

NORTHEAST ROUNDTABLE HYBRID – MEETING NOTES

Date: September 28th, 2022
Time: 09:00 – 15:00
Location: Pomeroy Hotel and Conference....
Virtual MS Teams

Attendees: *P = In person V = virtual*

Government:

- Jason Lawson (LWRS) *P*
- Shayla Blue (LWRS) *P*
- Tyler Annand (FOR) *V*
- Chris Cooper (LWRS)
- Kelly Cook (LWRS) *V*
- Tara Forest (IRR) *P*
- Aviva Jones (LWRS) *P*
- Joelle Ward (LWRS) *P*
- Tara Forest (IRR) *P*
- Penny Vanderwekken-Dunn (IRR) *V*
- Chris Pasztor (EMLI) *V*
- Nicole Edginton (EMLI)
- Scott Schilds (LWRS) *P*
- Karilyn Vince (LWRS) *P*
- Darin Hancock (LWRS) *P*
- Angela White (LWRS) *V*
- Carmela Arevalo (FOR) *V*
- Micaela Burton (FOR) *V*
- Susan Campbell (IRR) *V*
- Kelly Sims (LWRS) *V*
- James Morgan (FOR) *V*

Municipal:

- Carol Newsom (District of Chetwynd) *V*
- Brad Sperling (PRRD) *V*
- Rob Fraser (District of Taylor) *V*
- Steve McLain (District of Chetwynd) *P*
- Dan Rose (PRRD) *V*

First Nations:

- Ryan McKay (SFN) *P*
- Jim Webb (WMFN) *P*
- Nathan Prince (MLIB) *V*

Stakeholders:

- Jim Little (NE Stakeholders) *P*
- Andy Ackerman (NE Stakeholders) *P*
- Gerry Paille (BC Wildlife Federation) *P*
- Sarah Curtis (LP) *P*
- Tim Shaw (NorthRiver Midstream) *V*
- Wayne Sawchuck (Muskwa Kechika Advisory Board) *P*
- Barry Holland (Muskwa Kechika Advisory Board) *P*
- Jonathan Buchanan (AMEBC) *V*
- David Smith (Charlie Lake Resident)
- Elizabeth Abbs (Summit Lake Resident) *V*
- Johnny Mikes (MKAB / CPAWS) *V*
- Angela London (Ovintiv) *P*
- Helen Gilbert (School District 60) *V*
- Ray Ensz (FSJ Trappers) *P*
- Mike Whalley (RMC) *P*
- Aaron Fredlund (GOABC) *P*
- Christine Nicholls (TC Energy) *V*
- Jocelyn Paul (BC Hydro) *V*
- Johnathan Buchanan (AMEBC) *V*
- Julie Bourdon (Petronas) *V*
- Kaleb Bellamy (Flint Energy) *V*
- Kristine Bock (Canfor) *V*
- Peter Andreasen (Mining) *V*
- Phil Zacharatos (Muskwa-Kechika Advisory Board) *V*
- Tim Burkhart (Y2Y) *V*
- Trevor Oussoren (BC Hydro) *V*

Telephone:

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

- Collaboration with Treaty 8 First Nations in the Northeast
- Together for Wildlife
- Treaty Land Entitlement
- [BC Flood Strategy Update](#)
- [Fisheries in the Peace Region](#)
- [Regional Strategic Environmental Assessment](#)
- [Caribou Program Updates](#)
- [Caribou Restoration](#)
- [Caribou Surveys](#)
- [Muskwa-Kechika Advisory Board](#)

Welcome, Agenda, Minutes

- Jason Lawson as facilitator welcomed, territorial acknowledgement and agenda review.
- Shayla Blue conducted introductions.
- Meeting minutes from the last meeting have been posted online. Feedback and response to minutes is also posted. Questions/comments from last meeting?
- Comment: I attended an online session put on by heritage branch looking at heritage legislation with respect to DRIPA and UNDRIP. This may be something this group may want to hear a presentation on. Potentially another land use decision process that might come into effect with respect to protecting heritage sites.
 - Response: I will follow up with branch and see if we can get them to discuss.

