July 7, 2017

Dear Applicant:

Re: Your request for access to information under Part II of the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act FA/33/2017

On June 8, 2017, The Department of Fisheries and Land Resources (FLR) received your request for access to the following records:

"Any briefing notes, and drafts of briefing notes, dated or likely to be dated between January 1, 2012, and December 31, 2015, regarding the George River caribou herd."

I am pleased to inform you that a decision has been made by the Deputy Minister of FLR to provide partial access to the requested information. In particular, access to specific information contained within the records, has been refused according to Section 29 (1) (a) Policy Advice or Recommendations and Section 40 (1) Disclosure harmful to personal privacy. As required by 8 (2) of the Act, we have severed information that is unable to be disclosed and have provided you with as much information as possible. The appropriate copies have been enclosed.

Please be advised that you may appeal this decision and ask the Information and Privacy Commissioner to review the decision to provide partial access to the requested information, as set out in section 42 of the Act (a copy of this section of the Act has been enclosed for your reference). 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. Your appeal should identify your concerns with the request and why you are submitting the appeal.

The appeal may be addressed to the Information and Privacy Commissioner 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 (a copy of this section of the Act has been enclosed for your reference).
Please be advised that responsive records will be published following a 72 hour period after the response 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 responsive records posted to the Office of Public Engagement's 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;

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;

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.

Right of access

8. (1) A person who makes a request under section 11 has a right of access to a record in the custody or under the control of a public body, including a record containing personal information about the applicant.

(2) The right of access to a record does not extend to information excepted from disclosure under this Act, but if it is reasonable to sever that information from the record, an applicant has a right of access to the remainder of the record.

(3) The right of access to a record may be subject to the payment, under section 25, of the costs of reproduction, shipping and locating a record.

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).
Information Note
Department of Environment and Conservation

Title: Labrador Innu Nation

Issue: Draft MOU on the George River caribou herd (GRCH)

Background:

- In October, 2010 consultation meetings were held in St. John’s and Happy Valley-Goose Bay with George River caribou stakeholders. The meeting between Innu Nation representatives (including Grand Chief Joseph Riche) and provincial government officials took place in St. John’s on October 12. Minister Johnson chaired this meeting.
- In a letter to Minister Johnson dated October 25, 2010 Grand Chief Riche proposed the establishment of a “joint management committee” between the Innu Nation and the Province on caribou management.
- Chief Riche concluded his letter by requesting a meeting between Innu Nation officials and the Province to negotiate a caribou management agreement.
- In November, 2010 the province received a draft Innu Nation caribou management proposal.
- In a December, 2010 letter to Grand Chief Riche, Minister Pottle (on behalf of Minister Johnson) wrote in support of the Innu Nation’s proposal and stated that the “Province is prepared to provide sufficient and timely resources to engage in dialogue with the Innu Nation with the objective of an agreed conservation proposal to take effect this hunting season.”
- Furthermore, a detailed provincial response document accompanying the letter stated that “The proposed budget and request to the provincial government in the amount of $135,000 to fund the Innu Guardian program appears reasonable” and that the province supports the principle of a joint management committee on an interim basis to accomplish immediate objectives of caribou conservation during the 2010/11 winter season.
- An initial Labrador caribou MOU was drafted by the Province and forwarded to the Innu Nation in early January, 2011.
- The purpose of the Agreement was:
  - To facilitate effective cooperation between the Parties regarding the conservation of the Herds;
  - To provide for the effective conservation of the GRCH;
  - To conserve sedentary woodland caribou, including the Red Wine caribou herd (RWCH), in accordance with the Endangered Species Act and any Recovery Plans developed under that Act;
  - To promote the participation and the development of the Innu Nation in effective and sustainable wildlife management practices.
- Since the initial draft MOU was distributed, a series of iterations have been developed and circulated for review and response. The most recent of these was received from the Innu Nation on March 6, 2012.
Concurrently, Justice has drafted an MOU with the following six Quebec Innu Bands respected the conservation of George River caribou: Innu Takuiakan Uashat Mak Mani-Utenam (ITUM) First Nation, Unamen Shipu First Nation, Pakua Shipi First Nation, Nutakuan First Nation, Ekuantshit First Nation, Matimekush – Lac John First Nation. This MOU remains unsigned.

