

Summary Report

Second Joint Caribou Meeting – Ross River Dena and Sahtú Region

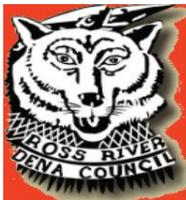


Held Aug. 31-Sep. 2, 2016
Tulít'a, NT

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2016 Meeting Summary

The 2016 Joint Mountain Caribou Meeting was held August 31 to September 2 in Tulít'a, NT. Co-hosted by the Tulít'a and Norman Wells Renewable Resources Councils, the intent of the meeting was to work with the Ross River Dena Council to address concerns about the well-being of Gudzih / Shúhta Goᓇepé in the Dechenla / K'á Tá (Macmillan Pass / Canol) area. The meeting was a follow-up to the first meeting held in 2014, when Sahtú delegates were hosted in Tu Łidlini (the community of Ross River), Yukon Territory.

Discussions at the first 'cross-boundary' meeting in 2014 helped to clarify problems, create dialogue, and build relationships between representatives of different regions, different levels of government, business and community members.

If the first meeting helped to set the foundation necessary for future cooperative action, the second was more about finding solutions to the problems identified previously.

Some priorities identified for immediate action in 2016 include:

- *Monitoring the harvest*
- *Restricting access & educating hunters*
- *Communication & finding support*
- *Protecting habitat.*

'Nááts'ihch'oh is like the centre of four corners or four nations – Kaska Dena, Ross River Dena, Nazani people and Tulít'a people – all four corners. It's very important.'

– Frederick Andrew

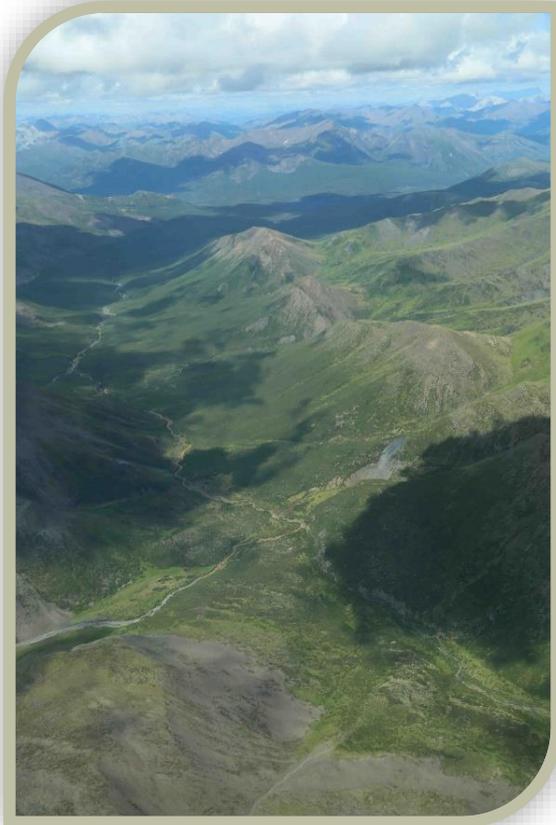


Photo: Deborah Simmons, SRRB

Many tools for action were identified during the meeting. Some of the things we can do to help Gudzih / Shúhta Goopeé at K'á Tá are:

- Increase our presence at check stations
- Apply Sahtú land claim 'Special Harvesting Areas' to define who can harvest and where
- Use RRC Harvesting Permits to control harvesting in certain management areas
- Protect areas with interim measures for Doi T'oh Territorial Park / CANOL Heritage Trail
- Educate hunters about where they can and cannot hunt and what permissions they need
- Protect lands with Sahtú Land Use Plan Zone Amendments
- Communicate to others what is happening and the work we are doing
- Approach researchers, governments, agencies and institutions for cooperation and collaboration.

There is consensus that we should start working on a community-based conservation plan as soon as possible. It's most important that the plan be strongly rooted and supported in our Dene / Dena communities, but it's also important that it's collaborative – we want to involve all the right partners and get it done right. Some of the elements that would be very important in a plan include:

- *Using Shúhta Dene values, knowledge, laws and ethics*
- *Monitoring and enforcement*
- *Protecting the land*
- *Collaboration and inclusivity*
- *Using the best available information.*



Photo: Janet Winbourne

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Introduction

Between August 31 and September 2, 2016, the second Joint Mountain Caribou Meeting was held in Tulít'a, Northwest Territories (NT). The meeting was co-hosted by the Tulít'a and Norman Wells ʔehdzo Got'Jneḡ (Renewable Resources Councils), and the intent was to work with the Ross River Dena Council (Yukon Territory) to find ways of addressing concerns about the well-being of **Gudzih / Shúhta Goʔepé** populations at **K'á Tá** (the Dechenla or Macmillan Pass/CANOL area).

The Tulít'a meeting was follow-up to an initial meeting held in July 2014, in which Sahtú delegates travelled to Ross River, Yukon Territory (YT) to discuss the situation around Dechenla. The 2014 meeting was extremely useful for clarifying problems, creating dialogue, and building relationships between representatives of different regions, levels of government, business and community members. It helped to set the necessary foundation for future cooperative action.¹



Photo: Janet Winbourne

The focus of the second meeting was on identifying solutions to the problems identified in 2014, including the possibility of collaborating on a cross-regional, community-led caribou stewardship or conservation plan. Twenty-five people attended the 2016 meeting, with representatives from nearby communities and local management organizations, regional co-management boards, renewable resource councils, conservation organizations, parks, as well as territorial and federal governments; a list of participants is provided in **Appendix A**.

'We've got to start thinking proactively and do something. Let's do it the Dena way where the respect and the culture, all those things come together.' – Norman Sterriah

¹ A report summarizing the 2014 meeting is available from the Sahtú Renewable Resources Board. **Appendix B** includes the resolutions that resulted from the meeting.

The Setting: Mackenzie Mountain People, Places & Caribou

Shúhta Dene, Ross River Dena, and Shúhtagot'İne (the people)

Shúhta (Mountain) Dene and Shúhtagot'İne are mountain people from both sides of the YT/NT border with a long, shared history in the Mackenzie Mountains. Today, many Mountain Dene live in the nearby communities of Tu Łidlini (Ross River), Tulít'a, and Norman Wells, but still travel to this region seasonally to hunt, fish, and gather traditional foods, medicines, and materials. Aboriginal harvesters also travel here from other communities. In this report, we use the terms as follows:

- **Kaska Dena** – Kaska Dena live in a large expanse of what is now the SE YT, southern NT, and NW BC. The Nation has been divided into five traditional groups now referred to as First Nations. The Ross River Dena Council is one of two Kaska First Nations in the Yukon
- **Ross River Dena** – Dena living in Tu Łidlini (the community of Ross River, YT), including members of the Kaska and other First Nations. Most Ross River Dena speak Kaska, but some speak Slavey
- **Sahtú Dene** – Dene people from the Sahtú Settlement Area (Sahtú = Great Bear Lake). Most Sahtú Dene speak Slavey; there are three dialects of Slavey within the Sahtú region
- **Shúhtagot'İne** – the term for Mountain Dene in Tulít'a dialect
- **Shúhta Dene** – a general term to refer to Mountain Dene.

K'á Tă (the area of interest)

We use the term K'á Tă throughout this report to refer to the main area of concern discussed by meeting participants; our use of the term encompasses an area including Dechenla/Dechİlq, and part of Macmillan Pass/the CANOL Road around Mile 212 to 222. Figure 1 shows the location of K'á Tă in relation to the communities of Tu Łidlini, Tulít'a and Norman Wells, however, it is important to note that the exact area of interest has not yet been defined by the group. Further work needs to be done to identify specific areas and habitats that are important to people and mountain caribou that will be the focus of stewardship activities. The boundaries shown for K'á Tă in Figure 1 are those documented by other researchers working with Shúhtagot'İne elders in 2007-2008, and are likely to change with future planning work.

Figure 1 includes several traditional place names important to Shúhta Dene. We hope to do further work identifying and using traditional place names, to better represent our shared knowledge and history in this area. We understand that K'á Tă is a Shúhtagot'İne name that translates as “willow flats” or “the end of the treeline”. Some other names that refer to specific locations or the broader area as a whole include Dechenla (“the land at the end of the sticks”), Dechİlq and Xaichu, among others.

K'á Tă is part of the Mackenzie Mountain barrens, an expansive, high alpine, tundra plateau near the headwaters of the Keele, Caribou Cry, Ross, and MacMillan Rivers. It is important ecologically because it provides rare summer habitat for caribou that come from many different places. Slavey river names such as Turıchı and Măcho Tsıé / Mitchotse reflect the fact that bull caribou migrate to and use this area in the fall. Our Kaska Dena and Shúhtagot'İne ancestors knew that they could rely on finding caribou here at certain times of the year, and would travel here to harvest, hunt, gather materials, and share with their neighbours. The unique importance of K'á Tă has also been recognized by the United Nations, who designated it as an International Biological Program Site in 1975. Numerous other nearby sites are also candidates for protection and/or special management, such as Łubeh (Keele Peak).