1. Collaboration with Treaty 8 First Nations in the Northeast

- Karrilyn Vince provided a presentation and conducted discussion on work in with Treaty 8 First Nations in the Northeast.
- New BRFN website <https://blueberryfn.com/where-happiness-dwells/>
- Question: There are concerns about certainty, industry, land itself and the permitting process. There are a lot of people getting anxious. One fellow has had a gravel permit on private land for three years and has been told it will take a year to renew so he could be collaboration put out of business. How will these situations be addressed? How do we provide certainty for current and future applications?
 - Response: We are all grappling with how the government responds to cumulative effects infringement. Live conversations are happening and Nations want to support an

economy, be more involved in decision making and find ways to support activities across the region. We want to have clarity and certainty, but it is taking time.

- Question: In response to the above, businesses want to know if this is going to happen in our lifetime? There has to be a vision about when it's going to end. Is it about money? These are real issues and the longer it takes there will be more going forward.
 - Response: I'm hesitant to have a timeline but believe in the next few months we will have greater clarity regarding consultation and permitting. We need to answer questions such as "What does deeper collaboration look like?" and "How they are incorporating their decision and land use planning?" We're certainly interested as the Ministry of Forests to set objectives and actions. Uncertainly didn't just start a year ago with the court case. Uncertainly and lack of collaboration has been happening for quite some time. The Province and Nations want to see an economy and figure out a path to get out of a place of conflict, and hopefully outside of permit-by-permit consultation.
- Question: What can folks in government tell us about the status of progression toward updating the FSJ LRMP?
 - Response: Leadership on land use planning is with the Ministry of Land, Water and Resource Stewardship (LWRS), the Ministry of Forests (FOR) no longer has responsibility in terms of leadership. The LRMP is officially on hold while waiting for pieces to fall into place. Negotiations with Treaty 8 Nations and discussions on other issues are happening provincially.
- Question: Will the LRMP proceed ever?
 - Response: All parts of the LRMP will be in some other process.
- Question: Will there be a partial LRMP?
 - Response: The future is uncertain.
- Question: Can you explain where everyone is falling within the new ministries?
 - Response: The Province is still working in the background between some delegations with LWRS and FOR. Allocations, leading inventory and analyses and decision making remains with FOR. The fish and wildlife biologists remain with FOR and engagement and ecosystem biologists went to LWRS. The Province has not totally figured it out.
- Question: You spoke about linear restoration. We came across some that happened in the Stewart Lake area. Communication I've seen says trappers, hunters and other stakeholders have been made aware of what's going on. Nobody was notified other than by the individual when they

found the activity. Whose responsibility is it to communicate that information? Structures found in the area make it dangerous for anyone to be there.

- Response: This has come to our attention. We note that things are not going to be perfect. We've heard from Saulteau First Nations and talked about how to improve, for example, better signage.
- Comment: There was a pamphlet that says there was consultation. Blueberry River First Nation contacted the Rod and Gun Club about rehabilitating features, and they provided maps. The Stewart Lake stuff was unheard of and the individual got the CO service involved as nobody knew what was going on. The structures and willow stems were more of an attempt to block access than rehabilitate linear features. There needs to be more work done to a greater extent than that for whole cut lines.
 - Response: Acknowledged.
- Comment: Private land trapping licences have not been issued at all. We were told this was due to considering cumulative effects. All private land trappers that have licences that have expired and are being held up. Animals aren't being managed on private land and are creating issues.
 - Response: We haven't had a recent conversation with our team about traplines. As with all permits, we are still in processing a backlog. There has always been a perspective that First Nations are not necessarily experiencing infringement on their rights as it's private land, but the court case has opened this up as private land contributes to habitat. We will talk to the team about where permitting is with respect to traplines.

2. Together for Wildlife

- Aviva Jones provided an overview of Together for Wildlife following a brief restoration discussion.
- Question: If we have a hunting season why are we conducting activities that may result in safety issues? In the past government has figured this out so we don't put anyone in unsafe conditions. Any thought about creating conflict of users?
 - Response: We have talked with proponents doing work about ways to get around that. There is some urgency for seedlings that arrived and putting them in the ground. Other ways to access areas having been explored. Risks and conflicts have been minimized where possible, but we are not able to do that entirely.
- Question: There was a community meeting in Chetwynd about caribou recovery. Biologists said the Province wanted to lower the moose population by seventy-five percent to enhance caribou recovery. The government then said no more moose tags, only LEH. Why the mixed messaging? Is there a way to streamline communication? A lot of people were not consulted.
 - Response: I can't speak to conversations I wasn't apart of. No proposals were put forward in the Northeast to operationalize reduction. When it comes to LEH for moose, we heard from First Nations and stakeholders about moose population concerns. It wasn't that they felt that moose numbers were going down, but that hunting became unsafe due to

how many people were in a space at one time. LEH was meant to partially reduce the population issue and reduce the amount of people out at the same time. The LEH is creating a little space to have conversations. Jason and I will talk more after meeting.

