



Committee for Cooperative Moose Management
Meeting Minutes (Final Version)
November 21, 2013
Winnipeg River Learning Centre

Present:

Kelly Leavesley (MCWS)	Stu Jansson (MB Trappers Assoc)
Vince Keenan (MBMF)	Brian Kotak (MBMF)
Ken Rebizant (MB Conservation)	Gerry Arbez (MB Wildlife Federation)
Kevin Doerksen (MCWS)	Cam Neurenburg (LdB Wildlife Assoc)
Trevor Barker (MB Hydro)	Paul Turenne (MLOA)
Robert Mulholland (RMA Eastern Region)	Bob Austman (MBMF)

Introductions – everyone introduced themselves at the beginning of the meeting

Additions to the Agenda – MCWS meetings with wildlife agencies in Ontario/Saskatchewan/Minnesota.

Minutes from the April 24, 2013 Meeting – page 4. It should be mentioned specifically that letters were sent to Hollow Water First Nation

Follow up to the April 2013 Meeting

Brian reviewed the chronology of events since the April meeting, and discussed the letters that were sent out to the First Nations, MB Metis Federation, Winnipeg Free Press, MB Wildlife Federation and to Ken MacMaster. Several of the letters/correspondence refers to the recent 60% increase in the moose population. Ken indicated that this is a point estimate of the population, and that the confidence limits should always be reported as well.

The committee talked at length about the importance of committee continuing on its work to ensure a speedy recovery of the moose population. The committee also discussed the importance of having First Nations on the committee. It is important that we continue on our work. Brian spoke with Ernest and Orton from Black River, and emailed Ivan to ask if it was OK to restart the committee. They did not have a problem with this. Kelly mentioned that the MCWS consultation process on moose is still continuing with the First Nations. Communities indicate that they want to be involved in moose management. The second phase of consultation starting, with consultation plans being completed with Black River and Hollow Water. The Black River consultation process has started already. Hollow Water's will begin soon. Funding has been approved from the province. There is a different process with Sagkeeng, which involves community discussions on revisiting traditional laws. This will then be input into moose recovery plan.

Lake Winnipeg East System Improvement Project – Kelly mentioned that a good mitigation measure for the new transmission line project from Pine Falls to Manigotagan would be a 300m no hunting area around the transmission line. MCWS have talked with Black River so far. A 300m buffer on each side would create a 600m wide no-hunting buffer in total (300m each side). Vince asked what would happen at locations close to PR304? Would the 300m buffer extend to the opposite side of the highway (which would not really add any more protection for the moose)? Kelly indicated that in such a case, the highway could be used as the boundary (therefore, the buffer would be less than 600m in total).

East Side Road – MCWS indicated that letters have just gone out to all First Nation communities on east side (Poplar River to Brokenhead) regarding the east side road development from Manigotagan to Berens River. There is an option to extend the Chief George Barker Wildlife Refuge north to Berens River, when the new all-weather road is done. MCWS will need to consult with each community. Initially, there seems to be support. Refuge won't happen until consultation is complete, and also until the road is completed. There was a question of if the legal land description of the existing road refuge still applies, since the Rice River road alignment has changed. There are some irregularities now with the road refuge, as the curves in the road are gone. There was a question regarding whether there will be restrictions to all wildlife hunting, including trapping? Yes. MCWS will look at how this affects trappers. Will trappers be allowed to build trapping trails from the road, or will they have to walk 300m in to each set? MCWS acknowledged that these have been identified as a concern. MCWS will work to accommodate those concerns. Stu expressed concern that this will be another constraint on trappers. For example, he is being impacted by not being able to create new trails in Nopiming on his trap line.

Kelly suggested that we should have a separate meeting of CCMM regarding extension of the road refuge.

Cam asked how will the information from consultations with First Nations on the east side road, as well as the moose recovery strategy feed back to the CCMM? Unknown right now. Same type of questions will be asked though.

Cam mentioned that the CCMM is very much needed in this region and needs to continue working on moose management issues. As members of organizations on the CCMM, they are under pressure to produce results. It is hard to understand the consultation process, as most of us are not privy to that information.

The Section 35 consultation process is required by law and this is a relatively new endeavor for MCWS. Some members of the CCMM expressed frustration with 2 separate processes, especially with the lack of communication. What is the time frame for consultation? Are all the community consultations proceeding at the same speed? It is critical that the CCMM and First Nation consultations occur at the same rate.

Brian suggested that there should be 2 mechanisms for information flow: 1) FN partners at CCMM meetings. 2) MCWS to provide updates on consultation process, including recommendations by FN. CCMM can discuss them and have MCWS to provide feedback to the communities through the consultation process.

Some CCMM members expressed further concern that we have a leadership vacuum at MCWS. It appears to be following a haphazard approach to managing natural resources. There is a need for a process for the moose recovery strategy. Some sort of master plan with a timeframe needs to be developed. It is also imperative that First Nations participate in this process with the CCMM.

