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Around the range

Apply for 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 Management Scholarship Fund is Jan. 31, 2010, and applications can be downloaded from the Web site of the Association of Canadian Universities for Northern Studies (www.acuns.ca/cnstawards.htm). No applications were received this past year, so the BQCMB wants to make doubly sure students know about the scholarship. The award is open to college or university students pursuing studies that contribute to the understanding of barren-ground caribou in Canada and their habitat. Students from communities on the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq caribou ranges are given preference.

Caribou fans Winnipeg-bound

The 13th edition of the North American Caribou Workshop (NACW) may turn into a caribou fest, if organizers have their way. Slated for October 25 to 29, 2010 at the Fairmont Hotel in Winnipeg, the workshop's steering committee is encouraging other caribou groups, like the BQCMB, to hold their own meetings at the same time. That way, they can support the NACW and benefit by networking with other caribou researchers. The NACW, which is expected to draw 250 participants, will ask the BQCMB to make a presentation, says NACW organizer Kent Whaley, Manitoba Conservation's regional wildlife manager in The Pas. The theme for the 13th NACW will be *Sustaining Caribou and their Landscapes – Knowledge to Action*. For more details, visit the workshop's Web site at NACW2010.ca.



David Vetra

PAGC community liaison co-ordinator Tina Giroux (far right) joins BQCMB members at their May 2009 meeting in Prince Albert. Giroux works with north Saskatchewan communities to help provide caribou biological assistance

Wildlife symposium report, DVD

A report from the March 2009 Nunavut Wildlife Symposium should be available on the Nunavut Department of Environment's redesigned Web site in early 2010. The symposium addressed concerns of Hunters and Trappers Organizations and Regional Wildlife Organizations, such as the handling of wildlife in research and management. A DVD is also being created by the Inuit Broadcasting Corporation. The symposium, held in Rankin Inlet, was organized by the Government of Nunavut (GN), Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. (NTI), the Nunavut Inuit Wildlife Secretariat and the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board (NWMB). The BQCMB was not invited to attend.

BQCMB meetings

The BQCMB gathers next in Winnipeg, November 19 to 21, 2009 for its regular fall meeting. The Board will be asked to decide if and how to go ahead with a proposed stakeholders workshop focusing on ways to help the Beverly herd population recover. It's been suggested that the workshop could be held after the Board's fall meeting in February 2010. Though the BQCMB had originally planned to have a joint workshop-Board meeting this fall, postponing the workshop became necessary due to conflicting schedules and the lengthy time required to raise funds to host the workshop and pay for the travel of participating stakeholders.

to Lutselk'e and Lutselk'e up north, then to Baker Lake and back down to Kasba." Outside the calving ground, Larocque saw only one

caribou – a bull – and almost no caribou tracks.

The Beverly herd's population was last estimated at 276,000 in 1994. While the herd's current size is unknown,

the continuing drop in numbers of cows and calves counted on the calving ground during June reconnaissance surveys means that the major decline documented in 2007 and 2008 has continued (see "Facts point to major decline in Beverly herd," Winter 2008/2009, *Caribou News in Brief*).

Reconnaissance surveys don't estimate population sizes. Systematic reconnaissance surveys map the location of annual calving grounds and provide a snapshot of the number of caribou on calving grounds during the calving period as survey planes

Leslie Wakelyn



Dennis Larocque

Stakeholders workshop proposed for February 2010

To provide meaningful recommendations to governments, Aboriginal organizations and communities, the BQCMB must find out what monitoring and management actions are required to help the Beverly herd recover and increase in size, and to prevent a serious decline in the Qamanirjuaq herd. It must also find out how these actions can be put in place. What is needed is a plan of action that all stakeholders, including all communities that depend on subsistence harvest of Beverly and Qamanirjuaq caribou, can and will support.

It's been proposed that the BQCMB host a Beverly and Qamanirjuaq stakeholders workshop in February 2010. The Board will decide if and how to go ahead with this at its November 2009 meeting. A total of \$46,000 from governments and industry partners has been raised for the workshop, and the BQCMB has also committed almost \$18,000 in cash and in-kind contributions to organize, co-ordinate and report on the meeting. The workshop would bring together representatives from communities that have traditionally hunted Beverly and Qamanirjuaq caribou, BQCMB members and representatives from key organizations such as the NWMB, the NTI's Wildlife Secretariat, the PAGC and the Porcupine Caribou Management Board. Participants would assess and discuss the BQCMB's draft action plan and provide input for the final plan.

When finalized, the action plan would be sent to communities, governments, Aboriginal organizations, regulatory agencies and other organizations as recommendations for action. The plan would be carried out by governments, communities, the BQCMB and other stakeholders.

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"Shrinking," continued from page 3

fly along parallel transect lines. Surveys are the responsibility of governments, not the BQCMB.

The Beverly herd's range stretches from northern Saskatchewan through NWT to Nunavut. Its calving ground lies largely in Nunavut, with a portion in the Thelon Wildlife Sanctuary in both Nunavut and the NWT. A 2008 report from InterGroup Consultants of Winnipeg estimated the Beverly herd's annual economic value at about \$4.9 million (based on 2005-2006 statistics). Northern Saskatchewan communities take more of the total harvest than any other jurisdiction.

Larocque says caribou did not return to his hometown of Camsell Portage over the fall and winter of 2008 and 2009, making it necessary for hunters to travel more than 200 kilometres by charter plane. But given the expense of air travel, Larocque added ruefully, "(we) probably would have been better off buying a cow from down South!"

How to help?