- Comment: Guide outfitter appeals of quota are coming in for the region and are consequences of the new restriction. These are expensive in terms of money and time. This is a big issue that needs to be talked to at a high level.
 - Response: Acknowledged.
- Comment: It seems government uses LEH as an easy tool to fix things. I've been a member of the Rod and Gun Club for twenty-five years and historically an LEH is put on because you don't need biologists to do it. More biologists are needed as there are hardly any in the Northeast right now and we need them to listen to the public about what is going on the land base. Nobody wants to listen to the Rod and Gun Club on this issue.
- Comment: It is surprising that consultation is now an issue, it's been an issue for 100 years. We learned our lesson and caribou consultation resulted in war between people and government. If you are going to review processes have all parties in the room for the discussion.
 - Response: Acknowledged.
- Question: We have been spending time in the Muskwa-Kechika Management Area and have seen major reduction in elk and moose. Eighty percent down from fifty years ago. Is anyone doing work to figure out why this reduction occurred? Numbers have dropped in areas with very little access.
 - Response: We need to examine if we have information to verify the eighty percent drop. Then we need to discuss where to go from there. We have to consider what we ultimately want as prioritizing something could be detrimental for something else.
- Question: Can the forest situation be recreated forensically through examining hunting success rates and weather reports, etc.?
 - Response: There is one project that you might find interesting. A box of aerial photos was discovered, and we are looking at digitizing those photos to examine habitat back then and compare it to now.
- Question: Before the LEH was put in place discussions with local leaders on why it was necessary should have happened. Knowing what indigenous harvest looks like might inform the process. There is reluctance to engage with First Nations with respect to their harvest. Are you in engagement with Indigenous leaders and peoples on what their harvest looks like? We are still under the impression that the LEH is a two-year process until there is information.
 - Response: We agree with that but would phrase it differently. We are in the process of building trust, and trust is the action of choosing to make something important to us vulnerable to actions of other people. The goal is to build trust and move forward collaboratively. Asking for information on where to traditionally hunt and important areas is a big place of vulnerability.
- Comment: Further down the agenda we are supposed to get information on RSEA. In the context of the cumulative effects update, everyone knows that RSEA is a process that has been ongoing for seven or eight years. In the South Peace process, three First Nations worked collaboratively through the University of Saskatchewan to document their food harvest. They mapped it in a process that allowed them to identify in grids where their people preferred to and had success in hunting, and where there was too much competition from others. That information has been

compiled into reports which have been delivered to the government and others and sent to government as series of recommendations on what would be necessary for moose habitat and changes in regulations to hunting regarding First Nation food security. That information has not been released by the government. The LEH in the Northeast was not a part of the government proposal that moose populations be reduced in areas where they share caribou habitat. It is part of government's response to recommendations that came out of RSEA. The need to reduce moose hunting in areas First Nations were brave enough to tell you about success in. This is all being discussed now at a leadership level between Chiefs and government and will take time to sort out. According to the best information collected in RSEA the problem with the moose population is related to cumulative effects of industrial footprints in moose habitat. It has been documented and recommendations have been made in their current condition report for actions to restore moose habitat.