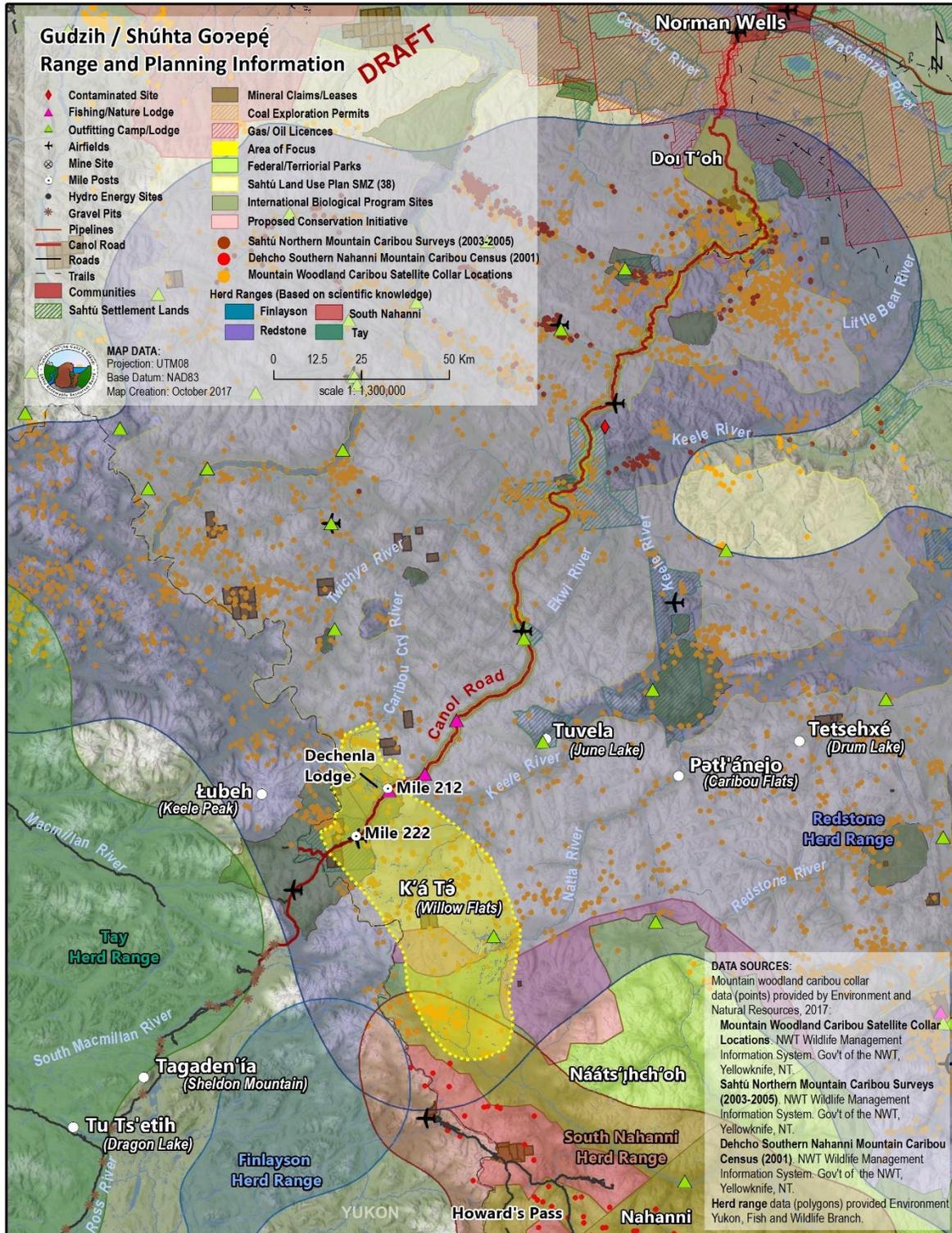


Figure 1: Map showing scientific knowledge of Gudzih / Shúhta Gooᓇpé range, plus areas of interest for mountain caribou planning in the Mackenzie Mountains. The area outlined and indicated as K'á Tó on this map has not yet been defined by the participants of the Joint Caribou Meetings, but was instead derived from: Andrews, T., G. MacKay, L. Andrew, W. Stephenson, A. Barker, C. Alix and the Shúhtagot'ine Elders of Tulita. 2012. Alpine Ice Patches and Shúhtagot'ine Land Use in the Mackenzie and Selwyn Mountains, Northwest Territories, Canada. ARCTIC Vol. 65, Suppl. 1 (2012) P. 22-42.

Gudzih / Shúhta ʔepé (the caribou)

Ross River Dena and Shúhtagot'Inę have many similarities in language and culture, but we use different dialects in our communities. As a result, we have different names for these caribou – for Ross River Dena they are Gudzih, and for Shúhtagot'Inę they are Shúhta Goʔepé. Generally, we consider the caribou to be to be all of one type, even though differences are noted in body size and coloration, antler size, and in behaviour and movement patterns.

Shúhta Dene have an in-depth knowledge of caribou, based on generations of experience in this area. Some of this information has been documented during other research projects. Overall, we know that Gudzih / Shúhta Goʔepé come to K'á Tǎ from many different directions, and all rely on the unique habitat found there. While there may be gaps in understandings of what is happening to Gudzih / Shúhta Goʔepé in the last ten or fifteen years, we feel that the land and caribou have already changed in way that are worrisome and we are interested in taking stewardship actions immediately.

Scientists classify northern mountain caribou as a type of woodland caribou, and while similar to their boreal counterparts, they have different habitat preferences and behaviours. Those that migrate have two types of movement patterns: they move up and down in elevation as food quality and availability changes, and they move seasonally between their winter and summer ranges. In the summer they are typically found in open alpine and sub-alpine areas where they seek out snow patches for relief from insects and heat. In the winter they move into more forested areas where there is less snow. There are also mountain caribou that do not migrate.

Relatively little scientific research has been done in this area, but it is thought that at least three herds of northern mountain caribou rely on K'á Tǎ; scientists refer to these caribou as the “Redstone Complex” to indicate that it is not just one herd. These caribou seem to occupy three different winter ranges at lower elevations along three major rivers flowing into the Mackenzie River – the Carcajou, the Keele, and the Redstone.

COSEWIC assessed northern mountain caribou in Canada as Special Concern in 2002; this status was re-examined and confirmed in 2014. Northern mountain caribou were listed as Special Concern under the federal *Species at Risk Act* in 2005, and a national management plan was released in 2012. They have not yet been ranked in the Northwest Territories, but were designated by the Yukon as Vulnerable, and by BC as Vulnerable/Apparently secure.



Photo: Ross River Land Stewardship Office

Conservation Context

K'á Tǎ is located within the NWT but accessed and used by people from both sides of the YT/NT border. This section provides information that should help the reader understand what this means for stewardship, as well as some background to the topics discussed at the 2016 meeting. Further details on the threats currently impacting Gudzih / Shúhta Goᓇpé are included in the 2014 meeting report.

Jurisdiction and Stewardship Roles

The co-hosts of the 2016 meeting were the Tulít'a and Norman Wells ᓇhdzo Got'jñę (Renewable Resources Councils, RRCs), with facilitation and support provided by the ᓇhdzo Got'jñę Gots'é Nákedı (Sahtú Renewable Resources Board, SRRB). Under the *Sahtú Dene and Métis Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement* (SDMCLA, 1993), the SRRB is a co-management board set up to act as the main instrument of wildlife and forestry management in the Sahtú Settlement Area. The Land Claim also outlines the mandate of Renewable Resources Councils in each Sahtú community, “to encourage and promote local involvement in conservation, harvesting studies, research and wildlife management”, and to advise the board with respect to participants’ harvesting and/or concerns in the community (Vol. 1, Sections 13.9.1-13.9.6). The board works together with ᓇhdzo Got'jñę in the five Sahtú communities to maintain Dene and Métis harvesting traditions and keep the land and animals healthy for future generations.

Invited delegates from the Ross River Dena Land Stewardship Office represent interests of the Ross River Dena Council – a Kaska First Nation, located at the confluence of the Ross and Pelly rivers, near the Campbell Highway and the North CANOL Road in the southeast Yukon. Kaska Dena and Ross River Dena have a history of use in the K'á Tǎ area, and a keen interest in helping to maintain a healthy ecosystem there, but do not have authority, treaty rights or land claim benefits in the NWT. There is precedence of a transboundary or overlap agreement between Ross River Dena and Sahtú organizations in the past. Participants at the first joint caribou meeting in 2014 recalled that an agreement had been negotiated around the area of interest in 1993. At that time, the parties agreed that Ross River Dena would continue to exercise their traditional activities on the NWT side and assist in stewardship as possible. An important outcome of the 2014 meeting was a verbal agreement that the 1993 overlap agreement should be built upon or adapted for current purposes as a “friendship treaty”, meaning that parties from both sides of the YT/NT border would continue to collaborate on conservation issues in the K'á Tǎ area.

Land use planning in the Sahtú region

Most of the impacts and conservation issues at K'á Tǎ are taking place east of the YT/NT border within the Sahtú Settlement Area (SSA). Since 2013, land use within the Sahtú has been guided by the Sahtú Land Use Plan (SLUP). First Nations, departments, and agencies of federal and territorial governments, and every body having authority under any federal or territorial law to issue licences, permits or other authorizations relating to the use of land or waters or the deposit of waste, are required to follow the Plan. If referred by a Sahtú, territorial or federal organization or other regulatory body (*i.e.*, Land and Water Board), or a directly impacted person, the Sahtú Land Use Planning Board (SLUPB) may make a conformity determination on a land use activity. The Board can also receive requests and make decisions on exceptions to the Plan. The Plan is required to be reviewed every five years to ensure its relevance and effectiveness in the future, but can be amended at any time.

Title to settlement lands outside of municipalities are vested to land corporations in three districts (Déljñę, Tulita and K'áhsho Got'ine). Responsibility for ownership and management of these lands rests

with the three district land corporations on behalf of land claim participants. As a result, the two other organizations relevant to discussions of land use and resource stewardship in this part of the Sahtú are:

- The Tulita District Land Corporation (TDLC) – Comprised of the Norman Wells Land Corporation, the Tulita Land Corporation and the Fort Norman Métis Land Corporation. The TDLC represents the economic interests of people in the Sahtú Region.
- The Sahtú Secretariat Inc. (SSI) – The coordinating body for the seven Land Corporations. It functions as a point of contract for all government agencies and departments on issues such as education, health, environment and economic development.

Parks and Protected Areas

Nahanni and Nááts'ihch'oh National Park Reserves

Part of the northern mountain caribou range in the NWT is protected within Nahanni and Nááts'ihch'oh National Park Reserves; combined, they protect 35,000 km² of the South Nahanni Watershed.²

Nááts'ihch'oh was established as a National Park late in 2014, following public consultation and negotiations with Sahtú Dene and Métis organizations. It covers an area of 4,850 km² and protects part of the upper South Nahanni River watershed. The region is known for its mineral potential, and mining companies had concerns the park would limit access. During negotiations, public concerns were raised about the impact that mining the region would have on the watershed. The final park boundary left 70% of the overall mineral potential outside the park, and 44% of the calving grounds within.³

The adjoining Nahanni National Park Reserve encompasses 30,050 km², including 91% of the Greater Nahanni ecosystem in the Dehcho Region and most of the South Nahanni River watershed. Originally established in 1972, the park was in "reserve" status pending settlement of land claims in the region. The Park is now managed in cooperation by the Government of Canada and Dehcho First Nations. The park was among the world's first four natural heritage locations to be inscribed as World Heritage Sites by UNESCO in 1978. The South Nahanni River achieved Canadian Heritage River status in 1987.⁴

Doi T'oh Territorial Park and CANOL Heritage Trail

Two proposed territorial parks are relevant to stewardship discussions around K'á Tá: Doi T'oh Territorial Park and the CANOL Heritage Trail (see Figure 1). Both the trail corridor and Doi T'oh (Dodo Canyon) area have traditionally been used by Shúhtagot'jñę for hunting, fishing and trapping. In recent years, the area has increasingly attracted visitors as a hiking and wilderness destination. The CANOL itself was a wartime construction project of a pipeline and service road from oil deposits in the Mackenzie Valley to Whitehorse.