**Actions Being Taken:**

- Content highlights of the current draft MOU include:
  
  1. Termination date of September 1, 2012.
  
  2. The MOU commits the province to paying the Innu Nation $118,000 for the services of four Innu Wildlife Guardians for the period January – April 2011. NR has indicated that they are willing to provide funding of up to $100,000 for this purpose with Justice providing the remainder. Four wildlife guardians were employed by the Innu Nation in the winter of 2010/11 for the purpose of monitoring harvest, communicating conservation messages, directing harvest to open zones, facilitating and delivering community engagement. The Innu Nation employed wildlife guardians in good faith and with the reasonable expectation that the province would provide financial support. The Innu Nation has submitted invoices totaling $118,000 to cover costs associated with the employment of the wildlife guardians.
  
  3. The MOU commits the province to pay the Innu Nation a sum of up to $118,000 for activities carried out by the Innu Nation to further the objectives of the MOU for the period January 1, 2012 to September 1, 2012. Activities carried out by the Innu Nation include the employment of four Wildlife Guardians. Funding to cover these costs will come from **need to confirm**.
  
  4. Formation of an Atik (Caribou) Committee comprised of representatives from the Innu Nation and the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. The Committee will advise the Parties with respect to issues concerning the management and conservation of the both the GRCH and sedentary herds. This may include the identification of a TAH and an Innu basic needs level.
  
  5. Endorsement by the Province for the Innu to hunt George River caribou in any hunting zone whether the zone has been declared, at the time, as being open by the Province without having to apply for, pay for or carry a provincial license. The Innu Nation agrees to direct the harvesting activities of caribou by Innu to caribou hunting zones and will make best efforts to discourage members from hunting outside of the caribou hunting zones.
6. The Innu Nation will provide the Province with an annual report detailing the number of caribou harvested by the Innu Nation, location of harvest and, where possible, age and sex ratio of harvested animals.

- Ministerial direction is sought on the contents of the MOU.

Prepared / Approved by: R. Firth,
Approved by: 
Date: March 12, 2012
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

- [Redacted] 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>300</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>
</tr>
<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-Îles 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.
• Bilateral 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 Beyou Istcheec, Nunatsiavut government, NG Beneficiaries, Naskapi Nation, Ekanatshit, Uashat mak Mani-Utenam, Nutashkuan, Innu Nation, and NunatuKavut, Tomgats 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>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TWPCM</td>
<td>17 April</td>
<td>4 July</td>
<td>Draft - 17 July</td>
<td>TAH recommendation 350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NunatuKavut</td>
<td>17 April</td>
<td>8 June</td>
<td>27 June</td>
<td>No recommendation provided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NG</td>
<td>18 April</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innu Nation</td>
<td>30 April</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naskapi</td>
<td>7 May</td>
<td>18 June</td>
<td>Draft – 4 July</td>
<td>TAH recommendation 1,727 for Naskapi Nation only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ekuanitshit</td>
<td>8 May</td>
<td>22 May</td>
<td>Draft – 19 June</td>
<td>No recommendation provided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natashaquon</td>
<td>8 May</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITUM</td>
<td>8 May</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unamen Shipu</td>
<td>8 May</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakua Shipu</td>
<td>8 May</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matimekush – Lac John</td>
<td>8 May</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</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 Sec 29(1)(a)

Prepared / Approved by: C. Doucet, K. Mehl, J. Blake
Approved by: October 16, 2012
Title: Caribou management, research and monitoring

Issue: Provincial funding being sought

Background and Status:

