

In Attendance: Murray Ross, Leif Olsen, Carl Gitscheff, Dave Harris, Steve Hewitt, Nick Baccante, Chris Addison and Raychl Lukie

April 29th, 2014 AGENDA

- Regulation updates (Minister's decision on proposed changes to wolf hunting regulations)
- Toad River bison
- Trapping licences, trapline management/EBA and consultation process updates
- Peace Northern Caribou Plan
- Moberly Lake trout release
- Accompany to Hunt permits
- Develop terms of reference for PAC
- Discuss Treaty 8 participation in PAC
- Identify issues, priorities, comments from PAC
- Ideas for better engagement

Regulation Updates (i.e. Proposed Changes to Wolf Hunting Regulations):

- Minister did not approve recently proposed regulation changes to remove the bag limit and remove the closed season above 1100 m
 - reasons due to wolf management plan that is being drafted and Minister did not want to implement regulation changes ahead of the management plan
- public complacent about wolves showing up everywhere
- discussion about cause for increase in wolf numbers being climate change, increased development and easier access to prey species
- need to look at big picture in terms of what is an acceptable level of big game so as to determine numbers of wolves that should be harvested
- members observe fewer numbers of deer and moose showing up at their feed stations that in the past, indicative of fewer ungulate species available, yet wolf numbers are abounding
 - PAC members mentioned in the 80's there were tonnes of deer, but few wolves
- suggested that there needs to be some level of human interference with respect to predator control to maintain sustainable wildlife populations
- regulation changes not likely to have a huge impact on predator control in isolation
 - members commented that every little bit helps
- even though Minister did not sign off on recently proposed wolf regs (i.e. to remove bag limit and remove closed season above 1100 m) there is still the opportunity for the Minister to endorse them at a later date (e.g. mid-cycle implementation)
- need to be able to quantify successful wolf control – what is best measure for success?
- SDM looking for consistent downward pressure (i.e. looking for long-term plan – 50+ years rather than 5 yr plan)
- question came up regarding whether section 7.4 of the wolf management plan is still in place (i.e. Province's opposition to controlling wolves for the purpose of increasing ungulate populations)
 - section 7.4 appears to still be in place
- suggestion came up to leverage caribou crisis in order to increase hunting pressure on wolves
- SDM concerned with age structure of moose – see a number of old grizzled cows
- negligible numbers of mature old bulls in the southern part of the south Peace

- members hope the proposed reg changes for wolves are revisited in the near future once the wolf management plan is implemented

Bison (Toad River / Pink Mountain):

- have been problematic for the last 7 years
- bison that have ventured down from the Liard area
- COS indicated that there were bison spotted south of the control line and needed to take action
 - needed to expedite because bison were at the edge of the Muncho Lake Provincial Park
- Kaska First Nation were interested in helping out
- Al Hansen, Parks Area Supervisor for Fort Nelson was also keen on being involved
- SDM Chris Addison asked community of Toad River to help out as well
- Fort Nelson expressed interest in participating but were not able to at this point
- Peter Stone was going to stop by McDonalds to drop off bison meat – never came to fruition
- viewed as successful collaborative management project
- highways department was also involved (i.e. offered use of picker truck for bison kills)
- 2 bison heads currently located in Fort Nelson – one to go to Watson Lake, other to SDM Chris Addison

Trapping Licenses, Trapline management and EBA Consultation Process:

- backlog in applications and thus, processing time
- trapping applicants concerned about delays in processing applications
 - concerns have been raised at the MLA, ADM and Minister levels but nothing has been done in response
- ADM Kevin Kriese wants to revisit consultation levels and processing time for consultation
- 12 vacant traplines are known today to actually be vacant
- Peace Region currently conducting an inventory of vacant to determine which traplines are truly vacant
 - could take another year or more to complete as several progressively direct letters will need to be sent out to those listed on traplines to get a response
 - SDM will likely determine what will become of those traplines that are truly vacant
 - some likely to go to First Nations and some will go to Province
- about 40% of traplines today are suspected to be owned by First Nations that have passed on
- First Nations only have to report on fur bearers trapped if the fur is sold
- Harry McCowan was recently hired to do some work on valuating traplines
- First Nations have recently requested from government 52% ownership of natural resources
 - would include wildlife, forest resources, etc.

