

Photo courtesy Bruno Croft



Around the Range

Monitoring Update

Regional Biologist **Mitch Campbell**, who represents the Government of Nunavut (GN) on the BQCMB, recently presented the Board with findings of an aerial reconnaissance survey that took place on the Beverly and Ahlak calving grounds in June 2013. The crew surveyed the same range as in 2011, using the double observer method—two experienced observers along with two less experienced observers. This creates an opportunity to train people in the field, something needed to involve more and more people in the surveys.

The peak calving period for Beverly caribou occurred in mid-June. The survey found about 11% more caribou counted on the calving ground in 2013. Campbell noted this simply means the herd is currently ‘holding its own.’

Predators were also observed, with the survey counting 22 wolves (the highest of any reconnaissance survey of the Beverly calving ground) and 5 grizzly bears. Campbell noted the proportion of calves killed by carnivores increased to 30% since the last survey. Other causes could be weather or abandonment of calves by cows.

Campbell noted that the use of collars to track caribou is not ideal, but the value of the information obtained from collaring programs is believed to outweigh the stresses on the animals. “Use of collaring is a tough decision for all the hunter and trapper organizations (HTOs)”, said Campbell. “They must be respectful and careful, but it is the best current way to obtain very valuable information.”

Threats to Qamanirjuaq Herd Continue

Campbell believes that the single biggest threat to caribou populations continues to be mineral exploration and development. There is an overall fear that the way exploration and development permits are being issued will lead to effects on caribou that can’t be controlled or mitigated. The Board agreed there is an urgent need for a 2014 population survey of the Qamanirjuaq herd.

Community members have also expressed concerns about the need for sound information about numbers of hunters and caribou

harvest. The BQCMB decided promoting more community reports would also be helpful. It was agreed to develop a template and initiate a program for standard community reports of hunting and observations.

Caribou...on Social Media?

A growing problem on the caribou range is the commercial sale of caribou meat within Nunavut using social media such as Facebook. While the caribou harvest is typically a very respectful, cultural harvest, there are situations where a few people are selling caribou for profit.

Adding to the problem is the willingness of air carriers to ship country food for free or at subsidized rates, an issue first noticed two years ago. The BQCMB believes air carriers should be encouraged to work with HTOs and the government so when populations are in trouble, they don’t give reduced freight rates for shipping caribou.

Chair **Earl Evans** pointed out, “people who go out and bring back clean caribou, with no waste, and help feed their communities are not the problem.” The Board’s target is not people who are feeding families, but those who are hunting caribou specifically with the goal of selling it for profit, which has the potential to make the harvest completely unsustainable.

The Board decided to contact Nunavut’s regional wildlife organizations to ask for their advice on contacting air carriers and to alert them to concerns about the freight subsidies. Keeping up communications with government agencies and working to keep local HTOs informed will be important as well.

North American Caribou workshop

The 15th North American Caribou Workshop will be held in Whitehorse, Yukon, from May 12-16, 2014 at the Kwanlin Dün Cultural Center on the banks of the Yukon River. Several BQCMB members will be attending the Workshop.

BQCMB Meetings

Since our last issue (Fall, 2013) the BQCMB met in Winnipeg, Manitoba for its fall, 2013 meeting. The next meeting will take place from May 6-8 in Regina, Saskatchewan. •



People and Caribou

Although he officially completed his term as a BQCMB member in March 2013, **Archie Catholique** attended both spring and fall 2013 Board meetings as a member of the Management Plan committee. He shared a few parting comments at the November meeting. "It's been a learning experience. I wasn't sure what this whole Board was about but in time I came to understand its mandate and the importance of the caribou, not only for First Nations people but other users. I have a lot of respect for the people that came before and for the people around this table."

Chair **Earl Evans** thanked Archie for his years representing the Lutsel K'e Dene First Nation (LKDFN). "Every one of you from the small communities are the voice out on the land. You are right there and know what's going on...all this in-



Leah Muckpah



Warren Bernauer

formation you bring to the table is for the protection of the caribou. You bring that experience and we appreciate that."

Sam Boucher is the new rep from LKDFN, officially appointed by the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) in November 2013.