The main use of the trail corridor is currently guided trophy outfitted hunting and Sahtú Dene and Métis subsistence wildlife harvesting. Some outfitting facilities are located directly within the corridor; some camps and access activities rely on the corridor. The other existing commercial operation in the area is a naturalist's lodge, located on the plateau adjacent to Macmillan Pass (Dechenla Lodge). Sahtú residents' use of the trail and surrounding area is for general recreation including hunting, hiking, camping, and

² <http://cpawsnwt.org/campaigns/south-nahanni-watershed>

³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/N%C3%A1%C3%A1ts%27ihch%27oh_National_Park_Reserve

⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nahanni_National_Park_Reserve

snowmobiling. Hunting access in the southern portion of the corridor and surrounding area has typically been from the west directly along the CANOL road by truck or ATV through Macmillan Pass, from YT. Hunters are both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal. Access for hunting from the Norman Wells area is by air and is less directly connected to the park. However, some aircraft landing sites and camp areas within the park have been used, including Dodo Lake and Linton Lake. Typically, other recreational users originate in Norman Wells and use the northern portions of the area, utilizing similar air access sites.⁵

In 2015 the Doi T'oh Territorial Park Corporation (DTPC) was formed to work with the GNWT to plan and manage a Territorial Park. Members of the DTPC include the Tulít'a Dene Band, Tulít'a Land Corporation, Fort Norman Métis Land Corporation, Tulít'a RRC, Norman Wells Land Corporation and Norman Wells RRC. Because most of the CANOL Trail is on Federal Crown Land, a land transfer agreement between the Government of Canada and the GNWT is required prior to park development.⁶

Update: Recent CANOL remediation work⁷

During the 2014 Joint Caribou Meeting there was some discussion about continued impacts of the CANOL Road on caribou, and a presentation on recent remediation work. While this was not a topic of discussion in the 2016 gathering, ongoing projects targeting the clean-up of remaining contaminated sites have accomplished significant work since the 2014 meeting. This work is summarized below.

Update on CANOL Remediation

Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC)'s Contaminants and Remediation Division (CARD), in partnership with the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT)'s Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment (ITI), provided funding for a capacity building and training program in the Sahtú Region to address the wire that had been impacting caribou along the CANOL Trail. In 2015, 23 participants in this capacity building program, all Sahtú beneficiaries, cleaned up 115 km of wire from the CANOL Trail. Building on this success, the program was renewed in 2016. A crew of 30 individuals worked in the Mackenzie Mountains, covering over 145km of tough and often treacherous terrain. The copper-coated steel wire was cut, coiled, and securely stored at transfer locations, where it can be addressed as part of future remediation activities. With only about 70 km of terrain remaining for future cleanup, the remaining wire can be cleared in one additional season of work in 2017.

Although several salvage operations have been conducted, remnants of the pipeline remain scattered along the trail, including oil tanks, buildings and bridges in disrepair, abandoned pipeline, contaminated soil and rusted machinery. Under the Federal Contaminated Sites Action Plan (FCSAP), INAC will undertake a risk management and remediation program, to address the environmental and human health concerns along the CANOL Trail. The invitation to tender was posted in March 2017. It is expected that the contract to complete the work will be awarded in June 2017 and remediation will be completed between 2017 and 2020.

⁵ Doi T'oh Territorial Park and CANOL Heritage Trail Management Plan, January 2007. Originally prepared by Bruce K. Downie and amended by The Doi T'oh Territorial Park Committee (Danny Yakeleya, Ruby L. McDonald, Leon Andrew, Charlie Gaudet, Michael Sanagan, and Larry Adamson) with the assistance of Deni Gaccione, Michael Morse and Richard I. Hardy.

⁶ <https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1445624695925/1445624831905>

⁷ Information provided by Candace DeCoste, Project Officer, CANOL Remediation Project, Contaminants and Remediation Division, Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC), March 2017.

Resource Management and Hunting Regulations

In the NWT, Environment and Natural Resources (ENR-GNWT) shares responsibility for the sustainable use and development of natural resources and environmental protection in a collaborative relationship with Aboriginal and municipal governments, federal and territorial departments, boards and agencies. ENR acts as the management and regulatory authority for wildlife and habitat in the NWT; the Wildlife Division of ENR is responsible for wildlife resource stewardship, through assessing and monitoring wildlife populations, habitat, Species At Risk, wildlife health and biodiversity.

The GNWT publishes a summary each year of NWT Hunting Regulations – this provides information on licences, fees, hunting, ethics, general provisions, possession of wildlife and special area conditions. There is also information on big game species including tag and trophy fees, bag limits, seasons and a map of hunting areas.

There is a harvest limit of one woodland caribou per year (either boreal or northern mountain) for resident NWT hunters. Non-residents can also hunt northern mountain caribou with an outfitter; non-resident hunters harvest an average of 159 caribou per year from the entire Mackenzie Mountains. There is no limit or closed season for northern mountain caribou for Aboriginal hunters.⁸

Monitoring and enforcement are complementary yet distinct parts of harvest management. Enforcement is an action whereby delegated officers ensure compliance to an act of parliament or legislative assembly, or a regulation disseminated under an act, where there is a sanction for failure to “comply” – normally in the form of a fine or imprisonment. Monitoring is an action whereby community members, company employees or private individuals observe and report on all aspects of land-use activities and wildlife management to the relevant agencies and/or regulators. A community monitor has no delegated legal authority.

GNWT wildlife officers have had authority for the enforcement of harvest regulations, and Aboriginal organizations’ responsibilities have typically been limited to monitoring. However, under the new, collaborative NWT Wildlife Act which came into force November 2015, there are now potentially more options for monitoring and enforcement under the “Alternative Measures” clause which have yet to be developed and tested.⁹

This report

This report presents the key messages and ideas for potential action resulting from the 2016 Joint Mountain Caribou Meeting held in Tulít’a. An additional product from the meeting is a draft management plan, in development at the time of writing.

A report was also produced for the initial meeting, held in Ross River in 2014. That report provides a detailed description of the current situation at K’á Tǎ, and readers should consult that document for further information on caribou declines, concerns about environmental change, and the intent and

⁸ <http://www.nwt-species-at-risk.ca/species/northern-mountain-caribou>

⁹ http://www.enr.gov.nt.ca/sites/default/files/wildlife_act_plain_language_document_1_february_2015.pdf

approach for joint stewardship. Both reports are available from the SRRB and the Ross River Dena Council.

The 2016 Joint Caribou Meeting was audio recorded with participants' permission, and verbatim transcripts prepared as a meeting record. Sequential interpretation is provided during the meetings, however no translation was done as part of the transcription. This report was prepared using the meeting transcripts, as well as notes taken during the meeting. Quotations are in a larger, gray font and have been edited for clarity or brevity as necessary. Participants were given opportunities to review and edit how their meeting input has been included as much as possible. More formal presentations are summarized and isolated in text boxes with topic headings.

The report summarizes the proceedings of the three-day meeting into two main sections based on the immediacy of the actions proposed:

- *Tools for Immediate Action*
- *Longer-term Action: Community-Based Planning.*

There are four priority topics in *Tools for Immediate Action*. Each has a summary explaining the problem, challenge or threat, as well as the goal for the proposed actions. Any additional information (e.g., updates provided by other stakeholders) is included under relevant topics and isolated in text boxes. Appropriate tools and specific actions suggested during the meeting are included for each topic.

The second main section of the report is *Longer-term Action: Community-Based Planning* and it contains an overview of the discussion that was had around what a community-based stewardship plan might look like. More detailed information will be included in the developing plan.

It should be noted that due to unfortunate weather circumstances in the Dechenla area at the time, Ross River delegates were not able to attend the Tulít'a meeting in person. As a result, some of the 2016 meeting discussions tended to be more focussed on the Sahtú and NWT region and perspective. Yukon representatives were able to present information and participate in discussions mostly on Day 3 of the meeting via videoconferencing, and have continued to be important collaborators throughout the planning process.



Photo: Deborah Simmons, SRRB

Setting the Stage for Action

The main purpose of the 2016 Joint Caribou Meeting was to build on work that happened at the first meeting, held in Ross River, Yukon Territory, July 2014. That initial meeting was very useful for clarifying problems, creating dialogue, and building relationships between representatives of different regions, levels of government, business, and community members. People talked about the problems being experienced at K'á Tá and began to discuss opportunities to work together to find solutions. Participants in the 2014 meeting achieved consensus with respect to five recommendations for immediate action to be considered by the Tulít'a and Norman Wells ʔehdzo Got'Inę (Renewable Resources Councils) and Sahtú Secretariat Incorporated. These resolutions are included in **Appendix B** of this report.

Because the first meeting helped to set the necessary foundation for future cooperation, the 2016 meeting was very action-oriented. People arrived keen to talk about what could be done to address the problems at K'á Tá, both immediately and over the longer-term. The meeting started with an opening prayer from Tulít'a elder Joe Bernarde, a round of introductions, and a short review of themes and resolutions from the 2014 meeting. Tulít'a and Norman Wells RRC representatives then opened discussions around priority conservation issues and ways to collaborate on actions.

