

YUKON FISH AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT BOARD MEETING
October 18 to 20, 2022
MINUTES
Yukon Willow Room

DAY 1: Tuesday, October 18, 2022 – Regular Meeting

PRESENT: Carl Sidney (Chair), Michelle Dawson-Beattie (Vice-Chair), Cheyenne Bradley, Danny Cresswell, Dennis Dickson, Dawn Kisoun, Ken Taylor, Randy Taylor, Blanche Warrington

ZOOM: Sebastian Jones, Franklin Patterson Jr.,

REGRETS: John Burdek,

STAFF: Graham Van Tighem, Diane Sheldon, Steve Hossack

SUPPORT: Colleen Henry (Minute Taker)

IN ATTENDANCE: Michael McKay (McKay & Associates), Martin Slama (Lake Laberge RRC), Priyank Thatté (Acting Assistant Deputy Minister, Environment, YG), Brittane Stewart (Director of Communications and Public Engagement, Environment, YG), Lars Jessup, Don Toews (Carcross Tagish RRC)

WELCOME AND OPENING PRAYER

Graham Van Tighem said the opening prayer. Carl Sidney welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Priyank Thatté, Acting Deputy Minister of Environment. There was a roundtable of introductions.

ADMIN AND FINANCES (TAB 01)

A. AGENDA REVIEW— C. Sidney

Carl Sidney reviewed the agenda.

Motion – 2022-14: That the Board accept the October 18 to 20, 2022 agenda as amended.

Moved by: Dawn Kisoun

Seconded by: Blanche Warrington

Passed by: Consensus

- It was recommended that a discussion about appointing an interim vice-chair as Carl Sidney's appointment expires on Tuesday, October 25, 2022. This will be added to Members' Time.
- There will be a discussion on Board procedures, etiquette, protocol, and mandate during Members' Time. It will be finalized by December Board meeting.

- The Dawson regional land use plan is undergoing consultation. Sebastian submitted comments on the draft plan. Consultations are open until November 20. There will be an open house in Whitehorse on November 16. Further discussion was added to Members' Time.
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B. EXECUTIVE REPORT (TAB 02) – G. Van Tighem, C. Sidney

Graham Van Tighem and Carl Sidney reviewed the Executive report and action items list provided in the meeting kit. The *CYFN Leadership Resolution No. 1160-22 Modernization of the Wildlife Act* and the *YFWMB Meeting Procedures* document were also provided in meeting kits. Graham asked Board members to review the procedures document in advance of the December meeting when it will be utilized to manage the communication within Board meetings.

Comments/Discussion:

- *Education Act* and fall harvest — Ken Taylor discussed the *Education Act* which allows for school councils to set their own school calendar to accommodate fall harvest. School councils need to know their power and authority. Outdoor education programs are also a challenge. They require paperwork, contingencies, safety plans, emergency plans, et cetera.
- Modernizing the *Yukon Wildlife Act* — This is one of the Board's strategic goals. The minister indicated, in writing, that he will follow up if First Nation governments identify this as a priority. Graham and Steve have been in contact with Mark. He said it would be months before anything happens. This is a high-priority leadership issue and should be discussed directly with the minister.
- Action Item 2022-06 — DDRRC regarding the Trapline Concession Allocations — The action item could be reworded for clarity. DDRRC recently contacted Graham and he will follow up with them.
- Action Item 2022-08 — McIntyre Creek Letter — When did the Board discuss this letter? There are other more important areas that affect wildlife. The Coffee Gold Road project is going through a large area that will run through a major sheep sanctuary. Did the Board write a letter to not support the road going through there and another one not supporting the road through the Eagle River? Graham Van Tighem provided information about the Coffee Gold project discussion and letter. The Board submitted a letter in 2016. The Board discussed the McIntyre Creek letter at the June 2022 Board meeting in Mayo. The Board was involved in the Coffee Gold discussions from 2016 to 2018. The Board's lawyer was also included in that discussion. There are other areas in Yukon which may deserve attention. There will be another round of engagement on McIntyre Creek in November. The Board can submit input if members wish. Graham will follow up and ensure comments are related to the Board mandate. This is an ecologically significant area both in terms of it being a salmon spawning stream as well as a connecting animal corridor. There are a lot of elements to this area.

Action Item 2022-10— Graham Van Tighem will contact the Council of Yukon First Nations to request permission to append Leadership Resolution 1160-22 in a reply letter to the minister

regarding his agreement to follow-up on modernization of the *Wildlife Act*. He will also request a plan of action, dates, and timelines from the minister.

C. FINANCIAL UPDATE AND AUDIT (TAB 03) – D. Sheldon, Michael McKay,

Michael McKay reviewed the financial statements and audit report to March 31, 2022, provided in the meeting kits.