A surprise guest to the November, 2013 BQCMB meeting was **Chief Leo Dettanikkeaze** of Northlands First Nation, who asked for a moment of silence for former Director **Jerome Denechezhe**.

"There is a huge loss of experience, advocating for communities and caribou, teaching of youth, etc." said the Chief. "We all must keep up the tradition of those before us." Joe Dantouze, soon to be confirmed as the BQCMB representative from the Northlands First Nation, was also in attendance and added words about Jerome's land claim efforts, chairing the BQCMB and his reputation as the longest standing member of the Board.

The BQCMB relies on the help of many people, and one of those who has helped lately is **Warren Bernauer**, a PhD Candidate at York University, Department of Geography. Warren has been assisting the Baker Lake Hunter and Trapper Organization (HTO) for several years, and assisted Board Biologist **Leslie Wakelyn** with workshops held with the Baker Lake and Arviat HTOs on the Kiggavik review.

Leah Muckpah has also been a big help to the BQCMB as of late. Leah has been attending BQCMB meetings as regional liaison for the Kivalliq Wildlife Board (KWB). She has also worked as the Arviat HTO manager for some time and is assisting the HTO, the Kivalliq Wildlife Board (KWB) and the BQCMB on various issues, including getting the word out about calls by many Nunavut communities and organizations for protection of calving and post-calving areas.

A familiar face returned to the BQCMB table when **Jimmy Laban** of Wollaston Lake, SK attended the November, 2013 board meeting in Winnipeg. Laban previously served as Board Chair. "I see people are still working hard," he said. •

"We all must keep up the tradition of those before us."

Below: Chief Leo Dettanikkeaze, Northlands First Nation (right) with Northlands councillor Joe Dantouze at the November, 2013 BQCMB meeting.



Photo courtesy Lynne Bereza

"Draft Nunavut Land Use Plan" cont'd from page 1

Chair Evans urged NPC to do the right thing and ensure that long-term protection for caribou calving and post-calving areas is provided in the Nunavut Land Use Plan.

NPC staff continue to consult with Nunavut communities as well as Denesuline communities of northern Saskatchewan and northern Manitoba. The NPC intended to meet in Thompson, Manitoba in late April 2014 to gain input from northern Manitoba First Nations, but the meeting did not take place. The NPC will hold a public hearing in late November 2014 on a revised Draft Plan that reflects its two years of consultations. Hearing input will be used to develop the final Nunavut Land Use Plan, which is expected to be submitted for approval in March 2015.

The Draft Plan and information about the Nunavut land use planning process, including comments submitted by all parties (see "Consultation Record") are available at www.nunavut.ca. The BQCMB's submission to NPC is available at www.arctic-caribou.com/publications_reports.html.

Kiggavik Review:

Search for Common Ground

As the environmental review of the \$1.5 billion Kiggavik uranium project proposed by AREVA Resources Canada continues, frustration has grown on both sides of the issue. Because the project marks the first time uranium would be mined in Nunavut, the ability to predict the likely effects of the large mine and its roads on caribou and other resources people depend on is hampered by lack of experience by all parties. Both AREVA and the BQCMB are first-time participants in a Nunavut Impact Review Board (NIRB) technical review. But that is not the only thing affecting the review. Communication is key, and despite the extensive consultation process conducted by Areva, there remains further communication and follow-up to be done to bring the parties closer together.

The BQCMB has been an active participant in the NIRB's review of AREVA's proposed Kiggavik Project since it began in 2010 and in the technical review of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) since it began in February 2013. In April 2013, the BQCMB submitted technical comments to NIRB on the Draft EIS concerning 12 issues relevant to caribou and caribou harvesters. By July 2013 most of these issues were still outstanding and the NIRB advised AREVA to discuss them with the BQCMB.

Mounting frustration

Fast-forward to November 2013, when AREVA representatives attended the BQCMB meeting in Winnipeg to discuss the unresolved issues. It was clear that AREVA hoped that by the end of the day, some common ground would be reached for their work on the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS). However, these were unrealistic expectations, given the presence of many brand new BQCMB members who were unfamiliar with many issues facing the Board, including the Kiggavik process.

