

CARIBOU NEWS

in Brief

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



BEVERLY & QAMANIRJUAQ
CARIBOU MANAGEMENT BOARD

Volume 27 No. 1 * April 2024

BQCMB Meeting #96

May 7-9, 2024

Winnipeg, MB

40 Years of Co-Management

Concern For Caribou Results in Proposal for Board (May 1981)

Caribou Management Discussions Begin (July 1981)

Agreement Reached: Government and native people to work together (December 1981)

These were a few of the headlines featured throughout 1981 in the Caribou News, a newspaper produced by the Keewatin Inuit Association. On October 7 of that year, recognizing the survival of the herds would require cooperation, northern Indigenous peoples and the governments of the Northwest Territories, Saskatchewan and Manitoba agreed to work together.

Today, the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq Caribou Management Board is embarking on its' 5th 10-year Caribou Management Agreement, and will soon release a new 10-year Caribou Management Plan.

We have come a long way in 40+ years. From our creation as the first caribou co-management board in North America, the BQCMB is now known as a model of co-management. And in this special edition of Caribou News in Brief, we invite you to share in our memories of the past four decades of working hand-in-hand to conserve the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq barren-ground caribou herds for present and future generations.

Ministers George McLeod, Raymond Chenier (representing John Munro), John Roberts, Alvin Mackling and Richard Nerysoo in Winnipeg to officially form the BQCMB, June 3, 1982.

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People and Caribou

Farewell Ernie Bussidor

The BQCMB was extremely saddened to hear of the passing of our friend and fellow Board member Ernie Bussidor, from Sayisi Dene First Nation, Tadoule Lake, MB, on January 28, 2024. Ernie joined the Board in 2017 and was respected for his thoughtful and passionate statements during meetings.



Photo : Seal River Watershed Alliance

When Ernie spoke, everyone listened. He had a poetic way of describing the challenges facing the caribou, often weaving in stories passed down from his Elders. He also often recalled the forced relocation of his people to Churchill in the 1950s and the tragic consequences. Ernie carried these painful memories throughout his life but found healing in spending time on the land, using his voice and the caribou drum, and working toward establishing protection for his beloved Seal River Watershed.

As founder of the Seal River Watershed Alliance, Ernie's vision was to "ensure our grandchildren's grandchildren have the opportunity to engage in traditional practices such as hunting, fishing and serving as guardians of the land and animals within a healthy watershed."

Ernie was never without his drum and welcomed any invitation to share it, soon opening and closing each BQCMB meeting with songs and drumming. We

Photo : CanNorth



“Every aspect of our cultures, spirituality and identities are rooted in our relationship to the caribou, the lands and the waters which sustain us.”

Ernie Bussidor,
Sayisi Dene First Nation

are all so grateful to have known Ernie, and are thankful that his vision for an Indigenous Protected and Conserved Area for his people is one step closer to reality. Ernie said, “I can now continue on my spirit journey knowing my children and their children will have a safe and secure future.”

Ernie's voice will not be forgotten by the people he impacted, or by the caribou.

Elder Joe Martin

The BQCMB was also saddened to learn of the death of our friend and fellow BQCMB member Joe Martin of Fond Du Lac Denesųliné First Nation, SK. Joe passed away on September 10th, 2023, at the age of 88 years.

Joe was an alternate member of the BQCMB since 2014 and he rarely missed a meeting. He was a passionate

board member who was dedicated to caribou conservation. He spent his life hunting, trapping, fishing, and was a longtime volunteer with the Athabasca Working Group Environmental Monitoring Program.

Joe was also a band councillor for 20 years, a former member of the police board, and former Chief. He served his community well. We will miss Joe's friendship and laughter at our meetings.

Happy Retirement Leslie Wakelyn

Leslie Wakelyn, the BQCMB's longtime wildlife biologist, retired January 1, 2024. What began as a six-month mapping contract in 1996 turned into a 27-year journey in barren-ground caribou conservation.



Photo by Brad Heath

Leslie Wakelyn proudly displaying a carving gifted to her by BQCMB member Dennis Larocque.

Leslie said there were multiple reasons that she stayed with the board for 27 years, including the variety of projects, the people she worked with, and the ability to work in the world of caribou. “I believed strongly in caribou conservation and wanted to make a difference.” Working with people is what Leslie said she will miss most, including the board staff she worked with as well as those with other wildlife organizations, such as the hunters and trappers in the Kivalliq region of Nunavut.

People and Caribou

She's grateful for having the chance to travel throughout the North and learn from people from different cultures. "Meeting people in their own communities has been really valuable to me," she said.

Leslie has had a front row seat to the BQCMB's evolution over time. She notes when the board first formed in 1982, its mandate was to address the "quite deep divisions" between how the government and local communities viewed conservation. "A lot of work has been done to help people understand each other's point of view," she said.

A brand-new Caribou Management Plan is soon to be released, something Leslie worked very hard on in the months prior to stepping down. With that work completed, it's a perfect time to retire. Leslie's plans for retirement include travelling, enjoying her cabin on Prelude Lake, and spending more time with friends and family. But she plans to continue to follow the Board's activities and maybe even pop in to a future BQCMB meeting next time it's in Yellowknife.

We hope she does! Leslie's vast knowledge of the BQCMB and caribou will be missed in the days and weeks to come, but it is her friendship that is truly irreplaceable.

Welcome to the BQCMB Gilly McNaughton

The BQCMB's new wildlife Biologist, Gilly McNaughton, is a lifelong resident of the Northwest Territories. She lives with her partner and their two dogs north of the Arctic circle in her hometown of Inuvik, which is located on the lands of the Gwich'in and Inuvialuit.

