

Conference of Management Authorities (CMA)
Meeting Minutes, February 20-21, 2018
Inuvik, NT Midnight Sun Complex

Attendees	Organization
Jody Pellissey, Chairperson	Wek'èezhì Renewable Resources Board
Marsha Branigan	Wildlife Management Advisory Council (NWT)
Allison Thompson	Wildlife Management Advisory Council (NWT)
Larry Carpenter	Wildlife Management Advisory Council (NWT) (Day 2 only)
Jodie Maring	Wildlife Management Advisory Council (NWT) (Day 2 only)
Kaytlin Cooper	Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board
Amy Amos	Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board
Eugene Pascal	Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board
Doug Doan	Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board
Jozef Carnogursky	Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board (Day 2 only)
Brett Elkin	Environment and Natural Resources
Joanna Wilson	Environment and Natural Resources
Norman Snowshoe	Environment and Natural Resources (Day 2 only)
Colin MacDonald	Sahtú Renewable Resources Board
George Barnaby	Sahtú Renewable Resources Board
David Tavares	Parks Canada Agency
Jessica Hum	Tłı̨chǫ Government
Shin Shiga	North Slave Métis Alliance
Earl Evans	Beverly and Qamanirjuaq Caribou Management Board (Day 1 and afternoon of Day 2 only)
Lisa Worthington	Management Plan/Recovery Strategy Preparer
Claire Singer	Species at Risk Secretariat

In-camera meeting of Management Authorities (Wildlife Management Advisory Council (NWT), Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board, Sahtú Renewable Resources Board, Wek'èezhì Renewable Resources Board, Tłı̨chǫ Government, Government of the Northwest Territories, Government of Canada) - No decisions or action items to report.

1. Introductions – *led by Jody Pellissey (Chairperson)*
Round table introductions.
2. Agenda – *led by Jody Pellissey (Chairperson)*
Review of agenda.
3. Minutes – *led by Jody Pellissey (Chairperson)*
Review and approval of draft minutes from October 2017, December 2017, and January 2018.

Decision #D2018022001: Decision to approve October 4, 2017 SARC/CMA workshop meeting minutes with no changes.

Decision #D2018022002: Decision to approve December 7, 2017 meeting minutes with edits discussed.

Decision #D2018022003: Decision to approve January 22, 2018 meeting minutes with edits discussed.

4. Action items since last meeting – *led by Claire Singer (Secretariat)*
Review of outstanding action items.

- A2016051102: Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) to prepare schedule for Peary caribou recovery strategy adoption by the CMA - Continue to bring forward.
- A2017050204: Report preparer to work on consequential revisions to guidelines for management plans and recovery strategies - Bring forward to next meeting.

5. Decisions made since last meeting – *led by Claire Singer (Secretariat)*
Review decisions made by email since last meeting.

Decision #D2018022004: Decision to appoint Allison Thompson as the Wildlife Management Advisory Council (WMAC) (NWT) member of the Species at Risk Committee (SARC).

6. Letters sent and received since last meeting – *led by Claire Singer (Secretariat)*
Review of letters sent and received since the last meeting.

No letters sent or received since last meeting.

7. Updates – *led by Jody Pellssey (Chairperson)*
Updates from Management Authorities and participating organizations.

Environment and Natural Resources (ENR):

- Boreal caribou is occupying a fairly significant amount of time at the moment, both in terms of range planning and the federal conservation agreement (s11) process. Participating in ongoing discussions with Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) regarding the development of a s11 agreement, with the aim of avoiding the enactment of a federal protection order in the NWT.
- Barren-ground caribou remain an important file. ENR is working on the renewal of the NWT Barren-ground Caribou Management Strategy and recently got Cabinet approval to start consultation and engagement. Range management planning is underway for a number of barren-ground caribou herds. ENR has also formed a new Bathurst caribou workshop group. With respect to upcoming surveys, 5-6 herd surveys will be conducted this spring/summer.

- With respect to the Porcupine herd, ENR recently participated in a Porcupine caribou summit in Whitehorse. ENR has committed to following this up with a meeting in the NWT at a later date.
- Development of wood bison herd-specific management plans is underway. The Mackenzie herd management plan is almost ready to be put into place. The Slave River Lowlands working group has a final draft version for which engagement and consultation can begin. The Nahanni herd management plan is a bit further behind. Currently working with Nahanni Butte and Fort Liard on a draft plan.
- The Wildlife Conservation Society got some funding this year to do some initial ground work scoping out a community bat program for the NWT. ENR has had initial conversations with them on how that might look in the NWT. If anyone is interested in that, just let Joanna know.
- Every two years, ENR publishes a guide to species at risk in NWT, jointly with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO), Parks Canada Agency (PCA), and ECCC, and with a lot of good input from people at this table as well. The 2018 edition has gone to the printer and will be ready by the end of March.
- For anyone interested in the gypsy cuckoo bumble bee (which has been assessed as Endangered in Canada and has experienced big declines throughout its historic range), a gypsy cuckoo bumble bee was collected in Norman Wells in 2017. Individuals were also collected in the Yukon and British Columbia in 2017. The last sighting in the NWT was in the 1970s.

