



Manitoba Model Forest
Committee for Cooperative Moose Management

Meeting Minutes
August 10, 2011
Winnipeg River Learning Centre

Present:

Brian Kotak (MBMF)	James Niedermayer (MB Wild Rice Assoc.)
Gordon Arndt (Bissett)	Stu Jansson (MB Trappers Assoc.)
Ken MacMaster (MB Wildlife Assoc.)	John Williams (MB Wildlife Assoc.)
Orton Ramsay (Black River FN)	Earnest McPherson (Black River FN)
Jonas Peebles (Black River FN)	Eugene Bear (Hollow Water FN)
Vince Keenan (MBMF)	Sandi Faber Routley (MB Métis Federation)
Jim Hoard (Pinawaw Game & Fish Assoc)	Alex Bjork (Hollow Water FN)
Hilda Bjork (Hollow Water FN)	Paul Millan (Brokenhead Game & Fish Assoc.)
Bob Austman (MBMF)	Ken Rebizant (MB Conservation)
Kelly Leavesley (MB Conservation)	Cam Neurenburg (Lac du Bonnet Wildlife Assoc.)
Gerry Arbez (Lac du Bonnet Wildlife Assoc.)	
Rene Barker (MBMF)	

1. Introductions

All the members and participants introduced themselves.

2. Additions to agenda

There were no additions to the agenda

3. Approval of minutes from last 3 meetings

The committee reviewed the minutes from each of the last 3 meetings and approved all minutes with the following revisions:

May 12 – There was a question as to why (on page 8), there was not a specific number of years identified for a potential hunting closure in GHA 26. The answer was that the committee felt that no one knows for sure how many years it will take for the population to recover. There are many factors at play. Thus, the number of years was left blank. Subsequently, the recommendation that went to the Minister, indicated that the closure should remain in effect until a sustainable harvest can be re-introduced.

June 2 – There were no comments

June 27 – Paul Millan commented that education, and in particular, traditional teachings would be a good thing for the committee to focus on with respect to activities of the committee for this fiscal year.

Kelly Leavesley indicated that the statement on page 3 regarding back-casting of diet needs to be corrected: we can back cast diet for about 2 months from muscle, and only since the last molt for hair samples

Page 4 Kelly Leavesley indicated that August and Sept are a good time to trap wolves as wolves become much more mobile after this time period.

On page 3, Rene Barker indicated that the correct trapline holder in GHA 17A is Henry Hardisty.

Brian will post the approved minutes on the MBMF website.

4. Minister's Announcement - Kelly Leavesley

Members of the committee thought that the announcement from the Minister would include a total hunting closure in GHA 26 would be included in announcement. It did not. MB Conservation has been spending a lot of time in consultations with Aboriginal communities. However, they have not made much progress with Sagkeeng. It is the largest FN community on east side (approx. 7,000 members). The Minister wants more progress, in particular, with Sagkeeng, before an announcement is made on GHA 26. A consultation plan developed with Sagkeeng. MB Conservation is hoping to have meeting with Sagkeeng next week. They have not met with community yet, only with Chief and Council. There are many moose hunters in Sagkeeng. Legal council has advised the Minister that a hunting closure could be challenged if adequate consultation has not been done. Many committee members stressed that a decision has to be made very soon, as the moose population is in jeopardy. MB Conservation is hoping to have decision by Sept 1. They had hoped to have everything in place by mid August, but the extra time will give more time for consultation.

There is a fire ban and travel restrictions in place right now. Back country travel on forestry roads is prohibited to all people right now. Accidental fires put others in jeopardy. This will help with reducing the risk of hunting of moose, as people are not allowed to use back country roads and trails. Jonas Peebles asked about the ability of FN to harvest medicines. Kelly Leavesley indicated that the travel restrictions apply to all activities. The restrictions are in place for safety. If a fire breaks out, MB Conversation does not want people trapped in the forest.

Gerry Arbez noted that the FN moose harvest usually starts in August. The travel ban helps, but with rainfall, the restrictions on travel will be eventually lifted, allowing FN to hunt. Cam Neurenburg expressed concern about the length of time that a hunting closure decision is taking. Kelly Leavesley indicated that the Treasury Board is currently looking at the consultation application right now. Is the consultation plan publically available? No, the consultation plan is confidential.

