) after the applicant is notified of the decision of the head of the public body, or the date of the act or failure to act; or

(b) after the date the head of the public body is considered to have refused the request under subsection 16 (2).

(3) A third party informed under section 19 of a decision of the head of a public body to grant access to a record or part of a record in response to a request may file a complaint with the commissioner respecting that decision.

(4) A complaint under subsection (3) shall be filed in writing not later than 15 business days after the third party is informed of the decision of the head of the public body.

(5) The commissioner may allow a longer time period for the filing of a complaint under this section.

(6) A person or third party who has appealed directly to the Trial Division under subsection 52 (1) or 53 (1) shall not file a complaint with the commissioner.

(7) The commissioner shall refuse to investigate a complaint where an appeal has been commenced in the Trial Division.
(8) A complaint shall not be filed under this section with respect to

(a) a request that is disregarded under section 21;
(b) a decision respecting an extension of time under section 23;
(c) a variation of a procedure under section 24; or
(d) an estimate of costs or a decision not to waive a cost under section 26.

(9) The commissioner shall provide a copy of the complaint to the head of the public body concerned.

Direct appeal to Trial Division by an applicant

52. (1) Where an applicant has made a request to a public body for access to a record or correction of personal information and has not filed a complaint with the commissioner under section 42, the applicant may appeal the decision, act or failure to act of the head of the public body that relates to the request directly to the Trial Division.

(2) An appeal shall be commenced under subsection (1) not later than 15 business days

(a) after the applicant is notified of the decision of the head of the public body, or the date of the act or failure to act; or

(b) after the date the head of the public body is considered to have refused the request under subsection 16 (2).

(3) Where an applicant has filed a complaint with the commissioner under section 42 and the commissioner has refused to investigate the complaint, the applicant may commence an appeal in the Trial Division of the decision, act or failure to act of the head of the public body that relates to the request for access to a record or for correction of personal information.

(4) An appeal shall be commenced under subsection (3) not later than 15 business days after the applicant is notified of the commissioner’s refusal under subsection 45 (2).

Policy advice or recommendations

29. (1) The head of a public body may refuse to disclose to an applicant information that would reveal

(a) advice, proposals, recommendations, analyses or policy options developed by or for a public body or minister;

(b) the contents of a formal research report or audit report that in the opinion of the head of the public body is incomplete and in respect of which a request or order for completion has been made by the head within 65 business days of delivery of the report; or
(c) draft legislation or regulations.

(2) The head of a public body shall not refuse to disclose under subsection (1)

(a) factual material;

(b) a public opinion poll;

(c) a statistical survey;

(d) an appraisal;

(e) an environmental impact statement or similar information;

(f) a final report or final audit on the performance or efficiency of a public body or on any of its programs or policies;

(g) a consumer test report or a report of a test carried out on a product to test equipment of the public body;

(h) a feasibility or technical study, including a cost estimate, relating to a policy or project of the public body;

(i) a report on the results of field research undertaken before a policy proposal is formulated;

(j) a report of an external task force, committee, council or similar body that has been established to consider a matter and make a report or recommendations to a public body;

(k) a plan or proposal to establish a new program or to change a program, if the plan or proposal has been approved or rejected by the head of the public body;

(l) information that the head of the public body has cited publicly as the basis for making a decision or formulating a policy; or

(m) a decision, including reasons, that is made in the exercise of a discretionary power or an adjudicative function and that affects the rights of the applicant.

(3) Subsection (1) does not apply to information in a record that has been in existence for 15 years or more.

2015 cA-1.2 s29

Disclosure harmful to personal privacy

40. (1) The head of a public body shall refuse to disclose personal information to an applicant where the disclosure would be an unreasonable invasion of a third party’s personal privacy.
Hello to All,

Please accept my apologies for not providing the start time for the GRC workshop. We will plan to start at 10am, as before, lunch will be provided. Although I do not expect the workshop will take the full day we will leave the ending time open in order to accommodate all comments and discussion, as needed.

Thank you in advance for reserving the time to discuss GRC with us. I look forward to seeing you on 2 November.

Katherine

Katherine Mehl, Ph.D.
Senior Manager of Habitat Game and Fur Management
Wildlife Division
PO Box 2007
117 Riverside Dr.
Corner Brook, NL A2H 7S1
Phone: (709) 637-2383
Fax: (709) 637-2004

Hello to All,

The Wildlife Division would like to invite your participation in the second George River Caribou (GRC) Advisory Workshop, scheduled for HV-GB, Friendship Centre, on Wednesday, 2 November 2011. Below is the proposed agenda for the meeting. If you should have any further items to include, please let me know and I will add them.

2. Management – Discussion regarding possible harvest management approaches for the 2011/12 hunting season.
3. Stakeholder Input – Discussion of comments received from stakeholders to date.
Hi to All,

The Province is dedicated to the management and conservation of the George River Caribou Herd (GRCH). In order to facilitate successful management and conservation actions for the future, the Province asks that each stakeholder group provide the names and contact information of two individuals that they wish to appoint to the Provincial GRCH Advisory Committee.

The Provincial Advisory Committee will be responsible for promoting conservation of the GRCH and providing management recommendations to the Minister of Environment and Conservation. Invited members include representatives from: Nunatsiavut Government, Labrador Innu Nation, NunatuKavut Community Council, Torngat Wildlife and Plants Co-management Board, Labrador Hunting and Fishing Association, the NL Outfitters Association, and the Province of NL.

The first meeting of the Provincial GRCH Advisory Committee is scheduled for 27 June, from 1:30-4pm at the Friendship Centre in HV-GB. In order for us to plan for the meeting, please forward the names and contact information of the two individuals that you wish to serve as your representatives, along with their availability for meeting on 27 June.

The tentative agenda for the meeting is to provide a status update on the GRCH, to include harvest updates and consultation and management timelines. The input of all groups will be necessary to ensure successful conservation measures and actions.

I would like thank you for your past involvement with the GRCH Workshops and I hope to see representatives from all groups on 27 June, from 1:30-4pm.

I look forward to hearing from. Have a great week,

Katherine

Katherine Mehl, Ph.D.
Senior Manager of Habitat Game and Fur Management
Wildlife Division
PO Box 2007
117 Riverside Dr.
Corner Brook, NL A2H 7S1
Phone: (709) 637-2383
Fax: (709) 637-2004
Our Wildlife, the quarterly newsletter of the NL Wildlife Division, is available on the Environment and Conservation website:
The information contained in this update reflects data and discussions presented at the George River Caribou Herd Advisory Committee meeting held in Happy Valley-Goose Bay on June 27, 2012.

The George River Caribou Herd (GRCH), along with other migratory caribou herds across North America, experiences large-scale population fluctuations over extended periods of time. Since the early 1990s, the GRCH has been in decline. Recently the decline has been occurring at an alarming rate, as confirmed by population censuses completed in 2001 and 2010. Results from monitoring other indicators of herd health, including calf recruitment, percentage of large adult males, and adult mortality, confirm the decline is significant and continuing.

Collared adult caribou annual mortality rates have been estimated to be at or above 30% over the past four years (2012). As of June 2012, mortality rates and calf recruitment estimates projected a population of fewer than 30,000 animals in Fall 2012.

An annual harvest of 2,500 animals can have huge consequences at such population levels, with a herd size difference of around 47% after only five years of harvest.
The Labrador resident/12-E licence phone survey has been almost completed and was successful in contacting 88% of licence holders.

There were a total of 678 provincial resident and 271 Nunatsiavut 12-E licences sold in 2011-2012. It was found that 21% of licence holders did not hunt and of those who did, success was around 68%. The total harvest estimate was 493 caribou, with the minimum being 433 and the maximum being 544.

2011-2012 showed a different trend in harvest pattern, with more animals harvested in January while in 2010-11, harvest increased towards the end of the season. This reflects a difference in herd movement, location, access, and weather from year to year. Females constituted 69% of the harvest.