Parks Canada Agenda (PCA)

- No updates.

Tłı̨chǫ Government

- The Tłı̨chǫ Government is involved in many planning, management, and advisory groups, including the Bathurst Caribou Advisory Committee, the Barren-ground Technical Working Group, and the Bathurst Caribou Range Plan.
- With the Wek'èezhìi Renewable Resources Board (WRRB), North Slave Métis Alliance (NSMA), and the GNWT, the Tłı̨chǫ Government recently completed an assessment of wolf harvesting feasibility. They will be starting community engagement on this soon.
- Participating in a CircumArctic Rangifer Monitoring and Assessment (CARMA) meeting in Whitehorse in March.

Wildlife Management Advisory Council (NWT) (WMAC (NWT))

- Completed community engagement regarding the proposed listings of barren-ground caribou and grizzly bear. A total of 110 people attended the meetings and provided good feedback.
- The Council met December 1-3, 2017 to discuss the results of engagement and arrived at consensus on the proposed listings.
- Also participated in all recent CMA meetings.

- Received new implementation funding, which is a significant increase. This should help them fulfill their responsibilities under the Inuvialuit Final Agreement (IFA).
- Preparing for a board meeting later this month.
- Working towards the release of the Dolphin and Union caribou management plan.
- Will be attending the CARMA meeting in Whitehorse in March.

Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board (GRRB)

- Conducted bat surveys in Inuvik and Aklavik in 2017. The results from these surveys are still to be analyzed. Anticipate conducting further surveys in 2018. Participated in initial conversations with the Wildlife Conservation Society regarding the development of a community bat program.
- Completed community consultations in September 2017 for the proposed listings of barren-ground caribou and grizzly bear.
- Held their winter board meeting in Inuvik in early February 2018. The board discussed listings, boreal caribou, the s11 conservation agreement for boreal caribou critical habitat, and Dolly Varden (harvest allocations, monitoring programs, eDNA sampling, tagging).
- Conducted muskrat research in 2017, which, although not a species at risk, is a species of concern in the Gwich'in Settlement Area (GSA). Their biologist also conducted aerial surveys of Dall sheep. Preliminary results indicate increases in numbers. Further surveys are planned for this summer.
- The Board participated in Advisory Committee for Cooperation on Wildlife Management (ACCWM) meetings and worked with communities to update information on the caribou herds in their area. They are anticipating doing herd surveys this summer. Their Renewable Resource Manager will be attending the Porcupine Caribou Management Board (PCMB) meeting.
- Produced a poster of rules/regulations on hunting grizzly bear in the GSA. Their annual calendar has been distributed to the communities. This calendar includes a number of species at risk messages. Their newsletter is coming out in the next month or so.
- Working through federal *Species at Risk Act* (SARA) files (various).
- All staff went to ArcticNet in December to do presentations and posters.
- The Board received an increase to implementation funding as well. As a result of this, their Species at Risk Biologist position is now permanent.
- Their Board Chairperson is leaving in November 2018. Eugene Pascal has been the Chair for 5 years.
- With the Gwich'in Tribal Council (GTC), the Board is going to work on developing videos of elders to document traditional management practices. The idea is to ensure that these practices are communicated to the younger generations. This is not specifically about species at risk, but is somewhat related.

Sahtú Renewable Resources Board (SRRB)

- Nothing specific to report.
- Discussed attending the CARMA meeting in March, but decided against it. However, will be attending the national caribou workshop in October.
- With respect to species at risk, caribou is the main concern on their traditional lands. People are not living their traditional way anymore so a lot of mistakes are being made.

Wek'èezhìi Renewable Resources Board (WRRB)

- The WRRB Chairperson, Grant Pryznyk, will be leaving his position at the end of June, so they'll be putting forward a new name for a Chairperson.
- At the moment, the Board has a number of vacant positions and no biologists. They are in the process of hiring two new biologists. The positions should be filled by early in the new fiscal year.
- The second biologist position will be funded from implementation funding, which was recently increased.
- Completed joint consultations with the Tł'chǫ Government on the proposed listing of barren-ground caribou, grizzly bear, and bats in late October/early November 2017.
- Released their annual board calendar. This year's calendar focuses strictly on species at risk in the Wek'èezhìi area and species at risk processes in the NWT and Canada.

Beverly and Qamanirjuaq Caribou Management Board (BQCMB)

- Their Executive Director has been putting a lot of effort into trying to get responses from the communities regarding the proposed listing of barren-ground caribou. When people heard that barren-ground caribou were going to be listed as Threatened, a lot of red flags went up. They thought harvesting would be stopped. That resulted in a lot of opposition to the listing in the communities. People also want to understand better why the herds are being listed, why some herds are doing well and some herds are not, and why the herds are being listed together in a single group.
- Working to update an assessment of the economic value of the harvest of Beverly and Qamanirjuaq herds of barren-ground caribou (which was produced in 2008 based on 2005-06 harvest estimates). The Board's current focus is working with caribou range communities in the Kivalliq region of Nunavut as well as the Athabasca Denesuline communities. The previous economic evaluation results showed that it would cost about \$20 million each year to replace that food source for communities. However, caribou are not just a food source; maintaining opportunities for caribou-harvesting peoples to live their traditional lifestyle is just as important.
- Bathurst harvest restrictions have impacted the connection to their traditional lifestyle and impacted younger generations. With restrictions, harvesting caribou has been missing from peoples' lives in the Bathurst caribou range for about 9

years now. People are concerned that what happened in the Bathurst range is going to happen to them as well.