Over the years, we see a huge amount of hunters coming in from different parts of the country. Right now we are experiencing a migration of hunters going up into the Northwest Territories. They are bringing in trailers with freezers, generators, quads, Argos, you name it. The numbers are getting bigger every year. They are telling their buddies, 'It's easy going up there. You can jump out of your vehicle and knock down a caribou at 300, 400, 500, 600 yards away with a large calibre rifle. There isn't just one or two. There are groups of hunters of maybe four or five people. They want two or three caribou each. So it's having a really devastating effect on the game that's up there ... I don't want to go up there anymore because of the amount of hunters up there. It's the first time I think I need to wear a fluorescent vest so I identify myself not as a caribou. It's just crazy. I feel anger. I feel frustration. I feel a lot of negative things when I think about this time of year up there. We need to put some measures in place to try to protect not only the caribou but our lifestyle also. We need to be stricter right now. We've got to start thinking proactive and do something. Let's do it the Dena way where the respect and the culture, all those things come together. – Norman Sterriah

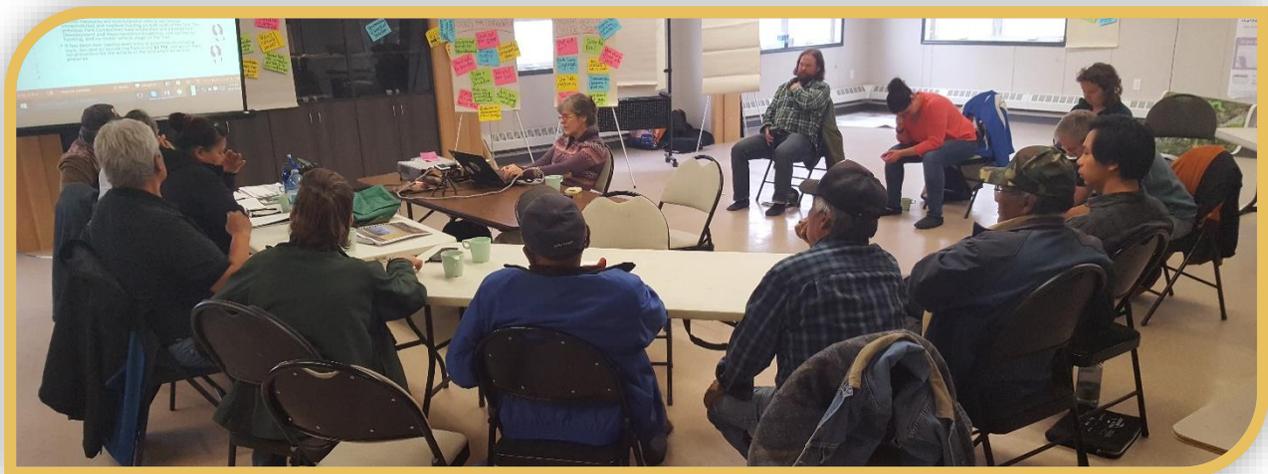


Photo: Janet Winbourne

Technical Presentation: Review of 2014 Ross River Meeting

Janet Winbourne, Technical Writing and Support

For two days in July 2014 the Ross River Dena Chief, Councillors and community members hosted Sahtú delegates in Tu Łidlini (the community of Ross River, Yukon Territory) to discuss concerns about the northern mountain caribou population in the K'á Tá area. Approximately 50 people took part in the meeting, with participants from Tu Łidlini, Norman Wells, Tulít'a, Yellowknife, and Déljñę. There were representatives from the Government of the Northwest Territories, Renewable Resource Councils and Boards, small business, research, and youth. The meeting was an opportunity to share local concerns – not only about caribou and their habitat, but about moose and all the other animals, about development, and the impacts on traditional lifestyles and livelihoods that people are experiencing. Six main themes of discussion arose.

Theme 1: Shared history, shared territory, shared culture

There is a long shared history of use for both Kaska and Sahtú people at K'á Tá. Shúhta Dene from Ross River and Tulít'a regularly travelled back and forth to the Mack Pass area to hunt and share.

Theme 2: Desire to work together, share knowledge and build on existing relationship

There is a strong interest in continuing to share and cooperate across the YT/NT border, and strength in working together to address these problems.

Theme 3: Concerns about declining numbers of caribou

People used to see thousands of caribou in the Dechenla / K'á Tá area. There has been a steep decline in the number of animals people are seeing in the last 10-15 years.

Theme 4: It's not just caribou – changes and impacts to the land and other animals

People are also seeing fewer moose, beaver and fish in the area. Climate change may be impacting the habitat of many animals.

Theme 5: Challenges we face

The main problems affecting Gudzih / Shúhta Goɔɔpé populations are: overharvesting, mining and development, pollution and garbage, wildfire, climate change, and predators.

Theme 6: Solutions/actions

There are many ways we can work together, such as: protecting the land, hunting restrictions and enforcement, education, increasing research/knowledge, and improving communication.

Next steps:

- Draft a "Friendship Treaty" based on the former MOU
- Form a joint caribou stewardship Working Group in the Dechenla / K'á Tá shared traditional territory
- Draft a Shúhta Dene code of ethics to guide caribou stewardship
- Draft a mountain caribou management plan to address problems.

RRC Presentation: Priority Concerns from Norman Wells and Tulit'a

Rocky Norwegian, President, Tulit'a RRC

The concerns that people have about harvesting and harvest monitoring at Mile 222 are the same concerns that Tulit'a has for the Keele River and Caribou Flats. We hunt there every year; it's where we get our food from. We are seeing boats coming out of that area and we don't know who they are, what or how many animals they harvested. It would be nice to have someone at the mouth of the Keele checking permits and monitoring the harvest, especially during the fall season. It would be nice if the RRCs can start taking that role on to have someone monitor these areas and have a position for these people. I think there is a role for the Renewable Resources Board in keeping count of those also.

It's hard to monitor these caribou. Some years there are nothing, some years a lot. They are changing their movements – now they've moved down from the Flats lower than I've ever seen in 19 years. It's probably all the same caribou moving back and forth, so while our main concern is the Keele River, what's happening around us does have an impact on the caribou we hunt.

We would like to see the Yukon Government cooperate with and financially support the monitoring at places like Mile 222, so that we have enough funding to be able to monitor properly and for a longer period of time. There are boundary agreements in place that deal with traditional usage across the YT/NT border. We should build on these rather than start all over again.

Rhea McDonald, President, Norman Wells RRC

I have just come from the Mile 222 area. There are a lot of people who don't know where the private lands are – resident and non-resident harvesters, people from the Yukon. There are quad trails all over the place. I think we need to jump on this before it becomes an even bigger concern; with all the restrictions on other herds, what I see is that there are going to be more and more people coming up to Mile 222. There will be another issue with the Nááts'įhch'oh Park and that access road as well.

I think that interim measures, proper signage, and the Tulit'a District need to be part of this – they are the ones who can give permission to access the lands. As it's happening now, there are hunters coming in from Yellowknife and other places, and they are not sure where the boundaries of the private lands are. There is an urgency there. Some of those ATV trails are so prominent, and from those it just spires off all over the place. Maybe we can get the ball rolling with ENR and start to send at least one of our monitors or one of our people out there to record what's going on out there too, to help work with ENR.

Enforcement might be something we want to look forward to so we can work with ENR. If they don't have the manpower, we can be there too. I know ENR has an issue with finding the manpower out there. Even if you send one officer out, it's a vast area. You can't be ten places at once; it's hard to be on top of it. Last year at Dechenla Lodge, I was talking to the owners and there were about 60-plus non-resident hunters in the area. It's just starting and I think we need to nip it in the bud.

Tools for Immediate Action

People that have been in the Mackenzie Mountains recently report that urgent action is required to address what is happening. Many are frustrated that several years have already been spent trying to get government representatives to pay attention to the conservation issues at K'á Tá, but officials have been focused on other areas and other caribou herds.

Because of this sense of urgency, we think that there need to be both short-term and longer-term approaches to problem-solving. We see the benefits of having a community-based stewardship plan in place, but know that planning processes can take time, and our situation is perhaps complicated by involving at least three communities and two territories.

As a result, we see the need to prioritize some immediate actions to start working on right away. At the same time, we will start to develop a strong plan for the future.

Four top priorities for immediate action include:

1. **Monitoring the harvest** – we need to find ways to estimate the total number of Gudzih / Shúhta Goᓇepé being harvested in the Mackenzie Mountains
2. **Restricting access and educating hunters** – to limit damage to habitat and poor harvesting behaviours, we must develop and post signage about private lands as soon as possible
3. **Communication and finding support** – it's important to reach out to other departments, organizations, companies, researchers, and individuals to get support for our management actions
4. **Protecting habitat** – there are many different things impacting caribou; ensuring they have good habitat will be very important to their survival.

In this section of the report we look at what the threats or conservation issues are, what are some of the tools that we have and can use right away, and what our information needs are so that we can work on these issues more effectively.

In the next section we look at actions that will take place over the longer-term – specifically, creating a community-based stewardship plan based on our shared Dene culture and values. While we can start working on this right away, it may take some time to complete.

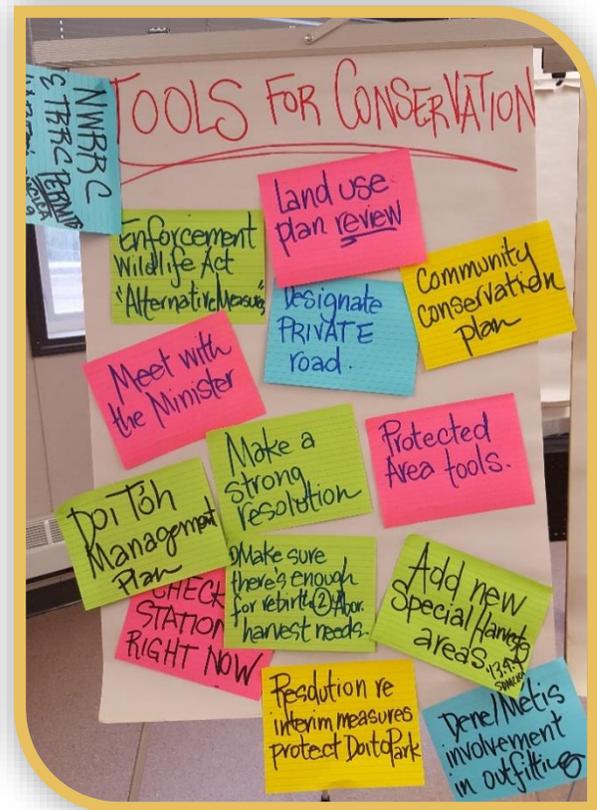


Photo: Janet Winbourne

Priority action 1: Monitoring the harvest

Year after year after year for at least 10 years verbally, I've asked why can't ENR utilize our monitors out there? They don't have the manpower and we might not have enforcement either, but in the meantime we can record and take information and if there's an enforcement issue, we can phone. All I've seen out there is that you need to get your export permit when you leave. I don't think that's enough. I think that regardless if you are a beneficiary, or non-beneficiary, from Ross River or not, that station needs to be a mandatory check-in/check-out.

– Rhea McDonald

In order to determine whether there is a conservation need to limit any harvesting at K'á Tá we need to know the total number of Gudzih / Shúhta Goꝛepé being harvested in the Mackenzie Mountains.

In the NWT, Environment and Natural Resources (ENR-GNWT) has had enforcement officers at Mile 222 during the fall hunting season for several years, but at other times of the year there is no presence and no formal monitoring in place. There was also formerly a game check station at the Ross River ferry in the Yukon in the 1990s; this is no longer in operation.

In Norman Wells there is a similar concern that no one is monitoring the total number of caribou being harvested in traditional harvesting areas up the Keele and Redstone Rivers and at Caribou Flats – it is likely the same caribou moving back and forth between there and Mile 222.

We need to establish whether GNWT can report on the number of resident harvesters active around Mile 222 on an annual basis; this would help support our observations that harvester numbers have been increasing. Regardless, there is strong interest in strengthening our monitoring and enforcement presence at Mile 222 and possibly at other locations. We would like to continue to develop indigenous-led initiatives, such as land guardian programs, as part of this work.

