

Bathurst Caribou Harvesters' Gathering January 29-31, 2013



Credit: Bruno Croft,
GNWT



Credit: Karin Clark, WRRB

Report by:
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Gathering Co-Hosted by:
Tłıchǫ Government and Wek'èezhìi Renewable Resources Board

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Report Summary

The three day Bathurst Caribou Harvesters Gathering on January 29-31, 2013 was planned as an opportunity for Aboriginal people who depend on the Bathurst caribou to meet and share their wisdom and experiences in addressing management issues. Grassroots Aboriginal elders, harvesters and youth delegated by Aboriginal governments and co-management boards of the NWT, Nunavut and Saskatchewan were invited to share knowledge across cultures and landscapes and make recommendations to decision-makers. The Gathering, attended by approximately 120 people, was structured to reflect a traditional format for dialogue and knowledge sharing that lends itself to a sense of equality among the participants. Identification of key issues served as the basis for focused development of solutions and recommendations.

The Gathering reflected advances in people's confidence to assert their perspectives and develop concrete recommendations for moving forward. A lot has been learned through the six years of debate since the 2007 Caribou Summit held in Inuvik about approaches in management. All parties have come to recognize the value of working together. The value of the grassroots approach was reaffirmed, and participants repeatedly mentioned their interest in sharing knowledge at similar forums in the future.

Commitments were made by participants to bring the results of the Gathering back to communities and sponsoring organizations with the view to acquiring support for the recommendations. Timely follow-up on an inter-regional process will support those who are dependent on caribou to renew their traditional role in taking care of the caribou.

Information from the Gathering was collected through audio recording of the proceedings, key messages posted on flip charts, and notes which were taken as close to verbatim as possible. Through consensus the Gathering participants put forward six recommendations, and this report provides, and reflects on, six key themes which the authors developed through review of the notes in order to provide context for the recommendations. The six themes and recommendations are summarized in the following table:

Gathering Themes and Recommendations

Themes	Recommendations
1. Traditional Monitoring and Management Systems	Traditional systems of monitoring should be implemented as a means of understanding the health and well-being of the caribou and as a basis for making decisions about harvest.
2. Traditional Aboriginal Laws about Caribou	Aboriginal governments should commit to confronting the breaking of traditional laws related to caribou. On-the-land curriculum and programs should be established and supported to ensure that new harvesters are properly trained in traditional harvesting laws ensure that new harvesters are properly trained in traditional harvesting laws specific to their regions

Themes	Recommendations
	and communities..
3. Research Questions	A forum should be convened very soon together with the Territorial government biologists to discuss how herds are defined and how they get their population numbers.
4. Research Planning and Follow-Up	Aboriginal researchers and Traditional Knowledge Holders should be involved in every step of research planning and follow-up with respect to research undertaken by governments and co-management boards – from developing questions and methods, to interpreting and communicating the results.
5. Grassroots Approach	Aboriginal elders and harvesters must be recognized as stewards of the caribou, playing a leading role in any management plans. Any discussions about plans for the Bathurst caribou must be held in a forum with all nations affected having the opportunity to be present.
6. Next Steps	a) An inter-regional body is needed to discuss changes in the Bathurst caribou and make recommendations for common action to conserve the caribou for future generations. b) Aboriginal governments and co-management boards should engage with communities about options for coordinating participation in inter-regional management to safeguard the Bathurst caribou – and report back to the Bathurst Caribou Working Group by September 2013. Based on these community options, governments and co-management boards should convene a forum to discuss next steps. c) There is an ongoing role for the Working Group made up of representatives from: - Akaičho Territory Government (including the Yellowknives Dene First Nation) - Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada - Athabasca Dēnesųłné - Dehcho First Nation - Department of Environment – Government of Nunavut - Department of Environment and Natural Resources – Government of the NWT - Department of Wildlife and Environment – Nunavut Tunngavik Inc - Kitikmeot Regional Wildlife Board - Nunavut Wildlife Management Board - NWT Métis Nation - Sahtú Renewable Resources Board - Tųchų Government - Wek’ēezhii Renewable Resources Board

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Bathurst Caribou Harvesters' Gathering Report

January 29-31, 2013

Behchokó (Tłıchq Territory) and Tree of Peace Friendship Centre (Akaitcho Territory)

Introduction

The conservation of the Bathurst caribou herd is of great importance to the well-being of all Northern and Aboriginal peoples in the Northwest Territories, Nunavut and Saskatchewan. Recognizing the role of Aboriginal harvesters in conservation, a working group of thirteen organizations developed a plan for a Bathurst Caribou Harvesters' Gathering on January 29-31, 2013 in the Tłıchq community of Behchokó. The Tłıchq Government (TG) and Wek'èezhìi Renewable Resources Board (WRRB) agreed to co-host the Gathering, recognizing that they have special responsibilities outlined in the Tłıchq Agreement to ensure that management planning processes for the Bathurst Caribou herd are achieved jointly with any body having authority over the caribou range and Aboriginal peoples who traditionally harvested from the herd. Implementing any management planning process will require consultation, engagement and information exchange with the many groups of people involved with caribou in the NWT, Nunavut and Saskatchewan.

On June 13, 2012, TG, WRRB and the Department of Environment & Natural Resources, Government of the Northwest Territories invited thirteen organizations to discuss coordinating and collaborating together as a "working group" -to develop short and long-term management planning processes for the Bathurst Caribou herd. Each organization agreed to confer with their respective leadership and communities to receive guidance and feedback on participating in the process and developing potential management actions.

The organizations present discussed a "grassroots approach" in which Aboriginal harvesters from the Northwest Territories, Nunavut and Saskatchewan would gather to discuss the Bathurst Caribou Herd. During a follow-up call in August 2012, the organizations noted that while community engagement is ongoing, there was a strong desire to bring together Aboriginal harvesters from communities within the Bathurst Caribou range to guide management activities.