### Harvest Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>2010/11</th>
<th>2011/12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quebec sport harvest</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labrador outfitters</td>
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<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labrador licence holders</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>1370</td>
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<tr>
<td>Labrador beneficiaries in LFA</td>
<td>493</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labrador Aboriginal Groups</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labrador Innu</td>
<td>430</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2243</td>
<td>2860</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*2010/2011 still being updated

**combined 12-E & regular licences
The Caribou Health Monitoring Program has had a very successful first year, with 197 sample packages returned, resulting in 179 jawbones, 178 leg bones, 132 fecal samples, and 110 blood samples. This represents a 38% sample package return rate from the estimated number of caribou harvested. Results from these data sheets and samples will provide information on pregnancy status, stress levels, parasite levels, aging, body size, and body condition indices.

Of November 2012 the body condition indices, stress levels, parasite levels, aging, body size, and body condition indices of caribou harvested, results from these data sheets and samples will provide information on pregnancy status, stress levels, parasite levels, aging, body size, and body condition indices of caribou harvested. This represents a 38% return rate from the estimated number of caribou harvested. Results from these data sheets and samples will provide information on pregnancy status, stress levels, parasite levels, aging, body size, and body condition indices.

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Hunters noted parasites in 14% of the animals, including besnoitia, souls, and flukes (in decreasing prevalence).
Collar Deployment

Sixty-five collars were active as of June 27, 2012. New iridium collars provide many benefits over the older Argos models, such as real-time locations and more efficient mortality investigations. New collars allow Wildlife staff to quickly identify dead adults if possible, do an immediate mortality investigation, and support for trying to determine the impacts of these predators on caribou at different stages in their cycle, especially on calving grounds. There was also interest in monitoring predator movement patterns and watching the bear camera footage. Some committee members in viewing the bear camera footage, but the causes of death were undetermined. Five of these deaths were from the 10 collars retrieved from the other six caribou, one of unknown natural causes, and one died giving birth. Two were due to predation. One of these predators was a known black bear, the third predator could not be identified.

Predator Monitoring

The predator monitoring program included the addition of seven wolf and 10 black bear collars on the calving and wintering grounds. The advisory committee noted the black bear population has increased, and offered support for trying to determine the impact of these predators on caribou at different stages in their cycle, especially on calving grounds. There was also interest in monitoring predator movement patterns and watching the bear camera footage. Some committee members in viewing the bear camera footage, but the causes of death were undetermined. Five of these deaths were from the 10 collars retrieved from the other six caribou, one of unknown natural causes, and one died giving birth. Two were due to predation. One of these predators was a known black bear, the third predator could not be identified.

Field Work

Field work in 2012 involved many field work efforts, including gathering information from 30 newborn calves. An increasing mean calf body weight trend is one of the few positive indicators of herd recovery potential. Above 6 kg is considered a threshold to reach a minimum necessary recruitment of around 35 calves per 100 females.
The following issues were brought forward by Advisory Committee meeting participants and discussed:

- Need to identify causes of adult caribou mortality.
- Need to understand why many calves are not surviving their first months.
- Concern that research and monitoring methods contribute to mortalities; wildlife staff follow protocols re: surveys and how long animals are chased.
- Whenever possible, work is done from the ground.
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- Less experienced hunters may be able to harvest just as many animals with minimal disturbance. Hunting parties should explore the potential to open more license parts to harvester other wildlife as needed.
- Research and monitoring show clear trends when the population is deemed healthy.
- Whenever possible, work is done from the ground.
- Wildfire risk follows protocols re: surveys and how long animals are chased.
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The essence of the GRCH decline is not fully understood. Migratory herds are known to fluctuate, as many wildlife populations do. However, the GRCH reached such a high abundance in the early 1990s, it appears density-dependent effects (limited food availability in certain areas of their range), lead to great decreases in body condition. This would have led to increased mortality and decreased reproduction. Although forage availability and body condition may have improved, other factors may still have an impact on population growth. While hunting is not likely a cause of the decline, it does negatively impact on a population. Hunting is known to have significant negative impacts on a population. Hunting levels, hunting is known to have significant negative impacts on a population. Hunting is not likely a cause of the decline, at low population levels, hunting is known to have significant negative impacts on a population.
From: Philpott, Holly
To: Barney, Wayne
Subject: FW: Meeting Note on George River Caribou update
Attachments: Information note GRC 15 October 2012.doc
Importance: High

From: Firth, Ross
Sent: Monday, October 15, 2012 2:59 PM
To: Doucet, Christine
Cc: Blake, John; Mehl, Katherine; Legge, Marilyn
Subject: FW: Meeting Note on George River Caribou update
Importance: High

Christine

Would you please put a note together within the timeframe outlined below. John summarized some recent actions (attached) on the GRCH file in his email of 09/23/2012 in which you were cc’d. The note should include, but not be limited to, the following:

- List known harvest numbers by all aboriginal / non-aboriginal groups for 2011/12
- Current population status and projected trend
- Overview of aboriginal consultations re the establishment of a TAH. Be sure to include all groups that were consulted.
- Overview of Montreal meeting and a report of significant outcomes/recommendations, eg. Aboriginal Round Table proposal, establishment of a Co-Management Board (attached)
- Current status of management actions by Province of Quebec
- Development of a cabinet paper for the Fall with management recommendations

Please forward me a draft note no later than tomorrow morning.

Ross

From: Roberts, Edna
Sent: Monday, October 15, 2012 2:39 PM
To: Firth, Ross
Cc: Legge, Marilyn
Subject: Meeting Note on George River Caribou update
Importance: High

Hi Ross,

Minister will be going to Goose Bay on Wednesday morning to meet with Minister Sheppard, Carl McLean and Minister McGrath regarding George River Caribou and a couple of other things. Would you provide an updated note on George River Caribou for him by tomorrow morning please?

Thanks, Edna

Regards,
Title: George River Caribou (GRC)

Issue: To provide an update on the status of the GRC herd and actions related to the ongoing management of the GRC.

Background:
- The GRC population has declined from an estimated 775,000 in the late 1993 to 385,000 animals in 2001, 74,000 animals in 2010 and to 27,000 animals in July 2012.
- Population projections based on adult mortality of collared animals as well as age and sex ratios collected during fall classification surveys, indicate that the GRCH may reach less than 22,500 animals by October 2012.
- The October 2012 projection represents a 70% population decline since the 2010 census and a 97% decline since 1993.
- The census result is supported by other biological indicators of herd health, including low calf recruitment; low adult survival measured from collared caribou, and reduced size of the calving area.
- Reasons for the decline remain unknown. Biologists believe the current decline was not caused by hunting. However, as the population becomes smaller, it is inevitable that hunting will add to natural mortality, leading to a faster decline and impeding recovery efforts.

Labrador Caribou Initiative
- As part of the 2011/12 budget process, the Labrador Caribou Initiative was approved for $1.9 million over 3 years.
- The objectives of this initiative are to enhance monitoring and conservation efforts for the herd to include: increased biological monitoring and research efforts, increased harvest monitoring, enhanced licensing, education and stewardship programs, the formation of stakeholder working groups, advisory and technical committees, and the development and implementation of a management plan for both the short- and long-term conservation of the GRC.
- Activities carried out so far include:
  - Spring calf condition survey and yearling collaring effort
  - Purchase and deployment of 90 Iridium collars for adult and juvenile caribou
  - Fall classification surveys
  - Mortality retrievals – however, cause of mortality for all retrievals can not be established
  - Development of stewardship and education materials
  - GRC management plan in development
  - Hiring process undertaken for 2 new Wildlife Biologist positions though pending final approval for implementation
  - Fuel cache deployments throughout the GRCH range
**Harvest Restriction and Numbers**

- MC 2011-0610 provided direction to maintain harvest restrictions implemented for the 2010/11 hunting season with additional measures.
- The 2010/11 restrictions included the limiting of one caribou per resident licence, no transfer of licences, and no commercial or outfitter harvest.
- Conservation measures for the 2011/2012 hunting season included a reduction in the season length for resident harvest, limiting license sales to government offices only, and a mandatory herd health monitoring program where successful hunters were required to collect and submit biological samples from their animals.
- The start of the 2012/2013 season has been delayed pending a decision on management actions by government.
- 2011/12 licence sales totals 620 (as of 30 January 2012)
  - 430 regular licences sold
  - 190 12E licences given out
- Harvest estimates for 2010/2011 and 2011/2012 are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Harvest Group</th>
<th>2010/11 Estimated Harvest</th>
<th>2011/12 Estimated Harvest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Labrador Innu</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>430</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quebec Innu in Labrador</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular Licence Holders</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>493*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NG beneficiaries</td>
<td>975</td>
<td>360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labrador Outfitters</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quebec Sport Harvest</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>260</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>GRAND TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>2425</strong></td>
<td><strong>2243</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*combined NG beneficiaries (12E) & regular provincial licences

- The majority of harvest by NG beneficiaries generally occurs in March and April.
- Incidents of illegal harvest in closed and non-zones by Labrador Innu and Quebec Innu were confirmed and include harvest of caribou in Lab West and Schefferville prior to season opening and 3 incidences of harvest (29 total caribou) in the closed Red Wine zone.