There is also a need to have a more consistent monitoring program in order to provide better information (e.g., population numbers) for decision-making. It was suggested that surveys be conducted every 2 years. 2016 is the next planned survey. Can ground monitoring be used to at least look for trends? Stu mentioned that trappers can provide valuable information on population trends.

Kelly indicated that MCWS is committed to do a wolf survey during years with moose survey.

Regional Moose Recovery Plan – Kelly Leavesley

A target population level needs to be agreed to in order to be able to know when to open up hunting again. In addition, the “how” you open up hunting (e.g., draw, etc) will be important. Hank has done some modeling to look at some basic effects of opening hunting when the moose population is at different levels.

We need to get back on track to plan the workshop for recovery planning. It was suggested that at the next meeting we should have Hank’s presentation, followed by a 1-2 day workshop. We should strive to have the next meeting in December, before Christmas. Dec 12 was selected as a tentative date. Brian will contact Black River members (Orthon, Ernest) and Ivan about the date.

2013/2014 Wildlife Monitoring Plans – Kelly Leavesley

Wolf collars will be deployed this winter. 6 collars were deployed on moose previously. 1 collar failed and 2 moose died. 3 collars will be put back out this winter. 3 collars are currently remaining (batteries good until 2015). The 3 new collars will therefore give us data until 2016.

Kelly showed GPS location data for 4 collared moose in the Quesnel Lake/Bissett area. They did not move all that much. Most of them were in cutovers or along edges of burns.

MCWS - Meetings with Saskatchewan/Minnesota/Ontario

SK is having same challenges with moose as us. Challenge in forest/agriculture interface. Moose doing well in farmland however. Moose numbers in the north are stable. In the forest/agriculture fringe, populations are declining. Populations in the agriculture zone are expanding. 40 collars on moose now (year 1 of 4).

NW Minnesota - moose populations in the mid 1980s was 4000+. This has declined to less than 100 in 2007. In NE Minnesota, surveys were conducted each year from 2005 to 2013. 2005 – 8100 moose, 2013 – 2800 moose. 67 % of calf mortalities due to wolves, 17% due to bear predation, low % due to drowning, unknown predation, abandonment. Significant mortality in first few months of collaring from natural causes. Indicates very high mortality rate. Adult mortality – 48% of mortalities or injuries due to wolves, 16% of mortalities due to winter tick, 5% due to brain worm.

There was a question whether West Nile and Lyme disease can affect moose? Unknown, but there are some researchers looking at East Nile.

Ken reviewed the results of the stable isotope analysis from samples from our region. Wolf stable isotopes indicated a diet of moose (15-36%), caribou (7-13%), deer (26-40%), snowshoe hare (24-32%) for winter and summer diet (total). Beaver is close to moose with respect to stable isotope signatures. Seems to be more moose in summer vs winter in the wolf diet. Results are preliminary however. Surprised by high snowshoe hare %. Preliminary data. Inadequate snowshoe hare samples from this region.

Kelly mentioned that MCWS want to purchase a few wolf collars, and program collars to collect location data every 2 hours. Can follow a pack for a year and investigate kills sites quickly. Looking for volunteers to go out and investigate kill sites. Bob, Cam, Trevor, Brian volunteered.

Results of GHA 26 Moose closure for 2013. Approx 5 moose taken in closed areas this fall. Approximately 15 in non-closed areas. Much fewer moose taken than last year. Not a lot of people hunting in GHA 26. MCWS have stepped up monitoring. There was a question of if there is any night surveillance this year? Yes. There have been numerous night patrols. However, there are not the resources to do aerial surveillance at night.

Deer populations are down all over the province. Way down in some areas. Due mainly to last winter (heavy snow, cold temperatures, long length of winter).

MCWS is requesting deer heads from 17A, 26 and 36. Gerry has circulated the request to his 390 members. MCWS have collected about 30 heads so far. Robert has 18 or 19 from Sagkeeng. Looks like about a 80% infection rate. There is a new graduate student who wants to look at parasites in lungs and liver. Hunters can turn in those organs to MCWS as well.

Status of Model Forest and Funding for 2014/15 – Brian Kotak

Brian mentioned that he has requested funding, for the next 3 years from the province and the 2 forestry companies the Model Forest is working with. If they agree, this would give enough core funding to keep the model forest going. We would still have to write other proposals for projects, but at least this base funding would allow the MBMF to continue to operate. Brian indicated that he will request that the MBMF provides some base funding for meetings of the CCMM for next year.

Update on Regional Forestry Project – Brian Kotak

The First Nation partners and 2 forest product companies are just completing a business plan, which will be submitted to the province shortly. Once this is complete, the majority of the work for the project will need to start, including a 20 year forest management plan, environmental impact assessments, the environmental licensing process, community meetings and developing and implementing a training plan. The project is progressing very well.

Update on Moose Curriculum – Bob Austman

-The moose curriculum is now complete. Bob had in-serviced teachers at the provincial SAGE (Special Area Groups for Educators) conference and will go to U of W/U of M faculty of education students soon. Bob thanked Myrtle Abraham and Ernest McPherson for providing their traditional knowledge on moose.

Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for December 12