Bathurst Caribou "Working Group"

- Akaitcho Territory Government (including the Yellowknives Dene First Nation)
- Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada
- Athabasca Dënesųłíné
- Dehcho First Nation
- Department of Environment – Government of Nunavut
- Department of Environment and Natural Resources – Government of the NWT
- Department of Wildlife and Environment – Nunavut Tunngavik Inc
- Kitikmeot Regional Wildlife Board
- Nunavut Wildlife Management Board
- NWT Métis Nation
- Sahtú Renewable Resources Board
- Tłıchq Government
- Wek'èezhìi Renewable Resources Board

Participants

The Bathurst Caribou Harvesters' Gathering provided an opportunity for grassroots Aboriginal participants delegated by Aboriginal governments and co-management boards of the NWT, Nunavut and Saskatchewan to share knowledge across cultures and landscapes and make recommendations to decision-makers. Organizers of the Gathering invited one elder, one harvester, and one youth from various organizations and communities (see Appendix A for invitation letter and Appendix B for the participant list). Although there were many observers from the Behchokò community at the Gathering, unfortunately the event took place during the same time as a youth conference in nearby Edzo. This likely meant that fewer Tłıchǫ youth observers were able to attend. Representatives from the Territorial and Federal governments were present but as observers only.

A planning committee consisting of representatives from the WRRB, Tłıchǫ Government, Yellowknives Dene First Nation, Kitikmeot Inuit Association and Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. worked with co-facilitators Joanne Barnaby and Deborah Simmons to plan the event. Logistical and administrative support was provided by Jody Snortland Pellissey (WRRB) and Kerri Garner and Departmental staff from the Tłıchǫ Government. Karin Clark (WRRB) was note-taker at the Gathering, and transcripts for Day 1 were provided by Kimberly Wilde.

Simultaneous interpreting was provided by Suzie Napayok and Nick Amautinuak (Inuktitut), Peter Huskey and Violet Mackenzie (Tłıchǫ), and James Marlowe and Sara Basil (Denesuline). Sound services were supplied by Pido Production Ltd.

Sponsorship

The Gathering was sponsored with the financial assistance from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Government of the Northwest Territories; DeBeers Canada, Gahcho Kué Project; Seabridge Gold, Courageous Lake Project; and the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board.



Poster showing Gathering sponsors

Purpose

This three day Gathering was planned as an opportunity for Aboriginal people who depend on the Bathurst caribou to meet and share their wisdom and experiences in addressing management issues.

During the opening session of the Gathering, Tł̨chq̨ Grand Chief Eddie Erasmus and Chief Clifford Daniels of Behchokò set the tone for the Gathering, welcoming participants and providing an overview of the workshop purpose. Co-host and Chair of the WRRB Joseph Judas spoke about the need to produce a management plan for the Bathurst Caribou herd. He talked about the challenges of balancing harvesting needs with protecting the caribou population.

We have a lot of people here from all different parts of the north right from Nunavut to the Whitehorse area. I am sure your caribou working groups and the leaderships in your regions have dealt with caribou in the past. We have elders in our region and our communities who have experienced how they dealt with the issue of caribou when it becomes less and less. We need to share those kinds of experience, those kinds of knowledge. That is the purpose of this meeting, is to share information about caribou. We have caribou management groups from across the country in the north that have different experiences that you can share with us, and vice versa – we can share our experiences with you. And with that, I would like to welcome you all to the community of Behchokò. Mahsi. Grand Chief **Eddie Erasmus**, Tł̨chq̨ Government, Behchokò, NT.



Grand Chief Eddie Erasmus



Chief Clifford Daniels

I would like to welcome everybody here. It's good to see everybody here. These gatherings are very rare. Good information is shared at these gatherings. We learn from each other. I think that we as a people can decide how to manage the caribou, especially when there is a decline. We can be involved to make these decisions, especially for ourselves. The information being shared will go back to leadership, regional meetings, and hopefully good decisions come out of this on how we can manage our animals. It's not just caribou; eventually it will be other animals that we will need to make decisions on that affect our future. Mahsi. Chief **Clifford Daniels**, Behchokò, NT.

The communities are asking us to do this work. We need to find solutions from the people here. Sometimes we run into problems, but we continue with our work. I am a hunter and trapper from my community. We depend very much on wildlife. We need to make sure that we do not lose any of our wildlife species. **Joseph Judas**, Wekweètì, NT



Joseph Judas, Chair, WRRB

Gathering Format

The Gathering was structured to reflect a traditional format for dialogue and knowledge sharing that lends itself to a sense of equality among the participants. Initially chairs were set up in a large circle and a wireless microphone, serving as a “talking stick,” was passed around to those who indicated an interest in speaking.

With this inclusive seating arrangement, and when facilitators saw the need, a “talking circle” was held as a way of giving every person an opportunity to speak. Many Aboriginal peoples regard the circle as a symbol for understanding life's mysteries. The cycle of life is perceived as a circle; the earth, sun and moon are round; the rising and setting of the sun follow a circular motion; the seasons formed a circle. In the old days, houses or shelters were built in circles, like the teepee and igloo. The facilitators suggested using this circle format as it recognizes this natural pattern while contributing to the building of consensus within the group.



Facilitator Joanne Barnaby at work

A draft agenda (see Appendix C for the preamble to the draft agenda) was designed to be flexible and responsive to the needs and issues brought forward by the participants. However, there were no formal presentations during the Gathering; rather, the format allowed for a progressive development of discussions and consensus-building on key issues, and as such the draft agenda was not followed. Instead, the process was guided by the following six-part structure:

1. Prayer and opening remarks from the co-hosts
2. Introductory talking circle
3. Issues scoping
4. Envisioning management solutions
5. Recommendations
6. Closing talking circle



Talking Circle at the Tree of Peace Friendship Centre, Yellowknife

During each round, key messages were posted on the walls and on flip charts. This helped participants to focus and to build on themes posted. Following the issues scoping round, the messages were clustered so that key themes could be identified. This served as the basis for focused development of solutions and recommendations. The themes were refined and recommendations were drafted by the facilitators based on review of discussions during Days 1 and 2, and were presented on the morning of Day 3.

In addition to the initial large circle, smaller circles composed of delegates from each of the regions were formed during the afternoon of Day 3 to consider the draft recommendations. Comments from each group were brought back to the large circle and shared by a presenter (or presenters) from each group. The recommendations were supported by consensus of the regional delegations, with the understanding that these would be submitted as advice only for consideration by Wildlife Management Authorities and Aboriginal governments.

