

NORTHEAST ROUNDTABLE SESSION 14 – MEETING NOTES

Date: February 16th, 2022

Time: 10:00 – 15:00

Location: Virtual MS Teams

Attendees:

Government:

- Jason Lawson (FLNRORD)
- Shayla Blue (FLNRORD)
- Tyler Annand (FLNRORD)
- Chris Cooper (FLNRORD)
- Kelly Cook (FLNRORD)
- Tara Forest (IRR)
- Dale Morgan (IRR)
- Katie Connah (FLNRORD)
- Aviva Jones (FLNRORD)
- Joelle Scheck (FLNRORD)
- Tara Forest (IRR)
- Dale Morgan (IRR)
- Rene Simard (IRR)
- Penny Vanderwekken-Dunn (IRR)
- Kai Elmauer (IRR)
- Chris Pasztor (EMLI)
- Michael Huck (FLNRORD)
- Alysha Holte (FLNRORD)
- Tristan Jones (FLNRORD)
- Karilyn Vince (FLNRORD)
- Shane Ford (FLNRORD)
- Barry James (FLNRORD)
- Angela White (FLNRORD)
- Carmela Arevalo (FLNRORD)
- Darryl Struthers (ENV)
- Sara Dickinson (OGC)

Municipal:

- Kathleen Connolly (DC Chamber of Commerce)
- Cheryl Montgomery (FSJ Chamber of Commerce)
- Carol Newsom (District of Chetwynd)
- Allen Courtoreille (District of Chetwynd)
- *Conflicting meting with PRRD*

First Nations:

- Ryan McKay (SFN)
- Naomi Owens-Beek (SFN)
- Jim Webb (WMFN)
- Nathan Prince (MLIB)
- Lana

Stakeholders:

- Jim Little (NE Stakeholders)
- Andy Ackerman (NE Stakeholders)
- Mike Whalley (Resource Municipalities Coalition)
- Lynda Neufeld (ConocoPhillips Canada)
- Tim Burkhart (Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative)
- Gerry Paille (BC Wildlife Federation)
- Charles Friesen (LP)
- Darrell Regimbald (Canfor)
- Glen Goymer (Canfor)
- Mark Phinney (Canfor)
- Jennifer Blaney (Ovintiv)
- Tanya Goertzen (Shell)
- Tim Shaw (NorthRiver Midstream)
- Wayne Sawchuck (Muskwa Kechika Advisory Board)
- Barry Holland (Muskwa Kechika Advisory Board)
- Scott Fraser (Dawson Road Maintenance)
- Jonathan Buchanan (AMEBC)
- Tim McEwan (Mining Association of BC)
- David Smith (Charlie Lake Resident)
- Elizabeth Abbs (Summit Lake Resident)
- Donegal Wilson (BC Snowmobile Federation)
- Kyle Bigras (BC Backcountry Hunter and Anglers)
- Tom Fulton (NE Wildlife Fund)
- Stephanie Killam (Muskwa-Kechika Advisory Board President)
- Guy Lahaye (NP Rod and Gun Club)
- Kaleb Bellamy (NP Rod and Gun Club)
- Carmen Anderson (Canfor)
- Chris Addison
- Jim Fulton (NE Wildlife Fund)
- Blair Miller (Stone and Folding Mountain Outfitters)
- Johnny Mikes (MKAB / CPAWS)
- Trevor Oussoren (BC Hydro)
- Christine Nicholls (TC Energy)

Meeting Reference Materials Available Online at [NE Roundtable website](#):

Welcome, Agenda, Minutes

- Jason Lawson as facilitator welcomed, territorial acknowledgement, and MS Teams info
- Materials provided on website for review by roundtable members

