



Committee for Cooperative Moose Management
Meeting Minutes (Final Version)
January 7, 2016
Winnipeg River Learning Centre, Pine Falls

Present:

Mike Adey (MLOA)	Brian Kotak (MBMF)
Cam Neurenburg (LdB Wildlife Assoc.)	Bob Austman (MBMF)
Kelly Leavesley (MCWS)	Paul Millan (Brokenhead G&F)
Brent Tessler (MCWS)	Stu Jansson (MB Trappers Assoc)
Jim Hoard (Pinawa Game & Fish)	Ivan Lavoie (Sagkeeng FN member)

1. Introductions – everyone introduced themselves at the beginning of the meeting.

2. Review/Additions to the Agenda

Brian reviewed the agenda with the committee. There were no additions.

3. Minutes from the December 17, 2015 Meeting

No corrections needed. OK to finalize.

4. Updates

Aerial survey – moose survey scheduled to start this Saturday. Hoping for fresh snow tomorrow. Survey is divided up into 2 areas (each with its own helicopters and team of people): one in the south, one in north part of GHA 26. Could take as little as 10 days if everything goes well. Are working on standardizing techniques and methods first. Kelly described the process for flying the survey.

Discussion on HSP funding - Next issue of Moose News newsletter to be produced before end of March and will include summaries of our results (deer head collections, trapper incentive program). Not likely to include results of aerial survey (analysis won't be completed yet). Hunter interviews in communities: MCWS still needs to develop the questionnaires. Need to confirm funding of interviewers for each community (funding coming from Memorial University). Collaring efforts: 4 moose collars and 10 wolf collars going on this winter.

Kelly indicated that she is looking to put in another HSP funding application. Likely will include more moose collars (up to 10). We can use GHA17A cash contribution for moose survey in 2017 as matching \$ for the HSP grant. Also looking to add training for surveying techniques for Aboriginal communities in the new HSP application.

Will there be a GHA17A moose survey this winter? Not possible. Too many other survey priorities right now. MCWS informed the committee that only MCWS staff will be allowed to be involved in aerial surveys (due to liability issues). This is a standard provincial policy.

4. GHA Moose Status Report and Recommendations

Kelly led a discussion on the purpose of the document the committee is developing. The main body of the document will provide a summary of the status of the moose population in GHA 26 (recent past, current), the factors affecting moose populations, and recommendations from the committee. In this respect, the document is not a recovery strategy. The province will be developing a formal recovery strategy (either regional or provincial). Brian suggested that we perhaps refer to our document as an status report on the GHA 26 moose population, and recommendations for management.

a) Overall Timeline, Activities and Budget

Brian indicated that there are 4 main sections to the proposed document. 3 are introductory sections: Section A - general introduction, Section B - factors affecting the moose population in GHA 26, and Section C - research, monitoring & management actions taken to date (and the result on the moose population). The 4th section (D) of the document will be the recommendations.

- January – Brian to write draft of Sections A, B & C. Agree upon the process for developing recommendations (done during the Jan 7 meeting), start development of recommendations
- February to March – review draft of Sections A, B & C. Continue to develop/refine recommendations
- April to May – finish recommendations. Write recommendations section of moose recovery strategy
- June – complete final revisions. Submit document to Minister of Conservation and Water Stewardship by end of June. There was discussion by MCWS that the document should be submitted to Wildlife Branch (i.e., Director of Wildlife).

Brian estimated that it would take him 4 days to write the first draft of Sections A, B & C. Will have first draft by next moose committee meeting. To be paid for from MCWS Treasury Board funding. Revision to the first 3 sections will be done by Brian, with support of Treasury Board funding. Facilitation of meetings by Brian to be paid from HSP funding (until end of March). Kelly advised that a second application has been made to Treasury Board to support the moose committee operations in the new fiscal year (April 1).

b) Process for Development and Refinement of Recommendations

Brian outlined a potential process for developing the recommendations. Based on 2 core principles: 1) respect for others, their ideas and viewpoints, and 2) all ideas are welcome and are worth discussing.

Get all ideas on the table. We can word-smith them later.

If there are pros and cons to a particular recommendation, this will be recorded

Strive for consensus on each recommendation. If this is not possible for a particular recommendation, then record the recommendation as having General Agreement (not all agrees with the recommendation or is comfortable supporting it, but the recommendation will still go into the document). When there is No Agreement on a particular recommendation (i.e., not supported by the majority of people), then the recommendation will not go into the document.

