

**YUKON FISH AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT BOARD MEETING**  
**December 13 to 15, 2022**  
**MINUTES**  
**Westmark Whitehorse**

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**DAY 1: Tuesday, December 13, 2022 – Regular Meeting**

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<b>PRESENT:</b>	Michelle Dawson-Beattie (Interim-Chair), John Burdek, Ron Chambers, Danny Cresswell, Dennis Dickson, Sebastian Jones, Dawn Kisoun, Ken Taylor, Randy Taylor,
<b>ZOOM:</b>	Cheyenne Bradley, Blanche Warrington
<b>REGRETS:</b>	Franklin Patterson Jr.
<b>STAFF:</b>	Graham Van Tighem, Steve Hossack
<b>SUPPORT:</b>	Colleen Henry (Minute Taker – from recording)
<b>IN ATTENDANCE:</b>	Marc Cattet (Director, Fish and Wildlife, Environment), Priyank Thatté (Acting Assistant Deputy Minister, Environment, YG), Eric Schroff (Fish and Game Association),

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**WELCOME AND OPENING PRAYER**

Dawn Kisoun said the opening prayer. Michelle Dawson-Beattie welcomed everyone to the meeting. There was a roundtable of introductions.

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**ADMIN AND FINANCES (TAB 01)**

**A. AGENDA REVIEW— M. Dawson-Beattie**

Michelle Dawson-Beattie reviewed the agenda. Additions were suggested as follows:

- Bill C-21 was moved out of the in-camera Members Time to just before Members Time.
- Update to the Outfitter Quota Appeal Committee — This is still in the Cabinet approval stage. There is no update, and no hearing has been scheduled.
- Update on Board appointments was added to the Executive Report.

**Motion – 2022-21:** That the Board accept the December 13 to 15, 2022 agenda as amended.

**Moved by:** Ken Taylor

**Seconded by:** Ron Chambers

**Passed by:** Consensus

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## **B. FINANCIAL UPDATE (TAB 02) – D. Sheldon**

Graham Van Tighem provided an overview of the Variance Report as of November 30, 2022.

**Motion – 2022-22:** That the Board accept the variance report to November 30, 2022, as presented.

**Moved by:** Ken Taylor

**Seconded by:** Sebastian Jones

**Passed by:** Consensus

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## **C. FINANCIAL WORKING GROUP (TAB 03) – R. Taylor, G. Van Tighem**

Graham Van Tighem provided an overview of the transfer payment funding agreement, including: background information; discussions with the Department of Environment and Aboriginal Relations; members of the working group; the legal review of the TPFA; and improvements to the financial process and timelines for reporting and audit. A PowerPoint presentation on the transfer payment agreement discussion with Aboriginal Relations, Environment, and the Board was provided in meeting kits. The presentation was confidential.

Randy Taylor provided an overview of section 10 of the TPFA which addresses when the Board would be in default. At the last working group meeting, Board members in attendance recommended removing that clause and adding detail about what it means for the Board to be in “financial difficulty” and adding it as an appendix. Yukon government no longer approves or scrutinizes the workplan which is a good change.

### **Comments/Questions:**

- Multi-year contribution agreements — Previously, Ken Taylor suggested working toward a multi-year contribution agreement. Graham confirmed this is not an option. Yukon government receives their funding annually and cannot administer a multi-year agreement. Randy said there is a chance it could be on the table if Yukon Government gets the funding from the Federal Government. The Board has asked to see the guidelines. Graham said they can ask about a multi-year agreement again at the next meeting. This is a UFA board, so it should be possible to get multi-year funding. The Board is audited annually, so there are safeguards in place. Ken Taylor recommended that the committee put the multi-year funding option back on the table and to ask for specific language, regulations, policy guidelines, and federal directives that indicate a multi-year agreement is impossible.
- Honoraria — Graham Van Tighem provided an overview of the honoraria guidelines. There is no transparent or official mechanism to change honoraria for boards and councils. The honoraria guidelines are grouped with meeting room expenses, travel expenses, per diems, et cetera, which were all developed in the late 1980s. All the expenses have been updated except for honoraria. If boards or councils were to pay more honoraria, their TPFAs could be removed.
  - Sebastian Jones said that DFO provides a \$150 top up to YSSC for honoraria. That’s an indicator of how far behind the honoraria is if other governments provide a top up.