- There is definitely hardship, but there's also a need to look at the big picture, including conservation. For this reason, people can support reducing harvest if it's necessary for conservation, but are not supportive of eliminating it entirely.
- Indicated that communities want people to come meet with them, face-to-face, to talk about this.

NWT Métis Nation (presented by Earl Evans)

- Have been discussing the proposed listing of barren-ground caribou. Some herds need more protection than others and it's also important to consider the impacts from industry. Some of the more traditional communities, like Fort Resolution, have very strong opinions about this.

North Slave Métis Alliance (NSMA)

- Similar update as provided by the Tłı̨chǫ Government.
- There are many processes in which they participate.
- Received the consultation letters from the GNWT with respect to the proposed listing of barren-ground caribou and responded to them.

8. Stewardship Program – *led by Amy Amos (Stewardship Sub-committee)*

Update on 2017/18 projects and update on 2018/19 call for proposals.

In 2017/18, there were four projects that were awarded a total of \$30,000 in funding. These included a rusty blackbird awareness campaign in Hay River and Yellowknife, a bat monitoring project, and a mountain caribou stewardship planning project. These projects must be completed by March 31, 2018.

There is currently a call for proposals for the 2018/19 fiscal year. The deadline to apply is March 1, 2018. Potential applicants should note that the previous \$5,000 cap on projects no longer applies.

Please also note that two federal funding pots are available for species at risk projects: the Aboriginal Fund for Species at Risk (AFSAR) and the Habitat Stewardship Program (HSP). Expressions of interest are due on Friday, February 23, 2018¹. A number of the NWT's species at risk are considered funding priorities this year. There's also a special northern pot of money to apply for, which makes applying particularly worthwhile this year. If the past is any indication, some projects may be able to receive fairly significant amounts of funding. For aquatic species, DFO will administer the funding. Funding for terrestrial species will continue to be administered by ECCC. AFSAR also has a prevention stream for funding, which scopes in species that are not yet at risk.

¹ This deadline for Expressions of Interest is now out of date. It was announced shortly after the CMA meeting that the deadlines for HSP and AFSAR have changed to Friday, March 2, 2018 (for the Expression of Interest) and Friday, March 23, 2018 (for the application).

9. CMA/SARC budget – *led by Claire Singer (Secretariat)*
Update regarding Secretariat budget.

The Secretariat provided an update on the budget projection for the next few fiscal years. Funding previously associated with one of the two positions in the Secretariat is no longer available. In order to ensure that CMA/SARC operational needs can still be met, this position, for which staffing action is currently underway, will be funded out of the Secretariat's budget. With this addition to the budget, the Secretariat is projecting that the budget will be completely allocated for at least the next three years. This does not mean that funding won't continue for the essential operations of the CMA and SARC. Status report contracts can still proceed, as can the Stewardship Program and meetings. It does, however, mean that if the CMA or SARC wish to do any additional work (e.g., discretionary contracts, special invited guests, joint workshops, etc.), the money for that will have to either be re-allocated from within the Secretariat's budget, or found elsewhere.

With respect to contribution agreements, please note that year-end financial reporting will be due soon. The deadline for submission of reporting is 60 days following fiscal year end (i.e., May 31, 2018). For those with invoicing contribution agreements, please ensure that invoices for this fiscal year are submitted as soon as possible.

If your organization anticipates that eligible expenses will exceed the value of your contribution agreement, please let the Secretariat know as soon as possible. Although the Secretariat is committed to funding all eligible expenses, unanticipated cost-overruns will likely have to be paid from next year's budget, which, as noted above, is already fully allocated.

All Management Authority and participant contribution agreements will be expiring at the end of this fiscal year. The Secretariat will contact each of you to discuss setting up new funding arrangements for the coming fiscal year.

10. Contact information and distribution lists – *led by Jody Pellissey (Chairperson)*
Verification and update to email distribution lists and contact information.

11. Proposed listings of barren-ground caribou, grizzly bear, little brown myotis, and northern myotis – *led by Jody Pellissey (Chairperson)*
Presentation of consultation/engagement results by Management Authorities. Discussion of positions on listing.

Northern myotis is found only in the southern NWT. The GNWT – the sole Management Authority for this species – supports the listing of northern myotis as a species of Special Concern.

Decision #D2018022005: Decision to list northern myotis as a species of Special Concern.