**Stakeholder Meetings and Consultations**

- The Wildlife Division hosted stakeholder workshops in June 2011, November 2011, and June 2012 in Happy Valley – Goose Bay to discuss updates, options and future needs for GRC management. The information gained from these workshops continues to inform the ongoing management process for GRC.
- Representatives from the following organizations were invited to attend:
  - Labrador Innu Nation
  - Nunatsiavut Government
  - NunatuKavut Community Council
  - Province of Newfoundland and Labrador
  - Labrador Hunting and Fishing Association
  - Newfoundland and Labrador Outfitters Association
  - Torngat Wildlife and Plants Co-Management Board
In January, 2011 provincial officials from ENVC, LAA and Justice met with Quebec Innu bands in Sept-Iles to discuss GRC management and conservation.

On November 22, 2011, ENVC officials met with members of Quebec Innu in HV-GB. ENVC provided a presentation on & discussed issues of GRC herd status with band members.

Discussions were held on June 28, 2012 between the Innu Nation and the Province through the ATIK committee, established under the MOU with the Innu Nation.

Bi-lateral discussions continue with a union of six Quebec Innu bands concerning sedentary and migratory caribou harvest and management in Labrador.

On September 12, 2012 a meeting was held in Montreal to discuss future management of the GRCH. This meeting was hosted by the government of Quebec, the HTFCC, and the TWPCB and represented Quebec-aboriginal consultations. Participants included the Nunavik Inuit, Makavik, Cree of Eeyou Istchee, Nunatsiavut government, NG Beneficiaries, Naskapi Nation, Ekuanitshit, Uashat mak Mani-Utenam, Nutashkuan, Innu Nation, and NunatuKavut, Torngats Wildlife Plants Co-Management Board. Information provided by other jurisdictions indicated that establishment of an effective co-management board was desirable but would take time. All parties agreed that discussions should continue regarding management of the Labrador caribou herds but significant work must be done to allay aboriginal distrust of government. Aboriginal groups requested government provide funding to establish an aboriginal round table to act as a forum for exchange and support in view of finding solutions, actions and recommendations built upon consensus and respect.

Aboriginal groups are interested in a co-management board that spans Newfoundland and Labrador and Quebec.

Consultations on Establishment of a Total Allowable Harvest (TAH)

In March 2012 a letter was sent to Aboriginal groups in Labrador and Quebec requesting consultation regarding management of the GRCH, including consideration of a TAH. Timelines for both aboriginal and government response were provided.

Information packages were sent out to all Aboriginal groups providing a summary of the GRCH status.

Aboriginal groups were requested to provide a written response, including a proposal for an appropriate TAH and information on their community’s Basic Needs Level, within 45 days of the consultation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholder</th>
<th>Date of Consultation</th>
<th>TAH Recommendation received</th>
<th>Gov’t Response Due</th>
<th>Comments</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>TWPCM</td>
<td>17 April</td>
<td>4 July</td>
<td>Draft - 17 July</td>
<td>TAH recommendation 350</td>
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<tr>
<td>NunatuKavut</td>
<td>17 April</td>
<td>8 June</td>
<td>27 June</td>
<td>No recommendation provided</td>
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<tr>
<td>NG</td>
<td>18 April</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Innu Nation</td>
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<td>Naskapi</td>
<td>7 May</td>
<td>18 June</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Government of Quebec**

- The Province of Quebec has taken management action by reducing outfitter harvest on GRC by 50% (compared to 2009 levels) for the 2011/12 season and closing the sport hunt for the 2012/2013 season.
- Quebec officials will be meeting with the Quebec Innu on October 31 – November 1, 2012 to discuss the status of woodland caribou herds and management options.
- Quebec officials indicated that they will participate in a larger multi-stakeholder working group.

**Actions Being Taken:** [ATIPPA Section 29 (1) (a)]

Prepared / Approved by: C. Doucet, K. Mehl, J. Blake
Approved by: C. Doucet, K. Mehl, J. Blake
Date: October 16, 2012
Hi John,

As requested, please find attached an updated briefing note on the status of moose and another on GRCH. Thank you to Wayne and John for their work on this,

Katherine

---

Hi. Can you each take one of these and revise per Ross's directions via track changes. Katherine – GRC, Christine MVC and Wayne Island Moose. By noon tomorrow please.

John

---

John /Sian

Please see email below from Melony. I’ve attached the most recent BNs from November 2012. Please review and update as necessary. Please do updates in track changes for my quick reference. Please revise and forward to me no later than end of day tomorrow.

Let me know whether you feel that there are any new briefing notes that may need to be considered for development.

Ross

Ross Firth
Assistant Deputy Minister – Natural Heritage

Department of Environment and Conservation
P.O. Box 2007
Hi folks,

As you are aware, the House of Assembly reopens this coming Thursday, March 7.

Please ensure that all briefing notes for the minister on relevant issues in your divisions are up to date, and please cc me on any updated versions.

Thanks,

Melony
Title: George River Caribou (GRC)

Issue: To provide an update on the status of the GRC herd and actions related to the ongoing management of the GRC.

Background:
- The GRC population has declined from an estimated 775,000 in 1993 to 385,000 animals in 2001 to 74,000 animals in 2010 and to 24,300 animals in July 2012.
- Population projections based on adult mortality of collared animals, and age and sex ratios collected during fall classification surveys, indicate that the GRC has declined further to approximately 22,000 animals by October 2012 and is now approximated at 20,000.
- The current population projection represents a 70% population decline since the 2010 census and a 97% decline since 1993.
- Population demographics indicate that the decline will continue into the near future.
  - A Fall 2012 classification indicated the percentage of calves was just 5%; the lowest ever recorded for a northern caribou population. Observations from aerial surveys and collar deployments conducted January and February 2013 confirm this very low calf recruitment.
  - Annual adult survival, measured from collared caribou, remains low at only about 69%. In order to maintain a stable or growing population, a minimum adult survival of about 90% is required.
- There is general agreement that the initial decline and the majority of the continued decline was not caused by hunting. The number of animals hunted in any given year was well within sustainable levels, typically around 2% of the population. Biologists believe the current decline was not caused by hunting. However, as the population becomes smaller, the effect of any continued hunting becomes a measurable magnified and significant contributor to the population decline. Continued hunting, when numbers are low adds to any natural mortality, leading to an even faster decline and impeding recovery efforts. The initial decline was likely caused by changes in the quality, quantity and accessibility of food as a result of herd expansion. Continued limited harvest, even in the short term, may risk extinction of this herd and will further impede and delay recovery of the herd to levels that can support resumption of sustainable hunting.

Labrador Caribou Initiative
- Per the 2011/12 budget process, the Labrador Caribou Initiative was approved for $1.9 million over 3 years. In 2011/12, $1.1 million dollars was appropriated and spent on enhanced monitoring and research of the GRC.
- In the current fiscal, $522,000 was allocated, with the majority of that having now been spent conducting the July census, fall classifications, predator collaring and monitoring and adult caribou collaring and monitoring exercises.
$382,000 is committed for ongoing work in 2013/14.