- Graham said the Federal Government and all boards funded directly by the federal government have changed their honorarium, such as the YESAB, the Water Board, or the YSSC. The issue is the administration of the funding through Yukon government. In addition, the YSSC is a sub-committee of the Board.
- John Burdek said a challenge is keeping this at the forefront when it comes time to renegotiate the implementation funding. CYFN is the negotiator. We need to keep the level of awareness up.
- Ron Chambers said the boards were never appointed to be financial people. It was supposed to have people take care of that for the board. That is the weak point of the overall organization of the agreements. The financial people aren't there on behalf of the board. It is dependent on who is in government finance and how they think the board should operate, but that isn't their business. Why am I talking about budgets if I don't know anything about budgets? They are being paid on our behalf, why are they not working on our behalf?
- Randy Taylor said it is important to get the agreement in place and to establish the process while things are going well before there are changes in government.
- Graham discussed the UFA education efforts and his meeting with First Nation Education.
- Annual Audit – Sebastian Jones said the YSSC does not get audited annually like the Board does. An audit is \$10,000 per year and takes significant work from staff. He suggested an audit every five years. He discussed other boards and their ability to waive audits under a certain threshold. The Board is not a society and is not under the *Societies Act*.
  - John Burdek suggested this could be discussed at the same time the multi-year agreement is discussed.
  - Graham Van Tighem said every year there are one or two suggestions from the audit that help to improve the financial management practices. The audit is a safeguard. He suggested this be discussed at the next meeting.

#### **D. OCTOBER MINUTES (TAB 04) — M. Dawson-Beattie**

Michelle Dawson-Beattie opened the floor for comments and discussion.

##### **Comments/Questions:**

- Page 2, top – Steve put the comments together and not Sebastian.
- Page 3, bottom – Change “compromised messaging” to “collaborative messaging”.
- Page 5, bottom – There will be a workshop in late fall or early winter to discuss habitat protection area in Southern Lakes. Did that workshop take place? Marc Cattet said there was an implementation committee has not met yet. The HPA has been approved and signed off. Randy Taylor said Carcross Tagish RRC and C/TFN will have a workshop to discuss habitat protection in the Southern Lakes area. He did not know if it has happened. Sebastian suggested having someone from the Board attend.
- Action Item 12 – Ken Taylor requested an update. Graham followed up and met with Cameron Sinclair who also received correspondence. There will be further discussion at

the next Angling Working Group meeting. Cameron will provide an update at the next meeting.

**Motion – 2022-23:** That the Board accept the minutes for October 2022, as amended.

**Moved by:** Dawn Kisoun

**Seconded by:** Ron Chambers

**Passed by:** Consensus

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### **EXECUTIVE REPORT (TAB 05) – M. Dawson-Beattie, S. Jones, G. Van Tighem**

Graham Van Tighem welcomed Ron Chambers back to the Board and reviewed the Executive Report provided in Tab 5 of meeting kits.

#### **Comments/Questions:**

- Yukon-share — This is about frontend sharing, not about backend sharing. There is a food sharing program in hospitals for First Nation elders. It may be a better effort to put time and energy into enhancing or broadening that program. The program will cover 10 percent of butchering fees. A large portion of the hunting community is unaware of the program. Graham and Steve will follow up and get more information.
- Regulation change process — Marc Cattet suggested a meeting with the Board and Environment be scheduled in January or February. They have developed a process internally that matches the timelines and approval process that need to be met in government. It has been reviewed by the Department of Justice. They will be ready to meet with the Board and compare notes. There was a discussion about the Board's involvement in the regulation change process. There is a legislation and regulation working group which should become activated soon.
- RRC AGM April 14 to 16, 2023 — Ken Taylor suggested having the YFWMB meeting the same week.
- Membership update — Graham provided an update. Carl Sidney's term came to an end. Ron Chambers has the federal/territorial position for the next five years. Two CYFN appointments and two YG appointments expire in spring. Graham will follow up.
- North American Ungulate and Caribou Conference, May 8 to 12, 2023, Anchorage — Graham Van Tighem submitted an abstract. Two board members and two staff have attended to present in the past. Sebastian and a colleague are working on an abstract on behalf of Yukon Conservation Society. Sebastian and two colleagues will attend. The Southern Lakes Steering Committee will also send members, including First Nations.

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### **CORRESPONDENCE REVIEW (TAB 06) — G. Van Tighem**

Graham Van Tighem reviewed the correspondence and correspondence list provided in Tab 6 of meeting kits.

#### **Comments/Questions:**

- Three-year outfitter quotas — Marc Cattet provided an update. There is recognition that the outfitting industry needs some predictability beyond one year. For the minister to provide annual operating certificates for a longer period than one year means the minister is going beyond his or her authority, which happened in the past. The effort is to come up with something that aligns with the *Wildlife Act* and meets the needs of the outfitters. Other things are also being addressed.
- Letter #7 from the Grizzly Bear Protection Society — The society has been invited to the Board meeting to clarify information, regulation changes, processes, and mandates. Graham recommended meeting with the society to discuss the misinformation on their website. John Burdek recommended drafting a formal letter outlining the Board's recommendation on the closure and the responsibilities of the RRC and using the letter to organize a meeting. It's important for the Board to ensure it is not misrepresented.