Comments/Discussion:

- Management Responsibility Statement — The text in the audit report regarding the preparation of the financial statements should be changed to “Management provided information for the preparation of the financial statements.”
- There will be further discussion during the Financial Working Group update regarding the audit. There is no specific requirement in the Umbrella Final Agreement for an annual audit. The work and financial cost is overly burdensome.

Motion – 2022-15: That the Board accept the financial audit report for fiscal year 2021-2022, as amended.

Moved by: Ken Taylor

Seconded by: Dawn Kisoun

Passed by: Consensus

Michael McKay will provide amendments by the end of the week in time for the Annual Report which is due October 31, 2022.

Diane Sheldon reviewed the variance report to September 30, 2022.

Motion – 2022-16: That the Board accept the variance report to September 30, 2022, as presented.

Moved by: Ken Taylor

Seconded by: Cheyenne Bradley

Passed by: Consensus

CORRESPONDENCE REVIEW (TAB 04) — G. Van Tighem

Graham Van Tighem reviewed correspondence letters.

Comments/Questions:

- Letter #16 — Ross River Dena Council and Liard First Nation hunting ads — This letter makes it clear that the laws of general application still apply and that, aside from First Nation final agreements, Category A and B settlement lands, things should be status quo. The Board may want to follow-up with the Director of CO Services in the future. There may be an opportunity to present something collaboratively with Ross River and Liard First Nation to do some compromised messaging. There was a discussion about the

Board's mandate regarding fish and wildlife which is the primary concern. It would be interesting to get Ross River's opinion.

- Letter #24 — Board Appointment to Yukon Salmon Sub-Committee — Carl Sidney's terms comes to an end. He is the representative on the YSSC. This is on the agenda for the December Board meeting. Yukon River Panel meetings will come up in December. One suggestion was to appoint someone if Carl does not get reappointed. It must be a Yukon government representative. The Yukon River Panel meeting will be in Anchorage the first week of December. Further discussion will take place during Members Time.
- Outfitter quota appeal process — Q) Is there a place for us in that conversation? A) Graham provided information. Historically, the Board had the contract to run the Outfitter Quota Appeal Committee and the Concession Competition Review Board. But that's not a board responsibility. The Board doesn't administer it anymore and are no longer involved. The Board can help facilitate the RRC representative on the Outfitter Quota Appeal Committee. This could be added to the December agenda to get an update from the Outfitter Quota Appeal Committee Chair and the Yukon government rep. There will be a short discussion about the committee and the harvest allocation policy during Members Time.

Action Item 2022-11 — Letter #3 – Dall Sheep Adaptive Management in Game Management Zone 7 East — Graham will follow up on the letter from the Minister regarding the Board's recommendation with respect to adaptive management changes through ministerial orders.

Action Item 2022-12 — Letter #4 — Observations regarding increased human pressure on Tarfu Lake and request for protection of fish stocks and water bird populations — Graham will respond to let the person know this will be raised with the CAST and will provide information about that team.

D. JUNE MINUTES (TAB 05) — D. Sheldon

Diane Sheldon reviewed the minutes. Some members provided comments. There were no additional comments.

Motion – 2022-17: That the Board accept the minutes for June 2022, as amended.

Moved by: Michelle Dawson-Beattie

Seconded by: Cheyenne Bradley

Passed by: Consensus

YFWMB CALENDAR UPDATE (TAB 06) — S. Hossack

Steve Hossack provided an update. The calendar is not finalized yet but are aiming for a November 1 completion deadline. He provided an overview of changes to the calendar process for photo selection. He recommended utilizing the working group for the information content. Board members can provide feedback and recommendations to Steve. The bottom bars will be sent to working group members for comment on Friday.

Comments/Questions:

- Q) Will there be delays like last year? A) We are already experiencing delays. There are a lot of things going on. There is a terms of reference and a contract with Yukon government to provide bottom bars and regulatory and heritage dates/auxiliary information. Five bottom bars have been received. Yukon government is short staffed.
 - C) The Board should order more calendars this year. Steve had planned to order 5,500 and may order 6,000.
 - There was a comment about the calendar pin holes ripping. It was printed on a lighter stock paper last year. They will be back to heavier stock paper this year.
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DIRECTOR OF FISH AND WILDLIFE UPDATE (TAB 07)— M. Cattet

Marc Cattet reviewed his update on current activities which was included in meeting kits.

