

CARIBOU NEWS

in Brief

Keeping people in touch with the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq Caribou Management Board (BQCMB), and with issues affecting caribou.

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Photo courtesy Tina Giroux



experience, new approach combine in new Management Plan

The BQCMB published the first management plan for the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq Caribou Herds in 1987, and has since reviewed and revised the Plan three times. Much has changed since the last management plan was developed in the early 2000s, and challenges and concerns about the future of the caribou herds have continued to increase.

The purpose of this new Plan—for the period 2013-2022—is to outline the ways in which the BQCMB will work to safeguard the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq barren-ground caribou herds and address caribou conservation issues. The Plan applies to these herds, their habitats and caribou harvesters from Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal cultures in two territories (Nunavut and Northwest Territories) and two provinces (Saskatchewan and Manitoba).

The new Plan not only benefits from the experience of many people during the first 30 years of the Board's tenure, it also reflects a new approach that embraces contemporary conservation and management knowledge, techniques and methods available for addressing current conservation challenges.

Most importantly, it will guide the BQCMB to make recommendations to communities, governments, regulatory boards, land use planning organizations, industry and other relevant parties whose actions or decisions may affect conservation of the caribou herds or availability of caribou for harvest, now and in the future.

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BQCMB MEETING #76

NOVEMBER 19-21, 2013

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BQCMB officers and members November, 2013

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Around the Range

BQCMB meetings

Since our last issue (Fall, 2012) the BQCMB met in Fort Smith, Northwest Territories for its spring 2013 meeting, and in Winnipeg for its fall meeting.

The location and timing of the spring 2014 meeting will be determined at the November, 2013 meeting.

BQCMB Governance Review

The BQCMB is the oldest caribou co-management board in Canada, currently in the 2nd year of its fourth 10-year term. At its May meeting the Board determined that a review of its governance is in order to examine such things as board structure, roles, responsibilities, procedures, resolutions, orientation for new members, succession planning, and agenda development. It could be reviewed by an outside organization to assess how the BQCMB operates and identify potential improvements for consideration by the Board.

Researchers investigate decline of Beverly Caribou Herd

Scientists and Inuit observers are trying to find out if a decline in the Beverly Caribou Herd is continuing, CBC news reported on June 20, 2013. A major survey two years ago indicated the Herd's numbers had dropped to 124,000 animals, from 276,000 in the mid-1990s.

The BQCMB was advised of the preliminary survey results last November, and in December a technical summary report was released by the Government of Nunavut (GN). "We don't know what the Herd was doing during that long time," said Regional Biologist **Mitch Campbell**, who represents the GN on the BQCMB. "That's what makes this survey important. We're going after trend." The report concluded that the Beverly Herd had likely declined although the extent of the decline was uncertain, and continued monitoring is required to identify appropriate conservation and management needs.

The Ahiak Herd (previously called the Eastern Kitikmeot Herd), which calves adjacent to the Beverly calving ground along the Queen Maud Gulf coast, was estimated at about 71,000.

In June 2013, Campbell and others did an aerial survey of the Herd on its calving ground around Queen Maud Gulf to determine whether the decline is continuing. Researchers will comb through the data in the months ahead and have an answer by the end of the year.

Dennis Larocque, BQCMB member from Camsell Portage Saskatchewan, and **Leo Ikakhik** from Arviat Nunavut participated in the survey as observers. A key feature of the survey was use of a double observer method to increase the precision in numbers of caribou counted. Leo and Dennis explained how the observers worked together in the survey, switching sides and resting their eyes when not on transect to avoid fatigue.

"Most of the caribou populations in the north are cycling down," said Campbell. "It's causing a lot of anxiety for a lot of hunters. We want to...give everybody time to work together to come up with solutions for the short term and until the caribou populations recover."

“Given the population numbers, the Government of Northwest Territories (GNWT) will be discussing the potential of a limited resident harvest on the Beverly and Ahiak Herds with the BQCMB and the governments of Nunavut and Saskatchewan,” said Northwest Territories Environment and Natural Resources Minister **J. Michael Miltenberger**.

Community-based monitoring

Saskatchewan’s Ministry of Environment withdrew financial support in 2012 for the community-based monitoring program for the barren-ground caribou herds that use northern Saskatchewan as their winter range.

Created in 2006, the plan called for hiring a biologist to monitor the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq Herds with the help of hunters and other caribou-using people in Saskatchewan’s range communities. The proposal was initially rejected for financial reasons and so collaboration was sought between the Ministry, GNWT and the Prince Albert Grand Council (PAGC). This equal cost-sharing solution proved successful and beginning in 2010, the three parties each contributed \$40,000 to the Athabasca Community-Based Monitoring Project on a five-year trial basis.

Saskatchewan biologist **Tina Giroux** submits reports twice a year to the BQCMB on the community-based monitoring program’s activities.



Board, staff and observers hear land information from Pierre Robillard at the May, 2013 Board meeting

Devolution almost complete in NWT

The GNWT has completed a redesign of its organizational structure to incorporate devolving programs and services, Premier Bob McLeod announced on October 1. Responsibility for managing land, water and resources will transfer from the federal to the territorial government on April 1, 2014, in accordance with the NWT Lands and Resources Devolution Agreement. The agreement was signed in June of this year.

The new organization design will integrate the GNWT’s existing responsibilities with functions coming from the federal govern-

ment, with several departments taking on federal functions related to their existing mandates, and a new department of Lands being created. Subjects that are currently still being discussed include developing a new resource management relationship between the GNWT and Aboriginal governments.

