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## Around the range

### Land use planning news

As of May 2011, the NWT Region office of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC) was still analyzing comments from planning partners on the *Draft Upper Thelon Land and Resource Management Plan*, issued in February 2010. While most partners had given their input, AANDC said it wanted to allow all partners the time they needed to examine the draft plan, and would still accept input from those who had not given feedback yet. Land use plans decide what activities can go ahead in certain areas.

In March 2010, the BQCMB provided preliminary comments, plus background information on barren-ground caribou range use and BQCMB recommendations previously submitted for permitting mineral exploration and development in the Upper Thelon region. AANDC gave the Board some funding to do the review.

As for the draft plan, it needs improvement, the BQCMB said. The plan should provide: 1) an interim land use plan for the Upper Thelon 2) options for excluding exploration or development from key portions of the plan area, and 3) assessment of cumulative effects of human land use activities across the caribou range.

The BQCMB also commented on the working draft Nunavut-wide land use plan issued by the Nunavut Planning Commission (NPC) in June 2010. However, the NPC has delayed releasing a draft plan (the next step) until December 2011 to give some of its planning partners more time to provide input. The Kivalliq region – home to all of the Qamanirjuaq's and most of the Beverly's calving grounds – is regulated by the *Keewatin Regional Land Use Plan*, approved in June 2000.



David Vetra

Some lively young square dancers entertained the crowds during a May 2010 BQCMB public meeting in Wollaston Lake, Saskatchewan, held in tandem with the Board's regular spring meeting last year

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### More MB-NU road talks

After several years in the works, contractor SNC-Lavalin last year wrapped up a business case studying whether a proposed all-season road between Manitoba and Nunavut makes sense economically. The favoured route of three suggested is the eastern Gillam-Churchill-Rankin Inlet route.

Then, in November 2010, the governments of Manitoba and Nunavut signed a memorandum of understanding that pledged, in part, to "continue exploring the potential for an all-weather road between Manitoba and Nunavut, including conducting initial stakeholder consultations" on the business case.

According to a Manitoba Infrastructure and Transportation government official who asked not to be named, the timing or make-up of stakeholder consultations have not been set yet, nor has the business case been

made publicly available, although the two governments are discussing a joint release of the publication. The mega-project's other partners are the Government of Canada and the Kivalliq Inuit Association. It's been suggested that 70 percent of the project's \$1.2-billion cost would have to be shouldered by the federal government.

### BQCMB meetings

The BQCMB heads to Winnipeg for its regular fall meeting from November 1 to 4, 2011. Work on a new caribou management plan and strategic planning for 2012 and beyond will play a central role at that get-together.

Meanwhile, the BQCMB's spring 2012 meeting is slated for Lutsel K'e, NWT. If logistics and costs prove to be too much to handle, the alternate location is Prince Albert, Saskatchewan.

# The return of *Caribou News in Brief*

We're back!

This is the first issue of *Caribou News in Brief* since Summer 2009. That's partly because the BQCMB has been stickhandling a higher-than-usual number of projects, which resulted in limited Board funds and energies being redirected into other projects.

Some of these key activities included:

- organizing the February 2010 BQCMB Caribou Workshop in Saskatoon, and following up with reports reflecting the presentations, discussions and ideas shared at the Caribou Workshop, as well as the first of community visits to gather even more feedback from Northerners
- taking part in the 13th North American Caribou Workshop in Winnipeg, October 2010
- providing detailed submissions to regulatory boards and others on various issues, including development projects, that could affect the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq herds
- attending workshops and delivering presentations to raise the profile of the BQCMB and concerns related to the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq herds, including a presentation to Jonah Amitnaaq Secondary School students in Baker Lake,

April 2009 by community resident and BQCMB member Thomas Elytook, who explained apprehensions about changes that may result from increasing mineral exploration and development in the Baker Lake area that could affect caribou; and a presentation by BQCMB member Earl Evans of Fort Smith called "The Shrinking Beverly Caribou Herd," delivered to the CircumArctic Rangifer Monitoring and Assessment network in December 2009

- updating case studies of the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq herds, and creating numerous communications products, including large BQCMB and caribou-related posters with conservation messages, and postcards asking caribou-range residents to describe caribou disturbances they have seen.

This issue of *Caribou News in Brief* brings readers up to speed on many of these topics. To learn more about the ongoing work of the BQCMB, visit [www.arctic-caribou.com](http://www.arctic-caribou.com).



With one of several beautiful parting gifts from the BQCMB

## ... and a fond farewell

After 17 years as editor of *Caribou News in Brief*, I am moving on to new challenges, leaving the BQCMB family with my best wishes. Working with hunters, scientists and other Northerners has changed my life, for the better. Everything important about the North, I learned by coming to understand that hunting is pivotal to provide for family – and caribou mean life itself to Northerners. To everyone I've worked with and interviewed over the years, thank you from the bottom of my heart. Mahsi cho, matna.

- Marion Soublière

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"Survey," continued from page 1

While this idea is not new – Government of Nunavut officials and some hunters have voiced this belief in the past – the concept has gained more attention thanks to the study by Nagy and his co-authors on the subpopulation structure of caribou in Arctic and sub-Arctic Canada. A scientific paper describing the study will be published in the Washington-based journal, *Ecological Applications*. The study's eight co-authors are affiliated with the GNWT, the Government of Nunavut and the University of Alberta.

"Working with a number of biologists in the NWT and Nunavut, I have analyzed all of the satellite tracking data obtained for barren-ground caribou during 1993 to 2009," Nagy told *Caribou News in Brief*. "My analysis indicates that the Beverly herd has not disappeared but has shifted use of calving grounds from its 'traditional' calving areas near Beverly and Garry Lakes to an area near the Queen Maud Gulf." Nagy presented his findings to the BQCMB at its October 2010 meeting in Winnipeg.

## Remaining open-minded

The BQCMB will wait to decide which view it will adopt for management purposes until more of the information describing these schools of thought becomes available, and until new information is gleaned from this year's population survey. In the meantime, the Board will continue to focus on issues that everyone agrees on, remaining open-minded as more surveys, studies and reports are completed on the Beverly herd.

For example, everyone agrees that caribou haven't travelled into Saskatchewan in recent years. That has created hardship for hunters there. Part of the BQCMB's job is to strive to ensure that caribou are accessible to communities that have traditionally harvested

the animals. In recent years, the only caribou accessible to Saskatchewan hunters appear to have been from the Qamanirjuaq herd.

