

Northwest Species at Risk Committee: Agenda

**Town of High Level Office
High Level, AB**

Wednesday, August 1, 2018 at 11:00 a.m.

AGENDA

1. Call to Order
2. Adoption of the Agenda
3. Adoption of the Minutes Page 3
4. Northern Alberta Elected Leaders (NAEL) Presentation
NWSAR Chair and Vice Chair Update: Slides *Handout*
NWSAR NAEL Update: Handout *Handout*
5. Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) NWSAR Resolution Page 21
6. NWSAR Pilot Project Page 25
 - a. Admin steps, research questions and project goals Page 25
NWSAR ABMI Developing a Plan: Slides *Handout*
 - b. ABMI comments and questions for NWSAR RE project goals Page 26
7. 17th North American Caribou Workshop Page 29
- 8.
- 9.
10. Committee Member Updates: (Short) Round Table Discussion
11. Terms of Reference: For Information Page 31
12. Next Meetings Date(s)
13. Meeting Adjournment

Northwest Species at Risk Committee
Administration Lead: Byron Peters, Mackenzie County

Northwest Species at Risk Committee: Minutes

**Town of High Level Office
High Level, AB**

Thursday, June 21, 2018 at 1:00 p.m.

- PRESENT:**
- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| Lisa Wardley | Chair, Deputy Reeve, Mackenzie County |
| Terry Ungarian | Reeve, County of Northern Lights |
| Linda Halabisky | Councillor, County of Northern Lights |
| Miron Croy | Councillor, Clear Hills County |
| Jacque Bateman | Councillor, Mackenzie County |
| Jessica Juneau | Councillor, Town of Rainbow Lake |
| Sunni-Jeanne Walker | Councillor, Town of Manning |
| Eric Jorgensen | Councillor, Mackenzie County (via teleconference) |
| Crystal McAteer | Vice Chair, Mayor, Town of High Level (via teleconference) |
- REGRETS:**
- | | |
|------------------|----------------------------------|
| Mike Morgan | Councillor, Town of High Level |
| Michelle Farris | Mayor, Town of Rainbow Lake |
| Chris Mitchell | Councillor, Town of Rainbow Lake |
| Amber Bean | Councillor, Clear Hills County |
| Jason Ruecker | Reeve, Clear Hills County |
| Keith Hutchinson | Councillor, Town of Manning |
- ADMINISTRATION:**
- | | |
|--------------|--|
| Byron Peters | Deputy CAO, Mackenzie County |
| Dan Fletcher | CAO, Town of High Level |
| Hayley Gavin | Regional Land Use and Environmental Project Manager/ Recording Secretary, Town of High Level |
- ALSO PRESENT:**
- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| Diana McQueen | DMC Consulting (via teleconference) |
| Ronda Goulden | ADM, Planning and Policy, Alberta Environment and Parks |
| Brian Makowecki | Executive Director Planning and Policy, Alberta Environment and Parks |
| Terry Jessiman | Wildfire Manager, Alberta Agriculture and Forestry |
| Steve Blanton | Woodlands Manager, Manning Forest Products Ltd. |
| Tim Gauthier | Manager – Planning and Sustainability, Tolko Industries Ltd. |
| Joe Dolling | Woodlands Manager, Tolko Industries Ltd. |
| Curtis Cole | Harvesting Superintendent, Tolko Industries Ltd. |

MOTION

1. Call to Order

Lisa Wardley called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

2. Adoption of the Agenda

18-06-001

MOVED by Linda Halabisky

That the agenda be adopted with the following additions:

- 7. b. Calgary Zoo Partnership
- c. Collaboration of Canadian Municipalities

CARRIED

All meeting participants introduced themselves.

3. Adoption of the Minutes

18-06-002

MOVED by Terry Ungarian

That the minutes from the May 1, 2018 NWSAR Committee meeting be adopted as amended below:

Spelling of NWSAR (missing an 'A') on Page 9

CARRIED

18-06-003

MOVED by Miron Croy

That Northwest Species at Risk Committee move in-camera at 1:07 p.m.

CARRIED

18-06-004

MOVED by Sunni-Jeanne Walker

That Northwest Species at Risk Committee move out of camera at 1:15 p.m.

CARRIED

Tim Gaither, Joe Dolling, Ronda Goulden and Brian Makowecki joined the meeting at 1:15 p.m.

All meeting participants introduced themselves.

4. Delegation: AEP ADM Ronda Goulden and Executive Director Brian Makowecki 1:15 p.m. – 2:45 p.m.

The Government of Alberta (GOA) were answering questions provided by NWSAR on page 17 of the agenda package.

1. GOA are still holding off on establishing additional conservation areas until they can complete the socio-economic analysis. They'd like to discuss how they continue with Northwestern socio-economic planning with NWSAR assistance.

Currently working on 2 fronts: awaiting confirmation from Canada on funding for restoration. Also restarting their oil and gas conversations for restoration – what funds they are willing to provide. Indigenous capacity funding is also key – during their Ottawa delegation they asked Canada to match GOA's funding input.

In the NE and west-central Alberta, GOA is having one-to-one conversations with oil and gas companies, on how disturbances can be reduced. GOA is trying to align all plans for different industries within caribou ranges, to see what they can do for caribou across the board. This takes a lot of time, they're also having the same conversations with the forestry industry.

In the NW, GOA recognizes that there is a lot of work happening amongst local groups, industry companies, ENGOs, municipalities and Indigenous Groups. Some good work is coming from groups collaborating together looking for solutions that work for caribou and the socio-economic interests.

Canada is now reporting progress every 6 months on caribou recovery. The end of August, 2018 is the GOA's deadline to submit Alberta's progress for Canada's October progress report. GOA needs to prove that there is progress from 6 months ago, and there is momentum to provide progress in the next 6 month reporting period.