- Response: Thank you.
- Comment: Were you aware of that report before the LEH report was made? Why wasn't this information provided before the decision on LEH?
 - Response: There are ongoing conversations about how the information is used and shared. This is not something that can be used on a decision-by-decision basis.
- Comment: I am not speaking to RSEA, I'm speaking of the report.
 - Response: The reports were connected to RSEA.
- Comment: Knowing work has been done already would be helpful. Hearing that information is available and speaking about trust and not sharing, even in the highest-level form, does not help from a trust perspective.
 - Response: Thanks, you, we can talk about what it can look like. Note, there are eight Treaty 8 First Nations in the Northeast and only two provided the information. It is incomplete.
- Question: There is a lot of territory where moose populations are taking a beating. A study in Alaska found that grizzly bears are eating cows, caribou, and moose. These are consequences of poor government decisions to ban grizzly bear hunting. Has there been any consideration of putting cameras on grizzly and black bears in the Northeast to find the impact they are having?
 - Response: We are talking about various predator projects, such as bears, cougars, and the already active wolf project.
- Question: We want to know what is being planned. What is going on in the Northern parts of the region where there is no industrial activity?
 - Response: When we have something planned, we will report that.
- Comment: That environmental livelihood information is not available to public. That isn't a government decision, that is a First Nation decision. That said, there is a related published study by Dr Natcher An Empirical Analysis of Food Expenditures by First Nation Households in Canada. <https://doi.org/10.18848/2160-1933/CGP/v11i01/15-31>
- Comment: It is pretty clear that ungulate populations in the Northern Rockies are a result of quite a few fires and an aggressive predator control program in the 1970s and early 1980s. There may have been more ungulates than there should have been on landscape. Shooting wolves out of helicopters and prescribed fires had an impact on populations as well. They are only removing

predators in relation to recovery of species at risk – caribou – and it’s not approved for other ungulates.

- Response: Thank you.

3. Treaty Land Entitlement

- Tara Forest provided an update on TLE Settlement and Lands Agreements.
- Question: Can you confirm the status of land selections identified for proposed Site C lands?
 - Response: Selection and identification of lands for Site C agreements has happened for Saulteau First Nations and Halfway River First Nation. Some First Nations, such as Doig River First Nation, have not yet identified land selections for Site C, but they are coming. When the Province does receive identified lands, that is when we will engage.
 - Further response: We are working on getting all kml and kmz files uploaded to the government together site. Any identified Site C lands and kmzs we have will be up there. We will provide an update when the govTogether site is updated.

4. BC Flood Strategy Update

- Kelly Sims provided an overview the BC Flood Strategy and status.
- Question: When is government going to commit money to build dikes and berms, particularly in the Sumas region? I’ve heard them say it would be ten years to get done, but a lot of damage can happen in that time. When talking about prevention and stuff like this, we are hoping government action will be sooner than two years.
 - Response: The effects of last years flood events highlight the need for a BC Flood Strategy. Government actions include hiring a team, and they are currently working with Washington state in creating a memorandum of understanding. I cannot speak to the ten-year estimate. I will take this question back. With climate change and knowing that events will be more adverse, there is a heightened need for government action.
- Question: Is there a component around the impacts of flooding on wildlife and fisheries?
 - Response: Yes, the BC Flood Strategy speaks to resilience and includes actions that reflect a need to respond to impacts on fish and fish bearing streams and habitats. However, it is included at a high level only.
- provided an overview the BC Flood Strategy and status.
- Question: When is government going to commit money to build dikes and berms, particularly in the Sumas region? I’ve heard them say it would be ten years to get done, but a lot of damage can happen in that time. When talking about prevention and stuff like this, we are hoping government action will be sooner than two years.
 - Response: The effects of not responding highlight the need for a BC Flood Strategy. Government actions include hiring a team, and they are currently working with Washington state in creating a memorandum of understanding. I cannot speak to the ten-year estimate. I will take this question back. With climate change and knowing that events will be more adverse, there is a heightened need for government action.
- Question: Is there a component around the impacts of flooding on wildlife and fisheries?
 - Response: Yes, part of it is on reliance and includes restoration and impacts to fish and fish bearing streams and habitats. Overall, it is included at a high level.

5. Fisheries Program in the Northeast

- James Morgan provided an update on what is happening in the fisheries program.
- Question: Are you doing work at Sundance Lake?
 - Response: Yes. There is an assessment slated for next year or the year following.
- Question: Moberly is said to have three defined spawning areas. Are those protected? One spawning area happens to be a popular swimming area.
 - Response: We are looking ways to get it protected. Anglers in BC are different from Alberta in that they are fairly liberal with sharing fishing spots, while Alberta anglers tend to protect theirs. These are interesting issues to combat, and I am not too sure if government regulations can work in that way. We discuss gear use and areas. The swimming shoal is not one of the three areas researched.
- Comment: Three members of Saulteau First Nations said there are no fish in Sundance Lake.
 - Response: Acknowledged.
- Question: There is a myth in Fort Nelson that there are salmon in the Liard River. I heard that a chum was caught in Toad River. Is that possible?
 - Response: [from meeting chat] Hi Rob, it's not a myth. I'm trying to find the report that highlights their presence. It's a small spawning population that is confined to upstream of the Canyon rapids. Standby for the report https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwi6nvW1j7j6AhUZFTQIHW49CjIQFnoECAYQAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.muskwa-kechika.com%2Fuploads%2F174%2FLiard_R_Chum_Salmon_Report_Apr_2006_.pdf&u sg=AOvVaw07o2nHATpZ2nhzNQepwTc1. Chum in the Toad is unlikely, but Chum in the Liard is very possible at certain times of the year. Stand by for the report That is the most comprehensive report on Chum in the Liard. It's on my radar to look into soon.