Scheduled to take place in Behchokó for three days, a power outage left the meeting space in the Cultural Center cold and in the dark on the second day, forcing a move to the Tree of Peace Friendship Centre in Yellowknife. While a half day was lost by the move, highly effective organizational support from the Tłıchǫ Government and the WRRB enabled the work to resume relatively quickly.



Thematic Cluster: Key Issues in Caribou Ecology



Breakout session, top to bottom:
Sahtú, Nunavut, Yellowknives Dene,
Dënesųhíné, Tłıchų.



Documentation

By consent of the participants, the Gathering was audio recorded. Notes on the proceedings were simultaneously taken by Karin Clark. During Day 1, notes summarized the proceedings, and on Days 2 and 3 notes were as close to verbatim as possible. Day 1 proceedings were fully transcribed by Kimberly Wilde as a supplement to the summary notes. Photographs were taken by Deborah Simmons. Full recordings and transcripts can be requested from the WRRB office.



Karin Clark, WRRB

What's in this Report

The results section of this report has been organized around the six key themes that were identified, and includes some background on the issues to give readers a contextual understanding, as well as any associated recommendations. Statements made by participants that demonstrate their concern are included. Participants were asked to review comments attributed to them and to provide the author (facilitator Joanne Barnaby) with any corrections deemed important.

Results

The following section provides an overview of the six key themes addressed by participants:

1. Traditional Monitoring and Management
2. Traditional Aboriginal Laws about Caribou
3. Research Questions
4. Research Planning and Follow-up
5. Grassroots approach
6. Next Steps

These themes emerged through Gathering discussions and were subsequently refined through analysis of notes/transcripts and flip chart notes, with an emphasis on linkages with recommendations for action. Where it was deemed appropriate, the authors of the report made minor edits to the recommendations originally drafted and reviewed at the Gathering - with the intention of ensuring clarity for readers who did not benefit from being present for the full discussions. The following sections include summaries of the discussions related to each theme, quotes illustrating perspectives shared, and finally the related recommendations which were supported by consensus of the Gathering participants (in green boxes).

Theme 1: Traditional Monitoring and Management Systems

Aboriginal people are the original caribou researchers. Knowledge about caribou has for generations been key to survival, so people have gained an intimate understanding of caribou social-ecological relationships, behaviour, movements, and health. Monitoring what they observe in the natural environment is a key aspect to their traditional management system. Sharing and exchanging what they see on the land while traveling or harvesting is a regular and expected responsibility of each member of the community. Observations relate to location of caribou (or other animals), the population and health of the herd, and the state of the habitat.

Any indications of problems including population decline, size and weight, and discoloration or spots on meat are discussed thoroughly and common understandings develop as to the cause and what actions should be taken. Monitoring extends beyond the caribou, comprehending the status of caribou habitat at both local and landscape scales, interactions with other wildlife, and harvesting practices. Decisions about hunting caribou are made based on numerous factors. Decision-making is collective, with strong leadership from the most knowledgeable, to ensure that the well-being of the caribou is considered. It is believed that caribou are free beings that make their own decisions and have their own leaders – caribou are not to be managed like ranch stock. People must have a strong system of self-governance, including strong leaders, teachers, and learners who follow the traditional laws.

Aboriginal people continue to have a strong interest in research and monitoring as a basis for wise management. Traditional knowledge perspectives continue to be a strong basis for learning about changes that may be occurring, since they bring together knowledge from the past with the current knowledge that comes through the maintenance of respectful harvesting practices.

Because of the many environmental and social changes that are taking place on the land, there is a need for the new research tools offered by scientific methods. Considered together in balance, traditional knowledge and science can provide a more complete understanding of caribou populations. Means need to be found for respectfully exchanging knowledge across cultures. This can create the basis for collaborative caribou stewardship. **Recommendation 1** indicates a need for strengthening traditional monitoring in establishing a well rounded knowledge system.



Peter Taktogon

We encourage trapper and hunters in our community. We give them booklets to keep track of what they see. At the end of the year they bring them to Renewable Resources. We get an idea of the number of animals out there. That's how we encourage our harvesters to continue their traditional monitoring practices. We have also used harvester's calendar. Any diseases we see they write them down. They use plastic bags to bring samples to Renewable to find out what the health problem is. **Peter Taktogon**, Kugluktuk, NU

In the past we would know where the caribou would roam based on previous years' observations because we existed with caribou. **Joseph Judas**, Wekweètì, NT

In Deline, in the past, people before they go caribou hunting, they gather. They go into a big house, they gather and decide where they are going to go hunting this year, Hottah Lake or North Shore. The elders know by past migration that the caribou are going to be over there. They don't need collars. They decide how many caribou they are going to get. For example, for 100 houses and 20 hunters, the hunters go out and get maybe 100 caribou. The hunters maybe take 3 each and 40 for the rest of the community. The houses that can't hunt, they get caribou. They make that decision as a community. **Michael Neyelle**, Deline, NT



Michael Neyelle

Recommendation 1

Traditional systems of monitoring should be implemented as a means of understanding the health and well-being of the caribou and as a basis for making decisions about harvest.

Theme 2: Traditional Aboriginal Laws about Caribou – Teaching the Youth

Both outrage and sorrow for disrespectful practices and wastage was expressed by Elders who believe strongly in their traditional teachings and laws. Participants have witnessed poor hunting practices and waste by both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities and argued that action must be taken to prevent this in the future. At the same time, participants affirmed that leading hunting families in the communities continue to keep the traditional laws alive. Self-governing nations must see this as a priority.

Participants often spoke about the importance of ensuring that youth are well educated as future stewards of the caribou. The huge attention paid at the Gathering to youth and their learning is indicated in a simple word count in the Gathering notes, according to which “youth,” “young” or “younger” were mentioned 76 times, and “taught,” “teach” or “teaching” 27 times. The active listening and occasional contributions by youth attending the Gathering were much appreciated by the older participants. Speakers called for a renewal of teaching traditions in communities and families, as well as curriculum including not only science about caribou, but also traditional knowledge and Aboriginal laws for treating caribou with respect. Often participants spoke about how they learned respectful harvesting practices on the land with their relatives. It was recognized that aboriginal laws and practices are culturally specific, derived from the stories and landscapes of the different regions. **Recommendation 2** points out that Aboriginal organisations

need to undertake proactive measures to renew and enforce the traditional laws that are specific to their regions and communities.