**New Action Item 2022-15** — Graham Van Tighem will draft a response to the Grizzly Bear Protection Society and circulate it for Board members' review.

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#### **DIRECTOR OF FISH AND WILDLIFE UPDATE (TAB 07)— M. Cattet**

Marc Cattet reviewed his update on select files document which was included in meeting kits. Topics included moose survey results, Finlayson caribou update, Kudz Ze Kaya project, Yukon Forum update, and amendments to the *Wildlife Act*.

#### **Comments/Questions:**

- Moose Survey results (Sifton-Miners Moose Management Unit) — Estimating subsistence harvest would be different from other areas as there are there First Nations including Ta'an Kwäch'än Council, Kwanlin Dün First Nation, and Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation. Also, it is closer to town and highly accessible. The subsistence portion is underestimated.
  - In the past, almost two-thirds of our meals were fish. If you remove one subsistence food source, the pressure moves to the next which are moose and caribou. Trying to deal with it regionally doesn't work. In the past, people lived to over 100 years old. They were living on salmon, moose, and caribou. We're replacing that with store foods and fast food. We can't let population counts be the only way we manage. Every time we count, the numbers go down. We need to make our perspective bigger.
  - When we talk about management, we're managing people who manage fish and wildlife in North America. It doesn't recognize the interconnectedness of life or the individual animals. It's all statistics and numbers. It doesn't work in southern jurisdictions as populations are lost and animals are put on the brink of extinction. In the north, the difference is that we have strong First Nations and there is hope.
  - If we've had an unsustainable harvest since 2011, why do you think the population of moose have almost tripled? There are other indicators that are less favourable like the cow-to-calf ratio is at the bottom end. The current and previous estimates are underestimates and fraught with error. When communicating this to the general public, the word "estimate" is lost or forgotten.

- Caribou survey results (Finlayson caribou herd – February to March 2022) — People blame hunters for harvesting caribou and moose, but it's really wolves and bears. There was a trail camera study in Alaska. Grizzly bears harvested approximately 42 calves in 35 days.
  - There was a study in northern Sweden on brown bears around 12 years ago. Of the 15 or 20 bears that were collared, only two were killing the reindeer. We generalize, but it is only individuals who are doing all the killing.
  - There was a study on elk in Yellowstone area. The population numbers were going down and people thought it was because of the wolves that were introduced. However, the bears were harvesting the calves. They spoke with older people who lived there for generations and discovered the bears used to harvest fish in the Yellowstone River. There were no fish in the rivers anymore because someone introduced lake trout in the Yellowstone Lake, and they were eating the indigenous trout. They had a fish problem which led to the bears harvesting the calves. Sometimes the cause is not what people think.
- Kudz Kayah Project and Finlayson caribou
  - There should be a role for the Board on the oversight committee.
  - It's explicit that the committee would be made up of three governments. The Board should contact the major projects of Yukon government Executive Council Office which leads this committee to ask how it can participate in the process.
  - If this were a situation in the traditional territory of a First Nation settled by an agreement, the RRC or the Board would be part of the committee.
  - Ross River Dena Council filed for judicial review of the project. The review is scheduled for April.
  - There is strong interest in creating a joint management authority for fish and wildlife with the Government of Yukon, Ross River Dena Council, and Liard First Nation. Marc Cattet will meet with representatives from RRDC on this initiative.
  - Does the proposed committee fit within the land claim agreements? There is always a grey area in the Ross River Dena country. There is no RRC, but it is within the Board's mandate. Asking the question will trigger a response from the lawyers to determine if it fits within the land claims jurisdiction.
- Joint Senior Fish and Wildlife Coordinating Committee
- Amendments to the *Wildlife Act*
  - Is there a timeline attached?
  - The memo laid out five recommendations. One is that, by the Spring Sitting 2024, there should be draft amendments ready for approval by Cabinet.
  - United Nations Biodiversity Conference (COP15) — There will be an announcement for a bilateral nature agreement between Canada and Yukon government for \$20.6 million over three years. Approximately \$5.5 million is for indigenous engagement over the next three years. There is potential to advance legislative changes. There is uncertainty over the next couple months with the current government One minister has put his name forward for Premier. The confidence and supply bill expires in January. If it is not renewed between the Liberals and NDP, there could be an election which will have a significant impact on what we are trying to do.

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## **DAWSON REGIONAL LAND USE PLAN SUBMISSION (TAB 08) —G. Van Tighem, S. Jones**

Sebastian Jones provided an overview of the plan, comments, and revisions. He also provided context regarding the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in and Yukon government conservation priorities for the land.