Ken MacMaster stated that according to the Minister's press release, the closure in western Manitoba is effective immediately. There is support of all FN in western MB for this. Black

River and Hollow Water FNs have agreed to closure for some time. In the west, agreement was quick. What is the hold up now? Ken Rebizant indicated that the community consultation process needs to happen first and that it has been a slow process to get this established. Ken stated that a FN cannot refuse to engage in a consultation process. However, Sagkeeng has agreed to be consulted. A community meeting is eminent. The community may still challenge a decision even with consultation. Because they indicated they are willing to be consulted, there is a duty by MB Conservation to consult.

Will one meeting be enough? Will that satisfy Sagkeeng? Does the justice department feel this is adequate consultation? It is likely that a series of consultation meetings will need to take place.

Bob Austman asked about the status of the land claim by Sagkeeng. The lawyers for Sagkeeng are telling them not to discuss anything. Thus, it is difficult to consult. Cam Neurenburg said that our committee is not equipped to deal with land claims. We are here to save a species. If there isn't a closure in the next couple of weeks, the credibility of the moose committee is in jeopardy.

Rene Barker: why is the government so hesitant to make a decision that is for the betterment (in the interest of all people, not just FNs).

The committee suggested that the Model Forest write another letter from CCMM to the Minister. The letter should express dissatisfaction with the lack of a hunting closure announcement for GHA 26. We understand need to consult, but action needs to be taken. Committee members expressed their desire for a letter to be written. It is never too late for such a letter.

There was a discussion that MB Conservation needs to address illegal market hunting (meat not being brought to communities, but sold). The province needs to investigate marketing hunting in our region.

Brian will write the letter to the Minister.

The committee also recommends that Brian post this letter, and our previous one, on the MBMF website. Brian indicated that the Minister did not reply to our first letter.

Cam Neurenburg stated that open and transparent communications by province is very important.

Kelly Leavesley said that she will send out information to the committee members as it becomes available.

5. Community Consultations

Kelly Leavesley indicated that there have not been many additional meetings recently. One was held with Bloodvein FN. Meetings have been held with Sagkeeng Chief and Council. Next week there is a consultation meeting planned for Brokenhead Ojibway Nation. They consider GHA 26 as their traditional area and do hunt moose there. Members of Peguis FN also hunt in GHA 26. Meetings are on-going with Black River and Hollow Water FN.

Kelly Leavesley stated that MB Conservation has met with MB Métis Federation as well. MC has not officially heard back from them yet. MMF is supporting the hunting closures in west and east.

Stuart Jansson asked about the travel restrictions in currently in place. What about commercial operators? Wild rice harvester, mining exploration? Kelly Leavesley indicated that permits can be issued on a case by case basis. They have not received a lot of requests yet though. Mining exploration requests have been denied. Stuart Jansson said that it is important for rice operators to get into their lakes to check the rice crops soon.

6. Prioritizing CCMM Activities for 2011-12

Brian Kotak provided a list of ideas for potential activities for the moose committee to undertake over the current fiscal year. The list came from activities identified in the current MBMF annual work plan as well as ideas raised by the committee over the last few meetings. A flip chart sheet with the activities was posted on the wall and each committee member was given stickers for voting on their favorites. The results (number of votes) are identified below:

- Putting one or more GPS collars on moose in GHA 26 to examine habitat use, etc. – 16 votes
- Funding towards an aerial moose survey of GHA 26 – 15 votes
- Development of a school curriculum for moose (or wildlife management in general). This could include involvement of students in tracking moose movement using the GPS collars – 13 votes
- Involvement of youth at the next Wolf Trapping workshop being given by Gordy Klassen – 13 votes
- Contributing towards the wolf/prey diet study – 12 votes
- GPS collaring of wolves in GHA26 and/or 17A – 9 votes
- Production of 1 or more issues of Moose News – 6 votes
- Wolf survey of GHA 16/17A – 6 votes

There was a lengthy discussion of the above. Some of the main points are captured below.

