Re: Your request for access to information under Part II of the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act. Our File No.: BTCRD/9/2015

On March 17, 2015, the Department of Business, Tourism, Culture and Rural Development, received your request for access to the following records/information:

“All ministerial briefing records, information notes and materials, discussion papers and/or reports of any kind, associated with the suspension of Non-Resident Big Game hunting licenses for the George River Caribou Herd in Labrador, via Tourism Operators/Outfitters, as was publicly announced on November 9, 2010 by E&C/LAAO. Details to include but shall not be limited to, any briefing records, information notes, and materials and reports, prepared for then Minister John Hickey in connection with an October 2010 meeting in Happy Valley Goose Bay to discuss new conservation measures for the George River Caribou Herd.”

I am pleased to inform you that your request for access to these records has been granted in part. Access to the remaining 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): Sections 18 and 20 (see attached).

As required by subsection 7(2) of the Act, we have severed information that is excepted from disclosure and have provided you with as much information as possible. In accordance with your request for a copy of the records, the appropriate copies have been enclosed. Please note that additional material responsive to this request has previously been provided in response to BTCRD-3-2014.

Section 43 of the Act provides that you may ask the Information and Privacy Commissioner to review this partial refusal of access or you may appeal the refusal to the Supreme Court Trial Division. A request to the Information and Privacy Commissioner shall be made in writing within 60 days of the date of this letter or within a longer period that may be allowed by the Commissioner.
Records that are refused on the basis of section 21 (legal advice) or section 18(2)(a) (official cabinet record), you must appeal directly to the Supreme Court Trial Division within 30 days after you receive the decision of the public body, pursuant to section 60. You may also contact the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner who may decide to initiate an appeal pursuant to subsection 60(1.1).

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, Str. A
St. John’s, NL A1B 3V8

Telephone: (709) 729-6309
Facsimile: (709) 729-6500

In the event that you choose to appeal to the Trial Division, you must do so within 30 days of the date of this letter. Section 60 of the Act sets out the process to be followed when filing such an appeal.

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 the ATIPP Coordinator at 709-729-7000.

Sincerely,

Alastair O’Rielly
Deputy Minister
Cabinet confidences

18. (1) In this section

(a) "cabinet record" means
   
   (i) advice, recommendations or policy considerations submitted or prepared for submission to the Cabinet,
   
   (ii) draft legislation or regulations submitted or prepared for submission to the Cabinet,
   
   (iii) a memorandum, the purpose of which is to present proposals or recommendations to the Cabinet,
   
   (iv) a discussion paper, policy analysis, proposal, advice or briefing material, including all factual and background material prepared for the Cabinet,
   
   (v) an agenda, minute or other record of Cabinet recording deliberations or decisions of the Cabinet,
   
   (vi) a record used for or which reflects communications or discussions among ministers on matters relating to the making of government decisions or the formulation of government policy,
   
   (vii) a record created for or by a minister for the purpose of briefing that minister on a matter for the Cabinet,
   
   (viii) a record created during the process of developing or preparing a submission for the Cabinet, or
   
   (ix) that portion of a record which contains information about the contents of a record within a class of information referred to in subparagraphs (i) to (viii);

(b) "discontinued cabinet record" means a cabinet record referred to in paragraph (a) the original intent of which was to inform the Cabinet process, but which is neither a supporting Cabinet record nor an official Cabinet record;

(c) "official cabinet record" means a cabinet record referred to in paragraph (a) which has been prepared for and considered in a meeting of the Cabinet; and

(d) "supporting cabinet record" means a Cabinet record referred to in paragraph (a) which informs the Cabinet process, but which is not an official cabinet record.

(2) The head of a public body shall refuse to disclose to an applicant a Cabinet record, including

(a) an official Cabinet record;

(b) a discontinued Cabinet record; and

(c) a supporting Cabinet record.

(3) The commissioner may review the refusal of a Cabinet record by the head of a public body under subsection (2) except where the decision relates to a Cabinet record which has been certified as an official Cabinet record by the Clerk of the Executive Council or his or her delegate.

(4) Where a question arises as to whether a Cabinet record is an official Cabinet record, the certificate of the Clerk of Executive Council or his or her delegate stating that the record is an official Cabinet record is conclusive of the question.

(5) The delegate of the Clerk of the Executive Council referred to in subsections (3) and (4) shall be limited to the Deputy Clerk of the Executive Council and the Secretary of the Treasury Board.
(6) An applicant may appeal a decision of the head of a public body respecting Cabinet records referred to subsection (2), except an official Cabinet record, to the commissioner or the Trial Division under section 43.