The BQCMB came up with an initial list of ideas for helping to protect the Beverly herd at its May 2009 meeting, before the 2009 survey was conducted. One long-held view was repeated – that protecting the calving grounds and post-calving areas, and minimizing disturbance to caribou at vulnerable times such as spring migration, are ways that governments and others can take action to help protect the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq herds. Yet even as recently as 2008, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) was still issuing new mineral tenures on the Beverly calving ground – including 49 mineral claims to Ruby Hill Exploration Inc., and 16 claims to Strongbow Exploration Inc.

The BQCMB is also urging governments to implement the caribou management

A "Recipe for Recovery"

The BQCMB will ask governments and other organizations to implement its "Recipe for Recovery" action plan to help the Beverly herd rebuild and prevent the Qamanirjuaq herd from experiencing a serious decline. The draft action plan will be discussed and further developed at the November 2009 BQCMB meeting and at a February 2010 stakeholders workshop. Actions recommended in the finalized plan will likely include the following ideas identified during the May 2009 BQCMB meeting:

- providing conservation education on good hunting practices that include the harvest of bulls rather than cows, and reduced wastage of caribou
- reporting and analyzing harvest
- enforcing regulations regarding hunting, and mineral exploration and development
- investigating various ways to conduct a population survey of the Beverly herd in 2010
- researching and monitoring caribou health and condition
- tracking caribou using satellite collars, and assessing alternative methods used for collaring
- protecting caribou herds and their habitats, including long-term protection of calving and post-calving areas
- planning on land use across the caribou ranges
- protecting caribou winter ranges from wildfires
- commenting to regulatory agencies on how proposed projects might affect caribou and habitat
- getting information about road impacts on caribou
- incorporating traditional knowledge along with scientific knowledge in management
- adopting consistent and complementary territorial and provincial caribou management strategies that are co-ordinated among governments across the herd's range
- collaborating on funding, research and management among jurisdictions
- publicizing the decline of the Beverly herd and actions needed to promote its recovery, including promoting dialogue between governments, communities, industry and the public
- lobbying politicians responsible for the caribou herd and communities that depend on it
- working with the PAGC, the NWMB, NTI and other groups concerned about the future of Beverly caribou, and
- reporting results of BQCMB meetings and decisions to Beverly range communities.

These steps complement the GNWT's current caribou monitoring plans and, hopefully, will also be a good fit with monitoring plans to come from the Nunavut and Saskatchewan governments in 2010.

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Qamanirjuaq herd may be a third smaller

The trend of shrinking caribou populations appears to have hit one of northern Canada's largest barren-ground herds.

The Qamanirjuaq herd is now thought to number around 345,000 animals, according to a preliminary draft population estimate from the GN-led June 2008 calving ground survey. That's down from 496,000, when these caribou were last counted 14 years ago in 1994.

"We're at a point where we have to be a bit more careful," says Kivalliq Region biologist and BQCMB alternate member Mitch Campbell, who headed the survey team. Nunavut's Department of Environment carried out the \$314,000 survey with Manitoba Conservation, and the survey team featured experts from Nunavut, Manitoba and the NWT. The survey's cost was shared by the governments of Nunavut, Manitoba and Canada – through INAC – the NWMB and others, such as the BQCMB.



Mitch Campbell

The preliminary survey estimate is still being reviewed but Campbell says the official survey results will be posted on his department's Web site (www.gov.nu.ca/env) later this fall.

Dropping since 1994, but herd still big

Calving ground surveys estimate a herd's population, based on the approximate number of pregnant cows on the calving ground. The 2008 Qamanirjuaq population survey also revealed just 20 calves for every 100 cows. The herd's size has been declining since 1994, says Campbell. Spring composition surveys have shown that the ratio of calves to cows has been falling over the past three years. However, Campbell notes that except for the 1994 population high-water mark, the Qamanirjuaq herd is still larger than in the past.

But six other barren-ground caribou populations in northern Canada have been in a downward spiral recently – some severely so, such as the Beverly and Bathurst herds (see "Shrinking Beverly herd goes from bad to worse," page 1). A big unknown is the neighbouring Ahiak herd, which calves along the Queen Maud Gulf coast in Nunavut. A June 1996 calving distribution survey estimated around 200,000 animals. A population survey, expected to cost \$400,000, will be conducted by the GNWT with the Nunavut government in June 2010.

Even more monitoring

Given the dip in numbers, even more monitoring of the Qamanirjuaq herd will take place now, says Campbell. Since 1993, his department has been tracking the movements of some caribou cows via satellite collars. The department keeps an eye on herd health in other ways, too.

A two-year dietary study, started in 2009, is examining stomach contents from rumen samples dropped off by Nunavut and



Nunavut Department of Environment

Manitoba hunters. Nunavut government staff want to figure out what the caribou are eating – it may prove where the caribou have been. Understanding why caribou travel in certain areas has also been a key objective of the department's long-running Kivalliq Region vegetation mapping project, which uses habitat data from 5,000 vegetation sites mapped over the past six years along with satellite collaring data to determine how caribou choose habitat.

The Department of Environment is taking blood samples of caribou to learn more about possible diseases, and is publishing a graphics-heavy book about diseases that may affect caribou, too. The department continues to conduct research through the Northern Contaminants Program of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) to monitor the presence of contaminants in the Arctic, including those found in country food such as caribou.

Late spring waylays Qamanirjuaq cows

Barry McCallum, AREVA Resources Canada



June 4, and the snowbanks aren't letting up: Regulatory co-ordinator Diane Martens (left), and environment and radiation protection supervisor Noella Gardiner brave the wintry conditions at AREVA Resources Canada's Kiggavik camp near Baker Lake, Nunavut. Below, right: embracing a blizzard on May 18

Old Man Winter badly overstayed his welcome in northern Manitoba and Nunavut's Kivalliq Region this year, forcing most Qamanirjuaq breeding cows to give birth within the treeline because they were unable to reach their calving ground by mid-June.

