



Committee for Cooperative Moose Management
Meeting Minutes (Final Version)
November 26, 2015
Winnipeg River Learning Centre, Pine Falls

Present:

Stu Jansson (MB Trappers Assoc.)	Mike Adey (MLOA)
Brian Kotak (MBMF)	Gerry Arbez (MB Wildlife Federation)
Cam Neurenburg (LdB Wildlife Assoc.)	Bob Austman (MBMF)
David Heinrichs (MB Metis Fed)	Brent Tessier (MCWS)
Kelly Leavesley (MCWS)	Ken Rebizant (MCWS)
Ron Missyabit (MCWS)	Neil Guimond (Sagkeeng FN member)
Ivan Lavoie (Sagkeeng FN member)	

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

2. Additions to the Agenda – Manigotagan River and Nopiming draft park plans

3. Minutes from the April 23 and June 23 Meetings

Clarification on June 23 minutes. Page 4 should indicate that fees will “not” be paid after Jan 31 for wolves. Cut off date for turning in wolves is Jan 31. Trapping can continue beyond Jan 31, but without the incentive program. The wolf incentive program was designed to be completed after 5 years. Also, MCWS do not want collared wolves to be trapped as part of the incentive program, as collaring is very expensive. Daniel has already sent out letters to all the trappers explaining this.

No revisions needed on April 23 minutes.

4. Updates

Kelly went through the copies of the presentations from the June 23 workshop to refresh everyone’s memory of what was covered.

a) 2016 Moose/Wolf Surveys

January – GHA26 moose survey

February – GHA26 wolf survey (to be done just prior to wolf collaring)

Moose surveys also proposed in Duck Mountain, Porcupine Mountain, GHA11 (south of The Pas). Could do GHA17A if money is left. GHA17A was last done in 2011.

New method for doing aerial surveys so that the surveys can be completed in a shorter period of time. A crew in north and south will be flying at the same time. Weather and good snow is becoming a factor more recently.

Other priority for MCWS is conducting a deer survey in GHA35. However, this is a big area and not enough funds available.

MCWS used to do multispecies surveys (moose, caribou, wolves, deer) as part of caribou program. This is no longer done. Concern was expressed by some committee members that we will not end up with any data on deer.

There was a question as to what is driving the need to survey GHA17A for moose? Has something changed? No, but it has been 5 years since the last survey. MCWS has not heard anything to suggest that the moose population has changed there. It is right next to GHA26 and moose do not see any boundary between the 2 areas. The First Nations do not consider the boundaries as being ecologically important.

GHA17 and GHA17B are now on the map in the 2015 hunting guide.

Difficult to find wolf packs for collaring. Therefore Alaskan trackers will be out first to locate packs just prior to the collaring work

b) Deer Head Collection Program

12 heads submitted so far this fall. Examinations are not done yet. Would be good to get some deer heads from north of the Black River.

c) 2016 Moose and Wolf Collaring

Hydro has agreed to go into a partnership with Memorial University (for next fiscal year) for NSERC funding to support the wolf project. Want to put 2 collars on each of 5 packs (10 collars total). There is currently funding from HSP for 3 moose collars. MCWS would like to put out another 10 wolf collars the following year, along with another 20 moose collars. This will give us 20 wolf collars between 2016 and 2017 on approx. 10 packs in GHA26 (north and south).

The Iridium collars for moose and wolves are currently logging location data every 2 hours.

d) Funding Applications

A lot of funding programs now require matching funding. For the HSP funding, we used the moose aerial survey to provide matching funding. Brian described the HSP grant and the components. Main components to be paid by HSP include meetings (facilitator, honoraria for First Nations, mileage, meeting room rental, food for meetings), purchase

of 4 new iridium moose collars, net gun contract for collaring work, helicopter fuel, helicopters, production of another Moose News newsletter, and overhead of the MBMF.

Stu asked a question about what happens if MCWS is not able to fly the GHA26 survey this winter? MCWS will try to reallocate the money to surveying other GHAs. Is it possible to park unused survey money in Wildlife Enhancement Fund? Not usually. Only if it is a substantial amount of \$.