- The objectives of this initiative include increased biological monitoring and research, increased harvest monitoring, enhanced licensing administration, education and stewardship programs, the formation of stakeholder working groups, advisory and technical committees, and the development and implementation of a management plan for both the short and long-term conservation of the GRC.

- Activities carried out to date include:
  - A total of 70 collars were deployed on adult caribou and 13 collars on juvenile caribou between April 2011 to current.
  - A total of 8 collars were deployed on wolves in GRCH wintering grounds (3) and calving grounds (5); 10 collars were deployed on black bears in the calving grounds.
  - Fall classification surveys (2011 and 2012)
  - Complete photo census of the herd (July 2012)
  - 20 Mortality retrievals (cause of mortality for all retrievals can not be established)
  - Development of stewardship and education materials
  - GRC management plan in development
  - Filling of one vacant Wildlife Biologist position
  - Fuel cache deployments throughout the GRCH range
  - Health monitoring from 197 samples returned by hunters (89% return rate)

Hunters contacted by phone and information reported (65% return rate).

Results are as follows:

- Low pregnancy rate (74%); threshold for normal population is considered to be 89%
- Low infection rates for respiratory diseases
- Average fat scores (86%) based on bone marrow scores
- High incidence of besnoitia (80%; up from 15.8% in 2007-08)
- Negative for West Nile Virus
- Stress hormone analyses are pending
- Cementum aging from incisors indicate fewer older individuals in the population (highest frequency of occurrence = 3 & 4 years of age).

**Harvest Management**

- MC 2011-0610 provided direction to maintain harvest restrictions implemented for the 2010/11 hunting season including:
  - the limiting of one caribou per resident licence,
  - no transfer of licences,
  - no commercial or outfitter harvest.

- Additional conservation measures for the 2011/2012 hunting season included:
  - a reduction in the season length for resident harvest,
  - limiting license sales to government offices only,
  - mandatory herd health monitoring program where successful hunters were required to collect and submit biological samples from their animals.

- In late December, MC 2012-0518 directed ENVC to:
In collaboration with Justice and IGAAS, initiate an immediate closure on harvesting GRC by all users for a period of five years:
- Consult with Labrador Innu and the Nunatsiavut Government with respect to the above.
- In collaboration with IGAAS and the Government of Quebec to engage in a Round Table to focus on the long-term management of GRC.
- Establish land-based conservation measures, subject to consultation with IGAAS and Department of Natural Resources, for George River calving areas.

- Harvest estimates for 2010/2011 - 2012/2013 are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Harvest Group</th>
<th>2010/11 Estimated Harvest</th>
<th>2011/12 Estimated Harvest</th>
<th>2012/13 Estimated Harvest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Labrador Innu</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>430</td>
<td>224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quebec Innu in Labrador</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular Licence Holders</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>493*</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NG beneficiaries</td>
<td>975</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labrador Outfitters</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quebec Sport Harvest (Outfitters)</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GRAND TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>2425</strong></td>
<td><strong>2243</strong></td>
<td><strong>454</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*combined NG beneficiaries (12E) & regular provincial licences

- The current 2012-13 harvest is now about 2% of the total current estimated population. This, combined with the poor demographics of the herd, is not considered a sustainable harvest and will result in continued and accelerated decline of the herd.

Stakeholder Meetings and Consultations
- The Wildlife Division hosted stakeholder workshops in June 2011, November 2011, and June 2012 in Happy Valley - Goose Bay to discuss updates, options and future needs for GRC management. The information gained from these workshops continues to inform the ongoing management process for GRC.
  - Representatives from the following organizations were invited to attend:
    - Labrador Innu Nation
    - Nunatsiavut Government
    - NunatuKavut Community Council
    - Province of Newfoundland and Labrador
    - Labrador Hunting and Fishing Association
    - Newfoundland and Labrador Outfitters Association
    - Torngat Wildlife and Plants Co-Management Board (TWPCB)
- In January, 2011 provincial officials from ENVC, LAA and Justice met with Quebec Innu bands in Sept-Iles to discuss GRC management and conservation.
- On November 22, 2011, ENVC officials met with members of Quebec Innu in HV-GB. ENVC provided a presentation on & discussed issues of GRC herd status with band members.
• Discussions were held on June 28, 2012 between the Innu Nation and the Province through the Atik committee, established under the MOU with the Innu Nation.
• Bi-lateral discussions continue with a union of six Quebec Innu bands concerning sedentary and migratory caribou harvest and management in Labrador.
• On September 12, 2012 a meeting was held in Montreal to discuss future management of the GRCH. This meeting was hosted by the government of Quebec, the Hunting Trapping Fishing Coordinating Committee, and the TWPCB and represented Quebec-aboriginal consultations. Participants included Aboriginal groups from both NL and QC.
• Information provided by other jurisdictions suggested that the establishment of an effective co-management board could be successful but cautioned that such an approach would take time. All parties agreed that discussions should continue regarding management of the Ungava caribou herds but significant work must be done to allay aboriginal distrust of government. Aboriginal groups requested government provide funding to establish an aboriginal round table to act as a forum for exchange and support in view of finding solutions, actions and recommendations built upon consensus and respect.
• Aboriginal groups are interested in a co-management approach that spans Newfoundland and Labrador and Quebec.

Government of Quebec
• The Province of Quebec management actions included 50% reduction in outfitter harvest on GRC (compared to 2009 levels) for the 2011/12 season and closure of the sport hunt for the 2012/2013 season.
• Quebec officials indicated that they will participate in a larger multi-stakeholder working group.

Consultations on Establishment of a Total Allowable Harvest (TAH)
• In March 2012, in collaboration with guidance from the Department of Justice and the Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs Secretariat, a letter was sent to Aboriginal groups in Labrador and Quebec requesting consultation regarding management of the GRCH, including consideration of a TAH. Timelines for both aboriginal and government response were provided.
• Information packages were sent out to all Aboriginal groups providing a summary of the GRCH status.
• Aboriginal groups were requested to provide a written response, including a proposal for an appropriate TAH and information on their community’s Basic Needs Level, within 45 days of the consultation.

Consultation timelines for each group are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholder</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TWPCB</td>
<td>17 APR</td>
<td>4 Jul</td>
<td>TAH recommendation 350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NunatuKavat</td>
<td>17 APR</td>
<td>8 Jun</td>
<td>No recommendations provided.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• A very poor response rate from consultees was received. For all groups that provided no response, follow-up letters were mailed on 24 August requesting, once again, input on the establishment of a TAH.

**Actions Being Taken:**
- Innu Nation requested a presentation on the methods used to count caribou – 8 Feb 2013 – despite several attempts, contact with Innu Nation to arrange this meeting has been unsuccessful.
- A draft agenda for a Labrador Aboriginal meeting was prepared and forwarded to Executive (1 Mar 2013) for consideration.

**Prepared / Approved by:**
J. Pisapio, K. Mehl, J. Blake, R. Firth

Approved by:
March 5, 2013
John

As you are aware, the Province, the Federal Government and the Innu Nation signed the Agreement In Principle in November (AIP) 2011 and we are currently in the process of final agreement negotiations. The AIP includes the land selections which primarily include Labrador Innu Lands (LIL), Labrador Innu Settlement Area (LISA), Permit Free Hunting Areas (CIII), and Economic Major Development Impacts and Benefits Agreement Areas.

The land designations, as agreed to in the AIP, were selected using small scale mapping with an agreement among the parties to further refine the boundaries to natural features where possible based on larger scale mapping. Section 5.21.2 of the AIP provides for this refinement process as per the following:

5.21.2 All the boundaries shown on the maps attached as Maps 5-A,B,C,D,E-1,E-2,F-1,F-2,G-1,G-2,H-1,H-2,J,L,M,M, and O, shall be adjusted or refined for the Atlas of the Agreement, upon agreement of the Parties, so as
(a) to create final boundaries and legal descriptions for those selections that are based upon topographic features to the greatest reasonable extent, while maintaining to the greatest extent the integrity of those selections; and
(b) to attain the land quanta prescribed in 5.2.2, 5.3.1 and 5.4.2.