Gilly brings to the Board a well-rounded background of working within the northern environmental and wildlife management field in public, private and charitable sectors. Most recently,



Photo by Roseann Nathoo

she spent three years working with an Inuvialuit co-management organization to support wildlife management projects that are informed by their traditional and local knowledge. She is also a student, working on a Master of Science degree where her research involved working with the Innu Nation and evaluating the fisheries chapter of their land claim agreement-in-principle with Innu cultural valuation of fisheries.

Gilly's first day on the job as BQCMB biologist began traveling from Inuvik to Churchill, Manitoba for the BQCMB's November board meeting. "We landed in Churchill just as a multi-day blizzard descended on south-western Hudson Bay and subsequently spent much of the week watching for polar bears in the high winds and snow!" she laughs.

Paying tribute to her predecessor, Gilly notes, "Leslie Wakelyn held this position for an incredible 27 years and I was fortunate to have had a few weeks of overlap with her before her retirement. She leaves a legendary presence behind as I pick up her career's work to support the Board, the communities she worked with, and of course, the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq caribou herds."

"I look forward to the learning journey ahead for me as I grow into this role and build relationships with not only board members, but with the communities

and people who have a vested interest in seeing the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq caribou herds healthy and abundant for generations to come."

Peter Gazandlare Hatchet Lake Denesūliné First Nation

The BQCMB's newest member, Peter Gazandlare, lives in Wollaston Lake, SK (Hatchet Lake Denesūliné First Nation), where he has been a band councillor for the past 9 years. Peter was raised in Lac Brochet, Manitoba, and moved to the community of Wollaston Lake in 1996. "I went for a visit to Wollaston and I'm still here," he jokes.

He has been hunting caribou "since I can remember", learning from both his father and great grandmother. He also taught Dene language and culture for almost a decade, but had to give that up when he became a band councillor. These days, it's "back-to-back meetings", he says.

Peter and his wife of 25 years, Darlene, have five children ranging in ages from 10 to 29, and an almost 2-year-old grandson. It's a busy life, which doesn't leave much time for hunting caribou, although he did get out on the land in late March.

The BQCMB looks forward to welcoming Peter's knowledge about caribou and the land to our board table. •

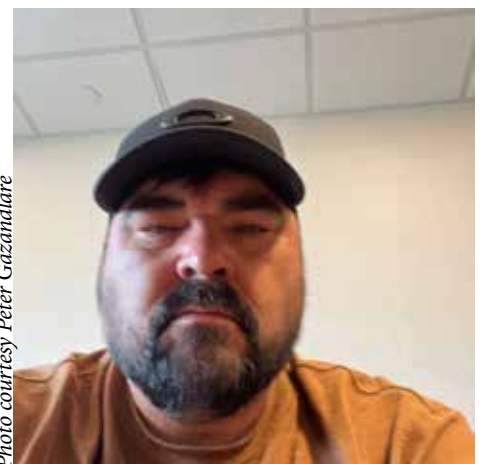


Photo courtesy Peter Gazandlare

Around the Range

Updates on the herds

Qamanirjuaq Herd: At its November 2023 BQCMB meeting in Churchill, Manitoba, Leslie Wakelyn presented information on behalf of the Government of Nunavut (GN). She explained that the GN has not yet publicly released the report on the most recent Qamanirjuaq population survey which took place in June 2022, but is expected to in early in 2024. The total estimated number of adult caribou in the herd in 2022 was about half the number estimated 30 years ago. Despite a slow steady decline of about 2% a year, it is still a very large herd, and the decline may have stabilized since 2014.

Beverly Herd: Leslie indicated the GN led a successful population survey of the Beverly herd in June 2023. Preliminary results are expected to be shared with the BQCMB at its May 2024 meeting. Based on the previous survey, the herd had declined 63% between 1994 and 2018, a rate of 4-5% a year.

Jan Adamczewski reported the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) conducted a late winter composition survey of the Beverly, Bathurst, and Bluenose-East caribou herds in March 2023. The survey was challenging due to extensive mixing amongst the herds on the winter range. There was about 82% Beverly caribou, with a ratio of about 44 calves per 100 cows. The last 4 years have found ratios of more than 40 calves per 100 cows, which is a good sign. Recent fall composition surveys show little herd mixing on the fall/rutting range and good ratios of calves:cows. There are also more collars on the Beverly herd than ever before, including 43 on adult females (cows) and 28 on adult males (bulls), for a total of 71.

IPCA One Step Closer to Reality

In January 2024, the Seal River Watershed Alliance, Sayisi Dene First Nation, Northlands Dene Nation, Barren Lands First Nation, and O-Pipon-Na-Piwin Cree Nation, the Manitoba Government, and the Government of Canada signed an agreement to undertake a feasibility study into making the watershed into an Indigenous Protected and Conserved Area (IPCA).

This is a major step toward protecting the watershed. Protecting it would not only ensure no industrial development

takes place on the watershed, but would help Canada move toward its target of conserving 30 per cent of its land and water by 2030.

For more information, visit <https://www.sealriverwatershed.ca/>. You can also watch the Seal River Watershed's film "We Are Made From The Land: Protecting The Seal River Watershed" at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kTUccsvzwbA>.

Meliadine Mine Expansion Denied

During a long 10-days in Rankin Inlet, NU in September 2023, the Nunavut Impact Review Board (NIRB) held its final hearing on the Meliadine Mine expansion proposal. The project is on the Qamanirjuaq herd's post-calving range, which was a major issue, as was a proposed new windfarm. NIRB recommended the extension proposal not be allowed to proceed at this time due largely to the high degree of uncertainty about the potential impacts the expanded project would have on caribou. The decision to accept NIRB's recommendation or not will be made by the federal government.