And due to wolf predation in those circumstances, "we're very concerned," says Kivalliq Region biologist and BQCMB alternate member Mitch Campbell. The number of caribou harvested by area hunters plummeted as a result, since most Kivalliq Region communities are along the Hudson Bay coast, and hunters "can't Honda and can't skidoo very far inland."

In Manitoba, BQCMB chairman Albert Thorassie of Tadoule Lake reported seeing cows on Munroe Lake, about 50 kilometres

north, as late as June 17.

Meanwhile, "people from Brochet said they even had caribou up at the end of May and June because of the ice," said BQCMB member Jerome Denechezhe of Lac Brochet. "And they told me that the caribou had calves at the north end of Reindeer Lake" (the lake straddles the Saskatchewan/Manitoba border). Ice in that area didn't fully melt away until July, Denechezhe said.

Environment Canada declared the late spring of 2009 to be record-breaking in the Eastern Arctic, with

almost 100 percent snow cover from James Bay on north as of June 11, according to a June 13, 2009 *Winnipeg Free Press* article.

This year, the tardy spring meant caribou began migrating later than usual, with the result that there were almost no cows on the calving ground in June 2009, said Campbell, adding that caribou along the coast were found with "huge fat reserves." Nunavut's Department of Environment was also unable to do spring composition work in 2009, since the caribou were still in forested areas. "We'll ask for a helicopter next year," Campbell noted.

The foul weather changed plans for some mineral exploration companies, too.

AREVA Resources Canada had assembled its Kiggavik camp near Baker Lake earlier than usual this year to take full advantage of the field season, and was drilling by May 27. AREVA's manager of Nunavut affairs, Barry McCallum, says that while the field season overall was quite successful, "the late spring resulted in more snow removal than anticipated, more down days due to blizzards and extra efforts required to manage the runoff in the vicinity of the drill sites." The company will mobilize a little later in 2010.



Barry McCallum, AREVA Resources Canada

Land use planning updates around the ranges

Upper Thelon Land and Resource Management Plan:

The first few months of 2010 will be busy – between January and March, INAC intends to give its planning partners and other interested groups, like the BQCMB, a chance to take part in the development of a draft Upper Thelon Land and Resource Management Plan. Partners in the plan include the Lutsel K'e Dene First Nation, Deninu K'ue First Nation, the Northwest Territories Metis Nation, the Athabasca Denesuline, the GNWT, Environment Canada and INAC.

INAC is currently assembling all available technical information on issues such as geology, water, caribou and valued ecological components to enter into the plan's first draft, which will likely be circulated to partners early in 2010 for comment and review.

And INAC “remains committed” to completing a draft plan – one that identifies where mineral exploration is allowed to go ahead in the uranium-rich Thelon geologic basin – by March 31, 2010.

INAC-NWT Region communications officer Tricia Melander-Forde says that the plan will be a “living document . . . that will likely evolve to suit changing needs or conditions.”

INAC held workshops with partners in Yellowknife in December 2008 and March 2009 to hammer out guiding principles and land use provisions to aid the planning process. Information that emerged from those workshops is guiding developments, and INAC has also provided funding to partners so that they can collect relevant information about land in the Upper Thelon and land use

activities to submit for use in shaping the plan.

Before circulating a draft plan to partners in early 2010, INAC plans to release a state of knowledge report in the fall of 2009

INAC says it “remains committed” to completing a draft Upper Thelon Land and Resource Management Plan – one that identifies where mineral exploration is allowed to go ahead in the uranium-rich Thelon geologic basin – by March 31, 2010

that details existing technical data as well as information received from partners, says Melander-Forde.

Creating a land use plan for the Upper Thelon region, a cultural sanctuary for the Akaitcho Dene, was ordered by INAC Minister Chuck Strahl in October 2007 when he handed down a decision to reject Ur-Energy's proposal to expand its uranium exploration program at Screech Lake, NWT.

Thelon Wildlife Sanctuary Management Plan: There have been no further developments since the GNWT became the last agency to endorse the multi-partner plan in August 2008. However, GNWT wildlife directory Susan Fleck said that this fall, the

GNWT would aim to discuss funding options for a management committee with the GN.

Once funding is in place, a committee can develop a budget and workplan. For years, the BQCMB has urged implementation of the Thelon Wildlife Sanctuary Management Plan, which recommends a special management area that would help protect the embattled Beverly herd and its habitat. The GNWT, GN, Kivalliq Inuit Association, NWMB, NTI and the Lutsel K'e Dene First Nation have all signed on to the plan.

Nunavut Land Use Plan: The Nunavut Planning Commission (NPC) will host a series of technical panels in January 2010 to discuss the management of key issues for a territory-wide land use plan, and it has invited the BQCMB to provide input to these panels. Three regional public hearings will follow, says NPC policy analyst Jonathon Savoy – one each in Cambridge Bay, Rankin Inlet and Iqaluit. Dates for these public hearings have yet to be confirmed.

Athabasca Stage 1 Land Use Plan: There has been no progress since the Saskatchewan Ministry of Environment, the PAGC and Athabaskan communities reviewed the Athabasca Stage 1 Land Use Plan last year, and the ministry incorporated all comments from that review. Dwayne Rinholm, an integrated land use planner with the Ministry of Environment, says his ministry “is hoping to work with PAGC and Athabasca leadership to finalize the document.”

School caribou hunts teach lots of “firsts”

For adult participant Eva Nalge of Tadoule Lake, it was the first time she shot a caribou. For Peter Yassie Memorial School student Brandon Cheekie, also from Tadoule Lake, it was his first attempt to skin a caribou. And for teacher Kirsten Rivard of Father Megret High School in Wollaston Lake, it was her first glimpse of a “land-made” map.