So far, implications for caribou resulting from new territorial responsibility for management of public lands, water and resources are unknown. nor is it clear whether there will be changes to management elements relevant to Beverly and Qamanirjuaq caribou as a result of devolution. •

Diamond mines on the horizon

On October 22, 2013, Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, the Hon. Bernard Valcourt, approved the development of the Gahcho Kué diamond mine. The Gahcho Kue diamond mine is on Beverly range in the NWT, NE of Lutsel K’e. A press release issued jointly by De Beers and Mountain Province Diamonds described the project as “the world’s largest and richest new diamond mine development.” The BQCMB was not a participant in the environmental assessment or review of this proposal, but the Lutsel K’e Dene First Nation was one of three NWT Aboriginal groups to protest the development.

Then, on October 23, 2013, Dominion Diamond Corporation announced it has filed an application with the Wek’ëezhii Land and Water Board (WLWB) requesting a new land use permit and a Class A Water Licence for extension of the Ekati Diamond Mine to include the Jay and Cardinal kimberlite pipes. The Ekati mine is located about 300 kilometres northeast of Yellowknife. It opened in 1998, was Canada’s first diamond mine in the Northwest Territories, and was scheduled for closure as early as 2019.

According to Dominion Diamonds, the Jay-Cardinal Project involves the development of the largest diamondiferous resource in North America. The application and Detailed Project Report for the Jay-Cardinal Project represents the first stage in the regulatory approval process that will extend the life of the Ekati mine another 10-20 years. Among other things, this will involve another open pit mine and underground mining, draining a lake, other freshwater diversions and movement of fish, and roads between the new site and the original site 25 km away.

Mineral exploration on calving grounds:

one step forward, two steps back?

In the last issue of Caribou News in Brief (Fall 2012) the article “Anconia Project: Clear potential to impact caribou” outlined the BQCMB’s long-standing position against mineral exploration and development on calving grounds. At the time, Anconia Resources Corporation was evaluating its Victory Lake area mineral claims in the heart of the Qamanirjuaq caribou calving ground. The BQCMB opposes any exploration or development on caribou calving grounds because of potential impacts from disturbance to caribou, changes to habitat quality and availability and cumulative effects that may add up when commercial land use activities occur on these important areas.

The BQCMB had recommended to the Nunavut Impact Review Board (NIRB) in January 2012 that no permits be issued for this project, and requested that an environmental review be conducted by the NIRB at a minimum to ensure a full and transparent public discussion allowing all interested parties the opportunity to present their views. However, in March 2012 the NIRB recommended that Anconia’s applications for exploration work on both Inuit-owned and federal Crown lands be processed without review. Following issuance of a one-year Inuit land use license to Anconia by the Kivalliq Inuit Association (KIA) in May 2012, the BQCMB sent letters of protest to respective ministers and the KIA.

Disappointingly, despite the BQCMB’s efforts, the KIA issued a renewal to Anconia authorizing exploration on the Qamanirjuaq Calving grounds for another year. A two-year federal land use permit was issued by Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC) in February 2013, as well.

These events beg the questions: how did this happen? And how can those organizations and communities with grave concerns about permitting exploration on calving grounds move forward from here?

The first question is perhaps the easiest to answer—how did this happen? Lack of communication and participation in initial project screening processes is a key issue. One major frustration is that the Nunavut Government did not provide comments to the NIRB, as it is currently a policy of the GN not to participate in NIRB’s screening process for land use applications.

Another issue is inconsistent community involvement. During the screening and permitting processes for Anconia’s exploration work on the Qamanirjuaq calving ground, communities in Nunavut were included, while others—specifically the Saskatchewan Athabasca and Manitoba Denesuline—were sometimes not. (The federal permitting process did include the Manitoba Denesuline, however.) The timeline provided for commenting and the lack of capacity of community organizations to review and comment on project proposals also frequently limit the ability of communities to participate meaningfully in the NIRB’s screening process. This was the case for screening of the Anconia project, which resulted in a limited screening without adequate input from potentially impacted caribou range communities.

The BQCMB is not alone in its reaction to Anconia’s project at Victory Lake or opposition to all exploration and development on caribou calving grounds. As evidence that the concern is widespread, BQCMB Chair Earl Evans cites resolutions from the Hunters’ and Trappers’ Organizations (HTOs) of Baker Lake, Arviat, and Chesterfield Inlet, as well as a resolution of the Kivalliq Wildlife Board (KWB) that was passed unanimously by all seven members, and a subsequent letter of support from the Qikiqtaaluk Wildlife Board (QWB) from Nunavut’s Baffin Region.

The Athabasca Denesuline of northern Saskatchewan and the Manitoba Denesuline also requested that the permits issued to Anconia be cancelled. In its October 2012 letter to AANDC, the Athabasca Denesuline stressed that under no circumstances “should calving grounds ever be explored/ developed/ disturbed in any way.”

“These organizations have taken strong positions because this project threatens their livelihoods,” Evans said during the BQCMB’s May meeting in Fort Smith, Northwest Territories. BQCMB meeting guest and harvester from Arviat, Leo Ikakhik, agreed. “This area is where our country foods are grown, where our hearts are. Any damage or disruption hurts us.”

“The Board has taken the position of no development on calving grounds,” added Florence Catholique, BQCMB alternate member representing the Akaitcho Government. “We have the interests of a lot of people at heart. Our concerns are for the caribou, the Dene people, and future generations.”