Committee members expressed their acceptance of this approach.

c) Begin Recommendation Process

Moose Population Objective

Are we able to set one? Do we base the population objective on what the habitat can support, previous populations levels where hunters were satisfied with hunting success, or other criteria?

Kelly indicated that few jurisdictions set population objectives on carrying capacity, mainly due to the lack of data. Requires a lot of resources to determine carrying capacity, and that can change overnight due to catastrophic events.

Are we better off seeking information through other ways? E.g. GPS collars and see what habitats moose are using? To figure out capacity, you usually bring in experts at a workshop who provide their expert opinion on the value of different habitats for moose. Is subjective, but can be done.

Kelly suggested that it would be far easier (and we would probably come up with a similar answer) by not making the setting of a population objective too complicated (e.g., don't use models, data, etc).

Historical numbers: high of 2350 moose in year 2000. Can we find check station data for the past? It would be good to have these numbers. Comment that up to 500 moose were harvested per year. The harvest was 30-60 moose per year in more recent years (e.g., pre hunting closure).

Would be good to have information on number of licenses sold, number of moose harvested in GHA 26. Need check station data.

Two ways of looking at population objective: range of numbers in order to sustain a healthy population Or what do people want the harvest to be, and then work backward to determine what the population needs to be to support that level of harvest. Difficult to do this as there is not much information on the moose harvest numbers for aboriginal communities.

Bob presented a method of simple method of calculating how many moose GHA 26 could support. By his calculations, his estimate of about 1350 moose in GHA26 as a carrying capacity.

The density of moose in GHA 26 has varied over the years. In recent years, it was highest in the year 2000 (0.343 moose/km²).

Kelly suggestion: 1600 to 2000 moose as a population objective range. If falls below 1500, management actions needed. Other committee members suggested a lower bound of 1200 moose before management action is needed. A declining trend could be a trigger for action. Committee members were comfortable with the population range suggested by Kelly (1600 to 2000) with a lower bound of 1200 when management actions would be initiated.

There was a discussion about the new Metis harvesting rights in GHA 26 in 17A, effective July 1, 2016. This is an unknown factor. Critical that MB Metis Federation and Metis hunters be part of the solution and respect the recommendations put forward in the moose recovery strategy.

There was also a discussion about the need more communication within FN communities with respect to moose. TAACs in Hollow Water First Nation and Black River First Nation helped ensure communication occurred. In some areas of the province, there are RMAs (in the north, there is one person in each community).

Should hunting be opened at the same time for licensed and rights-based hunting? Committee members felt that hunting should be opened for both licensed and right-based hunting at the same time.

Other options for opening up hunting:

- draw or a limit on number of licenses? 2 hunters per tag? Suggestion from committee that MCWS start with a lower number of licenses. Provides a conservative approach to re-introducing hunting. Less risk involved.

All agreed that we need a management strategy that is responsive.

There was an expectation expressed from licensed hunters that the strategy must be equitable across all groups with respect to our collective responsibilities to ensure a sustainable moose population.

Ivan suggested that all hunters (licensed, rights-based) should only harvest bulls. Leave the cows to breed and the calves to grow.

Discussion on night hunting. Ivan indicated that there is a big difference between night hunting from a vehicle (which is dangerous) and sitting in one spot (away from a road or trail). Ivan indicated that the latter method is a traditional method of hunting. He also only will use a light once he has called in a bull (not for scanning the surrounding forest). Many committee members were not aware of the difference in practice and thanked Ivan for the explanation.

The committee discussed the importance of some sort of forum in each community in which moose and other natural resource issues and information can be shared. The TAACs were successful when they were running. A TAAC in each community would need financial support for a chair, honoraria for elders, etc. Would Chief and Councils support the idea? The moose committee recommends that funding be sought for this. Perhaps MB Hydro could be approached for funding (they provided funding to TAACs in the past).

Finally, the committee briefly discussed the idea of developing a wildlife monitoring program using knowledge of those people out on the land (trappers, hunters, lodge owners and outfitters, etc.). We could submit an application to the Wildlife Enhancement Fund (applications are due in June) to develop a pilot program for this. This type of information would be valuable. Wildlife surveys are very expensive and can not be done every year. Information from land users could help supplement the data.

5. Other

Nothing

6. Next Meeting

February 18, 2016 at the Winnipeg River Learning Centre in Pine Falls. We will continue working on the recommendations section, and will get an update on winter survey activities conducted by MCWS.