In April 2009, important lessons were learned in Tadoule Lake and Wollaston Lake during hunts funded by the BQCMB (WWF-Canada, AREVA Resources Canada Inc. and Cameco Corporation provide funding to the BQCMB for these hunts, too). Each year, the Board directs money toward caribou-range community-based projects that ideally target school-age youth. Educational caribou hunts give kids a chance to gain new knowledge, including learning from elders while out on the land. More hunts in various caribou-range communities are planned for 2010.

In Tadule Lake, Sayisi Dene First Nation councillor Peter Duck of Tadoule Lake organized the series of hunts that took place over a week, combining 10 students, eight guides and elders, and three women in closely supervised small groups.

Caribou were plentiful at the mouth of the North Seal River. After shooting two caribou, “Tyler (Bussidor, a guide) skinned the first one,” Brandon Cheekie wrote in a trip summary for the BQCMB. “I watched everything he did. When he was done skinning it, it was my turn to skin the caribou. It was kind of hard but I got the hang of it.” He also learned to gut the carcass and cut off the meat. Later, after hunting geese, he and Bussidor cooked a caribou heart over a fire.

(Cheekie also learned a valuable lesson about patience when the belt on Duck’s snow machine broke. The two, along with student Sheldon Thorassie, walked about five hours before getting a ride home.)



Kirsten Rivard

Above: Veronique Sha’ oulle of Wollaston Lake (right) steadies a carcass while Clyde Sha’ oulle tests out his butchering skills. Below, far left: Lance Duck Thorassie (left) and Daniel Thorassie of Tadoule Lake with evidence of their successful hunt. Caribou weren’t the only wildlife in the area (see inset photos)

Nalge shot her first caribou at Anderson Island, and helped others to skin the animals. “Thanks to the caribou management board, the women that went had fun and learned a little bit of everything,” she wrote.

In Saskatchewan, Rivard was one of two teachers, five students and 10 hunters who skidooed two hours east across Wollaston Lake for a busy day of hunting, skinning and butchering. After supper, “one of the hunters told me there was a map at the top of the hill that was to the south of our trail,” Rivard recounted. “He asked me if I wanted to see it and I said yes.” After skidooing to the top of the hill, “he told me to look behind myself. I was awestruck at the view. I could see where we had come from and where we were going. He explained that many hunters come to the top of the hill so that they can get their bearings.”

Peter Duck



Courtesy of Albert Thorassie

Mineral exploration, 2009: Down but not out

A global economic recession and slumping mineral exploration levels slowed industrial developments on the caribou ranges in 2009 – but did not stop them.

“A year and a half after the Nunavut government adopted a uranium development policy, the territory is hopping with uranium exploration and development efforts,” reported the *Northern Miner* in an April 13, 2009 article (“Uranium enjoying a resurgence in Nunavut”). Several months later, the trade newspaper predicted that as more countries turn to nuclear power or crank up their current levels of nuclear power, and as uranium from decommissioned nuclear warheads dwindles, demand for uranium will increase (“Uranium poised for rebound as demand set to outstrip supply,” June 22, 2009). Meanwhile, the Saskatchewan Mining Association predicted that mining companies in 2009 would furnish more than \$2 billion in revenues to the Saskatchewan government – one-fifth of the government’s total budget revenues.

Here are updates on some mineral exploration proposals on or near Beverly and Qamanirjuaq caribou calving and post-calving grounds. As always, the BQCMB recommends that permit applications for mineral exploration on these sensitive habitats be rejected.

Garry Lake property, northwest of Baker Lake, Nunavut: Uravan Minerals Inc. still has not declared whether or not it will keep pursuing a land use application to explore for uranium on this hotly contested property on the core Beverly calving ground just south of Garry Lake, 245 kilometres northwest of Baker Lake. In February 2009, the NIRB issued final guidelines instructing Uravan to create a very detailed environmental impact statement (EIS). “Clearly the fulfilment



Courtesy of Agnico-Eagle Mines Limited

The Meadowbank Gold Mine, the Kivalliq Region’s first mine in decades, is still on track to open in early 2010

of the EIS requirement is a concern for Uravan,” wrote Uravan CEO Larry Lahusen in a May 11, 2009 letter to the NIRB. Meanwhile, his company’s Web site states that Uravan “believes the recommendation by the NIRB to conduct an EIS Review on a low impact entry-level exploration drill program is without merit and unprecedented anywhere in the world.” An EIS is needed for a Part 5 Review, as outlined in Article 12 of the *Nunavut Land Claims Agreement* (INAC Minister Chuck Strahl ordered the Part 5 Review in 2008). The NIRB received almost 200 messages from Canadians and others around the world protesting Uravan’s Garry Lake application. As of April 29, 2009, Uravan held half of all active mineral tenures on the Beverly traditional calving ground, with 357 mineral claims.

Thelon (“Thelon Basin”) and Thelon Basin (“Ruby Hill”) properties, northwest of Baker Lake, and Amer Lake property, north of Baker Lake, Nunavut:

Titan Uranium Incorporated’s Thelon property (now called Thelon Basin) and Western Uranium Corporation’s Thelon Basin property (now called Ruby Hill) both lie on the Beverly caribou traditional calving ground, northeast of the Thelon Wildlife Sanctuary and in a special management area proposed in the Thelon Wildlife Sanctuary Management Plan to protect the Beverly calving area outside the Sanctuary. Western Uranium’s activities in the Sand Lake area of the Ruby Hill property are of great concern to the BQCMB, since this is core calving area used by Beverly caribou since the 1970s. Both Titan and Western Uranium applied to the NIRB for extensions to existing land use permits, although neither had field operations planned for 2009. In both cases, though, the BQCMB gave the NIRB information to help it develop and recommend improved permit conditions – and to alert INAC, Titan

