

The fifth government responsible for managing the two herds is the federal government. In a March 2005 letter, Indian Affairs minister Andy Scott says that his department will “co-ordinate meetings with regulators in Nunavut to initiate discussions on the paper.” The BQCMB had hoped to meet with stakeholders across the range rather than just from Nunavut, but before considering that, community talks must happen. Hopefully, initial discussions can start with the communities of Arviat and Baker Lake this fall. Churchill has also indicated interest in a presentation by the BQCMB.



Courtesy of Manitoba Hydro

“It was a slam-dunk unqualified success,” enthused BQCMB secretary-treasurer Ross Thompson, speaking of the Canadian Wildlife Directors meeting in Regina where he, chairman Jimmy Laban and vice-chairman Tim Trottier spoke to a group of about 25, including all wildlife directors from across Canada. This quasi-formal group meets

For more news, see our web site:
www.arctic-caribou.com



Articles in Dene or Inuktitut are available upon request.
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Around the Range

New Management Plan available

The *Beverly and Qamanirjuaq Caribou Management Plan 2005 – 2012*, the long-term management strategy that will guide the Board, was published in May. A key priority is boosting community involvement in caribou management programs. So is monitoring and protecting caribou herds and ranges, the environmental assessment of proposed development activities on the ranges, incorporating local and traditional knowledge into caribou management programs, having school programs about caribou ecology and conservation, and communications.

The next step is developing action plans with specific instructions for what needs to be done. Print copies of the *Management Plan* are available from the BQCMB's secretariat (phone 204-467-2438 or e-mail rossthompson@mts.net), or download a copy from www.arctic-caribou.com

Low-level flying complaint resolved

No charges were laid in an investigation of low-level flying over caribou near Baker Lake after the helicopter company involved issued a letter of apology and promised to speak to its pilots, says Baker Lake RCMP Corporal

Rod Rudiak, who relayed the information to the hunters who lodged the complaint last fall. So far this year, no other low-level flying complaints have been filed with the Baker Lake RCMP. "The mine (the Meadowbank gold project) is starting to go into full force again and there's a lot of flights going on (but) we haven't had anything."

Cards now in Inuktitut and Dene

Pocket-sized observation cards, with a checklist of questions for hunters and others about disturbances they see caribou suffering from vehicles, aircraft or anything else that may bother them, debuted earlier this year in English. Now 500 copies each of Inuktitut and Dene versions will be sent to caribou-range communities later this summer. As well, an online version of the form can be filled out at www.arctic-caribou.com As industrial

development on the ranges surges ahead, the cards are becoming a way for the BQCMB to bank valuable first-hand accounts about human-caused activities that upset caribou.

BQCMB meetings

Bad weather and money woes prevented many Board members from attending the May 2005 meeting in Rankin Inlet. As a result, the Board did not have the minimum number of members needed to decide on many issues. It was agreed locations central to all the caribou-range communities in Saskatchewan, the Northwest Territories, Nunavut and Manitoba must become a standard for future meetings. So while November meetings will continue to be held in Winnipeg, the May 2006 session will be staged in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan with the May 2007 get-together set for Thompson, Manitoba.

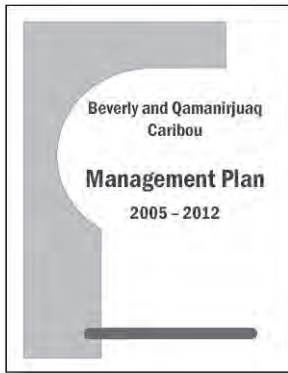


Photo by Deb Johnson



People who see caribou being bothered by vehicles, aircraft or anything else can help the BQCMB by filling out its new observation cards

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yearly to discuss issues and opportunities that span boundaries.

Except for a few participants familiar with the North, “I think they were surprised at the amount of activity that we described and the issues,” says Trottier. “We tried to portray it not just as something happening in one remote part of the world, but what we’re doing (in terms of protecting caribou) can be applied to other species.”