George River Caribou
- The population of the George River Caribou Herd (GRC) is estimated at about 20,000 animals, based on the latest data from the fall of 2012. The data shows that the herd is still in decline.
- GRC has been a staple in the diet and food security for Labrador Inuit. Action needs to be taken to ensure that GRC will continue to be there for our food security for future generations.
- In December 2012 the Nunatsiavut Government (NG) requested that the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador:
  - immediately impose a ban on all non-aboriginal harvesting of GRC;
  - accelerate the establishment of a GRC management plan in partnership with aboriginal groups; and
  - increase the level of research on the GRC in cooperation with other partners.
- Also, in December 2012, the NG recommended that Labrador Inuit immediately suspend harvesting of GRC for a period of two years.
- NG also requested that all other Aboriginal groups suspend harvesting for two years.
- The Nunatsiavut Government urged both the governments of Quebec and Newfoundland and Labrador to expedite the establishment of a George River caribou management plan.
- The NG recognized that it is critical that all of the aboriginal groups on the Ungava Peninsula have input and responsibility in the management decisions for the GRC. The NG along with the Innu Nation organized a meeting of all of the leaders of these groups to discuss the GRC. The initial meeting took place in Kuujjuaq, QC in January 2013. A follow-up meeting was held in Uashat, QC in April 2013.
- At the aboriginal leaders meeting in Uashat, an Aboriginal Round Table was officially established to respond to the decline of the migratory caribou and will strive to develop a conservation and management system in a way that respects all cultures and traditions. The Round Table is a strong step towards aboriginal leadership and responsibility towards the preservation of the land and animals on which these aboriginal groups depend.
- The Round Table has two Co-chairs: Sarah Leo, (President of Nunatsiavut), and Adamie Deslisle Alaku (Makivik Corporation), as well as an executive committee composed of representatives from each aboriginal group, namely Réal McKenzie (Innu of the Québec region), George Guanish (Naskapi Nation of Kawawachikamach), Todd Russell (NunatuKavut Community Council), Prote Poker (Innu Nation) and Isaac Masty (Grand Council of the Crees of Eeyou Istchee/Cree Regional Authority (GCCEI/CRA)).
- A technical committee has also been assigned to support the activities of the Round Table and initiate the development of a conservation plan for the Ungava caribou herds, including a process for recommending the sustainable sustenance and cultural allocation of caribou while respecting the sovereignty and independence of each member nation.
- The NG feels that significant movement has been made by the aboriginal groups in understanding the deep concern for the health of the GRC. The aboriginal groups are displeased with the five-year moratorium put in place by NL and feel that the aboriginal harvest should be left up to the aboriginal groups themselves to manage.
The success of any management plan for the caribou is dependent on full participation and agreement from all of the aboriginal groups. It is critical that this Aboriginal Round Table process continue.

The next meeting of the Round Table is scheduled for Nain in September 2013.

On January 28, 2013 as a result of the continuing decline of the George River caribou herd, the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador announced an immediate ban on all caribou hunting in Labrador for conservation purposes for a period of five years, with a review after two years.

The Province commended the position of the Nunatsiavut Government to recommend to its beneficiaries that no hunting occur this year for conservation purposes. The Province committed to continued dialogue with all Aboriginal groups in Labrador as it takes necessary action to protect the George River caribou herd.

**Action being taken:**

- The Province remains committed to continued funding of the Labrador Caribou Initiative for 2013-14 with $382,000 identified for increased biological monitoring and research.
- The Province remains committed to working with the NG to ensure the long term sustainability of the GRCH.
- The Province is aware of its obligations under the Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement and our responsibility for consultation with regards to Aboriginal groups in Labrador.

### Torngat Mountains Caribou

- The Torngat Mountains Caribou Herd (TMC) is a distinct herd whose range is in northern Quebec and northern Nunatsiavut north of Nain. Very little science has been conducted on this herd. Labrador Inuit have harvested less than 75 caribou from this herd this year.
- Traditional knowledge and limited western science is showing that the population of this herd is low. The NG, Torngat Secretariat, NL, QC, Parks Canada and Makivik Corporation met recently to discuss the need for a population survey to be completed as soon as possible.
- A traditional knowledge component will be critical in planning a survey of and completing a management plan as the TMC has unique characteristics. The NG is leading this traditional knowledge component and has begun plans with Makivik, Parks Canada and the Torngat Secretariat to get this traditional knowledge work completed.
- NL has a responsibility to work with all stakeholders to ensure adequate science is completed to make sound management decisions to ensure the long term sustainability of TMC.
- On May 1, 2013 a teleconference was held with officials that included the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador and the Nunatsiavut Government to discuss actions to enhance the current biological knowledge of the Torngat Mountain caribou herd.