Local groups looking for solutions for caribou, are bound by the same constraints as the GOA; one

constraint is the requirements of the federal recovery strategy, the other is legal implications. Since the GOA Ottawa delegation, legal action has been settled in two cases; one was the CPAWS law suit in regards to section 63 of the Species at Risk Act, and the other was the judicial review regarding critical habitat reporting every 6 months for the Southern Mountain (SM) caribou herds, in Alberta and BC.

Next June, a large report is expected to be released by the federal government; reporting on the status of all species at risk. The Narraway and Redrock Prairie herds were identified (amongst 8 other herds) as having an imminent threat to their recovery, by the federal government. The Cold Lake range has an active law suit pushing for the same imminent threat analysis to be conducted as the SM caribou herds. The SM herds are one step closer to emergency orders being imposed in those areas. As part of the imminent threat assessment, a threshold of 100 animals (or less) per herd played a role in the Minister's opinion to determine the imminent threat to SM recovery.

2. It is a significant cost to complete Regional Access Management Plans (RAMPs); you have to get lots of different people involved, you need good models with the right restrictions to predict where access would be in the future.

The Little Smoky caribou range is the first place that GOA is looking at for access planning – it is the pressure point of caribou range planning. There are multiple players, under-ground aggregated deposits, which GOA are trying to match with the forestry models and resources. GOA is 60% of the way there in Little Smoky – just need to audit and ground-truth the data. GOA is working with consultants who have significant technical expertise in this area. Looking at changing the way that future development can occur on the landscape using ideas that industry has brought to the table. Little Smoky is one of the hardest spots to align resource and access management with caribou – the solution space is so small. The geological layers that do not align with one another – GOA can utilize models for multi-scenario analysis – it is a huge learning process.

Where is the GOA with Regional Access Management Planning in the NW? GOA has not started on the NW yet.

NWSAR wants to see the major trunk routes protected for future use.

The key thing about having a road/access plan that works is; you wouldn't design a road network without understanding where the resources are, and who/when people would be extracting resources. Predicting the future use of the land is key to developing RAMPs. GOA is not at the level of deciding which routes to protect for future use. Existing infrastructure is not at risk, at the moment. GOA cannot be making any decisions until they have the local contextual awareness. GOA wants to maintain working landscapes.

8. Does the Albert Energy Regulator (AER) know that AEP is not at the level of deciding which infrastructure to reclaim or keep, yet? All companies have a reclamation component as a part of their disposition agreements, there are many other policy drivers besides caribou, which could be responsible for reclamation at this time. Eventually AER will have a plan to pick and choose roads to remove, retain, and further develop. Assessments will be completed at that same – just not now. AEP is more than willing and ready to receive further information, plans, etc. from municipalities, Indigenous Peoples, industries, etc. on RAMP solutions that are beneficial to caribou.
3. ILM same answer as the RAMP. Different conversations are happening with different industries, seeing where there is common ground and alignment to plan for ILM in ranges.
4. The ideas for the local management boards and/or knowledge consortium were discussed during the multi-stakeholder sessions in Edmonton (Feb and March 2018) – NWSAR wants to get all players in the room, at the same time to find solutions.

What would NWSAR like to see? Let's scope what that could look like in the Northwest. Most people look to the GOA to initiate this type of work, GOA is interested to see how this could happen from this area. Could NWSAR take the leadership?

NWSAR could perhaps expand the group by bringing in stakeholders from other industries to make up a bigger, diverse group. NWSAR took it upon ourselves to speak up for the communities who do not have a seat at the provincial or federal tables. Access into the ranges for example, is very important to local stakeholders for their livelihoods. NWSAR would like to put together local management boards for each caribou range. We want to know whether the solutions that come from those groups would be of value to the GOA. Before we initiate, we'd like to know this.

So long as there are solutions which are of benefit to the caribou, GOA would seriously consider them.

NWSAR could send a proposal to GOA on how a local board could be established, how NWSAR will pick people to be on it, how NWSAR thinks they could manage that board. Would need to ensure there was diversity on the board (different companies, ENGOs, Indigenous Peoples, etc.) – a plan that had some level of consensus, that actually had some positive difference for caribou would be considered by GOA. GOA could provide technical modelling support. Companies would have capabilities to assist too.

AFPA's knowledge network is inviting none-AFPA members to contribute.

Any plans for caribou would have to meet multiple values. Sometimes solutions have great parts to their plan, but they are not great for caribou. You cannot put a group of people together that goes away after a plan is complete, it's a long-term commitment. Once the plan is done, it is not over. A 100 year plan does not last 100 years – new information, disease, wildfires, etc. change plans.

There are concerns from the energy and forestry perspectives, that plans are always open for review.

Assurance is needed here. Any changes to plans, changes industrial costs, plans, operations, etc. GOA acknowledges this.

The NW has the best hope for achieving a local board, the northwestern caribou have the most hope of survival and recovery. Ranges that are more heavily disturbed – the solution space is much more limited. A plan that shows a positive trajectory for caribou will likely stay in place a little longer, as you have more room to work. There is a lot of solution space in the NW.

5. Where parks relate to caribou GOA need to do inventories. GOA needs to put more money into which lines to assess, and what is their status; this will help to determine where to spend the restoration funds. Older landscapes can be modelled to see whether they are likely come back naturally, soil types affect their recovery. Inventory is the answer – this is where we are going next in all ranges. We need to utilize our funding the best way we can. The people involved in this investment will want their money spent in the best way possible. They will want a say on where it is spent – certainty around protection of restored areas is key. Some funding for restoration will be used for inventories.

There are huge risks with restoration – you can run the risk of having to open up new areas to restore elsewhere that you cannot reach with current disturbance. Access, restoration, and reclamation plans will be developed for each area. The Caribou Mountains and Chinchaga Wildland Parks are certainly candidates for restoration.

6. GOA are looking for new conservation areas.

The NW already has huge conservations areas that require restoration.