Priority action 2: Restricting access & educating hunters

If it's damaging the land, I think we should really talk about that stuff – not only caribou, but lands. It's the habitat for the animals, that's why the ancestors selected it in the land claim. It's the habitat of the caribou, geese, and all the things that are there. That's why the elders are always talking about it. So when we talk about things we want to take care of, we want it to be taken care of the way the Dene people used to live with it a long time ago. They managed from that day until today and never disappeared. – Chief Frank Andrew

I spent nine years in the Yukon and in terms of caribou and moose, it was always the road accessible places where there were issues. The really remote areas were not a problem, but as soon as there's an all-weather road, there's access, and eventually there's going to be some kind of harvest issues. To me, to someone who cares about caribou, the scariest thing you can do is put all-weather roads on the landscape because everything changes after that.

– Jan Adamczewski

To minimize the destruction of fragile habitat and start to change other disrespectful and unsustainable harvesting practices, it may be necessary to control access to some areas of the Mackenzie Mountains.

Participants at the meeting identified the road as a major problem. It is possible that having an enhanced presence and authority at check stations may not have enough of an impact on the problems being experienced around K'á Tá. There are specific concerns that hunters coming into the Mile 222 area don't know where Sahtú private lands are. Motorized vehicles are going off-road and causing habitat damage because people aren't informed about private land boundaries. We worry that this is going to become a bigger problem if road access is increased, and as hunting gets restricted elsewhere in the territory.

Interim measures, proper signage, and the Tulít'a District can all be part of protecting areas and giving permissions to access lands. There is a sense of urgency to get going on this right away. Under the Sahtú land claim, RRCs can permit any person to harvest wildlife on Sahtú lands. However, there is currently no formal process for this to occur. The RRCs, SRRB and ENR are starting to work to develop and enforce a collaborative plan for Mile 222.

Outside of Nááts'jch'oh Park and Sahtú private lands there may be less local control over access, but education could help. One approach could be to dedicate some of the larger ATV trails as access routes and encourage hunters to only use these dedicated trails.

Habitat disruption can be caused by industrial activity both directly and indirectly. Most people present at the meeting object to mining activities in particular, and of any private control of access by mining companies. There is also concern about roads built for industrial activities will increase access to sensitive habitat. The Howard's Pass access road is likely to contribute to recreational use of the K'á Tá area (see Figure 1). Already, park staff are hearing of overland travel to Mile 222 facilitated by this road. Access is expected to increase on this route in the future, thereby potentially increasing impacts on Gudzih / Shúhta Goᵇepé through increased harvest and habitat destruction. While First Nations hunters are allowed to harvest in the park, non-First Nations are not. The park has law enforcement patrols that survey. They also have wildlife cameras from which footage can be used to identify and investigate any illegal hunting activity.

Tools We Can Use

Because many of the responses we can have to address these first two priority actions (***Monitoring the harvest; Restricting access and educating hunters***) are similar, the tools and suggested action items are presented here together.

Check stations

We see a need to increase our presence at the Mile 222 check station and possibly at other areas. This will require more than one officer at a time. We would like to see Sahtú people used out there in a supporting role. People from Tulít'a and Norman Wells could cooperate with ENR to record who is coming in and out of the area and to document harvests, contacting GNWT when enforcement is necessary. Signs about the mandatory check station are currently being developed.

Special harvesting areas (SHAs)

The land selection part of the SDMCLCA gives extra rights and powers to define who can harvest and where they can harvest (13.4.4). These can be revised, added to, or removed as necessary. Currently, SHAs haven't really been implemented. SSI and SRRB have written to the Minister to start to work out a process for implementation.

RRC Harvesting Permits

Other First Nations have used permitting systems to restrict or regulate hunting and access to sensitive areas and wildlife populations. Under the SDMCLCA, RRCs have the power to make permits that tell people whether or not they are allowed to harvest in areas where there is harvest management happening. This power is not restricted to Sahtú private lands, as the Norman Wells and Tulít'a RRCs have jurisdiction in the Tulít'a District. We could develop a RRC permit to complement the check station.

Protected Areas

An interim protection resolution for Doi T'oh Territorial Park and the CANOL Heritage Trail can protect lands within the park and trail corridor. The management plan for the proposed park includes details on how hunting and access regulations will be agreed upon and enforced (section 5.4), as well as motorized vehicle prohibitions within park areas (section 6.2.2).

Education and Communication

Hunters need to be educated about where they can and cannot hunt. They need to know where Sahtú private lands are and what permissions are necessary. ENR is able and willing to send out letters or a brochure to hunters that could include a map or GIS coordinates of the areas. While monitors have no enforcement abilities, they can explain where Sahtú private lands are and that hunters need District approval on private lands. Increased communication with visiting hunters is very important. This would improve the situation in locations such as Caribou Flats, the Dechenla /K'á Tâ area, and June Lakes.

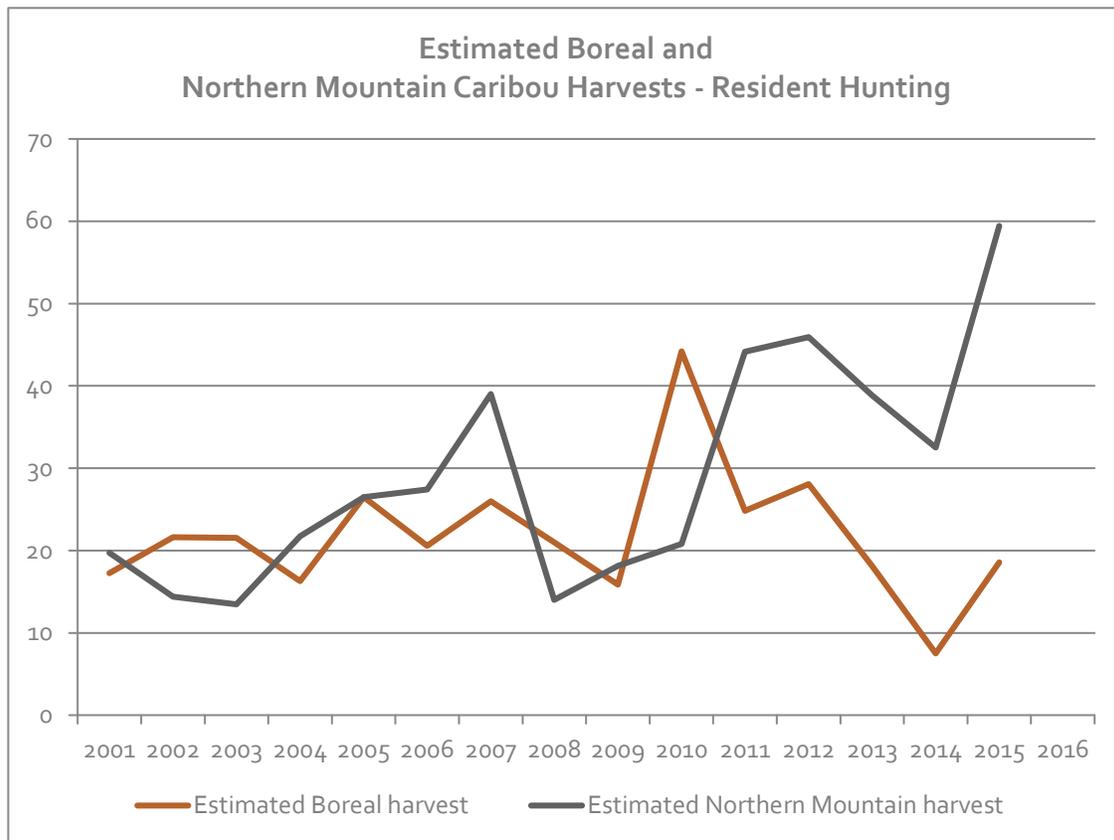
Priority 1 & 2 Action Items:

- *Ask GNWT to provide information on number of active resident harvesters at Mile 222*
- *Coordinate with GNWT and YT to estimate total harvests*
- *Develop a monitoring datasheet*
- *Get annual reports on outfitted hunts*
- *Post signs about the mandatory check station*
- *Clarify role of community monitors, establish where monitors are needed, how many, etc.*
- *Consider monitoring at places other than Mile 222*
- *Consider possibilities for First Nations to take on more monitoring and enforcement roles*
- *Secure more monitoring and enforcement positions in both YT and NT*
- *Circulate an interim protection resolution for Doi T'oh Territorial Park and the CANOL Heritage Trail from Norman Wells and Tulít'a RRCs*
- *Develop and post signs marking Sahtú Private Lands*
- *Develop system to spread information about Sahtú private lands to hunters*
- *Confirm whether GNWT has authority to protect private lands.*

Update: Estimated resident harvests of Northern Mountain Caribou¹⁰

While ENR does not issue tags separately for Boreal and Northern Mountain Caribou, recent analysis questionnaire data that include harvest locations has enabled an estimation of resident harvests of each ecotype (2001-2015). Results indicate that there is an overall increase in woodland caribou harvests and this is attributable to an increase in Northern Mountain Caribou harvests.

Based on detailed information from the NWT resident hunter survey, from 2001-2010 resident hunters harvested approximately 45 woodland caribou per year, and about (50%) half of their reported kills were Northern Mountain caribou based on location of hunt. During the past five years (2011-2015), resident hunters harvested on average 64 woodland caribou, and 70% of these were Northern Mountain Caribou. This averages to about 44 Northern Mountain caribou per year. This estimate is based on the assumption that boreal and mountain woodland caribou kills are equally likely to be reported (ENR unpublished data).



¹⁰ Information provided by Suzanne Carrière, Wildlife Biologist (Biodiversity), ENR-GNWT, Yellowknife, May 2017.

Scientific Presentation: Overview of NWT Monitoring

Jan Adamczewski, Wildlife Biologist, ENR-GNWT

Northern Mountain Caribou populations span parts of the Yukon, NWT and northern BC. Research and monitoring indicate that there are likely 36 different herds, with about 45,000 caribou all together. Some of the herds are small and isolated in small ranges with as few as 200 caribou. Some are larger – up to 4,000 caribou – with much bigger ranges. The Redstone may be the largest herd, with an estimated 5,000-10,000, but information is limited as the NWT herds have not really been defined yet.

A collaborative management plan was drafted for these populations of caribou in 2012 by Environment Canada and Yukon, BC and NWT partners. Overall, there is limited scientific information on NWT herds. More monitoring work has been done in the Yukon, but there is little to no trend information for 22 of the 36 known herds. In BC the southern and central mountain herds are doing poorly – some are down to 15 or 20 caribou – so they are trying measures like maternity pens and predator control to maintain them. Herds in northern BC belong to the Northern Mountain type and are relatively healthy because their ranges are still relatively undisturbed. Recognizing that they are vulnerable, Northern Mountain Caribou were assessed as a Species of Special Concern by COSEWIC in 2002 and by SARA in 2005.