In June 2010, the GNWT, along with the Government of Nunavut, conducted reconnaissance surveys of the traditional Beverly calving ground as well as calving areas across the Queen Maud Gulf and Northeast Mainland. Fewer than 20 breeding cows were observed on transect on the traditional Beverly calving ground, continuing the decreasing trend shown by surveys of the traditional calving ground since 2002. In the Queen Maud Gulf calving area, more caribou were observed on transect than during the survey in 2009. Reconnaissance surveys indicate trends but don't estimate caribou population sizes, which is why a population census was being done in June 2011.

One of the 2010 survey team leaders, South Slave regional biologist and BQCMB member Allicia Kelly, told Beverly herd stakeholders that "we cannot say with certainty what happened to the Beverly herd" since there was little monitoring of the herd between 1994 and 2002, and 2003 to 2006.

## Local involvement key

The Nunavut government's 2011 population survey was a complex undertaking. Partners

included the GNWT (which took part in the survey and helped to plan it); Nunavut hunters' and trappers' organizations (HTOs) for Taloyoak, Kugaruuk, Gjoa Haven, Repulse Bay, Cambridge Bay and Baker Lake; local industry; the Government of Saskatchewan; Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada; and the Prince Albert Grand Council (PAGC). (The GNWT covered the costs of travel, accommodation and meals for PAGC biologist Tina Giroux, who participated in the survey.) Also scheduled to take part were the Lutsel K'e Dene First Nation and the Northwest Territory Metis Nation. The Kitikmeot Wildlife Board and Kivalliq Wildlife Board supported the survey, too.

The survey team was to include 44 people, including 27 Aboriginal residents from caribou-range communities in Nunavut, NWT and Saskatchewan. "There was a big push for local involvement," and the goal was achieved with no compromise of expertise, Campbell says. Five fixed-wing aircraft and two helicopters were used in the survey.

As part of its Beverly caribou management efforts, the GNWT in 2011 has also been collecting samples from hunters and community hunts to determine basic caribou health and condition, along with

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## Higher Qamanirjuaq birth rate, lower census figures

The Nunavut government's 2008 population survey of the Qamanirjuaq herd concluded that the herd now numbers around 348,000. That might mean a decrease of a third from 496,000, the last time a population survey was done in 1994, but the decline is not certain due to statistical issues. A 2010 Qamanirjuaq spring composition survey found there were 33 calves for every 100 cows, a sign of a "slightly increasing population," says Campbell. In fact, the calves-to-cows ratio was higher than ratios for the previous four years.

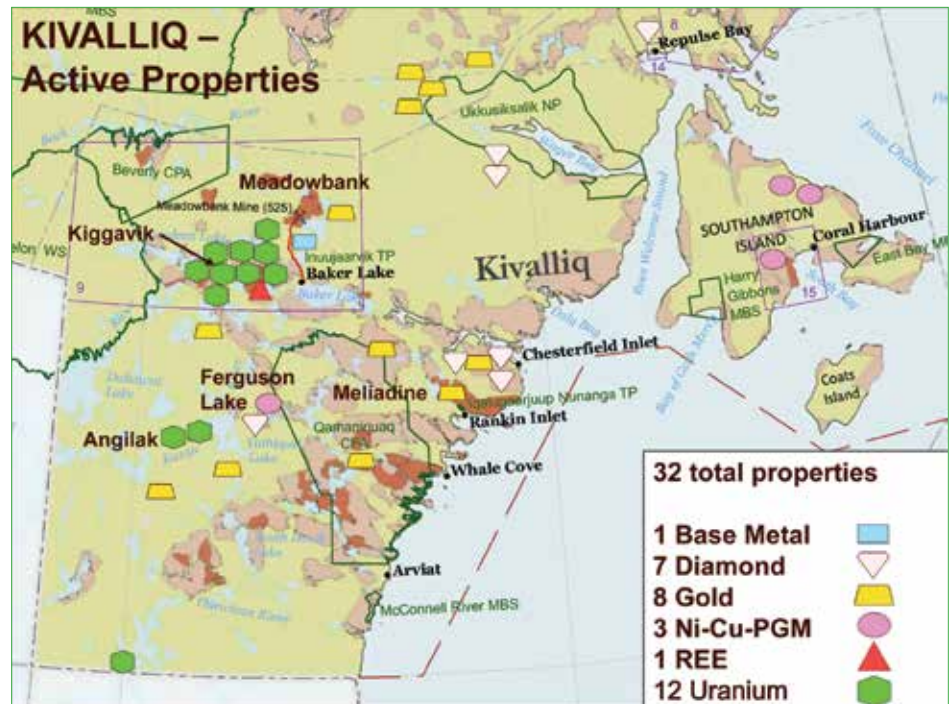
# Kiggavik Review: Ball in AREVA's court now

After more than a year in the making, the Nunavut Impact Review Board (NIRB) has given AREVA Resources Canada Inc. the final guidelines for creating an environmental impact statement (EIS) for the hotly debated Kiggavik uranium mega-project near Baker Lake, potentially Nunavut's first uranium mine. The venture would create five mines, a mill, a new transportation network and more. It would also pave the way for other uranium mining companies to set up shop in Nunavut.

Now the ball is in AREVA's court. It plans to submit its draft EIS by the end of November 2011, said the company's Kiggavik general manager, Barry McCallum, in a June 2 letter to the NIRB.

The BQCMB has repeatedly said that the precedent-setting Kiggavik project could cause significant impacts on caribou, habitat and hunting activities. This includes numerous short- and long-term potential impacts and cumulative impacts associated with disturbance, radioactive materials and other environmental contaminants.

These would affect not only Inuit in Nunavut but traditional hunters from NWT, Saskatchewan and Manitoba, too. Submissions from the BQCMB in February and March 2011 outlined concerns and provided recommendations to the NIRB for review scoping and EIS guidelines. These can



Kiggavik is one of 13 mining projects surrounding Baker Lake – nine of which are uranium exploration

be downloaded from [www.arctic-caribou.com](http://www.arctic-caribou.com) (click on “Publications,” then “Reports”).

## Concerns over review process

The BQCMB, which received \$90,000 in federal funding to take part in the Kiggavik review, has told the NIRB that being given only 30 days to analyze a draft EIS that could be thousands of pages long and developing requests for more information necessary to evaluate the

proposed project and its likely impacts on caribou is not enough time. The BQCMB has asked for at least 60 days to review AREVA's upcoming draft EIS.

