

YUKON FISH AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT BOARD MEETING

December 5th – 7th, 2023

MINUTES

Yukon Inn, Fireside Room, Whitehorse

DAY 1: Tuesday, December 5, 2023 – Regular Meeting

PRESENT: Sebastian Jones (Acting Chair), John Burdek, Ron Chambers, Randy Taylor, Dawn Kisoun, Pearl Callaghan

ZOOM: Blanche Warrington, Ken Taylor, Graham Van Tighem (Staff), Jerry Cruise (Selkirk RRC), Mark Nassiopoulos (Alsek RRC), Cassandra Wheeler (Alsek RRC);

REGRETS: Michelle Dawson-Beattie, Franklin Patterson, Danny Cresswell

STAFF: Diane Sheldon, Steve Hossack

IN ATTENDANCE: Janice Sibbeston (YFWET Manager), Annika Joe (Alsek RRC)

WELCOME AND OPENING PRAYER

Sebastian called the meeting to order followed by a roundtable of introductions. A moment of silence was held to provide members with the opportunity to reflect on fish and wildlife as well as on recent passings of individuals who had been true on-the land individuals. Members were also informed that Michelle would be in attendance tomorrow.

1. ADMIN AND FINANCES (TAB 01)

A. AGENDA REVIEW— Sebastian Jones

In putting forward the agenda for review, it was noted that a member had requested that discussion on Yukon Outfitter Quota Guidelines be moved to the morning of Day 1 and that the Executive Report and Correspondence be moved to Day 2. As the member was not available to speak to this request and as it was felt that the discussion should take place when the Chair was able to attend it was decided that the agenda not be changed.

Motion – 2023-18: That the Board approve the December 5-7th, 2023 agenda as presented.

Moved by: Ron Chambers

Seconded by: Sebastian Jones

Passed by: Consensus.

B. FINANCIAL UPDATE (TAB 03) – D. Sheldon

Diane Sheldon reviewed the financial statements to November 30th, 2023, provided in the meeting kit.

Motion – 2023-19: That the Board accept the financial report to November 30th, 2023, as presented.

Moved by: Randy Taylor

Seconded by: John Burdek

Passed by: Consensus.

C. October 2023 MINUTES (TAB 04) – D. Sheldon

Sebastian Jones opened the floor for comments and discussions regarding the October 17-19, 2023 minutes.

Comments/Questions:

- Page 1 – under “In Attendance” – “Arian” should be “Aaron”.
- Page 9 – Under “Present” – “Cruse” should be “Cruise”.
- Page 17 – Under “Present” – add Dawn Kisoun.
- Following corrections sent in by Sebastian:
 - Page 1, under Agenda Review, replace “than” with “then”,
 - Page 7, under Yukon Whitefish Species – replace “Whitehorse” with “Whitefish”,
 - Page 7, in third last sentence, replace “than” with “then”, also replace “COSIWIC” with “COSEWIC”.
 - Page 15, 4th to last sentence, remove 2nd “they”,
 - Page 16, under Financial Working Group, last sentence, change “for board” to “for the board”.

Motion – 2023-20: That the Board accept the minutes for October 17-19, 2023, as amended.

Moved by: Dawn Kisoun

Seconded by: Ron Chambers

Passed by: Consensus.

Question was asked as to whether or not a letter to the Minister regarding Wild Boar had been sent? Graham suggested moving into “Action Item Review” to address this and other action items.

D. ACTION ITEM REVIEW (TAB 05) – G. Van Tighem

Regarding the letter to Minister on Wild Boar, there will be a presentation on Day 2 from Animal Health Unit, following this it will be decided what will go in letter.

Steve informed members that he did follow up with Animal Health Unit shortly after the last Board Meeting and information received was that public engagement was conducted from June

to August and feedback had been extended into September. The “What we Heard” document is currently being drafted. A letter could be sent re-iterating our concerns around wild boar and requesting the information from the public engagement.

Pointed out by member that the Board needs to be prepared to respond publicly when the guidelines come out, possibly through a press release.

Action Item: 2023-21 – Staff and Executive will prepare for public outreach when guidelines come out regarding wild boar. Strategy will include others such as the RRC’s as they are being ignored.