**Action being taken:**

- The Province remains committed to working with the NG and other partners to enhance our knowledge and understanding of the biology and population status of the Torngat Mountain caribou herd.

**Date:** May 11, 2013
Issue: The QC-NL bi-lateral relationship in regard to the management of the George River Caribou Herd (GRCH).

Background and Current Status:
- The GRCH are a migratory species that frequently travel between QC and Labrador and have a widespread distribution over a 700,000 km² range extending from Ungava Bay in the northwest to the Labrador coast in the east.

- The GRCH population has declined from an estimated 775,000 animals in 1993 to a current estimate of just under 20,000 animals. The current projection represents a 97% decline since 1993. Current information suggests the decline will continue.

- ENVC notes there is general agreement that the initial decline was not caused by hunting, rather it is more likely it was caused by changes in the quality, quantity and accessibility of food as a result of herd expansion during the 1980’s and 1990’s. ENVC further advises that as the population becomes smaller, the effect of continued hunting becomes a magnified contributor to population decline. Continued hunting when numbers are low, in addition to natural mortality, leads to an even faster decline. A limited harvest, even in the short term, may contribute to the demise of this herd given current population levels.

- To address the decline in 2011/2012, NL imposed harvest restrictions for the GRCH which included limiting each resident to one caribou licence, no transfer of licences, no commercial or outfitter harvest, a reduced season length for resident harvest, selling licenses through government offices only, and introducing a mandatory herd health monitoring program where hunters were required to submit biological samples from their animals.

- For the 2011/2012 hunting season, QC implemented a 50% reduction in outfitter harvest on GRCH (compared to 2009 levels) with a closure of the sport hunt for the 2012/2013 season. In addition to the harvesting restrictions, the QC government hosted a multi-stakeholder meeting in September 2012 to discuss declining caribou herds.

- On 28 January 2013, NL announced an immediate closure on harvesting animals from GRCH by all users for five years, with a review after two years. On February 5, 2013, Minister Hedderson wrote to Minister Blanchet, QC’s Minister of Sustainable Development, Wildlife and Parks, informing him of the ban and noting NL and QC’s collaboration and information sharing on the GRCH in the past while encouraging such collaboration to continue. Minister Blanchet replied on April 8, 2013 noting that QC was in process of engaging stakeholders on the George River Herd and Leaf River Herd (located wholly in QC). The letter also indicated QC would collaborate with NL to work towards restoring the GRCH and supported the continuation of joint collaborative efforts to that end.

- In December 2012, prior to the announcement of the NL hunting ban on the GRCH, the Nunatsiavut Government recommended that all Labrador Inuit suspend hunting of GRCH for two years. The Nunatsiavut Government also requested that all other Aboriginal groups suspend hunting for two years.

- ATIPPA Sec 29(1)(a)

- Nevertheless, in February 2013, Grand Chief Poker sent a letter to Minister Hedderson outlining the Innu Nation’s conservation efforts including limiting the harvest to 150 male caribou for elders and community feasts. The Grand
Chief also noted there would be reductions in both area and season in which harvesting would occur while discussions with other Aboriginal organizations to establish an Aboriginal conservation strategy for the GRCH would continue. The Nunatukavut Community Council recommended their members not hunt caribou for a minimum of one year. \textit{ATIPPA Sec 29(1)(a)}

\textbf{Aboriginal led coordination}

- During the multi-stakeholder meeting hosted by the QC government in September 2012, Aboriginal groups held a separate meeting to discuss management of GRCH, the Leaf River herd, and the Torngat Mountain herd. Aboriginal groups from NL and QC requested both governments 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. QC received a similar request, and the April 8, 2013 letter from Minister Blanchet noted that QC was making a “financial contribution” but did not provide details.