Conservation areas are a good tool to utilize for species at risk; conservation achieves something on its own, without the restoration. Essentially, it means that those lands will not receive further disturbance. It allows for disturbance to exist and continue in other

areas of the range (achieving working landscapes). Conservation areas allow for greater freedom in other areas. GOA has heard from industries who feel “legal-vulnerability” (from a security perspective); to conserve and restore some areas, safeguards their future operations.

What about WBNP? There are imminent threats to caribou within existing parks.

SM caribou issues stem from the loss of winter habitat in the foothills (not the parks), GOA is unsure about the issues within WBNP. Habitat within WBNP may not be ideal for caribou – maybe range boundaries should be re-delineated?

7. Conservation areas need to be assessed from a regional land-use planning perspective – a multi-species approach and management, not for caribou alone. We have the biggest solution space, why are GOA pushing for large conservation areas in the NW? Municipalities have been waiting for the Upper and Lower Peace regional land-use plans to start for years, not this piece-mealing approach for separate initiatives and different at-risk species recovery planning.

AEP have experienced a lot of pressure from Canada on caribou range planning – GOA has deadlines to meet for different objectives.

What is included in GOA’s progress report for Canada? The restoration agreements with the oil and gas industry is in place (how much money is coming together and the plan that we will roll out) and the new conservation areas for the NE. GOA is already working on the progress for next 6 months reporting period (April 2019).

Restoration plans can include information and activities for multiple species (mammals, vegetation, etc.) NWSAR’s advocacy work has helped the GOA understand the NW a lot better. NWSAR can request funds from the province to complete a plan/project for caribou. Aggregated forestry conversations are also happening – this is progress.

Partnering with the Alberta's Trappers Association and local trappers in this area for predator management during caribou caving time could be key to increasing caribou calf recruitment survival. NWSAR believes we have easy wins in the NW, which are beneficial to caribou. Restore the habitat in the existing Wildland parks now. What is the point in conserving more habitat when we are not managing existing protected areas?

12. The NW needs better fire fighting policy in place for caribou ranges – GOA is concerned about where the fire fighters would be coming from to fight these types of fires.

11. NWT provides collared caribou data in their progress reports (i.e. caribou mother/ calf pair sightings, mortality investigation results, etc.) – why does GOA not provide this information? GOA are working on releasing more caribou collar data and information on their website this summer. GPS locations would not be available online. May be able to request calf sightings, caribou mortality information from field investigations.

GOA are interested in receiving information from all 3 rural NWSAR municipalities on the number of wolves harvested within county boundaries – if we have locations, also to send those.

There are many data gaps in the NW. NWSAR's FRIAA grant application started with 2 townships in 2 caribou ranges, to assess what the baseline disturbance is, and how much restoration is going to cost. We decided to try and fill as many data gaps as we can; we've expanded to 4 townships in all 4 caribou ranges.

GOA is interested in NWSAR's FRIAA project concept – there needs to be an organized conversation to show the pressures. Once the project proposal is flushed out NWSAR should send it to AEP to see whether GOA would be willing to accept it, and become a partner on the project.

GOA has a manual for restoration activities in the province; it sets the standards – NWSAR should

review this. Even if the disturbance percentage differs in the caribou ranges from the percentages GOA has in their draft provincial range plan, it doesn't really change the conversation. The relationship between habitat disturbance and the caribou decline trend is not disputed. Finding less disturbance doesn't resolve the issue, it may show that we have less restoration work to do. GOA funding may come with conditions/restrictions for any project.

GOA will await the FRIAA project proposal from NWSAR. Also if NWSAR want to consider leading a locally-led group GOA will await a proposal from NWSAR on this front too. Companies are willing to share data and information that is beneficial to the project.

NWSAR will await to hear what information GOA needs to complete their NW socio-economic analysis gaps.

Ronda Goulden, Brian Makowecki and Terry Jessiman left the meeting at 2:52 p.m.

Lisa Wardley called a meeting recess at 2:54 p.m.

Lisa Wardley reconvened the meeting at 3:09 p.m.

5. Delegation: Update from Forestry Industry Reps
3:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

When GOA first started talking about aggregated forestry harvest – they rightly believe that you reduce your impact on the landscape (our modelling confirms this). The tighter the disturbances are together, the more 500m buffers overlap, so the disturbance percentages are lower and closer to the 35/65% threshold. The more you aggregate, the closer you can get to achieve the thresholds.

Forestry divides their FMA into compartments, (age classes of trees are as close as possible) – try to harvest trees that are between 110-130 years, younger is usually too small, older is past maturity. We follow historical wildfire patterns. Aggregated forces us to harvest a broader range of trees, could become unsustainable harvesting as we harvest sub-optimum trees. There is a need for flexibility in the aggregated

approach for reactions to MBP infestations and wildfires (GOA is not sure what the mechanism is to solve this, yet).

Does aggregated harvesting allow for harvesting of areas which are likely to burn? Currently there is an exercise to see if we can get the harvesting levels to 65% undisturbed habitat over space and time – this does not balance habitat for species and wildfires – this still needs to be completed. Forestry management branch approves AACs and ensures we are compliant with sustainable forestry management standards.

Forestry still has to adhere to forestry management standards under AgFor; there are multiple values to achieve and AAC to be approved. We have been approved by AEP through caribou range planning first, then adhere to AgFor standards after.

Many GOA departments and third parties have an undercurrent of caribou goals – they're all doing actions to accomplish multiple goals, including caribou goals.

The current way we manage forests allows us lots of flexibility to changes in circumstances outside of our control (i.e. price of lumber change, recession, MBP, wildfires, etc.). Aggregated harvest does not allow for the same flexibilities.

Some companies may be able to make aggregated harvest work as they have a bigger solution space to work with outside of caribou ranges. Many companies are currently running their timber supply numbers through scenario development, once they have established compartments for aggregated harvest. This will tell us whether we can still harvest the same volumes as we are with our current practices. NWSAR needs to be part of a diverse management board for companies to come back and provide results too.