As well, the BQCMB, worried that the NIRB and AANDC (formerly INAC) may expect the BQCMB to do more during the review than its mandate calls for, clarified the Board's role.

The BQCMB stressed to the NIRB that it would not comment on ecosystemic and socio-economic effects of the Kiggavik proposal other than those that relate to caribou, caribou habitat and caribou harvesters.

## AREVA and the BQCMB

In 2007, the BQCMB signed a five-year funding agreement with AREVA that gives the BQCMB \$25,000 a year for caribou monitoring and other activities that further caribou research and improve mining practices. Only projects that both the Board and AREVA agree upon take place. The agreement hasn't stopped the BQCMB – a key intervener in the Kiggavik review – from being critical of AREVA activities, either.

## Baker surrounded by projects

The \$1.5-billion Kiggavik project, 80 kilometres west of Baker Lake, includes the side-by-side properties of Kiggavik and Sissons. AREVA is

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## What is the Kiggavik project?

The Kiggavik project would construct a camp to house more than 300 people, a winter road across Baker Lake or the Thelon River to the Kiggavik site (the back-up option is a north all-season road with cable ferry), a 20-kilometre road between the Kiggavik and Sissons sites, fuel storage facilities at Kiggavik and Baker Lake, plus a small facility at Sissons, three in-pit tailings management facilities, an airstrip and airport facilities to transport employees, drums of uranium and other materials, and more. The project is expected to create work for 600 employees.

According to AREVA, construction would start no sooner than 2017. Building would take about four years, and commercial operations would run for 17 years after that. Then five years would be spent cleaning up the site. However, AREVA points out that Kiggavik might operate for more than 17 years if additional mineral deposits in the project area are developed.

"Kiggavik," continued from page 5

the project's majority owner and operator. Its partners are Japan-Canada Uranium Co. Ltd. and DAEWOO International Corp. As of June 2011, nine uranium exploration projects, including Kiggavik, were underway west of Baker Lake. Also surrounding the community were four other exploration projects: two gold, one base metal, and one rare earth elements.

As the BQCMB noted in comments to the NIRB on the nearby Uranium North Resources' Mallery Lake project, all operations in the area involve "the transport of supplies and staff between (each project's) camps and Baker Lake, regular helicopter flights to move staff and drilling equipment, and low-level geophysical surveys." The cumulative effects of all activity in the area on caribou, especially during calving and post-calving periods, are a key concern for the BQCMB.

The long road to this point, which started in 2007 when AREVA first submitted its proposal, has included project "scoping." That

exercise was intended to pinpoint important social, economic and ecosystemic impacts to be studied and analyzed for the EIS. Public meetings were held in Baker Lake, Repulse Bay, Coral Harbour, Chesterfield Inlet, Arviat, Whale Cove and Rankin Inlet during spring 2010 to help identify areas of potential impact and public concern.

This led to draft EIS guidelines, feedback on those and, in March 2011, NIRB's EIS guidelines development workshop in Baker Lake. BQCMB executive director Ross Thompson participated in that workshop.

## No Inuktitut translation

Controversy has already dogged the Kiggavik environmental review. First, AANDC gave only about \$250,000 to seven groups to participate in the review, even though 10 groups applied for nearly \$2 million in funding. This, despite the fact that the NIRB took the highly unusual step of asking the federal government to

increase the amount of money available.

Then, the Baker Lake HTO and Nunavummiut Makitagunarningit asked that the Kiggavik review be put on hold until the NIRB could provide Inuktitut translation of the draft EIS guidelines, as well as an English/Inuktitut terminology list. The NIRB declined, explaining in part that it was not equipped to develop new Inuktitut terminology.

"How are unilingual Inuktitut-speaking hunters in Baker Lake and other Kivalliq communities, the people probably the most to lose if the region is opened to uranium mining, supposed to understand and take part in the review process if they are prevented from reading the most important document that the NIRB has to produce?," asked Nunavummiut Makitagunarningit vice-chair Joan Scottie.

## Many steps ahead in review

The complex Part 5 Review, which began in March 2010, entails many steps before a public hearing, the NIRB's subsequent report to AANDC and, lastly, a decision from AANDC. All this is expected to take several years.

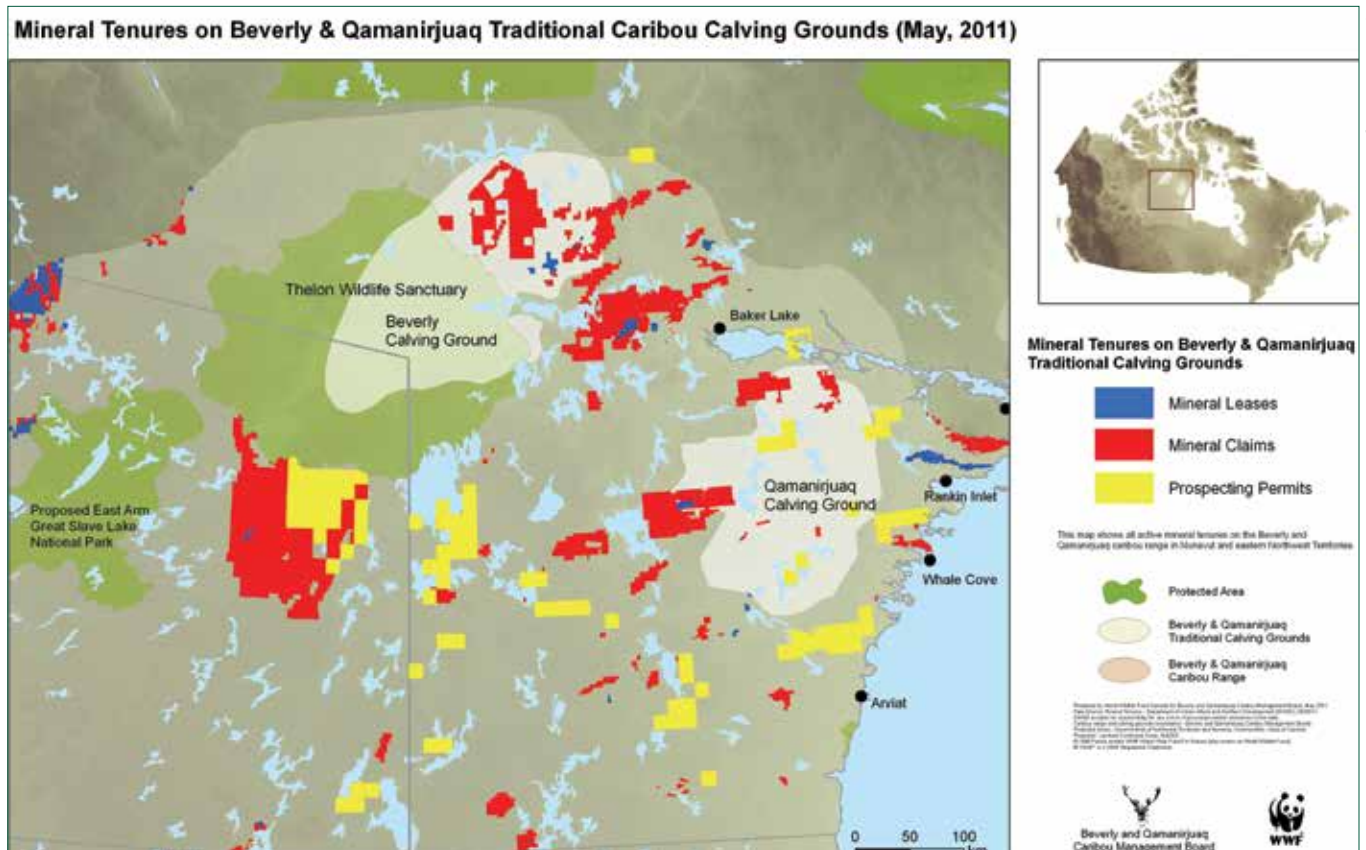
For more about review steps and timelines, go to [tinyurl.com/Kiggavik-next-steps](http://tinyurl.com/Kiggavik-next-steps). To receive information about the Kiggavik review, e-mail [info@nirb.ca](mailto:info@nirb.ca) or phone the NIRB at 1-866-233-3033.