Management Authorities for little brown myotis are the GNWT, WRRB, and the Tłı̨chǫ Government. Following discussion regarding the species range map, which extends into the Sahtú Settlement Area, the SRRB was also added as a Management Authority for little brown myotis. Pending the analysis of 2017 bat surveys in the GSA, the GRRB may also be considered a Management Authority for little brown myotis in the future. For the interim, the GRRB will not be considered a Management Authority for little brown myotis but will participate in the development of the management plan.

All four Management Authorities supported the listing of little brown myotis as a species of Special Concern.

Responses received during consultation and engagement suggested that most people had never heard of little brown myotis and sightings are rare. People were curious about whether bats could be eaten for food. Some requested the installation of bat monitoring stations. Concerns about white-nose syndrome were expressed; in particular, the potential for transmission to other animals.

Decision #D2018022006: Decision to list little brown myotis as a species of Special Concern.

The proposed listing of barren-ground caribou involved all Management Authorities (WMAC (NWT), GRRB, SRRB, WRRB, Tłı̨chǫ Government, and the GNWT). All six Management Authorities approved the listing of barren-ground caribou as Threatened.

There was quite a bit of interest in this proposed listing. Collectively, Management Authorities reported hearing from over 150 individuals and organizations, either submitting positions, requesting additional information, or participating in community meetings (including Hunters and Trappers Committees (HTCs), Renewable Resource Councils (RRCs), Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, NWT Métis Nation, Athabasca Denesuline, Inuvialuit Regional Corporation (IRC), Inuvialuit Game Council (IGC), Kátł'odeeche First Nation, BQCMB, Dehcho First Nations, Ghotelnene K'odtineh Dene, Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers, and GTC). The majority of submissions were in favour of listing, although a number of concerns were raised as well, including the potential impact of listing on harvest and how existing management actions will be considered in the recovery strategy. For some commenters, there was a sense that they were being blamed for the decline and were concerned therefore that harvest restrictions could be put in place following listing. Commenters also expressed concerns about key threats to barren-ground caribou (fire management, development, land management, climate change, changing seasons, warming temperatures, shifting calving grounds, overharvesting, poaching, lack of compliance with regulations, disease,

the impact of development, and predators), and also asserted that harvesting is not a primary threat.

It was noted that some communities felt more clarification was needed on the impacts of the proposed listing. Communities want to understand what's going to happen, how the process is going to work, what the implications are for harvesting, and what the implications are for caribou. Generally, communities were in favour of listing, but they didn't want their harvesting rights impacted. Reductions were seen as acceptable if needed for conservation purposes, but not a total elimination of harvest. Many people feel that listing is the first step to imposing harvesting restrictions. It's important to understand that cutting the caribou harvest removes an important part of peoples' lives. Representatives should come to the communities to discuss the process, implications, and what is needed from communities. These concerns were noted and accepted by Management Authorities. In this particular case, it was also pointed out that listing is very time-sensitive under the *Species at Risk (NWT) Act*, so some later requests for meetings couldn't be accommodated in time for this meeting of the CMA. However, Management Authorities are committed to finding time for those discussions, both at the CMA table and in communities, as the process continues.

Decision #2018022007: Decision to list barren-ground caribou as Threatened.

Action #2018022001: Management Authorities to submit their summaries of 'actions taken to prepare for consensus' to list northern myotis, little brown myotis, and barren-ground caribou to the Secretariat by March 16, 2018 for inclusion in Annex B of the consensus agreements.

Action #A2018022002: Secretariat to draft consensus agreements for listing northern myotis, little brown myotis, and barren-ground caribou for review by Management Authorities prior to the deadline.

The proposed listing of grizzly bear involved all Management Authorities (WMAC (NWT), GRRB, SRRB, WRRB, Tł'chǫ Government, and the GNWT). WMAC (NWT), GRRB, the Tł'chǫ Government, and the GNWT were not in favour of listing grizzly bear. The WRRB was in favour of listing as Special Concern, but was willing to reconsider their position if all existing management continues as is and any significant changes proposed to management that would negatively impact the status of grizzly bear would result in a reassessment as soon as possible. The SRRB also put forward a position supporting listing as Special Concern but without further input from their Board, was unable to comment on whether they'd be willing to reconsider if their concerns could otherwise be addressed. Ultimately, owing to these positions, consensus on listing grizzly bear could not be achieved during this meeting.

For those Management Authorities not in favour of listing, they felt that there was not sufficient evidence at this time to support the listing. There is no evidence of population

decline, habitat decline, or any imminent threats. The primary threat was noted to be human-caused mortality, which is currently considered to be at sustainable levels. Further, they felt that the species was well managed in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region (ISR), GSA, and the mountains. Further, grizzly bears prey on caribou calves on the calving grounds. This is seen as a possible threat to barren-ground caribou, the recovery of which is important in the NWT. However, they noted that the assessment brought to light some gaps in management and knowledge, and are supportive of using other mechanisms to address those gaps. This could include research on population levels in the NWT, collection and verification of traditional knowledge related to grizzly bears, mandatory reporting of human-caused mortality, biological sampling, and the introduction of a strong management program across the NWT.