In 2002 the SRRB put ten collars on caribou in the central Mackenzie Mountains to try to define seasonal movements and existing herds. Based on analysis by a graduate student, the collars indicated two herds, named after the Carcajou and Moose Horn Rivers. John Nagy looked at the same data and thought it might indicate three herds: Carcajou Lake, Redstone, and Mountain. The Carcajou Lake herd caribou don't travel far as they have a much smaller general range. The other two proposed herds have longer-range seasonal movements from the Yukon and Yukon-NT border country in summer, to winter ranges further into the NT. It is possibly two herds that can be found in the Mile 222 area (Mountain and Redstone). They are around the border in spring and summer, and closer to Norman Wells and Drum (Wrigley) Lake in the winter. However, this is based on information from just 10 collared cows.

The collar data also indicate possible calving areas – some of which have been cut out of Nááts'ı̨hch'oh Park and are now under consideration as multi-use areas. The roads are also a concern – road accessible places are associated with wildlife issues. In the Yukon, sustainable harvest from these herds is considered 2-3%; road-accessible areas often lead to more hunters and a need to manage the harvest.

It seems like good winter range may be scarce. Areas with limited snow cover and abundant lichens for winter forage are prime wintering habitat for these caribou, and these areas are limited in extent. There is also an idea that the larger northern mountain herds have an ecology more like barren-ground caribou – i.e., they move from wintering grounds to more remote calving grounds with fewer predators. This would maybe allow them to get to the larger herd sizes. But it's an incomplete picture we have right now. In the Yukon, studies have shown that these herds can vary from relatively sedentary (e.g., the Carcajou Lake group) to herds with more extensive seasonal movements. It is also possible that there is more complexity of herds in the central Mackenzie Mountains.

Priority 3: Communication & finding support

Perhaps our own land corporations and district have not been providing enough information to understand this clause; that's something they should do, so we understand what's in the claim book. There is jurisdiction and a clause that says we can do a management plan – perhaps we should work on a plan and make it meaningful so when people come into the country doing whatever they do, at least there is a process in place. Our group, our claimant group, should have public meetings about this kind of stuff. But they don't do that. Our own leaders need to step up to the plate. – Joe Bernarde

I like the idea of working together, but we have to be clear on how we are going to make that happen. – Chief Frank Andrew

To be able to put our concerns forward in an effective manner and be able to act on them, we will need support from other stakeholders, particularly the territorial government, but also some Sahtú organizations.

So far, we feel that we have not been a priority for support from the GNWT in regards to either human or financial resources. Effective communication will be key to cooperation and collaboration in addressing the conservation issues at K'á Tá.



Photo: Janet Winbourne

Who should be involved?

- Shúhta and K'áhsho Got'Inę
- Tulít'a and Norman Wells Renewable Resources Councils
- Tulita District and Land Corporation
- Ross River Dena Council
- Naʔani – Dehcho Mountain people
- We need elders to see the area with their own eyes
- Need to work with the youth
- Meet with outfitters
- Communicate with developers
- Cooperate with ENR and SRRB.

It is important to consider early on all the people who may have interests in the planning area and the work we are doing here. Invitations to participate should go out to Fort Good Hope and Deh Cho representatives, as both groups of people have a history of harvesting Shúhta Goʔepé in the Mackenzie Mountains.

It will be useful to have a transboundary agreement in place for how people will work together. It would be good to consult the existing overlap agreement between Ross River Dena and Sahtú organizations that was drafted in 1993 and build on that. That agreement was based on traditional use. It demonstrated a shared concern in the K'á Tě area, as well as an understanding that Ross River Dena would continue to exercise their traditional usage on the NWT side, and work with the groups east of the border towards good management of the area.

We also want to cooperate with territorial and federal government agencies, local businesses like outfitters, and the mining companies and developers. We will want to collaborate with researchers and to find sources of funding (**Appendix C** includes a list of ideas for research topics from the 2014 and 2016 meetings). Involving the right people, early in the process, will help us to be successful.

Tools We Can Use

Letter-writing

It is important that the Minister recognizes how important an issue this is to the Norman Wells and Tulít'a RRCs. Both the RRCs and the SRRB have shared authority for land and resource issues with GNWT. Letters should stress the challenges that we are facing at K'á Tě and propose ways that we could collaborate with GNWT on management issues. We need to become aware of any current or proposed research to look for areas of possible collaboration, and approach researchers to communicate our research priorities. We should look for ways to partner with conservation organizations and universities.

Tulít'a District and Land Corporation

We need to improve communication with the Tulít'a District and Land Corporation to get support for our plans and to develop a process for regulating activities that take place on Sahtú private lands.

Form a Joint Gudzih / Shúhta Goᓇᓇᓇ Stewardship Working Group

A working group could take responsibility for drafting a management plan for Gudzih / Shúhta Goᓇᓇᓇ. The management plan could encompass many of the challenges and actions identified as important at K'á Tě, indicate priorities, help track success, and be a useful tool to communicate our work.

Collaboration and cooperation

We need to build on existing relationships (e.g., with Parks Canada, outfitters, etc.) and find additional organizations that will collaborate on actions and funding. We also need to make sure that we have invited any interested stakeholders to be a part of our process.

Communication campaign

A broader public communication campaign could be used to build support and awareness of the situation at K'á Tě as well as the work that we are undertaking. Flyers, posters, signs, Facebook posts, and radio communications would all help spread information and generate support locally, regionally, and even internationally.



Photo: Jean Polfus

Priority 3 Action Items:

- Write letter to ENR Minister to communicate urgency of situation at Mile 222 and request a meeting
- Invite Fort Good Hope and Deh Cho representatives to participate in planning
- Write letter to of invitation to Association of Mackenzie Mountain Outfitters
- Improve communication with Tuli't'a District Land Corp. and get support for actions
- Arrange meeting between Tuli't'a District Land Corp. and RRCs to discuss monitoring and enforcement, especially to inform hunters about needing District approval on private lands
- Continue cooperating with ENR-GNWT to enforce restriction of quad use on private lands and provide harvest monitoring information
- Review/revise 1993 overlap agreement, or develop friendship treaty for joint stewardship
- Define area of interest/what is meant by K'á Tó, Xaichu, Dechenla (YT) / Dechılo, (NT)
- Define what we mean by stewardship / conservation and write a Dene code of ethics
- Set up a working group to start planning for immediate actions
- Develop budget and look for financial support.

Priority 4: Protecting habitat

Lands were selected under the land claim for a reason – the elders thought that in the future they would provide for the young people. We need to do a good job with a plan to protect the lands for the future. – Joe Bernarde

I think the message here is that the park is going to have a strong interest in whatever work gets done outside the park. The caribou don't see the boundary either, so they travel. – Deborah Simmons

One year we flew from Fort Simpson in July in a twin otter up to the headwaters of the South Nahanni River for a canoe trip. We got a look at this area and you start to understand that a lot of the Mackenzie Mountains are very dry, and then you get into this country near the Yukon border and all of a sudden it's so rich, it's so green. And then it kind of makes sense that the caribou would go there for spring and summer. It's a perfect area for them. – Jan Adamczewski

To make sure we continue to have Gudzih / Shúhta Goᓇepé for future generations, we need to make sure that there are places they can go where they aren't disturbed and that there is enough good habitat available.

Many Shúhtagot'Inę were consulted and their knowledge used in the development of the Nááts'ı̨hch'oh National Park Reserve. The area is a very special area to Shúhta Dene and many types of fish, birds and

animals. We have concerns that some land identified as important to caribou during park consultations – possibly even the calving grounds for Gudzih / Shúhta Goᓇepé – was later excluded from the park boundaries. If conservation zoning does not protect these lands, then the caribou could be impacted by mineral exploration and development activities. If we effectively lobby the right Sahtú organizations, we will be able to protect these lands.

Doi T'oh Territorial Park and the CANOL Heritage Trail are intended to be established as a Recreation Park under the Territorial Parks Act, and permitted uses will be similar to existing uses. A management plan for the park was approved by the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment in 2007. It has not yet been resolved whether any hunting activities will take place within park boundaries.

Tools We Can Use

Sahtú Land Use Plan Zone Amendments

Under the SLUP the Mackenzie Mountains are designated as a “Special Management Zone” (SMZ #38) due to the unique habitat found there and the Shúhta Dene history in the area (further details are included in **Appendix D**). Special Management Zones restrict some activities but allow for the exploration and development of mineral deposits. The Sahtú Land Use Plan is now being amended to zone the areas that were left out of the Nááts'ihch'oh National Park Reserve. Until the amendment process is finished, important habitat for grizzly bear, mountain caribou and Dall's sheep remains protected, however, it is likely that much of this area will remain in Special Management Zones that allow for potential mineral development. Land corporation by-laws state that the Tulít'a District Land Corporation needs to meet with beneficiaries about actions and decisions being taken, such as changes to the park boundary and zoning. If the SLUPB wants to make zoning amendments, TDLC is required to meet with SDMCLCA beneficiaries in Tulít'a and Norman Wells before a decision is made. Our voices can influence this decision.

Interim measures for Doi T'oh Territorial Park and the CANOL Heritage Trail

A resolution was put forward by participants at the 2016 meeting that protective measures outlined in the Doi T'oh Territorial Park and CANOL Heritage Trail Management Plan be implemented immediately. The relevant clause in the Management Plan is included in **Appendix E**, along with the resolution and distribution list. The Tulít'a Land Corporation, Fort Norman Métis Land Corp., Norman Wells Land Corp., and Tulít'a District Land Corp. have been requested to consider formally supporting such interim measures, so that the working group can develop implementation mechanisms as soon as possible.