Comments/Questions:

- Wetland Policy — Off-roading — There was a request for Marc to collaborate with PR Services and develop information on protected areas and wetland areas with respect to off-roading.
- Q) What does “wetlands of special importance mean”? A) There is no firm definition. Recently, there was a request to the Department of Justice to determine what kind of existing legal designation could be applied to wetlands of special importance. They received a legal opinion, but there is not much. The final decision has not been made. It should come out in the final policy.
- Black bear and grizzly bear population survey — Q) Can you provide details on the results and the translocation study? A) The population survey was completed in August. It was non-invasive. There is no population estimate yet. It appears the frequency of black bears hitting the traps is significantly more than grizzly bears. The translocation study is ongoing. He estimates four black bears and one grizzly were translocated. Many bears that were translocated did not return to the location where they were captured. Many bears did develop occupied home range within their area. Many were not repeat offenders.
- Tagish River Habitat Protection Area plan — There is a gap in the HPA. It applies only to the high-water mark. It doesn't provide any additional protection for fish and fish habitat. The RRC will engage with the public on the process. They engage with public to look at ways to get additional protection for fish and fish habitat under the *Fisheries Act* of Canada. There is a new provision which is the designation for ecologically significant areas that are important to fish and fish habitat. Right now, HPAs only cover furbearers and waterfowl and not fish or fish habitat which is a big gap. The RRC will have a joint process with C/TFN. There will be a workshop late fall or early winter do discuss habitat protection areas in the Southern Lakes. The focus for discussions will be caribou winter range, sheep lambing areas, and wetlands.
- Wolf population survey — The survey will take place in the early part of the winter.
- Aishihik bison conservation management plan — Graham asked about the public review process. He asked if it would be like the last review with meetings in Whitehorse,

Carmacks, and Haines Junction. Kluane First Nation may want a meeting in Burwash. He can get in touch with Chief and Council to see if they want a community meeting. They are on the bison tech team and the management team.

Action Item 2022-13 — Aishihik bison conservation management plan — Graham Van Tighem will contact Kluane First Nation Chief and Council to determine if they want a community consultation meeting.

UNGULATE WORKING GROUP UPDATE (TAB 08) — C. Sidney, K. Taylor, G. Van Tighem, L. Jessup, S. Hossack

Graham Van Tighem provided a brief overview.

Ken Taylor provided an overview of the draft *Ungulate Working Group Conceptual Framework* document provided in meeting kits. They are asking the Board to formally adopt the framework document.

Lars Jessup reviewed the annotated bibliography of publications, literature, and biological and sociological information provided in meeting kits.

Steve Hossack provided an overview of the communications strategy for the ungulate working group. The strategy is very rudimentary and will evolve over time.

Steve and Graham are the staff for the working group. Group members include Carl, Randy, Ken, Danny, Michelle, and Sebastian.

Motion 2022-18: That the Board adopt the ungulate working group conceptual framework.

Moved by: Blanche Warrington

Seconded by: Dawn Kisoun

Passed by: Consensus

The engagement letter to First Nations and RRCs will go out before the press conference. The next working group meeting will be on November 1, 2022, at 1:00 to 3:00 p.m.

Comments/Questions:

- Communication with RRCs and First Nations is important. We need to listen to their concerns in their areas which will vary.
- We must empower RRCs to develop a management plan in their area, with our help.
- Burwash area needs education for young hunters. There are more young moose killed than bigger bulls. Some animals are wounded, but the hunters don't go after them.
- Members discussed the need for First Nations enforcement legislation.
- Q) Would it be possible to assemble an archive of the bibliography and launch it in the Board office? It can be on a hard drive or USB stick. It would be a legacy of the project. These questions keep coming up. A) Yes. Some of the information came from the Yukon Archives and some from the EMR library. Lars has about 75 percent of the documents and can provide them to Graham or Steve.

- Don Toews provided information on the Southern Lakes caribou recovery program and the updated database including information from a comprehensive moose and comprehensive wolf survey. They have also completed the local knowledge survey which involved First Nations and non-First Nations. That data has been summarized. C/TRRC will host a workshop in February or March 2023.
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MEMBERS TIME — IN CAMERA

Motion – 2022-19: That the Board move the meeting in camera.

Moved by: Dawn Kisoun

Seconded by: Blanche Warrington

Passed by: Consensus

No additional minutes were recorded.

DAY 2: Wednesday, October 19, 2022 – Regular Meeting

PRESENT: Carl Sidney (Chair), Michelle Dawson-Beattie (Vice-Chair), Cheyenne Bradley, Danny Cresswell, Dennis Dickson, Dawn Kisoun, Franklin Patterson Jr., Ken Taylor, Randy Taylor, Blanche Warrington (AM)

ZOOM: Sebastian Jones,

REGRETS: John Burdek,

STAFF: Graham Van Tighem, Diane Sheldon, Steve Hossack

SUPPORT: Colleen Henry (Minute Taker)

IN ATTENDANCE: Oliver Barker (SARA), Audia Hassan (SARA), Marlena MacCabe (SARA), Robert Perry (YG), Don Toews, Martin (LLRRC), Margaret Campbell (ECCC, Migratory Birds), Kirsten Wilcox (ECCC, Species at Risk), Michael Svoboda (ECCC, SAR), Will Jones (Alsek RRC)

YFWMB YUKON WILDLIFE ACT REGULATION CHANGE PROCESS REVIEW (TAB 09) —

G. Van Tighem, S. Hossack

Graham Van Tighem provided an introduction and background. He reviewed the *Yukon Wildlife Act Regulation Change Process* presentation provided in meeting kits. Topics included: a flowchart of the regulation change process; overview; the information gathering phase; the information verification phase; the public review phase; the Board recommendation phase; the drafting and implementation phase; the future of regulation changes; and a review of the regulation change process. A copy of the presentation, the proposal form, and the flow chart of the regulation change process were included in meeting kits.