Additional comments regarding wild boar:

- Have read two articles regarding issues on wild boar recently in Saskatchewan and Manitoba and it is a very serious issue. Agree with suggestion about Board being prepared, only chance to stop.
- Question put forward on whether or not the Board should be meeting with Yukon Forum? If Yukon Government not listening directly than get other parties involved.
- Another suggestion put forward was to present to CYFN Leadership, provide the information on wild boar.
- Concern expressed regarding Yukon Government ignoring not only the Board but also the Renewable Resources Councils. Would be beneficial to re-engage the RRC’s and ask them to re-submit their concerns as a lot of the letters we have are old.
- Believe it is important to focus on keeping wild boar out, dealing with them after the fact does not seem to be successful.
- Question asked if there was further room for consultation? Steve’s understanding is that with the completion of the public engagement in September, the “What we Heard” document will be released followed by the release of regulations. The draft regulations have fencing for containment and what would happen in the event of wild boar escaping which included fines, dispatching of animals by Cos/livestock agents. If the Public engagement says no to wild boar than this could change the draft regulations. At this point we don’t know the results of the public engagement.

Question was asked if action item 2023-12 regarding submission of comments on Mineral Legislation had been done. Graham informed member that no submission has been sent yet, there is a new person doing the work. Will convene Habitat working group in January to draft submission. He did contact them, and they are still accepting responses.

Regarding Letter # 13 under October correspondence, was training policy recommendation letter on training modules done? Graham informed members that he has submitted comments; not a formal letter, just edits via email.

2. EXECUTIVE REPORT (TAB 02) – G. Van Tighem

Graham Van Tighem reviewed the Executive report provided in the meeting kit. His report set out the various meetings attended as well as future meetings.

Questions/Comments:

- How has the Board's Wildlife Management working group been involved in the Elk-Agriculture Pilot Plan? *Graham informed members that a committee was struck by government, and he was invited to sit on it. He was not involved in final steps of the pilot plan development. After the two-year plan is complete; the Elk management plan will be up for renewal.*
- Question was asked what the response of Fish & Game Association was to outfitter quota guidelines? *Graham response was that they just asked where the Board was at regarding outfitter quota discussions and we just let them know that a decision had not been made yet.*
- Question: Regarding CAST (Conservation Angling Stewardship Team) Working Group, what is their position on catch & release and the use of down riggers? Are these an issue for them? *Focus has been on FEED (Fishing Education & Ethics Development) but both catch & release as well as down riggers are contentious issues and are a high priority for group. This group is made up of both Board and non-Board members. Question put out as to whether or not this is something that the Board should determine its' position on.*
- Regarding down riggers, these were banned pre-devolution, mid 90's, after devolution down riggers were legalized; they are here and do not believe they are going away.
- Member expressed that he's not really in support of catch and release but it is what is being done. If too small or too big they have to be thrown back. Believe that we should discuss. Important that we have adequate information so we can have a full discussion and develop a clear picture of issue.

Future meetings:

- Wildlife Disease and Decision-Making Workshop – December 12th - Da ku Cultural Centre, Haines Junction – Graham and Steve will be attending. Pearl said that as she lives in Haines Junction, she could attend the meeting.
- Ungulate Working Group – December 18, 2023 - Finalization of communication strategy and press conference in the new year.

3. CORRESPONDENCE REVIEW (TAB 03) — G. Van Tighem

Graham Van Tighem reviewed correspondence letters provided under Tab 3 in the meeting kit.

Comments/Questions:

Letter # 1 – Michelle and John's term end dates are coming soon and YG is requesting appointments, Michelle has resubmitted her application.

Letter # 5 – Regarding Yukon Conservation Society's Parnell House Project, following a discussion it was decided that providing a letter of support would not be appropriate.

Letter # 7 – there is a presentation scheduled for Day 2 which will provide further information on the Salmon Project – Chu Niikwan Gyu.

Letter # 10 – suggested by member that those attending the Wildlife Diseases & Decision-Making workshop in Haines Junction bring up the issue of wild boar and disease.

Letter's 11 & 12 – Avalanche killed 6 sheep in one year, is an ongoing hazard for sheep, liver flukes affect them as well. Noted by member that in one these letters, 40% decline in sheep but goats doing better? Steve explained that this can happen due to a variety of reasons, goats can survive tougher conditions, habitat is different. Sheep have a harder time; if snow is deep, especially in lambing season, than not able to forage. Predation could be an issue as well; changing landscape opens this up, predators can get to them.

Letter # 13 – decline in Nelchina caribou herd – 12 bull harvest only. Fluctuation in population is not abnormal. It was also pointed out that Alaskans' try to manage a wild caribou herd like a domestic herd; it doesn't work; nature operates differently.