Evans is frustrated and concerned that the long-standing position against exploration and development on calving grounds held by the BQCMB and many other organizations continues to be disregarded. However, he is encouraged by the solidarity seen amongst organizations across the caribou ranges. “Our voices are stronger when we speak together,” he said.

As for the second question, the BQCMB recognizes that once permits are issued it becomes more difficult to oppose that particular exploration project—the reality is, exploration is taking place. The Board was a participant in the process and needs to collaborate with the other parties involved to ensure its comments and concerns are considered. So how can those organizations and communities with serious concerns about permitting exploration on calving grounds move forward from here?

Again, open lines of communication are essential. The BQCMB recognizes that once permits have been issued working with companies to minimize impacts to caribou is a priority, and therefore the Board invited Anconia representatives to its May 2013 meeting. At the meeting Anconia assured the Board that the company will meet or exceed permit conditions, abide by Caribou Protection Measures (CPM), consult on jobs and caribou protection, and minimize impacts on caribou throughout the exploration period. The Board in turn stressed the importance of all potentially affected communities, including Qamanirjuaq caribou range com-

“Our voices are stronger when we speak together.”

BQCMB Chair Earl Evans

munities in Manitoba and Saskatchewan, being included in any future project updates and requests for input.

The BQCMB has also invited the KIA to attend its November 2013 BQCMB Meeting.

Going forward, it is important to recognize that Anconia Resources is not the first nor will it be the last company to propose mineral exploration work on calving and post-calving grounds. The BQCMB has many communication tools at its disposal, including this newsletter, the BQCMB website at www.arctic-caribou.com, and

social media to inform and educate the public about the process and BQCMB concerns.

The Board can also promote best practices and request commitments from companies to stay off of calving grounds. Striving for effective CPM and lobbying for long-term protection for calving grounds through the Nunavut land use planning process and establishment of legislated protected areas will continue to be priorities, too.

There is room for improvement in the screening and permitting processes. However, the BQCMB has a strong voice and will continue to oppose any exploration and development on calving grounds, expressing its concern and making recommendations to review boards, permit authorities and government agencies for protection of caribou and caribou habitat. The Board will also be prepared to develop a strong position of opposition if the next phase, development, occurs. Most importantly, it will also continue to work alongside the communities and organizations with similar concerns to ensure all voices are heard. •

Did you know?

Studies show that caribou are sensitive to low-altitude overhead flights. They may affect caribou by causing long term behavioural changes or by increased energy expenditures. In some cases, physical injury or death may occur.

While it's always important to minimize disturbance near caribou, it's critical when herds are in decline or recovering from declines. Disturbance of these herds may affect their long-term survival.

Caribou response to disturbance depends on where and when the disturbance occurs. Particularly sensitive times are those periods in the annual cycle that are most important for the long term survival of the herd, such as calving, post-calving and summer.

Adapted from Gov. Yukon brochure: Flying in Caribou Country - How to minimize disturbance from aircraft

Kiggavik Review Continues

The \$1.5-billion Kiggavik uranium project was formally proposed by AREVA Resources Canada late in 2008, and has been undergoing environmental review since early 2010. The plan calls for a large mining complex at two sites linked by a 20 km road that includes four open pit mines and an underground mine, a mill facility, an airstrip, a 300-person camp and an 80 km road from Baker Lake, Nunavut. The proposed life of the operational mine is 12 years, with construction starting possibly as early as 2018.

There are concerns about the effects of a large uranium mine and its roads on caribou and the people who rely on caribou. These concerns are multiplied since it is the first time uranium would be mined in Nunavut. The BQCMB's ability to predict the likely effects of the project is reduced by the lack of experience with uranium mining in a tundra ecosystem that provides caribou and other resources people depend on.

Last issue (Fall 2012), we reported that the Nunavut Impact Review Board (NIRB) had issued a revised anticipated timeline for the technical review stage of the environmental assessment because AREVA had stated it would not be able to meet NIRB's preliminary three-week deadline for submitting responses to Information Requests (IRs). On January 31, 2013—seven months after organizations participating in the review submitted IRs to NIRB—AREVA submitted its responses.

The BQCMB had submitted 22 IRs to AREVA that identified shortcomings in the Draft EIS that needed to be dealt with to allow the BQCMB to assess AREVA's conclusions about the significance of effects on caribou. Unfortunately, only a few of the BQCMB IRs were answered in detail. The NIRB and AREVA stated that responding to many of the Board's requests could be postponed until the technical meetings and delayed addressing other

requests until even later in the technical review, during development of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

Technical review work in 2013

During the next stage of the technical review the BQCMB submitted detailed technical comments about 10 issues it identified with the Draft EIS, summarized as follows:

- The views and knowledge of Aboriginal peoples were not effectively used, including knowledge from caribou range communities outside Nunavut;
- Too much emphasis was placed on information from satellite-collared cows for assessing effects on caribou distribution and movements, and not enough analysis was conducted;
- Project-specific effects and cumulative effects may be under-estimated as a result of lack of consideration of historical and local knowledge about caribou using the project area, as well as lack of analysis of caribou habitat availability, mortality, movement and health;

- Cumulative effects assessment was insufficient, in part because analysis omitted key factors (such as accumulating radioactivity as a result of exposure to mines and roads across the caribou ranges) as well as exploration sites and several likely projects and roads.

Few of these concerns were addressed by AREVA in its May 2013 responses to technical comments from all review participants. As a result, the BQCMB raised these issues again during the technical meeting and pre-hearing conference in May-June.

