

Minutes of Telkwa Caribou Recovery Team Meeting, 24 August, 1999

Present: Rick Marshall
Tom Smith
George Schultze
Mark Williams
James Cuell
Astrid Vik Stronen

Update on Monitoring Work (George)

-caribou scattered about. 911 at Nanika Falls, 131 at Sinclair Creek, 1 cow + calf en route to Kitsegucla
-6 calves collared this summer. 3 died shortly afterward. 2 abandoned, the third had signs of avian predation (hemorrhaging around talon marks).
-still 9 calves alive (total of at least 12 born this year).
Astrid - there was also one uddered cow never seen with a calf.
-about 39 adults in herd
-2 caribou sighted at Hydro hill
-1 unknown collared caribou at Fort Babine
-in general, caribou spent longer in forest this spring, due to high snow depths.

James - have relocation data been entered in GIS? Relocation data very useful for development plan maps.

Astrid - problem with relocation database, relocation data for July might have to be re-entered.

-discussion: we seem to be getting about ½ of the number of calves we would expect based on “normal” pregnancy rates.

Tom - should we be collecting urine samples this winter for pregnancy rate analysis. General agreement that it would be a good idea. However, need to be careful about sampling, and we should plan on it taking some time and effort.

Workplan (George)

-no money to move bulls this fall. We have approval from region 5 to transplant caribou in fall of 2000
-wait one more year to look at calf production. If good calf production in June 2000, no need for further transplants.
-if poor calf production in June 2000, we should consider bring in some bulls

Question: what about genetics of bringing in caribou from Region 5?

-still no response re materials sent out previously. 3-4 shipments sent to Curtis Strobeck at U. Of A. Nothing heard.

Action: Sean to follow up with Helen.

-Astrid - are there plans to collar more calves next year?

-George - no plans for further calf collaring.

-Mark - any plans for further wolf collaring?

-George, Astrid - no plans to collar wolves this winter. Hard to justify collaring wolves if no one will be following up with studies. Astrid planning on writing up this spring. Unsure if there are any other grad students who might be following up on her studies. Will check.

-the only collaring planned is to put 1 or 2 collars on resident caribou.

-Anne-Marie is doing lichen/habitat work on contract. Claudia Howard and Jonah subcontracted.

Rick - Parks is going after \$\$ for bug problem in Tweedsmuir. Any chance of pursuing \$ \$ for Telkwa Caribou work?

James - \$\$ a one-time windfall to offset the Lakes LRMP, expect little chance of getting \$ \$ for Telkwa caribou.

Monitoring schedule for remainder of year:

daily calf telemetry now

weekly calf telemetry starting end of August

monthly telemetry for all caribou

helicopter flight in October for total count, calf survival over summer

monthly telemetry flights over the winter.

-reassess budgets in September

Access Management

-this year snowmobiles pretty much stayed out of Hunters' Basin and Camel Humps through most of winter due to lack of snow/wind scouring making travel difficult

-once there was enough snow, they went everywhere

-ATV's going into alpine in July, using the mining trail

Question: what is going on with the Morice PAS?

Action: check with Andy Witt on Morice PAS

-Mark - there is some indication of increasing support in Victoria for access management legislation.

-Rod Davis has indicated a willingness to go to the Minister to ask for an amendment to the FPC if DM's unwilling to use Section 105. Rod Davis has indicated we should send a formal request from the Regional F&W Manager to the DM's to get process underway.

Action: Mark to draft letter for RM to Morice and Bulkley DM's.

James - perception that Section 105 totally ineffective in managing access. Little precedent in province. Guenter would argue there is no MOF staff to enforce. Guenter moving on to Victoria at end of September, and unlikely to be willing to even consider a request.

-CO's can also enforce FPC, so Guenter's argument of lack of enforcement staff can be dealt with.

-recommend get process rolling with a formal letter.

-be prepared to get nowhere with Section 105 and pursue legislation through Wildlife Act.

-it would be helpful if we could piggy-back efforts for legislated closures in Telkwa on provincial efforts for sweeping motorized access restrictions.

-need to document non-compliance, and determine if Reid White and Jim Yardley would support legislated closures.

Options for Access Management

-little need to have Mt. Morice non-motorized zone. Area probably not critical to core area.

-elevational (4500') non-motorized closure both summer and winter would be simplest.

-permit fly in skiing to Starr Creek

-allow continued snowmobile activity in SE winter motorized zone, but have a 1 May cutoff. We have documented caribou calving in area, and it is likely caribou would move into the area in May, and use the south-facing ridges for forage, prior to calving.

-we should permit Houston snowmobile club to service their cabin in summer by permit only. Problem is ATV use in alpine beyond the cabin.

-lower elevations (integrated management zones) continue to be managed through road closures.

-need to get rid of the meat cache zone. It was a one year agreement, and we have ample documentation that snowmobiles did not stay within the zone.

-would be nice to get rid of motorized trail to Mooseskin Johnny. McIntyre doesn't want it. Trail identified on RAMP map. Parts of trail lost due to road development. Should seek input from public.

-should consider allowing permitted motorized access to area west of Burnie Lakes. Eg. have Smithers snowmobile club issues permits for groups of snowmobilers to access that area.

-will need to "grandfather" motorized access by trappers and g/o

-George - motorized restrictions should also apply to prospectors.

-therefore zonations would be simplified. There would be a non-motorized zone above 4500', a winter motorized zone in SE corner, and the integrated management zones below 4500'.

-hiking (mountain biking, horseback riding) should be permitted into alpine after July 15, and before September 15th.

-no dogs allowed, requirement to stay on ridge tops

-easiest to not have to issue permits.

-if number of hikers too great, we might have to go for permit system, in which case, the easiest way to administer would be to have clubs administer permits.

-need for further meeting with Sean and Len, and to get rolling on access issues.

-MOF producing a brochure on the illegalities of cutting trails, for distribution, newspaper article to come out in Wednesday's paper re new trails cut to alpine.

-Astrid to pull together references to motorized activities from old telemetry reports.

-it would be nice to have a map showing areas of motorized use outside of the zones (non-compliance) to present to Reid White and Jim Yardley when we discuss need for legislation.