- On May 31, 2013 there was an additional funding request from Aboriginal groups to support the aboriginal led consultation process. In response, NL noted existing commitments toward the Caribou Initiative (\$1.9M over three years; 2011-2012) and additional co-funded caribou research and monitoring (along with NG, the Federal Government, and the TWPCB under the LILCA). NL nevertheless agreed to consider funding on a case-by-case basis as resources permit and requested a detailed proposal on why the funding was needed and incurred expenses to which funding would be applied.

- In April 2013 Aboriginal groups from Labrador and QC formed an Aboriginal Round Table over concerns of the steep decline of the GRCH and increased concern over the status of the Leaf River and Torngat Mountains caribou herds. This meeting was preceded by a meeting of the same Aboriginal groups in January 2013. The next Aboriginal Round Table meeting is scheduled for September 2013. Representatives from the NL and QC governments have not been invited to attend any of the Aboriginal Round Table meetings.

- On September 4, 2013 NL and QC officials agreed to draft a letter to the co-Presidents of the Aboriginal Round Table, which will be signed jointly by DMs from NL and QC. The letter will include a draft Table of Contents and workplan for a Management Plan for the GRCH which, once finalized, will be adopted by each of NL and QC for implementation, as appropriate, within their respective jurisdictions.

- It is anticipated the preparation of the Management Plan, including Aboriginal consultation throughout its preparation and on the final draft Plan, will be a multi-year process. The Management Plan will also incorporate Aboriginal consultations throughout its development and will propose the formation of a “Liaison Committee,” comprised of 50% government officials and 50% Aboriginal representatives. This Liaison Committee may represent an opportunity for officials from NL and QC to work with the Aboriginal Round Table, which to date has not engaged either government nor revealed the substance of its deliberations, workplan or initiatives.

\textbf{Government led coordination}

- Since 2011, in an effort to address concerns related to the GRCH population’s rapid decline, officials from ENVC, IGAA and JUS have met with QC Innu bands in Sept-Îles and Happy Valley-Goose Bay. Bilateral discussions took place with the QC Innu bands concerning sedentary and migratory caribou harvest and management in Labrador. ENVC, in collaboration with IGAA and the Government of QC,
also engaged in a workshop in 2011 to provide an update on the status of the GRCH and receive input from various user groups regarding future management options for the herd.

- NL and QC officials have regularly consulted each other on management activities over the years through an informal relationship between both provinces with discussions at a technical and administrative level. While a formal co-management relationship does not currently exist for NL and QC on the GRCH, ongoing engagement efforts will continue under an informal process. This relationship has worked well to date in allowing both jurisdictions to share data and engage in joint research. However, hunting seasons in QC and NL do not neatly overlap given different opening and closing dates, as well as other variations, which add an additional challenge when coordinating decisions.

- ENVC advises that future discussions and activities will include a focus on population monitoring and collaboration with QC, as well as the identification of additional partners as part of ongoing research work. Officials from both NL and QC are scheduled to meet in September 2013 to discuss any joint working opportunities.

Prepared by / Edited & Reviewed by / Approved by: Herb Simms in consultation with ENVC / John Cowan and Brian Harvey / Sean Dutton
Ministerial Approval: Minister Collins
September 5, 2013
Information Note
Department of Environment and Conservation

Date: October 15, 2013

Title: Labrador Caribou Initiative Update

Issue: Provide a program update including summary of actions taken, worked planned for 2013-14 fiscal, and projected funding requirements for summer 2014 census as a specified new funding ask for fiscal 2014-15.

