Committee for Cooperative Moose Management
Meeting Minutes (Final Version)
May 8, 2014
Manitoba Conservation and Water Stewardship
Lac du Bonnet, MB

Present:

Kelly Leavesley (MCWS)
Brian Kotak (MBMF)
Earl Simmons (MCWS)
Bob Austman (MBMF)
Ivan Lavoie (Sagkeeng FN member)
Jim Hoard (Pinaway Game & Fish)
Vince Keenan (MBMF)
Stu Jansson (MB Trappers Assoc)
Gerry Arbez (LdBWildlife Assoc)
CamNeurenburg (MB Wildlife Fed)
Orton Ramsay (Black River FN)
Neil Guimond (Sagkeeng FN member)
Ernest McPherson (Black River FN)
Ken Rebizant (MCWS)

Introductions – everyone introduced themselves at the beginning of the meeting

Additions to the Agenda – Information on park planning for Nopiming Provincial Park and Manigotagan River Provincial Park. Signing authority for bank account. Information on deer head collection.

Minutes from the Jan 30, 2014 Meeting – Page 5. Stu pointed out that he brought up the non-resident wolf hunting season topic for information only.

Updates

Kelly explained that the committee is here to facilitate dialogue on moose management. The main focus of committee at this point in time is to provide input and assist MCWS in developing a moose recovery strategy for GHA26.

Moose Collaring

3 additional cow moose were collared on Feb 16, 2014 with real-time satellite collars. There are 6 moose in total now that have real-time GPS collars (3 in the Garner-Gem area, 3 in the Rainy Lake area). ESRA does not have any moose collared. These are the only ones in the province.

Wolf Collaring

4 wolves were collared on Feb 16, 2014 (2 in the Garner-Gem area and 2 in Rainy Lake area). With the collars in place, we can study pack territories, pack movements, pack size, and pack kill rates.

Brian indicated that it would be good to have some grad students analyze all of the data (moose, caribou, wolf relocations)

Wolf Kill Site Investigations

MCWS used the GPS data to look at areas where movement rates were low (e.g., kill sites). At one of the kill sites, a bull moose leg bone was found and it had very little marrow in it, indicating that this moose was not in good health. The wolves appear to keep going back to the same kill site.

Wolf Diet Analysis

There are some conflicting results from the stable isotope analysis. The data indicate that more moose are eaten by wolves in summer (30-36%of the wolf diet), but more deer in winter (40% of the wolf diet). May be related more to where the wolves were trapped. More wolf samples were trapped from south of the Translicense Rd (where there is more deer than moose).

Majority of wolves harvested this winter were from northern ½ of GHA26. Therefore the results may be different than previous years.

GHA 26 Wolf Survey

The wolf survey was flown on Feb 24&25, 2014. The minimum count was 45 wolves (i.e., the number of wolves actually observed). There was an estimated total of 78 wolves. There were also 28 wolves removed from the population prior to the survey – from trapping). Estimated total # wolves in GHA 26 was therefore106. The survey ffound that the wolves were not moving much, probably due to the snow depth. There could be higher wolf mortality this past winter. A lot more wolf tracks were observed in 2013 compared to this past winter.

Wolf Trapping Incentive Program

32 wolves harvested this winter. (34 in 2012/13, 57 in 2011/12).

Estimated density – 17.5 per 1,000 km^2 in 2011/12, 19.0 per 1,000 km^2 in 2012/13, 14.8 per 1,000 km^2 in 2013/14. This is considered to be a high wolf density (even if you just look at the minimum estimates). Wolf densities above 10 wolves/1000 km^2 would create problems for moose (but these studies not done in boreal shield areas)

Cam noticed that packs seem to be smaller this past winter. No big packs.

Deer Heads

74 deer heads were submitted by hunters in 2013. 73 examined so far. 84% were infected. Also, 2.2 nematodes per animal in 2013. Minnesota DNR thinks that brain worm is having an impact on their moose populations. There was a question of whether west nile virus can affect moose? Unknown.

There was a question about the whether herbicides used to control plants (e.g., spraying by Hydro) can affect moose? Scientific studies show that mammals are not affected as the herbicides only affect plants. Ernest indicated that those chemicals can affect the liver.

Consultations

Phase 2 of the Section 35 consultations has started. Processes have started in Sagkeeng, Black River and Hollow Water FN. Neil Guimond indicated that he was not happy with the consultation process that occurred in Sagkeeng. There was information sessions with the community, but real consulation meetings were only between the government and Chief and Council and did not include the community. Kelly indicated that formal Section 35 consultations are only between government and the First Nation leadership.