Nunavut Land Use Plan

The Nunavut Planning Commission has submitted the 2023 Nunavut Land Use Plan (the 4th version developed since 2010) to the three parties that need to approve it: Government of Canada, Government of Nunavut, and Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. The enormous plan sets out requirements for how 3.3 million square kilometres of Nunavut's land and marine areas will be used. The Plan includes recommendations for protecting caribou habitat and caribou. However, recent changes that make it more likely that this recommended Land Use Plan will be approved are also likely to provide reduced protection for the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq caribou herds compared to the previous draft Plan. •

Wolf Harvest Concludes

A wolf harvest program has taken place in the Northwest Territories for the last four winters. From January-April 2023 142 wolves were harvested in the incentive area, for a total of 431 wolves over the life of the program. The GNWT provides incentives for wolf harvesters in areas with Bathurst and Bluenose East caribou which are tracked using satellite collars. The Beverly herds may also benefit from reduced wolf predation, as they are using similar areas during late winter. •

The BQCMB is pleased to have contributed a letter of support for the Seal River Watershed initiative, which could protect 50,000 square km of caribou habitat. Congratulations to everyone involved in taking this next step toward establishing an Indigenous Protected Area in Manitoba.



BQCMB: A Model to Emulate

The Beverly and Qamanirjuaq Caribou Management Board (BQCMB) broke new ground when it became Canada's first co-management board for a major game species in 1982. It brought together Indigenous peoples and wildlife managers from the governments of Canada, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and the Northwest Territories to work toward the common goal of conserving two barren-ground caribou herds in northern Canada, the Beverly herd and the Qamanirjuaq herd.

The BQCMB was borne out of a perceived crisis. In the late 1970s, governments believed that the herds were in serious decline, based on census counts. There was disagreement among biologists about the cause of the decline, and questions from Dene and Inuit hunters about whether a decline even existed.

Federal, provincial and territorial ministers met in 1980 to discuss the problem and agreed any solution had to fully involve indigenous people. The result of these talks was the Beverly and Kaminuriak—now Qamanirjuaq—Caribou Management Board, in which Indigenous people would hold the majority. As reported in the *Caribou News* at the time, *“throughout the area there is a new spirit of cooperation in the air. No longer are people willing to take unilateral action. All sides seem to agree that there are problems and that they cannot be solved overnight, but solutions will be found if people talk together, work together, and reach joint decisions.”*

Since then, the BQCMB has fostered cooperation across jurisdictions and cultures. Yet even when a 1996 report on co-management by the Government of Canada called the BQCMB “a co-management model to emulate,” few anticipated the board would endure for over four decades.

Today, Dene, Inuit, Métis, Cree and non-Indigenous people in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut (which joined the board upon officially becoming a territory in 1999) continue to rely on the herds for their nutritional, cultural, and spiritual needs. Governments view the BQCMB as a convenient forum for the resolution of caribou issues, and board decisions are generally based on consensus.

As the BQCMB enters its 5th 10-year mandate, it has upheld its position as a “co-management model to emulate.” And its enormous volume of work by dedicated and passionate caribou people from across the ranges of the two herds is the direct result of continuing to talk together, work together, and reach joint decisions. •

*Adapted from the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq Caribou Management Board
20th Anniversary Report, 1982-2002.*

BQCMB through the years

1981 In Thompson, Manitoba, discussions began around the need for better communication and increased cooperation between the areas using the caribou herds.

An intense in-camera session in Prince Albert, SK in June resulted in the proposed formation of an Indigenous inter-jurisdictional caribou management board. Gunther Abrahamson, coordinator for the Department of Indian Affairs' participation in the discussion, commented "In one short day you've reached agreement on the board. I'm sure we can work together."

Then, at a historic meeting in Yellowknife, NWT in October 1981, Indigenous associations and government agreed to a formula for joint management of the Kaminuriak and Beverly caribou herds. Both sides agreed to a board with eight Indigenous and five government representatives. Chief Leon Cook of Black Lake, SK said "The faster we come to an agreement, the better for everybody."

1982 At a ceremony in Winnipeg on June 3, 1982, Ministers and Indigenous representatives from Saskatchewan, Manitoba and the Northwest Territories joined with the federal government to sign an historic Caribou Management agreement, committing themselves to working together for the joint management and conservation of the Beverly and Kaminuriak caribou herds



John Victor Martin, executive director of the Keewatin Tribal Council, and Alvin Mackling, Minister of Manitoba Natural Resources.

Jim Shaefer, a caribou user from Fort Smith, NWT was elected the first chairman of the Beverly and Kaminuriak Caribou Management Board at a meeting in Saskatoon on August 18-19th.



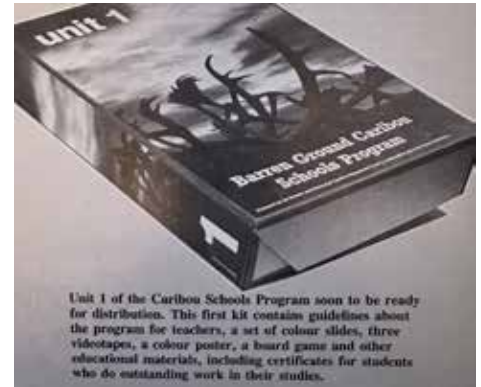
Jim Shaefer

1984 Caribou Management Board members learned new survey techniques showed as many as twice as many caribou in the Beverly and Kaminuriak herds as previously thought. Based on aerial photographs, it was estimated that the Kaminuriak Herd caribou in June 1983 could have numbered between 180,000 and 240,000, much higher than the counts of 100,000 to 140,000 resulting from visual sightings done at the same time.