On the other hand, grizzly bears are recognized as an important and sometimes sacred species. Knowledge about grizzly bears is incomplete and information about population and trends is unclear. The management regime for this species in the ISR and GSA is seen to reflect the importance of this species and the necessity of appropriate management. People are observing changes in grizzly bear behaviour, which may be indicative of a problem. It was noted that a listing could possibly put more pressure on the GNWT to take appropriate management action.

Despite these differences in position, the Management Authorities are committed to work together to try to achieve consensus prior to the deadline of April 11, 2018. Management Authorities have until March 16, 2018 to review and revise their positions in preparation for further discussion. In the case that consensus cannot be achieved, the CMA will need to inform the Minister of ENR. The responsibility for making a listing decision then shifts to the Minister of ENR. If this occurs, the Minister will be required to make a decision by no later than July 11, 2018.

In the case that consensus can be achieved, specifications regarding management commitments can be included in the consensus agreement. This could help ensure that all Management Authorities' concerns are being addressed, acknowledged, and recorded.

Action #A2018022101: GNWT to circulate summary of existing monitoring work for grizzly bears in the Sahtú region to CMA members.

Action #A2018022102: SRRB to review their grizzly bear listing position **by March 16, 2018 at 12noon** in light of the other Management Authorities' positions to see if consensus might be possible. If other Management Authorities wish to reconsider their positions as well, the same deadline applies. Management Authorities should communicate any revised positions to the Secretariat by the deadline.

Action #A2018022103: Secretariat to compile positions, rationale, and management concerns/gaps brought forward and circulate them to Management Authorities by Friday,

February 23, 2018. This should permit everyone to think about the commitments they would be willing to make and also form the basis for a possible future consensus agreement.

12. Recovery/management planning for upcoming species (informed by preceding listing discussion) – *led by Jody Pellissey (Chairperson)*
If listed, discuss path forward for development of recovery strategies/management plans for these species.

Following legal listing, a management plan will need to be developed for northern myotis and little brown myotis within two years. Likewise, a recovery strategy will need to be developed for barren-ground caribou within two years.

Earlier discussions on this matter suggested that Management Authorities were in favour of developing a multi-species management plan for bats in the NWT. This would scope in not just the two species at risk, but the other six bat species found in the NWT (big brown bat, long-eared myotis, long-legged myotis, silver-haired bat, hoary bat, and eastern red bat). It was confirmed that Management Authorities are still in favour of this approach. Although not a Management Authority, the GRRB will also participate in the development of the management plan.

For barren-ground caribou, there already exists a number of herd-specific management plans, including the ACCWM's plan for the Cape Bathurst, Bluenose-West, and Bluenose-East herds, the BQCMB's plan for the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq herds, and planning underway for the Bathurst herd. A renewal of the Barren-ground Caribou Management Strategy is also currently underway, which, if structured and scheduled appropriately, could serve as an umbrella document for the herd-specific plans. There was interest from Management Authorities in adopting these documents as part of recovery planning. To help inform this discussion, the GNWT will bring the draft Barren-ground Caribou Management Strategy to the next CMA meeting (May 2018) for review and discussion.

Action #A2018022104: GNWT to bring draft Barren-ground Caribou Management Strategy to May 2018 meeting of the CMA for review and discussion.

13. Peary caribou – *led by Jody Pellissey (Chairperson)*
Progress update. Recovery strategy and consensus agreement must be submitted to the Minister of ENR by September 30, 2019.

ECCC is continuing to revise the recovery strategy based on the comments received during the second jurisdictional review in June-July 2017. Further engagement with some organizations may be required. The next step is to place the revised draft recovery strategy on the federal registry for a 60 day comment period. ECCC estimates that this should take place in about April or May 2018. They then plan to submit the document to

the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board (NWMB) and request their approval of the proposed document. Once the NWMB has presented their position on the recovery strategy, it will move through final ECCC internal approvals in 2019.

WMAC (NWT) provided its approval to post the draft document on the public registry in September 2017. WMAC (NWT) has not actually approved the draft recovery strategy. Given that it looks like the recovery strategy will now go through a Nunavut approval process, it's unclear whether the recovery strategy will be returned to WMAC (NWT) (or others) for further review if substantial changes are made by Nunavut.

Action #A2018022105: Allison to ask ECCC whether the final draft Peary caribou recovery strategy will be returned to WMAC (NWT) for further review if Nunavut makes any substantive edits during their review².

For the CMA, the plan has been to adopt the federal recovery strategy, minus the critical habitat sections. However, there are still changes being made to the recovery strategy. It would therefore make sense for the CMA to wait for the recovery strategy to be finalized before proceeding with adoption. Ideally, the CMA would adopt the version that everyone has already approved rather than adopting a draft that would require further revision. This would mean waiting for the final version before starting Management Authority-led consultation and engagement on the strategy. Depending on when the strategy is finalized by ECCC, this may or may not necessitate an additional extension by the CMA to the completion date.

14. Dolphin and Union caribou – *led by Jody Pellissey (Chairperson)*
Development of consensus agreement respecting implementation (due by December 31, 2018).