Chief Charlie Football

We must be strong with self-government. If you see a lot of caribou parts at the garbage dump. Are we throwing away meat at the dump? The caribou will know if a nation took care of them and they will come back, if they were abused they will not come back. If we are going to change the behavior of the caribou we need to change our behavior. We need to respect caribou, we can't butcher and get blood all around. Traditionally woman couldn't step over caribou blood, the men must ensure that they don't leave blood on the ground (and make things difficult for women) and we must re-establish our traditions of having a sacred place to put the bones.

Chief Charlie Football, Wekweètì, NT

Every fall and winter we go hunting on the land after freeze-up. This is the way my parents taught me, so I am teaching my boy the way I was taught. If it's not me, my brother and my son go out hunting. Last year I went hunting on Whitefish Lake, I went there, I went with the youth, two students who were out on the land. Then in fall time I went to Ptarmigan Lake, that's where we went for our caribou. The caribou is not coming to our area any more. It's because of the industries that are all surrounding our communities.

My son went hunting at Nonacho Lake, past Grey Lake. We go pretty close to where they have the hydro, and there is a lot of overflow on Nonacho Lake due to the hydro. This is where we all go because we are teaching our youth to use the land and to go hunting. If we lose our culture and our heritage we will be gone, and without the caribou we wouldn't know what to do. **Terri Enzoe, Łutselk'e**



Terri Enzoe



Arthur Beck

It's so hard with people running all over, and caribou are nosy animals. Everybody who hunts caribou knows that. A lot of the youth are not taught properly, they chase them down, they chase them all over. If you drive a skidoo fifty miles an hour, that caribou will go fifty five. If you drive the skidoo five miles an hour, the caribou will go seven. You stop, he stops. You stay there; he'll come back to you. But what's happening is people are chasing them all over, they are not experienced hunters. When I grew up I was taught respect for the animal. Before we went hunting we did a prayer, and on our way out we pay the land, the creator for how much animals we need to feed our community. For our people, we pay the land. The first thing we do when we kill a caribou is cut the throat, let the blood flow back to earth.

That has to be taught back to our youth again. And it has to be taught in the schools, because it's not taught at home anymore. Back in the old days it was taught at home because it

was a way of life. Nowadays, you go into anybody's house, you see all these youth sitting there, playing those little games. They don't even talk to each other. They don't even look at each other. We have to start putting these games away. We have to start teaching our youth in school, make them understand the food chain, how things work together as a world. Youth have to understand how everything connects together. **Arthur Beck**, NWT Métis Nation

We have to educate our youth and children. If they go out on the land, they probably do things in a different way. This year my grandchild went hunting with me. He told me "feed the fire before we go hunting." That evening we were given caribou. When we teach our youth like that



Peter Eyotak

with respect and treat the caribou with respect, they will learn.

Chief Edward Sangris, Yellowknives Dene First Nation

I go hunting with my step dad. Even though I'm at home playing video games and I rarely go. But when I do it is enjoyable and fun. I grew up in Kugluktuk and then moved to Fort Smith. After I finish high school I want to move back to where there is some traditional hunting. I have done traditional drumming. Even though I'm Inuit I never really play the Inuit drum, but I've played the Dene drum. I love drumming. To come here I had to miss one class of drumming and it took something out of me. I've never missed a

class of drumming before. I love traditional food. One thing I like is you get to eat as much as you want and it tastes better than store-bought food. Moose and frozen fish is my favourite. When I was taught you are supposed to give your first kill to your elders. I go hunting rarely but I still cherish it. **Peter Eyotak**, Kugluktuk/Fort Smith

Recommendation 2

Aboriginal governments should commit to confronting the breaking of traditional laws related to caribou. On-the-land curriculum and programs should be established and supported to ensure that new harvesters are properly trained in traditional harvesting laws specific to their regions and communities.

Some Traditional Laws about Caribou

- Treat caribou with respect; many stories tell of the consequences of disrespectful practices, such as hitting caribou with a stick.
- Eat traditional foods for good health; using nature's gifts to sustain life is a traditional responsibility, and is part of maintaining a healthy relationship with the land.
- Practice spiritual protocols as a reminder of the value of creation and that nature's gifts must be reciprocated.
- Don't shoot the lead caribou, as the herd depends on them for their leadership and knowledge of migration routes, safe resting and feeding areas.
- Harvest other animals to reduce pressure on caribou when population is low.
- Use every part of the caribou; do not waste anything.
- Women must not step over caribou blood; this law recognizes the spiritual power of women that can affect others, including caribou.
- Don't talk too much about caribou, since this is offensive to caribou and may cause them to go away.



Women rarely spoke, but were a powerful presence at the Gathering.

Theme 3: Research Questions

Gathering participants resented that so much attention is paid to controlling hunting, while other factors affecting the Bathurst caribou appear to be ignored. A full range of views and questions about what is affecting caribou populations were expressed. The vigorous discussions about the status of the herds and the many factors that influence caribou habitat and health, movements and numbers reflect people's strong interest in observing, learning and sharing knowledge about caribou. The Gathering did not aim to resolve complex questions about caribou ecology, but the discussion was useful as a scoping of priority issues that should be worked on in the future.

Key Issues in Caribou Ecology

- Climate change
- Contaminants
- Disease
- Dust
- Exploration
- Fire
- Industrial development
- Low level flights
- Mineral exploration
- Predators (e.g. wolves)
- Roads

Understanding caribou ecology is more challenging than ever with the introduction of mines and roads and the advent of climate change. These affect caribou habitat and relationships with wolves and other ungulates in numerous ways that no one fully understands. A cross-cultural learning approach allowing for respectful dialogue among traditional knowledge holders and scientists may provide a full picture of how environmental change can be understood and managed to sustain healthy caribou herds.

Observations made by harvesters and elders regarding historic trends were the basis for a strong belief of many participants that industrial development has a major impact on caribou habitat, health and movements. This belief is further underlined by the fact that the timing of downward population trends as reported by scientists is closely matched with the development of mines and roads in critical habitat areas.