6. Regional Strategic Environmental Assessment

- Darin Hancock provided an RSEA update.
- Comment: From a First Nation perspective, we want to credibly assess the impacts. An important objective for us was to collect information that could be used to do scenario assessments that would inform recommendations about the need to change legislation, regulation, and policy to optimize the exercise of Treaty 8 rights. The notion that the crown only has to mitigate or offset impacts of their decisions on Treaty 8 rights has been said to be a wrong strategy in the first call decision in 2011. BC appellate court said in 2011 on West Moberly First Nations' appeal that the rights of First Nations to occupy lands in accordance with tradition is coequal to that of the crown to make decisions. With actions that have potential to impact upon treaty rights, the statutory decision maker must balance coequal rights. The Province always talks about mitigating or

minimizing and I always talk about larger higher-level objectives, to optimize rights of people and to optimize the rights of the crown and those who develop in the area.

- Response: Thanks Jim for that clarification. Jim has been integral to where we got with RSEA due to his incredible insight.
- Comments: Those five values were agreed upon. There were two additional components identified in the process. A caribou component was identified there, in a process the Caribou Partnership Agreement would examine. The other thing that was different was the approach to water, as there were questions such as “can you eat fish and drink water?” Our Nation was engaged in a parallel process examining cumulative effects in the Murray River and looking at impacts of coal mining on rivers in the Quintette area. Our approach to water was not high level, but was focused on whether fish in the Wolverine and Murray systems were going to be affected in the same way as fish in upper Williston (mercury), as there is selenium. If we get to phase two, those two components need to be addressed in the scenario analyses process.
 - Response: Thank you.
- Comment: The reason we use the term peaceful enjoyment is because in Treaty 8 the fundamental promise the crown made was that they would provide a goodly supply of fish and game for the support and sustenance of the Indigenous people, and that, when necessary, would protect Indigenous people from unreasonable interference with way of life. Others cannot interfere unreasonably with the quiet enjoyment of your rights.
 - Response: Thank you.
- Comment: Thirty-nine percent of Provincial revenue comes from the Northeast. In recent budget updates, there is just under two billion in surplus and most comes from our area. This shows how it ties in long term.
 - Response: There are lots of ideas we would agree on. After Site C fifty-one percent of BC’s power will come from the Northeast. All OGC revenue comes from the Northeast.
- Comment: When will it end and what will it look like. A government representative said, “when we finish it will still be an economy, it will be sustainable, but wont’ be the economy we have today.” RSEA collected a lot of information, particularly with moose and the ability of First Nations to sustain themselves. This shows you there will have to be changes. There is a notion of optimization and focus on trying to find the highest value possible for one set of rights, while finding the highest value possible for another set, namely development interests. When you try to do that, you cannot choose to maximize the economic development interest of government and communities to the detriment of First Nations rights and interests. That means nobody will get everything they want but there has to be a lot more emphasis on managing crown lands and resources to allow First Nations to have cultural sustainability. That means there will have to be a reduction in the industry and recreation footprint on the landscape. This was discussed early in

the RSEA process. Try to keep that in mind in stakeholder engagements when you are wondering what is going on.

- Response: Thank you.
- Comment: We have always had a three-legged stool model: environmental, social, and economic. Take one leg and everything collapses. How do we recognize the rights of Treaty 8 and at the same time keep the wheels on? This is a huge challenge for RSEA and everything else in the decision-making process. Cumulative impacts were identified in 2000 by staff in Fort St. John. We must figure out the how and this is a tool for helping that.
- Question: Having known about RSEA for as long as I have been involved in local government it hasn't changed. If the future of RSEA is not going to be more inclusive, but we want everyone to buy in and understand the conversations and struggles, there is a need to have the reports and conversations become more public.
 - Response: Loud and clear, that is the goal.