Why don't industries use the same roads? Some of the problems we have today exist because of our previous inability to share access in the past with other industries. Shared access (ILM) would help remove lots of disturbance from the landscape.

Any land that is taken off the FMA we have to adjust our plans. If it reaches a certain threshold we must be compensated. Every FMA holder is concerned about their land base. How we adjust the cut when there are wildfires (2.5% is the

threshold of loss). If (X) is taken away and that affects the mills, then we need to adjust. We're always under constant pressure.

Jacque Bateman left the meeting at 3:50 p.m.

Tolko would be interested in presenting their scenario analysis results to a management board that is quickly established, with a diversity of stakeholders on the board.

The stewardship group could provide a rep to sit at your table. The stewardship group is currently completing exercises for conservation areas (looking at the 17% conservation areas target). Conservation areas under municipal authority are not currently counted towards the GOA 17% target. Municipal environmental reserves are very restrictive (similar to provincial Wildland Parks), they should be included.

Miron Croy left the meeting at 4:30 p.m.

NWSAR could look to fill researcher's gaps with your FRIAA project. Are there any gaps in the researcher's research that they can fill with this project?

The work must be credible, it must be scientific. Utilize a reputable organization.

6. Draft FRIAA FRIP Grant Application

NWSAR administration provided an overview of the preliminary ideas for the grant application project.

a) Potential Expansion of the Project

NWSAR administration provided an overview of the expansion details on page 19 of the agenda package.

NWSAR administration have been involved in conversations with ABMI about partnering to complete more technical components of the expansion to the project.

b) Potential Outcomes (Project Deliverables)

NWSAR provided an overview of the potential project deliverables on Page 20 of agenda package.

All this information is needed in the NW from a Tolko perspective. Tolko need to understand where GOA sits on this project, before they move any further. The stewardship meetings are having the same conversations.

The more partners you have involved in the project, the harder it becomes to arrive at a conclusion; to select townships for the study area; finalizing the report, etc. – NWSAR runs the risk of not having their research questions answered. Also becomes more expensive – forestry has concerns that the project scope is getting too broad. Too much scope, means too much work.

c) Commonalities and Potential Partnerships

Every group that you ask to partner will have different things to add to the project.

The stewardship group has already developed a list of data gaps that need to be filled – will have to compare theirs to NWSAR's. Too different data standards: AVI vs. ABMI. There might be some common-ground between sharing data from the stewardship table to this one.

West Fraser could be willing to share aerial photos for the Chinchaga range (from 2014) with NWSAR, if it would help in data gathering.

Species at risk assessments are commencing inside WBNP at the same time as we are trying to do work outside of the park.

Knowledge must be gained from partners across the country that have the expertise. Maybe our project is a bit too broad at the moment, but it should provide the answers that we need.

NWSAR should set a criteria for site selection, what questions do you want to answer, what are you trying to show, what are the end goals? Companies have data – they can share some, most of it is public. Timelines and budget are required, we don't want to duplicate work.

Restoration: types – what are you doing? Sites that do not meet vegetation height regulations – there may be issues in restoration abilities for such sites. Companies have

agreements with First Nations in these ranges about information sharing – we'd like to know what you've sent to them.

Companies have grant writers on staff that NWSAR could utilize to assist with/write the grant application. Utilizing FRIP funds is based upon companies endorsing you to utilize their FRIP funds. You could receive letters from multiple companies, allowing you to utilize (X) amount of their funds. FRIAA Open Funds is a good avenue to use, it's decided by the membership – they rank the proposals. It is a competitive process: proposals get voted on the synopsis, the membership votes; the top ones get funded. NWSAR could potentially look at a Phase 1 project (answering one question), while working on later phases that are much more expensive?

Would we get approval to use FRIP funding for a project outside of the FMA? It would be difficult. The AVI layer does not include inventory on seismic lines – so this is a data gap for companies too within FMAs. Any ground component/ground-truthing would have to involve First Nations partners.

Steve Blanton, Tim Gauthier, Joe Dolling and Curtis Cole left the meeting at 5:38 p.m.

Lisa Wardley called a meeting recess at 5:40 p.m.

Lisa Wardley reconvened the meeting at 5:58 p.m.

NWSAR administration provided an overview of the ABMI presentation slides (handout) – briefly describing research ABMI has conducted previously RE caribou/ what they could bring to the FRIAA project.

NWSAR supports developing a big picture project plan (including the components provided by NWSAR administration under 6a. and 6b.); dividing up components that could be completed in multiple phases. The bigger picture project will demonstrate that NWSAR is serious about helping caribou, and are not looking to stall range planning in the NW.

Essentially, we'll be developing a masterplan with phased segments, split into different projects. We need to show how we're going to work together with partners before we present externally – funders could set their own priorities, based on

our goals and objectives – see how we can get the projects funded.

We will have to present to CAPP and other organizations too.

NWSAR agrees with the potential deliverables; we need to flesh out actual goals and objectives. What's the research questions that we want to answer?

d) Mapping Exercise

NWSAR did not feel ready to participate in a mapping exercise for township selection; identifying the study areas. NWSAR would like NWSAR administration to further develop the ideas, goals, objectives, questions and deliverables; providing a more finalized proposal for the next NWSAR meeting.

7. Government Advocacy (Transboundary Meetings and Collaboration)

a. REDI Tour and RMA Meetings

REDI is organizing meetings in NWT with First Nations, Metis groups, and government entities. NWSAR could double up with REDI for caribou discussions at these meetings.

A resolution was passed last fall at the AAMD&C convention (now Rural Municipalities of Alberta – RMA) for RMA to spearhead the transboundary meetings and discussions on species at risk recovery; collaboration in NWT and BC. Mackenzie County recently had their RMA member visit; a discussion was had about this resolution. If we meet with any Northeastern BC and/or NWT government entities, we should bring an RMA rep with us.

FCM reps will also be working to get things moving along RE our resolution at the federal level.