Graham Van Tighem provided an overview of the documents provided in the meeting kits including: the November 1, 2021 original submission by the Board; Dawson Regional Planning Commission Recommended Plan from June 2022, a Summary from August 2022, and Highlights from August 2022; and the Board's December 5, 2022, correspondence regarding the Recommended Dawson Regional Land Use Plan Consultation Response. The new version of the plan is greatly improved.

### **Comments/Questions:**

- Q) How is the mining community reacting? A) There is always concern whenever land is withdrawn from the mining phase. The most recent comments from placer miners at the most recent engagement sessions was about where they would mine in 50 years when current placer mining areas are all mined out. The response was that the planning document is a living document that will be revisited over time.
- Graham Van Tighem will send a revised version for review once comments from Board members are incorporated.
- Planning Commission Recommended Land Designations — Sebastian Jones can provide an illustration (map) for the Board's submissions. Steve also volunteered to provide a version to go with the Board's submission if the Board finds value in that.
- The deadline for Board comments is December 18, 2022 for final submission by December 20, 2022.

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## **YFWMB MEETING PROCEDURES APPROVAL – M. Dawson-Beattie, G. Van Tighem**

Michelle Dawson-Beattie provided a brief overview. Graham Van Tighem and Steve Hossack reviewed the YFWMB Meeting Procedures 2022 Final document.

### **Comments/Questions:**

- The document is long and should not be read out at every meeting.
- Part of the document can be read out at meetings and part of it can be posted. The code of conduct and meeting kit can be printed on a board and put at the front of the meeting room.
- This document can be provided in the meeting kits. It can also be provided in the email invitation along with the agenda.
- The document can be posted on the website under board meeting dates.

**Motion – 2022-24:** That the Board accept the Board meeting procedures as amended.

**Moved by:** Dawn Kisoun

**Seconded by:** Sebastian Jones

**Passed by:** Consensus

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**NOMINATIONS FOR CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR (TAB 10) — IN CAMERA**

No additional minutes were recorded.



## DAY 2: Wednesday, December 14, 2022 – Regular Meeting

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<b>PRESENT:</b>	Michelle Dawson-Beattie (Chair), Sebastian Jones (Vice-Chair), John Burdek, Ron Chambers, Danny Cresswell, Dennis Dickson, Dawn Kisoun, Ken Taylor, Randy Taylor,
<b>ZOOM:</b>	Cheyenne Bradley,
<b>REGRETS:</b>	Franklin Patterson Jr., Blanche Warrington,
<b>STAFF:</b>	Graham Van Tighem, Steve Hossack
<b>SUPPORT:</b>	Colleen Henry (Minute Taker – from recording)
<b>IN ATTENDANCE:</b>	Marc Cattet (Director, Fish and Wildlife, Environment), Jenna Bell (Ausenco), Shena Shaw (Casino Mining Corp.), George Morgan (Casino Mining Corp.), Tim Gerberding (Yukon Salmon Subcommittee), Monica Krieger (Executive Director, YSSC), Tom Jung (Senior Wildlife Biologist, YG), Don Toews (Carcross Tagish RRC)

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### **CASINO MINE PRESENTATION (TAB 11) – S. Shaw, G. Morgan,**

Shena Shaw introduced herself and provided an overview of her background. She reviewed her presentation provided in meeting kits. Topics included: a project overview; assessment and permitting; project development since 2016; wildlife studies; current activities; and next steps.

#### **Comments/Questions:**

- First Nation engagement — There is active engagement ongoing with all five affected First Nations. Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in was involved in the best available tailings technology study from 2016 to 2018, which completely redesigned the tailings facility. There are ongoing conversations about several other topics.
- Displacement of wildlife — Certain aspects will be fenced, but it’s too long to fence it completely.
- Tailings dam and impacts on salmon — Q) A major concern is the potential effects on salmon. The tailings dam will be one of the largest dams ever constructed on this planet. The impoundment facility will also be one of the largest impoundment facilities constructed on the planet. There will be a considerable quantity of potentially acid generating ore contained within that impoundment. What assurances are there that the dam will not fail and adversely affect salmon? The tailings dam is situated above important salmon spawning rivers and tributaries. A) This project must go through YESAB and did enter YESAB in 2014. There are several other permits and licences that are required. The bigger ones are the water licence and the quartz mining licence, but as well, the DFO and Environmental Climate Change Canada anticipate needing *Fisheries Act* authorization and a Schedule 2 amendment.
- Wildlife monitors
  - Q) If Casino doesn’t put up the fencing, can they hire wildlife monitors and pay them equal to a truck driver or mill worker? In the past, wildlife monitors were

treated badly. A) They anticipate hiring wildlife monitors. It is good practice. It starts at the top and must be communicated. Everyone needs to know the value and role of everyone else who is there.