(7) An applicant may appeal a decision of the head of a public body respecting a Cabinet record which is an official Cabinet record directly to the Trial Division.

(8) This section does not apply to

(a) information in a record that has been in existence for 20 years or more; or

(b) information in a record of a decision made by the Cabinet on an appeal under an Act.

2012 c25 s6

Policy advice or recommendations

20. (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 unless no progress has been made on it for more than 3 years;

(c) consultations or deliberations involving officers or employees of a public body, a minister or the staff of a minister; or

(d) 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.

2002 eA-1.1 s20; 2012 c25 s8
George River Caribou Consultations
Key Messages

- Caribou populations throughout North America are known to fluctuate dramatically. There remain many unknowns associated with the dynamics of changes in these populations. As populations of caribou increase, populations of associated predators also increase. Additionally, higher densities of caribou are more susceptible to parasites, disease and range over-browsing, all which affect herd health and survival. These factors and many others contribute to population decline.

- Many circumpolar migratory caribou populations have experienced significant and drastic decline in recent years.

- Studies have shown that the population of the George River caribou herd has fluctuated dramatically in the past.

- Modern population studies of the herd began in 1958, which revealed a population of 15,000 caribou. By the 1980’s it is estimated the population peaked at nearly 800,000. A 1993 estimate placed the George River caribou herd (GRCH) population at approximately 775,000 caribou. By 2001, when the next survey was completed, this estimate had fallen to 385,000 animals representing a decline of approximately 50%.

- The George River caribou herd has been in a natural population decline phase since the nineties.

- The timing of a caribou census is primarily a function of available human and financial resources in relation to census cost, interval since the most recent census and an ongoing analysis of other demographic and harvest trend information.

- Harvesting is carried out by aboriginal and non aboriginal hunters in Quebec and Labrador as well as by an outfitting industry and commercial operations.

- Harvest has decreased from approximately 38,000 at its peak (split equally between Quebec and Labrador) to approximately 9,000 in recent years.

- In recent years, the majority of harvest has occurred in Labrador (25% Quebec and 75% Labrador).

- The population decline was not precipitated by hunting however at the current population level, hunting is now considered additive.

- The population has now reached a level where hunting will exacerbate the decline and affect future recovery efforts.

- The previous population low lasted for thirty years from the 1920s to the 1950s however a small increase occurred between 1925 and 1934 but then dropped off again.

- The herding nature of caribou, their range expansion and modern harvesting methods has put the George River caribou in a very vulnerable situation.

- “The Labrador Caribou Hunt” a discussion paper produced by the Wildlife Division in 1995, stated “an imminent natural decline in population size will eventually produce a situation where limits on harvesting may be necessary”.

- In 2009, concern was expressed that the population may be approaching a level that would require a review of management strategies.
• The 2010 commercial harvest was reduced by 60% and a census of the herd was undertaken in 2010.
• The Province of Quebec and the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador led the census with partners that included, Nunatsiavut Government, Institute for Environmental Monitoring and Research, Torngat Wildlife and Plants Co-Management Board, and Laval University.
• Management of the George River herd is a shared responsibility between two provincial governments and aboriginal governments and organizations.

Current Management Program - Resident, non aboriginal
• No limit on license sales
• Two caribou allowed per license
• Special free northern caribou licence
• One license per individual per year
• Transfer system that allows Labrador residents to transfer licences to someone else

Current Management Program - Aboriginal
• Inuit- Outside of LIL/LISA must acquire a regular caribou license. Free licence in 12E management unit.
• Innu- Until New Dawn Agreement is ratified Innu are not subject to licensing.
• There is currently no limit on the number of caribou that may be harvested by Inuit under LILCA and the Labrador Innu.

Current Management Program - Non-resident:
• Non residents must purchase through an outfitter. There are 22 Labrador Outfitters registered with TCR with a combined quota of 6100 caribou. In recent years caribou harvest from outfitting has been less than 300 caribou.

Current Management Program Commercial:
• The 2009 commercial licence allocation allowed for the harvest of 1,050 caribou split between three operators.
• In 2010, this was reduced by 60% to a harvest allocation of 420 caribou.
Consultation Plan
George River Caribou Herd Harvest Management Plan – 2010-11

Issue
There is growing empirical evidence to suggest that the George River caribou herd (GRCH) has undergone a significant population decline. The magnitude of the decline has taken the population of the herd below the capacity to sustain existing harvest management strategies. Preliminary results of the GRCH post-calving aggregation census conducted in July 2010 supports this assertion. In response, a revised harvest management strategy is required for 2010-11 to ensure that the current year’s harvest does not significantly contribute to further population decline. Consultations are required with stakeholders and interest groups prior to development of this strategy.