Caribou Program Updates

- Joelle Ward gave a presentation on Partnership Agreement implementation and other general updates.
- Question: On the central planning process, what involvement is there with First Nation technicians?
 - Response: There is direct involvement in Partnership Agreement Restoration Implementation Schedule planning meetings with GIS folks from West Moberly First Nations and Sauleau First Nations. Because we are getting down to the operational nitty

gritty, we have really emphasised involving technical people who have a lay of the land and know what restoration looks like.

- Question: Is it possible for Jason or Shayla to notify this group of public engagement processes? There was one that just expired on the Sukunka coal mine proposal that a lot of people probably weren't aware of.
 - Response: Absolutely, Jason and Shayla will update what they know.
- Comment: On the basis of the public engagement process for the Sukunka coal mine, there were about 306 respondents to the engagement process and the overwhelming majority were opposed to it.
- Comment: The Fish, Wildlife and Habitat Coalition of BC represents twenty-six organizations, members, and businesses. We were aware and got a letter put in, but a lot of individuals were not aware.
- Comment: There was some mention about trapping being used to help in caribou enhancement but only for First Nations. Did this happen or is it still happening? Is there any movement on using non-First Nations to help with predation?
 - In the South Peace ongoing hunting and trapping of wolves and other predators by First Nations occurs in Klinse-Za is around the pen to reduce predator numbers and minimize risk to guardians and penned caribou. The broader ground wolf reduction program is no longer active. We did have a ground wolf reduction program with Doig River First Nation for a year or so. Both programs have petered out. There will be an opportunity for discussions, particularly around the Boreal and the pending Boreal plan assessing feasibility of wolf reduction. There is a new provincial procedure that is meant to support statutory decision makers and supports government policy. Fort Nelson First Nation is a partner on the boreal plan, but we are not excluding exploring other opportunities as well.
- Question: On the sidelines observing the caribou recovery project in terms of implications to the region, to see the maternal penning in person live, to see the cows and calves, to hear the guardians speak with passion, is something real, heartwarming, and significant when we hear the story and the success of these programs. How do we get the message to those opposed to components of it? The general population of the Province and region would be much more supportive when they get to see the work that is underway and see progress. There is something special about seeing it in real life.
 - Response: Totally agree. I had the privilege of two visits this year. It is really special and reminds all of us why we're doing what we're doing. It makes all the challenges feel worthwhile. That is a really great example and wasn't lost on the Minister, Deputy or

Chiefs that have been on the project. The Province has been supportive for all but one year, and it has been a really positive partnership and collaboration.

- Comment: As a sociologist my work has always focused on how people who were at risk of destructive lifestyles managed to save themselves. The people who are working on that caribou program have found something strong enough to make them want to live, want to reconnect to their culture, to their lands and want to stay engaged in a process of change and growth. In saving the caribou, they individually and collectively are saving themselves and enriching their communities. This shows time and again that in First Nation communities taking on that active stewardship and fostering role makes people stronger.
 - Response: Thank you Jim. Really well said.
- Comment: I can't agree more, this is one of the world's most extraordinary success stories for wildlife recovery. It's a story we need to keep telling. I'm aware of several films about the caribou recovery program: Mothers of the Mountain <https://www.lockstockcreative.com/project/mothers-mountains-doc> and Caribou Homeland. Stories www.caribouhomeland.com have been in the Guardian newspaper lately as well as on CTV. It is a story we want to see celebrated. When get close to an agreement milestone maybe provide advance notice to this group so celebratory activities can be arranged.
 - Response: Excellent. We will keep an ear to ground at the Ministry of Environment. When there is a date, it will be passed along to Shayla to share out.
- Scott Schilds provided an update on Quintette restoration.
- Question: You touched on replanting with conifers and deciduous. The aspen replants, could you describe what that was? Actual plants or something other?
 - Response: Actual aspen seedlings, 1.5 years old. Specifically at uplands sites on heavy compaction roads. In most areas there were conifers.
- Comment: Some cutlines are used by local trappers. Are they still allowed to trap in the area? A trapper was using a cutline to cut trail. Are trappers allowed to cut trail?
 - Response: Great question, I don't know the answer about cutting trail. We struggle with sending out notifications to trappers and struggle to get a response. There is a need to get a coordinated approach to identify lines and areas to keep open. The intention is not to remove access for traplines and recreation, but the issue is tough to get information on. In terms of reopening, the same rules that apply to other items on the land would apply.
 - Response: It would be disappointing if a line was reopened by a trapper or someone else. That would negate the reason and resources that went into restoring it in the first place. For cutting live trees there would be a permit requirement from FOR and that would be the same statutory decision maker who permitted the restoration so that puts them in a tricky spot. Scott nailed it. Moving forward we are trying to build out a multi year