At the end of the day, the environmental review is still only one part of Kiggavik's journey to becoming reality.

Numerous permits would also have to be issued by federal and territorial regulators, and institutions of public government and Inuit organizations. Finally, AREVA and its project partners would have to decide if uranium market conditions are good enough to turn Kiggavik into a money-making endeavour.



# Uranium exploration abounds on ranges



Courtesy of WWF-Canada

To see larger versions of this map, or to find out who holds prospecting permits, mineral claims and mineral leases on the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq calving grounds, go to [www.arctic-caribou.com](http://www.arctic-caribou.com) (click on "Maps," then "Mining interests")

Despite the global recession of 2008 and the March 2011 meltdown at Japan's Fukushima Nuclear Power Plant, which has caused some nations to rethink nuclear power, mineral exploration has largely bounced back in northern Canada. Beverly and Qamanirjuaq caribou still face uranium exploration almost everywhere on their ranges. The BQCMB has long recommended to governments, regulators, and industry that permits for exploration or development activities should not be issued on key seasonal ranges of the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq caribou herds, particularly the calving and post-calving areas.

## Nunavut

Mineral exploration and associated spending throughout Nunavut is blazing away. More than \$322 million may be spent in 2011, indicates AANDC, up from \$189 million in 2009. What's more, in February 2011, AANDC issued 9 new prospecting permits for areas at least partially in the Qamanirjuaq traditional calving ground or the 2008 calving area, and 11 additional permits on the herd's primary spring migration route just south of these calving areas – despite the BQCMB's written recommendation against the move. ("Traditional calving ground" is used by the BQCMB to describe the cumulative area used

for calving that was delineated by government surveys from 1963 to 1994.) All 20 of these permits are within AANDC's Qamanirjuaq Caribou Protection Area, which was established in 1978 and is part of the current land use plan for the region.

At its May 2011 meeting, the BQCMB decided it would start sending letters to each company with mineral tenures on the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq calving grounds, to acquaint them with the Board's position on protecting these areas.

In 2010, 32 exploration projects were underway in the Kivalliq Region, led by uranium (12), gold (8) and diamonds (7).

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"Exploration," continued from page 7

Heading the uranium surge is AREVA Resources Canada's proposed Kiggavik uranium mine and mill mega-project near Baker Lake, which is well into its environmental review. Agnico-Eagle Mines Limited's Meadowbank Gold Mine, north of Baker Lake at the north edge of the Qamanirjuaq range, started production last year, with plans to operate until 2019.

As of May 5, 2011, seven companies/individuals held 554 active tenures on the Beverly traditional calving ground: Uravan Minerals Inc., Bayswater Uranium Corp., Titan Uranium, Ruby Hill Exploration Inc., Cameco Corporation, Strongbow Exploration Inc. and Ronald McMillan. Uravan held the most mineral tenures – 355 mineral claims.

On the Qamanirjuaq traditional calving ground, nine companies/individuals held 239 prospecting permits, mineral claims and mineral leases as of May 5, 2011: Starfield Resources Inc., Devonshire Resources Ltd., Pacific Ridge Exploration Ltd., Agnico-Eagle Mines Ltd., Minroc Management Ltd., Diamonds North Resources Ltd., Marcelle Hauseux, Lawrence Barry and Comaplex Minerals Corp. Starfield holds more than half of these as mineral claims and leases.

Meanwhile, Uravan Minerals' much-disputed proposal to explore for uranium on the core Beverly calving ground south of Garry Lake has been in a stalemate for several years because Uravan has not yet delivered an EIS – nor has it withdrawn its land use permit application. In 2008, former AANDC Minister Chuck Strahl ordered that the Garry Lake proposal undergo a Part 5 Review under Article 12 of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement. In early 2010 and 2011, the NIRB asked Uravan when it would submit its EIS.

Uravan, in return, sent the NIRB an almost identically worded letter each time, describing the estimated costs (either \$370,000 or \$5

## Cameco and the calving ground

Cameco continues to hold 4 mineral claims and 16 mining leases issued by AANDC between 2004 and 2007 on the traditional Beverly calving ground, despite stating in 2008 that its exploration activities in Nunavut and NWT were outside traditional calving grounds. Cameco's statement, in which it said that it recognized the importance of caribou conservation and protection within the traditional caribou calving and post-calving grounds in Nunavut and NWT, followed a public pledge by diamond miner De Beers Canada to stay out of caribou calving areas.

million, depending on whether the baseline data and information required is publicly available) to prepare an EIS as required by the NIRB's guidelines. Uravan has said that the guidelines "go far beyond the scope of the Garry Lake project proposal."