Numerous concerns and information needs were raised around the table, including past experiences from northern Saskatchewan mines. Many of the concerns centred around the effects of the uranium on land and water. What about downstream effects? Are there toxic chemicals used in processing? How dangerous are the chemicals? There were also questions around where the uranium would be mar-

keted, compensation, mine abandonment once ores are depleted, and the safety of transporting processed uranium. The importance of caribou as a livelihood and the effects of the proposed project on caribou were high on the list of concerns.

AREVA expertly answered safety questions and was quick to stress that processed uranium is stable and spills will be relatively easy to clean up. Dangerous agents (sulphuric acid) will be made and managed on site to avoid the need for transporting these substances. Mine sites are now designed so that water runoff is collected and treated, rather than released into the environment.

However, as the discussion continued, it became clear that both sides were growing more frustrated with the process. AREVA acknowledged they were having a hard time moving ahead without fully understanding the concerns of the Board. However, the BQCMB had requested a separate meeting to discuss the technical issues still outstanding and received no response. Time issues work both ways. Until AREVA wrote its draft EIS the Board didn't know the full proposal and potential impacts, so didn't know what the main concerns related to effects on caribou and caribou harvesters might be.

At the end of the day, nothing was resolved and a room full of hungry and frustrated people left dissatisfied. AREVA and the BQCMB executive committed to meeting in the Spring of 2014 to try to make progress on resolving BQCMB issues.

Moving forward

After what was learned during the exchange between AREVA and the BQCMB at the November Board meeting, both parties resolved to revisit outstanding technical issues through a detailed working session. Chair **Earl Evans**, Vice-Chair **Tim Trottier**, Executive Director **Ross Thompson** and contract biologists **Leslie Wakelyn** and **Anne Gunn** met with several AREVA staff on April 3-4th in Saskatoon.

The BQCMB's objective was to clarify:

- what issues are outstanding and why
- what work must be done to address the outstanding issues in the Final EIS
- why this additional work is necessary.

AREVA's objectives were to discuss each of the outstanding BQCMB issues to better understand concerns, to provide information, and to obtain community information for consideration in the assessment and development of proposed mitigation measures to be described in their Final EIS.

Fortunately, good progress was made during the meeting. The BQCMB was able to provide additional information and context to improve AREVA's understanding of BQCMB concerns, as well as suggest clearer direction for potential action by AREVA to address the outstanding issues.

The BQCMB is drafting a meeting summary to be finalized during the May 2014 Board meeting, after which the Board will submit a letter to the NIRB.

BQCMB Executive Director Ross Thompson, who co-chaired the meeting with **Diane Martens** from AREVA, was positive following the meeting. "AREVA seemed to accept that they shouldn't downplay the Kiggavik project's potential effects and that where there are uncertainties they should say so, rather than imply that information minimizes impacts," he said. "AREVA recognizes that we still will bring some issues forward in the BQCMB's review of the final EIS. We will put forward our issues sensitively, but assertively."

"At the end of the day, everybody agreed the meeting was most appreciated and helpful."

"We will put forward our issues sensitively, but assertively."

BQCMB Executive Director Ross Thompson

Kiggavik Review:

HTO Workshops

Community input and information-sharing activities help the BQCMB to provide community perspectives in its submissions to the NIRB on the proposed Kiggavik uranium mine and mill complex.

To gather some of this valuable input, the BQCMB recently held two workshops—the first in Baker Lake on March 18, and the second in Arviat on March 19.

Leslie Wakelyn, BQCMB contract biologist, organized the workshops with the assistance of York University graduate student **Warren Bernauer** (who has been working with the Baker Lake HTO for some time.)

The BQCMB shared its concerns about challenges facing caribou and their cumulative effects, including the effects of increasing exploration and development across the caribou ranges. Concerns about the potential effects of the Kiggavik project and key issues for caribou and caribou harvesters were also highlighted, along with the BQCMB's views about AREVA's plans to minimize project effects and cumulative effects.

For each workshop, HTO board members plus several other additional invited participants (all community members, most active hunters or elders) took part.