restoration implementation schedule and use the draft product to better engage with tenure holders, trappers, guide outfitters etc. to see where there may be conflicts and try to figure out a path forward. Without a doubt we are going to see restoration ramping up in a very large way. We have procured a contract with DWB to proactively develop restoration prescriptions on linear features. What will have shelf ready prescriptions for anyone to take on. We recognize the need to do better and have more engagement when these products are coming out to home in on and resolve conflicts, so we don't end up on the other side where a line has been restored and someone has used that line for last twenty years

- Agnes Pelletier provided a presentation on the 2021/22 Northeast region caribou field program
- Comment: In tradition with First Nations caribou historically were hunted when moose or other large ungulates were not available. About five caribou equal the meat equivalent of a single moose. When First Nations are dependant on caribou each family will have to hunt five annually and very quickly the populations are going to have to be significantly larger than most are contemplating. Right now in Klinse-za after six or seven years there are maybe 128 animals. This may be comparable with Quintette but neither the Province nor First Nations have had the courage to estimate what a herd should be that would be both sustainable and capable of meeting the needs of First Nations, or how much habitat will have to be managed to sustain that.
 - Response: Appreciate the comment. The “self-sustaining” definition was developed in collaboration with First Nations and incorporates both that Indigenous peoples could live off caribou populations, as well as that there would be opportunities for licensed hunting.
 - For Klinse-za a number was developed for estimating how many caribou are needed on the landscape to feed families that used to rely on them and can't anymore, but we're not sure how accurate it is. The number is about 650 caribou (developed in 2013, McNay, S., D. B. Cichowski, and B. Muir. 2013. Action plan for the Klinse Za herd of woodland caribou (*Rangifer tarandus caribou*) in Canada. West Moberly First Nation, Moberly Lake, British Columbia, Canada.). Right now, the population is 114 animals. We need a growth rate that is high enough to ensure we get there. There are no targets for the others, but we can keep talking about those.
- Question: Is there any correlation between that and the growth of the two herds without maternal pens?
 - Response: The maternity pen as an additive positive effect on growth rate compared to wolf control only. The Klinse-za population is growing annually by fourteen percent; it

was estimated that the mat pen contributed to that increase by 6%. McNay 2022 Demographic responses of nearly extirpated endangered mountain caribou to recovery.

- Question: For the Narraway, the other table shows no collars on the herd . Does Alberta collar the caribou?
 - Response: Yes, Alberta has collars on Narraway caribou, especially in the southern portion of the range. We are collaborating with Alberta, as they regularly put collars out on the BC side of the border, and we share data about Narraway and Bearhole-Redwillow.
- Comment: The Kennedy Siding herd is unique, and that is a McLeod Lake Indian Band initiative. Principally, there is a feeding station where they supplement natural feed, with some control over operations. The herd is recovering at the same rate in absence of maternal penning because of the habitat features the herd occupies.
 - Response: For Kennedy Siding the reason for that implementation was because they noticed the poor body condition of the herd. I am not sure about Klinse-za. Quintette is fine for conditions. Kennedy Siding also has wolf control, not just the feeding station. They would not have been feeding without wolf control. For herds with low numbers, predator control is important, then building up other measures around it.
- Question: Doing analyses on the animals, can you tell how the overall health of herd is? Would that give you some indication of habitat?
 - Response: We conduct mortality investigations as much as possible based on funding available and weather conditions. We send samples (blood, hair, feces, bones, and others) to a lab for analyses. These analyses can tell us whether the animal had health issues prior to death. Some underlying health conditions might increase the probability of predation. There is an ongoing project at the provincial level led by the Wildlife Health lab related to caribou causes or mortalities and general population health.
- Question: Having previously worked for government, money isn't in this program. Have you been given sufficient funding to get to 600 animals sustainably? To reach that goal, how much will it cost?
 - Response: The caribou program has access to funds that get distributed across the Caribou Recovery Program including staffing. We do not always get our funding requests fulfilled in full due to competing priorities. Central Mountain populations get a lot of attention thanks to the Partnership Agreement, and Boreal populations get a lot of interest as well; we can sometimes leverage federal funds for these.
 - Response: The program is pretty well funded and probably in the eyes of other groups we are flush with money. There are two things I want to point out, because of the Section 11 bilateral conservation agreement BC has with Canada that enables funding for Southern Mountain caribou and our requirement to match funding, a certain amount of our program funding supports initiatives for Southern Mountain Caribou. For Boreal, Canada and BC are negotiating a bi-lateral Nature Agreement. Hopefully there is an