Public Environment Scan
• In July 2010, a post calving aggregation photo-census was conducted in partnership with the Government of Quebec, Laval University, the Nunatsiavut Government, Tomigat Plant and Wildlife Co-Management Board and the Institute for Environmental Monitoring and Research. Preliminary estimates from the July population survey indicate that the herd now consists of approximately 50,000 animals.
• On August 9, 2010, a joint news release by the Department of Environment and Conservation and the Department of Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs announced a delay in the opening of the caribou hunting season in Labrador, as the result of preliminary information and ongoing analysis regarding the George River herd.
• The news release stated that an update on the harvest management plan for the George River Caribou is anticipated in early September. Until that time, hunting opportunities for all non-Aboriginal peoples will be suspended.
• Back in July 2009, the Department of Environment and Conservation issued a press release announcing its plans to conduct a census in 2010 to determine current status and health of the GRCH. It also stated harvest management strategies may have to change pending the results of the census.
• A public advisory was placed in the 2010-11 Hunting and Trapping Guide that noted ENVC’s plan to conduct a census in 2010, and requested public input and comment on the existing harvest management plan for this herd. The guide was released in March 2010 and distributed to over 100,000 qualified hunters in Newfoundland and Labrador. One submission was received.
• On August 10, 2010, Minister Johnson participated in a radio interview with CBC regarding the delay in the opening of the hunting season. It was stated that the ban did not apply to outfitters who had previously booked hunts.
• In early June and mid-August, Michael Johansen wrote an article that was carried in The Telegram, The Labradorian and The Western Star in which he highlighted the declining population of the George River caribou herd and criticized the Provincial Government’s conservation efforts.
• There has been ongoing illegal hunting activity on threatened woodland caribou in Labrador by hunters from Quebec. However, these hunters are permitted to hunt caribou from the George River herd to the north of the Joir River group. Their
participation in the hunt has been based on George River herd numbers between 275,000 and 325,000 animals, rather than the approximate 50,000 that currently exist.

- Both Aboriginals and non-Aboriginal hunters participated in illegal hunting of George River caribou during the winter of 2008 and 2009. Hunters illegally harvested caribou in an area closed to hunting. The closed zone represented the core range of the threatened Red Wine caribou herd that was designated as a measure intended to help conserve this herd. Extensive media coverage (print, radio, television) occurred during the periods of this illegal harvest. This included both provincial and national media outlets.

**Strategic Considerations**

- The Government of Quebec shares joint responsibility with this province for management. There is currently no written agreement or formal understanding concerning the shared management of this resource. At present, wildlife officials from both provinces informally share information and communicate on the status of the herd, but have no formal provisions for co-management.  

- The George River herd is critically important to Labrador and the province as a whole. With the exception of limited harvest from the northern Torngat Herd, this herd contributes almost exclusively to the Aboriginal, resident and non-resident harvest needs within Labrador.

- The land claim of NunatuKavut has not been accepted by the Federal Government for the purposes of negotiation. Newfoundland and Labrador does not have to make a decision on this claim unless and until the Federal Government decides to accept the claim for the purposes of negotiation. If this occurs, then the province will have to complete its own independent review of the claim documentation. NunatuKavut has recently submitted new claim documentation to the Federal Government which is currently under review. In the new documentation, the members of NunatuKavut claim an Inuit identity rather than a Metis identity. Currently, they are subject to provisions under the *Wildlife Act* that include the requirement to possess a provincial caribou hunting license identical to the licence requirement of non-Aboriginals.

- Without an exemption for members of NunatuKavut, the above noted harvesting restrictions for non-Aboriginals will also apply to NunatuKavut. The courts have found that a duty to consult was owed to the Labrador Metis Nation on the Trans Labrador Highway Phase Three.
• Labrador Inuit land claim beneficiaries may also be unhappy with harvest restrictions imposed upon them when hunting outside of the Labrador Inuit Settlement Area.

• The elimination of the commercial harvest will impact three businesses which currently possess commercial licenses. In 2010, this allows for a harvest of 420 animals. It may also impact on the availability of caribou meat for the restaurant and retail trade. In 2009, commercial caribou licences in Labrador were reduced by 60 per cent to 210 licences, or 420 caribou. This decision was based on fall classification and collar mortality data that suggested a significant decline had occurred in the herd.