In its presentation at the pre-hearing conference, the BQCMB stated that AREVA had not satisfactorily addressed concerns about effects on caribou and caribou harvesters in its Draft EIS or subsequent responses to BQCMB concerns, and that the Board did not accept AREVA's conclusions that there will not be significant project specific and cumulative effects on caribou or on the well-being of the people who depend on caribou across their annual ranges.

Part of the Baker Lake HTO contingent at the NIRB's Kiggavik Community Roundtable and Pre-Hearing Conference: (L to R) Joseph Scottie (HTO member), Hugh Ikoe (HTO President), Warren Bernauer (graduate student assisting HTO with Kiggavik review)



Photo courtesy Leslie Wakelyn

Need for community input

The BQCMB has been an active participant in all stages of the environmental review, participating in both the NIRB's Technical Meeting in Rankin Inlet in May and its Pre-hearing Conference (PHC) and Community Roundtable in Baker Lake in June.

The timing of these meetings was a concern, however, and both Makita and BQCMB wrote to the NIRB in winter 2012-2013 protesting the review timeline and noting that the months of May and June are not appropriate times to hold community meetings.

NIRB replied in both cases that they could not avoid a specific time of year when scheduling meetings. However its July 2013 PHC report included this statement: "The Board understands that a late spring or early summer date for the Final Hearing may make it more challenging to ensure full and active participation by potentially affected communities, as many community members may be engaged in traditional activities during this time."

The BQCMB sent another letter to NIRB this past May, in which Chair **Earl Evans** noted there was a lack of opportunity for meaningful input from Athabasca Denesuline communities and others who have direct experience with uranium mines in northern Saskatchewan, and who may also be impacted by this project.

The letter noted that "There is still concern that the Manitoba, Saskatchewan and NWT communities have not been fully consulted, in fact AREVA has not held meetings to explain the project with Manitoba and Saskatchewan communities, despite invitations to do so."

Comments provided to the BQCMB from Athabasca Denesuline communities by the Prince Albert Grand Council (PAGC) illustrate that harvesters from communities across the caribou ranges have information relevant to the Kiggavik project about caribou, exploration and development impacts, and uranium mining specifically.

Directives from NIRB

In its PHC Report NIRB accepted AREVA's commitments and imposed 25 additional directions to guide the prepara-

Critics of the Kiggavik project continue to be outspoken: Nunavummiut Makitagunarningit (Makita), Nunavut's uranium development watchdog, said in April 2013 that "important documentation is not being translated into Inuktitut, and important meetings are being held during the height of Inuit hunting seasons."

While the scheduling of the meetings has been up to the NIRB, Barry McCallum, manager of Nunavut Affairs for AREVA, notes there are challenges for having uranium terminology translated into Inuktitut. "There's a lot of work in mining terminology, but not much in uranium," he said. For Kiggavik's Draft EIS, several hundred pages (out of a total of about 10,000 pages) were translated from English into Inuktitut.

In the future, McCallum said AREVA will continue to work with Nunavut's language authorities to have documents translated "into the words that locals use as opposed to what somebody put on a map."

The BQCMB had the summary of its technical review comments translated into Inuktitut and provided to NIRB for distribution at the pre-hearing conference.

With files from Mining Watch

tion of the Final EIS. Directions which responded to concerns of the BQCMB include: reconsideration of the potential effects of the Kiggavik Project on caribou; collection, incorporation and integration of additional Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit, including the use of other Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge; and revisions to the cumulative effects assessment.

Also, in response to BQCMB input during the technical review of the Draft EIS, NIRB recommended that AREVA's Final EIS address outstanding issues tabled by BQCMB at the PHC regarding potential effects and cumulative effects on caribou. It listed the 10 outstanding issues identified by the BQCMB in the PHC report, as well as five outstanding issues identified by the Baker Lake Hunter's and Trapper's Organization. At the close of the PHC several issues also remained outstanding for each of the Kivalliq Inuit Association, Government of Nunavut, Environment Canada, and Health Canada.

AREVA has requested time at the BQCMB's November 2013 board meeting to discuss unresolved issues outlined by BQCMB throughout the technical review and at the PHC. The Board will be looking for some commitments for addressing the BQCMB's outstanding issues in the Final EIS, expected in September 2014.

Next steps

The BQCMB is planning workshops with Baker Lake HTO, Arviat HTO, and Lutsel K'e tentatively early in 2014. These workshops are expected to provide key input that will influence and assist the BQCMB review of AREVA's Final EIS and preparation of further comments and presentations.

After reviewing the Final EIS, the BQCMB will present to NIRB's technical meetings, and will make a presentation to NIRB's final hearing in Baker Lake. This is expected to take place in late winter or spring 2015, depending on the date of the filing and acceptance of a complete Final EIS.

The BQCMB will continue to be an active participant in the Kiggavik Review. Coordination of BQCMB review work is being conducted by biologist **Leslie Wakelyn** and technical assistance is being provided by **Anne Gunn**, a former GNWT caribou biologist with extensive experience in environmental review. Participant funding is being provided by the federal government. BQCMB will continue to work in cooperation with Baker Lake HTO and its partners as well as with PAGC. •

Jerome Denechezhe:

Farewell to a Friend

Jerome Denechezhe, former Chief of Northlands First Nation, represented the communities of northern Manitoba on the BQCMB for more than 30 years. As one of the founding members, Jerome was instrumental in establishing the Board back in 1982. Since his passing in April of this year, those who knew him have spent time reflecting on his many contributions over the years.