Bill Richards, Jerome Denecheze and Peter Yassie receiving the news that new population figures for the Kaminuriak caribou herd were higher based on new survey techniques.

The first sample kit of the Caribou Schools Program was presented to the Caribou Management Board at its April meeting, receiving an enthusiastic response from members and observers. One complete kit was to be distributed to each school in all the caribou using communities in the Board's jurisdiction by the beginning of the school year.



Unit 1 of the Caribou Schools Program soon to be ready for distribution. This first kit contains guidelines about the program for teachers, a set of colour slides, three videotapes, a colour poster, a board game and other educational materials, including certificates for students who do outstanding work in their studies.

1986 The first long-term plan for the management of the Beverly and Kaminuriak Caribou Herds was released for public discussion. A six-member subcommittee of the BQCMB held meetings in Brochet and Lac Brochet, MB to talk about the Plan and give Manitoba caribou users an opportunity to discuss the plan. A meeting scheduled for Tadoule Lake had to be cancelled due to bad weather.



Tim Trottier and Steve Kearney at a BQCMB meeting in Fort Smith, NWT August 1984

1987 The Caribou Management Board decided at its August meeting in Winnipeg to recommend against mineral exploration and development inside the Thelon Game Sanctuary, which contains about half of the traditional calving grounds of the Beverly herd.

1988 The BQCMB established an award to help full-time students whose studies would contribute to the understanding of barren-ground caribou and their habitat. Preference was given to applicants from a caribou-range community and to those examining the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq herds.

1989 After hearing concerns of Baker Lake residents and hunters from other communities about the effects that a uranium mine would have on the Beverly herd, the BQCMB urged governments not to approve Urangesellschaft Canada Limited's proposal for developing the Kiggavik uranium mine near Baker Lake.



Keewatin members Paul Kaludjak and David Kritterdlik pressed the Board to take a stand on the Kiggavik mine issue. "People are terrified about this thing taking place," Kaludjak said.

Following a leak of radioactive mine-water into Wollaston Lake in 1989, Ed Benoanie, Chief of the Hatchet Lake Band, told the BQCMB his community had lost confidence in the agencies responsible for enforcing mining company operating regulations in Saskatchewan. The BQCMB called on the Minister of Environment to hold an independent inquiry into the leak.



Ed Benoanie, Don Thomas, and Tim Trottier

1990 The BQCMB produced a life-size target poster to help hunters improve shooting skills, and a short time later began sponsoring shooting competitions in caribou-range communities that made use of the posters and target-shoot rules.

1992 The governments that fund the Beverly and Kaminuriak Caribou Management Board agreed to renew its mandate for a second ten-year term. The spelling of Kamanuriak was also changed to Qamanirjuaq at the request of Inuit.

The BQCMB supported the government of the NWT's first satellite collaring of Qamanirjuaq caribou as a two-year pilot project.

1993 The BQCMB urged the federal environmental assessment panel to defer the Rabbit Lake uranium mining project in northern Saskatchewan, pointing out that the risks to caribou and their habitat outweighed the benefits of more jobs and increased economic activity.

Jerome Denechezhe, a councillor with the Northlands Band at Lac Brochet, MB who was involved with the initial setup of the BQCMB, became the new chairman, and Ross Thompson left the Board after a decade. Thompson had been with the Board almost since it began, first as vice-chairman from 1983-1990, and as chairman since 1990.



Jerome Denechezhe (top) and Ross Thompson

1994 A survey of the Qamanirjuaq calving grounds show the herd's size to be approximately 496,000.

1995 Years of effort led to the publication of the BQCMB's *Fire Management Technical Report No. 1* along with the shorter summary, *Management Report No. 1*. The studies examined the ecological role of fire in the boreal forest and how it relates to caribou, using traditional knowledge to map out priority caribou hunting areas on the range. The Board then developed a fire suppression strategy for caribou and made recommendations to the governments of the NWT, Saskatchewan and Manitoba.

1996 The BQCMB's independent newspaper, *Caribou News*, first printed in October 1980, was replaced by the much shorter "Caribou News in Brief" due to lack of funding. Editor Marion Soublière lamented there would be little room to cover the topics the BQCMB deals with. "I'll keep my fingers crossed that other media will wake up to the fact that caribou are a big part of peoples' lives here in the North. And that makes it something worth writing about."

"I'll keep my fingers crossed that other media will wake up to the fact that caribou are a big part of peoples' lives here in the North. And that makes it something worth writing about."

Marion Soublière, Editor,
Caribou News

BQCMB through the years

1997 The BQCMB began work with caribou users to draft a hunting code of ethics, which resulted in a Hunt Wisely poster. The poster, dealing with safety and other issues, was targeted to hunters.



The governments of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, the Northwest Territories, Nunavut and Canada agreed to extend the BQCMB's mandate beyond the end of its second 10-year mandate.



L to R: Nunavut MP Nancy Karetak-Lindell, INAC Minister Robert Nault, and BQCMB Secretary-Treasurer Gunther Abrahamson

“To me, the BQCMB’s position paper was a landmark piece of work.”

Monte Hummel, president emeritus, WWF-Canada

2005 The BQCMB received a “Spirit of the Earth” award from Manitoba Hydro for its work safeguarding the caribou herds. BQCMB member from Tadoule Lake, MB, Albert Thorassie, remarked “well, it’s about time—the Board’s been in existence since 1982.”

1998 The BQCMB completed a policy paper for apportioning the commercial harvest of caribou based on the total sustainable use of the estimated caribou population. The BQCMB also updated its methodology for determining allowable harvest of caribou in 1998.