At Thompson’s invitation, audience members provided comments and advice. Getting caribou surveys done in order to have data to back up claims for the need to protect the herds, initiating talks with major land users, including industry, and promoting the Board to senior government people were just a few of the valuable responses.

Constant turnover of ministers, deputy ministers and assistant deputy ministers means the BQCMB must put together a briefing paper and meet in person “with higher-ups on a regular basis to remind them of what this organization exists for and why



Phone (204) 467-2438 or e-mail
rossthompson@mts.net for a copy of
the plain language summary



Courtesy of Environment and Natural Resources, GNWT

Economic development must be balanced with caribou conservation, but right now, protection of the herds and their habitat lags far behind

each jurisdiction participates and what’s worthwhile about the organization,” advised Manitoba wildlife director Jack Dubois.

With “a million boards and advisory groups,” new ministers and deputy ministers are often overwhelmed. “It’s a lot easier to get response (to an initiative like the BQCMB position paper) if you’ve done the homework of getting minister and senior staff acquainted with your organization ahead of time.”

Thompson also spoke to about 30 people at the 2005 Nunavut Trade Mission to Manitoba in Winnipeg, where economic development between the two jurisdictions, especially the proposed Nunavut-Manitoba road, was on everyone’s mind. Potential routes will soon be studied, and Thompson warned that a route threatening the conservation of caribou would be disastrous.

Full support at HBNRRT

Meanwhile, Leslie Wakelyn, consulting biologist to the BQCMB, addressed the Hudson Bay Neighbours Regional Round

Table (HBNRRT) in Rankin Inlet, where the crowd of 40 included mayors, councillors and senior administrative officers from two Manitoba and seven Nunavut communities. In a presentation, Wakelyn summarized the key recommendations from the BQCMB’s position paper. A resolution supporting the recommendations passed unanimously, and the HBNRRT agreed to send letters pushing for action by Manitoba and Nunavut agencies responsible for caribou management, land use planning, protected areas planning, land and water management, and environmental review and impact assessment.

Networking one-on-one, Thompson also met with Prince Albert Grand Council advisor Barry Hunter, and with Gail Whelan Enns, Manitoba Wildlands director, who offered to help distribute the position paper and plain language summary.

The position paper and plain language summary are online at www.arctic-caribou.com. Manitoba Wildlands also has the position paper on its site, manitobawildlands.org.

“Just the tip of the iceberg”

Fear of a mining boom has prompted four Akaitcho communities in the Northwest Territories – including Lutselk’e – to start mapping out important lands in their traditional territories that they want the federal government to designate as out of bounds to developers while treaty implementation negotiations wrap up, something that’s expected to take at least another five years.

A June 29 public hearing in Lutselk’e into a proposed summer/fall uranium mineral exploration operation at Screech Lake in the Thelon Basin, south of the Thelon Wildlife Sanctuary, was cancelled when the proponent, Ottawa-based Ur Energy, pulled out following strong opposition.

“People in Lutselk’e are feeling a lot of pressure from resource development,” especially from the diamond mines that quickly sprang up north of their traditional territories, says Steve Ellis of the NWT Treaty #8 Tribal Corporation. “They see what’s going on in the Thelon as just the tip of the iceberg.” If action isn’t taken to ensure development proceeds wisely and certain areas are off-

Cameco Corporation Saskatoon, Saskatchewan



The Thelon Basin is geologically similar to Saskatchewan’s Athabasca Basin, where five mines (including the McArthur River Mine above) produce much of the world’s uranium

Protection via the Thelon Management Plan

Having Akaitcho Dene approve the Thelon Wildlife Sanctuary Management Plan is another priority of the LKDFN. (Inuit and Nunavut organizations, who are partners to the plan, have already approved it). The plan contains two special management areas to protect the calving ground of Beverly caribou to the northeast of the Sanctuary, and to protect the Upper Thelon watershed. The LKDFN is also negotiating with Parks Canada to establish a protected area that would help protect Beverly caribou range in the East Arm/Artillery Lake area.

limits to development, residents believe “that whole piece of land will be taken away from them, just like what happened on the north side,” says Ellis.