A trapper, hunter and fisherman from the community of Lac Brochet, he was “one of the few people that moved from Brochet to establish the community of Lac Brochet and the Northlands First Nation,” says **Daryll Hedman**, who represents the Government of Manitoba on the BQCMB. “Jerome had a very good understanding of the movements of the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq caribou and had a keen interest in the management and conservation of both herds for the Dene people that rely on caribou for subsistence living.”

“I remember him first as a shy young man,” says former BQCMB Secretary-Treasurer **Gunther Abrahamson**, who worked alongside Jerome for over 20 years, “but he won the confidence of all and was eventually elected chairman.” (In fact, Jerome served as Chair twice – from 1998-1999 and from 2005-2008.) “He was comfortable in this role and ran productive meetings. He was a good listener and understood the consensus of the Board. He knew when it was necessary to stand firm and when it was wise to yield. His sense of humour diffused conflict and kept people working together. We all respected him. I will keep his memory alive in my thoughts and especially his smile and boyish giggle.”

Those who knew him well describe Jerome with similar words: humble, respectful, kind. No matter how important the position he held he was never above helping out a friend in need. **Tim Trottier**, who represents the Government



Photo courtesy David Vetra

of Saskatchewan on the BQCMB, served alongside Jerome for over 30 years. He tells a story that perfectly illustrates this modesty. “It was around 1989 and we had scheduled a summer meeting in Lac Brochet,” says Trottier. “Jerome was Chief at the time, and they were going to put us up in teacherages, but when we arrived they weren’t ready. Jerome gathered up sheets, blankets and pillows and came in and made everybody’s bed. Here he is a Chief, and he is making the beds for everyone!”

Despite his quiet manner, Jerome was not afraid to deal with difficult situations. The BQCMB was the first co-management board established in North America for a major game species, and “the beginning was not easy,” stresses Abrahamson. “All of us were new to the concept of co-management and everybody brought some baggage to the table. The early days were complicated by divisive issues such as land claims, treaty rights, the validity of traditional knowledge and western science, and the jurisdictional responsibilities of federal, provincial and territorial governments.”

Jerome speaking out during the February 2010 BQCMB Caribou Workshop in Saskatoon. (Also pictured: Pierre Robillard, Saskatchewan board alternate)



Photo courtesy David Vetra

“We all respected him.”

former BQCMB Secretary-Treasurer Gunther Abrahamson, who worked alongside Jerome for over 20 years,

Perhaps his early years on the BQCMB helped prepare him for a later role as a Chief Negotiator in the North of 60 Land Claim (from 1999-2013). In his quest to help achieve recognition of Manitoba Denesuline Treaty and Aboriginal rights, colleagues note “it was remarkable how Jerome always remained calm, patient, respectful and constructive, even in the hardest times.” A public tribute on the Manitoba Denesuline North of 60 Land Claim website describes him as a clear thinker who “reminded everyone of our purpose—to reclaim traditional lands, to secure benefits for the community, to make a better life for the children and the grandchildren.”

This concern for future generations is a theme woven throughout Jerome’s life,

according to BQCMB Executive Director **Ross Thompson**. “He was constantly promoting Board programs which best relate to community leaders, elders and youth,” according to Thompson. “He was never afraid to speak out about the importance of sharing our experience and developing strong teamwork to benefit the caribou and future generations.”

Jerome’s work to benefit future generations was perhaps felt most strongly in his own community of Lac Brochet. During the BQCMB’s May 2013 meeting, board alternate for Lutsel K’e Dene First Nation **Florence Catholique** read a testimony that community representatives had written about their former Chief: “He was among the first to bring the BQCMB’s ‘On the Land Camp’

program to the school kids. The people are very thankful for all his efforts and involvement. Many people paid tribute to Jerome at his funeral, including those from northern communities and governments. The Athabasca Dene chartered a plane to attend and other Manitoba charters were full to get to the community for the funeral. He left word that although he is gone, we are to continue in the work he started and never give up. The children need our good work and direction!”

BQCMB members and staff past and present can rest assured that the work Jerome started will indeed continue. As Abrahamson notes, “It is a tribute to Jerome that, in times of financial restraint, governments have renewed the Board’s mandate for a fourth decade.”•



Photo courtesy North of 60 Land Claim website

People and Caribou

Board chair **Earl Evans**, GNWT alternate **Jan Adamczewski** and contract biologist **Leslie Wakelyn** attended the eighth CircumArctic *Rangifer* Monitoring and Assessment (CARMA) conference in Vancouver in December 2012. CARMA consists of a network of managers, researchers and community residents who share information about the world's wild *Rangifer* (reindeer and caribou) populations and how they're affected by global impacts—such as climate change and industrial development. BQCMB is a long-standing partner of the organization and has also presented at past conferences. The organization held its first international conference in 2004.

Yellowknife was the location for a Bathurst caribou and Cumulative Effects Workshop in March, 2013. **Archie Catholique** represented the BQCMB thanks to funding from GNWT. Highlights included presentations on Bathurst caribou monitoring, cumulative effects, caribou management strategy, surveys, models to integrate traditional knowledge, Bathurst Herd study, and collar information. The GNWT is putting together a framework to assess factors affecting the herds, including predators, other species, mines, and roads and using the Bathurst Range as case study.

Photo courtesy Leslie Wakelyn



BQCMB member Archie Catholique

"I think they tried to see if the caribou act differently if the distances from the mines is different. They are trying to find which areas around the mines affect how and when caribou move." said Catholique. These results may be used to follow how other herds like the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq Herds react. "It's good that this information will be shared and is a top priority in the GNWT Caribou Strategy."