Comments/Discussion:

- Adaptive management — For all the discussions we have, we don't have a widely accepted definition of adaptive management. Steve pulled one from a conservation textbook. It is defined as "a decision-making process that promotes flexible decision making, may be adjusted in the face of uncertainties as outcomes for management actions, and other events become better understood. Careful monitoring of these outcomes both advances scientific understanding and helps adjust policies or operations as part as part of an iterative learning process. Adaptive Management also recognizes the importance of natural variability in contributing to ecological resilience and productivity. It is not a trial-and-error process. Rather, it emphasizes learning while doing. Adaptive management does not represent an end in itself, but rather a means to more effective decisions and enhanced benefits. It's true measure is in how well it helps meet environmental, social, and economic goals; increases scientific knowledge; and reduces tensions among stakeholders." That is a definition that we don't use. It would be interesting to keep it in front of mind to help ensure everyone is on the same page.
- Working Groups — The policy regulation and legislation working group includes Franklin, John, Ken, and Randy. The licensed hunting working group includes Michelle, Franklin,

John, and Ken. Graham suggested having five people on the working groups. He would like to have broad spectrum of participation. The working groups will report back to the board as usual.

- We are reviewing the process, but the government is reviewing their side also. At some point, will there be collaboration? It's a joint process. However, there are things that the government does that the Board does not need to be a part of. Yukon government provides most of the changes and they deal with the implementation. Graham continues to extend invitations to government to be involved in the discussion. Getting an outside person to support and facilitate will be important.

ELK WORKING GROUP PRESENTATION (TAB 10) — R. Perry, G. Van Tighem

Robert Perry reviewed his presentation *Elk: Two Year Pilot Project*, provided in meeting kits. Topics included: background information; two key principles; implementation plan; establish a steering committee; hire a coordinator; range-scale herd management applications; and internal YG initiatives.

Comments/Discussions:

- Problem Elk — Q) How are they identified? A) There must be visible signs that these animals have been around for a while. There is still ambiguity and there will have to be some discussion between the coordinator, the COSB, and the farmer to identify animals that are truly problematic.
- The summary document and information the Board received is different regarding complaints. The summary document said that, after the pilot project, despite achieving several milestones, elk encroachment persisted, and landowners remained dissatisfied. Yet we also heard that complaints disappeared once we removed 80 elk. The squeaky wheel gets the grease. Robert was not certain that the level of complaints is indicative of what is actually happening on the ground.
- Q) Has relocation of problem elk been attempted? How were the 80 elk removed as part of the pilot project when the conflict hunt and permit hunt only had eight to 12 permits per year? A) During the liberalized hunt, five permits were put out every two weeks throughout the hunt season which increased the number of elk shot throughout the two-year pilot period. That is why Robert made the distinction between the liberalized conflict hunt and normal conflict hunt with eight or so permits. During the two-year pilot, the licences were increased considerably. Relocating the elk was discussed, but there wasn't a lot of uptake. What will it do to subsistence food sources and natural populations? Do we want to impose them on someone else? The answer was no. The idea was not well received because we would be encroaching on First Nation lands. There is a host of other concerns with translocating species such as disease and parasites. There were concerns about winter tick which is why there is an exclusion zone around Takhini. Elk and moose don't overlap so the risk is minimized, but the concern is still there.
- Q) What is the determination of ticks on elks and why is it monitored so closely to keep them away from moose? A) That is why they are monitored. Are the fears justified? Researchers studied the winter ticks with respect to moose and elk and habitat overlap.

Moose have larger home ranges and do not return to the same places. Elk are habitual and have a high fidelity to their range.

- Ticks affecting livestock and horses — If the ticks are picked up, it is on the owner to cover vet bills. There is a lot of consideration and money to keep elk out of farmer's land. The tick program is not looked at. They're only looking at hides. Ticks could be in Lake Laberge one day. It is incredibly hard to get rid of ticks on moose. We can potentially look at other avenues, especially hunting. They were brought here to take the hunting pressures off moose but is that really happening. Wild horses may also be getting the winter ticks. We're all aware of it and that's why decisions are cautiously made. Example — horses are contained in a fenced area in Champagne, and they have been infected. Elk were the epicentre of the infestation, but they have spread.
- Hide submissions — Are hide submission information public? Where can we find the data on whether the hides have ticks and where they come from? Robert will send an email. There may be a publication on where ticks are found.
- Is there any thought to enforce a stipulation attached to PHA or conflict hunt for a mandatory hide submission? Elk and deer hid submissions are mandatory.
- Yukon government EMR and Environment reps have done an amazing job to facilitate a worthwhile solution to this long-term issue. The last review happened around the time the ticks became an issue. The departments have done a good job of recognizing the issues and tempering enthusiasm of comments and maintaining our objectives of the management plan.