The committee thought it would be good to have GPS collars placed on moose this winter so that data could be collected on habitat use, movement patterns, movement in relation to predators, etc. The information obtained from the GPS collars could also be used as part of a moose/wildlife curriculum for high school. Bob Austman indicated that he would be very interested in working with MB Conservation and others on such a curriculum. While there were a majority of committee members who thought that contributing funds towards an aerial moose survey in GHA26 this winter was a good thing, there were questions about why we would put money towards this, if the province has already committed to paying for it. Brian indicated that the Model Forest is hoping to secure a 5-year funding agreement with MB Conservation, as part of a new 5 year plan that the MBMF is developing. This would show that the MBMF/CCMM is willing to assist the province in wildlife management in a real and tangible way. Some committee members still felt that the moose committee funds should be spent in a different manner. There was no resolution to the issue.

The committee felt that it would be good to support the attendance of youth at the next wolf trapping seminar given by Gordy Klassen. The youth however, should have a keen interest in trapping and be able to work with an existing trap line holder/trapper. The workshop is not designed as a general informational session, but rather to provide the knowledge and skills to trappers who will trap wolves.

The committee was also supportive of the CCMM providing funding towards the wolf/prey diet study. This financial support could go to trappers in GHA 17A (as the new wolf trapping program announced by the province would only be for GHA 26) and/or for paying for the analysis of samples.

The committee was less supportive of conducting a wolf survey of GHA 26/17A or for the placement of GPS collars on wolves.

While the Moose News received few votes, committee members indicated that the newsletter is an excellent method for getting information out, and that the committee should continue to produce issues of Moose News.

7. Additional Management Recommendations from the committee

The committee decided to wait until there is something more announced by the province before providing any more management recommendations to the Minister.

8. Access Decommissioning Update and Field Tour Logistics

Kelly Levesley showed map of eastern region, indicating areas of access decommissioning. For the field tour, we will be going to Gem-Garner area. This road was decommissioned a few years ago, and then used again by a mining exploration company. It was subsequently decommissioned again. Stuart Jansson indicated that right after the decommissioning was done (when the equipment was still being loaded on a flat deck), people were already making a side trail for ATVs. Taking a road out does not guarantee that access is completely blocked off. People will create a new route. Taking our main grade roads can lead to trail proliferation of new trails.

There is not much to see on the Happy Lake road. The northern portion has been decommissioned last week. Culverts and bridge were removed by Tembec. Therefore, we would not be able to go too far up the road.

There is work scheduled to be done in Maskwa area, but no work has been done yet. Negotiations with economic stakeholders are on-going.

The Shoe Lake harvest area had big clear cuts. This could be one of the stops on the way to Gem-Garner.

The permanent decommissioning plan is still being negotiated with Tembec.

Kelly Leavesley indicated that the moose committee can recommend areas for decommissioning as well. This should be an agenda item at next meeting.

Brian Kotak said that mining and exploration are putting a lot of trails and roads on the landscape now.

Jim Niedermayer indicated that he uses access on these roads for getting to his wild rice lakes. He is concerned about how he will access his lakes in the future. Kelly Leavesley indicated that Tim Swanson is talking to economic stakeholders now. He is in charged of the permanent decommissioning. Tim is the regional forester with MB Conservation.

9. Request by MB Wild Rice Producers to become member of CCMM

Jim Niedermayer indicated that the wild rice producers associaiton wants to provide insight to committee on impacts of management recommendations on rice producers, and also to have input. They also can provide information as they are out on the land.

Kelly Leavesley indicated that one of the main reasons for organizations and communities to be on the committee is that they are interested in conservation of moose. This is an overarching objective of the committee. It is also important that you take information from the CCMM back to your membership. The Wild Rice Producers participation would be valuable as you would understand why access decommissioning is being proposed for a certain area, and take that info back.

Several CCMM members spoke in favor of having the Wild Rice Producers as a member of the CCMM. Any group that is impacted by our recommendations should have a voice at the table. "Industry" as a membership group is found in the Terms of Reference for the committee. Tembec was a member and worked well on moose management issues with the committee.

John Williams made a motion that the application by the MB Wild Rice Producers become a member of the CCMM be approved. The motion was seconded by Cam Neurenburg. Motion was carried (13 in favor, no opposed).

Next meeting: October 13 at the Winnipeg River Learning Centre.

Meeting minutes recorded by Brian Kotak