



**MBMF Committee for Cooperative Moose Management  
Meeting Minutes  
Winnipeg River Learning Centre  
Powerview-Pine Falls**

**January 5, 2012**

Present:

Brian Kotak (MBMF)	Kelly Leavesley (MB Conservation)
Ken Rebizant (MB Conservation)	Daniel Dupont (MB Conservation)
Cam Neurenburg (LdB Wildlife Assoc)	John Williams (MB Wildlife Federation)
Gerry Arbez (LdB Wildlife Assoc)	Eugene Bear (Hollow Water FN)
Hilda Bjork (Hollow Water FN)	Alex Bjork (Hollow Water FN)
Trevor Barkers (MB Hydro)	Jonathon Williams (MB Conservation)
Earle Simmons (MB Conservation)	Jim Hoard (Pinawa Game & Fish Assoc)
Jim Niedermayer (MB Wild Rice Assoc)	Stu Jansson (MB Trappers Assoc)
Ivan Lavoie (Sagkeeng FN)	Paul Millan (Brokenhead Game & Fish)
Vince Keenan (MBMF)	Bob Austman (MBMF)
Rene Barker (MBMF)	

**Introductions**

Introductions of the committee members were made

**Additions to the Agenda**

The following items were added:

- Aerial survey in GHA 26
- Travel restrictions in Atikaki Wilderness Park
- GHA 17 moose population
- Current status of deer population

**Minutes from Last Meeting**

There was a discussion of whether or not people's names should be mentioned in the minutes. There was agreement that this was a good idea and we should continue in this way.

#4 Access decommissioning tour – Kelly indicated that it was a mining exploration company that paid for the final decommissioning at Garner-Gem Lake road.

4<sup>th</sup> paragraph, page 2. There was discussion about the wording in the minutes of what will happen to the Translicense Road. Kelly indicated that MB Conservation is

investigating if there are other private interests in the road. No decisions have been made yet. Brian will revise the minutes to reflect this.

The revised minutes were approved by committee

### **Update on Consultation Process - Kelly Leavesley**

There was a meeting in October with Sagkeeng Chief and Council, as well as some community members at the Deputy Minister's office. Meetings continue with the Black River and Hollow Water TAACs. There were also meetings held with Sagkeeng Elders on Dec 7&8.

Kelly stressed that it is important for the government to listen to comments from the community and to consider them in the final decision. MB Conservation heard from Sagkeeng about the importance of Rights and on communication with the community. There has been discussion with Sagkeeng on alternate options for the moose closure since our last meeting. The province is very close to making a decision. MB Conservation hopes that final discussions will occur soon, hopefully next week. There will be notification to the communities and Moose committee before the decision is announced publically. One of the concerns from the community, is that no one wants to be the person to say that a closure should be done. In the end, however, the government makes the decision.

Rene indicated that Hollow Water has a draft letter to be sent to the Minister. Black River will also likely have a letter.

A question was raised about what the alternate proposals were? Closing all of GHA 26 might not be acceptable to communities. Alternative options could include closures for certain important moose areas. In addition, protection would not only be for today, but there could also be areas which will have good moose habitat in the near future. There was a question of what the benefit is of leaving large areas open to hunting, that have no moose right now? By doing this, it does not totally infringe on Aboriginal and treaty rights. It is a balance between protection of vital moose areas with the needs of Aboriginal communities. Areas of greater concentrations of moose would be protected under this scenario.

There was a comment from several FN members that the communities are interested in co-management. It must be part of the solution.

Licensed hunting: will still be closed in GHA 26, regardless of conservation closure.

The committee stressed that there is still a need for discussion on what the target moose population for GHA 26 should be. In our letter to the Minister, we indicated by Dec 2012 a target population should be determined. This was not done.

Cam indicated his frustration with not been able to take much information back to their wildlife association members. The consultation process and discussions are not publically available. Cam indicated that many wildlife association members feel that there will not be much moose hunting opportunity in the future. He does not feel that the alternative management options will help the moose population to rebuild (or rebuild as quickly).