As the meeting is ahead of schedule Chair asked members if there was anything that they would like to discuss. A discussion on the Kluane sheep issue was suggested, members agreed. Prior to reading out the draft letter that will be sent to Environment, Steve provided an overview of the issue:

- Letter received mid November from government notifying us of their intention to enable adaptive sheep management in 5 units in Kluane, intent was to put PHA's in these areas,
- This would be outside our normal Regulation Change Process.
- This issue emerged in May and it was mentioned at our June Board meeting that there was some consideration of an PHA but nothing further was heard until this fall;
- In meetings late July, concerns were raised about population numbers, and potential impact to hunters, First Nation proposed voluntary no-hunting but YG not supportive.

Steve read out the proposed draft letter (see 12.2 in board kits). This letter addresses the concerns around the responsibility of board as per the UFA, the accelerated timeline, and the use of adaptive management in this situation.

Comments/Discussion:

- Member asked for the definition of “adaptive management” – step wise process; have a plan, doing and rechecking. Government “adaptive management” is more a “adaptive harvest management”; could be so much more; government focuses on harvest, as far as tends to go, no revisiting. Board supports conservation but doesn't agree with circumventing process – have to ensure all knowledge is included; not just scientific.
- Can't let bureaucratic system tell us how to manage fish and wildlife; this letter shows that we know what we are talking about.

4. DIRECTOR OF WILDLIFE UPDATE (Tab 04) – Marc Cattet (Director, Fish & Wildlife Branch)

Individuals accompanying Marc in providing update consisted of Briar Young, Assistant Deputy Minister; Kelsey Russell, Northern Mountain Caribou Biologist and Ron Sumanik, Strategic Advisor to Deputy Minister. Briar thanked Board for having him; attended Executive Meeting in July, here as a learning endeavor and to provide support.

Kelsey opened with update on Clear Creek Caribou herd, which is in the Northern Tutchone region, northwest of Mayo. It often overlaps with the Hart River herd. Collaring program in late 90's and in 2001 a population estimate done, approximately 900 animals. Regional concerns by Na-Cho Nyäk Dun due to the amount of development in herd range, especially in the southern portion. In 2017 started another collaring program, 39 GPS collars, population estimate in 2018 which resulted in just less than 800 animals. Slightly less than previous one but different methodology was used so hard to compare. Since 2018 two composition surveys done, calf/cow ratio is lower than what would like for a herd considered to be stable. A range assessment should be ready in the new year. A new collaring program is being started, did go out in March but were not successful, were more successful in November and were able to put 8 collars out, still have 22 to put out and will try again in February/March 2024. Hope to get a better understanding of distribution, do believe that there has been a range shift to the north. Do have some newer collars are solar and provide location every 15 minutes, will provide information in terms of distance and behavioral response to disturbance. Also plan to do another population survey in 2024 which will be done at the same time as Hart River. There is a small, licensed harvest and no harvest by outfitters.

Comments/Discussion:

- Member commented on the change in range map, which has shifted more to the north. Was this due to development and is where the caribou were found a result of mining? ***Collar data led to change, there are not a lot of animals in the northern area, is a winter range, older data does reflect this movement so don't believe it is something new.***
- Wildlife key areas have been identified in the south; will this also occur in the northern areas? ***John Ryder and Tyler Kuhn (Habitat Program DOE) have recently completed consultations to review key areas and would like to provide the results of the review as well as next steps at the next Board meeting.***
- ***Regarding key wildlife areas, the challenge with caribou is that key areas were determined based on survey data but we now have all the collar data which hasn't been integrated. We are trying to bring both types of data together.***

Marc provided the following update on Kluane sheep conservation concerns:

- In February Kluane First Nation brought forward concerns regarding sheep populations in their traditional area, they requested an emergency closure and cancelled their sheep lottery hunt as well wanted to move forward on a conservation management plan.
- The surveys completed in summer of 2022 did corroborate Kluane FN concerns to a degree, in summer of 2023 the branch did a series of surveys over a broader range and again found results that reflected some population concerns.
- Multiple meetings held with Kluane First Nation/letter sent out on proposed adaptive management action to all parties (Board, Kluane FN, Whiteriver FN and RRC's in area)
- Several meetings with co-management partners; not a strong desire to go that route.
- Last week and half looking at a way to bring 7 co-management partners (Kluane FN, Champagne/Aishihik FN, White River FN, Alsek RRC, Dan Keyi RRC, Board and Environment) together to discuss issue and options.
- A letter has also been sent out to interest groups (Fish & Game Association, Yukon Outfitters, Yukon Conservation Society, outfitters specific to area) letting them know that co-management group will be meeting and an update will be provided.