announcement before Christmas for the signing of that agreement. The intention for Boreal caribou will be an annex to the agreement which will provide multiyear funding certainty to support monitoring and inventory initiatives. The Nature Agreement and annex for the Boreal replaces the need for Canada and BC to negotiate under section 11.

- Question: Do we have enough money? BC is resource rich and has a regime where resources such as timber are converted into 2x4s to support lumber industries and are sold out of country. That timber also has value in other resource markets such as carbon or environmental services. First Nations among others are spending a lot of time right now looking at the First Nation climate initiative nature-based approach to obtaining forest tenures that can be managed for conservation and funded by providing some carbon offsets. What is the simple answer to the question of what would compel the government to provide the money. This comes from the Yahey case where Justice Burke said that the Province cannot destroy elements essential to supporting the way of life of the Dunne-za. If First Nations say having a sustainable herd of caribou in order to feed themselves a traditional diet is an intentional diet, as Sauleau First Nations, McLeod Lake Indian Band have, the government will have to find a way. Hopefully in collaboration. We will have a sustainable economy in future, but it may not be what it is today. We do not want to bankrupt the Province but priorities need to change.
 - Response: Thank you for the comment.

7. Muskwa-Kechika Advisory Board

- Phil Zacharatos provided a presentation on the Muskwa-Kechika Advisory Board.
- Phil provided a website for further questions: <https://www.muskwa-kechika.com/>
- Question: My group's opinion is that the Muskwa-Kechika Advisory Board has not been properly consulted on things like hunting regulation changes and prescribed fires, which are part of your mandate. We have made a comment that you guys aren't involved enough. Another one has to do with the Muskwa-Kechika access management area. Why doesn't it cover the whole of Muskwa-Kechika? There was a report of an operator using side by sides in critical caribou habitat. Upon investigation it was found that the machine was running in Muskwa-Kechika but not in the access management area. I don't know if that can be revisited or where we go from here.
 - Response: In terms of what's happening or not happening with prescribed burns, we're aware of that. We took an interest, if it's allowed in the management plan, then why? We took it forward not as advocates but as guardians.
- Comment: This was something brought up a while back. Looking at access management plans for the Northern area, those assume the management plan covers all of Muskwa-Kechika but that's wrong. There are a bunch of things in the caribou planning system that are inaccurate. Changes

to regulations impact the Muskwa-Kechika itself. It's interesting to look what has changed, such as you can't hunt caribou in region 7B but you can in 7A.

- Question: Who do we bring up access management to? We firmly believe folks sunk under the waves because of no money.
- Comment: There is little history on the access management area. The access management area was developed prior to the creation of Muskwa-Kechika and prior to the Mackenzie LRMP, so those are reasons the boundaries don't line up.
- Comment: The access management area was brought up because someone out there had found ATVs at the top of a mountain. At this time roads and trails are put in regulations to get a handle on that. Since then things have changed. There are more trails. That regulation was in effect before the Muskwa-Kechika access management area.
- Comment: The access management area should overlap Muskwa-Kechika. A piece of work should be to make them the same going forward.
- Comment: The big issue of the Northern Rockies is that Kaska has proposed a major conservancy area and it overlaps with the Muskwa-Kechika access management area . How is that being dealt with? Why would you have two layers over the same land for basically the same purpose?
 - Response: The problem is we don't know where the government is on this one.
- Comment: That area is bigger than the Muskwa-Kechika access management area.
- Comment: The Kaska conservancy area overlaps with Treaty 8 boundaries so there are unresolved assertions of Aboriginal rights and title by Kaska that conflict with the treaty rights established under Treaty 8, particularly for the Dunne-za, Dene Tha' and Fort Nelson.

8. Meeting Closure

- The next meeting is **December 7th**. Looking forward to feedback on this format.