Priority 4 Action Items:

- *Conduct state of knowledge work to identify existing information, gaps, and permissions necessary to use and share knowledge and data on topics such as caribou range, calving, distribution and movement patterns*
- *Encourage community leaders to send letters to the SLUPB to support an amendment to the existing SLUP regarding conservation zoning for proposed conservation zones (PCZs) that were excluded from Nááts'ihch'oh National Park Reserve boundaries that contain critical caribou habitat.*
- *Send letter to generate support for implementing proposed interim measures to restrict mechanized ground access in the Doi T'oh Territorial Park Area.*

Technical Presentation: Sahtú Land Use Plan Amendment Proposal

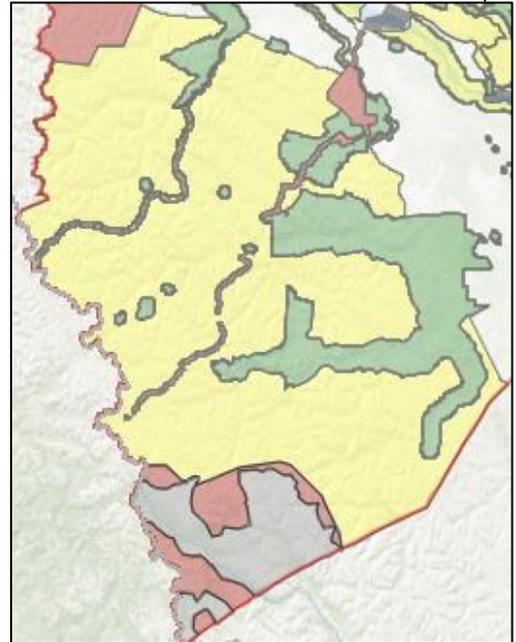
Tee Lim, Project Manager, Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society-NWT

Because the Northern Mountain caribou have a large range, it's important to have a broader discussion about movements and significant areas in the region. It's maybe not just the Redstone herds we're concerned about here, but also the Nahanni herds and the caribou that people encounter and harvest up the Keele River – I know there are concerns people have raised for those caribou too.

CPAWS attended a meeting last July in which there was discussion about what to do with the lands outside of Nááts'jch'oh National Park Reserve. Obviously some of that land is important to caribou – certain places have even been identified as Redstone calving grounds. I know that the Sahtú Land Use Planning Board (SLUPB) very much wants to hear from people in Tufit'a and Norman Wells about what they would like to see in terms of conservation zoning, special management zoning and also potentially general use zoning.

The SLUPB came up with one plan, then the GNWT made a submission on what they thought should be the zoning. When we look at the plan map yellow indicates the Special Management Zone, green is Conservation, gray is the park, and white means General Use. The Proposed Conservation Initiatives are red. Each has a different designation for how that land can be used.

While much of this is still being figured out, it's good to consider the movements of the caribou in the Mackenzie Mountains when we look at the zoning options. The trouble is that we don't have good maps for caribou – we don't have very much information on where the caribou are moving and where the different populations are. While some of this information was documented on maps during the Parks Canada consultations, some people suggested that the caribou maps would be strengthened by more information.



Workshops like this and the products that come out of this meeting can feed into and influence the SLUPB process and help expand on the information that is available for planning.

Science and TK Presentation: Learning about Shúhta Goxepé Populations

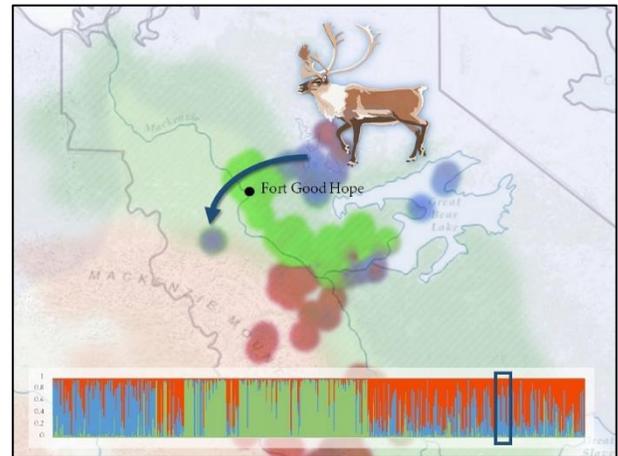
Dr. Jean Polfus (Liber Ero Post-doctoral Fellow) and Frederick Andrew (Special Advisor to SRRB, Shúhtagot'ıne Knowledge Holder)

Part of the work that we've been doing focuses on how Dene language is used to describe the different kinds of caribou. There are many different dialects spoken in the Sahtú. In Tufit'a, there are several dialects spoken by different family groups - K'áálq (Willow Lake), Dəoga (Mackenzie River), Shúhta (Mountain) and Sahtú (Bearlake). People are really close in the Sahtú region, but the accurate pronunciation in the different dialects of all the caribou terminology is really important to the elders.

The really interesting thing about caribou is that we know they travel over large areas and can all mate with each other, but there are different names in Dene language for the different types of caribou that live in different ways. The barren-ground herds migrate large distances – they go way up on the tundra to the coast of the Arctic Ocean where they have their calves in huge groups. In the fall they come down into the boreal forest. They are known as ɤekwé (in Délıne), ɤedə (in Colville Lake and Fort Good Hope), nódıłə or ɤepé (in Shúhta dialect). They overlap with tɔdzı in the winter (the word tɔdzı is used by all the dialects). Tɔdzı are the boreal caribou. They tend to be more solitary; they stay in the forest, don't form large groups to calve, and don't migrate long distances like barren-ground caribou. The caribou in the Mackenzie Mountains are called Shúhta Goxepé in Shúhtagot'ıne dialect. It's not clear exactly where the boundary is between tɔdzı and Shúhta Goxepé.

Through a process of ɤelxé ɤeghálats'eda "learning together" we developed comprehensive and unified representations of caribou in the Sahtú through an interdisciplinary exploration of population genetics, phylogenetics, traditional knowledge, Dene language, and visual approaches. Specifically, we examined the genetic material from caribou poop samples collected by community members. The DNA analysis provided evidence for caribou population differentiation that corresponds to the caribou types recognized by Dene people. For example, we learned that in the early 1930s ɤekwé/ɤedə/nódıłə/ɤepé "barren-ground caribou"

went as far as the Shúhta Goxepé areas. During a focus group meeting in Fort Good Hope, Gabe Kochon described a historic event where a large herd of ɤedə crossed the Dehcho (Mackenzie River) and headed into the foothills of the mountains many years ago. We collected caribou poop samples from the area in the mountains in our 2014 helicopter survey and identified nine individual caribou from the site in subsequent analysis. Genetic analysis of these samples found a high probability of assignment (average 0.73) to the barren-ground caribou cluster (shown as blue in bottom bar and represented as blue on the map). Genetic structure analysis identified three clusters of 1) barren-ground caribou (blue) 2) boreal woodland caribou (green) and 3) mountain caribou (red).



Longer-term Action: Community-Based Planning

Many of the actions itemized in the preceding section may be considered urgent, with the possibility of immediate responses coming from existing land and resource management organizations within the NWT (e.g., the RRCs and/or SRRB). At the same time, we would like to begin to work on a longer-term planning framework for the K'á Tá area. We think collaborating across the NT/YT border, as well as among communities and agencies will give us the most strength and conservation success. We will likely want to set up a Working Group for this longer-term planning.

Community-based conservation or stewardship plans are starting to be recognized and respected by regional and federal governments in places like Australia and the Canadian north, where Délı̨ne and Kugluktuk recently completed their own community-based plans for caribou. While the situation at K'á Tá is a little complicated (spanning multiple communities and two territories) we will be able to learn from these models. We can also look to other planning bodies, such as the Porcupine Caribou Management Board and the Advisory Committee for Cooperation on Wildlife Management. Both of these Boards prepared caribou stewardship plans across multiple land claim areas and communities; they have good community support and did not rely on government to achieve their successes.

During the 2016 meeting there was general consensus that working on a conservation or stewardship plan for Gudzih / Shúhta Goꝑeꝑı̨ in the Mackenzie Mountains would be the best idea for long-term success. This section of the report highlights what a plan could do for us, as well as the main elements that were discussed as important in regards to developing a plan we could feel ownership over. More detailed information will be included in the draft plan, currently under development.



Photo: Deborah Simmons, SRRB

Why make a plan?

A community-driven plan doesn't have to take forever and if it is solidly put together ENR looks at those things carefully and we are pretty happy to see them. – Jan Adamczewski

Do a good job on the management plan. If there's a way to make it meaningful for young generations, please do so. We don't want to go down the road three or four years and have it dismantled and start all over again. That is something I don't look forward to. We need one set of rules we live by and that's meaningful to us. Make sure it's written right so we don't have to take it apart and look at it again down the road. – Joe Bernarde

Perhaps we should work on a [management] plan. Make it meaningful so people can come into the country doing whatever they do, at least there is a process in place. – Leon Andrew

To protect Gudzih / Shúhta Goᓇepé, the landscape, and Shúhta Dene interests at K'á Tǎ, we need to show leadership; writing down a plan will provide some actions that we can all agree to and others can pay attention to and follow.

The RRCs in the Sahtú have powers outlined in the land claim that enable them to influence how things will go for the mountain caribou; one approach is to prepare a plan to put forward to the SRRB for approval (depending on the scope, once approved it would possibly go forward as a recommendation to the Minister). There are many different ways to make a plan; we would need to decide on the scope, whether we pick members to form a working group, and how to proceed and make a plan, among many other things.

The SRRB has supported the Délı̨ę Caribou Conservation Plan because a plan like that can be effective – it presents the situation as a whole, in an organized way that is easily understood by other stakeholders. While concepts such as stewardship and conservation and harvest regulation are not new to Aboriginal people, writing them into a plan can be an instrument for making those things happen more easily today.

There are also other ways that we can work on behalf of Gudzih / Shúhta Goᓇepé, such as proposing various actions and making resolutions. But we can also see that the governance situation is shifting in the NWT and this may create new opportunities for Aboriginal organizations. Importantly, “Alternative Measures” under the new *Wildlife Act* will likely mean that there will be revisions to regulations that recognize and accept other approaches and ways of doing things.¹¹

While we do hope to see our territorial government shift its attention to the serious issues facing us at K'á Tǎ, we think that taking stewardship into our own hands now, before the situation gets worse, is the best course of action.

¹¹ NWT Wildlife Act available on online <https://www.justice.gov.nt.ca/en/files/legislation/wildlife/wildlife.a.pdf> and http://www.enr.gov.nt.ca/sites/enr/files/wildlife_act_plain_language_document_1_february_2015.pdf.

SRRB Presentation: Community Conservation Planning Approach

Deborah Simmons, ʔehdzo Got'ine Gots'é Nákedı (Sahtú Renewable Resources Board)

People started working on community conservation plans in the Sahtú as the concerns about barren-ground caribou were becoming overwhelming and it became clear that the region wanted to take a different approach. There was consensus in the communities that people did not want tags, they didn't want government enforcement to be the main approach, and they didn't want to use that part of the land claim that had a total allowable harvest mechanism in it. Déljñę and Colville Lake have been working to write down their own approach to a caribou stewardship or conservation process.