Still others questioned if in fact the population has declined and expressed doubt about the ways in which caribou biologists define caribou herds and ranges as the basis for monitoring population numbers. These people pointed out that their elders do not have names distinguishing herds, and considered caribou to be free animals across the landscape. It was suggested that some caribou migrate between "herds" or change their migration routes, giving an appearance of fluctuation in the Bathurst population. **Recommendation 3** highlights a priority area in which cross-cultural learning needs to take place in order to achieve understanding and consensus in management approaches.

We have to address the fact that all this mining development is having big impacts on the caribou. The government wants to blame the harvesters because they want the development. When we start to manage people the animals will come back and take care of themselves. **Arthur Beck**, Fort Resolution, NT

Ever since the people start talking about the decline of the Bathurst herd, someone here mentioned that there was no evidence (of what happened to them). Where did they go? Nobody has seen carcasses. I always ask that question. Where did the new herds come from? Where did the Bluenose Herds come from? And then there was the Ahiak Herd. I haven't got an answer yet. To us they are all one herd. **Sam Kapolak**, Bathurst Inlet, NU



Sam Kapolak



John Bekale

If there were 450,000 healthy caribou and we are down to 32,000. I go back to what my elders said that the cows are not producing. We could do some studies about why they are not producing or why they might be going somewhere else. **John Bekale**, Yellowknife, NT

If there is going to be a future gathering, it will be very important to have scientific information as well. Our knowledge and your knowledge go hand in hand. It will go a long way to use that information. It will show historical. The past information should be brought here to see what has happened over the years until today. **Phillip Kadlun**, Kugluktuk, NU



Phillip Kadlun

Recommendation 3

A forum should be convened very soon together with the Territorial government biologists to discuss how herds are defined and how they get their population numbers.

Theme 4: Research Planning and Follow-up

Some people expressed strong views about research approaches used in the past to study caribou and often had difficulty trusting results and conclusions put forward by Government. For example, many still make the case that collaring is offensive to the caribou and traditional teachings indicate that when disrespect for caribou is shown they will not return to the people. Recently, steps have been taken to engage harvesters in traditional knowledge and scientific caribou research, pointing to a possible means of building trust across knowledge systems.

It is recognized that specialized training is required to design and undertake traditional knowledge and scientific research alike. While no one would dispute the need for separate re-

search processes, **Recommendation 4** indicates a need for collaborative research planning and follow-up so that collective understanding of questions and results can inform decision-making in an atmosphere of trust and respect.

This is a very important animal on the land, it is not a dog but they have put a collar on them. I can't say that it is good. That is how they (government) do their work but it is not good. The animal that we thrive and survive on we don't like how it is being treated today. The caribou is very important to us, been everything to us, shelter, tipi, clothing and out on the tundra, that's all we have. **Phillip Dryneck**, Behchokó, NT



Phillip Dryneck



Pierre Robillard

I worked three different years on calving surveys. It is really hard and difficult to count the caribou. I was asked to assist the biologist. We flew to Baker Lake, we viewed the calving area. We worked for 11 days. From June 1-10 we viewed the calving ground. You can hardly see any caribou, it is camouflaged. They look like grains of rice on the land. You look from a satellite. We viewed all over the calving ground. We knew we didn't kill them, we didn't give them away...sometimes they go elsewhere. In a few years we knew they went down. In the calving area there is lots of (human) activity and the caribou is going elsewhere. We noticed another herd about 20,000 on Baker lake area. There was hardly any around Albertine Lake when we did the survey. For me it is hard to have an accurate number by aircraft and helicopter. Sometimes you see thousands and thousands and can't possibly have accurate count. **Pierre Robillard**, Black Lake, SK

Our harvesting practices are very much community driven. The direction comes from the hunters and the people that go out on the land and observe the wildlife. Hunters go out in different areas and report back what they are seeing. Sometimes we hear that there are a few caribou over there, the east or south. And that is one of the ways we observe wildlife. By working with the wildlife department we are taken very seriously. We have the desire to work with them, based on the understanding that we care and respect wildlife. These are the mechanisms that we use in Nunavut. **Phillip Kadlun**, Kugluktuk, NU

Recommendation 4

Aboriginal researchers and Traditional Knowledge Holders should be involved in planning and follow-up with respect to research undertaken by governments and co-management boards – from developing questions and methods, to interpreting and communicating the results.

Theme 5: Grassroots Approach

A number of speakers expressed frustration that their voices haven't been heard in the past. There was strong support for a grassroots approach in Bathurst Caribou management processes. Trust among Aboriginal nations and government can be rebuilt if harvesters are involved in decision-making. The stewardship responsibilities that Aboriginal people have for taking care of the caribou require that they be directly involved in such management assessments and decisions. This is especially important as a way of establishing a common vision across jurisdictions covered by the Bathurst caribou range. Different regions and nations are operating in different management frameworks, depending on the status and nature of land claim agreements, but everywhere harvesters share a focus on the well-being of caribou. **Recommendation 5** affirms the value of a grassroots approach in Bathurst Caribou management.

They had meetings in the Explorer Hotel and the government said limiting harvest would only last three months. But it has been three years that there have been restrictions. They are not being honest. **James Lafferty**, Behchokó, NT



James Lafferty



Chief Edward Sangris

Our neighbours all around us here have land claims settled. That's where you are coming from, you have wildlife boards. We are still negotiating our land claim. My people want to come to this meeting and be here for this very important issue. The way the (government) decisions are made, it might worsen our situation. **Chief Edward Sangris**, Dettah, NT

We are the ones that have to fix the problems in our communities and our areas. If we don't speak out all things may go into chaos. Before the caribou disappear we have to do something about it.

Isadore Charlo, Bechokò, NT



Isadore Charlo

Recommendation 5

Aboriginal elders and harvesters must be recognized as stewards of the caribou, playing a leading role in any management plans. Any discussions about plans for the Bathurst caribou must be held in a forum with all nations affected having the opportunity to be present.

Theme 6: Next Steps

International treaties established early in the 20th century as well as the Canadian constitution and recent comprehensive land claims include recognition of Aboriginal harvesting rights. Aboriginal people have the right, legally enshrined in the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act and in the Tłıchǫ Agreement as well as in other federal and territorial legislation, to participate in decisions that affect these harvesting rights. As a result, Aboriginal communities expect to play a role in all aspects of wildlife, harvesting and habitat management.

