

RRDC Responses to Information Requests

December 10, 2019

Topic 1: Caribou Status

IRs to All Parties

- 1.1. Which kinds of caribou most concern you as a Party: ᐱᑦᑦᑦᑦᑦᑦ (Bluenose West or Bluenose East barren-ground caribou), shúhtagóᑦᑦᑦ (Northern Mountain caribou), or tódzi (Boreal Woodland caribou)? Describe your main conservation concerns. (SRRB)

RRDC Response

We are concerned about Mountain caribou. We have worked closely with Tulít'a RRC for past 10 years. There has been a huge influx of Tulít'a people in our traditional territory. A lot of hunting pressure on caribou. Climate change is also a concern for us. We find that caribou numbers are declining.

Topic 2: Hunting Law

IRs to All Parties

- 2.1 Do you have concerns about regulation of caribou harvest? What are your concerns? (SRRB)

RRDC Response

Yes, we do have concerns. In the Yukon, to get a hunting permit it doesn't take too long and pretty much any newcomer can get a permit. There are a lot hunters in the North Canol Road, travelling as far as Yellowknife. Most of the hunters hunt for horn, not for meat, which is pretty disturbing. In the summer time, our ferry operator (who is from Ross River) is always says he is leaving. He is feeling helpless with all the moose and caribou being taken by outsiders. The current regulations allows for anyone to get a permit.

- 2.2 How do you ensure that Indigenous harvesters that are not from your jurisdiction respect local hunting laws? How do you deal with visiting Indigenous harvesters that violate local hunting laws? (SRRB)

RRDC Response

The way I see is that we all were brought up with respect, the Dene law. Visitors need to get consent from the community prior to harvesting. We have encountered visiting Indigenous harvesters violating our local laws. A few years ago, we had a meeting with local elders and they put their feet down and said we had to use the people we have in the lands department to create a permitting process that follows our believes. For example, if you don't use the hide, bring back to the community. We put an ad on the paper explaining our harvesting guidelines, there was some backlash, but also some people saw it as a good thing. At the end of the day some people did not bother to come in and get a permit. Some people did follow the conditions. There were questions and they were answered. This was a way for us to ensure our jurisdiction.

- 2.3 In the North, each region has a wildlife management authority that works with communities to determine the approach to caribou conservation. Do you have

concerns about the coordination of caribou hunting regulation across regions? How do you propose that these concerns be addressed? (*SRRB*)

RRDC Response

Ross River does not have any recognition from the federal government. We try to work with other jurisdictions but there are disputes over lands. So far we have been creating our own regulations in regards to wildlife it has been though. We are trying. For example, we sent letters to outfitting businesses in the area and we asked to have a community member present on trips, this doesn't always happen. We like to get the meat and the hide back.

IRs to Kugluktuk Angoniatit Association (AAK) and Ross River Dena Council

2.5 AAK and RRDC have engaged in development of community harvest laws. Please share as much information as possible about these laws and how they are working to address caribou conservation concerns.

RRDC Response

Draft copy of community harvest laws is available. Some people follow some people don't. We find there is still a lot of work to be done.

Topic 3: Approaches to Wildlife Harvesting

IRs to All Parties

3.1 List three (or more) aspects of Indigenous country food systems and ways of life that most contribute to promoting caribou conservation. Do you have concerns about threats to these systems? (*SRRB*)

RRDC Response

1. Permitting process should be place
2. Education on how we (Dene people) govern ourselves
3. On the land camps are great for education
4. Community Monitoring is the best way. Water, Changes to the landscape and wildlife should be monitored.
5. Climate change is a big concern for our community, most northern communities are at the forefront of climate change. We are concern there will come a day where they will be no more snow.
6. Wild fire – displaces people and animals. We find Climate Change is a huge concern relating to the country food system.

3.2 How are Indigenous country food systems changing? What impacts are these changes having on caribou? (*SRRB*)

RRDC Response

Some concerns are: climate change, over hunting, industry development. Caribou numbers are declining.

Elders have always taught us to respect the land. The animals are feeling the changes to the land and we are too. Our youth is losing their identity and culture, they are not on the land as much.

Topic 4: Harvest Monitoring

IRs to All Parties

4.1 Harvest monitoring is recognized as a key component in effective harvest regulation.

What is the most effective way to monitor caribou harvest in your experience? (*SRRB*)

RRDC Response

Guardians on the land are the most effective way to monitor caribou, they are our eyes and ears on the land. It is also a great opportunity for young people. There was a report that showed decrease drug and alcohol use when youth is out on the land often. Guardian programs are very helpful. We need more guardian training for our people, to monitor the landscape and wildlife.

4.2 Over the past year, Indigenous Guardian programs have come onto the National stage as part of Indigenous environmental governance systems. What role can Guardians play in harvest monitoring? (*SRRB*)

RRDC Response

We had a program this past summer and it was very successful. 6 communities members participated. It was a great program.

Topic 5: Participation, Education, Information

IRs to All Parties

5.1 Discussions among Member Boards of the Advisory Committee for Cooperation on Wildlife Management emphasize education and communication as priorities in achieving effective harvest regulation. What are your priorities for education and communication? (*SRRB*)

RRDC Response

Our priorities for education and communication are – community engagement and keeping people informed. Best way to keep people informed is through community meetings.

5.2 The *Indigenous Discussion Paper and Calls to Action* presented at the 2018 North American Caribou Workshop notes that "all Indigenous people have roles to play in caribou stewardship – women, men, and those who define their gender in a more fluid way – just as caribou herds are structured according to the roles of individual animals. We all depend upon each other." Please describe the importance of gender roles for you in harvest regulation, and any concerns about inclusion. (*SRRB*)

RRDC Response

Don't shoot the leader, they are also the main breeders and they lead the group. Don't shoot cows. We need that balance, the cows are the one helping bring the numbers up. We need to follow our Dene code of ethics.

5.3 In its 2016 BNE Hearing Report, the SRRB found that that "there is strong consensus in the Sahtú Region that youth involvement is critical for the success of community *zekwé*

[caribou] conservation plans." Describe your approach to involving youth in wildlife harvesting and harvest regulation. (*SRRB*)

RRDC Response

It comes down to having a guardian program and training the youth and showing them our ways of life. We have workshops to develop strategies to include youth. [2017 workshop with SRRB is an example]. We talk about our concerns with caribou and having youth present to talk about priorities and strategies is important. Programs should be based on the land without distractions. We go hunting and share meat. It was a positive experience. It was a great venue to talk about hunting laws and permitting.

5.4 What materials or websites do you recommend for review as relevant for consideration by the Parties related to the central question of the Public Listening Session? (*SRRB*)

RRDC Response

We will ask our elders what is appropriate to share.

Topic 6: Aboriginal and Treaty Rights

IR to All Parties

6.1 All regions in the North with Comprehensive Land Claim Agreements conducted similarly designed Harvest Studies as a requirement of their claims and as an evidence base for protecting Indigenous harvesting rights. If you participated as a partner in a Harvest Study, what do you consider to be the current and future value of the study? If you are continuing to participate in Harvest Studies, are these differently designed? Are they being used differently? (*SRRB*)

RRDC Response

We don't have a land claim agreement in our area. We live in a small community so we know what our people harvest. Other wildlife management organizations do animal surveys with helicopters which goes against our code of ethics we also don't support collaring, it does not respect animals. We also don't support catch and release fishing. Our elders say that fish will die.