Meeting Participants

The Baker Lake workshop included eight HTO board members, including Chairman **Hugh Ikoe**, Vice-chair and Secretary-Treasurer. Three other Baker Lake hunters, including former BQCMB member **Thomas Elytook** and HTO Manager (and hunter) **Joan Scottie** also took part. **Paula Hughson**, an Inuk from Baker Lake who recently wrote a graduate thesis on the traditional knowledge and oral history of the Kiggavik area, also attended.

The Arviat meeting included seven HTO board members, including Chairman and BQCMB member **Alex Ishalook**, Vice-chair and Secretary-Treasurer, and former BQCMB member **Laurent Angalik**. Three other Arviat hunters and HTO Manager **Leah Muckpah** also participated. •

Photos courtesy Leslie Wakelyn



Pictured: Group photo of some of the Baker Lake HTO board and guests.



Pictured, left to right: Arviat HTO meeting participants Gordy Kidlapik (board member), Alex Ishalook (Chairman), and Leah Muckpah (HTO manager).

The Baker Lake workshop also included a presentation by the HTO Board of conditions it had developed previously and later submitted to the NIRB as input to the Kiggavik review. These conditions, under which they “will **consider** supporting Areva’s Kiggavik proposal” to the NIRB, are as follows:

1. Mining and exploration is banned in caribou calving and post-calving grounds under the new Nunavut Land Use Plan.
2. Mining and exploration is banned in areas of cultural importance to the Inuit of Baker Lake, to be selected by the HTO.
3. The Government of Nunavut finalizes an implementation plan for the caribou strategy framework that satisfies the Baker Lake HTO.
4. Areva must commit to the following conditions:
 - a. Contract the HTO to monitor caribou and other wildlife along all roads and near the mine site. Areva will provide funding to the HTO to operate an independent wildlife monitoring program.
 - b. Provide funding to the HTO to hire additional staff, to ensure the HTO has the capacity to deal with monitoring reports, future exploration/mining proposals, etc.
 - c. Cease operations when caribou migrate through the area (including mine operations, access roads and air traffic).
 - d. Suppress dust on all roads.
 - e. Provide funding to Government of Nunavut Department of Environment to undertake aerial population counts and surveys of the calving grounds of all affected caribou herds during the mine's operation.
5. Baker Lake HTO must be involved in mine inspections. Inspections must be random, without prior notice given to Areva.

The complete motion with additional explanation is available at: [ftp.nirb.ca/02-reviews/active reviews/09mn003-areva kiggavik/2-review/02-general correspondence/](ftp.nirb.ca/02-reviews/active%20reviews/09mn003-areva%20kiggavik/2-review/02-general%20correspondence/)

Community Profile:

The Caribou Eaters



Albert Thorassie

Editor's note: This article is the first of a new series in Caribou News in Brief. Each issue, we will profile a different community located from around the caribou range.

Tadoule Lake is a community in northern Manitoba reachable by plane, snowmobile, and dogsled. Pronounced "Ta-doo-lee", derived from the Dene ts'euoli, translated as "floating ashes", the Tadoule Lake settlement is one of the most northern and isolated communities in Manitoba. The nearest

rail link is in Churchill, 250 miles to the east. The settlement is located by the Seal River, about 200 km south of the treeline, and centered within the winter range of the Qamanirjuaq caribou herd.

The people of Tadoule Lake are Chipewyan and are traditionally referred to as the Sayisi Dene, or the "People of the East." Originally known as the Duck Lake Band, anthropologists refer to the Dene people as the Edthen-eldili-dene ("Caribou eaters"). Their original homeland stretched west from the shores of Hudson Bay and occupied a vast territory that straddles what are now northern Manitoba, the southern Kivalliq region of Nunavut and southwest corner of the Northwest Territories.

The registered population of the Sayisi Dene First Nation as of March, 2014 was 789 with 317 members living on reserve and 472 members living off reserve. It is governed by Chief Peter Thorassie Jr. and three councillors.

Although the community is small, the pull is strong for the Dene people who grew up as part of the Tadoule settlement. Just ask Albert Thorassie, who has represented the communities of northern Manitoba on the BQCMB since 1991. After growing up in Churchill (see sidebar) he moved to Winnipeg in 1969 and later to Brandon to attend college. A summer visit to Tadoule to see his Mother in 1984 became permanent. "I didn't want to leave," he

In 1956, due to the influence of European trade, the entire Duck Lake community was relocated to the outskirts of Churchill, Manitoba. The transition to the urban environment was very difficult, and the Sayisi Dene spent over a decade living in tents and shanties on the outskirts of the city. Sadly, it is believed that as many as one third of the Sayisi Dene people lost their lives as a direct result of the relocation to Churchill and the abuse and poverty they suffered.