- In the high Arctic, the monitors have the final word on whatever is going on around them. They are considered important. There is an authority situation involving wildlife. People must have respect for those in authority who are looking out for their best interests.
- If there is a situation where there is already a chemical leaching in the environment, you need to know whether you're improving it or making it worse. An example is the Windy Craggy at Tatshenshini Alsek which had arsenic coming out of the side before they started mining. People weren't aware arsenic was there. In Kluane National Park, they are finding aluminum and copper leaching into the environment. You need to have the whole picture. Casino is continuously working to understand the geochemistry of the rock and the metallurgical process.
- Forty Mile caribou crossing above Coffee Creek — There is old written material about caribou crossing in that area. That area shouldn't be overlooked. The trails are grown in. Make sure something doesn't get missed because it can't be seen. If we're interested in getting the caribou to move back in, we need to protect that corridor.
- Donjek is a salmon bearing river and some of the upper reaches of the Klotassin and Dip Creek may host salmon. You don't have to go far below Casino to find salmon. What studies have been done in those regions to determine the presence of salmon? The salmon also come into the Kluane Lake.
- Shena Shaw suggested scheduling another meeting for the fish biologist to attend and present.
- The brochure states that the Casino team is firmly committed to health, safety, and well-being of Yukoners, preservation of social, cultural, and environmental values throughout the life of the proposed Casino mine. If we think about the Faro experience. Taxpayers of Canada were left to pick up a multibillion-dollar mess. We need assurance that we're not talking about 27 years, but we're talking about forever.
- Shena Shaw discussed the potential for another player to take over Casino. They will be held to an international standard. She agreed with the comments about Faro. This has to be designed with closure in mind. That work is going on with Selkirk in a comprehensive way. That will form part of the submission for the assessment process. She is happy to return to have a more detailed discussion.
- The environment is part of the culture. We need to talk about that more. First Nations had no input into what happened during the Gold Rush. Relatives were separated by the Alaska/Yukon border.
- The trucking estimate for the mine is one per hour. There is a lot of concern about animals being hit on the highway in the Carcross area due to trucking. They need to also consider impacts to other First Nation traditional territories and not just in the mining region.

Michelle Dawson-Beattie and Shena Shaw discussed having a follow-up meeting with Casino and the Yukon Salmon Subcommittee along with fish and wildlife specialists. Shena suggested the Board provide topics. Carmacks is hosting the RRC AGM in April. It would be a good opportunity for Casino to attend and meet with RRCs in the affected traditional territories.

## **YUKON SALMON SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATE/BUDGET APPROVAL (TAB 12) — M. Krieger**

Monica Krieger provided an overview of the budget for the Board's approval. The budget was included in meeting kits. Monica also provided an update on the YSSC activities, including: the YSSC meetings; the Yukon River Panel meeting and presentations; post season numbers; Alsek sockeye; the Yukon River Educational Exchange for 2023 in July; AFN resolution; Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans.

**Motion – 2022-25:** That the Board accept the 2023-24 Operating Budget for the Yukon Salmon Subcommittee as presented.

**Moved by:** Dawn Kisoun

**Seconded by:** Ken Taylor

**Passed by:** Consensus

### **Comments/Questions:**

- Surplus — The subcommittee carried over substantially more than estimated. They will try to spend a good portion of it between now and March 31. They are looking at website development and other communications products.
- There will be a UFA implementation funding review in 2024. The subcommittee is hoping to get additional funding for a second staff position. It's hard to ask for money when they have a surplus every year. They have to work on reducing the surplus. In other years, there was no surplus, but it has grown from staff turnover and COVID impacts such as meeting and workshop cancellations.
- Ich study — Q) Was there any discussion about the Ich coming from the ocean? Was there any discussion regarding management? A) The study was narrow and looked at what the organism does to the salmon. It didn't look at why it is more prevalent than before. There seems to be less of the good food available for salmon out in the ocean. The salmon are coming back smaller and weaker. It would be worthwhile to investigate whether the salmon that are debilitated and weaker are more susceptible. Dennis referred to issues with the study. The study requires killing fish to determine the level of infection. We don't have a lot of fish so killing them is a big concern. This study doesn't make much of a difference to the management of the salmon runs because the salmon runs are already on life support. Thinking about how to use this study to adjust our fishing techniques, if the salmon came back, is it worthwhile killing off hundreds more fish to do this?
- Management goals of salmon runs — Sebastian provided an overview of metrics to determine how many salmon should get to the spawning grounds, including maximum recruitment yield, which the Canadian delegation wants to use, and the maximum sustainable yield, which the Alaskan delegation wants to use.
- Cheyenne Bradley provided a brief update on Yukon Days. She met with a lot of ministers and Members of Parliament to discuss salmon. They discussed the need for political support for negotiations across the border. They will have to do some follow up in the New Year.