Peace Northern Caribou Plan:

- defined as northern caribou in the south Peace region
- unsure about what is a realistic baseline for caribou
 - First Nations speak of there once being a “sea of caribou”
- leveraging certain level of development in high elevation
 - proponent required to pay \$/hectare or must employ habitat off-setting
- 150 caribou thought to be in the area of the Roman and Quintette mines
- as per the PNCP, objective is to protect > 90% of HEWR in the Graham, Moberly, Burnt Pine,

- Scott, Kennedy Siding and Narraway herd ranges
- disturbance in place prior to mines being developed are not taken into consideration as far as the aforementioned objective
- Quintette and Narraway herd are the most challenging to secure habitat for
- Quintette area is great for caribou and coal production
- some genetic differences exist between the boreal and mountain caribou
 - historically the result of female caribou not crossing Peace River but males crossing and impregnating caribou cows
- previously there was a managed decline of caribou

Moberly Lake Trout Release:

- 2nd stocking of lake trout proposed for May 12th
- release of 14,000 lake trout
- F & W will collect last batch of eggs this fall for future lake stocking
- suggested cause of decline is overfishing
- history of discussions with local First Nations re: lake trout being fed to sled dogs
- observe big mature fish but limited numbers of younger generations
- densities of hatchlings low and possibly numbers further decline due to predatory fish (e.g. whitefish and burbot)
- hydro-acoustic surveys indicate high density of whitefish
- idea behind program is to allow more fish to mature to an advanced life stage so as to reduce the risk of predation by predatory fish (i.e. larger fish less likely to be preyed on by predatory fish)
- lake trout released for public viewing and / or participation near boat launch on the park side of the lake (i.e. school kids involved, etc.)
- question came up about fish and / or wildlife species regarding whether First Nation treaty rights permit First Nations to harvest species that are a conservation concern
- ACTION ITEM:** Nick Baccante to follow up with Conservation Officer Service (COS) re: whether First Nation treaty rights permit them to harvest fish and / or wildlife species that are a conservation concern

Treaty 8 Participation in PAC:

- Province is required to invite Treaty 8 First Nations to participate in the Public Advisory process and have input into the development of the TOR for the PAC as per the WCMA (refer to Section 7.0 – 7.8 of the WCMA)
- ACTION ITEM:** Raychl Lukie to draft note to current PAC informing all members that an invite will be going out for Treaty 8 to participate in future PAC meetings

Develop Terms of Reference (TOR) for PAC:

- PAC to begin devising their own TOR in the near future
- important to define the purpose of the PAC
- TOR to include such items as the frequency of meetings, the numbers of members,

representation from First Nations and stakeholder groups, etc.

-reference made to other regions having larger groups that are dysfunctional

-discussed idea of a small subset of the PAC leading the development of the PAC's TOR

-Leif Olsen, Carl Gitscheff and Murray Ross all volunteered

-ACTION ITEM: PAC to begin brainstorming ideas about the TOR

-ACTION ITEM: Treaty 8 invited to participate in the development of TOR once representation from Treaty 8 is selected for the PAC if Treaty 8 chooses to participate

-ACTION ITEM: Subset of PAC members to collaborate in drafting TOR prior to next PAC meeting anticipated for the fall of 2014

Accompany to Hunt:

-concern about residency requirements of applicants (i.e. those temporarily living and / or working in BC from elsewhere) – reference to applicants with Alberta license plates, etc.

-a couple of hundred issued in Peace Region (7B) Alone; 500-600 issued throughout entire Province

-60-80 Accompany to Hunts are issued annually for moose in Region 7B; some for goats with majority for deer

-application process and reporting requirements are not in line with each other

-in future looking to implement on-line / electronic licensing system for applications and for reporting because of the time spent on paperwork

-Chris Addison on steering committee for electronic licensing / reporting proposal

-3rd attempt for Chris alone to implement; has been tried 5 times and failed

-implementation of electronic licensing / reporting system anticipated for 2017 – better traction this time around

-would apply to lands applications, trapping licenses, guide outfitter declarations, reporting, etc.

-COS reports to Dave Vince who subsequently reports to Victoria

-Accompany to Hunt forms are similar to those for hunter declaration

-majority of harvest is elk and deer in the Agriculture (Ag) Zone

-under an Accompany to Hunt license an applicant can apply for a number of a species within a single region for up to 3 MU's

-SDM will normally issue license for entire Ag Zone

Ideas for Better Engagement:

-suggestion that each member should have an alternate / back up in place in the event he / she is unable to attend a PAC meeting – will maintain communication

-suggestion for an invite to go out to the COS

-discussion around having a member of the public involved that is not an active member of associations for which there is already representation in the PAC, but is tapped in to a broader public forum

- later concluded it would be difficult to pinpoint such an individual and may not be necessary and / or beneficial if the PAC already has broad representation
- discussed idea about devising a list of topics for discussion for the PAC to focus on
 - important to address our objective (e.g. increase moose population numbers versus control predator populations as a means to increase moose population numbers)
 - ideas suggested were predator control / management, moose, caribou, etc.
 - PAC decided moose may be a good focus because this would also potentially address several other issues as well (e.g. predator control)
- ACTION ITEM:** PAC to focus on moose as topic area for discussion in upcoming PAC meetings and address specific objectives for the group

Discussion About Potential Future Meeting Dates:

- October / November acceptable to most
 - one member suggested October 21st is the earliest he could meet