Comments/Questions:

- Concern identified is the urgency to have PHA's in place. Is this less urgent now? **Believe it is still urgent but right now stepping back to allow discussion, not sure where going, everybody in agreement that have to do something.**
- There is more to wildlife management than just harvesting, with government, adaptive management = adaptive "harvest" management. **That is a fair comment, there is a set of tools that we could be using; on us to start putting these in place; adaptive management enables the flexibility and ability to react quickly.**
- Adaptive Management does allow rapid response but along with that there is also a requirement for monitoring and analysis. Resources to do this don't seem to part of the action taken under adaptive management by government. With out the additional resources it is really not adaptive management. **Maybe need to re-name, adaptive management tools right now are limited i.e. do nothing or address harvest, can't control other environmental factors that are occurring; nothing in tools to address.**
- Agree that not really adaptive management but believe tools are there, i.e. no fly zones; restricting helicopter access is another. **Branch has wildlife act; don't have authority i.e. chopper flights or access restrictions, these are EMR activities; outcome not always what environment would want.** Environment Branch only has the *Wildlife Act* but Government has the required tools, Departments shouldn't work in silos.
- Information is important, don't make rules to protect one species at the expense of others; important not to put roadblocks that result in us hand cuffing ourselves.

In closing Marc spoke to the Moose Survey result documents which were included in Board kits. Branch is currently working at ensuring all reports related to survey data backlogs are completed and made public as soon as possible. Technical reports, which are more comprehensive, take longer to produce but he would ensure that these were made available at Boards request.

5. YUKON FISH AND GAME ASSOCIATION (Tab 05) – Eric Schroff (Executive Director, zoom), Bryce Bekar (President)

The following points were provided by Bryce and Eric in their presentation to Board:

- Expressed concern regarding the seemingly circumvention of the responsibility and ability of Board to be the primary instrument of resource management been taken by government, i.e. adaptive management.
- The Association fully supports the process that the Board has under UFA; it is one of the most important processes that we have in the Yukon.
- It's not just about management of harvest, has to be more holistic, i.e. use of fire and/or predator management for example (trapping).
- Public has fear that something will be pushed through with no opportunity for input.
- The association is in full support of conservation, real lack of information and need to understand what Yukon Government is doing in relation to sheep and proposed adaptive management steps.

- Once an area is closed to hunting there is no mechanism to re-open for general harvest, just modification of PHA's.
 - The use of the term adaptive management as being proposed by Fish & Wildlife Branch are a misuse of the phrase "adaptive management" which is actually a process where you present a hypothesis, test it, and an action is taken and that action is then evaluated and then that action adjusted if needed. It is a continuous process.
 - The Department is using adaptive management as a way to circumvent opportunities for public input and involvement in decision making through the Board's process
 - Important that there is public consultation and a public meeting regarding the Kluane sheep issue prior to any final decisions being made.
-

6. NOMINATIONS FOR CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR – IN CAMERA

Motion – 2023-21: That the Board move in camera.

Moved by: Dawn Kisoun

Seconded by: Ron Chambers

Passed by: Consensus.

No additional minutes were recorded.

Motion – 2022-22: That Michelle Dawson-Beattie be re-appointed as Interim Chair to April 10, 2024 and Sebastian Jones be re-appointed as Vice Chair to October 23, 2024. Both appointments were through acclamation.

Moved by: Dawson Kisoun

Seconded by: Blanche Warrington

Passed by: Consensus.

Motion – 2023-23: That the Board move out of in camera.

Moved by: Randy Taylor

Seconded by: John Burdek

Passed by: Consensus.

7.0 MEMBERS TIME — IN CAMERA

Motion – 2022-24: That the Board move back to in camera.

Moved by: Pearl Callaghan

Seconded by: John Burdek

Passed by: Consensus.

MEMBERS TIME

Members time was in camera. No meeting minutes were recorded.

YUKON FISH AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT BOARD MEETING

December 5th – 7th, 2023

MINUTES

Yukon Inn, Fireside Room, Whitehorse

DAY 2: Wednesday, December 6th, 2023 – Regular Meeting

PRESENT:	Michelle Dawson-Beattie (Chair), Sebastian Jones (Vice Chair), John Burdek, Ron Chambers, Randy Taylor, Dawn Kisoun, Pearl Callaghan
ZOOM:	Blanche Warrington, Ken Taylor, Graham Van Tighem (Staff), Annika Joe (Alsek RRC), Don Toews (CTRRC).
REGRETS:	Franklin Patterson, Danny Cresswell
STAFF:	Diane Sheldon, Steve Hossack
IN ATTENDANCE:	Janice Sibbeston (YFWET Manager), David Dickson

Meeting called to order and thanked Sebastian for acting for day 1. She reviewed the agenda for Day 2. Michelle also informed members of Cheyenne Brandley's resignation from the Board.