Extension of Chief George Barker Wildlife Refuge

MCWS is in the process of proposing to extend wildlife refuge. Have invited 9 communities to engage in the discussion process. 8 communities have consultation plans developed. Hollow Water FNs consultation plan is still in development. Kelly showed a short PowerPoint overview that MCWS has provided to communities. All the communities are interested. A wildlife refuge of 300m on either side of the centerline of the road is proposed to preserve moose and caribou (similar to what is already in place for the Rice River Road and Beaver Creek Road.

ESRA has an Environment Act license for construction of PR304 to Berens River. Plan to have this completed by 2018. Bridge over the Bloodvein River will be completed in August 2014. Once bridge is in, this will open the area up.

Proposal is to extend the wildlife refuge from just south of the Bloodvein River to Berens River. Want to have wildlife refuge in place prior to Bloodvein bridge (this summer)

This is not an emergency situation, but rather is a proactive management strategy.

MCWS will only pursue this if the communities want it. There was a question of how much time is the province giving the communities and stakeholders before a decision is made? This is a pretty short process. Not much time before the bridge goes in.

Question about cottage development. The all-weather road could facilitate cottage development and this would bring increasing pressure on wildlife.

MTA raised a concern about not being allowed to trap along the road. This is an issue with respect to trappers with firearms. There are RLTs up along the Rice River road. There is no compensation programs in place by the province. Kelly indicated that it is important that the province point out all of the consequences.

Does the CCMM support the concept of extending the wildlife refuge? Can the province accommodate the trappers? Yes, but not by creating a wildlife refuge. There was a question of whether MCWS can't just use the restriction along a maintained road (i.e., existing legislation: no discharge of a firearm across or along a maintained road, as per the Wildlife Act). Does not have to be a numbered highway. This would allow for trapping. MTA stated that the trappers have to be included in the process to develop the options for the wildlife refuge.

Ernst indicated that we need to respect the views of the people that live in those territories (Bloodvein, Berens River). We can not speak for them.

The refuge would also help protect woodland caribou. They are a very different animal compared to moose in terms of habitat needs, etc..

Modeling

Unfortunately, the last meeting was cancelled. Hank had a medical emergency and also there were some difficulties with the model, so the model is not ready yet. Several committee members indicated that we need a population objective for GHA26. MCWS also indicated that we need better wolf information for the model (e.g., number of moose eaten per wolf per year). MCWS had a conference call recently to seek advice on wolf predation rate. Experts suggested using a lower predation rate.

MCWS will be in a position to discuss the modeling at the next meeting. It is important to have this done. A moose recovery plan needs to be developed and the modeling is an important component.

2014-15 Winter Survey Program

MCWS would like to do a moose survey in GHA26 this coming winter (2014-15). A funding proposal has already gone in. Also considering GHA17, but this may not occur. A deer survey may be warranted in GHA35 as well. Looking to find $ for additional collaring.

Update on Model Forest in 2014/15

Brian mentioned that the MBMF is now pretty much operating on their own bank account funds. The federal support of model forests in Canada was terminated as of March 31, 214. In addition, very little new monies are available for grants these days. The MBMF has reduced the working hours of Brian, Bob and Bev already. Brian is looking for

alternative sources of funding. More than 5 model forests in Canada have already shut down over the last 6 months. Most of the remaining ones are struggling to stay open. Brian will be meeting with the Minister of MCWS this summer to discuss the situation and to explore what can be done.

As of April 1, 2014, the MBMF is now the location of the national office of the Canadian Model Forest Network. Brian is the new national General Manager. It is a small contract to the MBMF (1 day per week for Brian, 1 day per month for Bev). Although it is not a large contract, at least it is a source of much needed funding.

Signing Authority

Jim/Kelly have to send in a letter to the bank to make tsure that he account is not dormant. We need to change the signing authorities for the moose bank account.

There was a resolution by Brian Kotak that Jim Hoard, Kelly Leavesley and Daniel Dupont be the signing authorities, with only 1 person needed to sign cheques. The motion was seconded by Stu Jansson. Motion carried.

There is approximaely $3,300 in the account. We had $8,000 a few years ago, but spent $5,000 on wolf incentive program.

Manigotagan and Nopiming Park Plans

These park plans are being developed and public engagement will occur this fall. Kelly handed out a form if you are interested.

Next Meeting

To be determined. Will be based on having the population model ready.