Currently, we are in the process of negotiating these refinements with the Innu Nation and the Federal Government. At this point we have the LIL and LISA refined using the agreed upon principles, and I am seeking your input/sign off on these refinements.

I would like to get together with you, and anyone else you feel appropriate, to review and discuss these refinements. I will be away from the office on business for the next two weeks but would like to get together very soon after that. As you can appreciate, there is a lot of work remaining on the land selections, such as writing the Legal Descriptions, which can not proceed until the boundaries are finalized.

Are you available to meet anytime in the first two weeks of April?

Please let me know your availability and I will schedule a meeting.

Thanks

Mark

Mark Bugden
Senior Analyst
Aboriginal Affairs
Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs Secretariat
4th Floor, Confederation Building, West Block
P.O. Box 8700
St. John's, NL
A1B 4J6
Telephone: (709) 729-4496
"This email and any attached files are intended for the sole use of the primary and copied addressee(s) and may contain privileged and/or confidential information. Any distribution, use or copying by any means of this information is strictly prohibited. If you received this email in error, please delete it immediately and notify the sender."
Hi Ross,

Is it OK to contact the Labrador Aboriginal groups to arrange a meeting – per our earlier discussion regarding a suggested path forward? (See attached/below)

Hi Ross,

John has asked that I forward the attached agenda to you. As requested, attached is a draft of the proposed agenda, prepared by John Pisapio and me, for a meeting between GNL and the Aboriginal groups. The agenda holds a greater amount of information than would be provided to the Aboriginal groups but at least it, for now, provides a better idea of our thought process.

I hope that we can get moving quickly on this, if possibly, having the meeting as early as next Wed but this may vary depending on availability of the larger group. My impression after speaking to Rebecca (NG), is that if we are to get somewhere with this before Aboriginal groups meet on it without us, we will need to meet the week of the 4th or 11th.

Note that page 2 of the attached document contains a list of potential invitees (at least who would be sent the invitation and # of participants/group). If we stick to 5/group than my feel is that the gov't of NL will also need to keep to this number. Depending how who is requested to go along with us, we may need to adjust this upward (eg, if participation by Stewardship and Education section or if gov't requests another department be represented). I thought that it may be beneficial to have David present given his presence on/experience with the survey methodology. Sara is very good at the typing out the full conversations but I think we can get away without counting her since she would not be there as a participant. Same with Wanda, if she comes to check on things.

Please let me know if you have any questions. Once I get the OK, I can work with John/Wanda to invite participants and organize the meeting. Thank you for your support of us moving forward with this.

FYI - Still no word from the Innu Nation – I spoke to [redacted] who did not think IN would participate in a larger Aboriginal meeting (no surprise). I also got a hold of [redacted] briefly but he had to go immediately after I identified myself – apparently he was in the middle of a conference call when I phoned.

Katherine

Katherine Mehl, Ph.D.
Labrador Aboriginal Meeting

Proposed Date: week of 4 or 6 March 2013
Location: Friendship Centre, Happy Valley-Goose Bay
Time: 10 am – 3 pm
Lunch Provided: noon

Moderator: Katherine Mehl

Purpose: Provide recent information on the status and health of the herd and discuss a path forward for caribou management.

PROPOSED AGENDA

1. Opening Remarks (John Blake?)
   - Purpose of the meeting
   - Introduction of new Sr. Biologist, Labrador

2. Recent information concerning the status of the herd (John Pisapio)
   - Brief presentation on current population estimate and results of the health monitoring
   - Health monitoring brochure

3. Gather input on observations from the land (John Pisapio)

4. Question/Answer/Discussion regarding methodology/ herd health (John Pisapio)

5. Overview of the direction provided by government (Katherine Mehl)
   - Engagement with Aboriginal Roundtable
   - Involvement of QC (government and Aboriginal groups)
   - Funding for research, monitoring, and stewardship (Caribou Initiative)
   - Habitat protection planning (range map submitted to ILUC)

6. Proposed path forward (Katherine Mehl)
   - Separate committee comprised of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal representation to meet prior to or following the Aboriginal Round Table meetings
     i. Option 1: Continuation of the Advisory Committee and how it may interact with an Aboriginal Roundtable
- Advisory committee to contain all stakeholders
- Can expand by inviting participation of QC gov't and Aboriginal groups

ii. Option 2: Separate committee consisting of select individuals from Aboriginal communities and government (QC & Labrador)
- Aboriginal and regulatory/management agencies only

**Benefits:**
- Allows for Aboriginal only dialogue while creating an atmosphere for input by management/regulatory agencies.
- Encourages and allows for dialogue among both management agencies and Aboriginal communities
- Having the meeting in conjunction with one another (Round Table) reduces travel cost of Aboriginal groups.
- Coordinates efforts and allows for interactions among QC and NL.

7. Discussion/input on the proposed and alternate path forward.

8. Summary of recommendation/input from this meeting *(Katherine Mehl)*

9. Timelines and Action items *(Katherine Mehl)*
   - Consider time required for community input and reporting back
   - Distribution of contact information for the group
PROPOSED ATTENDEES:

*Meeting invitations to be extended to the following individuals with the option to invite up to five members from each organization.

- Government of NL
  - John Blake, Director – Wildlife Division?
  - Katherine Mehl, Sr. Manager Habitat Game and Fur
  - John Pisapia, Sr. Biologist, Labrador
  - David Elliott, Biologist, Labrador
  - Brian Harvey, Director Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs

*Note taker: Sara McCarthy

- Nunatsiavut Government
  - Rebecca Willcott, Director of Renewable Resources; Phone 709 896.8582; Email Rebecca_willcott@nunatsiavut.com

- Innu Nation
  - Richard Nuna, Manager Operational Programs; Phone 497-8396 (o), (c); Email: rinuna@innu.ca

- NunatuKavut Community Council
  - George Russell, Phone 709.896.0592; Email: grussell@nunatukavut.ca
Hickey, Rhonda

From: Mehl, Katherine
Sent: Wednesday, April 10, 2013 10:09 AM
To: Miller, Kirsten; Blake, John
Subject: RE: GRCH letters from Innu Nation and Unamen Shipu

John,

If all managers/staff are required to respond to emails marked ‘Minister’ or ‘end of the day’ with immediacy, a BB will be required and I suggest we submit the requisition. If speaking notes were required on the Round Table – Melony would have had those that we prepared for the harvest ban press release. Further, if an immediate need existed, IGAAS staff could check on signed Ministerial letters via the Minister’s office.

Katherine

From: Miller, Kirsten
Sent: Wednesday, April 10, 2013 9:57 AM
To: Blake, John; Mehl, Katherine
Subject: RE: GRCH letters from Innu Nation and Unamen Shipu

Unless I am provided with a Blackberry I am unable to check emails every second of every day and I am called into A LOT of meetings. I apologize for not acting on this email in a timely manner but I also do not have the information they were looking for. I would like to request a meeting to discuss this and other issues.

Kirsten

Kirsten Miller
Senior Wildlife Biologist - Habitat Management
Wildlife Division
Department of Environment and Conservation
Government of Newfoundland and Labrador

117 Riverside Drive
Box 2007
Corner Brook, NL A2H 7S1
phone: (709) 637-2029
fax: (709) 637-2004

From: Blake, John
Sent: Wednesday, April 10, 2013 9:30 AM
To: Mehl, Katherine; Miller, Kirsten
Subject: FW: GRCH letters from Innu Nation and Unamen Shipu

You should both be aware of the exchange below.

From: Firth, Ross
Sent: Wednesday, April 10, 2013 8:20 AM
To: Blake, John
Subject: RE: GRCH letters from Innu Nation and Unamen Shipu
While I can appreciate that staff are busy, we have to ensure that emails are scanned, prioritized and addressed in a timely fashion. It reflects poorly on the department when we fail to respond to such a request.