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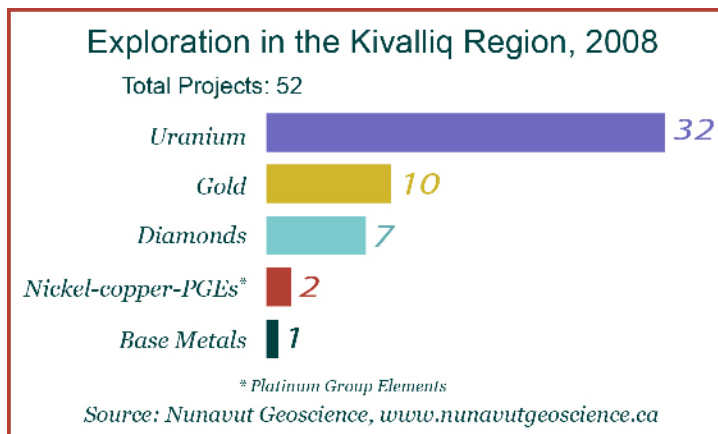
"Mineral," continued from page 9

and Western uranium to the urgent need to lessen impacts on the extremely vulnerable Beverly caribou and their habitat. The BQCMB recommended that Titan and Western Uranium be notified that future permit conditions may be more stringent in response to the serious situation facing Beverly caribou and the potential loss of caribou harvesting opportunities for Aboriginal hunters. Similarly, even though Uranium North Resources' Amer Lake property does not lie within the Beverly traditional calving ground, the BQCMB again provided the NIRB with information to help it develop and recommend improved permit conditions, and to alert INAC and Uranium North to the need to minimize impacts on caribou and caribou habitat.

Kiggavik property, west of Baker Lake, Nunavut: INAC Minister Chuck Strahl has not yet announced his response to the NIRB's March 2009 recommendation that the proposed Kiggavik uranium mine and mill project 80 kilometres west of Baker Lake – possibly Nunavut's first uranium mine – undergo either a Part 5 or Part 6 Review, as per Article 12 of the *Nunavut Land Claims Agreement*. The environmental

review would include public hearings, with a Part 6 Review done by a federal panel, and a Part 5 Review done by the NIRB. However, drilling, engineering and environmental baseline activities did go ahead at the Kiggavik site from May to August, 2009. The Kiggavik project, majority-owned by AREVA Resources Canada Inc., calls for three open pit mines at Kiggavik plus a mill, an open pit mine and an underground mine at the neighbouring Sissons property, plus a road from Baker Lake. The BQCMB has registered its many concerns with the NIRB about the massive proposal and ongoing exploration, especially potential impacts on Beverly caribou and caribou habitat from activities on the post-calving area, including low-level flights and cumulative effects of this and other projects across the caribou range.

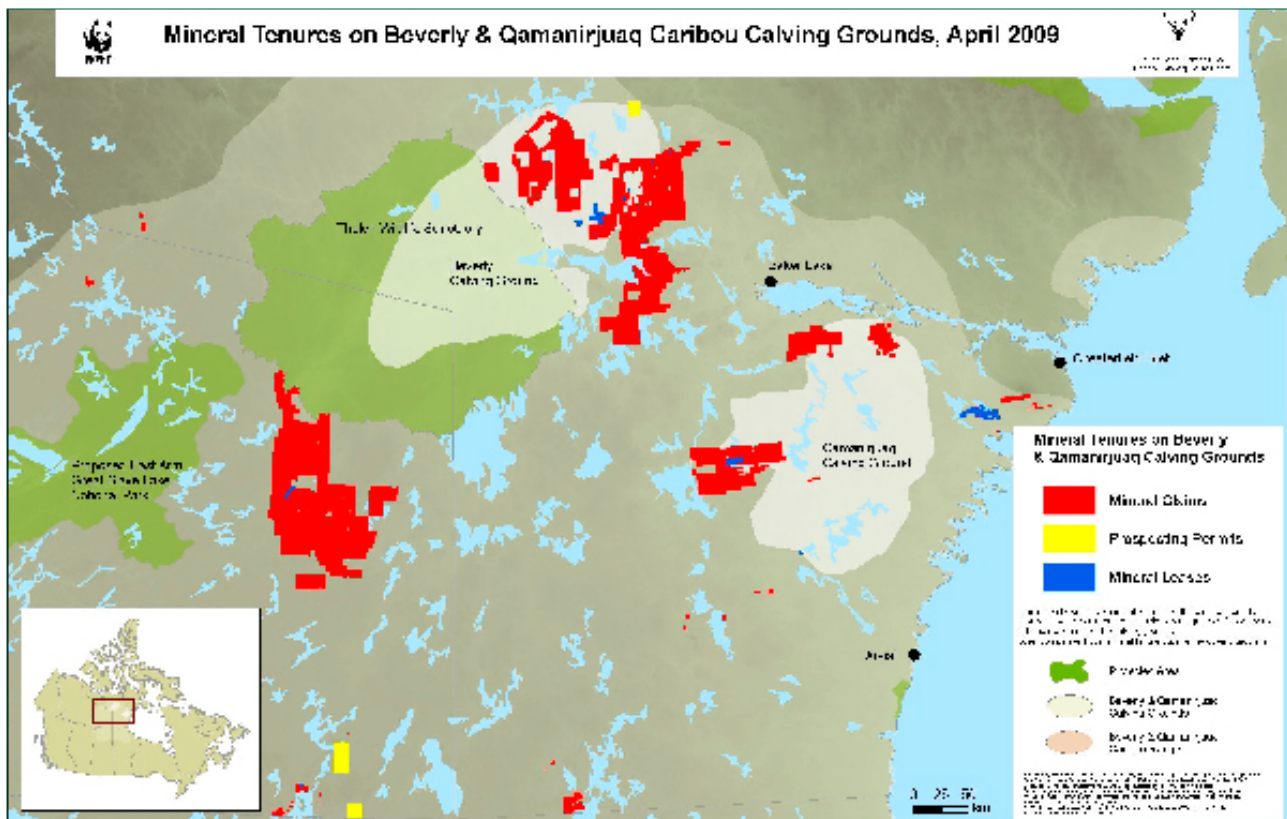
Meadowbank Gold Mine, north of Baker Lake, Nunavut: The open pit mine is still on track to launch in early 2010. Meadowbank is expected to produce about 350,000 ounces of gold per year over nine years. Agnico-Eagle is also conducting additional exploration in the area, with the intent of extending the mine's life.