ENGAGEMENT ON THE SPECIES AT RISK ACT MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR BULL TROUT (Western Arctic populations) (TAB 11) — O. Barker, M. MacCabe

Oliver Barker introduced himself and provided information on his new position at Species at Risk. Marlena MacCabe introduced herself. There was a roundtable of introductions.

Marlena reviewed her presentation on *Western Arctic Bull Trout Management Plan — Technical Discussion* provided in meeting kits. The topics included: presentation overview; *Species at Risk Act* overview; the SARA process; management plan; western arctic bull trout distribution overview; management objective; Yukon threats; and conservation measures; and opportunities for input. The presentation was provided in meeting kits.

The Board will advance a submission once a draft is provided. Graham would like to get a letter from the Board as soon as possible. The following information should be included in the letter:

- Bull trout must have clean, cool waters and they are voracious feeders.
- They are susceptible to overharvest, climate change, habitat alteration, and changing water quality.
- We currently have healthy populations of bull trout. Yukon government had the forethought to have a regulation in place many years ago so that people could only catch two bull trout and be in possession of four.
- We have more work to do when it comes to education about bull trout. Regulations may not be enough.

- The Board supports the current environmental state and protection of the fish as they can be overharvested. Through social media, there is a potential for the bull trout to be targeted by anglers.

All of that should go in the Board's submission as acknowledgement that it is appropriate to identify bull trout as a species of special concern in Yukon.

The Board produced posters of bull trout. Graham can distribute them upon request.

Comments/Discussion:

- Changes to stream temperature — How do we reconcile the fact that climate change is likely to have an extreme effect while stream temperature is unlikely to have an effect? The answer is to consider them separately, but that doesn't answer the question. One effect of climate change is increased stream temperature. Stream temperature and river temperature are a huge problem for salmon. Bull trout, being in the north, will likely be highly impacted. From the presentation, the increase in stream temperature was due to impacts other than climate change as it falls under anthropogenic causes. When we talk about alterations to stream temperature, we're talking about habitat degradation and not climate change impacts.
- Range maps don't always capture the actual range. Fish seem to be able to show up in unexpected places. The eDNA work is finding bull trout in places we don't expect. The management plan is confined to the area of the map in the presentation. Q) How would it apply to bull trout that occur outside the range? A) The bull trout designations under COSEWIC are not limited to the Western Arctic. There is a designated unit of upper Yukon watershed (headwaters of Teslin, Southern Lakes), which will capture those fish. If they do exist, they would be considered a different population. That population is considered data deficient. There are few instances of bull trout that have been found.
- Page 7, Map — Western Arctic bull trout — Is that the official name? That region is not the western Arctic. A) The naming convention is from COSEWIC. In terms of scientific naming, that is a good question. There is no subdivision. "Western" is a generic word that used around populations that occur between NWT, Yukon, and northern BC. COSEWIC is an arm's length advisory body. For the purposes of SARA, we must follow the COSEWIC naming convention. They can recommend that the name is inaccurate. Scientists look at some genetic background of the fish populations and where they come from — Eurasia or the north and east. There are often historical movement components.
- There is now conclusive evidence over several decades that there is a good distribution of bull trout in the headwaters of the Teslin River Yukon River. It has been confirmed by genetic testing and local knowledge and scientific knowledge verify that. A management plan is not restricted to Liard. There is broader distribution in the headwaters of the Teslin River.
- A 30-day external review will follow the distribution of the draft management plan. Once there is a comprehensive draft document that incorporates feedback, there will be a broader opportunity for the Board and public at large to provide input. There will be two future engagements with the Board with a document in hand.
- How long does the "special concern" designation last? It depends on the nature of the threats which are unlikely to go away. This is a slow growing fish, it reproduces late, it is relatively easy to catch, it is likely to be susceptible to climate change impacts which are

certain and widespread. This is a species that we must keep an eye on for the foreseeable future.

- The Enhancement Trust funded studies for hanging culverts and impacts on the Dempster Highway and other areas. The trust has also funded translocation of grayling populations trapped by hanging culverts. The Board can have some involvement in this in the future.
- Catch and release mortality is another concern. This species is caught and released a fair bit. We need to improve catch and release methods, angler education, and limit catch and release. It is a mortality concern.

Action Item 2022-14 — Regarding the SARA Management Plan for Bull Trout, Graham will prepare a draft submission which will address the Board concerns and provide to members for their review. Oliver and Graham will discuss timelines.

FINANCIAL WORKING GROUP UPDATE — G. Van Tighem, D. Sheldon

Graham Van Tighem provided an overview of the Transfer Payment Funding Agreement (TPFA) provided in meeting kits. Also included in the board kit were components of the legal review of the TPFA undertaken with Dave Joe.