1999 The board published a “Protecting Beverly and Qamanirjuaq Caribou and Caribou Range” report that provided seasonal range maps and other information for impact assessment and land use planning on Qamanirjuaq and Beverly caribou range. This was followed by a Map Atlas and Documentation, including a CD-ROM including more than 75 maps of the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq range and 150 pages of text, photographs and maps showing seasonal caribou ranges.

2000 The BQCMB was approved as a registered charity by Canada Customs and Revenue Agency in March 2000. Having charitable status facilitates private-sector fundraising to support projects such as caribou monitoring.

2003 Longtime BQCMB Secretary-Treasurer Gunther Abrahamson retired from the Board after 20 years. Members appointed Ross Thompson, former Manitoba government representative, vice-chair, and chair, to take over as Secretary Treasurer.



Gunther Abrahamson and Ross Thompson

2004 The BQCMB released a position paper making five key recommendations to governments and regulatory agencies, among them long-term legislated protection for the herds’ traditional calving grounds and post-calving areas. World Wildlife Fund Canada (WWF-Canada) contributed \$60,000 to the project. “To me, the position paper was a landmark piece of work,” said Monte Hummel, WWF-Canada president emeritus.



A plain language version of the BQCMB’s 2004 position paper was released in English, Dene and Inuktitut.

2006 The BQCMB’s 2005-2012 Management Plan identified additional satellite collars on the Beverly herd, calving ground surveys for both herds in 2007, fall and spring composition surveys for both herds, collection of harvest data, and community projects as priorities for the year.



BQCMB members Thomas Elytook of Baker Lake, Dennis Larocque of Camsell Portage and alternate Joe Marten of Fond du Lac, all communities that harvest Beverly caribou, listen to discussions about a possible survey.

2007 BQCMB member Earl Evans of Fort Smith, NWT made a presentation at the historic 2007 Caribou Summit, held in Inuvik, NWT amid declining NWT caribou populations. Delegates' top recommendation was to protect caribou calving grounds. BQCMB members Tim Trottier and Joe Marten also attended as part of the Saskatchewan delegation.

BQCMB reviewed the effectiveness of federal 30 year old Caribou Protection Measures, suggesting that they should be assessed to ensure they protect caribou now and in the future, not just if they succeeded in doing what they were designed to do 30 years earlier.



L to R: Tim Trottier, Thomas Elytook, Dennis Larocque, Earl Evans, Carl McLean and Florence Catholique examine maps tracking land use activity on the caribou ranges at the BQCMB's November 2007 meeting.

2008 The BQCMB contracted Intergroup Consultants to estimate the annual value of the caribou harvest. The resulting report stated the value to be \$20 million dollars.

A June survey of the Qamanirjuaq calving grounds showed the herd numbering at around 345,000 animals, a third smaller than in 1994. Although it had been declining since 1994, the herd was still larger than in the past.

2009 A June survey of the Beverly calving ground found fewer than half the number of breeding cows counted in 2008 during a similar calving ground survey, said BQCMB biologist Leslie Wakelyn, a member of the survey team that spent nine days flying over and around the traditional Beverly calving ground.



L to R: Alicia Kelly and Judy Williams (GNWT), Leslie Wakelyn (BQCMB), and pilot Perry Linton during a fuel stop on the tundra between Beverly Lake and the Queen Maud Gulf.

2010 From February 23 to 25, 2010 the BQCMB hosted a Caribou Workshop in Saskatoon, SK. The Workshop was held to find ways to help the ailing Beverly caribou herd to rebuild, and to try to stop the Qamanirjuaq population from going through a major decline as well. More than 75 elders, hunters and others from Saskatchewan, the Northwest Territories, Manitoba, Nunavut, Alberta, Yukon, British Columbia and Ontario came to the Caribou Workshop because of their concern for caribou.



BQCMB Chair Albert Thorassie (l) and Albert Boucher of Lutsel K'e, NWT conducts opening prayers at the 2010 Caribou Workshop.

2011 The BQCMB submitted comments on the draft scope and EIS guidelines, and the review process for AREVA's proposed Kiggavik uranium mine and mill project near Baker Lake, NU.

2012 The BQCMB received a 4th 10-year mandate from the governments of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Nunavut, the Northwest Territories, and Canada. The new Management Agreement increased the 15,000/year contribution from its signatories to \$25,000 year, its first increase since 1982.

Earl Evans, Fort Smith NWT, became chair of the BQCMB, taking over from previous Chair Albert Thorassie.



Earl Evans

“Well, it’s about time—the Board’s been in existence since 1982.”

Albert Thorassie, BQCMB member, Tadoule Lake, MB (upon hearing the BQCMB had been selected for a Manitoba Hydro “Spirit of the Earth” award

BQCMB through the years

2013 Jerome Denechezhe, a founding member of the BQCMB and chair on two separate occasions (1998-1999 and 2005-2008) passed away.

2014 The BQCMB submitted extensive comments to the Nunavut Planning Commission (NPC) on the Draft Nunavut Land Use Plan. The Board's position is that no development should be permitted in caribou calving and post-calving areas.



2015 BQCMB Chair Earl Evans presented the BQCMB's comments and recommendations at the long-awaited final hearing for the Kiggavik Project. The BQCMB was one of 15 registered intervenors.

2016 The BQCMB released the results of its first vulnerability assessment of the Qamanirjaq herd, rating the herd's vulnerability level at "medium-high" risk of continued decline.

The minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs reviewed the Nunavut Impact Review Board's final report on the proposed Kiggavik uranium mine and agreed with the BQCMB: "the project should not proceed at this time."