All participants felt that the traditional system of inter-regional sharing and cooperation is critical to the well being of both the caribou and communities dependent on them. Participants shared stories of Inuit and Dene communities working together and helping anyone in need. Many expressed a desire for this cross regional and inter-cultural forum to continue in some manner as a means to participate in decisions of common concern.

Gathering participants discussed ideas for organizing around the need to address caribou issues and the possibility of developing a management plan. There were mixed views on the idea of establishing a caribou management board. Those who favoured the idea pointed to the success of the Porcupine Caribou Management Board in taking action to increase the population and to protect habitat. Others were reticent to establish yet another board in an area where so many boards exist already.

It was recognized that co-management boards established in land claim regions can play a coordinating role to support effective cross-regional engagement and decision-making, working with leadership organisations in non-land claim regions. All participants, however, echoed the view

that opportunities for grass-roots people to participate in decisions that affect them and a resource that they significantly depend on must be accommodated.

People also expressed concern that the current context may present some obstacles to making progress in collaborative management processes. It was noted for example that changes to jurisdiction are being made through devolution, and this may affect NWT priorities in caribou and habitat conservation. Additionally, the ongoing initiative on the part of the Government of Canada to find ways to ‘streamline’ the regulatory system caused some people to be pessimistic about any efforts to protect caribou through either existing management boards or by the possible development of a new management body for Bathurst caribou. Nevertheless, **Recommendation 6 (a-c)** recognizes the need for such a body, and points to a process and collaborative framework for its establishment.



Moise Rabesca

One day my dad told a story about how he met Inuit living on the land at Contoyto Lake. Sometimes it's emotional and humbling. They were happy to welcome us, they fed our dogs and us. They entertained us with their big drum. We stayed in an igloo and had a good time. Four days later we departed into the tree-line feeling healthy. My companion gave his moccasins, I ended up with sealskin mukluks. Another ended up with an Inuit dog whip. The Dene dog whip is really short, theirs is really long and it got caught in the trees. When they hunted they went for two or three months. They shared tools, stove, everything and helped each other out. Communication was good.

Moise Rabesca, Behchokó, NT

Boards are very effective and good at putting recommendations together. But a forum like this speaks louder volume than a board can. Having a gathering like this far outweighs the value of a board. But the challenge will be to get funding to continue having a forum like this. Consider some different concepts for putting recommendations rather than using a board format. This is grass roots, the people, the hunters the elders sitting together and I think this is more effective. **Luigi Torretti**, Kitikmeot Inuit Association



Luigi Torretti and Bruno Qavvik

Because of land claims, we don't seem to meet as often as we did before. There are boundaries and we don't meet regularly. We seem to go apart. We need to get together as nations of harvesters that depend on caribou. **Michael Neyelle**, Deline, NT

If we are going to set up a management board it has to have teeth. We need to make sure that all the regions can say yes to any body set up. **John Bekale**, Yellowknife, NT



Archie Wetrade

When we are having a meeting like this it is not only for hunters and elders it is also for woman. We should have more women because they have lots of knowledge. They work on the hide make dry meat and take care of the family. We have to take this into consideration. The woman works harder than the man. **Archie Wetrade**, Gamètì, NT

When we (Porcupine Caribou Management Board) started, we had no control over fire, development, climate change but we did have control over harvesting. We only make recommendations to government. We started a plan so that our future generations have the same rights and opportunities as Aboriginal people do now. That is our ultimate goal and we strive to do that through a harvest management plan. It is a plan for all times. After the plan we developed an Implementation Plan that details annual actions. If the population goes below 45,000 there will be no harvesting. These are really hard decisions but we are looking after our future generations. If we are in the green zone (no concern about population) we can hunt the way we have always hunted, cows and bulls. We can take our children out and teach them to hunt. It takes a lot of coming together and working out the details. The caption on the harvest management plan is “setting a good trail for the future generation” **Joe Tetlich**, Whitehorse, YT



Joe Tetlich

Recommendation 6

- a) An inter-regional body is needed to discuss changes in the Bathurst caribou and make recommendations for common action to conserve the caribou for future generations.
- b) Aboriginal governments and co-management boards should engage with communities about options for coordinating participation in inter-regional management to safeguard the Bathurst caribou – and report back to the Bathurst Caribou Working Group by September 2013. Based on these community options, governments and co-management boards should convene a forum to discuss next steps.
- c) There is an ongoing role for the Working Group made up of representatives from:
 - Akaitcho Territory Government (including the Yellowknives Dene First Nation)
 - Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada
 - Athabasca Dēnesųłné
 - Dehcho First Nation
 - Department of Environment – Government of Nunavut
 - Department of Environment and Natural Resources – Government of the NWT
 - Department of Wildlife and Environment – Nunavut Tunngavik Inc
 - Kitikmeot Regional Wildlife Board
 - Nunavut Wildlife Management Board
 - NWT Métis Nation
 - Sahtú Renewable Resources Board
 - Tłchq Government
 - Wek'èezhii Renewable Resources Board

Conclusions

In 2007, the Government of the NWT sponsored a Caribou Summit in Inuvik to address concerns about declining herds. The Summit brought together a diverse group of participants, including hunters, elders and leaders from communities across the NWT along with Aboriginal governments, co-management boards, and representatives from the oil and gas and mining industries. During the Summit, participants stressed that Aboriginal people must play a leading role in caribou stewardship. Six years later, the Bathurst Caribou Harvesters' Gathering built on actions identified at the Summit, which included a call for an Aboriginal conference on caribou, and pointed to the collective responsibility of all partners to be active in developing solutions. Many of the things that were discussed at the Summit also arose at the Gathering, confirming their importance for the communities. In particular, habitat protection continues to be a priority issue. Collaboration between traditional knowledge holders and scientists remains highly valued as a basis for achieving full understanding of caribou status, and the possibility of consensus in management decisions.

The Gathering reflected advances in people's confidence to assert their perspectives and develop concrete recommendations for moving forward. A lot has been learned through the six years of debate about approaches in caribou management. All parties have come to recognize the value of working together. The value of the grassroots approach was reaffirmed, and participants repeatedly mentioned their interest in sharing knowledge at similar forums in the future.