Catholique added it was interesting to hear **Nicole McCutchen** and her discussion on the cumulative effects assessment in NWT and the need for training, learning and partnership all around. (The first meeting to begin the development of a Range Plan for the Bathurst caribou herd was held in Yellowknife November 12-13, 2012. Leslie Wakelyn attended as an observer for the BQCMB.)

The Northern Journal reported March 12 on Aurora College's Environment and Natural Resources Technology Program (ENRTP) winter camp for second year students. Five students from Fort Smith's Thebacha campus spent 10 days learning to shoot his or her own caribou, dissect the carcass and package the meat. Helping out again this year was BQCMB Chair Earl Evans, who was born and raised in Fort Smith. Evans has been leading community hunts since the 1970s. His expertise led one student to remark "I think he's probably the best caribou skinner around; he can do it in 10 minutes flat."

Evans was also profiled in the Canadian North's in-flight magazine recently. The article, titled "Defender of the Hunt", was in the "Our People" section of the October/November edition.

"I think he's probably the best caribou skinner around; he can do it in 10 minutes flat!"

Aurora College student's comment about Earl Evans



BQCMB member Alicia Kelly accepts a wedding gift from Chair Earl Evans. May, 2013

Photo courtesy Ross Thompson

A number of faces are changing around the BQCMB table. GNWT Board alternate member Jan Adamczewski has made a big contribution to the BQCMB. Jan attended many meetings and provided much input on many issues, including playing a major and ongoing role in the development of the current Management Plan. Welcome to **Bruno Croft** as the new alternate member for GNWT.

Farewell to Archie Catholique, board member for Lutsel K'e NWT representing the Akaitcho Government. Archie's contributions will be missed, although he will continue to assist with the Management Plan. His replacement will be **Sam Boucher**, also from Lutsel K'e.

Thomas Elytook and **Laurent Angalik** have also completed their terms as NU community reps on the BQCMB. Welcome to new reps **Alex Ishalook** from Arviat and **Stanley Adjuk** from Whale Cove, who were recommended by the Kivalliq Wildlife Board and appointed by the Minister of Environment, Nunavut.

Finally, BQCMB member **Alicia Kelly**, who represents the GNWT, is on one year of educational leave at the University of Alberta to complete her graduate work on boreal caribou. Alicia, who married **Tim Van Dam** on January 27, 2013, was touched to receive a wedding gift of a stained glass caribou from the BQCMB at it's May meeting. All the best, Alicia!•

What is in the Plan?

The Plan includes nine goals and more than 30 objectives focused on the principles of caribou conservation common to all BQCMB management plans, including:

- recognition of the social, cultural and economic values of caribou;
- using all forms of knowledge (including scientific and local and traditional knowledge)
- applying the precautionary principle and principles of sustainable development;
- cooperation among communities and governments; the need for respectful harvesting practices;
- the need to limit the effects of land use and development on caribou and their habitats to allow caribou to move freely through their ranges;
- the importance of education and communication.

The Plan's new elements stem primarily from some of the current challenges facing the BQCMB, including those related to the priority placed by governments on economic development in the north and different opinions about the type, amount, and location of development that should occur and how much environmental protection is required to provide long-term sustainability.

Given the ongoing need of more and better information about the caribou herds on which to base recommendations for conservation and management, monitoring the caribou herds and various factors which may affect them is crucial for identifying what actions are needed to maintain healthy herds that will continue

to provide for the needs of traditional caribou harvesters. For this reason, the Plan identifies monitoring and assessment of herd vulnerability as priorities. The Plan also highlights the importance of harvest information for management, outlines factors that influence how harvest affects a caribou herd, and includes guidelines for assessing acceptable harvest levels based on herd vulnerability. A section of the Plan that describes BQCMB concerns about the effects and cumulative effects of commercial land use on the caribou herds and their habitats includes background about mineral exploration and development, roads, and land use specifically on calving and post-calving areas, as well as strategies for protecting caribou and their habitats.

BQCMB communication and conservation education activities will be ongoing, however they will be particularly emphasized during times when one or both caribou herds are highly vulnerable.

Finally, an essential addition to the Plan is a series of updated maps of annual and seasonal caribou ranges for both herds; mineral tenures and exploration and development projects; existing and proposed roads; wildfire history; ecozones and ecoregions; and protected areas within the caribou ranges.

How was the Plan created?

This plan was developed over a two-year period by the BQCMB Management Planning Committee with assistance from the Board's Executive Director and many others.

The Plan will be reviewed by the Board at its November 2013 meeting and if approved, distributed in early 2014. •

The Board appreciates the many hours of work the following dedicated to creating the plan:

Board Members:

- Allicia Kelly, Gov. NWT
- Archie Catholique, Akaitcho Government
- Bruno Croft, Gov. NWT
- Daryll Hedman, Gov. MB
- David Vetra, Gov. NU
- Dennis Larocque, northern SK communities
- Earl Evans, Northwest Territory Metis Nation
- Florence Catholique, Akaitcho Government
- Jan Adamczewski, Gov. NWT
- Jeff Mercer, Gov. Canada
- Mitch Campbell, Gov. NU
- Tim Trotter, Gov. SK

Other Contributors:

- Ross Thompson, BQCMB Executive Director
- Leslie Wakelyn, BQCMB contract biologist
- David Lee, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated
- Nicole McCutchen, Gov. NWT
- Michelle Swallow, Gov. NWT
- Tanya Handley (contract illustrator)
- Caslys Consulting Ltd. (maps)

What is a vulnerable caribou herd?