Graham provided an overview of the following:

- concerns with the language of the contract and impacts (Yukon government issues with workplan and delay of payment).
- benefits to other conservation partners, such renewable resource councils, due to the Board's efforts to improve, streamline, simplify, or clarify this agreement.
- the legal review of the Board's TPFA.
- Yukon government's administrative responsibility to administer funding, but they do not govern the Board. They have modified the payment schedule to include a much bigger first payment and adjusted the deadline for the annual report to October 31 to accommodate the audit.
- the need for a more independent TPFA that is less bureaucratic, less contractual, and more reflective of the spirit and intent of the UFA.
- the next working group meeting in November. The working group includes Graham, Diane, and Randy Taylor.

Randy Taylor provided an overview of issues with the government scrutinizing the Board's workplan. This has since changed. We need to meet with decision makers regarding change. We may require more legal advice and representation. RRCs have much less money and resources to pushback. This also pertains to the RRCs funding agreements.

Graham said they have made RRCs aware, as well as other boards and committees and they have committed to helping them with their TPFAs as well. Their meeting with Deputy Minister of Environment Manon Moreau was a big turning point.

Further discussion will take place during Members Time.

STATUS OF HIGHLY PATHOGENIC AVIAN INFLUENZA IN CANADA (TAB 13)— M. Campbell

Margaret Campbell reviewed her presentation on avian influenza in Yukon and Canada. Topics included: signs in birds; southern Canada; northern Canada; hunter information; next steps and future impacts; BC/Yukon research project; monitoring and reporting; HPAI resources in Canada and Yukon; and Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) dashboard (Yukon data). There are a low number of cases in the Yukon.

Margaret also provided an update on Migratory Birds Regulations. Key updates were provided for the following: migratory birds regulations modernization; section 35 rights; hunting; nest protection; and links to more information. The presentation was provided in meeting kits.

Comments/Questions:

- NWT/Nunavut — Opportunistic sampling is swabbing while banding on Banks Island. There is no banding program in Yukon. There have been no cases in songbirds to date. HPAI exists within waterfowl as a source sink population. It is rarely in smaller birds. It is an oral fecal transmission. Ravens will occasionally get the AI.
- Q) Why does Yukon have such low cases? A) It is likely that birds were getting sick on their way up, in Alberta or BC. If there were cases, they died on the land and are undetectable. They weren't sick during the big congregation events such as the celebration of swans in Marsh Lake. It could be that we have a less virulent strain in the west side of the country. It is likely there are more cases, but they are not being detected or by the time a bird is found it has been so heavily scavenged that we can't find a sample.
- Wildlife is also in tourism. There should be advertisements in cultural centres and visitors' centres where tourists go.
- Q) Is information sent to mining operations and environmental offices? A) There is so much activity in the Yukon. Placer mines in remote locations might see some of this. Information should be sent to remote areas along with permitting information. Margaret will add mines and tourist operations to the list of recipients for information.
- Q) Is this cyclical? A) There have been outbreaks in the past. We don't have information on how this will change this year. We're waiting to see what happens with the States and then we will be able to predict based on that. All Canadian resources are having discussions with American resources.
- Q) Were there any large-scale die offs? A) There were several large die offs on the east coast in the middle of summer (northern gannet, common eider).
- Q) Did it hit snow geese? A) Snow geese are one of the top five across Canada. Any infected snow geese likely died on their way up to Yukon.
- Q) Have you considered producing field-testing kits for hunters to do testing after they have harvested birds? A) They have tried. There are some in the south of Canada. They don't have any for Yukon. There were some kits made for NWT, but they have run out. This will be on the list for production for next year. The one concern is keeping the sample frozen.
- Q) Could this be noted on the calendar — information on what to do if you see a dead bird? A) Steve did some work this spring. If it were tested in Yukon waterfowl in a species like snow geese where we have an open season, it would make sense.
- Regulations — The Board has a role to review regulations in the Yukon. The Board has helped to advance regulation changes for waterfowl in north Yukon. Margaret has

background data with respect to those regulation changes and can provide it to the Board. The Board did have input into the snow goose regulation changes.

- Q) One update to the regulations was abandonment. Does that mean that up until a few years ago, people were allowed to abandon waterfowl? No. People weren't allowed to abandon waterfowl. This is more along the lines of making sure it is clear in the regulations as there were interpretation issues. Abandonment is an enforcement grey area. The regulation helps to ensure it is more clearly reflected.
 - Q) Who enforces waterfowl regulation? Would it be a federal game warden? A) It should be. COs can charge and pass it on to the federal office.
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SAR UPDATE (Grizzly Bear and Wolverine Management Plan) — K. Wilcox, M. Svoboda

Michael Svoboda introduced his team. There was a roundtable of introductions. Kirsten Wilcox reviewed her presentation on Species at Risk Updates. Topics included: SARA purpose and approach; the SARA process; assessment; listing; recovery planning; management plans; grizzly bear — development of a national management plan; wolverine — development of a national management plan; proposed amendments to the status of 4 birds — barn swallow, Canada warbler, lesser yellowlegs, and short-eared owl; and imminent threat policy. A copy of the presentation was provided in meeting kits.