Lisa Wardley will inform NWSAR about the REDI road trip dates.

b. Calgary Zoo Partnership

Calgary Zoo has made some significant progress on the Greater Sage Grouse file. They now have much more

capacity RE scientists involved in their projects, there may be an opportunity for this group to explore a partnership with the Calgary Zoo on the caribou file.

NWSAR administration could follow up and bring new information back to NWSAR?

18-06-005

MOVED by Sunni-Jeanne Walker

That NWSAR administration explores potential partnerships with the Calgary Zoo on the caribou file.

CARRIED

c. Collaboration of Canadian Municipalities

At FCM there were 2 meetings outside of the conference; one was FPAC sponsored, and the other was hosted by the City of Fort Saint John. It was suggested that all concerned municipalities collaborate together at the federal level as an official unified voice; a resource-based municipality group was the wording used at this meeting. Is our committee willing to participate in a national collation, if this does materialize? Many members thought this as an essential part of NWSAR's government advocacy role.

FPAC has offered their administration team to do a national approach from the forestry perspective. FPAC is also doing a weekly information share with a municipal group – if we have new information we should share it with them.

8. NWSAR Potential Next Steps

As discussed above.

9. Committee Member Updates

Thank all NWSAR members who contributed to the garnering of support for the emergent resolution at FCM. NWSAR's Chair appreciates everyone's contribution.

There was lots of debate, support and opposition to the emergent resolution. All other resolutions passed quickly with minimal debate.

The expansion of the boreal protected areas surrounding WBNP, to the NE, creates more opportunities for the diseased

bison to encroach onto private lands – this increases the risk of disease transfer from wood bison to cattle in NW Alberta.

Do we want to meet with anyone RE caribou during stampede? NWSAR members do not see the value in setting up meetings on the caribou file during Stampede week in Calgary.

10. Budget Update (In-Camera)

As all other meeting participants had left the meeting, there was no requirement for NWSAR to move in-camera for the budget discussion.

The current state of the budget was discussed; there is no new information to provide at this time.

NWSAR Mackenzie County administration will forward the budget information provided to Mackenzie County Council on May 8, 2018 to the NWSAR Town of High Level administration.

11. Terms of Reference

Received for information purposes.

12. Next Meeting Date(s)

18-06-006

MOVED by Linda Halabisky

That the next NWSAR meeting date will be:

- ❖ Wednesday, August 1, 2018 @ 11:00 a.m. at Town of High Level

CARRIED

13. Adjournment

18-06-007

MOVED by Terry Ungarian

That Northwest Species at Risk Committee meeting be adjourned at 7:10 p.m.

CARRIED

Northwest Species at Risk Committee
Administration Lead: Byron Peters, Mackenzie County

These minutes were adopted this ____ day of _____
2018

Lisa Wardley, Chair

DRAFT

Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) NWSAR Resolution

RESOLUTION: -17F

TITLE: Municipal and Privately-Owned Protected Areas Inventory

SPONSOR: Mackenzie County

PREAMBLE: In 2010, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) adopted the *Strategic Plan for Biodiversity*, which included 20 global biodiversity goals, known as the *Aichi Targets*. All parties to the convention agreed to achieve these targets by 2020. In response to this, Canada adopted a suite of national targets, known as the *2020 Biodiversity Goals and Targets for Canada*. Canada and Alberta's co-led *Pathway to Canada Target 1* project, focuses on the protection of 17% of terrestrial areas and inland waters, and 10% of coastal and marine areas, across Canada. Alberta Environment and Parks has also committed to achieving the protection of 17% of terrestrial areas and inland waters by 2020, in the province of Alberta.

WHEREAS: As of the end of 2016, the Government of Canada recognizes that 10.5% of terrestrial areas and inland waters, and 0.96% of coastal and marine areas are protected, through federally protected areas; and

WHEREAS: As of June 2018, Alberta Environment and Parks recognizes that 12.54% of Alberta is protected, through 8.24% federally and 4.3% provincially protected areas; and

WHEREAS: The International Union for Conservation of Nature recommends that all privately-owned protected areas, that satisfy all international standards, should be recognized as protected areas by all levels of government; and

WHEREAS: The *Modernized Municipal Government Act* provides municipalities with land-use planning tools, such as environmental reserves to permanently protect parcels of land to conserve natural features including: natural drainage courses, flood plains, waterbodies, and riparian areas from future development; and

WHEREAS: Alberta Environment and Parks has yet to announce that municipal and privately-owned protected areas would be recognized in their assessment to achieve their target of 17% terrestrial areas and inland waters protection; Therefore be it

RESOLVED: That Rural Municipalities of Alberta urge the Government of Alberta to recognize municipal and privately-owned protected areas in their reporting towards Alberta's 17% protection of terrestrial areas and inland waters target; provided that they satisfy international standards for protected areas or Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs); Further be it

RESOLVED: That Rural Municipalities of Alberta partner with Alberta Urban Municipalities Association to compile an inventory of all municipal and privately-owned protected areas in Alberta, for the purpose of providing Alberta Environment and Parks with a complete inventory of candidate protected areas and OECMs, for their 2020 17% terrestrial areas and inland waters protection target.

Member Background:

Canada's 2020 *Biodiversity Goals and Targets for Canada* was released in 2015. Canada and Alberta's co-led *Pathway to Canada Target 1* project, is based upon the Convention on Biological Diversity's *Aichi Target 11*.¹

In 2017, the Governments of Canada and Alberta established a National Advisory Panel to advise governments on achieving Canada's international commitment to the Convention on Biological Diversity.²

Canada and Alberta's co-led *Pathway* project also established a National Steering Committee, an Indigenous Circle of Experts and a Local Government Advisory Group, who make up the *Pathway* Team.³ However, the Local Government Advisory Group is yet to be formalized.⁴

In 2016, Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP) committed to achieving the protection of 17% of terrestrial areas and inland waters by 2020, in the province of Alberta.