Uravan's website, meanwhile, states that "(a)lthough uncertain, it is Uravan's hope that by working with the NIRB and INAC, the requirement for an EIS Review can be replaced with the inclusion of sufficient caribou calving protection guidelines in the LUP application to mitigate concern."

But according to NIRB technical director Ryan Barry, Uravan has to either withdraw its application, or submit an EIS and proceed through the review process. "There are no other options," confirms Barry.

## Saskatchewan

CanAlaska Uranium Ltd. – one of about 25 firms exploring in the area – calls the Athabasca Basin the "Saudi Arabia of Uranium." One-fifth of the world's uranium is extracted here via three mines operated by Cameco Corporation and AREVA Resources Canada Inc.: the McArthur River, Eagle Point and McClean Lake mines. The region is also home to the Key Lake and Rabbit Lake uranium mills.

Cigar Lake Mine, whose construction has been delayed several times by flooding in its underground production area, now may

be operating by mid-2013, predicts Cameco. On the other hand, majority-owner AREVA and its partners have delayed plans for the Midwest Mine due to low uranium prices and high development costs – although the environmental assessment continues. The Midwest, Cigar Lake, Eagle Point and McClean Lake mines are all near the community of Wollaston Lake, with the McArthur River Mine slightly further southwest.

## Manitoba

The biggest project in northern Manitoba consists of three side-by-side CanAlaska properties – NW Manitoba, Kasmere South and Kasmere North. They cut a diagonal path from the Saskatchewan/Manitoba border up to the Manitoba/Nunavut border, an area of more than 1,400 square kilometres.

In 2007, activity on exploration licenses stopped after the Northlands Dene First Nation called for a halt on uranium exploration near Lac Brochet. Companies had not consulted adequately with northern Manitoba communities still in the midst of treaty land entitlement selections.

In March 2010, following three years of consultations with local First Nation bands, the Government of Manitoba issued exploration permits for ground work and drilling for uranium and rare earth elements on CanAlaska's NW Manitoba Project.

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# BQCMB Caribou Workshop: Ideas to action

Fewer than 20.

That's how many breeding caribou cows were seen on transect on the Beverly traditional calving ground during a June 2010 reconnaissance survey. This very small number makes the recommendations for protecting caribou and habitat that emerged from the February 23 to 25, 2010 BQCMB Caribou Workshop in Saskatoon more vital than ever.

The BQCMB Caribou Workshop, the centrepiece for much of the Board's efforts last year, was organized with the help of sponsors to find ways to aid the ailing Beverly herd. The event drew more than 75 elders, hunters, government staff, scientists and others from Saskatchewan, NWT, Nunavut, Manitoba, Alberta, Yukon, British Columbia and Ontario.

## Five main issues

Fewer and fewer caribou have been spotted on the Beverly herd's traditional calving ground during annual reconnaissance surveys since 2007 (see "Looking for answers about Beverly caribou," page 1).

In 2009, the BQCMB decided it should work more closely with communities that have depended on the Beverly herd to figure out how everyone can help the herd. The BQCMB also wanted to prevent the Qamanirjuaq population from going through a major decline.

BQCMB Caribou Workshop participants spent three intensive days sharing knowledge and focusing on five main issues affecting caribou:

- climate change
- loss of habitat due to forest fires on the winter range
- disturbance from human land use activities
- harvesting, and
- predation (especially on the calving grounds).

People listened to each other respectfully, and contributed a wealth of practical ideas on ways that everyone – governments, regulatory agencies, communities, hunters and others – could help declining caribou herds rebuild.

"This is just the first step," BQCMB chairman Albert Thorassie told participants as the workshop wrapped up.

Number of communities in Manitoba, Nunavut, NWT and Saskatchewan that depend on the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq herds to feed their families: **at least 20**

Minimum net value of the annual harvest from the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq herds (2005-2006 statistics): **\$20 million**

Social and cultural value of the caribou harvest: **priceless**

## From ideas to action

Suggestions from BQCMB Caribou Workshop participants are now among the highlights of two photo-packed reports. A 26-page *Overview Report* of the workshop and a longer 60-page *Detailed Report* (with descriptions of many presentations, plus a more thorough account of comments about challenges that the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq caribou herds face, and possible solutions) are online at [www.arctic-caribou.com](http://www.arctic-caribou.com). So, too, is the two-page summary of the workshop that was sent to all participants in March 2010.

The reports, though, are only one part of efforts to turn ideas from the BQCMB Caribou Workshop into concrete action.

A priority for the Board is developing a comprehensive list of mitigation measures, based on discussions from the BQCMB Caribou Workshop. The BQCMB is also assisting with caribou-range community meetings to discuss the main issues affecting caribou. The first meeting was held at Wollaston Lake,



David Vetra

BQCMB Caribou Workshop participants, such as these people from Saskatchewan and Manitoba, spoke passionately about their reliance on caribou

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"Workshop," continued from page 9



Elder Martin Broussie  
of Black Lake,  
Saskatchewan shares  
his views on caribou

Saskatchewan in May 2010, drawing more than 90 people. Meetings are expected to wrap up by the end of 2011. Having community meetings allows many more people who rely on the Beverly and

community meetings, and making recommendations to governments and others based on comments provided.

In recent months a few caribou herds, like the Porcupine and Bluenose East herds, have received good news that their populations have stopped declining and are actually getting larger. But most herds around the world have been shrinking in size lately. This is a result of both natural and human-caused factors.



Richard Aksawnee of Baker Lake, Nunavut (in cap) makes a point during a small group session

## Taking pressure off caribou

The BQCMB Caribou Workshop began with presentations about the status and management of the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq caribou herds and their ranges, and the economic value of the herds to communities. Other presentations described different perspectives on caribou cycles and declining herds.