Ron Missyabit: How do we collect local knowledge (non-Aboriginal knowledge)? We don't have a process to collect this. The HSP funding is dedicated for Aboriginal participation, and is specifically interested in knowing what the Aboriginal/Indigenous communities' needs are for moose (not general TEK on moose). We need to collect local knowledge from non-Aboriginal peoples as well as there are many individuals and groups on the landscape that could provide valuable information on various wildlife species. Brian suggested that we could have put in an application to the Wildlife Enhancement Fund in take for the development of a data collection system for land users. Should be a priority for the committee next year. ESRA and Hydro already have this in place as part of their development projects.

MMF indicated that they have mandatory surveys for harvesters. Stu indicated that provinces such as New Brunswick and Ontario has mandatory reporting for trappers.

HSP funding could be applied for the next year. Are people interested in this? Is this something that your members would be interested in? Yes, but need to know that MCWS will use the information. Can't discount the local knowledge information. Need to consider what HSP priorities will be. Ken Rebizant suggested that we need to make the observations quantifiable (e.g., # animals or tracks per linear mile). There may be different objectives for collecting the data and thus some data may be quantitative and some may be qualitative.

Who will help with the HSP application? Kelly indicated that she would do the bulk of the work, but would want help. Stu is willing. So is Brian.

There were concerns expressed with the interviews with Aboriginal hunters as part of the current TEK component of HSP grant. Concerned about how this information will be used. MCWS indicated that the info being gathered as part of current HSP project is to get data that feeds the moose model. Need a better understanding of past and current community needs with respect to moose harvest.

With respect to a land-based monitoring program, Stu mentioned that trappers, outfitters, NROs, local hunters, etc. should be involved. Should include all species (big game, fur bearers, endangered, invasive).

David Heinrichs indicated that a university in Sweden published a study that showed that hunters were just as accurate as estimating moose populations as surveys.

It would be good to engage local knowledge to see how close people's opinions are to the aerial survey estimate.

e) Wolf Trapping Incentive Program

14 wolves have been submitted so far this fall/winter

How many packs of wolves in GHA26? Not sure. Difficult to determine. Usually we use GPS collars as "spies". Use the collar signal to locate the collared wolf and then see how many other wolves are associated with the collared one. However, currently there are not enough collars out in the GHA to determine the number of packs. Ivan Lavoie suggested that there may be 16 or more packs in GHA26. Kelly indicates that based on territory size, there may be less than 16 packs. This remains an unknown.

Stu indicates that large family units of wolves may be several packs that get together occasionally. Different family units may use the same general area.

Ivan; best time to collar will be December, before the individuals disperse. Our problem is that we can't get the collaring company at that time of the year.

Stu suggested that it would be good to be able to identify individual wolves by sight.

Ivan: should collar female wolves as well. Not just males Kelly indicated that this will be done, but it is difficult to determine gender during the capture process until you actually have the wolf in the net. Ideally, would like the Alpha animals.

Concern that the incentive program may have been taking out alpha males and females first (they are first to enter an area). This may be altering the dynamics in the packs

Drones: can these be used for surveys? Large size drones have limitations (cold weather, coverage, time aloft). Could be used for small geographic areas. Could be used to investigate wolf kill sites.

f) Consultations

Not much has happened since the last meeting. By the end of winter (after the survey) MCWS hopes that there will be more meetings. MCWS have met with Black River FN. No contact with Hollow Water FN yet. Not sure who their coordinator is. No formal consultations in the last 6 months. The purpose is to talk to the communities about the same things we are talking about at the moose committee meetings. However, it has been hard to organize meetings. Informal meetings in the communities are still occurring however. Ivan: there is still a lack of info in the communities (e.g., where moose hunting is still allowed).

Government's requirement is to provide a mechanism for consultation. If a community does not participate, then government can make a decision in the absence of community input. However, they prefer input.

David Heinrichs expressed that MCWS is not but should be consulting with the MMF specific to GHA 26.