When a caribou herd is "vulnerable", the herd as a whole is more likely to be negatively affected by things that would have less impact under better conditions. For example, caribou in declining herds are more likely to be in poor condition and to have less ability to tolerate stresses, so would be considered to be vulnerable at that time. In contrast, when most caribou in a herd are in good shape, they can use their good condition (stored energy and strong bodies) to deal with disturbances caused by natural and human-related events. A herd that is increasing with good calf productivity and range conditions may be in less danger from negative effects of localized or range-wide stresses, thus the herd is considered to be less vulnerable at that time.

Award gives students rare glimpse into northern world

Since 1988, the BQCMB has helped post-secondary students learn more about the management and conservation of barren-ground caribou and their habitat through its Caribou Research and Management Award, sponsored by the Board's Caribou Management Scholarship Fund. The annual award, administered by the Association of Canadian Universities for Northern Studies (ACUNS), currently carries a value of up to \$1,500 and is open to anyone studying barren-ground caribou or their range in Canada. Preference is given to applicants from a caribou-range community and to those examining the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq Herds.

This year's recipients are **Laura Hebert**, a Masters Candidate, Natural Resources Management, University of Manitoba researching "A Historical Ecological Analysis of Caribou in Northern Manitoba", an exploration of the historical relationship between caribou and Cree people in the north of the province; and

Knut Kitching, a Master's Candidate in Geography at McGill University working on a project in eastern Nunavut titled "Tuktu and Climate Change Adaptation: Inuit Hunting on Southern Baffin Island."

Hebert has this to say about her project: "My research project is an exploration of the historical relationship between caribou and First Nations people in northern Manitoba. Specifically, I will determine the role of caribou in the lives of Cree people in the region across time (e.g., subsistence uses, trade patterns, etc.), and gain insight into how this relationship was affected by caribou diversity, population changes, and migration patterns."

"...grants like the BQCMB Caribou Research and Management Award give students a rare glimpse into a northern world that seemed out of reach as an undergraduate."

Knut Kitching, Caribou Research and Management Award recipient

Hebert will visit archaeological collections from York Factory and other sites in the region, consult ethnohistorical materials in the Hudson's Bay Company Archives and the Manitoba Archives, and hold community workshops with York Factory First Nation. "During these workshops, I will share my findings and community members will be able to share their own knowledge and insights into this history, providing a deeper understanding



Photo courtesy Knut Kitching

Knut, sun and wind-burned after several days out hunting seals on the ice, following hunters during the spring season.

of the interactions of caribou and northern Manitoban Cree people."

Kitching writes "My research aims to understand the complex links between caribou and the Inuit of southern Baffin Island. I am examining in particular the changing nature of this relationship within the context of multiple stresses now being experienced by both Inuit and caribou. Climate change, changing social and economic environments and wildlife management regimes all act upon the caribou-Inuit relationship. This research is particularly timely given the current decline in the South Baffin caribou herd."

"Going to Baffin Island has been a tremendous opportunity for me to explore the sorts of management issues I am interested in through a variety of lenses," writes Kitching. "I enjoy being on Baffin – being a Norwegian-Canadian, the climate, landscape and culture appeal to me and I feel easily at home. From a southern Canadian perspective the far north can be inaccessible, awards and grants like the BQCMB Caribou Research and Management Award give students a rare glimpse into a northern world that seemed out of reach as an undergraduate."•



Photo courtesy Laura Hebert

Laura in the lab at the Parks Canada office in Winnipeg, MB., looking at the site reports and faunal remains from York Factory.

Apply for a BQCMB scholarship

Psst . . . want to win an award of up to \$1,500 for your college or university studies on barren-ground caribou? The deadline for applications for the BQCMB's long-running Caribou Research and Management Award is Jan. 31, 2014. Apply today!

The award is open to college or university students pursuing studies that contribute to the understanding of barren-ground caribou and their habitat in Canada. Students from communities on the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq caribou ranges are given preference.

Over the years, awards have fueled the study of topics as diverse as microsatellite DNA, heavy metal contaminants in the lichen-caribou-wolf chain, and the place of traditional ecological knowledge in wildlife management institutions. A number of award recipients have gone on to make caribou management a focal point of their careers.

To download an application for the Caribou Research and Management Award, visit the web site of the Association of Canadian Universities for Northern Studies:

<http://acuns.ca/website/awards/>

Hunting Practices

The Beverly and Qamanirjuaq Caribou Management Board (BQCMB) believes that wounding of caribou and other wildlife and wastage of edible meat is a critical issue.

The BQCMB is concerned about negative impacts to wildlife resulting from same-day hunting using airplanes, where animals are harvested as soon as the plane lands and there is no camp or transportation available at the hunting site.

When time is limited and there is no other transportation to get into a good position to make clean shots, this increases the potential for poor shots, shots that hit more than one caribou, and likelihood of wounding of animals that can travel far from the plane before they die from their injuries.

If there is no way to travel on the land (e.g. snow machine) the hunter may not be able to track down injured animals and meat may be wasted. During the winter, daylight limits the time available and the pilot and hunter may not have time to retrieve wounded caribou. Poor shots and rushed skinning result in heavy trimming of edible meat or inedible meat, and meat that is not properly cared for.

When aircraft are used to facilitate harvesting, the BQCMB would like to see a wait time of 12 hours on the ground prior to hunting. This would ensure that hunters have time to follow and retrieve wounded animals. Hunters should also have a means of moving on the land in order to follow any animals that are wounded but not killed. This could include a snow machine, snowshoes, boat, or the ability to walk on the land (e.g. when snow is heavily packed in winter).