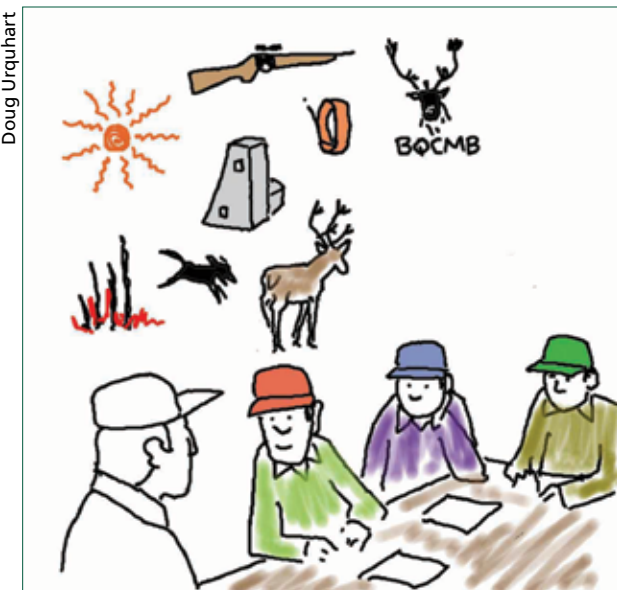
Then participants split up into small groups to identify main factors affecting the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq herds. People reported back to the whole group after each discussion period and shared knowledge to better determine what can be done to aid caribou.

The BQCMB is grateful to many people for making the

workshop a success, including workshop facilitator Doug Urquhart and translators Rosanna Good and Elaine Hay. As well, many sponsors were essential to the workshop's success: NWT's Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Nunavut's Department of Environment, the Saskatchewan Ministry of Environment, the AANDC (NWT and Nunavut regional offices), Manitoba Conservation, the PAGC, the Athabasca Land Use Office, the Athabasca Denesuline Negotiation Team, the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board, WWF–Canada, AREVA Resources Canada Inc. and Cameco Corp.

The BQMCB believes that everyone needs to work together to conserve the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq caribou herds. Individuals, communities, companies and governments must all do what they can to take pressure off caribou so that declining herds can recover, and all herds can be healthy and productive.

To learn more, visit [www.arctic-caribou.com](http://www.arctic-caribou.com) or e-mail [info@arctic-caribou.com](mailto:info@arctic-caribou.com).



Facilitator Doug Urquhart of Whitehorse, Yukon – a talented illustrator as well – sketched concepts as the three-day workshop progressed, like this one showing main factors affecting caribou today

## What people can do to help the caribou

Prior to the BQCMB Caribou Workshop, Board members had identified what they believed were the top priorities for helping the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq herds. Those ideas were presented to Caribou Workshop participants for their reaction, and their feedback added to these ideas. Here are the BQCMB's recommendations for ways that governments, industry, communities and hunters can help declining caribou herds:

1. Governments and others should protect areas that are very important to caribou, including seasonally important habitats like calving grounds and key migration corridors.
2. Governments and regulatory agencies should do more to help protect caribou from disturbance and habitat loss resulting from mineral exploration and development, and from wildfires.
3. Hunters should take only what they need.
4. Hunters should prevent wastage.
5. Hunters should harvest bulls instead of cows whenever possible.
6. Communities and governments should encourage traditional harvest of predators, like wolves and bears, especially on the calving grounds.



To gather input from Northerners who have seen caribou, the land or water being disturbed by human activities (such as planes or other vehicles), the BQCMB gave out 1,000 pre-stamped postcards in 2011 with a questionnaire on the back to be filled in. The BQCMB also created target posters to aid hunters

## “We need to educate hunters”

Eric Tapatai of Baker Lake firmly believes that more needs to be done to teach people how to help preserve caribou.

In an April 2010 e-mail, Tapatai asked the BQCMB about probable causes of caribou declines, suggestions from wildlife boards and scientists, and actions being taken to educate people about protecting caribou, to ensure they still exist in the future.

“I only hunt male caribou and mostly bulls and stay away from harvesting females because females are the ones producing more caribou. But I know for a fact that . . . a lot of people mostly harvest females in the fall and in the winter because hunters think that females are ‘better’ meat during those times of the year.”

“I have harvested both females and males and there is really no difference in taste and texture.”

Tapatai, who operates Turaavik Outpost Camp, an alternative home and camps program for inmates from Nunavut's justice system, said that “(w)e need to educate hunters that (1) there is no difference in taste and texture (2) and that hunting females are probably one of the main causes of the decline.” With the increase in mineral exploration over the last few years, Tapatai added that caribou routes and behaviour have changed as well.

“I have seen a helicopter flying around a small herd of caribou and ‘spooking’ them; also, a helicopter flying around Musk ox and disturbing them as well. I have also witnessed a plane flying over the Meadowbank Mine road flying approx. 50 meters low and also spooking caribou (in the fall of 2009).” Tapatai said that he reported these disturbances to authorities but has never received feedback.



**In Profile:** *Nunavummiut Makitagunarningit*

# Asking tough questions about uranium

Courtesy of Nunavummiut Makitagunarningit



“A lot of people were simply afraid to sign” Makita’s petition calling for a public inquiry into uranium mining for fear of being seen as opposing government, says Makita chair Sandra Inuitiq, left, seen here with vice-chair Joan Scottie

**By Morgan Beaudry**

“We must focus on how we as a people have come to this displaced place where we now are so desperate that even one of the most destructive mining practices in the world has now become appealing to us. . . .”

*- Makita Chair Sandra Inuitiq,  
addressing the Government of Nunavut  
Public Forum on Uranium Mining,  
Iqaluit, March 17, 2011*

Nunavummiut Makitagunarningit – or Makita, for short – has asked a lot of tough questions about uranium mining since the small citizen-led, non-government organization was launched in November 2009. Questions like those posed during public meetings this spring on uranium development, held to gain citizen input as the Nunavut government works to create a position and policy further

to its May 2007 principles. Those principles support uranium mining if certain conditions are met.

Makita’s goal is to foster informed public discussion about whether uranium mining should be allowed in Nunavut or not. Unfortunately, the answers to Makita’s questions have not always been encouraging – like the resounding ‘no’ in reply to petitions submitted to the Government of Nunavut in June 2010, calling for a public inquiry into uranium mining. Nunavut Premier Eva Aariak said in an August

27, 2010 response that enough regulations, consultations and federal regulatory bodies exist to ensure that “the highest possible standards for human health and environmental protection are met” as far as uranium mining is concerned.

But Makita chair Sandra Inuitiq says if Nunavummiut felt that was the case, there would be no need for Makita. Fears that the government wants uranium revenue more than public insight into uranium mining is why Makita exists.