In 1969, some Duck Lake Dene began discussing the possibility of again becoming self-reliant and returning to the ancestral caribou-hunting and gathering lifestyle. In 1971, about 75 members of the Band returned on their own to Duck Lake. Later, they moved further north to set up a new community at Tadoule Lake, where they returned to their barren-ground caribou hunting life.

Today, the people of Tadoule Lake struggle to restore and maintain their traditional culture. Many of the elders with knowledge of the old ways have passed away and much of their knowledge has died with them. Although many young people are keen to observe a First Nations identity, there is often no basis in Sayisi traditions. Hopefully, in time, the Sayisi people will be able to build upon the foundations of their own traditions and values, and continue carrying them forward to future generations.

admits. At the time he could understand Dene, but couldn't speak it. "I sort of lost it for awhile. It was all here, and I understood it, but now I speak it, too," he says.

He was soon elected as a band councillor and served for 11 ½ years. Today, Thorassie is part of the Sayisi Dene who work at returning to their traditional winter hunting and trapping ways, by encouraging local youth to do the same. "We're trying to get the kids involved with traditional hunting and learning how to live like our ancestors did. We keep that up all the time," says Thorassie. "We are trying to work with these kids to try to do more than play games. You have to go out on the land, learn how to track, and live off the land like our ancestors did."

The hardest job, according to Thorassie, is trying to find people to coordinate community hunts. "We've been losing elders off and on and now the elders that we have left are very, very few that can tell us how they used to live."

Thankfully, community members like Thorassie step in and do their part, making sure the youth recognize the importance of traditional knowledge AND education. Thorassie has spear-headed youth projects about caribou and taken advantage of the BQCMB's 'On the Land' program that sponsors caribou hunts, poster contests and classroom studies across the range. He describes his reaction when youth hear about a caribou hunt: "They say 'can I come? can I come?' And I say 'do you go to school?'" I explain that it's not fair for them to come if a kid that goes to school everyday stays home."

That leadership is why Thorassie, and others like him, are considered young elders, who will likely remain in Tadoule for many years. "It's the lifestyle that I just don't want to throw away...it's my own backyard. And when people say 'I have nothing to eat,' I shake my head and say 'What's that? Caribou! Go and shoot it and clean it up and take it home.'"

"That's the stuff we want them to learn. We can't lose it."•

Sources:

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Photos courtesy Albert Thorassie



Community hunts and "On the Land" camps are some of the ways community members in Tadoule Lake are passing on traditional knowledge.

Meet the BQCMB Member:

Tim Trottier

Tim Trottier had a busy year in 1982. The then-29 year old was hired as a regional wildlife biologist for the Government of Saskatchewan (Northern region), and shortly after was appointed to represent his employer on the BQCMB. This makes him the Board's longest-serving member, which is "hard to believe" according to Trottier. "When I started with the board, I really felt young and inexperienced...I wasn't very anxious to speak out amongst the very experienced, knowledgeable people all around me. I spent my time listening at the beginning."

The Saskatchewan native was raised in a small community in the forest fringe country. Summer jobs spent on the caribou ranges of the Northwest Territories gave him his first taste of what would become a lifelong career. After spending time in Manitoba and Alberta, he accepted the job with the Government of Saskatchewan, feeling it was a "natural fit for what I was interested in." He now lives just outside of La Ronge, a community of about 7,000 located at the edge of the Precambrian Shield.

Anyone who has been involved in something for three decades must enjoy the experience. When asked what stands out about his time on the Board, it is clear that *how* it works is as important to Trottier as what it does. "I always liked the fact that the board tries to work equitably with the Aboriginal people. That always appealed to me—that we try to sit down in a neutral setting and talk about things."