Graham Van Tighem will draft a letter to the Yukon Salmon Subcommittee for budget approval.

### **AISHIHIK BISON MANAGEMENT TEAM (TAB 13) — T. Jung**

Tom Jung provided an update on the Aishihik Bison Plan. Topics included: bison as a species at risk; bringing bison back; bison stewardship; previous bison plans; a new bison plan; population target; impacts of bison; federal *Species at Risk Act*; roles and timeline; the Aishihik Bison Technical Team; planning process and workshops; population status; long-term vision; plan goals; interim harvest guidelines; adaptive management; and a brief summary of key directions in the draft plan. A copy of his presentation was provided in meeting kits.

#### **Comments/Questions:**

- Harvesting time — Q) One thing about harvesting the bison compared to the caribou and the moose is that caribou and moose harvesting times are considered for a different purpose. With the bison, it is open during the winters. Is that still the best time for them to be harvested? A) Initially, the bison hunting was set based on recommendations from the Board. In 1998 and 1999, Lawrence Joe was the Chair. He spoke to First Nations in NWT who told him that winter was the time to hunt bison because their fat is less yellow and whiter. That was one of the biggest reasons. Also, winter hunting was preferred because bison can calf a lot later than moose and caribou. It was hoped that the calves were independent of their moms by then. There were other reasons like snowmobiles crushing vegetation and opening new trails. There is a lot of desire to hunt bison in the fall. They did open the highway hunt. Maybe they will open in the fall because that's what Yukoners want to do.
- People are really concerned about the food value of the bison and the end of winter really isn't the best time to harvest anymore.
- The plan doesn't come close to solving all the problems or issues. It provides direction, but there will be some difficult discussions with all Yukoners about how to balance quality with opportunity.

The Board will discuss consultation during Members time.

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### **UNGULATE WORKING GROUP UPDATE (TAB 14) — G. Van Tighem**

Graham Van Tighem provided an update. He provided an overview of the Board's engagement letter to Yukon First Nations and RRCs regarding the Ungulate Working Group sent on November 16, 2022, and initial responses. He sends responses to the working group for review. He also provided an overview of the Carcross Tagish RRC email regarding the ungulate working group and the Carcross Tagish RRC meeting on December 12, 2022. Those documents were provided in the meeting kit. He also discussed his meeting with Marc Cattet, Michelle, and Sebastian about having YG on the working group. Marc is willing to have Sophie Czetwertynski available to attend. The last working group meeting was November 1. The next meeting has not been scheduled yet.

Lars Jessup discussed the annotated bibliography, priorities, and his review of the relevant Yukon plans and species management guidelines. He discussed the potential for a literature review project on habitat enhancement.

#### **Comments/Questions:**

- Press conference — Lars wanted to open a discussion about the press conference and how he will receive direction. He expects more RRCs and First Nations to reach out. It would be good to have direction to address that and how they want to make decisions.
  - Michelle discussed the decision to not go forward with the press release.
  - Graham provided information. They decided to postpone the press release. They need to decide whether to have a press release right away or if they want to wait for feedback from communities on the working group and include that in the press release.
  - We need to do better job to communicate and to provide direction to Lars from the entire group. It's critical that we're all on the same page and that we're all in the loop.
  - We need more regular working group meetings to make these decisions. If the decisions are changed or altered, we need to communicate that with the working group.
  - Steve discussed the press conference and potential questions. What does the working group want to say in the public eye? Does this warrant a press conference at this time? Do we want to spend the first three months of the new year engaging with some of the partners and go public once we have a better footing? There were more questions than answers. We need to flesh this out more at the working group level.
  - By engaging with the RRCs and First Nations there will be questions. Carcross Tagish RRC invited the Board to present at the moose management workshop at the end of January. Public events garner public interest. Ken's push for the press conference was to get ahead of the message to establish the narrative before it is co-opted by other parties. We need to meet in January. If we don't have some message, you will get interest anyway.
  - A brainstorming session to codevelop a message box of anticipated questions from the press will be a good exercise.
  - It doesn't matter what the media ask. Tell them what you want to tell them repeatedly and that's what they have to print. Don't spend too much time trying to answer every little question that might come up.
  - What do we tell RRCs who are interested to attend the meeting in January?
- Community engagement sessions — Community engagements will be different, but there must be some commonality for each one. How will we collect information? Will we develop a standard PowerPoint for those community engagements? When we did the community engagements for the bison plan, we had the plan, the objectives, the presentation that Tom delivered, and questions. We need to come up with some common or consistent approach to those meetings.
- RRC AGM — Do we want to engage with the RRCs all at once? That could be a worthwhile exercise.
- Having co-chairs for the committee doesn't make a lot of sense. The chair of the Board should also chair the committee.
- Issues raised include non-resident special guides/hunters and actual or perceived ungulate population decline. The working group is an opportunity to answer some of those questions. The message boxes need to be defined.