The Board can provide comments on the proposed amendments to the status of barn swallow, Canada warbler, lesser yellowlegs, and short-eared owl until October 31, 2022.

Environment Canada will reach out on the imminent threat policy in spring 2023.

Graham Van Tighem provided information on communications with the Board. The technical advice and information from Canadian Wildlife Service and Environment and Climate Change Canada has always been excellent.

SARA will reach out to the Board with respect to the grizzly bear management plan to determine how the Board would like the information to be incorporated into the national management plan. Graham recommended that Tom Jung (Senior Wildlife Biologist) and Jodie Pongracz (Carnivore Biologist) with Yukon Environment also be included in that conversation.

Comments/Discussion:

- Q) Once a species has been declared at risk, how long does it get that distinction? A) There is no time limit. COSEWIC reassesses on a 10-year cycle. If it continues to decline, it will stay on the list.
- Q) If you declared chinook salmon a species at risk, would that have an impact all the way down the river, across the border? A) We don't deal with fish. DFO has their own mechanisms. If a species were listed, there are broad management strategies with goals and ways to help manage that. The Canada's Act applies only in Canada. The US has their own endangered species list. ECCC has responsibility for terrestrial species. Department of Fisheries and Oceans is responsible for fish. It is the same act, just administered by different people.
- Q) What is the status of Wood Bison? Is it a species with a management plan? A) Wood bison is currently listed on schedule as threatened. The last COSEWIC assessment was done a few years ago and wood bison was assessed as a species of special concern.

- Regarding salmon listing — ECCC and DFO have different criteria for listing species under SARA. That is why Yukon River salmon are not listed. If they were terrestrial, ECCC would have advanced them for listing.
- Q) Regarding incorporating local plans, how do the two work together? How do you have two separate management plans? A) There is no prescriptive implementation. It is a gathering of goals for the species. We honour the work done in the Yukon to identify goals. It may not apply in southern Canada. Different parts of the management plan can apply in different areas. The threat section can be divided by region or ecological region. Their plan would refer to Yukon's plan and will depend on partners' feedback on how it can be included. Sometimes there is no local management plan. They would work directly with locals to draft it if a local plan doesn't exist.
- Q) What is the difference between eastern and western populations of wolverine? A) They were originally assessed separately. Now they are being lumped together and they are assessing wolverine across Canada. The eastern population is disappearing, and the northern population is increasing.
- Q) How do the birds experience population declines? A) The range doesn't extend very far into the Yukon. There have been big declines globally in aerial insects which have contributed to population declines. For other species, it can be habitat loss. Things can happen on a global scale that impact the birds here.
- Q) Do species get down listed if they have been stable for several years? A) If the population is stable, the listing will change. There are many factors involved in the COSEWIC assessment.
- Do you get a lot of statistics on wolverines for trappers? A) There is not a great population estimate for wolverines. Part of the benefit of making a management plan is that it can be used as a tool to get better population estimates such as input from trappers. A lot of the estimates across the region are not understood well. A lot of work is done through hair samples. Some people are working with trappers to collect samples from fur. Q) If we don't have better information, how do we know if we should put them on the species of concern or the threatened list? A) We do know that they are disappearing from areas of their range in Quebec and Atlantic Canada. People do have population estimates. They can be better, especially to see if they are improving. We know there are declines across their range. There are projects in Nunavut and there is traditional knowledge evidence.
- Q) Canada doesn't enforce SARA for critical habitat unless on Crown lands and water. But when critical habitat is identified, is it identified on land that Canada does not directly control, such as provincial, territorial, or indigenous lands? A) For critical habitat, the short answer is yes, we identify critical habitat everywhere.

MEMBERS TIME — IN CAMERA

Motion – 2022-: That the Board move in camera.

Moved by: Michelle Dawson-Beattie

Seconded by: Cheyenne Bradley

Passed by: Consensus

No additional minutes were recorded.

DAY 3: Thursday, October 20, 2022 – Regular Meeting

PRESENT: Carl Sidney (Chair), Michelle Dawson-Beattie (Vice-Chair), Cheyenne Bradley, Danny Cresswell, Dennis Dickson, Dawn Kisoun, Franklin Patterson Jr., Ken Taylor, Randy Taylor

REGRETS: John Burdek

ZOOM: Sebastian Jones, Blanche Warrington

STAFF: Graham Van Tighem, Diane Sheldon, Steve Hossack

SUPPORT: Colleen Henry (Minute Taker)

IN ATTENDANCE: Janice Sibbeston (Manager, YFWET), Don Toews,

YUKON FISH AND WILDLIFE ENHANCEMENT TRUST (TAB 15) — K. Taylor

Refer to the Enhancement Trust minutes.