Background:
- In 2011, 1.1 million dollars appropriated for three years
- Remaining funds for 2013-14; $ 382,000
- Major project components for the current fiscal year (2013-14) include:
  - Ongoing monitoring and research of George River caribou (GRC):
    - Fall classification
    - Spring calving grounds survey
    - Collaring of adult and juvenile caribou
    - Mortality investigation and collar retrievals
  - Predator collaring and research
  - Fuel purchase and shipment in support of summer census (2014)
  - Health monitoring program (caribou)
  - Preparation of a long term Management Plan for George River Caribou
  - Completion of the Labrador Caribou Initiative Year II Report
  - Stewardship projects and community consultations

Summary of Monitoring Under the Initiative to Date:
- 97 collars deployed by NL
  - 49 collars currently active
- 38 mortality investigations of collared caribou from April 1st to present
- Adult Survival Estimates:
  - Survival from June 1st 2011 to May 31st 2012:
    - Females-75% (n=136, IC 95% 67-82%)
    - Males-61% (n=23, IC 95% 40-78%)
    - Yearlings-46% (n=13, IC 95% 22-72%)
  - Survival from June 1st 2012 to May 31st 2013:
    - Females-80% (n=121, IC 95% 72-86%)
    - Males-81% (n=21, IC 95% 59-93%)
    - Yearlings-58% (n=12, IC 95% 31-82%)
  - Survival from June 1st 2013 to May 31st 2014:
    - Results pending
- Annual calving ground and fall classification surveys completed for each year within the initiative.
- 25 collars deployed on black bears and wolves:
o Health monitoring program: has provided results on harvest statistics, pregnancy rate, body condition, age distribution, parasite load and prevalence of disease. Results were distributed to participating hunters and the general public.

George River Caribou Management Plan
o Scoping document and Table of Contents for GRCH Management Plan prepared (August 2013)
o Interprovincial discussions between NL and QC regarding management planning (Sept 2013). Shared geography and interprovincial movement of the herd requires consistent management positions from the provinces. General agreement on suggested technical components of Management Plan(s) (e.g. monitoring requirements). Further discussions between NL and QC on technical components and table of contents ongoing.
o Ungava Peninsula Caribou Aboriginal Round Table (UPCART) commences (Sept 2013)

WD / NL preparing plan to engage Aboriginal groups in participating in the development and writing of the Management Plan (or Conservation Strategy).
  o Consideration of establishing a “liaison” committee comprised of Government representatives from NL and QC and the Aboriginal Roundtable to further develop the Management Plan.
  o Long-term Management Plans (or Strategies) are used by other jurisdictions that manage for caribou.
  o Wildlife Division is positioned both legislatively and in terms scientific findings to offer a constructive and cooperative path forward. Preparing a draft Management Plan framework and inviting the participation of others will be an important step.
  o It is recommended that NL and QC collaborate to draft a long-term management plan for presentation to Aboriginal groups for input and consideration, with the final management plan to be co-authored by both governments and Aboriginal groups.
  o In general, it will be most efficient and effective for all groups to review, comment and participate in the completion of a Draft management plan prepared by WD, rather than duplicating efforts by preparing plans individually. Presently, the UPCART is endeavoring to develop its own Management Plan. The Torngat Wildlife Plants and Co-management Secretariat is also undertaking to prepare a Management Plan.
  o In order to increase communication and efficiency of efforts, it is recommended that the intent of government drafting and subsequently co-authoring the document be communicated to all Aboriginal groups. Delay in doing so will likely result in duplication of efforts and act to impede forward progress in clarifying roles and responsibilities, and management actions.
2014 Summer Photo Census

- Required as key component of Labrador Caribou Initiative and the Management Plan process to determine current population estimate and to assist in establishment of future population target thresholds for resumption of legal harvest.
- Also required to support NL commitment to conduct an assessment of the harvest prohibition after two years (2015).
- Census requires ongoing deployment of caribou collars (in addition to the 39 active collars) to meet sample size requirements needed to generate valid results. Between NL and QC an additional 40 collars are to be deployed in winter 2013 – 14. to meet this requirement. A collar sample size of approximately 80 caribou is deemed sufficient to represent the current population level of approximately 20,000 animals.