Ross

From: Blake, John
Sent: Wednesday, April 10, 2013 8:07 AM
To: Firth, Ross
Subject: RE: GRCH letters from Innu Nation and Unamen Shipu

Ross. Kirsten was in meetings most of yesterday. I suspect, like most of us, that she simply was not in a position to open all emails as they come in. I don’t consider it uncommon to have emails unopened for 6 hours. It would seem to me that AA would know who the appropriate person is to contact to get such information.

John

From: Firth, Ross
Sent: Wednesday, April 10, 2013 8:02 AM
To: Blake, John
Subject: RE: GRCH letters from Innu Nation and Unamen Shipu

John

Please remind staff of responding in a timely manner to emails. I note that this email wasn’t actioned for more than 6 hours after it was received. Staff should be aware of trigger words such as “Minister” and “by the end of today” when prioritizing a review and response.

Ross

Ross Firth
Assistant Deputy Minister - Natural Heritage

Department of Environment and Conservation
P.O. Box 2007
117 Riverside Drive
Corner Brook, NL
A2H 7S1

Ph. (709) 637-2199
Fax (709) 637-2180

From: Blake, John
Sent: Tuesday, April 09, 2013 5:00 PM
To: Firth, Ross
Subject: FW: GRCH letters from Innu Nation and Unamen Shipu
Please see below. I've cut and pasted some key messages that were developed back in January in association with the Aboriginal Round Table. I'm not sure specifically Gioia is looking for. In respect to the copies of correspondence referenced, I have not been provided any signed copies.

Aboriginal Roundtable on George River Caribou
Key Messages
January 31, 2013

- There are many aboriginal groups that use and rely on the caribou of the George River Herd, including Innu, Naskapi, Cree, Inuit and Metis from both Quebec and Labrador. Given existing treaties and agreements, establishing a formal Co-management Board is not seen as a feasible nor expedient option. Additionally, discussions with the Government of Quebec did not favour the establishment of a co-management board.

- Instead, the Provincial Government proposes to engage aboriginals through an Aboriginal Round Table. We will work with all Aboriginal groups from Newfoundland and Labrador and Quebec in cooperation with the Government of Quebec to help lay a foundation for how to cooperatively manage the herd.

- The purpose of the roundtable is to provide updated information on the status and health of the herd, to promote discussion and to bring forward recommendations. The roundtable approach will promote dialogue among Aboriginal groups, allowing for a shared path forward toward conservation.

- The province will continue to hold meetings with the existing George River Caribou Herd Advisory Committee which includes membership of Aboriginal groups as well as non-Aboriginal stakeholder organizations such as the Labrador Hunting and Fishing Association and the NL Outfitters Association.

From: Miller, Kirsten
Sent: Tuesday, April 09, 2013 4:32 PM
To: Blake, John; Mehl, Katherine
Subject: FW: GRCH letters from Innu Nation and Unamen Shipu

I am not sure what the documents/info is that Gioia is looking for. Please advise.

Kirsten Miller
Senior Wildlife Biologist - Habitat Management
Wildlife Division
Department of Environment and Conservation
Government of Newfoundland and Labrador

117 Riverside Drive
Box 2007
Corner Brook, NL A2H 7S1
phone: (709) 637-2029
fax: (709) 637-2004
Hi Kirsten,

I have been asked to pull some speaking notes together on the status of the round table for GRCH in Labrador and Quebec for our Minister by the end of today. Do you have any current information that could help us?

Also, I am trying to track down NL's responses to a letter from Chief Prote Poker of Innu Nation on February 19, 2013 and another letter from Francois Levesque on behalf of Unamen Shipu on February 15, 2013, both letters were addressed to Minister Hederson. Do you know the status of these letters?

If they have been signed, could you please forward a copy to me and I will file over here.

Thanks very much Kirsten,
I appreciate this is a very hard time for Wildlife.

Gioia
John, Kirsten,

Below in the right hand column in blue is NL response to this Innu (#59) issue. This wording came from IGAA. Are you Ok with the wording.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>16.5.5.5 Construction Effects: Aboriginal Contemporary Traditional Land Use</th>
<th>The assessment of &quot;current&quot; use of lands and resources is somewhat irrelevant when in the current context Innu are prohibited from hunting caribou. However, Innu expect that the area will be suitable for the sustainable harvesting of caribou at some point in the relatively near future. For this reason, the assessment needs to consider the effects of the proposed Project not only on current use but also on the Innu right to hunt caribou. See comments in response to sections 7, 9, 10 and 12 related to caribou, cumulative effects and the hunting of caribou by Innu.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The response from the Proponent appears to imply that since the Innu are currently prevented from hunting caribou in the areas affected by the Project, and therefore have no current use in the form of caribou hunting, that their right to hunt caribou and the effects of the Project on that right do not need to be assessed. See additional comments regarding issue A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This is the same issue raised by Innu Nation above in Issue A.</td>
<td>Government is hopeful that the current ban on caribou hunting in Labrador will ultimately result in the return of sustainable population levels of the George River Caribou Herd. Government is committed to working with Innu Nation to ensure sustainable conservation and management of the George River Caribou Herd toward the shared goal of recovery and eventual resumption of a sustainable harvest. Government will take appropriate measures to mitigate impacts of the Project on caribou upon release of the</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
the group's activities occur outside the LSA and RSA and it is unlikely that there would be any decrease in harvesting by Innu Nation as a result of the Project.

Transmission Project EA, and has invited Innu Nation to participate in a Round Table to share information on herd status, consider management requirements and prepare a long term Caribou Management Plan.

In addition to the above, the provincial and federal governments and Innu Nation are participants on the committee for the Labrador Woodland Caribou Recovery Team, which is an initiative to support research, work with stakeholders on monitoring and follow-up on woodland caribou populations in Labrador.

Please see our responses to Comments 58, 64 and 67.

Pat Marrie
Environmental Scientist
Environmental Assessment Division
Department of Environment and Conservation
P.O. Box 8700
FYI

From: Maureen Baker [mailto:maureen.baker@iemr.org]
Sent: Saturday, June 01, 2013 11:05 AM
To: 'Maureen Baker'; gbfleur@globetrotter.net; Doug.Bliss@ec.gc.ca; Bowles, Ron; 'LCol Michael Ward'; ggoodyear@uhnl.nf.ca; jgoudie@nunatsiavut.com; 'J. Marneamskum'; colin.keiver@forces.gc.ca; 'R. Noël'; fnoonan@nf.sympatico.ca; rjuna@linnu.ca; 'G. Russell'; denis.vandal@mrmf.gouv.qc.ca; s.olpinski@makivik.org
Cc: 'Louis Lapierre'; 'Gloria Belliveau'
Subject: RE: minutes/proces-verbal 1/2 English - ppt

En- ppt

Maureen Baker
Administrative Manager
Institute for Environmental Monitoring and Research
P.O. Box 1859, Stn. B
Happy Valley-Goose Bay, NL A0P 1E0

tel 709-896-6231
fax 709-896-3076
Status and Management of the George River Caribou Herd

Wildlife Division
Department of Environment and Conservation
Newfoundland and Labrador
April 2013
Population Estimates

- GRCH increased from ~15,000 in the 1950s to near 800,000 in the late 1980s;
- 1993 pop. estimate ~ 775,000 animals

Current Population Projections for the George River Caribou Herd

Number of Caribou


74,000 (survey) 22,000 (survey)
Population Projection

* Assumes no hunting
- Large scale population cycles occurring over 40 – 70 year time scales are typical of migratory caribou herds.
- Declines are also ongoing in other herds across the North
- The severity of the highs and lows in George River caribou population fluctuations is not seen in other herds and make it particularly vulnerable. See example -

![Graph showing population size over time for George River and Other Herds](image-url)
Possible Past, Present and Future Factors in the GR Caribou Population Crash

Global Warming
- Insect Harassment
- Apparent Competition - Moose
- Food Availability (Freeze/Thaws)

Increasing Cumulative Disturbance
- Landscape Development
- Snowmobiles, ATVs, Cars, GPS