8. CHISANA CARIBOU MANAGEMENT PLAN UPDATE (TAB 06) – G. VAN TICHEM

Graham provided a summary on the updating of the 2010-2015 Management plan for the Chisana caribou herd:

- Representative groups from both Alaska and Yukon make up the committee that is currently facilitating the review of the plan.
- Population is between 557 – 706 and is considered stable; goal is to support stable or increasing population.
- Community tours held last month, a "What We Heard" document is now being produced and could result in additional changes being made to plan through recommendations of the Board or modifications by the management partners.
- The new plan proposes increased monitoring with populations surveys every 3-5 years and composition surveys annually.
- Currently there are 30-40 collared caribou, and these will be maintained.

- Harvest monitoring will amp up with a more detailed harvesting regime being developed; the increased monitoring data will determine harvest.
- Public review and feedback in both in Alaska and Yukon, three community meetings in Yukon – Burwash, Destruction Bay and Beaver Creek. In general people were very supportive of the updated plan, however issues came up such:
 - looking at predation,
 - supportive of herd increase.
 - strategies don't go far enough to support herd growth to historical range.
- At these community meetings a lot more traditional knowledge was shared, and it was noted that there was fluctuation in herd range. Also, collaring was felt to be too invasive and that other ways of surveying should be looked at. Possibility of habitat enhancement was also brought up.
- The Board will make recommendations in May/June 2024 to Minister as well as Kluane First Nation and White River First Nation according to governments timeline provided.

Comments/Questions:

- This management plan seems to be a harvest management plan; why is no habitat and/or access protection addressed in plan? ***The range in Alaska is all park so already protected, range in Yukon is quite remote and not easily accessible rest in Yukon on crown land. It is a good point and should be considered.*** Believe not mentioning the parks that are in the herd range is a gap in the plan.
- What does Chisana mean? – ***Elders in Burwash “the place where the sun shines on the water”.*** This should be highlighted in plan.
- Was engagement limited to highway communities? **Yes.** Understand why consultation is focused but believe that end up missing a wider base of knowledge/wisdom when consultation is limited, there is a risk losing input.
- Reference was made that steps would be taken in the event of the Nelchina herd migrating into the Chisana. In between the Nelchina herd and the Chisana is another herd, will they migrate into the Chisana? ***Would be good question to ask the caribou biologist, believe it is not common for them to overlap. The Nelchina herd was identified as the biggest overlap threat to the Chisana herd as the Nelchina can be harvested which is a concern.***

9. WILDLIFE HEALTH AND REGULATION UPDATE (TAB 07) – Michelle Thompson

- Michelle introduced herself as one of the program veterinarians working in the Animal Health Unit under Mary Vanderkop who is the Yukon's Chief Veterinary Officer.
- Background information on the Sheep and Goat Order – *M. ovi* was identified as being responsible for pneumonia in Big Horn Sheep and that it could be carried by domestic sheep and goats without showing any symptoms. In 2015 the Board & the RRC's put forward a resolution to ensure separation of domestic and wild sheep. In 2016 a 3rd party risk assessment was completed. These led to development of Control Order 2018-001 which put steps in place to prevent spread of the disease.
- Control order came into effect in January 2020 and set to expire on December 31, 2024.

- In preparation of expiring control order – looking at data known around M. ovi, where domestic and wild sheep are now/ impact assessment to see impact for farms/update risk assessment based on all data known – being worked on now, completed summer 2024.
- Have been testing domestic sheep/goats over last four years, latest testing – no domestic sheep were positive/2 goats tested positive.
- Since 2015, started testing all ungulates for M. ovi, have tested 1400 ungulates – no wild sheep have tested positive; 6 migratory caribou/2 moose have, strains carried by caribou and moose is different from sheep.
- Animal Protection & Control Act was passed in November 2022; engagements have been taking place to draft specific regulations to address definition of livestock and standard of care, standards of care/slaughter and specific classification for species, i.e. Eurasian wild boar – high risk versus prohibited.
- “What we Heard” document currently being worked on and should be released in January 2024 and the next steps would be to bring the draft regulations to Cabinet.
- Other areas being worked on by unit- chronic wasting/rabies/avian influenza.