Fears shared by many

Like the Tribal Corporation and the Lutsel K’e Dene First Nation (LKDFN), the BQCMB, World Wildlife Fund Canada, Athabaskan Dene, North Slave Métis Alliance, local outfitters and others had concerns about the proposed uranium exploration.

“The Screech Lake property is located in key Beverly caribou habitat,” says consulting biologist Leslie Wakelyn, who had planned to present on behalf of the BQCMB at the Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board hearing. The BQCMB is concerned by “the direct effects of exploration on caribou, such as disturbance from aircraft, especially during the spring migration and post-calving periods.” Another worry is cumulative effects, including impacts

from existing and abandoned uranium mines in northern Saskatchewan.

Lutselk’e residents are determined to protect caribou, water and the Thelon barrenlands. Both the Bathurst and Beverly herds are hunted there, and Ellis says that development appears to be harming the Bathurst caribou. While the Thelon River flows into Baker Lake, not Lutselk’e, the Dene and Inuit from that region share a sense of kinship after having met in the barrenlands for countless years. Ensuring polluted water does not reach Baker Lake is important to Lutselk’e.

So is preserving the barrenlands, considered a sacred place. “People will often talk about that area as the most beautiful area, and that there’s responsibility on the part of the people that that area is not spoiled.”

The world wants uranium

Uranium exploration is heating up in the North. The Thelon Basin is geologically similar to the Athabasca Basin in northern Saskatchewan, which produces almost one-third of the world’s uranium. The price of uranium jumped 40 per cent in 2004 because of increasing global demand for electricity (uranium fuel generates nuclear power to create electricity).

But in Lutselk’e, “there’s real concerns

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BQCMB wins award from Manitoba Hydro

Praising it for safeguarding the caribou herds, Manitoba Hydro selected the BQCMB as one of 12 recipients of its 2005 Spirit of the Earth Awards.

“(Caribou are) the lifeline of those northern communities,” said George Campbell, chair of the volunteer panel overseeing the awards and a northerner himself, originally from Norway House, Manitoba. “It’s their food, it’s their clothing, it’s their everything.”

The Spirit of the Earth Awards, now in their third year, bring public attention to aboriginal history and culture in Manitoba. “It recognizes people for good things done, with a very strong environmental focus,” says Manitoba Hydro’s Brendan Carruthers, an environmental education specialist who manages the awards program. The awards evolved from an idea that Campbell and colleague David Crawford had after volunteering with the 2002 North American Indigenous Games in Winnipeg. Wanting to continue the legacy of the Games,

which focused on cultural activities as well as sports, the two approached Manitoba Hydro for funding.

During a special luncheon for this year’s award recipients, BQCMB Manitoba members Jerome Denechezhe and Albert Thorassie described the Board’s structure and ongoing efforts to preserve the herds, using traditional knowledge and science.

The Spirit of the Earth Award is one of the few such awards the BQCMB has ever received. “Well, I think it’s about time,” Thorassie later said. “The Board’s been in existence since 1982.” Government and user members work together, but even when there are disagreements, “at the end of



Courtesy of Manitoba Hydro

BQCMB members Jerome Denechezhe and Albert Thorassie (second from right and right), along with secretary-treasurer Ross Thompson (second from left), lunch with Gary Shingleton of Manitoba Hydro (centre) and Harvey Nepink (left), a SOTE award recipient for the Waterhen Wood Bison Ranch, Skownan First Nation

the day they come away with a solution.

“The Board does help the community at large, plus the government people. They work hand in hand.”

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about uranium,” says Ellis. In 1952, the owners of the Stark Lake project, located about 16 kilometres from Lutselk’e, began exploring for uranium. They departed after a few years, leaving behind “a large tailings pile that is highly radioactive in an area people just don’t go to” today, says Ellis.