S o u t h B o o m e r a n g Lake, North Boomerang Lake, Crab Lake and El Lake properties, Upper Thelon region, NWT: For now, Uravan has withdrawn its land use applications for its South Boomerang

Lake and North Boomerang Lake properties, and Bayswater Uranium Corporation has done the same for its El Lake and Crab Lake properties (while the Crab Lake property is in the Dubawnt watershed, exploration was also slated for the Upper Thelon watershed). However, Uravan, which is conducting exploration in the Upper Thelon area in partnership with Cameco Corporation, said in a May 20, 2009 press release that "Uravan's withdrawal of the Boomerang LUP does not mean the abandonment of the Boomerang project or the underlying mineral tenure." Following the environmental assessments of these projects, the Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board (MVEIRB) recommended to INAC Minister Strahl in September 2008 that all proposals be rejected except for the Crab Lake proposal, which it recommended be approved with conditions intended "to prevent project-specific harm to barren ground caribou and to heritage resources." The BQCMB had opposed all four proposals to expand exploration efforts that have been taking place on key Beverly and Ahiak caribou spring migration range. The BQCMB also wanted to see adequate progress made on land and resource management in the Upper Thelon basin (see "Land use planning updates around the ranges," page 7.) Cameco said in its May 14, 2009 letter to Minister Strahl that "Uravan and Cameco have decided to postpone all exploration work on the Boomerang dispositions until the concerns can be addressed with local impacted communities," and that "Cameco has already begun to work very closely with all parties concerned with the Upper Thelon area."

Continued on page 11



As of April 29, 2009, there were 714 prospecting permits, mineral claims and mineral leases on the Beverly calving ground, and 239 on the Qamanirjuaq calving ground

“Mineral,” continued from page 10

Screech Lake property, Upper Thelon region, NWT: Despite intense and ongoing opposition by Lutselk’e residents to a Ur-Energy proposal to expand its exploration program for uranium at Screech Lake on key Beverly and Ahiaq caribou spring migration habitat – and despite MVEIRB’s recommendation to reject the proposal in May 2007 and the acceptance of this recommendation by the responsible governments in October 2007 – Ur-Energy carried out ground geophysics, surveying and soil sampling activities at Screech Lake for two weeks in August 2009. The work did

not require a land use permit. Ur-Energy also issued a press release in which it thanked “the band council and the Lutsel K’e community for enabling the Company to carry out” the work. “Ur-Energy continues discussions with First Nations groups and Aboriginal-owned business corporations towards an exploration agreement for the Screech Lake project,” the press release stated. “This summer’s geophysical program will provide us with necessary information to assist us in better planning a future drilling program.” However, a CBC North story that aired Sept. 3, 2009 and was posted online said that Lutsel K’e Dene

First Nation members “were shocked when Chief Steve Nitah told CBC News the First Nation signed an agreement allowing Ur-Energy Inc. to conduct a small exploration project this summer at its Screech Lake property.” In 2005, Lutselk’e approached the BQCMB to help stop the Ur-Energy exploration project. Over the following two years, the BQCMB provided numerous comments, information requests and presentations as a party to the environmental assessment of the proposed project, which was conducted by the MVEIRB.

In Profile: Leonard Adam, Fond du Lac

Music and family – the best of all worlds



Courtesy of Leonard Adam

Give a warm welcome for Leonard Adam and Sons: Leonard Adam (right), with sons Len on bass guitar (left) and Dene on drums

Veteran musician and devoted family man Leonard Adam of Fond du Lac is starting to reap the rewards of hard work. Big time.

A guitarist since the age of 13, Adam broke ground more than a decade ago when his contemporary songs, written in Dene about his culture and traditions, hit the airwaves. Until then, Dene was usually heard only in gospel music but Adam – encouraged by local elders and inspired by the success of popular northern Quebec musical duo Kashtin, who sang in their Innu language – felt sure his Dene songs could reach a wider audience.

This November, Adam, 42, heads back to Saskatoon's Turtle Island Music studio to record his first CD since his 1999 debut album, *Spirit Flies*. And he'll have his dream band with him – sons Len, 17, on bass guitar and Dene, 10, on drums.

Adam and his band – now called Leonard Adam and Sons – have played a steady stream of festivals, roundups, gatherings and youth conferences over the years, with their furthest voyage taking them this past August to the End of the Road Music Festival in Inuvik, NWT. But

that gig may be surpassed by an even longer trip next February or March, when Adam and his sons may take up an earlier invitation from a Navajo American Indian group to perform in Arizona, in the southwestern United States.

Adam's songs have special meaning not just for Dene, but for other Aboriginal groups as well. "Relatives," his first song, was based on the experiences of his grandparents, the late Madeleine and John Lidguerre, with whom he lived a traditional life hunting and trapping in the bush until he was 13.

The song is about "losing our tradition, living in isolation, the cost of living, culture shock," says Adam, who was born in Uranium City. "It's the truth about – not only the Dene people – how the Native people, they survive, used the land, animals . . . how our traditions should be the same and it's not."