A Dolphin and Union caribou management plan has been developed by the NWT, Nunavut, and ECCC. The expectation is that this plan will be released publicly in a joint release on March 29, 2018. This release will meet the CMA's management planning requirements for this species. Following the release, an implementation agreement needs to be completed and submitted to the Minister of ENR by December 29, 2018. This implementation agreement applies only to WMAC (NWT) and the GNWT (the NWT Management Authorities). A first take on the implementation agreement is tentatively scheduled for development at a workshop on implementing the Dolphin and Union caribou management plan that WMAC (NWT) and the Inuvialuit Game Council are hosting in summer 2018 in Ulukhaktok. This meeting will likely include attendance by relevant management partners (including HTCs) so is an ideal venue for this work.

² This was actioned shortly after this meeting and prior to the approval of the minutes. ECCC proposed that they re-submit the final Peary caribou recovery strategy to WMAC (NWT) at the same time that they submit it to the NWMB.

Action #A2018022106: Dolphin and Union caribou Management Authorities (WMAC (NWT) and GNWT) to complete 'actions to prepare for implementation consensus agreement' table and submit to the Secretariat.

15. Polar bear – *led by Jody Pellissey (Chairperson)*

Finalization of consensus agreement respecting implementation (due by March 27, 2018).

A draft implementation agreement was included in the materials circulated for this meeting. The final, signed consensus agreement must be submitted to the Minister of ENR by March 27, 2018. This file is proceeding according to schedule.

16. Annual/periodic reviews of progress – *led by Jody Pellissey (Chairperson)*

2017 annual review of progress on hairy braya recovery strategy.

This is the CMA's first annual implementation review of the hairy braya recovery strategy. Actions 1.1 and 1.3 of the recovery strategy have been actioned. Dr. Jim Harris, the foremost global expert on this species, has agreed to try germinating the seeds he collected during 2011 field work. Beyond germination, the aim is to grow the plants to maturity so additional seeds can be harvested. If successful, he has agreed to deposit a portion of the seeds to a seed bank and conduct genome sequencing in his lab and coordinate a submission to a gene bank for storage. If germination is unsuccessful, collection of additional seeds will need to be scheduled.

With respect to action 2.1, the last survey was conducted in 2011. In accordance with this action, another survey will need to be scheduled for 2021. If the aforementioned germination is unsuccessful, seed collection can perhaps be added to the 2021 survey rather than schedule two trips.

WMAC (NWT) noted that a number of individuals have inquired about the plant and that one person in Paulatuk has been collecting and pressing specimens for years.

17. Wood bison – *led by Jody Pellissey (Chairperson)*

Report of progress from report preparer. Actions to prepare for consensus agreement.

Wood bison were listed as Threatened in the NWT in July 2017. A recovery strategy must be completed by July 2019, in accordance with the *Species at Risk (NWT) Act*. Due to expire shortly, the existing 2010-2020 NWT Wood Bison Management Strategy is being re-purposed and updated to serve as a CMA recovery strategy.

At this point, Management Authorities should review the first draft of the recovery strategy included in their meeting materials. Please consider, in particular, the wording of the goals and objectives. Given that the current wording may be interpreted as having implications for other Management Authorities (regarding re-expansion into historical

range), it is important that all Management Authorities, even those outside current wood bison range, consider the wording there. Possible ways of addressing this concern include:

- Replacing the word ‘throughout’ with ‘within’.
- Remove reference to historic range and make the goal simply about healthy wood bison populations in the NWT.

Although the *Species at Risk (NWT) Act* does not apply in national parks, given the transboundary nature of this species, Parks Canada – Wood Buffalo National Park should indicate how it envisions participating in the development and implementation of the recovery strategy. This may include reviewing drafts and identifying areas for collaboration in and around the Park (e.g., methodology, survey timing, collision management, etc.)

Based on feedback received from Management Authorities during the meeting, the report preparer will consider the possibility of shifting the planned consultation/engagement period from June-August to August-November, or thereabouts.

Action #A2018022107: CMA to review first draft of the wood bison recovery strategy and submit comments to the report preparer by March 29, 2018.

Action #A2018022108: Wood bison Management Authorities (GNWT, Tłı̨chǫ Government, and WRRB) to complete ‘actions to prepare for consensus agreement’ table and submit to the Secretariat.

Action #A2018022109: GNWT to confirm definition of ‘historic range’ used in the draft recovery strategy (i.e., 5,000 years before present or 100-150 years before present).

Action #A2018202110: Report preparer to consider shifting the planned consultation/engagement period for the wood bison recovery strategy to August-November 2018.

18. Section 11 agreement on boreal caribou recovery – *led by Brett Elkin (ENR)*
Update on status of Critical Habitat Protection Order and development of a s11 agreement with the Government of Canada.

ENR provided an update on discussions with ECCC about the possible development of a s11 boreal caribou conservation agreement between the GNWT and Canada, further to the update that was provided on January 22, 2018. Essentially, s11 agreements are tools that, in the short term, help avoid protection orders under the federal SARA, and in the longer term, help ensure the conservation of boreal caribou - including protection of critical habitat. ENR and ECCC have had some technical discussions on this matter. Some other Management Authorities have also had their own bilateral conversations with ECCC. ECCC has indicated an interest in developing a s11 agreement very quickly.