Tracking activities on the caribou ranges

Meanwhile, the BQCMB is attempting to map land use activities across the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq ranges. Information from the Saskatchewan and Manitoba governments has still not been supplied, but data for the NWT and Nunavut show plenty of development

activity, including:

- numerous land use permits, prospecting permits and active mineral claims issued on the Qamanirjuaq traditional calving ground (mapped between the 1950s and 1994) and post-calving range
- two land use permits, several active mineral claims and leases, and a prospecting permit issued on the Beverly traditional calving ground (mapped between the 1950s and 1994). A few land use permits and many prospecting permits exist on post-calving range right up to the southern and eastern boundaries of the Thelon Wildlife Sanctuary.
- large blocks of prospecting permits issued across the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq caribou

ranges in Nunavut and the NWT.

The most advanced mining project on the caribou ranges is the proposed Meadowbank gold mine near Baker Lake. A decision on any additional information that mining company Cumberland Resources may need to file in its final environmental impact statement (FEIS) for Meadowbank was expected July 9, at the earliest, from the Nunavut Impact Review Board. Once Cumberland files its FEIS, intervenors have 90 days before final hearings begin. If NIRB gives Meadowbank the go-ahead, the project proceeds to the Nunavut Water Board for review.

To read an expanded version of this story, please see www.arctic-caribou.com

Monitoring priorities project: lots to consider

Monitoring Change, a video that captures caribou-range residents speaking out about events that affect caribou in their areas, is now out in separate English, Inuktitut and Dene versions. It's just one result of an ambitious BQCMB monitoring priorities project that wrapped up last month.

Whether it's unpredictable changing weather, forest fires or mining activity, caribou face different challenges on different parts of the ranges, and these challenges need to be monitored. In March 2004, Anne Kendrick, community liaison for the BQCMB's Nunavut community-based caribou monitoring pilot project, began organizing workshops at select communities around the caribou ranges to discover what regional factors most affected caribou. (Workshops took place in Fond du Lac, Lac Brochet, Arviat and Baker Lake. Those planned for Fort Smith and Tadoule Lake didn't pan out because of timing conflicts). Communities and BQCMB community representatives have said they'd like the Board's caribou monitoring program to extend across the ranges.

A final report now with the BQCMB for

consideration suggests ways to tailor caribou monitoring to regional priorities, and to streamline the 44-page questionnaire and mapping exercise used in the Nunavut pilot project. The project also aimed to create links between traditional and scientific knowledge and tie mapped data from Baker Lake and Arviat hunters in with vegetation and/or satellite-collaring data collected on the Qamanirjuaq range by the Nunavut Department of Environment.

At the BQCMB's May meeting in Rankin Inlet, Kendrick gave the Board 19 recommendations that tackle these objectives as well as broader BQCMB goals, such as cultivating the use of traditional knowledge, public outreach and fundraising.

Some initiatives the BQCMB could spearhead include:

- finding money or other support for communities so that they can afford to write proposals for starting their own community-based caribou monitoring program, with an

eye to getting funding from partners

- re-designing community knowledge collections with seasonal interviews, annual workshops and community assemblies
- establishing a sampling effort with hunters
- publishing a handbook on range-wide research procedures, which differ between jurisdictions.

The BQCMB could also play a partnership role by:

- linking with universities and non-government organizations to tap into funding and in-kind support
- investigating international exchanges with other caribou/reindeer-hunting communities to learn more about caribou monitoring projects happening in other parts of the world
- offering scholarships to encourage projects of interest to the Board that combine traditional knowledge with science
- setting up a "Friends of the Barren-Ground Caribou" non-profit group to help communicate information about caribou to the public.

Since the BQCMB didn't have a quorum at the Rankin Inlet meeting, the recommendations will be voted on at the November 2005 meeting instead, where the Board will decide which recommendations take priority.