• The reduction of the number of animals available to harvest on each resident and non-resident license may also impact the outfitting industry. In an effort to minimize economic hardship to these companies, licences have been issued to outfitters who have confirmed hunts booked for the period beginning August 10, 2010, up until the present. The reduction in the number of animals that may be taken on a license may affect the sales of some hunts where hunters had anticipated the harvest of two caribou from a single license.

• The majority of the Quebec-based harvest on this herd occurs in August and September in the form of outfitter-based hunts. Because of their legislative schedules and season dates which open August 1, and because many outfitters are currently in the field with clients, Quebec have advised that they will maintain the status quo respecting their outfitted hunts for 2010. It is anticipated that the harvest implications of this could be in the order of 1,000 caribou. The majority of the harvest of GRCH occurs in Labrador.

• Beginning in the 2009-10 hunting season, Quebec eliminated all commercial caribou harvest licenses. These licenses were issued exclusively to Aboriginals and, in the past, have amounted to a harvest of up to 2,500 animals.

• No formal consultations have yet been held with the Government of Quebec concerning the implications of such a low herd size. Informal discussions, however, have been held between Quebec and provincial wildlife biologists respecting the census results and management implications. Both provinces continue to collaborate on finalizing the census report.

• While declines in the population of the herd were observed in 2009 and initial management actions were taken (reduction by 60 per cent of commercial harvest) by the province at that time, an aerial census of the herd was not conducted until July
2010 because of planning, logistics and optimal timing.

Consultation Details
The Department of Environment and Conservation will lead the consultation process. The department will be represented by John Blake (Director), Wayne Barony (Species Management Coordinator), Christine Doucet (Senior Manager – Research Section) and Gerry Yetman (Senior Manager – Stewardship and Education). Representatives from the Department of Tourism, Culture and Recreation and Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs have not been finalized, but officials from both departments will be present for all meetings.

Invited representation will be solicited from user groups as outlined in the Target Audience section below. It is anticipated that selective meetings with component group representation will be completed on an individual basis. Larger scale public meetings will be considered following the receipt of the final estimate and in preparation for longer term (post 2010-11) GRCH management.

While public meetings will not occur at this time as a result of the short time frame to complete this consultation exercise, a news release will be issued to inform the public of the consultations and solicit public input through e-mail and regular mail.

2010/11 Objectives
A consultation with targeted stakeholders is being proposed in order to provide information related to preliminary census results and discuss management approaches in light of a significant decline in the population. Feedback received from these stakeholders will be used by the Provincial Government to inform the decision making process regarding proposed harvest management changes. Longer-term options that may involve the development of a co-management model that includes Aboriginal groups and the Province of Quebec will be considered for the period beyond 2010-11.

Consultation objectives include:
1. To engage in stakeholder consultations to help inform the Provincial Government in its decision making regarding recommended changes to the harvest of GRCH for 2010-11 in light of the decline.
2. To present preliminary census results to stakeholders, as a means of ensuring the accurate dissemination of information, and discuss management options for the 2010-11 season.
3. To inform and engage the general public regarding management options of the herd and invite their participation through e-mail and regular mail at this time.

Target Audiences
Internal
- Premier’s Office
- Cabinet Secretariat
• Communications Branch
• Cabinet
• Ministers and MHAs
• Department of Tourism, Culture and Recreation
• Department of Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs
• Department of Natural Resources
• Department of Environment and Conservation

External
• Labrador Innu
• Nunatsiavut Government
• NunatuKavut
• Quebec Innu
• Innu Nation
• Sheshatshiu Innu First Nation
• Mushuau Innu First Nation
• Nunavik Inuit
• Torngat Wildlife and Plants Co-Management Board
• Government of Quebec
• Resident Hunters
• Outfitters
• Commercial Operators
• Institute for Environmental Monitoring and Research
• Media
• General public

Input from the general public will also be sought through a news release that will be issued. The public will be asked to provide feedback through e-mail and regular mail.