Comments/Questions:

(Q) Is a control order just for disease? ***Under the Animal Health Act, the focus is disease and the control order becomes a tool under the act so yes.***

(Q) What would the response be if there was contact? ***Initially If a wild sheep were seen to be in contact with domestic sheep/goats then steps would have been taken to capture the wild sheep to prevent any further contact to others in the wild. Now that we have more information and with all sheep/goats being tested; response may be different.***

(Q) Is M. ovi tested for regularly outside of Yukon? ***No***

(Q)What specifically is happening in regard to wild boar with the next steps? are the draft regulations based on the public engagement and if can you reference what will be going forward? ***Right now, with regard to Eurasian Boar document lays out what is being seen in rest of Canada as well as what heard through the engagement process, this will be put forward to Minister. Regarding number of farms with Eurasian Boar, the Ag branch looking at current status now, main source for information was from Yukon Ag Association.***

(Q) Will the Board get an opportunity to see what is being proposed i.e. draft regulations? ***The information was collected in the engagements, concerns around Eurasian Boar heard loud and clear, the regulations and species list can be adapted and changed over time.***

This Board makes recommendation to Minister; we need to know what the red flags are so can make informed recommendations that protect our native wildlife and their habitats.

10. YUKON SALMON SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATE (TAB 08) – Monica Krieger

Monica reviewed the YSSC Proposed budget for 2024/25, a copy of which was included in board kits. Following a question-and-answer period the following motion was put forward.

Motion – 2022-25: That the Board accepts and approves the Yukon Salmon Subcommittee 2024/25 budget as presented.

Moved by: Sebastian Jones

Seconded by: John Burdek

Passed by: Consensus.

Other points covered in update:

- The need for the Board to appoint another member to the YSSC to fill vacancy due to Cheyenne Bradley's resignation. This will be on February 2024 agenda.
- Yukon River Education Exchange – 7 people to Alaska; one of the participants, Max Zimmerman has produced a 4 min film about the trip.
- In November committee went to Washington to address concerns about salmon, both Cheyenne and Dennis went as members of this committee along Carmacks Chief Nicole Thom, MP Brandon Hanley and Pat Duncan. It is a start.
- The Yukon River Panel will meet in Whitehorse in January.
- Salmon stock rebuilding for Chinook - ongoing work on this, we have had one workshop to address this, more to come.
- In closing, Ron acknowledged MP Hanley's work; he said he would try and he did. Meeting with Alaskan decision makers are important. Dynamics are different in Alaska.

11. CHU NIIKWAN GYU SALMON STEWARDHIP CENTRE (TAB 09) – BRANDY MAYES, KDFN

Brandy provided information on the planned salmon stewardship currently being worked on, Chu Niikwon Gyu (Shining Waters). As per document included in board kits highlights of presentation included the following:

- Approached by DFO, put together vision and was provided funds - \$250,000 - to do a feasibility study.
- Building partnerships with Carcross/Tagish FN and Ta'an FN as well other First Nation and NGO's and YSSC.
- Will be based on four traditional laws, look at what took place in past and than move forward.
- Looking at restoration, conservation, hatcheries, research, and education, all housed in stewardship centre, it will be teaching place.
- Feasibility portion currently underway, over the next two years, completion date planned by 2028/29.

Comments/Questions:

- Pointed out that the dam was put in with no input and that dams do have a life span.
- Question asked if there was any resistance from other First Nation? ***No, we all have to work together; work being done could even influence Alaska. We are gaining a lot of support; it is inclusive of all First Nation.***

12. WOLVERINE PROJECT (CAMERA TRAPS – DAWSON) (TAB 10) – Tom Jung, Zac Fragel, Alice McCulley

- Tom opened the presentation by introducing Zac Fragel, a student from University of Alberta who is looking at the response of wolverine & allied species to industrial disturbance in the gold fields.
- Is part of a larger project which involves a large team, Department of Environment, University of Alberta, Federal departments as well - Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in.
- Multiple projects – endemic species distribution/ bio blitz/ FN capacity building/ Outreach education/ songbird research/modeling climate refuge.
- Area of study diversity value/27 species at risk/11 only occur within area and there is a lot of activity in area.
- Key threats – climate change/ exploration/ habitat loss.
- Wolverine and allied species were chosen as they are a species at risk, are a valued fur-bearer, have biological cultural importance and are sensitive to humans.
- Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation would like to be able to do more monitoring/ most industrial disturbed area in Yukon and ecology not well known.
- Initially the plan was to look at collaring wolverine and den site location and ecology/took a while but there was not a lot of support for this. More interested in non-invasive ways of studying and wanted to include other species.
- Camera trapping was decided on and would look at allied species (wolverine interact with) species that they feed on and species that provide kills the feed on.
- All partners working together – First Nation/Government and University

Alice McCulley, Director of Natural Resources, Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in provided the following:

- Presented the “Ecological and Land Use Monitoring Plan” developed by Tr'ondëk at our June Board Meeting in Dawson.
- Laid out four land-based needs/ healthy land, fish & wildlife/availability of plants and animals to harvest and water to drink/ access to land to carry out traditional activities/transfer of knowledge between generations.
- Climate change, landscape alterations and intensive land use activities and use threaten these needs. Stewardship plays important role in addressing threats and risks.
- Information obtained will be used to make informed decisions.
- Wolverine is of cultural significance, are an important fur bearer.
- Area is of high cultural significance to TH citizens in terms of use – subsistence hunting/harvest camps.
- Project is a collaboration and involves shared decision making, knowledge, and resources.