Meanwhile, the video *Monitoring Change* is being sent to communities, government departments and others, and will also appear on the Internet on the University of Manitoba's Natural Resources Institute website. APTN plans to air the video. A broadcast date has yet to be confirmed.

Photos by Anne Kendrick



People from Baker Lake (left), Fond du Lac (above) and two other communities described factors that affect caribou in their region

Autumn 2005 date for road consultations

Community consultations for a Manitoba-Nunavut road route selection study are now slated for this fall, says the consulting firm in charge of the study.

John Hickes, speaking on behalf of SNC-Lavalin Inc. at the BQCMB May meeting in Rankin Inlet, said that a full day of consultations would take place in each community with two return visits over a period of up to two years. Hickes was accompanied by Kivalliq Inuit Association (KIA) executive director Bill Logan. KIA, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, Transport Canada and the governments of Manitoba and Nunavut are paying for the \$1.1 million study.

A community liaison officer would be hired from each community, a move Manitoba BQCMB member Albert Thorassie later called “a really good step,” and traditional knowledge is to be incorporated. BQCMB member Daryll Hedman urged that Fox Lake, Nelson House and Split Lake be added to the communities on the consultation list since possible routes cut through their resource areas.

It had been hoped that consultations would start in early 2005. But the project’s advisory committee must be formed first, and that’s happening this summer, another member of the SNC-Lavalin Inc. team, Ben Hubert, told *Caribou News in Brief*. The BQCMB will sit on that committee.

One of three possible routes would be chosen, starting either in Lynn Lake, Thompson or Gillam and ending in Rankin Inlet. According to an April 21, 2005 KIA press release, the 1,200-kilometre winter road/summer trail would “progressively develop into a two-lane all-weather road” if the winter road demonstrates “the viability, economic and social benefits of an all-weather road”

after a number of years. SNC Lavalin Inc. will provide more news about the study via a newsletter this summer and, later, a website.

KIA executive director Bill Logan (right) mans the controls during a presentation on the proposed road



Photo by Daryll Hedman

New Kivalliq plan at a standstill

With finalization of the West Kitikmeot land use plan the priority in Nunavut, efforts to update the Kivalliq land use plan are at a standstill over the summer.

Nonetheless, the first of eight steps necessary to update the Kivalliq land use plan’s content is underway, says Nunavut Planning Commission (NPC) senior policy advisor Adrian Boyd.

The *Keewatin Regional Land Use Plan*, published by the NPC, is the only land use plan in existence on the ranges of the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq caribou herds. It was approved by the Canadian and Nunavut governments in June 2000. In Nunavut, reviews of land use plans are to take place every five years, as a rule. The December 2004 issue of the NPC’s newsletter, *Land and Water*, reported that the Kivalliq plan is being reviewed again because of regional issues, including a proposed road and power transmission line between Nunavut and Manitoba, and “the use of lands in the southern boundary area of the Keewatin by the Denesuline. NPC Board and staff will be meeting and talking with Denesuline people as part of the review process.” However, it’s not known when these talks would take place, says NPC’s Boyd.

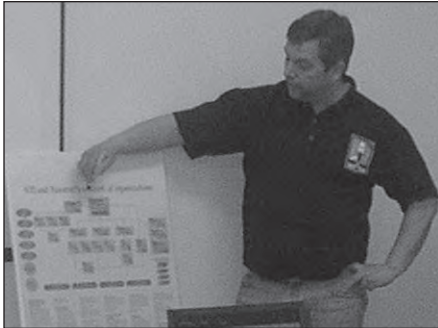
Step One has been to identify land use issues and concerns with community residents and others. Remaining steps include identifying the plan’s vision, core values and goals, collecting and analyzing information about the region to put into a computerized mapping system, developing options for land use, drafting a land use plan for public review, evaluating and approving the plan, then implementing and monitoring it.

A new *Keewatin Regional Land Use Plan* is of great importance, in part because of improvements needed for outdated Caribou Protection Measures, conditions added to land use permits for developers to meet. The Measures were introduced by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada in 1978.