AEP's 2016-17 annual report describes the potential for privately-owned and municipal protected areas to qualify for reporting towards AEP's 17% target. Outlining how Alberta will identify these areas if they meet international standards for protected areas or Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs), pending international OECMs guideline development.⁵

In January 2018, the International Union for Conservation of Nature released *Guidelines for Recognizing and Reporting Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures*. These guidelines recognize that municipal and privately-owned protected areas can provide OECMs benefits, which can meet international reporting standards.⁶

AEP's 2017-18 annual report does not mention identifying other areas, including municipal and privately-owned protected areas or OECMs in their reporting, towards their 17% target.⁷

Although the intention of environmental reserves, under the *Modernized Municipal Government Act* (2018), is to prevent the development of hazardous lands, avoidance of natural drainage features and pollution prevention in wetlands and other waterbodies, many municipalities create environmental reserves for other intentions, including environmental significance. The co-benefits of designating environmental reserves can include the protection of wildlife habitat and habitat connectivity, protected areas for biodiversity and safeguarding the hydrological functionality of

¹ Source: <http://www.conservation2020canada.ca/the-pathway/>

² Source: <https://www.newswire.ca/news-releases/federal-and-provincial-governments-create-national-advisory-panel-on-canadas-biodiversity-conservation-initiative-627230281.html>

³ Source: <http://www.conservation2020canada.ca/the-pathway/>

⁴ Source: <http://www.conservation2020canada.ca/who-we-are/>

⁵ Source: <https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/40c2fab1-e757-49f1-b403-e42c0239158a/resource/b77f22fa-e83e-4b6b-bd8b-e74868ef9547/download/2016-17-aep-annual-report-20170623.pdf>

⁶ Source: https://www.iucn.org/sites/dev/files/content/documents/guidelines_for_recognising_and_reporting_oecms_-_january_2018.pdf

⁷ Source: <https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/40c2fab1-e757-49f1-b403-e42c0239158a/resource/d50a12fa-15b3-4471-a6be-6b41bc6361d1/download/aep-annual-report-2017-2018.pdf>

Northwest Species at Risk Committee
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wetlands and waterbodies.⁸ These benefits could be considered as OECMs under international standards.

AEP is working to achieve their 17% target, through multiple initiatives including caribou range planning. AEP's *Draft Provincial Woodland Caribou Range Plan (2017)* provides the scope of Canada and Alberta's co-led *Pathway*, and states that conservation areas designated as part of range planning may contribute to their 17% target.⁹

Through caribou range planning, AEP have proposed to permanently protect approximately 1.3 million hectares of land in Mackenzie County for the Bistcho, Yates and Caribou Mountains herds; these areas would qualify and report towards AEP's 17% target.¹⁰ 1.3 million hectares equates to approximately 15.8% of Mackenzie County's geographic land-base.

AEP's *Business Plan 2018-21* describes how municipal and privately-managed areas that may meet the definition of a protected area or an OECM, are currently excluded as data is incomplete. AEP estimates that municipal and privately-owned protected areas represent less than 0.25% of the 17% provincial target.¹¹

Over the next two years, other RMA member municipalities could see proposals for an increase in provincial protected spaces to achieve AEP's 17% target. Additional protected spaces have the ability to impact municipal service capacities and operating budgets.

A complete inventory of all municipal and privately-owned protected areas will help AEP to assess and include all areas which qualify, for reporting towards their 17% target.

Other References:

Government of Alberta (2018) *Modernized Municipal Government Act*, Available: http://www.qp.alberta.ca/documents/Acts/2016ch24_unpr.pdf

Government of Canada (2018) *Canada's Protected Areas*, Available: <https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/environmental-indicators/protected-areas.html>

RMA Background:

⁸ Source: <https://www.communityconserve.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Environmental-Reserve-in-Alberta-A-Discussion-Paper.pdf>

⁹ Source: <http://aep.alberta.ca/fish-wildlife/wildlife-management/caribou-range-planning/documents/DRAFT-CaribouRangePlanAndAppendices-Dec2017.pdf>

¹⁰ Source: <http://aep.alberta.ca/fish-wildlife/wildlife-management/caribou-range-planning/documents/DRAFT-CaribouRangePlanAndAppendices-Dec2017.pdf>

¹¹ Source: <https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/503f5c97-1fc9-4d72-b1ab-f32eafd9dd7f/resource/492414c7-cc8d-4154-abff-bb81081f0644/download/environment-and-parks.pdf>

Northwest Species at Risk Committee
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NWSAR Pilot Project

NWSAR admin steps since June 21, 2018:

- Developed NWSAR research questions
- Developed a draft criteria for pilot project township selection
- Developed NWSAR goals
- Developed rationale for each goal
- Provided questions to ABMI for each goal
- Sent pilot project slides to ABMI
- Participated in a conference call with ABMI (review slides, ask/answer questions)
- ABMI has some questions for NWSAR, prior to providing quotes for project work

NWSAR research questions:

1. Are habitat disturbance percentages accurate for anthropogenic (human footprint) and natural disturbances in NW caribou ranges?
2. Which disturbances have naturally revegetated and could be removed from the habitat disturbance percentages, in NW caribou ranges?
3. Which disturbances could be good candidates for restoration activities?
4. What are the estimated densities of ungulate populations (caribou, elk, all deer species, moose and bison) in NW caribou ranges?
5. What are the estimated densities of predators (wolves, black bears and grizzly bears) within NW caribou ranges?