2017 Thanks to generous funding from WWF-Canada, the BQCMB launched the "You Can Make a Difference - Caribou for the Future" campaign aimed at strengthening support for caribou conservation. The campaign included videos, posters and fact sheets on three themes: respectful harvest, the importance of harvest reporting, and cumulative effects.



2018 The BQCMB launched the Kivalliq Harvest Reporting Project, modeled after the successful Athabasca Denesųliné Harvest Reporting Project in Saskatchewan. With funding provided by the Nunavut General Monitoring Program, BQCMB staff met with Hunters and Trappers Organizations in Arviat, Baker Lake, Rankin Inlet and Whale Cove to talk about the project.

2019 The BQCMB determines the Beverly herd to be at high risk of continued decline, based on the results of its vulnerability assessment of the herd in November 2017.

The BQCMB held its fall meeting in Arviat, NU. It was the first meeting in Nunavut in 15 years, and the first meeting in Arviat since 1999.



L to R: BQCMB member August Enzoe, Nick Arnaaljuak, and Chair Earl Evans in Arviat, NU.

A "Who is the BQCMB" video was produced to highlight the Board's work over the past decade and encourage governments to agree to a fifth mandate.

2020 For the first time in its 38 year history, the BQCMB cancelled its spring meeting due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The meeting had been scheduled to take place in Churchill, Manitoba.

Tina Giroux-Robillard was hired to lead development of the Beverly and Qamanirjaq Caribou Management Agreement which expired on March 31, 2022. Following this she took over as Executive Director from Ross Thompson, who retired from a long career with the BQCMB in early 2022.



Tina Giroux-Robillard

Longtime BQCMB members Tim Trottier, Government of Saskatchewan, and Daryll Hedman, Government of Manitoba, retired from the Board. Both Trottier and Hedman were serving the board as Vice-Chairs when they retired.



Tim Trottier



Daryll Hedman

2021 The BQCMB held its 89th meeting virtually due to COVID-19 restrictions.

The BQCMB recommended that the Government of Nunavut Department of Environment (GN-DOE) conduct a Qamanirjuaq population survey in June 2022 and a Beverly population survey in June 2023.

The Board also passed a motion to support designating barren-ground caribou as a Threatened Species in Canada.

2022 Former BQCMB Executive Director Ross Thompson and former Vice-Chair Tim Trottier are named Honourary Board members, joining Gunther Abrahamson and Daryll Hedman.



Ross Thompson

The first Qamanirjuaq survey in five years was deemed a success by GN-DOE officials. Mitch Campbell, Kivalliq Regional Wildlife Biologist and BQCMB member, said “I think it’s the quickest and most cost-effective survey we’ve ever done.”



L to R: John Ringrose, Mitch Campbell (GN-DOE), David Lee (Nunavut Tunngavik), John Boulanger (Integrated Ecological Research), and Vicki Trim (Government of Manitoba)

After the 2012-2022 Beverly and Qamanirjuaq Caribou Management Agreement expired on April 1, 2022, the five government signatories agreed to a one-year extension while negotiations continued on the terms of the next Agreement.

Executive Director Tina Giroux-Robillard and Chair Earl Evans made presentations in Rankin Inlet, NU and Thompson, MB on behalf of the BQCMB at the final public hearings for the 2021 Draft Nunavut Land Use Plan.



Dene drummers open the NPC’s NLUP public hearing in Thompson, MB in September 2022.

Former BQCMB member and Chair Albert Thorassie, from Sayisi Dene First Nation in Tadoule Lake, MB, passed away. He was a member of the BQCMB for over three decades.

2023 The BQCMB created a video summarizing some of the passionate arguments from participants in the final public hearings for the NLUP. Another video followed, called “We are the Caribou”, further highlighting caribou peoples’ comments made at the hearings about the importance of caribou for their cultural and spiritual identities. Both videos can be found on the BQCMB’s YouTube channel.

A population survey of the Beverly herd was completed in June.

This year marked the 30th anniversary of the Nunavut Land Claims Act, which was passed in 1993.

The BQCMB was given its 5th 10-year mandate. The long-awaited Beverly and Qamanirjuaq Barren Ground Caribou Management Agreement 2023-2032 was signed by the governments of Nunavut, the Northwest Territories, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Canada, and included a much-needed increase to the BQCMB’s annual funding.

It was also the first Agreement in BQCMB history to include Indigenous governments as signatories, including the Athabasca Denesuliné, Ghotelnene K’odtineh Dene, Inuit of the Kivalliq Region, Lutsel K’e Dene First Nation, Northwest Territory Métis Nation, and Ticho Government.

After 41 years, a true “Nation to Nation” relationship has been established within the BQCMB. •

This timeline is only a small snapshot of the board’s many accomplishments and the extraordinary people who have contributed to the BQCMB over the years. The work continues, and we look forward to celebrating our 50th anniversary in 2032.

BQCMB: Looking Ahead

BQCMB Executive Director Tina Giroux-Robillard has only been in the job for a little over two years, but she has plenty to smile about: under her guidance, and with strong board direction, the BQCMB can boast both a new and improved 10-year Management Agreement AND a new 10-year Barren-Ground Caribou Management Plan. But it wasn't an easy, or a quick, process. "We actually started working on the current 10-year Management Agreement in late 2020," explains Giroux-Robillard. "It quickly became clear that the Board had operated in much the same way for 40 years and some changes were needed."