### **Fall Moose Harvest Statistics – Earle Simmons**

Earle gave an update on the moose harvest statistics from September to December

There were no licenses issued for GHA 26. There were 5 known bull harvest (treaty harvest), but officers did not spend a lot of time patrolling

GHA 17A licensed hunters -13 moose, 1 kill found and 1 cow was shot and left. 1 moose harvested as part of a fly-in moose hunt at Aikens Lake.

GHA 17: Adventure Air flew 150 hunters, 25 moose harvested. 4-6 hunters per group. Blue Water Aviation flew in 160 hunters, 30 bulls were harvested. WAM did not fly last fall. Known FN harvest: Berens River FN - 6 bulls 1 cow, Pungassi FN - 3 moose during derby. Bloodvein FN no info, Little Grand Rapids FN - 10 moose

GHA 17 – the moose harvest last fall was about average in terms of success rate.

MC has the info for the air carriers. Will compile the information for the moose committee.

The committee expressed concern about east side road and impacts on GHA 17A and 17

There was a discussion regarding the need for an aerial survey of GHA17. The province only has a small budget for surveys, and this does not cover much area.

Trevor Barker asked if MB Conservation can break GHA17 into smaller management units. Perhaps the province could fly areas in conjunction with ESRA.

Recommendation: MB Conservation to bring information to the next moose meeting for discussion on reconfiguring GHA17. The committee also indicated that it would be good for this committee to have input into how hunting will be controlled and regulated. East side road will change things. Need to be proactive in thinking about how to manage this area.

Bob Austman asked if there is merit in restricting hunting to the use of primitive weapons (archery, black powder)? A comment was made that it is easier to control hunting using a draw system, rather than the type of weapon.

What is the carrying capacity of the habitat right now? The forest is aging and this will have implications for moose. There is no forest harvesting and forest fires are not large in extent anymore. How will young forest habitat be renewed? MB Conservation has historical data on the moose population. Need to discuss this at the next meeting. Also need to consider the lower threshold that you don't want the population to drop below, and what action would be taken to reverse the trend. We do have a HSI (habitat suitability index) model, but it was not developed to look at a moose population level. It only gives an indication of the number of high, medium and low habitat quality units available.

### **Wolf Reduction Program – Daniel Dupont**

15 wolves have been submitted from trappers so far – 13 from GHA 26, 2 from 17A. Daniel knows of another 5 wolves that still need to be brought in.

There was a question about the trapping effort to get these wolves. Some people believe that there are a fair amount of wolves out there. Some loners but also large packs. Would be good to touch base with trappers to determine level of effort.

Deer heads – collected from all over GHA 26 and Whiteshell. There was a suggestion from the committee that MB Conservation produce a map of where the samples came from and an indication of which ones were positive and negative for brain worm. In total, 14 deer heads were collected. 11 were positive from GHA 26, and 3 were negative.

Daniel will bring a deer head to next meeting so that people can see what the parasite looks like.

There was a question of whether we know how many wolves need to be removed to have an impact on the wolf population? Need 80% every year for 5 years. We are targeting 100 wolves (around 60%).

### **Moose collaring project – Kelly Leavesley**

MB Conservation hires a professional capture company. There is a province-wide contract done for multiple projects. In that tender, there is an opportunity to capture 6 moose. MB Conservation swapped 4 caribou collars that they had for 4 moose collars that ESRA had. Therefore, collars are now in place.

Moose calves: there will be no GPS collars for calves. For a study to look at calves, usually you have to collar 50-70 calves. You also need to capture the cows first. Not an option for us. For now, best to capture 4 cows.

Our collars could work for up to 3 years, but we may want more fixes per day and therefore, the collars will last a shorter period of time (e.g., 1.5 years versus 3 years).

Time release built in to the collar so that the collar will drop off automatically (no need to recapture the animal to retrieve the collar).

The cost of the capture is approximately \$1650/moose.

There is a 2<sup>nd</sup> helicopter involved during the capture work to help find the animals. Moose committee funding could pay for this, as well as the capture, to a maximum of \$9,000.

MB Conservation will be taking blood from cows to see if they are pregnant. Also will fly after calving period.

Hydro is testing a thermal imaging camera system for aerial surveys. Can distinguish bears, moose, seals, etc. The infrared technology could revolutionize aerial surveys. It is possible to use this to get a handle on the black bear population, which you cannot do with traditional aerial surveys. It is very costly right now (use of the equipment and personnel), although you can do surveys much quicker and have the ability to go back and look at video footage. Maybe we could do a test/pilot project in the MBMF area?