After BQCMB and NPC staff met to discuss an updated land use plan for the Kivalliq Region, BQCMB chairman Jimmy Laban recently wrote to NPC chairman Bob Iyall, urging that the Board be included in land use planning for the Kivalliq Region as a major stakeholder.

People and Caribou

Photo by Daryll Hedman



NTI's Bert Dean

A small crowd at the BQCMB's May meeting enjoyed **Bert Dean's** guided tour through Nunavut wildlife organizations. Dean, associate director of wildlife at land claim organization Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. (NTI), explained that Hunters and Trappers Organizations (HTOs) exist at the community level. The chair of each HTO sits on one of the territory's three Regional Wildlife Organizations (RWOs): the Kivalliq Wildlife Board, the Kitikmeot Hunters and Trappers Association, and the Qikiqtaaluk Wildlife Board for the Baffin area. NTI is the parent body, and it also has an advisory wildlife committee comprised of the chair of each RWO and NTI second vice-president

Photo courtesy of Matt Fredlund



Scholarship winner Matt Fredlund

Raymond Ningeocheak. Unfortunately, few people were able to attend the Rankin Inlet meeting, so Dean has offered to give a more comprehensive presentation at the Board's next meeting.

Meanwhile, **Robert Connelly**, acting director for Nunavut's Department of Economic Development and Transportation, told the BQCMB about his department's plan to conduct a feasibility study of the commercial processing and export of Qamanirjuaq caribou meat. The BQCMB will be involved in the study, and a report on the study's terms of reference should be available this fall.

Keeping mining companies on their best behaviour, environmentally speaking, is the ultimate goal of Aurora College Natural Resources Technology Program student **Matt Fredlund** of Rankin Inlet, winner of the \$1,500 BQCMB

Scholarship Fund award for 2005.

"I really want to get involved (as an) environmental technician with the mines to make sure they're keeping on track – not ruining the land, running the caribou out," says the 22-year-old. The BQCMB award, going for the first time ever to a resident of the caribou ranges, was allocated to general educational pursuits this year rather than a specific research project about Canadian barren-ground caribou. Fredlund enters the final year of the two-year diploma program at Aurora College's Thebacha Campus in Fort Smith this fall. Graduates can also pursue a Bachelor of Environmental Science degree with a further two years of study at Lethbridge University. Fredlund says he may try to get a few years of work experience before pursuing a degree.

The application deadline for the 2006 Caribou Management Scholarship Fund is Jan. 31, 2006. Students from a Beverly/Qamanirjuaq range community get top priority. For more details, contact: Association of Canadian Universities for Northern Studies, Suite 405, 17 York St., Ottawa ON K1N 9J6. Phone: (613) 562-0515, fax: (613) 562-0533. E-mail: office@acuns.ca Website: www.acuns.ca

Baker Lake Hunters and Trappers Organization (HTO) chairman **Harold Etegooyok** reports that the HTO began moving into its new office in the Jessie Oonark Building in June. Its previous office was damaged when the municipal garage next door to it burned down in November 2004.

Publisher's Box

Caribou News in Brief is funded by the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq Caribou Management Board. It is produced twice a year by M.E.S. Editing and Writing Services. ISSN 1489-3436. Opinions expressed are those of the editor and contributors. Back issues available in microform from Micromedia Limited. All comments and suggestions are welcome, and may be sent to:

Caribou News in Brief
Editor: Marion Soublière
1865 Leclair Cres.
Ottawa ON K1E 3S2
Tel.: (613) 841-6817
E-mail: caribounews@arctic-caribou.com

Beverly and Qamanirjuaq
Caribou Management Board
Secretary-Treasurer: Ross Thompson
P.O. Box 629
Stonewall MB R0C 2Z0
Tel.: (204) 467-2438
E-mail: rossthompson@mts.net
Website: www.arctic-caribou.com