Formal negotiation direction for the GNWT is pending. However, at this time, ENR's perspective is that any potential s11 agreement between GNWT and Canada should be built on three elements:

1. The CMA's NWT Recovery Strategy for boreal caribou;
2. The CMA's Consensus Agreement Respecting Implementation of the Recovery Strategy for Boreal Caribou in the NWT; and
3. A process for developing range plans – in which the next step would be engagement and consultation on a draft boreal caribou range plan framework.

ENR is committed to respecting co-management processes and ensuring adequate consultation and engagement. For additional clarity, the draft range plan framework being put forward by the GNWT (item 19 on the CMA's agenda) has not yet undergone consultation and engagement. Therefore ENR's perspective is that a s11 agreement at this time could potentially speak to a process for moving range planning forward, and may include timelines, but would not commit to the content of the framework that has not yet been agreed upon.

ECCC has indicated that funding might be possible for boreal caribou conservation activities, but only for jurisdictions who are negotiating s11 agreements. Further, ECCC believes that formal s11 agreements could help mitigate the possible risk of a protection order. These are two of the reasons why ENR thinks it is worthwhile to continue discussions at this time.

Discussion at the CMA table suggests that Management Authorities are troubled by the aggressive timeline being pursued by ECCC as this will not permit the effective participation of co-management partners or allow organizations sufficient time to assess the potential for infringement to Aboriginal rights. They are also concerned that negotiations are taking place primarily behind closed doors between ECCC and the GNWT. ECCC has indicated that they're willing to work with others bilaterally, outside of the conversations with the GNWT. This is also considered troubling because it sets up silos within the NWT where different groups don't know what others are discussing and negotiating, and may not reflect the considerable work and consensus already achieved amongst CMA partners on the NWT boreal caribou recovery strategy and implementation agreement. Ultimately, Management Authorities want to participate but don't have the capacity to do so effectively on this schedule. Everyone is also interested in understanding what others are saying to make sure messaging is consistent.

19. Boreal caribou range planning – *led by Joanna Wilson (ENR)*
Consultation/engagement presentation on range planning framework.

Joanna Wilson from ENR provided a presentation on the draft boreal caribou range planning framework. The presentation is a summary of the discussion document that was included in the materials for this meeting. Joanna will share the presentation slides

with the CMA; however, please note the presentation may still change a bit as ENR finalizes communications material for consultation and engagement. To facilitate the finalization of communications documents, feedback on this presentation would be appreciated and should be sent to Joanna directly.

Action #A2018022111: Joanna to circulate presentation slides on the draft boreal caribou range planning framework.

Questions and answers that arose during Joanna's presentation:

Question: With the undisturbed habitat target that's included, it's going to mean nothing can happen on the range from now on, even fire. Look at the disturbance in the southern part of the range. Even in the north, there are lots of cutlines and other disturbances. Meeting that target will be very difficult, especially with the government issuing timber harvesting permits. How are you going to deal with that?

- Answer: We're not proposing that everything comes to a stop when you hit the 65% threshold. We're proposing a more flexible approach to managing disturbance across the landscape. One of the objectives is to help the southern NWT improve its range condition because there's a lot of disturbance in that region. So we're looking at improving that over time, with a combination of short, medium, and long-term actions, which take into account the amount of time it takes to bring good habitat back online.

Question: Saskatchewan is developing their own range plan, right? Is Alberta doing one too?

- Answer: Every jurisdiction in Canada that has boreal caribou has been asked to develop range plans. Saskatchewan has been doing further studies to identify critical habitat, but will be starting range planning soon. Alberta has been working on range plans for their boreal caribou populations.

Question: How would you define enhanced management?

- Answer: From a development point of view (e.g., human impacts), it's about the requirements someone has to meet before they cause disturbance. Basic management is done according to the normal conditions we have in place. Developers are also encouraged to follow best management practices, but there's nothing out of the ordinary. Enhanced management would put in place additional conditions to help ensure that the amount of undisturbed habitat increases over time. Intensive management involves even more conditions to ensure that we don't lose undisturbed habitat.

Question: Is there a time period within which caribou won't enter a burned area?

- Answer: Biologically, it's our understanding that caribou do use burned areas, but that the larger effect of having a lot of young forest could be of concern. Critical habitat defines these areas though as disturbed until 40 years after the burn. We

know on the ground there's no magic switch at 40 years and that it could be longer before habitat is considered ideal for caribou again, but 40 years is the timeline used for critical habitat management.

Question: So the fire map is based on 40 years?

- Answer: Yes, anything that's burned within the last 40 years.

Question: What do you mean when you say 'responding to changing fire conditions'?