1. Collaboration with First Nations in the Northeast

- Karrilyn Vince and Sara Dickinson (OGC) provided an update/discussion with Q and A's on the Collaboration with First Nations in the Northeast.
- Question: Can you speculate a timeline for an interim approach to permitting?
 - Response: Not going to speculate and can't provide timelines. We know this is important and part of the conversation. Industry is important for economic development in the area, and the Nations are interested in this as well.
- Comment: If we speak in terms of moose and caribou, I think its important to note that we saw this coming, and stakeholders have been trying to make changes in how things are done in the NE. Unfortunately, doesn't listen. Efforts to enhance wildlife populations goes against present government policies. Industrial practices could have been changed a long time ago, and industry is willing to make any of these changes required. When you are told you must act in a particular way, the changes must be at the government level. The Throne Speech was a step in the right direction. The Rod and Gun club is extremely frustrated because we've tried a lot of things, and this is a sensitive area we're moving into. From the perspective of the club, we are tired of people in the NE for paying for the mega projects (dams, ponds, mines). All these projects are encroaching on the recreational capabilities of the people in the NE.
 - Response: Acknowledged.
- Comment: Feeling optimistic that there will be stakeholder discussion with Treaty 8 before these changes come into effect. We can make the resource big enough so that there is no issue for anyone. We have been poor at making that happen. There are a lot of tools that could have been used to increase the population of ungulates and stakeholders are looking forward to working with T8 Nations on this.
 - Response: Acknowledged.
- Question: What is available for population surveys that are relevant and recent regarding moose in the NE, as a starting point for these stakeholder talks?
 - Answer: There have been recent inventories completed.
- Question: Will there be changes to the permitting process for both First Nations and the Province's Decision Makers?
 - Answer: Yes, that is part of the work we are doing, collectively.
- Question: A lot of decisions are being made without reference to the public. I'm hearing there are more caribou than they thought there were up in the Northern Rockies. At some point we are going to have to rely on science, and we will have to do this here for wildlife management.
 - Response: We are moving into a budget cycle. We can't post things publicly, however our intention is to use Engage BC as a tool for engagement.

- Comment: For a third year in a row, there is a total unawareness of the effect that these disruptions have on people for livelihood. We're participating in the solution, is the government going to have consideration for how the seasonal disruption will impact the hunting season and people's livelihood?
 - Response: Government is aware and acknowledges the hardship, thank you for sharing this.
- Question: How is this going to roll out regarding the possible reduction in moose harvest and closure in caribou?
 - Response: Government will be rolling this out, and information will be coming forth as we continue our conversations with First Nations.
- Comment: People in the NE have been thrown under the bus, and as far as I'm concerned in terms of fairness, it's not right. Transparency starts with the people and ends with negotiation between government to government. Mechanisms have to be put into place to allow for public input into the process. Things are being negotiated right now, and the public wants to know what's being negotiated, and this is because government is supposed to representing the public's concerns. We need to be doing better across the board.
 - Response: Acknowledged.
- Comment: There is a government policy on proper consultation and there is frustration that this is not being done with respect to stakeholders.
 - Response: Acknowledged, and the intention is to involve stakeholders at the appropriate time and level.

2. MIRR TLE Update

- Tara Forest and Dale Morgan provided an update on TLE.
- Comment: There is a government policy that requires face to face consultation. Will the Province start to consider doing face to face engagement through Zoom? It certainly doesn't enhance public engagement and consultation by sending them to a website. There needs to be more engagement with the public.
 - Response: This is not the only method for engagement we are using. We are going to be conducting community engagement, and we are willing to receive requests for types of community engagement as well, and we will be coordinating this soon. We've shared information at this table, presentations to stakeholders, and we aren't shy with what we must share, and we will continue to engage going forward.
- Comment: We've come a long way from 5 years ago, transparency is 1000% improved. Considering that, not everybody communicates digitally, and we need to have face-to-face meetings. Covid has shut everything down over the past 2 years, and we need to go back to personal interaction.
 - Response: Acknowledged and agreed.
- Comment: Are we engaging with anyone with interested parties with overlapping tenures?

- Response: We do a status report and reach out to every interested party with overlapping interests in TLE selections.
- Question: Could the shapefiles on the Gov Together BC website please include number of hectares in the metadata?
 - Response: We will take that back and consider it.
- Question: Can you share the TLE/TLA link on chat please?
 - <https://engage.gov.bc.ca/govtogetherbc/consultation/land-transfers-in-northeast-british-columbia/>