The reality is, of course, this is not an easy thing to accomplish. "In my experience it's not traditionally how government operates," he notes. "I think the fascinating thing is that the board has been able to continue on in that fashion for 30 years. There is always pressure to alter the process...from the public, from industry, from government...to include a whole range of diverse stakeholders, the way a lot of other boards and committees operate." The ability

to resist this pressure, he says, speaks to the overall unity of the BQCMB.

Trottier also believes that the Board has grown and evolved over time to take on more and more responsibility, which is a major accomplishment. "Although it has remained an advisory board, it has also taken advantage of opportunities to play a much stronger support role for the jurisdictions it represents in terms of caribou management." A perfect example, says Trottier, is "being able to get additional outside funding while still maintaining its independence." He also feels the board is seen by the Aboriginal groups as a trustworthy entity. "I believe they see us as a group they can come to, because we are arm's length from government, and they can use us as their mouthpiece in a sense."

A continuous challenge, however, is to be able to keep that profile and uniqueness while maintaining the interest of governments in working with Aboriginal communities. Keeping governments engaged, especially in times of changing economies, means "there is always pressure to cut back on various things." Trottier also points out that with the caribou range being in the more remote parts of the country, there is a constant danger of being seen as 'out of sight, out of mind'. The Board has the ongoing challenge of ensuring that interest doesn't wane.

A true outdoorsman, Trottier enjoys many of the traditional pass-times of the north. An avid skier, he belongs to the provincial cross-country ski association. A licensed trapper and member of a provincial trapping organization, he enjoys trapping a variety of different fur bearers. He has also owned sled dogs for over 20 years, even competing in some long-distance events in the past.

These days, however, Trottier has little time for hobbies, as he and wife Bonnie are in a state of transition since losing their home in a fire last June. Thankfully their three children—a son, 25, and two

"I always liked the fact that the board tries to work equitably with the Aboriginal people. That always appealed to me—that we try to sit down in a neutral setting and talk about things."



Photo courtesy Lynne Bereza

daughters, 21 and 18, have all left the nest and no one was injured. Although this was a devastating blow, one bright spot during the otherwise difficult period was the birth of their first grandchild. "I turned 60 and became a grandpa," he chuckles.

Trottier's motto is simple: "I try to live by having a good work ethic, and being honest and open-minded. That's about it." He is also kind and treats others with respect, and as a result others have the greatest respect for him. To this day, Trottier continues to listen more than he speaks, but when he does speak, he commands the ear of everyone in the room. •

Did you Know?

The first month of a newborn caribou's life represents a critical stage in the caribou life cycle—the time when adult caribou are most sensitive to human disturbance and the likelihood of calf mortality is 50 per cent.

Source: Canadian Geographic

Youth and Caribou

Each year, the BQCMB channels funds to caribou-range community-based projects that ideally target school-age youth. This give kids a chance to gain new knowledge, learning from seasoned hunters, trappers and elders.

Athabasca Denesuline N   N   Land Corporation biologist **Tina Giroux** recently reported on the 4th Annual Youth & Elder Caribou Culture Camp, hosted by Hatchet Lake Denesuline First Nation. The camp took place from April 6-11, 2014.

This year, the camp was held at Cochrane River, SK. Fifteen youth between Grades 10-12 attended the camp from all three Athabasca Denesuline communities (Hatchet Lake, Fond du Lac, and Black Lake). Ten elders and nine hunters also participated.

Activities included a caribou hunt, meat preparation, survival skills training, target shooting, fish netting, trapping, and safe travelling on ice/rivers. •



Photos courtesy Tina Giroux

Pictured clockwise from top: 2014 Elder and Youth Caribou Culture Camp, Cochrane River, SK; A little Dene hunter in the making, main camp, Cochrane River, SK; Elder William Dzeylion holds a caribou head, charred by the fire; Youth take a break during the caribou hunt, Bently Lake, SK.



Publisher's Box

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Coming soon:

BQCMB Management Plan

The BQCMB Management Planning Committee is pleased to announce the 2013-2022 Management Plan will soon be available.

The Plan has been under development for over two years and reflects a new approach that embraces contemporary conservation and management knowledge, techniques and methods available for addressing current conservation challenges.

Look for it soon on-line at www.arctic-caribou.com and in your HTO or band office! •