Commitments were made by participants to bring the results of the Gathering back to communities and sponsoring organizations, with the intent to acquire support for the recommendations. Timely follow-up on an inter-regional process will support those who are dependent on caribou to renew their traditional role in taking care of the caribou. People expressed their appreciation for the opportunity provided by the Gathering for elders, harvesters and youth to come together in envisioning a grassroots approach to the long term management planning process for the Bathurst Caribou Herd. In addition to recommending a follow-up meeting to address Gathering recommendations, participants urged that another Gathering be held within a year.

We came knowing that everyone here cares about caribou. We have something in common and come together with the desire to work together. **Philip Kadlun**, Kugluktuk, NU

With this workshop ending today, I hope good things come out of it. I'm grateful for the stories of the elders, how they hunted, how the ancestors lived and how we can use it down the road. The elders are our biologists. **Peter Paulette**, Fort Smith, NT



Peter Paulette

Appendix A – Invitation to Bathurst Caribou Harvesters' Gathering



December 14, 2012

VIA EMAIL

DISTRIBUTION LIST

Re: Bathurst Caribou Herd Regional Gathering, January 29-31, 2013

The issue of caribou management throughout the Bathurst Caribou range is one of great importance to the well being of all Northern Peoples in the Northwest Territories, Nunavut and Saskatchewan. An objective of the Tłı̨chǫ Agreement is for management planning processes, specifically respecting the Bathurst Caribou herd, to be achieved jointly with any body having authority over the caribou range and representatives of any Aboriginal peoples who traditionally harvested from the herd.

Management planning processes must use all sources of information, including traditional and scientific knowledge. During initial meetings about short and long-term management planning processes for the Bathurst Caribou herd, organizations present discussed a "grassroots approach" in which Aboriginal harvesters from the Northwest Territories, Nunavut and Saskatchewan would gather to exchange information about the herd and provide guidance for management activities.

With this in mind, the Tłı̨chǫ Government and the Wek'èezhì Renewable Resources Board invite one elder, one harvester and one youth from your organization or community to attend the Bathurst Caribou Regional Gathering on **January 29-31, 2013 at Behchokǫ, NT**. Elders will help us to understand the traditional system of caribou management and communication with other groups. Harvesters will present and discuss their experiences over time based on their observations, and youth will help develop ideas to manage caribou today and in the future. Unfortunately it will not be possible to cover honorarium costs for any participants. We have obtained some funding from various sources to support travel to the Gathering, but are currently not able to cover costs for all participants.

A draft agenda will be forwarded early in the New Year for your review. Please inform Joanne Barnaby (jvbarnaby@gmail.com or 867-876-1119) of your availability and number of representatives attending by no later than January 11, 2013. Please also let her know whether your organisation is able to cover travel costs if necessary, and note what, if any, interpreting services will be required for your delegation.



If you have additional questions or concerns regarding travel or accommodations, please contact Kerri Garner, Director, Lands Protection Department, Tłıchǵ Government at (867) 392-6381 ext. 1355 or email: kerrigarner@tlicho.com, or Jody Snortland Pellissey, Executive Director, Wek'èezhìi Renewable Resources Board at (867) 873-5740 or email: jnortland@wrrb.ca.

Sincerely,



Grand Chief Eddie Erasmus
Tłıchǵ Government



Joseph Judas, Chair
Wek'èezhìi Renewable Resources Board

Cc Chief Ted Tsetta, Yellowknives Dene First Nation
Chief Edward Sangris, Yellowknives Dene First Nation
Chief Dore Enzoë, Łutselk'e Dene First Nation
Chief Louis Balsillie, Deninu Kue First Nation
Lynda Yonge, Director, Wildlife, Environment & Natural Resources
Laura Duncan, Tłıchǵ Executive Officer, Tłıchǵ Government
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Northern Development Canada



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Walter Bayha, Chair
Sahtú Renewable Resources Board
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Appendix B – Gathering Participant List

	Affiliation	Name
1.	???	Harry Beaulieu
2.	Bathurst Inlet Burnside Hunters and Trappers Organisation	Sam Kapolak
3.	Bay Chimo Omingmaktok Hunters and Trappers Organisation	Peter Kapolak
4.	Behchokò	Alfred Whane
5.	Behchokò	Anthony Tsatchia
6.	Behchokò	Artie Franki
7.	Behchokò	Bobby Wanazah
8.	Behchokò	Casey Rabesca
9.	Behchokò	Charlie Apple
10.	Behchokò	Charlie Michel
11.	Behchokò	Chris Black
12.	Behchokò	David Dryneck
13.	Behchokò	David Walsh
14.	Behchokò	Eddie Koyina
15.	Behchokò	Edward Bishop
16.	Behchokò	Edward Camille
17.	Behchokò	Francis Washie
18.	Behchokò	Frank Camsell
19.	Behchokò	Gabriel Gon
20.	Behchokò	George Beaulieu
21.	Behchokò	George Mackenzie
22.	Behchokò	Harry Rabesca
23.	Behchokò	Jarvis Lamouelle
24.	Behchokò	Jerry Quitte
25.	Behchokò	Jerry Simpson
26.	Behchokò	Joe Erasmus
27.	Behchokò	Joe Gon
28.	Behchokò	Jonas Football
29.	Behchokò	Joseph Nitsiza
30.	Behchokò	Joseph P Mantla
31.	Behchokò	Joseph P Mantla
32.	Behchokò	Larry Michel
33.	Behchokò	Leonard Fish
34.	Behchokò	Louis Chocolate
35.	Behchokò	Marie A Sabourin
36.	Behchokò	Martha Mantla
37.	Behchokò	Michael Dryneck

