

Ne K'ə Dene Ts'ı̄l̄ Forum Meeting Notes

December 8, 2017, 10:00 am-12:00 noon

Participants

Leon Andrew (SRRB and Forum Chair), Deb Simmons (SRRB), Gordon Yakeleya (TRRC), Faye D'eon-Eggertson (Parks Canada), Joe Hanlon (SRRB), Jennie Vandermeer (GNWT), Tracy Williams (TNC Canada), Kris Brekke (CPAWS), Normon Pieroot (FGH RRC), Camilla Rabisca (SRRB), Michael Neyelle (SRRB), Walter Bezha (Deline), Sjoerd Van der wilen (DGG), Karen Clyde (Yukon Government Fish and Wildlife), Alex Francis (Yukon Government Watson Lake), Audrey Steedman (Parks Canada), Janet Winbourne (SRRB), Micheline Manseau (Parks Canada), Paul Wilson (Trent University), Frederick Andrew (SRRB), Stephanie Behrens (GNWT ENR), Jean Polfus (researcher), Bruce Hanna (GNWT ENR)

Regrets

Norm Sterriah, Josh Baricello

Notes

- Jennie Vandermeer - Do we have an agenda? Deb - main item is a presentation from Micheline about her research for a letter of intent about caribou research due in February. We'll have a presentation with opportunity for discussion by the group. We'll also be talking about next steps for the research.
- Michael Neyelle - DGG is a new organisation and first time attending this forum, so I want to acknowledge them. Deb - Mahsi and thank you Sjoerd for joining us. Sjoerd - Second time, but mahsi and thank you for the acknowledgment.
- Deb Simmons - Context for presentation goes back to 2012 meeting in FGH with 3 delegates from each RRC, where they made a unanimous resolution supporting non-invasive research, collaborative research, with strong TK dimension to it. Led to Jean Polfus's doctoral research and thesis, with a focus on todzi. Her work has been widely recognized by both the community collaborators like Frederick Andrew and in Canada for outstanding work when presented in other places.
- Deb Simmons - So a question was how to focus the future research. Our conclusion was that it is better to do a good job and be focused, step by step. So what is being proposed to the group today is focused on mountain caribou but bridging into questions about the relationships among the different populations. So that is why we are bringing together the mountain caribou working group, who are working on a conservation plan, with our Ne Ke Dene Tsili Forum group. So we really thank Norm, Jennie, Camilla, for joining the

call because its important to set these projects in the bigger picture of the Sahtu region.
Any questions or comments?

- Tracy Williams - Can you resend the slide presentation?
- Gordon Yakeleya - When you mention the working group, who makes up that working group? Deb - At the moment it includes TRRC (Gordon) and people who participated in the workshop at Dechenla Lodge in July to draft a plan. Gordon - OK, understood.
- Michael Neyelle - Notes that SRRB inviting all the RRC presidents to serve on SRRB as special advisor.
- Gordon - What is my role as a special advisor to the board? Deb - That's on our agenda for this afternoon.
- Micheline Manseau - (see presentation; notes below will include questions/answers with reference to slide number)
 - 1 - title
 - 2 - guidance
 - 3 - from the plan (quotes from the draft mountain caribou management plan) - Including this kind of material is very important to setting up a new model for the national research councils, so they can see how we can bring science and indigenous knowledge into the work that could be funded by the councils.
 - 4 - a long time ago, we were people with caribou : biocultural diversity of caribou in the Central Mackenzie Mountains region to guide current planning activities. Bringing together multiple perspectives / tools / knowledge. For many regions of the north we still have inadequate baseline data (a common understanding of the status and components of these landscapes) to inform management and decision making. So this proposal contributes to this need to create baseline data against which we can compare impacts / activities and so on. We argue here that it is not just a physical description but also social and ecological baselines, integrating those together to create a more robus baseline.
 - 5 - broad temporal and spacial scales
 - 6 - dene language - focus on new research is now moving west to focus on the mountain populations.
 - Frederick Andrew - Notes the names that people from FGH / CL would use for caribou (?ede / Nodile). Deb - Notes how aware Sahtu community members are of the full context across the whole region.
 - Michael Neyelle - I saw something in the news about barren ground caribou being threatened, can we talk about that? Deb - That is a management thing but we can talk about that later.
 - 7 - dene language - expect to find a lot of diversity in the mountain populations, some results are already pointing to that; groups of caribou that have operated

as distinct groups, likely for thousands of years. To understand change over time we will look at how much stability there has been in these populations over time.