After Adam sent a cassette to the newly launched Mississippi Broadcasting Corporation radio

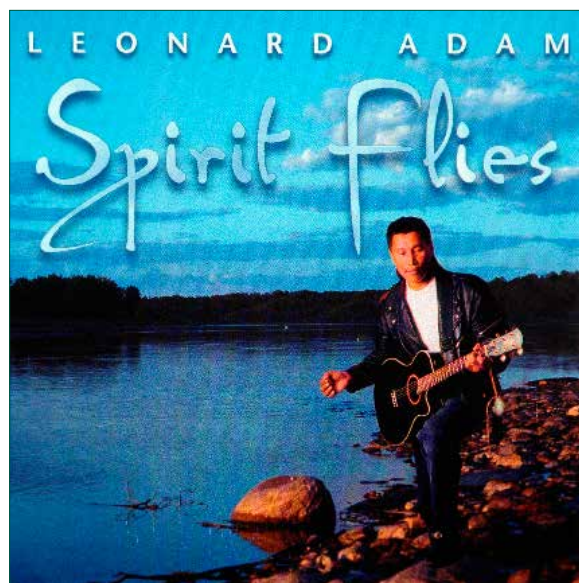
(The song "Relatives") "is the truth about – not only the Dene people – how the Native people, they survive, used the land, animals . . . how our traditions should be the same and it's not."

- Leonard Adam

network in 1996, "I was getting calls. Some people were even crying!" It was a turning point, much like the time a year earlier when he quit drinking – an event, he says, that also shapes his lyrics.

The song "Relatives" deeply touched people. Events soon snowballed with the radio airplay, starting with a request to perform at the 1997 Prince Albert Voices of the North showcase of Aboriginal talent. There, he was

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LEONARD ADAM
Spirit Flies
Turtle Island Music, 1222 Alberta Ave., Saskatoon SK
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"Music," continued from page 14

discovered by the owners of Turtle Island Music, who arranged for him to record an album in their studio once he had written a full slate of songs. The album eventually launched in November 1999 during a performance at Prince Albert's Northern Lights Casino that was simulcast on APTN.

But family always comes first, and Adam clearly adores his. Over the years, during two different instances, Dene and Len came to the rescue when their dad was in a bind because of an absentee band member. Both boys ended up astounding people with their musical talents. Incredibly, Dene was only four years old when he first slipped behind the drum set to pound away at a wedding dance. "He blew everyone away!" says Adam, who laughs when remembering how people could barely see the little tot behind the drums.

Do you know someone living in a caribou-range community with an interesting story you think we should tell in our new "In Profile" column?

If you do, e-mail us at caribounews@arctic-caribou.com

or phone (613) 841-6817

Two and a half years later, Len surprised his father when he revealed he had been secretly practising guitar – a godsend when Adam discovered four hours before a talent show that his regular bass player couldn't make it.

Wife Dorothy, 43, helps arrange bookings for the band and has provided constant support over the years. She and her husband also have a daughter, Shannon, 19, another son, Dakota, 15, and now a grandson (Shannon's son) named Cohen, who is almost a year and a half old.

The *Spirit Flies* album is available on iTunes and is sold through West Coast Music

and other outlets. Leonard Adam and Sons' Facebook profile also links to a few YouTube videos of the band in action. To learn more, contact Adam at lenadam_09@yahoo.com or phone (306) 686-4888.



Courtesy of Leonard Adam

Adam with his grandson Cohen

No business case yet for proposed road

Contrary to rosier reports, there is no guarantee yet of a road between Nunavut and Manitoba. Contractor SNC-Lavalin has not yet finished a business case for the megaproject, and a business case is essential in order to persuade potential funders to invest in the \$1.1 billion Gillam-Churchill-Rankin Inlet route. The 1,100-kilometre eastern route, the shortest of three possible routes that were studied, was recommended by SNC-Lavalin as the best choice for the all-season road.

The BQCMB has stated that any route will inflict damage on the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq caribou, and has urged further investigation into travel by rail.

A March 26, 2009 CBC North story

reporting on a Kivalliq Chamber of Commerce meeting with Nunavut government officials indicated that the road could start construction in five years after completion of the business case.

However, Manitoba Infrastructure and Transportation director Amar Chadha told *Caribou News in Brief* that "we cannot talk about the funding until we know the business case."

In September, project manager Tim Stevens of SNC-Lavalin spoke about the proposed Manitoba-Nunavut road at the Northern Transportation Conference 2009 in Iqaluit where, amid positive outlooks, he also outlined the BQCMB's worries, and

described caribou impacts as a "primary concern" in this project. Stevens' presentation can be downloaded from www.vanhorne.info/recentevents.

The governments of Canada, Nunavut and Manitoba, Manitoba Hydro, Qulliq Energy and other utility companies, and mining firms have been pegged as possible funders. Should the megaproject get the green light, construction would likely take place step-by-step, with the 340-kilometre Rankin Inlet-Whale Cove-Arviat section being built in 6 to 10 years, the 580-kilometre Arviat-Churchill section being built in 11 to 20 years, and the 180-kilometre Churchill River-Sundance-Highway 290 section being built in 21 to 25 years.

Devon Killulark



Beyond Baker

There's more than one way to shoot a caribou. Photography buff Devon Killulark of Baker Lake shows how it's done, with a collection of candid snaps outside Baker Lake that freeze-frame a quizzical caribou (below left), a caribou skin tent on the tundra (below right) and a day out on the land under a perfect blue sky (above). Killulark's dramatic image of a caribou running through a blizzard is featured on the cover of the BQCMB's 2008-2009 annual report (see page 1)

Devon Killulark



Devon Killulark

strategy for declining herds with low numbers, outlined in the *Beverly and Qamanirjuaq Caribou Management Plan (2005-2012)*. It calls for increasing management effort as the population decreases, where maximum effort is required when a herd falls below the level required to meet the subsistence needs of traditional harvesters.