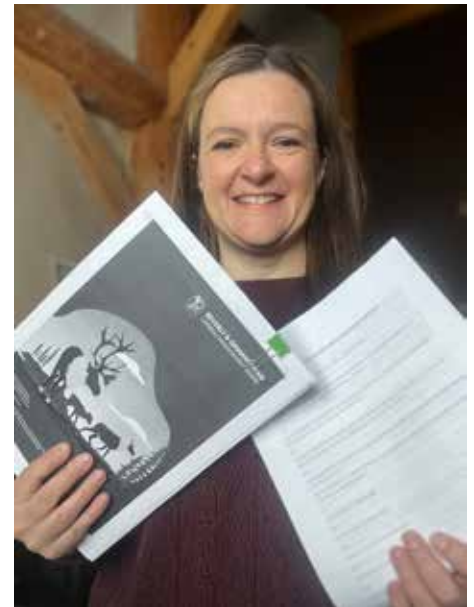
Although the negotiations took longer than hoped, April 1, 2024 marked a new era for the BQCMB. Its new Barren Ground Caribou Management Agreement includes a much needed boost in operating funding, and includes Indigenous governments and organizations as signatories for the first time in the board's history.

Asked how it feels to have finalized the "new and improved" Management Agreement, Giroux-Robillard says "Indigenous peoples have been stewards of caribou for millennia. This is an important relationship that we value and learn from at the BQCMB. Knowing we helped secure that relationship for

"Indigenous peoples have been stewards of caribou for millennia... knowing we helped secure that relationship for another 10 years is a testament to this board and their dedication. It makes my heart happy."

another 10 years is a testament to this board and their dedication. It makes my heart happy."

Long before the final signature was in place in the new Management Agreement the BQCMB was also working toward a new 10-year Caribou Management Plan. The new Plan—titled "Caribou is Life"—was borne out of working with board members, Indigenous peoples across the ranges of the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq herds, and Elders, to inform and strengthen the plan and support co-management of the herds.



BQCMB Executive Director Tina Giroux-Robillard holds the final draft of the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq Caribou Management Plan and signed Management Agreement.

The BQCMB is grateful for the time community organizations, individuals and board members devoted to this process. The resulting BQCMB Management Plan truly highlights the shared responsibility we all have toward these herds, and the need for reconciliation between each other, the land, and the caribou.

The Management Plan can be downloaded at <https://arctic-caribou.com/caribou-is-life/>.



If we hope to safeguard the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq barren-ground caribou herds for present and future generations, a collective approach is needed. That is why the BQCMB's 2023-2032 Caribou Management Plan includes actions for not only the BQCMB to take, but for individuals, community organizations, governments, industry, tourism operators and others whose actions or decisions may affect the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq caribou herds or their habitats.

Caribou Connect is a tool the BQCMB has created as part of the BQCMB's new Caribou Management Plan. By using Caribou Connect to share actions related to the Management Plan, we can track the progress of the Plan, share best-practices, encourage further collaboration, and work together for the benefit of the herds and the communities that rely on them.

Visit Caribou Connect at <https://arctic-caribou.com/caribou-connect/> today and see what it's all about. Maybe YOU have a project to share!

BQCMB Member Spotlight: Manitoba Dene



Two First Nations currently represent northern Manitoba on the BQCMB: Sayisi Dene First Nation and Northlands Denesuline First Nation.

Traditionally known as Etthen-eldeli-dene (caribou eaters), the Manitoba Dene's lifestyle was attuned to the life patterns of caribou. Before the arrival of the fur trade, these Dene were nomadic, following the caribou north to their summering grounds on the tundra, and returning each year to spend winter in the forest. Some families stayed south of the treeline all year, while others spent most of the summer on the "barren grounds." Although other sources of food were sometimes available when caribou were not, caribou always provided essential materials for clothing and shelter. Tents, for example, consisted of a framework of poles bound together at the top and covered with as many as 70 caribou skins.

The nomadic lifestyle of the Dene ended in the 1940s and 1950s, when people began living in permanent settlements.

Tadoule Lake, Manitoba

Sayisi Dene First Nation, Tadoule Lake, Manitoba (Treaty 5), is a fly-in community located 250 km west of Churchill. About 325 residents live in Tadoule Lake. The Sayisi Dene people, formerly known as the Duck Lake Band, were forcibly relocated to the outskirts of Churchill in 1956. In 1969, they moved to Tadoule Lake to return to their barren-ground caribou hunting lifestyle. Today, hunting caribou remains an important part of the Sayisi Dene's culture and livelihood and passing this lifestyle on to the community's youth members is a priority.

Northern Manitoba has been well represented on the BQCMB by members from Tadoule Lake, including former Chair Albert Thorassie, former member Geoff Bussidor, and most recent member Ernie Bussidor, who passed away earlier this year (see "People and Caribou" on p. 2). Ernie often referred to Tadoule Lake as "our utopia".

Lac Brochet, Manitoba

The Northlands Denesuline First Nation (Treaty 10) is located at Lac Brochet, in the northwestern part of Manitoba. Lac Brochet was established in the early 20th century as a trading post for the Hudson's Bay Company. It was incorporated as a village in 1963, and today this Dene community is home to just over 700 people. Like Tadoule Lake, Lac Brochet is a fly-in community, accessible by road only in winter. It is located about 240 km northwest of Thompson. The village of Lac Brochet (which means Dahlu T'ua, or "Jackfish Lake" in Dene) is the most northern First Nation community in Manitoba.

Lac Brochet has long been a part of the BQCMB; former Chief Jerome Denechezhe was a founding member and twice served as chair. Elder Napoleon Denechezhe (pictured at left) has represented Lac Brochet and northern Manitoba on the BQCMB since 2014. His community is focused on teaching the youth traditional ways of life, like how to respectfully hunt caribou, because, as Nap says, "It's our livelihood." •



Pictured top to bottom:

- *Drying caribou meat in Tadoule Lake*
- *A youth enjoying an on the land camp in Lac Brochet*
- *Caribou hide drying in the sun*
- *Nap Denechezhe, BQCMB member from Northlands Denesuline First Nation*

Youth and Caribou

Youth Representatives at BQCMB Meeting

During the BQCMB's meeting November 21-23 in Churchill, MB we were fortunate to have youth representatives Shakayla Antsanen from Northlands Denesuline First Nation, Lac Brochet, MB (below left), and Été Zoe (below right) from Thcho Government, Behchoko, NWT joining us.