Messages
• A census of the George River caribou herd was conducted in July 2010. The Province of Quebec and the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador led the census, along with other partners: Nunatsiavut Government, Institute for Environmental Monitoring and Research, Torngat Wildlife and Plants Co-Management Board, and Laval University.
• Preliminary census results of the George River herd indicate a significant population decline since the previous census in 2001. As a result, the Provincial Government is seeking input from stakeholders, Aboriginal groups/Nunatsiavut Government, and the Torngat Wildlife and Plants Co-Management Board on caribou harvest management measures to be taken in the interests of conservation.
• Consultation sessions will be held with targeted stakeholder groups. In addition, interested individuals are encouraged to provide written input via e-mail and regular mail.
• The Provincial Government will share the preliminary census results with stakeholders during the consultations and work collaboratively to identify revised
harvest management approaches. Work will continue with these and other stakeholders to develop a longer-term management plan for the George River herd beyond 2010-11.

- When the final analysis of the census has been completed, along with the compilation of the information gathered through the targeted consultations and public input, an update will be provided as to the management decisions for the 2010-11 season.

**Secondary Messaging:**

- As an initial conservation step to address the perceived decline, the Provincial Government reduced the 2010 commercial harvest by 60 per cent.
- Management of the George River herd is a responsibility of two Provincial Governments (Newfoundland and Labrador and Quebec). Also, consultations with the Nunatsiavut Government and the Torngat Wildlife and Co-Management Board, in accordance with the Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement, and other affected Aboriginal groups and organizations are crucial to the effective management of this herd.
- Caribou populations throughout North America are known to fluctuate dramatically. The rate of decline being experienced by the GRCH is consistent with recent declines observed in other northern caribou herds across North America.
- Studies have shown that the population of the George River caribou herd has fluctuated dramatically in the past. Modern population studies of the herd began in 1958, which revealed a population of 15,000 caribou. Subsequent surveys placed the herd population at nearly 800,000 in the late 1980s; 775,000 in 1993; and 385,000 in 2001.
- The George River caribou herd has been in a natural population decline phase since the late 1980s. While the population decline was not precipitated by hunting, at the current population level, hunting is now considered significantly additive to natural mortality and continued hunting will exacerbate the decline and affect future recovery efforts.

**Stakeholders**
A list of stakeholder groups and respective contacts to be consulted includes but may not be limited to:

1. **Resident Hunters** - 10 hunters will be selected at random from various regions of Labrador to represent the interest of this user group. These hunters are selected from past activities in GRCH harvest via licence sales. Efforts will be made to ensure reasonable regional representation is achieved in the selection process.

2. **Nunatsiavut Government**
Rebecca Willcott
Director of Renewable Resources
Ph. 709 896-8582
Rebecca.Willcott@nunatsiavut.com
Mr. Jim Goudie,  
Wildlife Manager  
Postville Office  
General Delivery  
Postville, NL, A0P 1N0  
Ph: (709) 479-9880  
jgoudie@nunatsiavut.com

3. Innu Nation  
Mr. David Hart – Community Policy Officer  
Ms. Paula Reid  
Sheshatshiu, NL  
Ph: (709) 497-8398  
dhart@innu.ca  
pried@innu.ca

4. NunatuKavut  
Ms. Tammy Lambourne  
Environmental Officer  
370 Hamilton River Road  
P.O. Box 460, Station C  
Happy Valley-Goose Bay, NL, A0P 1C0  
Ph: (709) 896-0592 ext. 229  
tlambourne@labradormetis.ca

Wayne A. Russell  
Senior Fish and Wildlife Guardian  
P.O. Box 198  
Town Hall  
Port Hope Simpson, NL  
A0K 4E0

5. Torngat Wildlife and Plants Co-Management Board  
Mr. Bruce Roberts, Chair  
Mr. Jamie Snook (Executive Director, Torngat Secretariat)  
217 Hamilton River Road  
P.O. Box 2050, Station B  
Happy Valley-Goose Bay, NL, A0P 1E0  
(709) 896-6786

6. Outfitters  
Newfoundland and Labrador Outfitters Association  
Mr. Dean Wheeler, President  

Additional Outfitters as identified by TCR.
7. Commercial
Drover's Labrador Outfitters Limited
Mr. Alonzo Drover
P.O. Box 121
Labrador City, NL, A2V 2K3
Ph: (709) 944-6947

Uncle Sam's Butcher Shop
Mr. Randy Battcock
13 Hillcrest Road
Happy Valley-Goose Bay, NL, A0P 1E0
Ph: (709) 896-3736

Northern Light Inn
Mr. Brad Letto
P.O. Box 92
Lanse Au Clair, NL
Ph: (709) 931-2332
Fax: (709) 931-2708

Approach
User group and stakeholder representation will be solicited to meet and discuss future harvest management options for the GRCH and to assist in formulating new strategies. It is proposed that the Wildlife Division staff meet with user groups and present findings on the status of the herd and solicit input on how conservation targets may be revised and/or achieved. Representatives from TCR and LAA will also assist in conducting the sessions. The results will be compiled by the Director of Wildlife and forwarded to the executive to assist with the consideration of adopting revised harvest management plans for GRCH in 2010-11 and replace the previously approved plans as outlined in the 2010-11 Hunting and Trapping Guide. 