- Norman Pierrot steps out briefly.
- 8 - finer temporal and spatial data
- 9- finer temporal and spatial data
- 10 - knowledge from communities. Deb Simmons - lead communities would be Tulita, Norman Wells, Ross River.
- 11 - knowledge from non invasive sampling.
- 12 - knowledge from remote sensing, photos, memories. Focus on snow and vegetation as a starting point.
 - Deb Simmons - requests explanation of remote sensing.
 - Deb Simmons - asks what the maps are showing. Micheline - Explains how remote sensing uses map grids and can illustrate historical and future changes over time.
 - Frederick Andrew - (in Dene language, to Leon Andrew) Stresses importance of not just using the high tech methods. Micheline - Agrees, it is important to keep discussing this as the project evolves. Deb - We are trying to support boots on the grounds, people out there on the land and with the caribou to really know what is going on. That is a really important support for quality work. Too much technology can sometimes get in the way of, or support.
 - Michael Neyelle - I know Sjoerd is listening, did DGG say something about NASA flying over and sharing photos? Sjoerd - I know NASA approached the biosphere saying they are interested in finding new areas where they can fly over and do research, but I don't know more at this point. From my Tlicho days we were approached as well and got some really high quality pictures that can be used for different aspects, like forest fire, amount burned, and more interesting is that you can make high detailed maps of caribou habitat and what is good habitat and what is not good habitat. Michael - Sjoerd, remember the satellite photos they did for Tuk Tuk Nogait national park? Micheline - Yeah, the lichen is hard to pick up on these images and people are working hard to improve the methods there. Other features like fires, and ice on lakes, are easy to get, but others are harder.
 - Walter Bezha - Can we add the berries to that image? I had a hard time finding them this summer!
 - Gordon Yakeleya - I attended the ACCWM caribou meeting in Yellowknife, and this is new technology for people from the sciences. But

our knowledge, talking about caribou numbers declining, and the harvesters from Colville Lake said no, there are a lot out there, you are missing them. But satellite info can conflict with that and we can run into problems. You have to rely on the knowledge of the people who are doing the harvesting. Micheline - I think what has happened with this technology over time, the discussion with people who have the knowledge of the land is essential to properly using this technology. And people like NASA are very interested in working with people so the info can be used in the best way. Some of the sea ice mapping in the arctic where Inuit have played a big, big role in applying the technology to make sure the images really speak to them, and they are receiving big international awards for that work.

- 13 - fit to target area / training potential - These are a bit more technical topics, but are important to the proposal and properly addressing the funders.
- 14 - the team (draft)
- 15 - timeline
- 16 - comments?
 - Micheline Manseau - Notes that both mountain and barren ground caribou couldn't be fit into the same proposal.
 - Bruce Hanna - Notes that Wilfred Laurier University has proposal in for boreal caribou study.
 - Gordon Yakeleya - Are you coming out to Tulita with your research work with what you intend to do out in the mountains. Micheline - For the letter of intent, we would probably do additional phone conversations. But certainly after that I'd like to spend some time in Tulita to start thinking about what the full proposal would look like. Gordon - I think to build up your proposal, I'd like you to meet with the community before you start anything. So maybe make an attempt to come to Tulita and work with the harvester. We don't know who the harvester will be until we identify the area you are going to look at. Micheline - Deb and I can talk about that. Deb - We can do scope out what might be possible. Important to note that there is no funding yet and that Micheline did come out to the Dechenla meeting. Gordon - I think an in person meeting is important and I think you would get the full support of the people in Tulita. Deb - This phone call is an important step in getting towards that kind of meeting. Gordon - Also important when using all this technology to remember to include youth and passing on information and traditional knowledge to young people.