Some feel that there needs to be an all-inclusive process for input. Need to involve all at the same table (not just Indigenous peoples).

There was concern expressed that there may be a feeling by First Nations that licensed hunting for moose should not be allowed in the future in our region. Kelly: we are not getting that feeling during the community meetings. Meetings have focused on sharing of the resource.

Need to think about how hunting is opened, when moose reach X number. Don't wait for it to happen, but do the planning now. Must include the interests of all (FN, MMF, licensed hunters)

MOU with Premier and MB Metis Federation. Federal government has recognized that all of MB is traditional harvest area. MMF wants province to recognize GHA26 and GHA17 as traditional harvest areas. They have their own bag limits and seasons. Laws of the hunt are to go into provincial regulations in the future. After July 1, 2016 Metis harvesting rights could be applied to GHA26 and 17A. Rights do not currently extend north of the Winnipeg River. Suggestion that the FNs need to have this information during the consultations.

To date, MMF has issued over 9,000 harvester cards. But, according to MCWS anyone with a Metis card (not a harvester card) can hunt. There are over 50,000 Metis cards (adults). The MMF holds that Metis Harvesters must possess a MMF Harvester Identification Card validated with a Conservation Trust Fund sticker.

There are local Metis people that are not part of the MMF. According to MCWS they still have all legal rights as a Metis person.

David Heinrichs explained the 2003 Supreme Court of Canada case, *R. v. Powely*. The court stated that Aboriginal rights are communal, not individual, and that to exercise the community's right to hunt for food one must: 1. Self-identify as Metis; 2. Have an ancestral connection to the historic Metis Community; 3. Be accepted by the contemporary Metis Community.

5. Management Planning

a) Timing for Forwarding CCMM Recommendations

Deferred to next meeting

b) Review Moose Modeling Information

Kelly reviewed the population modeling.

2010 – starting population of 823 moose (\pm confidence interval). With no action, moose population would go to essentially zero by 2013. With no hunting and no wolf kills, population of moose would grow to about 1200 by 2013. Scenario with no hunting and only 50% wolf predation, the population would be somewhere in between by the year 2013.

Newer information will be added to the model to strengthen it. This includes moose reproductive rates (data mainly from western MB), moose survival (adults, calves), predation on moose (by bears, wolves)

Observation by some that wolves may be feeding mainly on beaver during non-frozen season. Stu: in dry years, higher proportion of beavers in wolf diet.

Wolf predation: the 8 ungulates/wolf/year (based on RMNP) is likely high for our area.

Need at least 3 years of population estimates (through aerial surveys) to get a more accurate picture of moose population growth. With only 2 data points, the projected moose population can have a large range of possibilities. That is why this winter survey is so important.

Q: What is the carrying capacity of the habitat without forestry now? Can the existing habitat support 3,000 moose? Concern that the provincial policy on no logging in parks is putting large game (especially moose) at risk by removing the renewal of the habitat. If there is no forestry and no fire, how will habitat be renewed?

If the committee shares this view, Brian can express this at the Parks Plan meeting hosted by LdB Wildlife Association on Dec 16. Yes, everyone supported this view. It would be a long process to get the government to change their no logging in parks policy.

c) Discuss Brainstorming Results from June 23 Meeting

Deferred to next meeting

6. Moose Management in Scandinavia

Bob gave a presentation on his recent trip to Sweden and Norway. There are many small private woodlots that are actively managed for timber as well as moose. Each landowner has an allocation of 8 moose tags (for a 50 hectare woodlot). They can use all tags for themselves and keep the meat, or sell to restaurants. This type of forest management has created a thriving moose population.

7. Other

Gerry Arbez mentioned that there is a meeting in Lac du Bonnet on December 16 (7 pm at the Legion) regarding the draft Nopiming and Manigotagan River park plans.

8. Next Meeting

The committee thought it would be good to have one more meeting before Christmas, as it will be difficult to schedule a meeting in the new year due to the survey work that is planned. Next meeting is December 17 at WRLC