Total Resource Requirements for 2014 Summer Photo Census
(2014-15 items are encumbered funds, 2014-15 items new required new funds)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Fiscal Year</th>
<th>Estimated Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fuel purchase and shipment pre-deployments(NL)</td>
<td>2013-14</td>
<td>20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collar purchase (NL)</td>
<td>2013-14</td>
<td>30,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-census collar deployments (NL &amp; QC)</td>
<td>2013-14</td>
<td>100,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fuel purchase and shipment pre-census(NL&amp; QC)</td>
<td>2014-15</td>
<td>60,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Census helicopter charter(NL &amp; QC)</td>
<td>2014-15</td>
<td>100,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td></td>
<td>310,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Assumed 50/50 cost sharing between NL and QC for 2014 – 15 fiscal

Total Additional 2014-15 Funding Ask for NL contribution to Census 80,000

(IEMR contributed 20% in 2012 Census)
Summary of 2013 – 14 budget expenditures (or encumbered) to date

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Cost to Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>June Calving Ground Work</td>
<td>70,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring/Hebron Predator Work</td>
<td>20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Torngat Reconnaissance Flight contribution</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argos Data Fees for the Year</td>
<td>50,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall Classifications</td>
<td>80,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intervale and biological samples analysis</td>
<td>6,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fuel Purchase for the Year</td>
<td>25,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fuel Shipping</td>
<td>6,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL SPENT or ALLOCATED</strong></td>
<td>267,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL REMAINING</strong></td>
<td>115,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Remaining must cover the fall classification(2013), caribou and wolf collar deployment (winter 2013 – 2014), stewardship initiatives and any funding required to support proposed liaison committee.

Need for Continued Funding for the Labrador Caribou Initiative

- Under the current hunting ban, funding must continue to ensure GRC demographics are monitored to the extent necessary for evaluation of the population level response to alleviated hunting pressure. Collars to be deployed in 2014 in preparation for census will be active and available for monitoring for three years.
- Additional monitoring will also be instrumental in estimating (through the collaborative Management Plan process) the amount of time it will take for the herd to reach levels that can sustain resumed and sustainable harvest.
- This monitoring will also direct the type of harvest strategy to be employed.
Environment and Conservation
November 13, 2013

George River Caribou Herd Slips toward Historic Population Low

The findings of recent research and monitoring activities conducted jointly by scientists from the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador and the Province of Quebec confirm that the George River caribou population continues to decline towards a historically low level. A caribou classification survey, which documents the ratio of females, males and calves in the herd, was conducted at the end of October, 2013. The results showed less than 6.8% calves in the population. In order for a caribou population to grow or remain stable, the percentage of calves in the fall generally needs to be at least 15%.

Additionally, this fall classification effort allowed biologists to calculate and provide updated population projections. In 2012, the last year in which a full census of caribou was conducted, the population was estimated to be 27,600 animals. Based on that number, and applying the findings of the 2012 and 2013 fall classifications; the population is currently estimated at 19,700 and projected to further decline to approximately 15,700 by the fall of 2014. Since 2012, the population has declined by 38%.

“This government has invested significantly in the monitoring and management of this important population during the last several years” said the Honourable Joan Shea, Minister of Environment and Conservation. “In 2011/12, $1.9 million was allocated over 3 years for the Labrador Caribou Initiative. This funding has allowed for significantly enhanced management of the herd, including increased biological monitoring and improved collaboration on the long term conservation of the George River caribou”.

“Our monitoring efforts now indicate a herd of less than 20,000 George River animals, which is of great concern. Once the largest caribou herd in the world, we’ve seen the population decline by more than 98% in only 20 years” said Minister Shea “The hunting ban on George River Caribou continues to be crucial if we are to give this herd a chance to rebound. Any harvesting at this extreme population low in the cycle represents additional adult mortality and, subsequently, fewer calves the following year. Our shared responsibility as stewards of this herd is to ensure the resource is used in a sustainable manner.”

In addition to low calf numbers, collared caribou monitoring continue to reveal poor adult survival. When combined with low calf population composition, these demographics produce the steep decline we are still witnessing in the GRCH.

Biologists with the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador and the Province of Quebec continue to investigate the causes of these high adult mortalities and low recruitment. Both jurisdictions have initiated discussions on the development of a joint management plan that will seek the collaboration of all resources users and Aboriginal groups. “Safeguarding the long term persistence and sustained harvest of this irreplaceable resource is a common goal shared by all stakeholders; one that we will work to achieve together” said Minister Shea.