- Frederick Andrew - It is very important for traditional knowledge to be included, and for people to be on the land. Very important to us as Dene people.
- Deb Simmons - Asks Micheline to explain the progression from previous work to this project. Micheline - There is a lot of interest but a lack of capacity to tackle it all at once, so we try to do things progressively and build on past successes, and move on to new questions when we are able. We can see with Jean's work that it takes time to do this learning together.
- Walter Bezha - Like Fred, Leon, Gordon said, the knowledge...we had a problem in the SARA process with the boreal caribou. I was a little concerned about getting knowledge from across the territories. And the way it worked out was that knowledge was added as we progressed in the report, on the TK side. Communities are interested, but the funding portion is always....it comes back down to education, the light bulbs come on, and the knowledge and history from the aboriginal side starts being added in. So I'm going to suggest that the DGG and the RRCs start looking at other funding that can support those portions. Because it won't happen just...the process itself will be limited. That's generally the way it works. If we want the TK side to be bigger then there has to be a component from all of the RRCs to add on to what the study is doing. That's the way the SARA TK work...it came from the communities, other sources, RRCs, band councils. So that needs to happen, and we all have some responsibility to bring that back to the communities. Otherwise it becomes very cumbersome. Jean had these focus groups, and they could bring info back to the communities, but it is very hard and ongoing - trying to say all of this in our own language takes not only a lot of innovations but also a lot of time. So sometimes people get the impression that these things happen on their own....well, it doesn't. We had very good experience in Deline with our own caribou management plan. People don't see the...a lot of times it is all done by someone else. And because the studies are technical, the translations never really get down to the level where people understand how they perceive things. This proposal is a very high level, and I think we can see the solution, but we won't see it until it actually happens. And that complicates things. There will be questions about priorities in the communities, but this is a step and much of the information we talk about and gain here will certainly help us with our priorities and decisions. Sometimes people

tend to forget that all information helps in leadership making good decisions. I'd like to see good TK info from this study go to leadership and get their response. That is powerful, and when it comes down to funding it is all about prioritizing. Jean's project really shows us that history and gives us a lot of information as to where we are heading. It is so important for decision making.

- Deb Simmons - Anyone else have comments?
- Jennie Vandermeer - Question about draft mountain caribou management plan and how it relates to this. Deb - The working group has agreed that the draft is ready for community engagement, and that that is a top priority. The draft plan also includes a research component and developing a funding proposal for the knowledge piece of the planning work. Ross River was a catalyst for this planning process in the first place. So the individual communities will review the draft plan and there is a strong interest in having a cross-community dialogue as well. But there is nothing concrete in play right now. Jennie - So I am offering my help to set up that meeting between the communities to discuss the draft management plan.
- Stephanie Behrens - asks for community input on the draft proposal / plans. Gordon - We want to move forward with community engagement as soon as possible. Stephanie - So each community will look at the plan and make comments? Gordon - We are doing it like Colville Lake is doing their plan. Need to have more meetings with the community. Deb - We really need to write down a draft process.
- Frederick Andrew - Stephanie, in the past everybody survived and was strong by working together. In Sahtu we are trying to work together with Ross River to address the overlap issue at mile 222. It is good that you are asking questions because that is how we learn.
- Gordon Yakeleya - Stephanie, we have other gateways coming into the mountains, we have the Keele river and the Redstone. We have to fit all of that into one agreement so we don't have separate agreements, and that is something we are talking about too. Stephanie - It makes sense that the district would meet together and then get on the same page and then include Ross River afterwards; it just seems like Ross River is taking the lead on it. Deb - I think we're getting into the weeds on the caribou planning, but Stephanie and Jennie I would love to have you participate in the working group. Are you OK with that Leon? Leon - We've done a lot of talking in the past year, and it is time we did something.

- Frederick Andrew - Regarding technology, it is very good and has good information but you also need to get down on the land and look at the landscape and that is how you actually know. Me, Gordon, Leon have all been there by dog team, it is a long ways but we don't look at it as a long ways, we were just there and see it. I'm really proud of Joe's wife Jean, she took beautiful pictures but she's actually been there with skidoo. She and Gordon went out to Willow Lake, wow, she has been on the land in 30 below! That's what I call a study. That's good, and that's why it is so important that we need to work together.
- Deb Simmons - I think one of the things that inspires this proposal is your experience at Dechenla. Micheline - Yes, clearly, it is an amazing place and I learned a lot and will try my best to help convey that information.
- Deb - Does anyone else have comments?

Meeting adjourned at 11:58 AM approximately.