“We are not against development; we are against development where the residents aren’t given a chance to debate the issues and have a long term plan about the kind of activity taking place in their backyard,” Inuitiq says.

## People afraid to speak out

Ten years ago, uranium, a toxic radioactive metallic element used principally to fuel electricity-producing nuclear reactors, was

worth just US\$7/pound. In 2007 the price shot up to nearly US\$140/pound and then fell, selling for about US\$51/pound today. As the price rose, voices in government opposing exploration and mining grew fewer and quieter.

“There is very little economy apart from government, which is Nunavut’s largest employer. There’s a real fear of some kind of backlash if they are in opposition or even seen to be in opposition of government,” says Inuitiq, who herself works for an arm’s-reach agency of government as policy director for the Office of Languages Commissioner.

## New, but busy

Since 2009, Makita has also:

- applied for and received intervenor funding for the Kiggavik environmental review
- sponsored a November 2010 meeting in Iqaluit on uranium, featuring the world’s foremost anti-nuclear activist, Dr. Helen Caldicott; Dr. Isabelle Gingras, one of 23 doctors from Sept-Îles, Quebec who threatened to quit unless Quebec banned uranium mining; and Gordon Edwards of the Canadian Coalition for Nuclear Responsibility.

To learn more, contact:

Makita  
P.O. Box 1554  
Iqaluit NU X0H 0H0  
info@makik.ca

The group plans to launch a Facebook page in September. Makita welcomes volunteers.

Joining Inuitq as vice-chair of Makita is Joan Scottie, founder of the Baker Lake Concerned Citizens Committee. It led the campaign against German mining company Urangesellschaft's proposed Kiggavik uranium mine in the late 1980s, leading to a March 1990 plebiscite that saw Baker Lake vote overwhelmingly against the mine.

Flash forward to 2010. Of 14 uranium exploration projects underway in Nunavut, 12 were in the Kivalliq region, including the massive Kiggavik mine and mill proposal, now spearheaded by AREVA Resources Canada.

Last year, Makita sent its petition to every HTO and municipal office in Nunavut, and collected about 200 signatures in Baker Lake, Arviat, Chesterfield Inlet, Rankin Inlet, and Iqaluit and Grise Fiord.

"We've had a lot of people come up to us and say they support Makita but cannot be involved because they work for government

**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](mailto:caribounews@arctic-caribou.com)**

or depend on government funding for their organization," said Inuitq.

### **Calling on NTI to take action**

Taking a different tact, Makita has now called upon land claims organization Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated (NTI) to hold a plebiscite among Inuit beneficiaries on uranium mining. Cathy Towtongie, president of NTI since late 2010, said in a Feb. 24, 2011 *Nunatsiaq News* article that Nunavut needs to see "Arctic-specific regulations" around uranium mining before supporting the Kiggavik project.

Once the Nunavut government issues a report following its 2011 uranium development consultations, NTI plans to review its own *Policy Concerning Uranium Mining in*

*Nunavut*. NTI adopted this policy in September 2007, reversing its long-standing ban on the exploration or mining of uranium or thorium on subsurface Inuit-owned land.

"The threat uranium mining presents is not just to human and environmental health; we're being taken advantage of as a society because we are economically desperate," said Inuitq. There are moral considerations too, such as whether the uranium will be used in weapons manufacturing and a lack of safe nuclear waste disposal options.

"There's a sense here that calling for steps to mitigate risks means you're opposing something and there seems to be no room for dialogue," Inuitq said. "For me, that's a real frustration. It's not what I envisioned Nunavut would be about."

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"Survey," continued from page 4

doing sampling through Aurora College's Environment and Natural Resources Technology Program winter camp. A spring composition survey to estimate the proportion of calves from the previous year that survived to 10 months of age found an average of 57 calves for every 100 cows, says Kelly – a ratio generally associated with increasing herds. This was the second year in a row of high recruitment, which is a positive indicator for the caribou on this range.

The Beverly population stood at around 276,000 animals in 1994, the last time the herd was successfully counted. The GNWT attempted a population survey in 2007 but bad weather forced the operation to scale back to a reconnaissance survey.

"Exploration," continued from page 8

The NW Manitoba, Kasmere South and Kasmere North projects lie right beside two new provincial parks in the northwest corner of Manitoba on the ranges of the Qamanirjuaq and Beverly herds, Nueltin Lake Provincial Park and Colvin Lake Provincial Park. Directly north of Nueltin Lake Provincial Park in Nunavut is Cameco's Nueltin Lake uranium exploration property.

Both parks lie within the traditional territories of the Northlands and Sayisi Dene First Nations. Manitoba Conservation states that no mining is permitted within the parks, and that Aboriginal people still have the right to hunt, trap, fish and pursue other traditional activities in these areas. These lands are also available for treaty land entitlement selection.

### **NWT**

Exploration has been quieter in the NWT since the 2008 recession. Spending is expected to reach \$83 million in 2011, much lower than 2008 expenditures of \$148 million, according to the NWT and Nunavut Chamber of Mines.

A handful of firms are exploring on the caribou range in the NWT – mainly for diamonds but also for nickel, base metals and gold. None are on the portion of the Beverly traditional calving ground in the NWT, which is protected by the Thelon Wildlife Sanctuary. Resource management planning for the Upper Thelon region is still underway.



## near Lutsel K'e

By Rick Olsen

Manager, Forests

Environment and Natural Resources, GNWT

In early June 2010, lightning caused two fires approximately 60 kilometres southeast of Lutsel K'e near Gagnon Lake, part of the traditional Beverly caribou range. Both fires were located in areas with limited recent fire history. After further assessment of the growth potential of the fires, it was determined that there was a high probability these fires could grow to a significant size. Following the direction provided in the *GNWT Forest Fire Management Policy*, the decision was made to respond to these wildfires by attempting to limit their fire growth to the north and west.

A Northwest Territories Incident Command Team was dispatched to the fires on June 18. The complement included a seven-person overhead team, 35 fire crew members

and four camp support personnel. Operations were supported by helicopter and air tanker aircraft. Over a two-week period, they conducted a series of direct and indirect attack methods in order to contain the fires within specific geographical areas. After this period, the fires were monitored with occasional limited action on hot spots near the perimeters that had potential to escape the control zones established for the fires. The final fire sizes for the two fires were 43,388.99 and 50,000.00 hectares.



