

**Voluntary Recreational Access Management Group
November 21, 2001 Meeting**

Attendance List

Name	Organization	Fax #
George Schultze	WLAP	847-7728
Laurence Wicks	Houston Snowmobile Association	
Daryl Hanson	Smithers Exploration Group	
Al Madigan	Houston	
Bill Wookey	Smithers Snowmobile Assn.	846-5681
Ed Hinchcliff	Oldtimers	847-3932

Ray Chipeniuk had contacted Daryl to say he would not be able to attend this meeting.

Agenda Development

- 1.) Review last meeting's minutes
- 2.) Status report of caribou
- 3.) Hand Out
- 4.) Club Reports
- 5.) Signs
- 6.) Other

Minutes

1. Review last meeting's minutes
 - Reviewed and approved October 17, 2001 Minutes
 - October 17 minutes as well as the Progress report will be distributed to all groups on the mailing list.

**** Action; George to send copies of minutes to all groups***

2. Status Report of the Caribou
 - George provided maps showing the caribou locations found on the two telemetry flights conducted since the last meeting.
 - Caribou seem to be shifting to their winter habitats. One caribou that summers near Morice Lk was located just south of the Telkwas west of Houston Tommy Cr at the end of October and then was located Nov 16th near Takysie Lk. The other collared caribou were located in the Telkwa Mountains. The two that have wintered north of the Telkwas in past years could not be tracked due to weather conditions.
 - There have been no further mortalities detected.
 - Four caribou were fitted with GPS radio collars to provide some finer scale detail on daily activities.
 - Caribou sightings in the valley bottom had been reported.

3. Hand Out

- George provided a handout showing the budget amounts for the Telkwa Project since 1997.
- the group indicated that the amounts were less than or equal to what they had thought.
- Laurence pointed out that these dollar values did not reflect the entire cost because they did not include salaries of the staff involved.
- George indicated that between himself and Sean the estimated time would be probably be .4 of a man year.

4. Status of Recreational Compliance (Club Reports)

- Bill reported that Snowmobile season had started and that no activity was occurring in the Telkwas.
- Laurence and Al reported that their clubs activities had been occurring in the Plateau area and had not extended into the Meat cache or the Star Cr. Areas.
- George commented that he had discussed the request by Ed to allow an organized ,one time /year atv access into the Hunter's Basin area with his counterparts at WLAP and the feeling was that as long as it was organized a once a year event would probably be acceptable.

5. Signs

- Signs are being made by the sign painter
- George provided copies of the sign painter's mock ups to the group.
- Signs will take approx 4 wks to complete.

6. Other

- Daryl's caribou update article appeared in this weeks Smithers paper, group had positive feed back
- Houston Today needed a copy of the photograph (not digital file) so George was going to see if he could locate a print and give it to Daryl.
- Laurence wanted to know where we are with regards to the access agreement in particular the Meat Cache area and Starr Cr.
- George explained that the agreement currently was that there would be winter motorized use allowed on the Grizzly Plateau (Houston Snowmobile Area) and that in the Meat Cache Area motorized access would be one weekend a year only for special club event depending on what the caribou activity was.
- Laurence asked what happened to the Height of Land agreement in the Meat Cache corridor and why was that not still in place as he felt that it was working fine. He pointed out that the caribou were increasing and seemed to be doing well and that the club members cared about the caribou and their actions proved that they were good stewards of the resource. He claimed that club members avoided going where caribou were known to be and caused minimal stress to the animals. According to their experience the caribou , even if they moved away from the snowmachines initially , would get used

to their presence and would invariably return to use the same areas and would in some instances use the snowmachine trails as movement trails.

- George pointed out that the Meat Cache corridor was initially agreed to only as a one year interim access area and that it would depend upon the results of the caribou monitoring what the status of that corridor would be. In fact the voluntary corridor remained in place for two years. In 2000 WLAP could no longer support the motorized activity in the corridor due to the fact that caribou were using the area and they did exhibit behaviour that indicated that they were being affected by the snowmobile activity.
- Laurence also had concern about the perception that one user group was being given preferential treatment because people could still helicopter into Starr Cr to Back country ski and yet motorized users were not being allowed access. He claimed that skiers were saying that they had no impact on caribou so their activities were acceptable.
- George clarified the position again that the management prescriptions were base on what was deemed to be significant liabilities to caribou. If the amount of back country skiing activity or any other activity gets to the point that it is felt to be impacting the caribou then appropriate recommendations would be made. No group would be immune.
- Laurence and Al both expressed the importance of the Telkwa Mountains for Houston's economy especially in these tough times. They felt that for Houston to remain a drawing point for winter recreationalists from afar it would be essential to maintain access into the Telkwas, beyond just the Grizzly Plateau area.
- Laurence commented that this is a very sensitive issue in the community as they feel that their activities are more than a recreation to them but closer to a way of life. The emotions are running high and if the people do not get some recognition for their efforts or some give with regards to where they can access WLAP is in danger of losing support for the project entirely.
- George said that he would take Laurence's comments and concerns back to his counterparts and get some feed back.

Last Meeting held Wednesday, December 19, 2001, 7:00 PM at Quick school)

Future meeting January 24th 2002, 7:00 PM at the Quick school.