The department will work with and consider recommendations from the Torngat Wildlife and Plants Management Board for the management of the GRCH within the Labrador Inuit Settlement Area.

Consultation Materials
Consultation materials will consist of presentations (mostly contained in PowerPoint format) of biological data, current harvest management strategies, and solicitation of input for discussion on future management options. Traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) will be gathered from both stakeholder consultations as well as discussions between ENVC and local experts through ongoing collaborations. ENVC also gains TEK and LEK (Labrador Ecological Knowledge) from people on a daily basis through informal interaction with the public. The division also has an excellent collaborative
relationship with the Nunatsiavut Government through the Torngat Secretariat of the Wildlife and Plants Management Board.

A public advisory was placed in the 2010/11 Hunting and Trapping Guide that noted ENVC’s plan to conduct a census of the GRCH in 2010, and requested public input and comment on the existing harvest management plan for this herd. The guide was released in March 2010 and distributed to over 100,000 qualified hunters in Newfoundland and Labrador. One submission was received.

Schedule 18(1)(a)(ix), 18(2)(a)

At the present time, exact scheduling dates cannot be established. Once approval in principle is received, the Wildlife Division will begin to arrange the necessary meetings. Given the restrictive timelines, some of the noted participants may be unable to meet, but attempts will be made to facilitate inclusion wherever and whenever possible, and their written input will be encouraged.

Communication with Stakeholders
The identified stakeholders will be invited to participate in the consultations via an invitation from the Director of Wildlife or a divisional representative, and the meetings will be scheduled directly with the specific stakeholders/user groups. Open public meetings or co-management meetings with the province of Quebec will not be conducted at this time; however, a news release will invite public input through e-mail or regular mail.

A letter from the Deputy Ministers of both the Department of Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs and the Department of Justice was sent to Chief Real MacKenzie, Matimekush-Lac John First Nation and Chief Georges-Ernest Gregoire, Uashat mak Mani-Utenam First Nation on August 27, 2010. The letter committed that officials from the Department of Environment and Conservation will meet with both bands to discuss caribou management and conservation.

It is anticipated that consultation with the Quebec Innu will begin in the Fall of 2010. Discussion with the Quebec Innu will include the provision of information on the 2010 George River caribou census; an overview of caribou management in Labrador (including possible revised GRC harvest management approaches) and, current management and conservation of threatened Labrador woodland caribou.

Correspondence will be sent to Quebec Innu in September, with an invitation to participate in caribou management and conservation discussions with Provincial Government officials. ENVC will work with the departments of Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs, Natural Resources, Justice and the Intergovernmental Affairs Secretariat in developing agreed objectives for these discussions. The role of the Government of Quebec in these discussions will need to be clarified. It is anticipated that Quebec Innu bands will welcome the opportunity to engage in direct bilateral discussions to exchange information and discuss caribou management and conservation.
It is understood that the Government of Quebec does not currently plan on revising their George River caribou management strategies until the final census results have been fully presented and analyzed. In all likelihood, this will not result in any change to Quebec's management approaches for the 2010-11 season. Most recently, the Government of Quebec held consultations in relation to the 2004-2010 Nord-du-Quebec (Rangifer tarandus) Management Plan.

Facilitation
Facilitation of the consultation process will be conducted by staff of the Wildlife Division, in collaboration with TCR and LAA. Secretarial support for the working group will be provided by the Wildlife Division of ENVC.

Minister/MHA involvement
All relevant MHAs will be informed of the progress of consultations and provided with high-level key messages.

Recording and Issues Tracking
Wildlife Division staff will record comments during discussions.

Media Policy
A news release will be issued regarding the stakeholder consultations and will invite public input through e-mail and regular mail. Should media inquiries arise during the stakeholder consultations, the outlet will be directed to the Director of Communications for ENVC, as per the usual communications protocol.

The outcome of the consultations and the public input, along with the analyzed census data and management strategies, will be communicated via a news release later in the fall, following the completion of the survey review.

Post-Consultation Communications Activities
Communications Plan to be prepared after the 2010 survey results are known.