- Answer: We're proposing that we set thresholds for human disturbance based on what fire has done in the past, but we also need room in our plans to accommodate future fire behaviour that may not be consistent with the past. The thresholds will need to be adjusted over time in response to that. In the long term, we may also get more information on the actual impact of fire to caribou. Maybe the impact isn't as bad as we think it is. That kind of information could change our response to fire too. However, more fire in the next few years means that we'll have less room for other disturbance. So we're trying to balance the need for developer certainty with 5-year mid-term reviews to accommodate this uncertainty.

Comment: It will be hard to support this until after we've talked with our management partners.

- Answer: You don't need to provide an indication of support today. We will be conducting consultation and engagement, and perhaps you as Management Authorities will feel you need to conduct your own community engagement work. This will be part of the process over this year.

Question: When you were calculating the baseline fire disturbance area, did you consider that some of the years in the past might be outside of the normal range?

- Answer: To figure out what the historic fire disturbance was for a region, we looked at historic fire data. Each year of data is considered to fall within a 40 year assessment window. None of these 40 year windows were categorized as being within or outside of the normal range. However, we used the median fire footprint from these windows; half of the fire snapshots would have been above and half below the median. The exception is the Wek'èezhìi area, which is quite skewed because the median is almost the same as the minimum, which doesn't account for outlier years. That's why for the Wek'èezhìi area, the maximum disturbance threshold is actually the same as that used for the Dehcho/South Slave region, because use of the actual median there would have meant no further disturbance could be accommodated.

Question: For your focused engagement, you're thinking that land owners and non-government organizations (NGOs) are going to sit down at the same table and talk?

- Answer: That's our proposal. We weren't originally thinking of having industry and NGOs there at all, but having them included is a model that worked well for Bathurst range planning.
 - It appears that the situation might be different in the ISR. ENR will discuss this issue further with WMAC (NWT).

Question: Will these be considered guidance documents, or will they have more teeth because of the federal SARA? Asking because the Bathurst range plan is just a guidance document.

- Answer: This is somewhat different and we would definitely not consider this to be only a guidance document once complete because of the necessity of providing effective protection for critical habitat. The range plan framework and the range plans themselves won't change a regulation in and of themselves, but the idea is to implement everything.

Question: Do the range plans have to be approved by territorial Cabinet? Is there some sort of federal approval they require?

- Answer: Approval by Canada isn't necessary, but we do need to show them that the range plans provide effective protection. Territorially, we've been working internally over the last couple years to make sure that we're not putting forward a plan that works for ENR but not the other departments and which ultimately wouldn't be approved. We've received approval to start consultation and engagement on this framework and Cabinet wouldn't have granted approval if they didn't think this was a good proposal. Once we're done consultation and engagement, we'll need to bring it back to Cabinet again for final approval.

Question: What's your schedule to completion?

- Answer: We're hoping to have the framework done by this fall.
 - Question: So the focused engagement is all happening in the next six months?
 - Answer: Yes.

Question: Will this be approved in a consensus agreement by the CMA? Is that part of this process?

- Answer: Each individual Management Authority will need to review and approve, but it won't come back to the CMA.

Question: Will the focus group include affected indigenous organizations or just land owners?

- Answer: We're proposing that the working group include mostly land owners and land managers, but that we'd consult bilaterally with other organizations rather than have them on the working group.

- Comment: For the sake of efficiency, suggest having these groups as part of the working group rather than consulting in two different directions.
- Comment: The working group also needs to include the IGC.
 - Answer: The intention was to have a way to work with groups that need to either approve or implement the range plans. So management authorities for boreal caribou and the land.

Question: Are you asking for people to review the documents and comment on them now? Or wait for something formal to come out?

- Answer: We're not asking for comments right now. However, it would be useful to hear your reactions to the material in advance of consultation and engagement.

Question: When should we expect to see this?

- Answer: We're just trying to get the summary and plain language material sorted out, but hopefully in the next few weeks.

20. Next meetings – *led by Jody Pellyssey (Chairperson)*

Before discussing the next meeting, the issue of CMA press releases was raised as an addition to the agenda. As it stands, five press releases are issued at the moment, at various points in the process:

- A CMA press release upon signing the listing consensus agreement.
- A GNWT press release upon legal listing.
- A CMA press release upon consensus approval of a management plan/recovery strategy.
- A GNWT press release upon release of the management plan/recovery strategy.
- A CMA press release upon completion of an implementation agreement.

The first four press releases are resulting in confusion among the press because of the delay in legal listing and the delay to release of the management plan/recovery strategy (e.g., when the management plan/recovery strategy is approved by the CMA the press wants a copy of the plan/strategy but we have to say that it won't be released for another 3 months).

Suggestion to drop this down to three press releases:

- A CMA press release following a legal listing.
- A CMA press release upon publication of a management plan or recovery strategy.
- A CMA press release upon completion of an implementation agreement.

Decision #D2018022101: Decision to reduce number of regular press releases from five to three (one at each step).

Next meetings:

- The next meeting is scheduled for May 15-16, 2018 in Yellowknife.
- Then the following meeting would be in late February 2019 in Inuvik.

Decision #D2018022102: As a cost-saving measure, decision to alternate face-to-face meetings between Yellowknife and Inuvik; the two communities that host the majority of CMA members.