Zac Fragel, University of Alberta student provided the following:

- Study area is in Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in traditional area/ 25000 sq. km.
- Required as Wolverine have large home areas.
- Few different methods being used in study– areal images to categorize and map footprint disturbances, sound recorders to monitor industrial landscape and trail cameras.

- Initially 5x5 km cells and categorized each cell based on disturbance intensity; environmental factors also included i.e. fire history/tree cover/wetlands.
- Have 138 sites in total, will graph areas distance/sound distance – population abundance compared to disturbance and sound.
- Initial results – spring 2024

In Conclusion Tom provided the following:

- Next steps and timeline – 3-5 years of fieldwork planned and data will be accessed annually.
- 1st year results will decide if have to make any changes in study design.
- 2 years funding at a time and reports provided through out.
- Have also discussed the possibility of rescoping to a monitoring program in the end which would enable TH to continue monitoring.

13. UNGULATE WORKING GROUP UPDATE (TAB 11) – M. Dawson-Beattie, G. Van Tighem, S. Hossack, L. Jessup

Graham provided the following:

- Have been collecting and compiling information received through engagements into “What We Heard” document.
- Strategic planning discussion has taken place within working group – ensure fits Boards Strategic goals.
- Have met with one of the Northern Tutchone RRCs - Carmacks.
- Still need to engage with some First Nation, i.e. Kwanlin Dun being one as well as the RRCs – Selkirk/Mayo and some stake holders.

Comments/discussion:

- Discussion around Moose Management Plan versus Moose Management Framework-working group shifting more to a management framework. Moose management plan not governed by Board, is a government document. If keep as a Board document can maintain tone wanted, not restricted. Look at framework “tool box” for harvest; framework could enable department being able to do better job.
- Framework document could be a resource to RRCs, look at an integrated approach i.e. an ecosystem wholistic approach.
- Multi-year project will grow and evolve as we learn; Ungulate Management framework will be a living document.
- Question asked in reference to Table 5 in document, reference to First Nation harvest information; is the Board as a whole or the ungulate working group planning to actually approaching First Nation to obtain harvest information and also in terms of First Nation engagement, has the Board reached out to the non-self governing First Nation? ***In terms of First Nation harvest information, historically was attempted in the 90's but did not lead to anything substantial, working group did discuss and believe that can move away from actual numbers; gathering of local and traditional knowledge can provide***

understanding of what is happening in area. Have not yet been successful in engaging with non-settled First Nation but It is intent of working group to do so.

- **Board members on the Ungulate Working Group will attend community meetings.**
- Regarding First Nation harvest; how to collect and how to build a relationship; have a contractor/ staff collect info, might take time, do have to build trust.
- Question asked Do First Nation Lands and Resource still meet on an annual basis?

14. SHEEP MANAGEMENT CONCERNS (TAB 12) – David Dickson

David reviewed his document which had been included in board kits. His presentation included the following:

- Observations “family’s outfitting area since 1969”.
- In early days there was a lot of wildlife; 1930’s harvesting of furs = reduction of predators, denning wolves and denning bears part of harvesting.
- Showed multiple slides that showed harvesting of predators.
- Mining impacts from staking claims; if surveys, helicopter activity disperses sheep in nursery mountain, nursery group disturbed; left area, long term impacts.
- In 2012 he sent letter to government regarding the mining activities and impacts to sheep, on Flat top range – first time no sheep seen.
- In 2013 were out hunting moose – staking frenzy again- no moose.
- Spoke to impacts seen/ observed and impacts of exploration - debris from staking left behind, no reclamation work done.
- No clean up takes place, core materials and lumber left behind including drill pads built in sheep traditional area.
- Excavation has long term impacts – destruction of habitat.
- Recent activities and resulted in a destruction of Davids’ livelihood.

Comments/Questions:

- Not supportive of putting PHA out and using adaptive management to by-pass Board.
- Government puts value on mineral extraction rather than wildlife.