Density Dependent Effects
- Lack of Forage
- Poor Body Condition
- Poor Calf Condition
- Parasites & Disease

Predation
- Wolf/Bear Pops Have Had Abundant Prey
- Reproduction and Survival Increase
- Higher Predator Numbers
- Increased Predation Pressure

Harvesting
- No longer compensatory- additive mortality
- Change in Group Dynamics/Behaviours

Catastrophic Events
- Floods
- Drowning
- Forest/Bush Fires
- Protest Harvest

Potential Extirpation

Changes in Natural Behaviours, Reduced Foraging, High Stress & Low Reproductive Capacity
Continued Decline of George River Caribou:
• Health indicators
  ➢ Good condition (Fat ratios good)
  ➢ 80% Besnoitia
  ➢ Low pregnancy rates (74%)
• Percent large males is abnormally low (2%)
• Recruitment of calves exceedingly low
  ➢ 8 calves/100 females
  ➢ 39 calves/100 females necessary for a stable population
• Adult Mortality high (30%)
• Incisors were pulled from jawbones to conduct cementum aging
## GRC Harvest Levels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Harvest Group</th>
<th>2010/11</th>
<th>2011/12</th>
<th>2012/13</th>
<th>2013/14</th>
<th>2014/15</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Labrador Innu</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>430</td>
<td>493*</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>504**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quebec Aboriginal Groups</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>700</td>
<td></td>
<td>80</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>2243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labrador Licence Holders</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>1370*</td>
<td></td>
<td>260</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NG beneficiaries in LISA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labrador Outfitters</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quebec Sport Harvest</td>
<td>360</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>2860</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>504**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Includes 12E licence holders

** Reported harvest of ~92 Sedentary not included
Deployment of collars on wolves in GRCH wintering grounds (4) and calving grounds (6).
Deployment of 10 collars on black bears in June.
Partnership with Govt. of Quebec and Laval University.

Results:
- Low survival
- Further work planned
Assess population demographics

- Investigate cause of caribou mortality – predation, illegal harvest, disease, range condition
- Examine factors contributing to low recruitment
- Examine the relationship between besnoititia and population demographics
- Required to inform management actions
Path Forward - Planning for Recovery

- Requires continued monitoring to assess future population response
  - Demographic response - Biological indicators, i.e. calf recruitment, sex ratio
  - Determine rate of population change (e.g. stabilization or slowing of decline; short-term)
- Engagement with Aboriginal groups
- Understanding expectations about long-term response
- Even with no hunting, recovery will take many years
Population decline continues at an accelerated rate

Hunting is contributing to population decline:
  - Additive to natural mortality
  - Accelerating decline
  - Impeding the rate of recovery

Need for immediate and continued outreach

Success requires buy-in among stakeholder groups

Management plan = Population Recovery and Harvest Resumption plan

Continued monitoring/research
Thank You

It's Our Turn to Help
Forest-Dwelling (sedentary) Boreal Caribou in Labrador:
Monitoring and Research Program

Wildlife Division
Department of Environment and Conservation
Newfoundland and Labrador
• Continuous distribution

• Densities of sedentary caribou range from 0.03 to 0.06 caribou/km$^2$ in core ranges

• Caribou also occur at very low densities (< 0.005) outside these ranges in southern Labrador
Research and recovery efforts for woodland caribou are long-standing for the Province of NL and will continue into the future.

- Surveys
- Demography (survival rates, calf recruitment)
- Habitat selection, mapping, range ecology
- Synthesis and integration of data
- Predator-prey relationships
Management

In addition to on-the-ground research and monitoring activities:

- Data synthesis for COSEWIC reassessment
- Environmental assessment and mitigation of large-scale developments within sedentary caribou ranges
- National and Provincial recovery planning
- Planning for caribou areas and habitats in protected areas: the Labrador Blueprint
#Population Trends

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Trend (# yrs)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mealy Mountain (2012)</td>
<td>1604 (1409-2171)</td>
<td>Decline (at least 25%; 7 yrs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red Wine (2001)</td>
<td>97 (72 - 189)</td>
<td>Decline (87%; 20 yrs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lac Joseph (2009)</td>
<td>1285 ± 360</td>
<td>Decline (52%; 9 yrs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joir River (2012)</td>
<td>69*</td>
<td>Decline (110 in 2009)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Minimum count based on range within Labrador
Joir River Count

- 4020 km² were surveyed; first survey of complete known range extent
- Transects spaced 6 km apart (679 km)
- Only 3 groups observed
- Minimum count 69 (110 caribou were counted in 2009 with less survey effort)
- 5% calves in 2012
• Document the vital rates over time
• To evaluate potential differences among populations
• To document mortality patterns
• Model population growth based on survival and recruitment
Fieldwork

- 121 animals captured over 20 years in LJ and RWM herds, and fitted with radio-collars, which are used to determine survival rates
- 78 caribou in MM population
- Calf classifications
- Visits to mortality sites where possible
Temporal Variation in Survival RWM and LJ

Lac Joseph
- 1984-87 (St. Martin): 0.95 19.5
- 1998-2009: 0.84 5.7

Red Wine Mountain
- 1981-88 (Veitch): 0.80 4.5
- 1993-97 (Schaefer): 0.70 2.8
- 1998-2009: 0.78 4.0

- Both populations have experienced significant fluctuations in survival since the 1980s.
- Variation in survival rates has increased
Mealy Mountain Caribou are the only animals to experience an increase in survival.
Survival rates are similar to those observed historically in LJ caribou.
At what levels of adult female survival do we observe stable growth?
Extensive effort has gone into identifying high-value habitats.

The objective is to relate caribou habitat use to preferred seasonal conditions and map these throughout the range.

We have created a basemap using satellite images with habitat classes relevant to caribou (e.g. lichen rich areas for winter, wetlands for calving).
Field Examples:

- Lichen-shrub Woodland
- Dense coniferous

- Lichen Woodland
- Forest-no lichen

- Alpine
- Forest with Lichen
Characterization of lichen biomass in RWM winter range

- Quantify lichen biomass across different habitat types
- Determine high quality winter habitats based on height, coverage and biomass of reindeer lichens
- Couple with information on the snow depth and snowpack.


Winter Ranges

- Caribou spend almost 5 months a year on winter ranges
- They must cope with deep snow and extreme cold
- Select lichen rich areas, reduce energetic expenditure; Employ adaptive behaviours to forage.
- Only 12% of LJ and 8% of RWM ranges composed of ideal winter habitats
Movement rates reflect behaviour.
Understanding movement assists in mitigation and monitoring.
Trans Labrador Highway Impact Assessment

- To assess the impacts of the TLH 3 on the movements, distribution and range use of Mealy Mountain caribou
- Increased traffic can result in avoidance of roads, creating effective barriers
- Data indicates that not all animals in the herd will be affected equally
Summary

- Long-term monitoring (1982-current)
- All herds appear in decline
- Demography
  - Increased variation in adult Survival
  - Adult survival is most important to pop. growth
- Habitat selection (LJ & RWM)
- Recovery planning
- Mitigation
Subpopulation Structure

Newfoundland Labrador

- Organization of population based on spatial affinities to a given part of the range
- Population organization likely arises from behaviour of females
MMC Survey Strata

- High (2 km; 48% sampling intensity)
- Moderate (4 km; 25% sampling intensity)
- Medium-low (6 km; 18% SI)
- Low (24 km; 4% Sampling intensity)
Spatial Scales - sampling use and random locations

Range level
- Used and Random (1 per 2 km²)

Home Range
- ‘Used’ seasonal location paired with random location from within animal HR

Fine Scale Movement
- Each ‘use’ location is paired with 5 random locations within a movement buffer

Scales relate to characteristics of patterns in movement for the RWM
ATIPPA Section 29 (1) (a)

Katherine

From: Pardy, Shelley
Sent: Monday, September 09, 2013 9:02 AM
To: Mehl, Katherine; Blake, John
Subject: RE: Provincial permits

ATIPPA Section 29 (1) (a)

Shelley Pardy Moores
Senior Manager-Endangered Species and Biodiversity
Wildlife Division

Ph: 709 637 2018
Fax: 709 637 2080

From: Mehl, Katherine
Sent: Sunday, September 08, 2013 11:06 PM
To: Pardy, Shelley; Blake, John
Subject: RE: Provincial permits

ATIPPA Section 29 (1) (a)

Katherine

From: Pardy, Shelley
Sent: Sun 9/8/2013 9:24 PM
To: Blake, John; Mehl, Katherine
Subject: FW: Provincial permits

John and Katherine,
We can discuss after our Monday morning meeting if you both have time. I think they need locations and permits ASAP.