The next step is to have a working group meeting on January 6, 2023, from 1:00 to 3:00. Steve Hossack requested a pre-engagement timeline or order of events prior to the meeting.

Further discussion was added to the in-camera session.

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### **YUKON FISH AND GAME ASSOCIATION (TAB 13)— E. Schroff**

Eric Schroff provided an update. He provided an overview of the Fish and Game Association, background, and activities. The Fish and Game Association is committed to helping clean up garbage on the land and to help repair damage to anybody's cabin. The association has been involved in policy and regulatory issues for Finlayson caribou, Forty Mile caribou, proposed regulation changes for moose hunting, permit hunt authorization system, grizzly hunting, and management. If there is a conservation issue, supported by local and traditional knowledge as well as data and analysis, they want to be part of the conversation to try to deal with that issue.

Eric provided an overview of Bill C-21. The association voiced their concerns and sent letters to the Prime Minister and the Minister of Public Safety. They have also reached out to MP Brendan Hanley and will have a phone call with the MP on December 19. Graham requested a copy of the letter from the association to the federal government.

Eric also discussed ungulates and highlighted the following:

- Stories contribute to people's understanding with respect to ungulates. It is important to get these stories out. The Board could include this in the communication strategy.
- The scientific approach doesn't do a good job of encouraging storytelling.
- A narrative is being developed that is setting the stage for a broader story. The myth is that we're running out of moose and that there is a race to the last moose. He believes that is an overstatement of the situation in many instances. Is it real? Where is it real? Why is it real? What's going on out there?
- His alternative story is that Yukon is a big place. We have largely intact ecosystems. We have a modest but growing population and a lot of wilderness areas with limited access and limited harvest of ungulates. We have lots of moose when you look at Yukon as a whole.
- The UFA sets out how wildlife should be managed, and we've shown success in managing and maintaining sustainable populations for harvesters for decades. There are places with issues but, since the 1980s, the moose harvest numbers by licensed hunters have been relatively constant. There has been a sustained harvest over decades. Moose populations have suffered in areas where access is good or in areas close to the population centres.
- We're seeing new survey results that are positive. We're planning to improve habitat, assess the impacts of predation, and develop plans to enhance moose numbers.
- Data is important, but so is careful analysis and calm, measured mitigation of the data and population estimates.
- Biologists should provide analysis and numbers. They should not be advocates.
- The Board needs to sift through the data, look at the interpretations, ground check the assumptions and ask the questions. Is this really the case? How does it look? Why does it look this way? Then the Board needs to advocate to make the management decisions.

This board has an amazing opportunity, amazing group of people, and a daunting challenge.

- Do we really have a moose population problem? If we do, what is it? We have a problem in Sifton-Miners with subsistence hunting and licensed hunters and we should deal with that. If we really have a problem, what has changed to get us into the problem.
- Some folks would say that if there are more hunters out there and success is going down, there must be fewer moose to shoot. That's an assumption. There is no evidence to support that. A lot of the new people who come to the Yukon and get a hunting license don't know anything about hunting moose.
- The survey that they sent out to the moose hunters every year asks the question: Did you hunt moose — yes or no? How many days did you hunt moose? Where did you hunt moose? Were you successful? All you will get from that is a general snapshot of what's going on but we're not able to sort through the data.
- The people who are out there hunting all the time are in a different group from those who moved up from Toronto last year and has never been out. There's no question that asks: Were you out hunting in a wall tent for 10 days? Or did you drive down to Mayo and back five times? We don't get that data and we need it. Were you successful — yes, or no? What's the definition of success? The definition is: Did you kill a moose? The question should be: Did you have a good hunt? The next question should be: Did you harvest a moose, or did you fill your freezer?
- Eric hunts with his friend every year. They never shoot more than one moose. When he gets the survey, he answers “No” to the question “Were you successful?” because he didn't shoot the moose. His friend answers “Yes.” Their success rate is 50 percent, but it is actually 100 percent because they both have meat in their freezer and meat to share with others.
- We're not getting the data that we need to support some of the assumptions that we're making. It's important to talk about that. It goes back to the stories — we need to have the stories with Environment folks in the room so that they can hear that there are different ways of asking the questions that may give us better answers to help things in the future.