15. YUKON OUTFITTER QUOTA GUIDELINE REVIEW – IN CAMERA

Motion – 2022-26: That the Board move to in camera.

Moved by: John Burdek

Seconded by: Dawn Kisoun

Passed by: Consensus.

No minutes were recorded.

Action 2023-23 - YFWMB Executive Director will work with YG to establish funds to hire a proposal writer to develop a comprehensive proposal that will set out time-lines, costs, and budget to carry out the public review of the Guidelines to Establish Outfitter Quotas.

Meeting Adjourned 4:47 pm.

YUKON FISH AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT BOARD MEETING

December 5-7, 2023

MINUTES

Fireside Meeting Room, Yukon Inn

DAY 3: Thursday, December 8th, 2023 – Regular Meeting

PRESENT:	Michelle Dawson-Beattie (Chair), Sebastian Jones (Vice Chair), Ron Chambers, Randy Taylor, Dawn Kisoun
ZOOM:	Graham Van Tighem (Zoom), Blanche Warrington, Ken Taylor, Pearl Callaghan
REGRETS:	Franklin Patterson, Danny Cresswell, John Burdek
STAFF:	Diane Sheldon, Steve Hossack
IN ATTENDANCE:	Janice Sibbeston (YFWET Manager)

16. YUKON FISH AND WILDLIFE ENHANCEMENT TRUST (Tab 14) – K Taylor

Refer to the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Enhancement Trust minutes.

17. YUKON GRIZZLY BEAR PROTECTION SOCIETY (TAB 15) – Dr. Annette Belke

Dr. Belke introduced herself and Lea Bayliss as directors of the society. Document was provided to members and was reviewed. Provided information on work they have done, goals of the society – hunting ban on grizzlies/ban roadside hunting/establish rehabilitation centre for injured and orphaned grizzlies. They are in support of the Grizzly Management Plan but believe that more needs to be implemented. Spoke to what they saw as gaps, when plan developed no one expected climate change to occur so quickly, needs to be considered; actual numbers not known, First Nation not required to provide harvest #'s, poaching concerns and more education on attractants. Also, plan should be reviewed every 3 years.

Comments/Questions:

- Vice-Chair thanks them for their presentation, pleased to see a focus on attractants, is a gap. A grizzly rehab centre is pretty ambitious and pointed out that a review every 3 years may not be practical as plan take a lot of time to develop.
- Concern expressed about comparing Yukon to British Columbia, the Yukon is very different. Also, First Nation have a history of dealing with bears; are cultural differences.
- Graham mentioned the importance of community driven fish and wildlife management and the Board's process for establishing our own Grizzly Bear Conservation Plan. The Society's approach should follow that process rather than looking elsewhere.

18. YUKON ENERGY (TAB 16) – Lisa Wiklund, Communications Manager

Following introductions of herself, Lindsey Rear, Resource Manager for Resource Planning Group at YE, Lars Jessup (consultant) and Tess McLeod for Na-Cho Nyäk Dun, provided the following:

- Yukon Energy currently has a water use licence to use water from Mayo Lake to generate electricity at the Mayo Generating Stations A and B.
- This water licence is set to expire December 31, 2025.
- These stations put in without a lot of consideration for impacts, Station A in 1952 and Station B in 2011.
- Recognition that the construction and continued operation of the stations has impacted the land and water, as well as traditional ways of life.
- Because of this, Yukon Energy’s intent is to do things different this time around, looking at partnership with Na-Cho Nyäk Dun to find a better way forward.
- Technical and oversight groups established- Yukon Government, Yukon Energy, Na-Cho Nyäk Dun to work collaboratively and to provide input and guidance through the relicensing process and future operations of the facility.
- Reviewed process timeline between now and 2025 –throughout 2023 have been engaging with community and Na-Cho Nyäk Dun looking at various fish studies and passage discussions development of project proposal, target of May 1, 2024 for submission of project proposal to YESAB as well as Water Board and Fisheries authorization processes and permitting occurring in 2025.

Comments/Questions:

- Noted that references regarding “fish passage discussion” - action rather than discussion is important.
- Looking at process timelines – 2024 project to YESAB and hopefully get favorable decision and then submit in 2025 to Yukon Water Board/Fisheries Act Licences – don’t see it happening in time – what happens if don’t get water licences in time or it still held up in YESAB? ***Approach within the Technical Working Group is to hopefully put forward a strong proposal which will facilitate faster process; believe a shorter time period emergency option is available is needed.***

MEMBERS TIME AND CLOSING REMARKS (IN CAMERA)

Members had an in-camera discussion. No minutes were recorded.

ADJOURNMENT