NWSAR pilot project goals:

1. Baseline Disturbance
2. Vegetation Inventory Phase 1 (Chinchaga)
3. Wildlife Densities
4. Vegetation Inventory Phase 2 (Bistcho, Yates and Caribou Mountains)
5. Identifying Candidate Restoration Areas
6. Milestone Updates, Summaries, Progress Reporting
7. Pilot Project Final Report

NWSAR pilot project goal content and rationale, and draft townships selection criteria: please see accompanying slides, before reviewing the following questions

ABMI comments and questions for NWSAR RE project goals:

Goal 1: Baseline Disturbance

1. Goal 1 answered with Goals 2 and 4, if it's from a vegetation recovery perspective.
2. If the goal here is to look at what vegetation has regrown; ultimately removing lines that have disappeared through vegetation regrowth – this is goals 2 and 4.
3. Does NWSAR have any issues with the identification of disturbance? (i.e. identity of footprint features in certain areas, not from a vegetation recovery perspective).
4. ABMI could complete Goal 1 if NWSAR would like to determine whether human disturbance has been mapped accurately (i.e. spatial data is incorrect – ABMI human footprint layer says there is a well pad, but ground-truthing proves otherwise).
5. Could be completely in 1 of 2 ways, or a combination of both:
 - a. Fly-overs of selected areas (taking high-resolution pictures or videos) – ABMI will then geo-reference the images/video and compare with their inventory.
 - b. Citizen science (using ABMI's new app Naturelynx) – citizens/volunteers can take geo-tagged pictures with the app, data is collected by ABMI through the app – they will then compare with their inventory.
6. Fly-bys are relatively quick, takes a few days. Complete during late fall and again come snowmelt in the spring. Citizen science will take much longer.
7. Does NWSAR want to complete Goal 1? – Complete to guide Goals 2 and 4?

Goal 2: Vegetation Inventory Phase 1 (Chinchaga)

1. Estimating vegetation heights using existing LiDAR data (2007) does not need to be restricted to 4 townships – desktop study of entire Chinchaga range.
2. Field component (ground-truthing will be restricted to the pilot project area).
3. ABMI's vegetation inventory will be completed with higher precision than previous studies of other research groups.
4. Desktop study can be completed any time – Field component during summer 2019.
5. How in-depth do we want to get with inventories? (Structural vs. species specific).

Goal 3: Wildlife Densities

1. Cameras and ARUs can be deployed anytime after the ground is fully frozen (typically after Christmas) – January 2019 could work.
2. 75 cameras per range (25 in north, 25 in middle, 25 in south parts of the range).
3. It takes a crew of 2 people 6-10 days to deploy 25 cameras. ABMI suggests 3 crews of 2 people deploying all 75 cameras per range at one time.
4. Cameras cost \$1,000 each (75 cameras x 4 ranges = \$300,000) *equipment cost only (does not include data processing) – there are cost saving alternatives.
5. ABMI have 50 ARUs to lend NWSAR – if we choose to use ARUs, ABMI suggests covering 2 ranges per year, alternating the ranges monitored each year (provides NWSAR with datasets for each range every 2 years).
6. Volunteers deploying the cameras would require a couple of days training with ABMI in High Level – there are also very strict rules RE deploying cameras and ARUs (i.e. no lures, no dogs, cannot skidoo right up to camera placement location, must access placement spots via intensively used roads/trails/pipelines/walk from access road).

Goal 4: Vegetation Inventory Phase 2 (Bistcho, Yates, Caribou Mountains)

1. LiDAR data exists for the Bistcho area at a lower resolution (2m instead of 1m) – ABMI would need to learn more about this data and its technical capabilities.
2. NWSAR needs to consider the cost of acquiring this (mid-2000s) LiDAR data for Bistcho vs. acquiring new data from fly-bys (providing current state) – there has been significant natural changes in these areas since the mid-2000s.
3. Fly-bys could be complete at the same time as the ground-truthing field component – summer 2020.

Goal 5: Identifying Candidate Restoration Areas

1. Current ABMI practice is to conduct a coarse exercise first – this could be completed for the entire ranges (could become Goal 1 to enable township selection for pilot project areas and /or define where to locate cameras/ARUs).
2. Could be completed relatively quickly (part one).
3. Could input new data collection into model to run a finer scale identification process as one of the final outputs?

4. Should check to see whether GOA policy/directive has recommendations for scale of restoration modelling.

Goals 6 and 7: Milestone Updates, Summaries, Progress Reporting and Pilot Project Final Report

1. If ABMI are comfortable with NWSAR admin being the lead for all written materials? – ABMI is value-neutral, essentially they are a non-advocacy group. This would require more discussion and approval from their board.

Written materials, while they can be used by NWSAR to advocate to GOA/Feds, provide social media posts, etc. the actual progress reports, summaries, infographics cannot provide bias/advocacy content.

2. NWSAR interpretation of research findings would have to be reviewed by ABMI.
3. NWSAR agrees to provide ABMI with copies of all written outputs prior to finalizing and release?
4. ABMI would like to publish scientific manuscripts with the data collected through our project – is this something NWSAR approves of?
5. ABMI can host data on their online platform for NWSAR to access.

ABMI Cost Estimates for NWSAR Pilot Project

1. All of the above questions need to be answered first.
2. NWSAR need to determine ABMI involvement vs. capacity/involvement of NWSAR admin/volunteers to complete certain tasks.
3. NWSAR to determine a maximum ceiling budget?
4. NWSAR to propose timelines to deliver all aspects of the pilot project.
5. ABMI cost estimates will not include air support – could NWSAR arrange for access to helicopters and/or fixed-wing planes to carry out fly-bys and/or camera deployment tasks?

Project Funding

1. Which associations/others do we want to apply for funding from? (i.e. FPAC; AFPA; CAPP; FRIAA; GOA; Canada; etc.)
2. Who are we willing to partner with? (i.e. Industry; First Nations; GOA; ENGOs; etc.)