Hunters can take immediate steps to safeguard Beverly and Qamanirjuaq caribou, too.

The BQCMB is asking hunters to take only what they need, prevent caribou wastage and, whenever possible, shoot bulls instead of cows. According to calculations by the Porcupine Caribou Management Board, taking one bull instead of a cow could translate into 23 extra animals for the herd 10 years down the road. This practice can make a big difference to herd size and productivity over the years, particularly for declining herds.

BQCMB members agreed at their May 2009 meeting that an action plan should be drafted to aid the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq herds. Board members will review the "Recipe for Recovery" draft action plan at their November 2009 meeting in Winnipeg (see "A Recipe for Recovery," page 4).

As well, the BQCMB is proposing to hold a Beverly and Qamanirjuaq stakeholders workshop in February 2010 to permit representatives from key organizations and communities that have traditionally hunted these herds to assess the draft action plan and provide input. Once the plan is finalized, the BQCMB would submit the plan with recommendations to communities, governments and other organizations for further action (see "Stakeholders workshop proposed for February 2010," page 3).

Differing viewpoints

Not everyone believes the Beverly herd has declined, however. The director of wildlife management for Nunavut's Department of Environment, Drikus Grissing, was quoted in an Aug. 4, 2009 *Slave River Journal* article as saying that his government thought that the smaller number of Beverly caribou seen may be the result either of a natural cyclical decline, a shift in calving ground location, or the Beverly herd joining with the Ahiak herd.

According to the GNWT, however, the June 2009 reconnaissance survey of the Ahiak

herd counted fewer caribou on its calving ground this year as well. And the Qamanirjuaq herd's population is thought to have dropped from 496,000 in 1994 to 345,000 in 2008, according to a GN preliminary draft population estimate (see "Qamanirjuaq herd may be a third smaller," page 5.) The GNWT plans to do a full population survey of the Ahiak herd in June 2010 with the Nunavut government.

Action underway for other declining herds

Other NWT barren-ground caribou herds have suffered population declines as well, including the Porcupine, Cape Bathurst, Bluenose West, Bluenose East and Bathurst herds. In fact, the GNWT's June 2009 calving ground survey of the Bathurst herd found that the overall population now numbers only about 32,000 animals – down from population estimates of about 350,000 in 1996, 186,000 in 2003, and 128,000 in 2006. Here are some caribou conservation efforts have sprung up for these herds:

- The GNWT is conducting workshops with the Tlicho government, Aboriginal organizations, and NWT communities and outfitters that harvest Bathurst caribou, and is working with these groups to develop a Bathurst caribou recovery plan. The GNWT intends to put a plan in place to further reduce harvest of Bathurst caribou
- The Yellowknives Dene First Nation announced it would not hold a community caribou hunt this year due to the Bathurst herd's low numbers
- The Yukon government has temporarily banned the hunting of female Porcupine caribou in an effort to reverse the slow decline of that herd, and is asking hunters to report all caribou killed in the Yukon to the Yukon government. The Porcupine Caribou Management Board is attempting to get government support for its harvest management plan, which is based on voluntary harvest restrictions tied to herd size. The plan was developed over the past four years in consultation with Aboriginal organizations and communities in the Yukon and NWT that harvest Porcupine caribou.

People and caribou



Tina Giroux

BQCMC members, alternates and friends at the May 2009 Prince Albert meeting (standing, left to right): Mitch Campbell, Dennis Larocque, Alicia Kelly, Earl Evans, David Vetra, Thomas Elytook, Daryll Hedman, Laurent Angalik, Ross Thompson, Tim Trottier, Jerome Denechezhe and Archie Catholique. Seated, left to right: Albert Thorassie, Jan Adamczewski and Pierre Robillard

It was a cordial meet-and-greet as new faces met with veteran caribou supporters during the BQCMC's May 2009 meeting in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan. **Archie Catholique** of Lutselk'e, the BQCMC's newest member, had his first chance to meet everyone. Introductions were also made with several others who plan to stay close with the BQCMC: Nunavut Department of Environment wildlife manager **David Vetra**, GNWT South Slave Region biologist **Alicia Kelly** and INAC field

operations manager **Peter Kusugak**.

Tina Giroux, PAGC's new community liaison co-ordinator, **Sean Willy** of Cameco Corporation and **Dave Hastman** of Manitoba Conservation also experienced their first BQCMC meeting.

Prince Albert was a homecoming of sorts for some familiar faces – in particular, **Jimmy Laban** of Black Lake, the Board's chairman from 2003 to 2005. Not surprisingly, the Saskatchewan contingent was the largest, with vice-chief **Don**

Deranger, **Ron Robillard** and **Peter Brook** of PAGC also on hand, along with **Phillip Josie** of Wollaston Lake and **Louis Mercredi** of Fond du Lac. Regular attendee **Robert Moshenko** of the NWMB made

the trip, as did **Bert Dean** of NTI's wildlife secretariat, and **Diane Martens** and **Martin Gebauer**, both of AREVA Resources Canada.

Former BQCMC secretary-treasurer **Gunther Abrahamson** continues to keep the co-management board that he helped to create in the public eye. Earlier this year, Abrahamson deposited his personal, bound copy of the signed 1982 *Beverly and Qamanirjuaq Barren Ground Caribou Management Agreement* with the Canadian Museum of Civilization in Gatineau, Quebec. He also provided a CD of archival Board minutes, prepared some time ago by University of Alaska Fairbanks graduate student **Tracy Smith**. Researchers keen to track down the BQCMC's history will find both these items useful, along with other BQCMC artifacts that Abrahamson donated to the museum earlier, including all issues of *Caribou News* since 1980 and various BQCMC-affiliated videos by late filmmakers **George Mully** and **Don Snowden**.

Publisher's Box

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