3. Partnership Agreement Update:

- Joelle Scheck provided an update presentation on the [Caribou Partnership Agreement](#).
- Question: Where can we access the map of motorized vehicle closures?
 - <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/sports-culture/recreation/motor-vehicle-prohibitions#snowmobile> and <https://www.bcsf.org/trails>
- Comment: The BCSF has pulled together the shapefiles and have it accessible on a website.
- Comment: We (users) do not know of any permit to access areas
 - Response: The motor vehicle closures are closed unless they are open, and you need a permit to show to access these areas. Only for active management areas. The clubs are interested in talking about this – we are happy to have this conversation.
- Comment: We want to see the plan, we've seen maps and files but no plan. There is a commitment for \$150,000, and the clubs have not received those funds yet.
 - Response: The money is available, has not been released yet.
- Comment: BCWF and members from North Peace Rod and Gun Club met with BRFN to discuss reclamation work, and we were all very supportive to get the permits in place except for a couple pieces that were problematic.
- Comment: It seems that when we have limited entry season that's focused on mature bulls and the pregnancy rates are not the issue.
- Comment: There needs to be better messaging for snowmobile routes.
 - Response: Acknowledged.
- Question: Was the predatory work approved at all?
 - Response: All permits have been approved now.
- Question: How does the average Joe become educated about these changes who are snowmobiling?
 - Response: With timing of the announcement, signage, public education, and materials weren't available. A lot of the areas that were created have no signage, and we are trying to fix that gap. We're just putting the finishing touches on a pamphlet to educate snowmobilers and hired a youth worker to visit the different staging areas and provide advice and education.
- Question: Earlier this week, the federal government passed an Order-in-Council to refer species-at-risk assessments of BC caribou populations to back to COSEWIC. Would appreciate any contextual information that provincial representatives are able to share regarding linkages to provincial

- initiatives and the impetus, i.e., part of a statutory review cycle/ petition response/ other.
 - Response: We can't provide further context right now, haven't looked at this yet.

4. Draft Boreal Caribou Protection and Recovery Plan:

- Chris Cooper provided a presentation on the Draft Boreal Caribou Protection and Recovery Plan. *Presentation to be distributed and posted after Estimates.*
- Question: At the end of the blackout, is there going to be a chance for consultation or will this be a notification?
 - Response: We are going to discuss the work being done right now. When we can make that publicly available, the Province will schedule follow up sessions. Comments received through engagement will inform decision making on this plan by end of summer.
- What do you attribute to decline in the west side herd? Can you point at any specific reason for this?
 - Response: We collar adult females and continually work to get more collars in more females in this herd each year. Tracking the collars allows us to identify the female survival rate. When the female dies it lets us know and we go out and investigate. We know what threatens these herds, and the immediate factor is predation. Which means we need to look at what caused the increase in predation to Caribou? Industrial development causes habitat loss and change which causes a chain reaction which impacts Caribou habitat.
- Question: Have you done studies for MK and outside the MK where development isn't happening?
 - Response: Can't speak to studies. We are actively investigating northern mountain herds; we don't know exactly why this is happening.
- Do you have pregnancy rates for these herds?
 - Response: No, we primarily look at calf recruitments – which tells us how many females were successful in raising young.
- Comment: For the better part of 100 years, we undertook intensive predator control using poison and aerial control and had a predator control branch of government. Those times are characterized as having very high ungulate populations, we need a balanced approach on fire, and we cannot escape doing those things
 - Response: We've increased other ungulates; the hunting regulations are not part of this recovery plan. This plan is meant to achieve positive habitat trend.
- Comment: As soon as you kill moose, they'll turn to the Caribou. They are really connected to each other. You can't separate the two programs out. You can't put the hunting regulations and the habitat management plan in separate boxes as they are connected.
 - Response: The BCPRP will address habitat management, protection, and restoration for the long-term recovery of these herds. It does not consider or incorporate hunting regulations.
- Question: Do we have an optimum herd population for the 4 herds?
 - Response: No, we are wanting to see a positive trend or growth to show for self sustainability.
- Comment: It would be nice to have density objectives for caribou, moose, wolves, bears etc and manage to those objectives.
- Comment: Self sustaining is a myth if we're intervening. If were successful with caribou, one way or another there will be fewer predators on the landscape and the options just do it on different

timescales. We must accept we'll be doing predator control for generations. The goals are to have industry, moose, caribou, and self sustaining, but you can have 3 of those.