	Affiliation	Name
38.	Behchokò	Michael Rabesca
39.	Behchokò	Michael Wetrade
40.	Behchokò	Moise Frankie
41.	Behchokò	Monique Mackenzie
42.	Behchokò	Narcisse Rabesca
43.	Behchokò	Nikita Mantla
44.	Behchokò	Pat Lafferty
45.	Behchokò	Patrick Black
46.	Behchokò	Peter Martin
47.	Behchokò	Philip Whane
48.	Behchokò	Bobby Wanazah
49.	Behchokò	Chris Franki
50.	Behchokò	Francis Williah
51.	Behchokò	Frank Black
52.	Behchokò	James Lafferty
53.	Behchokò	Larry Wanazah
54.	Behchokò	Pierre Tlokka
55.	Black Lake Wildlife Organisation	Pierre Robillard
56.	Cambridge Bay Nunavut Tunngavik Inc	George Hakongak
57.	Dene Nation/Yellowknife	Camilia Zoe-Chocolate
58.	Deninu Kue First Nation/Fort Resolution	Carol Collins
59.	Deninu Kue First Nation/Fort Resolution	Donald Beaulieu
60.	Deninu Kue First Nation/Fort Resolution	Frank Lafferty
61.	Deninu Kue First Nation/Fort Resolution	Gabriel Lafferty
62.	Fond du Lac Wildlife Organisation	Joe Martin
63.	Frank's Channel	Moise Rabesca
64.	Gamètì	Dakota Wetrade
65.	Gamètì	Edward Williah
66.	Gamètì	Fred Mantla
67.	Gamètì	Louie Zoe
68.	Gamètì	Louis Zoe
69.	Gamètì	Therese Zoe
70.	Government of Nunavut/Kugluktuk	Lisa-Marie Leclerc
71.	Kitikmeot Inuit Association/Kugaaruk	Bruno Qavvik
72.	Kitikmeot Regional Wildlife Board/Gjoa Haven	James Qitsualik
73.	Kugluktuk Hunters and Trappers Organisation	Allen Jr Kudlak
74.	Kugluktuk Hunters and Trappers Organisation	Peter Taktogon
75.	Kugluktuk Hunters and Trappers Organisation	Phillip Kadlun

	Affiliation	Name
76.	Kugluktuk Kitikmeot Inuit Association	Luigi Torretti
77.	Lutselk'e Wildlife Committee	Roy Desjarlais
78.	Lutselk'e Wildlife Committee	Terri Enzoe
79.	Metis Nation/Fort Smith	Earl Evans
80.	Nunavut Wildlife Management Board/Iqaluit	Sarah Spencer
81.	NWT Environment and Natural Resources/Behchokò	Kelvin Kotchilea
82.	NWT Environment and Natural Resources/Behchokò	Lawrence Lewis
83.	NWT Environment and Natural Resources/Hay River	Ron D Antoine
84.	NWT Environment and Natural Resources/Yellowknife	Nicole McCutcheon
85.	NWT Environment and Natural Resources/Yellowknife (Head-quarters)	Bruno Croft
86.	NWT Métis Nation/Fort Resolution	Arthur Beck
87.	Pelly Bay	Nick Amautinuvar
88.	Rae/Edzo	Isadore Charlo
89.	Rae/Edzo	John Quitte
90.	Sahtú Renewable Resources Board/Déłıne Renewable Resources Council	Michael Neyelle
91.	Smiths Landing Smith's Landing First Nation	Magloiff Paulette
92.	Smiths Landing Smith's Landing First Nation	Peter Eyotak
93.	Smiths Landing Smith's Landing First Nation	Peter Paulette
94.	Tłchq Government/Wekweètì	Chief Charlie Football
95.	Wek'èezhìi Renewable Resources Board/Behchokò	Charlie Rabesca
96.	Wek'èezhìi Renewable Resources Board/Gamètì	Archie Wetrade
97.	Wek'èezhìi Renewable Resources Board/Wekweètì	Joseph Judas
98.	Wek'èezhìi Renewable Resources Board/Whatì	Charlie Jeremick'ca
99.	Wek'èezhìi Renewable Resources Board/Yellowknife	Karin Clark
100.	Wekweètì	Steven Dryneck
101.	Whatì	Charlie Quitte
102.	Whatì	Freddie Bishop
103.	Whatì	Jimmy Nitsiza
104.	Whatì	Margaret Nitsiza
105.	Whatì	Pierre Beaverho
106.	Whatì	Veronica Quitte
107.	Whati/Wekweeti	Mike Nitsiza
108.	Yellowknives Dene First Nation/Ndilo	Eddie Sikyea
109.	Yellowknives Dene First Nation/Dettah	Alfred Baillargeon
110.	Yellowknives Dene First Nation/Dettah	Chief Edward Sangris
111.	Yellowknives Dene First Nation/Dettah	Modest Sangris
112.	Yellowknives Dene First Nation/Dettah	Randy Baillargeon

	Affiliation	Name
113.	Yellowknives Dene First Nation/Dettah	Shannon Gault
114.	Yellowknives Dene First Nation/Dettah	Sizeh Charlo
115.	Yellowknives Dene First Nation/Yellowknife	Mike Francis
116.	Yellowknives Dene First Nation/Yellowknife	Randy Freeman

Appendix C – “Towards An Agenda”

The following preamble to a draft agenda was delivered in advance of the Gathering for consideration by delegating organisations.

TOWARDS AN AGENDA

This three day workshop provides an opportunity for Aboriginal Peoples who depend on the Bathurst caribou to meet and share their wisdom and experience with addressing management issues.

It will provide participants with an opportunity to identify the issues of concern to them and talk about how they dealt with these issues in the past. The workshop will focus on these key issues with the goal of creating a good understanding of how issues were addressed traditionally and how we might build on that strength for resolving issues in the future. A short presentation on key issues that have been brought forward by communities concerned with the Bathurst caribou will be made. This will help ensure that participants know that their concerns have been heard.

The first part of the workshop will generate a short list of 3 issues that participants agree will be the focus of a workshop process for Days 1 and 2. The workshop will then use a simple process of determining how people addressed that issue in their traditional system and proceed to how that traditional approach can be adapted and used now.

For example, we know that many people are concerned about how management decisions are made if the population seems to be going down. Participants might be asked to talk about how they dealt with caribou shortages in the past in traditional times. What did they do if there were no caribou in their normal range? Did they talk to people in other communities? Did they help each other out? How did they make these decisions? How did they make sure the caribou population stayed strong?

People have also expressed strong views about research methods used to study caribou. This may well be another issue selected by participants. Again, using the approach of building on the traditional knowledge, we might ask how they monitored caribou in the past? We might also ask why they do not like the use of collars on caribou? Is there a role for Aboriginal harvesters, elders and youth in monitoring caribou in the future?