#### **Comments/Questions:**

- That statement — “Did you get your moose?” is one the worst statements ever.
- Bison — In 2021, there was a concern that the bison numbers were going down and the harvest numbers were going up and we were headed for a catastrophe. The working group developed a matrix that said that if the population were 1,400 and above, we could continue the regular harvest season. If it were below a certain number, they would go to PHAs. If it is less than that, there would be no season. The most recent survey said the range was between 1,700 to 2,100 with a midrange of 1,900 which is well above that 1,400 threshold. The email went out that they would use 1,700 as the number as the more accurate number which was generated by the previous survey. The previous survey is also based on a minimum estimate. We need to have those conversations.
- Carcross Tagish RRC angling and fishing catch and release — Don Toews discussed excessive catch and release concerns in the Southern Lakes. First Nation elders say that catch and release is playing with the fish and anglers should not do that. We need to

reconcile the need for regulatory catch and release to reduce and limit excessive catch and release which leads to mortality.

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### **BILL C-31**

Members discussed Bill C-31. MP Brendan Hanley statement and a list of proposed prohibited firearms were provided in Tab 16 of the meeting kit. Members made the following comments:

- One of the concerns is the attitude people have about the gun. If people have a semi-automatic gun, does that mean they blast everything that's moving? That's the attitude that we need to look at. People up here who are hunting haven't developed that attitude and we get painted with the same brush as the people who do have these guns but not the same mindset. Making a rule doesn't solve the problem because it's how they use the situation.
- Why aren't there limits on the amount of ammunition you can have in a gun? No hunting rifle needs more than four or five shells.
- Steve Hossack has researched Bill C-31 and offered to provide a draft letter to the Board for review.
- This is a political issue. Do we even make a comment? Do we take a side? Wildlife management is not about taking sides.
- Do we have any mandate to address this issue? Chapter 16 talks about the Board's mandate to make representations to the minister in terms of restrictions on methods and practices of harvest. It doesn't say anything about making representation to the minister on this specific issue. It feels like we're getting into somebody else's kitchen. I'm not supportive of the Board taking a position on this.
- The Board could get into trouble by making a statement or taking a stand on something like this. How does it fit into the mandate? It's a political issue.
- The UFA, section 16.4.3 states: "Yukon Indian people shall have the right to employ within their Traditional Territories traditional and current methods of and equipment for Harvesting..." That's the part of the UFA that stands out for this. As a board, consistent with conservation and people's interest in harvest, that's where that connection may or may not be drawn.
- There has been a lot of movement on this issue already by hunting and fishing associations across the country.
- For the Board, this is a peripheral issue.

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### **KLAZA CARIBOU HERD (TAB 16) — S. Jones**

Sebastian Jones provided an introduction. The following documents were included in Tab 16: a Klaza HPA briefing note from June 2022, a *Klaza distribution, movements, demography, and habitat* document; Klaza disturbances document, inventory studies, a range assessment, and a *Future Land Use Scenario and Potential Levels of Human Disturbance* document.

### **Comments/Questions:**



- Q) Has the Carmacks RRC discussed or initiated any action regarding this in any way? A) No. Sebastian has been thinking about caribou a lot over the last couple of years. The Klaza herd seems to be doing okay now but is facing serious threats. He is trying to think of a way to look after them. He is not aware of any HPA being proposed even though it's contemplated in the final agreements.
- This is a discussion that should be had with the Carmacks RRC. There are different methods to protect habitat rather than an HPA.
- The Carmacks RRC would be the first to be approached, but that can't happen until there's support from the Board. If the RRC opposes it, that's the end of it.
- Sebastian Jones provided information on the HPA at Ddhaw Ghro. It is a long slow process and there is no template. The solution for the project proponent would be to reroute.
- Randy Taylor provided information on the HPA in Tagish River area. It was initiated 20 years after the Carcross/Tagish First Nation agreement was signed. It took another seven years to establish the HPA. This may not be the ideal route to go.
- The Board Executive should approach the Carmacks RRC to discuss concerns about the winter range and determine their thoughts. An HPA may come out of that discussion.
- Executive will do the due diligence and report back at the February Board meeting.

Graham Van Tighem will reach out to Selkirk RRC and Carmacks RRC to see where they are with engagement and discuss sensitive areas management, Klaza caribou range, or other issues. He also suggested having them at the RRC AGM as others are impacted.

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#### **MEMBERS TIME — IN CAMERA**

Members discussed levels of discussion to be in-camera. No minutes were recorded.

**DAY 3: Thursday, December 15, 2022 – Regular Meeting**

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**PRESENT:** Michelle Dawson-Beattie (Chair), Sebastian Jones (Vice-Chair), John Burdek, Ron Chambers, Danny Cresswell, Dennis Dickson, Dawn Kisoun, Ken Taylor, Randy Taylor,

**ZOOM:** Cheyenne Bradley

**REGRETS:** Franklin Patterson Jr., Blanche Warrington,

**STAFF:** Graham Van Tighem, Steve Hossack

**SUPPORT:** Colleen Henry (Minute Taker – from recording)

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Janice Sibbeston (Trust Manager, YFWET)

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

Refer to the Enhancement Trust minutes.

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Meeting brought to an end with closing prayer.