Hunting by aircraft is prohibited in many jurisdictions. And although the BQCMB is focused on caribou, this should apply to the hunting of all big game species and should apply to all harvesters and caribou users.

Pictured: Use of snowmobiles is one way hunters move on the land to follow animals that are wounded but not killed.



Photo courtesy Tina Giroux



On the Land

Youth and Caribou

Over the years, the BQCMB has funded several “On the Land” programs or “culture camps” with various northern schools—teaching students about caribou, their environment, ecology and conservation efforts.

Lac Brochet Culture Camp

Pierre Bernier, Vice-Principal of Petit Casmir School in Lac Brochet, Manitoba, reported on a successful April 2013 traditional hunt to Misty Lake, 50 kms northwest of Lac Brochet. They shot 12 caribou for the Culture Camp and the school graduation. Elders and Rangers showed the students how to harvest the caribou, told them the body part names in Dene and described ways in which each part was traditionally used.

Students from kindergarten to grade 12 took part in a variety of traditional and modern activities on the land like meat cutting, fishing, net setting and checking, preparing fish and dry meat, fire and bannock making, dog mushing, building snow shelters, snowshoeing, sliding and wood cutting. Over 260 students and 100 community members enjoyed their experience at camp.

Principal Bernier writes “Thank you very much for the funding. It made a huge difference in our kids’ lives. We are hoping we can keep this partnership alive for the years to come.”

“It made a huge difference in our kids’ lives.”

Pierre Bernier, Vice-Principal of Petit Casmir School in Lac Brochet,

Youth-Elder Camp, Fond du Lac, Saskatchewan

Prince Albert Grand Council biologist **Tina Giroux** also reported on a successful Youth-Elder Camp, out of Fond du Lac, Saskatchewan near Skinny Whitefish Lake. Harvesting and preparing caribou meat was featured along with anatomy, story-telling, trapping, videos, record-keeping, sample collecting and language instruction, which involved teachers, guest demonstrators and 24 youth.

Next year’s camp is proposed to be located on the tundra.

Pictured top to bottom:

- Athabasca Dene youth learning how to butcher caribou
- traps for demonstrating to youth at culture camp
- Youth returning from a successful caribou hunt
- Andrew Isadore & Victor Echodh

All photos courtesy Tina Giroux

Lutsel K'e, NWT Dene School Culture Camp

BQCMB alternate **Florence Catholique** submitted a report on behalf of the Lutsel K'e Dene School for 2011-2012.

Students spent several weeks hunting and trapping in January and February of 2012 around Lutsel K'e and in the du Hammel Lake area. In March, 12 traditional instructors/hunters supervised an 8-day trip to Artillery Lake northeast of Lutsel K'e in the Barrens for caribou hunting. All students and instructors traveled by snowmobile so students learned safe traveling and navigation skills.

The hunt was very successful and all the students brought meat back to their families. The elders at the camp provided instruction on preparing caribou for smoking, cutting the meat for transport by snow machine, skinning the caribou so that hides could be prepared, and showing students the way to prepare all the traditional parts of the caribou that Dene use and eat.

Elders and resource people also taught students how to get water and wood and maintain a safe and healthy campsite. Students had daily chores including hauling water from the lake and cutting, splitting and delivering wood to all the tents, especially for the elders. Students also learned how to cook out on the land and travel safely in groups when they are out hunting. •



Photo os Skinny Whitefish Lake, SK courtesy Tina Giroux

Did you know?

The economic value of the harvest of the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq caribou herds in 2005-06 was about \$20 million!

From an economic analysis of the estimated harvest by Intergroup Consultants Ltd.

Upper canine teeth are generally found in male and female caribou, however they remain unused and below their gums. This indicates that at one time caribou may have had a use for canines.

Adapted from a wildlife fact sheet by Government of Nunavut - Dept. of Environment

The eyes of caribou living in Arctic areas with 24-hour darkness in winter change colour with the seasons, and caribou vision becomes 1,000 times more sensitive to light during winter months.

www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/arctic-caribou-eyes-change-colour-withseasons-1.2325462

Safety First

Future "On the Land Camps" will be asked to focus on safety and first aid and include demonstrations on axe and knife handling, proper snow machine use, water and ice awareness, wilderness first aid, and appropriate winter gear and clothing.

The reason, says BQCMB Chair Earl Evans, a lifelong hunter who frequently lends his expertise to programs geared at teaching students to hunt, is due to concern that sometimes hunting becomes the focus without kids learning proper safety skills first. "Land skills, camp skills, how to operate a snowmobile safely, what to do in case of hypothermia and other dangers, even how to dress properly for the bush...these are skills youth need in order to hunt safely," stresses Evans.

He says it is important to make sure basic safety and first aid is available and emergency response (i.e. satellite phone/plane) is also accessible. "Being properly prepared for an emergency is a skill that will help them years down the road."

Coming up

In the next issue

In the next issue of Caribou News in Brief, we will introduce a new “Getting to Know You” section. But we aren’t just getting to know people - we are getting to know communities, too. The first community we will profile is Tadoule Lake, Manitoba.

Where is Tadoule Lake? Who lives there? What makes it a special place?

Find out in the next issue of Caribou News in Brief - coming in May, 2014!



Did you know?

The BQCMB has a new Facebook page.

Just search “BQCMB” on Facebook...and “Like” our page!

Publisher's Box

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Photo of Northern lights, Stony Rapids, SK courtesy Ronald Robillard