Shelley Pardy Moores  
Senior Manager-Endangered Species and Biodiversity 
Wildlife Division  
117 Riverside Drive/ Box 2007  
Corner Brook, Nl  
A2H 751  
Phone: 709 637 2018  
Fax 709 637 2080  

From: David Bird, Prof.
Sent: Sat 07/09/2013 3:00 PM
To: Pardy, Shelley
Cc: ATIPPA Section 40 (1)
Subject: Provincial permits

Shelley, please see the attached proposal. I am sending you a more visual one in a separate email. To be honest, we have not overflown any caribou as yet. Keep in mind that we are flying 1200 feet overhead and there is absolutely no disturbance to caribou or any other wildlife. To date, we have merely been testing the UAV's ability to fly beyond visual range and to detect fake caribou in the form of wooden sheets. However, it would be great if we did have your permission to fly high over any telemetered caribou within our range of 40 km from the PTA while we are here.

I am somewhat surprised that your office was not aware of our plans from someone in IEMR as it seems to be a small world among wildlife organizations working in Newfoundland/Labrador. If a permit was required from your office, I just assumed that we would work under one from IEMR. Nevertheless, as a law-abiding biologist, I am embarrassed by this development and I hope that you will accept my apology for not notifying you. Ultimately as the Principal Investigator, I must take the blame for the oversight.

If your office cannot give us permission at such late notice, I will fully understand. In any case I will ensure that you and other Wildlife Division officials you deem appropriate will receive a copy of our report.

I hope you had a restful weekend. Cheers

Sent from my iPhone

Hi Shelley. To be honest, I was looking for locations of caribou so that we might be able to fly over appropriate caribou habitat to gain images from a UAV for analysis. We are actually flying at an altitude of 1500 feet and any wildlife below...
do not even know we are there. Moreover, we are placing down boards to simulate caribou for a detectability analysis. We are doing this research for IEMR. The idea is to avoid disturbing any wildlife. They did not inform me that I would have need of a separate permit. I am not sure if I have a copy of the proposal in my laptop computer with me. Could we discuss this issue with IEMR on Monday? Hope you get this today. Cheers.

From: "Brandt, Rolf"  
Date: 7 September, 2013 1:37:51 PM ADT  
To: "David Bird, Prof."  
Subject: FW: Caribou project: start thinking about booking flights

I think you used this one to apply for some of your grant.

From: David Bird, Prof.  
Sent: Thursday, March 15, 2012 11:50  
To:  
Cc:  
Subject: RE: Caribou project: start thinking about booking flights

Hi to all. Please find attached the proposal concerning the UAV/caribou research beginning in June this year. With this email, I am officially submitting it to Louis Lapierre of the Institute of Environmental Monitoring and Research for consideration for funding. While I am copying [redacted] of Transport Canada on this email, [redacted] is planning to coordinate our test flights with those of a visiting military team from Germany who will be testing their own UAV at much higher altitudes in the same airspace and at the same time. Thus, [redacted] expects to piggyback our research on the German SFOC. I am in the throes of amending my Animal Use Protocol to include the caribou research as well. So, if IEMR is happy with the proposal and sends me a cheque, I will have it deposited into a McGill University account. It is my understanding that the Kenneth Molson Foundation will be sending me a cheque sometime this spring as well. Once we get a final green light from the Wing Commander at CFB Goose Bay, we can begin the process of booking flights and finalizing our plans. Cheers.

David M. Bird, Ph.D.  
Professor of Wildlife Biology  
Department of Natural Resource Sciences

ATIPPA Section 40 (1)
Thanks John.

Brian RM. Harvey
Director - Aboriginal Affairs
Government of Newfoundland and Labrador
(709) 729-1487 (w)
(709) 693-1612 (c)

I've not seen anything from Innu Nation in response to our request for consultation.

John

John, could you please confirm?

Brian RM. Harvey
Director - Aboriginal Affairs
Intergovernmental & Aboriginal Affairs Secretariat
Government of Newfoundland and Labrador
(709) 729-1487 (w)
(709) 693-1612 (c)

I'm in the process of reviewing some prosecution files involving Innu hunters.
Hickey, Rhonda

From: Firth, Ross
Sent: Friday, December 20, 2013 3:32 PM
To: Blake, John
Subject: FW: Media Inquiry - Innu Nation release - ensure the survival of the George River Caribou herd

fyi

Ross Firth
Assistant Deputy Minister - Natural Heritage

Department of Environment and Conservation
P.O. Box 2007
117 Riverside Drive
Corner Brook, NL
A2H 7S1

Ph. (709) 637-2199
Fax (709) 637-2180

From: Thomas, Deborah
Sent: Friday, December 20, 2013 10:21 AM
To: Firth, Ross
Cc: Chippett, Jamie
Subject: FW: Media Inquiry - Innu Nation release - ensure the survival of the George River Caribou herd

Ross, could we draft a statement?

From: Coffey, Tina
Sent: Friday, December 20, 2013 10:19 AM
To: Chippett, Jamie; Shea, Joan; Piercey, Susan; Thomas, Deborah; Firth, Ross
Subject: Media Inquiry - Innu Nation release - ensure the survival of the George River Caribou herd

Bailey White of CBC Radio, Goose Bay, 896-2911 is looking for a response to the following released by Innu Nation. An interview is scheduled with Grand Chief Prote Poker for 12 o’clock. She would like a response before 3pm today.

Thanks
Tina

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Innu Nation Harvest Restrictions Continued

(Natuashish) Innu Nation will continue to limit the harvest of caribou by Innu Nation members and will continue to work collaboratively with Aboriginal communities throughout the region to ensure the survival of the George River Caribou Herd for future generations.

“We are demonstrating our continued commitment to caribou conservation in ways that respect our culture and are consistent with our rights.”, stated Grand Chief Prote Poker.

The Innu Nation guidelines restrict the harvest to 150 male animals to each of both Sheshatshiu and Natuashish and only in the hunting zone known as George River Labrador Caribou Hunting Zone. The harvest will be allocated on a priority basis to elders and for communal mukushan feasts. No harvesting will take place during the period May - August. These limitations have been in place since February 2013.

19 December 2013
Periodic declines in the George River Caribou Herd occur every 40-60 years. Biologists and Innu elders are in agreement that hunting is not the cause of the herd’s decline, and that the harvest of male caribou will not adversely affect the recovery of the herd.

Innu Nation is working with other Aboriginal groups in both Quebec and Labrador to bring forward community-based caribou conservation plans that limit harvesting in ways that respect Aboriginal rights, while addressing the full range of issues—including habitat loss and industrial activity—that are known to have negative impacts on caribou.

“Our work with other Innu, Inuit and Cree communities in Quebec who also harvest from the George River Herd is an ongoing success. The solutions to ensure the survival of the George River Herd will come from the people who are most connected to the caribou,” stated Innu Nation Grand Chief Poker.

Innu Nation Guardians will closely monitor the Innu harvest and share information with other Aboriginal communities concerning the status of the herd.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Grand Chief Prote Poker 709-478-8755
Deputy Grand Chief Jeremy Andrew 709-497-8398

Hi Tina,
I’ve attached the press release below.
I’ve scheduled an interview with Grand Chief Poker for 12 o’clock. I need to have something up for the 3:00 news so if it’s possible to talk to someone before then it would be greatly appreciated.
Thanks so much!!

Bailey