YSSC UPDATE

James MacDonald sent his regrets that he could not attend the meeting. Monica Krieger was also away and could not attend to provide an update.

Cheyenne Bradley provided a brief update. The committee is planning for the post season meeting. DFO will provide an update on the TK working group and there will be an update on the PSSI. Cheyenne also reviewed the email from James MacDonald to the Board.

Comments/Discussion:

- Alaska harvesters were not fishing salmon all summer. There are some renegades who fish regardless.
- There are many reasons for the decline of salmon such as disease and ocean trawlers. The goal is to talk about what we can do for salmon instead of blaming one another. People harvest in both Alaska and Canada.
- Klukshu — The sockeye escapement was 49,000 plus and the fishery was open. It is a different species from the Yukon River salmon, and it fluctuates annually.
- C/TFN, Kwanlin Dün, and Ta'an Kwäch'än Council will do a feasibility study on the hatchery and fish ladder.
- Climate change affects chinook more than sockeye or chum. Chum and sockeye have a different biology and fluctuate periodically. Chinook population is steadier. We need to develop long-term strategy, understanding that there won't be any harvesting and we need to understand we are in survival mode. We need to change how we think of Yukon River chinook and what it means to us over the next 20 years.
- We need more studies, more people, more funding, and more fish.

- Pacific Salmon Strategy Initiative is more geared toward BC. They have four pillars including conservation and stewardship, salmon enhancement, harvest transformation, and integration and collaboration. Yukon and BC face completely different challenges. The four pillars they are operating under may not be the best for the Yukon.
- Yukon Days in Ottawa — MP Brendan Hanley sits on the fisheries committee. We could take some representatives to Ottawa to stress the initiatives and the issues with Yukon River chinook salmon. We can also create a lobby group like they did with the Porcupine caribou to lobby in Washington, DC.
- The appointment system in Alaska is nothing like our system. The grassroots people in Alaska are never represented except for the Yukon River Drainage group.
- The AFN meeting resolution about the decline of Yukon River chinook may be used to bring the issue to Washington and Ottawa. Ottawa is more aware of the salmon issue.
- Danny Cresswell provided information on a proposal that went through the development corporation board to look at salmon as part of a three-part food security project. A three-year project for \$800,000 was approved. It didn't go forward. Cryogenics was the company that had frozen milt to fertilize eggs and they are looking for someone to take it over in the Yukon. It would be possible to put hatcheries and sub-hatcheries on streams and tributaries. Danny can provide information about the proposals to the Board. Cheyenne suggested Danny send the information to Elizabeth MacDonald at the First Nation Salmon Stewardship Alliance.

CAST UPDATE — G. Van Tighem, S. Hossack

Graham Van Tighem provided an overview of the Conservation and Angler Stewardship Team. Topics included: the conflict between First Nation perspective on catch and release angling and legislated catch and release angling; including traditional knowledge in management; modernizing regulations; local site-specific regulations (Teslin Lake regulation change to liberalize harvest of pike); stocked lakes; 2022 lake trout symposium and Board presentation; the FEED course and the recommendation for CAST working group review; and action items.

The last CAST meeting was in February 2022. They will set a working group meeting for November to get things moving again. At the very least, Graham would like to discuss the FEED course.

Comments/Discussion:

- Q) How will traditional knowledge be used to inform regulation changes? A) One example is First Nations perspective on food handling and not playing with their food. For catch and release on Mandanna Lake, there was a maximum number of fish anglers are allowed to catch and then they must stop fishing. That is an example of regulations that are based on First Nation traditional knowledge.
- Reconciling concerns about excessive catch and release is a big issue with First Nations and elders. Unnecessary catch and release is when people catch 20 or 30 grayling which is a cultural, social, and a management issue. Approximately 10 or 15 percent of those fish will die. Regulations are our biggest education tool.

- There will be a joint proposal between Yukon government, C/TFN, and C/TRRC on limiting catch and release for Little Atlin, Lubbock, Snafu, and Tarfu.
 - Graham provided information on the Lubbock weir. The perception was that there were 10s of thousands of graylings in there. However, the number of fish was closer to 1,000. That information was valuable in educating the public about impacts of catch and release on the population.
 - Downriggers and lake trout — This is a conversation that needs to take place.
 - Anglers — We have potentially 15,000 people who are angling. We need public support to maintain fish quality, habitat, and water.
 - Dennis has worked on some of this work. They discussed a module approach on fish handling, catch and release, leaving communications materials at places like Little Atlin, and public perceptions. There are old ideas and old management methodologies like “let them go, let them grow”. Now we’re telling people to do the opposite. We have new ideas, new science, new traditional and local knowledge, and new approaches.
 - Paul McCarney can potentially engage on communications with CAST.
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CLOSING COMMENTS

Ken Taylor thanked Carl Sidney for his work on the Board.

Danny Cresswell said the closing prayer.