Northwest Species at Risk Committee
Administration Lead: Byron Peters, Mackenzie County

17th North American Caribou Workshop Working Together

Date: October 29 – November 2, 2018
Location: Delta Hotel, Ottawa City Centre
Price: \$475.00 per person
Conference Held: Once every 2 years
Program: Yet to be finalized
More information: <http://www.nacw2018.ca/Homepage>

Optional Pre Conference Workshops – Monday October 29, 2018:

Climate Change 101 – Full Day

Price: \$60 per person
Maximum number of participants: 50 people
Experts: Greg Flato (ECCC); Chris Derksen (ECCC); Marc-Andre Parisien (NRCan);
Mark Hebblewhite (University of Montana)

Indigenous Talking Circle – Full Day

Price: \$60 per person
Maximum number of participants: unlimited

More information: <http://www.nacw2018.ca/pre-conference-workshops>

Optional Post Conference Activities – Friday November 2, 2018:

Eastern Ontario Model Forest Tour – Full Day

Price: \$95 per person
Maximum number of participants: 50 people

Field Trip to Kitigan Zibi – Full Day

Price: \$95 per person
Maximum number of participants: 25 people

Collections Tour at the Canadian Museum of History – Half Day

Price: \$20 per person
Maximum number of participants: 25 people

Hike at Gatineau Park – Half Day

Price: \$20 per person
Maximum number of participants: 30 people

More information: <http://www.nacw2018.ca/post-conference-activities>



17th NORTH AMERICAN
CARIBOU WORKSHOP

2018
Ottawa



17th NORTH AMERICAN
CARIBOU WORKSHOP
October 29 – November 2, 2018

OTTAWA, ON CANADA

Connect with
people from across
North America
who are involved in
caribou research,
monitoring,
management,
conservation and
habitat restoration.

Theme | Working Together

- Translating Knowledge into Action
- Strengthening Livelihoods and Futures
- Finding Innovative Solutions

www.nacw2018.ca

TERMS OF REFERENCE

NORTHWEST SPECIES AT RISK COMMITTEE

Background:

The northwest region of Alberta encompasses high economic development value in a variety of natural resource sectors. Notwithstanding this, the region is requested to carry the highest burden of environmental protection of any other region within Alberta.

Current and proposed Provincial policy and strategies requires the Lower Peace Region to subsidize economic activity in other regions; to allow, both, the Federal and Provincial governments to achieve conservation targets for the natural environment. Cumulatively, multiple conservation initiatives and species at risk recovery strategies have the ability to negatively impact the rural communities of northwest Alberta.

We, the local tenants of this region have collaborated; in an attempt to secure smart economic growth, a sustained quality of life, and well-balanced environmental protection for our future generations. Through the use of optimal adaptive management, transparent stakeholder engagement, and effective environmental stewardship; we endeavour to achieve this purpose.

Purpose:

To collectively provide and share information, ideas and resources; relating to the continued and future prosperity of northwest Alberta. Instill effective regional adaptive management and transparency which allows all stakeholders to play a vital role in shaping our collective future. Develop tangible solutions founded upon an evidence-based approach, to ensure a balance of smart economic growth, a sustained quality of life, and an enhanced natural environment; for all of our businesses, communities and wildlife.

Responsibilities:

To ensure that any impending species recovery or conservation initiative, that has the ability to affect the smart growth of northwest Alberta; is prefaced with a thorough regional socio-economic impact analysis.

To proactively work with all other levels of government, including the First Nations; to create well-balanced working groups; with all key stakeholders relevant to impending conservation areas and species recovery.

Emphasizing that, northwest Alberta currently encompasses a vast amount of protected lands. Impending species recovery and conservation initiatives should aim to enhance the value of these areas for species at risk recovery and biodiversity, rather than seeking to protect unjustifiable additional areas of land.

Northwest Species at Risk Committee
Administration Lead: Byron Peters, Mackenzie County

Structure:

Two councillors and an alternate appointed by each of the founding municipalities.

Alternates may attend all meetings.

Founding municipalities consist of:

- County of Northern Lights
- Mackenzie County
- Town of High Level
- Town of Rainbow Lake
- Clear Hills County
- Town of Manning

Associate membership is available to other municipalities. Associate members shall not have voting rights.

Mackenzie County is the administrative lead for the committee, with administrative support from each of the founding municipalities.

The administrative lead will prepare and provide the agenda for all meetings.

Meetings are open to the public as per Section 197 and Section 198 of the Municipal Government Act.

Meetings may, in part, be closed to the public if matters to be addressed are recognized under; Section 197(2) of the Municipal Government Act, and/or Division 2 – Part 1 of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

The committee shall pursue grant opportunities to fund any larger projects, with Mackenzie County as the grant sponsor and/or lead.

Quorum and Costs:

Decisions shall be reached by consensus, consisting of two appointed members from each of the founding municipalities. Alternates shall not be considered for consensus unless standing in for an appointed member.

Meetings shall be hosted by the Town of High Level, at the Town of High Level Office, and meeting costs will be shared by the founding municipalities.

Each Municipality and other delegates are expected to cover the costs of their members. Additional costs, such as those derived from committee motions, will be subject to additional discussion and approval from each of the founding municipalities.

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Administration Lead: Byron Peters, Mackenzie County

All decisions reached by consensus; which are within the scope of the Terms of Reference, are binding upon all municipalities.

Associate members shall pay a \$1000 annual Associate Membership fee.

Communication:

An electronic data sharing forum will be created and maintained, with access for all of the committee members, and meetings will be scheduled quarterly, or as required by the Chair.

FINANCIAL TERMS OF REFERENCE

NORTHWEST SPECIES AT RISK COMMITTEE

Financial Responsibility:

The Town of High Level shall be the party responsible for administration and management of all financial matters relating to the Northwest Species at Risk Committee.

Funds held in trust by the Town of High Level will only be used to further the goals of the Northwest Species at Risk Committee. No funds will be released by the Town of High Level without approval by consensus of the Northwest Species at Risk Committee.

The Town of High Level will develop and maintain a budget report for the Northwest Species at Risk Committee which will provide all known revenues and expenses. At no time will the Town of High Level reimburse expenses incurred by the Northwest Species at Risk Committee that will exceed those funds held in trust for the Northwest Species at Risk Committee as described in the budget report.

In the event of dissolution of the Northwest Species at Risk Committee, any remaining funds held by the Town of High Level after all expenses due have been paid, will be returned to the funding partners as a proportional share of the amounts originally invested.