As operations section chief, it was the job of Environment and Natural Resources (ENR) fire technician Louie Beaulieu (above, pointing to a map on the table) to lead the large group of firefighters in containing these two major fires. All men in the photo above are part of the operations section, except for ENR officer Tom Lockhart (to the right of Beaulieu). Bottom, far left: The view from a water bomber that was working the fire. Bottom, centre: Sam Boucher of Lutsel K'e during a consultation flight. Boucher had a trapline in the area



All photo courtesy of  
ENR-GNWT



# BQCMB recommends continuing to 2022

With its current mandate ending in April 2012, the BQCMB passed a resolution after its October 2010 meeting that recommends to governments that the Board continue as a single window of caribou management advice for the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq herds for another decade, until 2022.

The Board was to propose by June 1 to the five governments that fund the Board's core operations – Saskatchewan, NWT, Nunavut, Manitoba and Canada – a revised caribou management agreement, said BQCMB executive director Ross Thompson. Already, the Baker Lake HTO, the PAGC and other organizations have voiced moral support for the BQCMB's continued efforts – encouragement that the Board values greatly, says Thompson.

Governments have endorsed a series of 10-year mandates for the BQCMB since the Board was founded in 1982.

Many important tasks that go beyond 2012 await the BQCMB. These include:

- continuing to provide analysis and caribou management-related recommendations in the Kiggavik environmental review
- following up on the February 2010 BQCMB Caribou Workshop by assisting with community meetings to give, and receive, more information about the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq herds and ultimately recommend to governments and others how to conserve the caribou, and
- producing a new herd management plan and action plans by 2013 (the *Beverly and Qamanirjuaq Caribou Management Plan [2005-2012]* ends next year).

The BQCMB is an Aboriginal-led co-management board of hunters, biologists, and land and wildlife managers. All Board members live in the North. As an advisory

A student from Lutsel K'e Elementary School during a 2010 "On the Land" outing. This community caribou program for youth, funded by the BQCMB, is led by seasoned hunters, trappers and elders



Pierre du Hammel

board, the BQCMB works with governments, communities, industry and other organizations to develop recommendations for the conservation and management of the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq caribou herds and their ranges.

The BQCMB works mainly for traditional caribou users and their families who depend on caribou. About 16,000 Aboriginal people – mainly Dene, Inuit, Métis and Cree – are among the almost 21,000 people living in communities on or near the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq ranges. The BQCMB also labours on behalf of all Canadians and people of other nations.

## Differing values, new respect

Over the years, the BQCMB has brought people together from different governments, communities and cultures to discuss issues and make recommendations for safeguarding the two herds. This has resulted in greater understanding and respect for different values and points of view. Among the BQCMB's accomplishments are:

- raising more than \$1.25 million since 2002 from government, non-government organizations and industry to fund

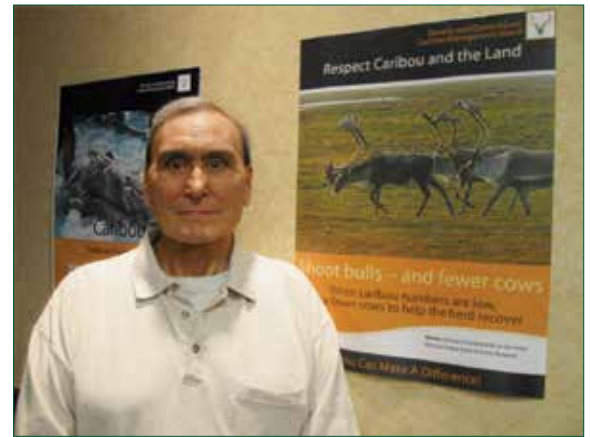
community-based projects, caribou and habitat protection efforts, community-based monitoring, and much more

- producing a position paper with strong recommendations for governments and regulatory agencies to protect calving and post-calving areas, as well as other important caribou habitats
- recommending improvements to AANDC's Caribou Protection Measures
- reviewing land use permit applications and development proposals
- staging a major caribou workshop
- sponsoring "On the Land" programs with schools
- disbursing annual awards from the Caribou Management Scholarship Fund, and
- producing communications tools that encourage wise hunting and reduced disturbance of caribou.

The BQCMB has also pledged to work with agencies outside government to find funding for Board priorities such as information gathering and sharing, youth involvement, and collecting and using traditional knowledge.

# People and caribou

David Vetra



Leslie Wakelyn

BQCMB member Earl Evans (left, standing) speaks during the Talking Circle opening session of the 13th North American Caribou Workshop. Above, Joseph Scottie of Baker Lake stands beside new BQCMB posters suggesting ways to conserve caribou

With the populations of many caribou herds around the world falling, interest in the 13<sup>th</sup> North American Caribou Workshop, held in Winnipeg from October 25 to 29, 2010 was at a peak. The international event, staged every two years, drew 400 participants – twice as many as usual. Among the attendees who travelled from Greenland, Norway, Germany, the United States and Canada were members of the BQCMB, who had just wrapped up their usual fall board meeting in Winnipeg.

BQCMB chairman **Albert Thorassie** delivered a presentation on challenges facing the BQCMB during a symposium in which six speakers from across Canada looked at how knowledge informs management decisions of barren-ground caribou. Thorassie, along with BQCMB members **Earl Evans** of Fort Smith, **Jerome Denechezhe** of Lac Brochet and **Laurent Angalik** of Arviat were also invited speakers at the special day-long session, “Aboriginal knowledge and perspectives on caribou management.”

Also attending the session, organized in a traditional Talking Circle format in which the speaker who has the floor holds a talking stick, was **Joseph Scottie** of Baker Lake. Scottie

participated in the BQCMB’s October 2010 meeting in place of BQCMB member **Thomas Elytook**, who could not go.

BQCMB executive director **Ross Thompson** also introduced panel members for several symposiums, including the closing symposium that provided an outlook on research and management.

In other news, several current and past BQCMB members are sharing their skills with other pivotal boards as well. In February 2010, BQCMB member **Peter Kusugak**, the field operations manager for AANDC’s Nunavut Region office in Iqaluit, was appointed by former AANDC Minister Chuck Strahl to the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board. And in July 2010, former BQCMB member **Richard Mercredi** of Fort Smith, the regional superintendent for GNWT’s Department of Public Works and Services before retiring in 2008, was appointed to the Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board.

David Vetra



Peter Kusugak

Marion Soublière



Richard Mercredi

## Publisher’s Box

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