- There are other recovery programs going on but we're wondering how overlapping recovery programs impact each other (ie. Caribou and Fisher)
 - Response: We worked with Fisher staff, to understand what the caribou measures would positively impact fisher based on caribou stuff. It speaks to need for caribou work through multispecies approach.
- Comment: Some years ago, the early idea of a BC boreal caribou recovery plan was something like "let industry go through and do its thing, caribou will likely decline, and then (years later) we'll try and recover boreal herds where we can." Seems like that concept has (hopefully) fallen by the wayside now?
 - Response: Development happened at a large scale; we are now in a reactive mode to reverse these declines over time. The situation that these herds are in, is that the market drove industry in this region. These existing protections are not enough o maintain the self sustainability of these populations.
- Comment: I applaud this plan for pretty much looking after the needs of forestry and Fort Nelson, need to point out that oil and gas can't be pushed into grey areas if its better for caribou recovery. OG is where it is. Province needs to look after fort nelson's future from an oil and gas perspective.
 - Response: As the market demand drives development back, OGC will look to issue tenures and will continue to maintain access to these areas. If activity comes back, it may be more expensive due to environmental offsetting, and will have an impact to how much OG impacts economy. We can't allow industry to dictate how we recover caribou, that is the province's jurisdiction and to consider balance.
- Comment: We are recovering to what numbers? In terms of industry, they can go ahead in a lot of these places, but the practices must be changed. Industry is willing to change when asked to.
 - Response: We are under directive to recover these herds. We are going to be managing a much larger area, but its not to the extent to just lay a protection down on all areas of this region. Economy and environment must be balanced. We are trying to maintain the economy as well. The objective is not a set number, it is a positive trending growth rate over time for these herds.
- Comment: We must be careful about 1 species management. The feds were responsible for the mismanagement of sockeye salmon stocks. Getting a sense that we're creating a cloud that will prevent any development from happening in the province.
 - Response: Caribou are an "indicator species" that inform the general health and well-being of their ecosystem. Because the strategies in this plan promote positive habitat trend over the long-term, other species will benefit from that same trend.
- Comment: For many years there has been an advisory group to set standards for performance, this seems to be ripe for setting up for an oversight group for this area. It can provide public and technical oversight – this might be a good opportunity to involve citizens, industry, and help everyone understand what's going on out there.
 - Response: Agreed, this is a good suggestion.
- Question: The socio-economic assessment is slide is different than a previous presentation.
 - Response: The numbers they gave before were not accurate today due to the variation in pricing, so we tweaked the slide to the amount of resource available, not the dollar value.

- Comment: Further reminder that the Gravel Resource is limited but of great value for Forestry, Oil & Gas and the public. The ability to use this resource needs to be identified.
 - Response: This is something we need to do to understand how the restrictions interact with this resource.
- Comment: Feedback and further consultation on this plan – can't just have website feedback.
- Comment: There was reassurance around single species management. To what extent are other species being considered? How many other species are being considered in the management plan? At the end of the day, to get objective for all species is a long term and expensive proposition. Other species need to be considered in the total equation as well.
 - Response: We agree that other species need to be considered, this recovery plan does not rely on mechanisms only unique to caribou, this plan looks at establishing positive habitat trend, and is meant to manage the whole ecosystem. The driver is caribou, the ecosystem will be impacted positively from this.

5. General Discussion

- Comment: We've been talking about northern Caribou; the rumour was that all caribou in 7B were off limits to hunting. There is a significant number of caribou in the Northern Rockies.
 - Response: There is no licence to hunt boreal caribou and hasn't been for quite some time as they are red listed. Any proposed regulation changes will be coming forward and future engagement can happen then.
- Question: No regulation changes until stakeholders have become fully apprised? Can we assume that there will be no changes until stakeholder consultation?
 - Response: This plan does not propose any regulation changes of any kind. It proposes to apply additional Government Action Regulation (GAR) orders to apply management intents for different industries across herd ranges.
- Question: Is this something that we should look towards for this coming season, or
 - Response: We expect to send a revised plan, based on engagement, to the Minister this fall but there will be no suggestions or intentions for hunting seasons.
- Comment: When you have these engagements, use Zoom. It's a good tool for engagement so that everyone can listen,
 - Response: There will be a combination of in-person and virtual meetings
- Question: Sometime soon there will be engagement, but that won't be the end of it, it will go to engage BC.
 - Response: Yes, that is our expectation.
- Question: About the LRMP process, is this on hold until cumulative effects with BRFN and T8?
 - Response: Yes, there are still conversations occurring, but LRMP is on a pause.

6. Next Meeting

- Next meeting: **May 25, 2022**