The committee has agreed to contribute up to \$9,000 for the moose collaring project. A question was asked as to whether this the best use of our \$? Yes, it will allow us to build on our knowledge.

### **Aerial Survey for GHA 26 – Kelly Leavesley**

The survey funding is part of new funding announced by the province for here and the Duck Mountains. Total \$190,000 for GHA 26, duck and porcupine mountains. Waiting for more snow in order to conduct the survey. Need a base of 25 cm of snow. Normally we would have started first week of Jan. MB Conservation is planning on doing a deer survey in GHA 22 (Minnedosa), and moose survey near The Pas.

Also, a wolf survey is planned in GHA26, Duck and Porcupine mountains. Each cost about \$25K. The surveys will be done by the Alaska trackers. Also need enough snow cover to do the surveys.

If the aerial survey cannot be done due to weather, should we look at the infrared technology? There was a recommendation from the committee that MB Conservation work with Hydro to explore that technology.

### **Moose/Wildlife Curriculum – Bob Austman**

Bob Austman started on flushing out the moose curriculum. It must meet the prescribed outcomes for the province. There are 5 main themes in Grade 12 biology, one is biodiversity (where the moose curriculum would fit)

There are a number of aspects that the curriculum could include: moose biology and ecology, how moose is managed, predation, etc. A variety of topics that hit the teaching outcomes.

Tradition use of moose use by FN is also an area that should be included in the curriculum.

Bob will create an outline for the next moose meeting. The committee will then provide input, critique.

### **Travel Restrictions in Atikaki**

Cam received an email from a Long Lake cottage owner. The letter was from the province and was about travel restrictions (ban on snowmobile or ATV travel in Atikaki). Further, in South Atikiki there would be a requirement for a permit from MB Conservation. This is a Parks branch initiative. It is part of management plan for those parks and does not apply to trappers, lodge owners, Aboriginals. But, it also applies to boat caches (i.e., no boat caches allowed). Several people expressed concern about how these decisions were made. Many years ago there were some public open houses for South Atikiki and Atikiki Wilderness Park. After that, there was no feedback to the public. Decisions seem to have been made recently behind closed doors. There was no knowledge that new legislation was being proposed to ban motorized access and boat caches.

The bans and restrictions cover both GHA17 and 17A. How would this affect moose hunting? It will make it an activity where only the rich, that can afford to fly into a lodge, will be able to hunt moose.

Cam indicated that he will forward the letter to the moose committee. There was a suggestion that we should invite Parks Branch to the next moose meeting. We can also look at the management plan for each park.

### **Status of Deer Population**

MB Conservation indicated that the deer population has declined over the last year. Part of this was likely due to conditions last winter (very deep snow). Part could be due to predation. There was 30-40% mortality last winter. The deer population is down right across the province.

### **Budget Update – Brian Kotak**

Brian indicated that we have about \$21,500 remaining in the moose budget in the MBMF bank account. Of that, \$10,732 needs to be spent in this fiscal year, as this money is provided by the federal government. If we don't spend it, we lose it. With the upcoming collaring work, we will be able to spend the \$10,732 without any problem. Part of Bob Austman's contract to the MBMF is also coming out of the moose budget, with respect to

the moose curriculum development. We will likely carry forward funding (non-federal government money) from this fiscal year to the next fiscal year, as some costs (e.g., moose meetings, wolf diet study, moose news) will likely come in under budget, or not be spent.

### **Moose Phone-in Show on CJOB**

Just before the meeting closed, John Williams and Kelly Leavesley mentioned that they will be on an hour-long phone in show on CJOB regarding the moose population. It will be on Jan 6 at 10 AM. If you can, take some time to listen in.

### **Next Meeting**

The committee asked that Parks Branch be invited to the next meeting to talk about the new restrictions in Atikaki and South Atikaki. It was suggested that we have the next meeting on Feb 16. Brian indicated that his schedule is extremely tight from now until the end of March, but could fit in a meeting on Feb 16. The committee also set a date for another meeting: March 15. Both meetings would be at the regular location (Winnipeg River Learning Centre).