Shakayla gave a presentation on the Seal River Watershed, a proposed Indigenous Protected and Conserved Area (IPCA). She explained it is an area where the lands and waters are protected by the Dene and Cree people who live there.

Shakayla said "I'm very proud of myself with the presentation I did for Seal River Watershed, although it was nerve wracking for my first time! I think this meeting was very important for the caribou, and for us and other communities to know what's happening and what's going on with the caribou."

Été gave a presentation about her participation in Thcho's Boots on the Ground program. Été's chaperone, Stephanie Behrens, noted "we call her "eagle eyes" because she can spot a caribou a mile away. It's been a joy having Été work with us, she's got such a bubbly personality, and she brings a lot to our organization. Having these youth be involved and seeing them grow into this field and carrying on the work we're trying to do is very important."

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Stephanie Behrens, BQCMB member
Thcho Government

Elder Napoleon Denechezhe, who accompanied Shakayla to Churchill, was also impressed with the youth representatives. "It's really touching to see someone from your own community. It's amazing how the youth can talk like that in front of people – I'm proud of them."

Elder-Youth Caribou Hide Workshop

Churchill, Manitoba was the setting for a Caribou Hide Workshop on February 8 and 9, 2024 funded by the BQCMB's "On The Land Camp" program. Workshop coordinator Heather Spence-Botelho, along with partners the Sub-Arctic Friendship Group, Churchill Womens' Program, and Warrior Caregiver brought together youth and Elders to learn and work on caribou hides.

"Gathering together in an environment set up with caribou hides, poles, frame, tools, etc. was a great way to gather and learn different ways (Dene/Inuit/Cree) to tan caribou hides," said Spence-Botelho, a Cree/Dene Knowledge Weaver.

She led the workshop along with Florence Hamilton, a Dene Knowledge Keeper, hunter, and trapper who has a lot of hide work experience, "We scraped two caribou hides and the students all had an opportunity to work on the hides and take in many teachings."



Thank you so much for the wonderful sponsorship!”

Heather Spence-Botelho, Cree/Dene
Knowledge Weaver

The experience was beneficial to the students, according to Spence-Botelho. “There is traditional knowledge in our community, and so much interest from local men and women to take part and help keep these teachings around.”

Spence-Botelho, who learned about the availability of BQCMB’s On the Land Camp funding while attending the BQCMB’s November 2023 meeting in Churchill as an observer, was grateful to be selected after applying for a grant of \$2,500 to hold the workshop. “This was the very first time having this beautiful teaching in the school/community, and this is all due to your support and funding.

Thank you so much for the wonderful sponsorship!”•



A new look for the BQCMB



BEVERLY & QAMANIRJUAQ
CARIBOU MANAGEMENT BOARD

“Our hands can destroy this cow and calf and the habitat they need. But our hands can also be supportive, helpful, and protective.”

Jan Adamczewski, BQCMB
Vice-Chair, Operations

With the signing of an historic new Barren Ground Caribou Management Agreement earlier this year, and a 10-year Caribou Management Plan in the works, the BQCMB decided it was also timely to update its logo.

The new logo’s image of a cow and her calf being held in a human hand signifies the strong connection between people and caribou. It also represents the great responsibility we collectively have to conserve the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq barren-ground caribou herds for future generations.

There is also a personal connection between the BQCMB and its new logo. The image was inspired by a pencil drawing by Jan Adamczewski, the BQCMB’s Vice-Chair, Operations and board member representing the Government of Northwest Territories.

Jan explains the intent behind the drawing. “To some extent it is meant to be in the eye of the beholder. My hope was that anyone looking at this drawing would see the caribou cow asking a question: what are your intentions toward me and my little calf? The large human hand is by design, because our influence now on the landscape, on caribou and many other things, is very powerful. Our hands can destroy this cow and her calf and the habitat they need. But – our hands can also be supportive, helpful, and protective.”

We are grateful to Jan for allowing us to interpret his drawing in logo form so this message can be shared widely. •

Heard around the BQCMB Board Table

Quotes from BQCMB Meeting #95, Churchill, Manitoba

“The winter road is the only real threat to our caribou; there’s been incidences where inexperienced non-native hunters come up. With inflation there is a higher demand for country food.”

Ernie Bussidor, Sayisi Dene First Nation, Tadoule Lake, MB

“We don’t shoot everything in sight. We don’t kill for the sake of killing, we just kill what we need.”

Dennis Larocque, Camsell Portage, SK

“I would hate to see the Beverly herd go the same way as the Bathurst herd. We have our harvest monitoring program to help stop that from happening.”

Stephanie Behrens, Thcho Government, NWT

“When you lose elders, you lose a thread to the community, you lose a lifeline to get information to the young people.”

Earl Evans, Chair, NWT Métis Nation

“These are the places these animals give birth, so they should be left alone. It’s a little bit of common sense.”

Jan Adamczewski, Government of The Northwest Territories

Pictured clockwise from top left: Mayor of Churchill Manitoba, Mike Spence, and Chair Earl Evans

Napoleon Denechezhe and Ernie Bussidor during the opening prayer

Dennis Larocque

BQCMB staff Lynne Bereza, Leslie Wakelyn, Tina Giroux-Robillard, and Gilly McNaughton

Photo credits: Lynne Bereza



Publisher’s Box

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