The idea of creating a community conservation plan came about because of an Australian man named Stuart Cowell who was in Yellowknife training Michael Neyelle and Walter Bayha as "conservation coaches." He started working with an Aboriginal community in northern Australia in 2008 and they developed their own plan for the land and the wildlife. The reason they were doing it is that they had to find a way to talk to the government. They'd always had their own way of doing things, but decided to write it down as a way of explaining to the government how they wanted things to happen, and in order to get the recognition, support, and funding that they needed. The Aborigines wanted to use their own ways of doing things as a basis, so they called it "healthy country planning." They used their own language, concepts, stories, vision, and ways of taking care of the land. It was a very positive experience. So that's what Déljñę tried to adapt to their own culture, language, stories, and vision for barren-ground caribou. Stuart has been helping us along the way with his experience. That's how the Board started supporting community conservation planning.

Much is the same here – people have their ways of conserving the caribou, but need to communicate these to the government and other people who are coming into the area. Shúhta ʔepé and Shúhta Dene language and stories are different, but you can use the same tools to make your own plan. For the barren-ground caribou, it was mostly about the communities taking control of their own harvesting and other conservation methods. When we met in 2014 with Ross River, it sounded like people had a bit of a different issue that they wanted to address with respect to the mountain caribou. The biggest concern was that people from outside were coming into the area, harassing the caribou and damaging the habitat. There were observations by the Ross River Dena that the population in Dechenla / K'á Tə is going down, and something needs to be done.

It's a bit more complicated here because there are three communities involved. There are jurisdictional issues to be addressed and decisions to be made about what is the role of the Ross River Dena in helping the situation. The Ross River people are spending a lot of time in that area, so they are the ones with the most presence and ability to monitor and take some role in dealing with the visitors. In the Sahtú you can decide what kind of enforcement mechanisms you want to have. You have alternative measures under the Wildlife Act, where you can develop and seek approval for and recognition of your own enforcement process. You can make your own documents and your own policies as RRCs. Then that process can be adapted over time to make it work, and there is ENR enforcement as a back-up.

What would a plan look like?

In Australia, one of the things I think was a real key to success, in addition to people just being the owners of their own work, is they had a structure. They had a path that they laid out before them. That kind of path was more likely to work because it would help them to communicate what they wanted to the government and to other people. They owned their work and they used their language, concepts and stories. They used their vision for the future of that land and for that wildlife. They also used their own cultural ways of taking care of the land. So that's what Délı̨nę tried to adapt to Délı̨nę culture, Délı̨nę language, Délı̨nę stories and Délı̨nę vision for barren ground caribou. Shúhta is different and has its own stories, there's Shúhta Dene language. So you can use some of those kinds of tools to make your own plan, but use some of that experience, learn from some of that experience too. – Deborah Simmons

We don't want a government law. We are a community. Someone else comes from outside into our community and tells us we want you to follow these laws. That's not right for us. We've got our own traditional laws way back before the government laws kicked in. Everybody was working good together at that time. – David Etchinelle

If you are going to talk about conservation, you should have Dene law to respect the wildlife; Dene law is not respected. The caribou population can go up and down. I am a Shúhtagot'ı̨nę. I have come to an age where I consider myself an elder too. Some day there will be a lot of people out here – that's what my father told me. How would we handle people? If everything is done by what's written on paper, it's a law that you abide by. – Norman Andrew

It's important that the plan be strongly rooted and supported in our communities, but it's also important that it's collaborative and efficient – we want to involve all the right partners and we want to get it written down quickly. We can learn from examples elsewhere, such as Australia and Délı̨nę, that use the "Conservation Coaches Network" framework and training. We can adapt these models for our plan, to better represent Shúhta Dene culture and values. Some elements that are important in a plan include:

➤ *Using Shúhta Dene values, knowledge, laws and ethics*

A plan based in our traditional values will be able to represent and put forward our shared interests most effectively. We can build on the *Dena Ah Nezen* code to encourage more respectful harvesting behaviours; we may even have a Dena Wildlife Act to follow one day. The plan should be centered around local concerns and the decline in caribou in the K'á Tá Area, regardless of their respective herd.

➤ *Monitoring and enforcement*

Aboriginal people should be more involved in monitoring harvesting and enforcing rules around harvesting; we would like to see a continuous presence like a Dene Land Guardian Program. We have to be prepared to limit own people, and be prepared to implement emergency measures, if needed, while we complete the plan. We will need to decide on enforcement mechanisms – possibly creating new ones under the *Wildlife Act* Alternative Measures, where we can develop and seek approval for and recognition of our own enforcement process. Monitoring costs need to be shared between the Yukon and NWT.

➤ *Protecting the land*

We need to find different ways to protect caribou, like with zoning, hunting areas, etc. Our communities should be directly involved in the negotiation and authorization of industrial projects in the Mackenzie Mountain area. We want to see a conservation plan that speaks to more than just caribou; it needs to protect habitat. This will help protect Shúhta Dene ways and traditional activities also.

➤ *Collaboration and inclusivity*

We will need to discuss how the jurisdictional issue will be addressed and what the RRDC role will be, but we are Dene and we should work together. We want the elders to see the area with their own eyes. Youth also need to be part of conservation efforts. We must have good communication and dialogue with communities about any decisions that we think should be made. We also need to involve all stakeholders, including industry, business (like long-time outfitters), researchers, and government.

➤ *Using the best available information*

Traditional knowledge, local advice, and science should all be used to inform the plan. Relatively little scientific research or monitoring has been done on Gudzih / Shúhta Goṛepé at Ka T'e, but a lot of local and traditional knowledge has been documented and is held in living memory today. It would be helpful to partner with groups like EarthWatch to do research on climate change (e.g., permafrost melt). It is important to assert Dene values in any research that is being done however; we know that caribou are very sensitive and we need to make sure that we treat them respect. A list of research needs identified in the 2014 and 2016 meetings is included in **Appendix C**.

At the time of writing this report, a draft community-based stewardship plan was underway, and further work is expected to take place during the July 2017 Joint Mountain Caribou Meeting at Dechenla Lodge.



Photo: Ross River Land Stewardship Office

Traditional and Local Knowledge Presentation: Caribou in the Macmillan Pass – Caribou Pass Area

Josh Barichello and Norman Sterriah, Ross River Dena Land Stewardship Office

Dechenla Lodge is situated at the Mackenzie Mountain barrens or "Xaichu". This is a very special area for Shúhta Dene, Kaska Dena, and caribou. There is a rich, traditional history for Shúhtagot'jne here, who would harvest geese feathers and caribou at different times of the year. It was also recognized as unique by the United Nations, who identified it as an International Biological Program Site in 1975.

Traditional knowledge work with Ross River and Tulit'a Elders has documented many places here as very important historically. An example is Łubeh / Łupee or Keele Peak – a unique site and traditional settlement for Shúhta Dene. It's the highest peak in the Mackenzie Mountains and there has been talk about making it into a federal or territorial park or a special management area, but it also has a high mineral potential. There are numerous other important places that contain special habitats and cultural sites that were documented in the Ross River Dena Land Use Plan and a TK study in the MacTung area.

This area is special for caribou from a lot of different places. In early June it is a post-calving gathering place and there used to be lots of caribou gathering there before the rut in August-September. The caribou that come here go to a lot of different places in the winter. Caribou are critical to the health of the land and to our Dene culture. They are our food and our tools. Our music and our games come from caribou. Our people have harvested in this area forever and continue to depend on these caribou.

We are here because we are seeing a dramatic decline in caribou numbers over the last 10-20 years. We don't know exactly what the cause is, maybe they are moving and it is natural, but we blame over-hunting. Some other factors may be from climate change – like melting snowpacks, increased forest fires, and loss of habitat from the shrub line moving up. There is also more industrial disturbance. But the elders see the decline in caribou happening at the same time as this massive increase in resident hunters from the NWT. The caribou are staying away from the CANOL Road corridor, and we are seeing fewer big bulls. Hunters come in groups of four or five and they want two or three caribou each. It's having a devastating effect on the game, there are too many ATV trails in the alpine, and it is displacing local hunters from their traditional camps. We see meat wastage, disrespectful hunting practices, and bears learning to come to kill sites to take what's left behind when they hear shots.

We need to put some measures in place to try to protect not only the caribou, but also our lifestyle. At the moment they monitor at the ferry crossing, writing down license plates and there is a large number of vehicles coming from the NWT and BC. We have to do something. We need to collaborate on having more Dene people monitoring and guarding the land from both sides and put more formal monitoring in place. We are pushing for all hunters to follow the traditional Dena Ah Nezen code, but we also want to put a Dena Wildlife Act together, go beyond monitoring and make our own regulations, the Dena way. We would like to see the recommendations from 2014 move forward. We have ideas for what a plan should contain, and about land guardian programs. We feel that we need to act now so that our future generations can continue to live from the caribou as our elders have done.

‘The laws of the Dene, the culture of the Dene, it will always be here. The laws of the white people will always be there too. I want our young people to understand both sides.’

– Chief Frank Andrew

Conclusions

The first Joint Mountain Caribou Meeting, held in Ross River in 2014, was an important first step towards collaborative, cross-regional, community-led stewardship of the K’á Tǎ area. At that meeting, Ross River Dena (YT) and Shúhtagot’jñę (NT) confirmed that they not only had a shared history and culture, but shared concerns and interest for the land and the caribou in the Mackenzie Mountains.

Based on the foundation established in 2014, participants came to the 2016 meeting ready to talk about actions. It quickly became clear that some of the problems at K’á Tǎ require urgent action; these include harvest monitoring, restricting access, finding support for management actions, and protecting habitat. Numerous tools were identified that could be used immediately by existing Sahtú organizations to start to address these challenges.

There was also consensus that a good long-term strategy would be to develop a community-based conservation or stewardship plan. Recent successes and legislative developments in the Canadian north indicate that this approach is likely to be received well by territorial governments and communities alike. There are several models that we will be able to learn from.

It is likely that a Working Group will soon be established to work out further details of what a stewardship plan for Gudził / Shúhta Goǎepę may look like, but work has already begun and we have agreed on several important characteristics of a plan:

- We will use Shúhta Dene values, knowledge and laws
- Communities and First Nation organizations will be more involved in monitoring and enforcement
- Stewardship will include not just caribou, but land and Dene cultural sites and activities
- Our planning process will be collaborative and include all interested parties and stakeholders
- We will use the best available information, including traditional, local and scientific knowledge.

While we recognize that there are still many information gaps about these caribou, we have already seen enough change in the landscape that this planning work will begin immediately; we do not want to wait until it has become a crisis situation at K’á Tǎ.

Appendix A: List of Participants

2016

Jan Adamczewski, Wildlife Biologist, Environment and Natural Resources, GNWT, Yellowknife, NT
 Frederick Andrew, SRRB Special Advisor, Tulít'a, NT
 Chief Frank Andrew, Tulít'a Band Council, Tulít'a, NT
 Leon Andrew, SRRB Special Advisor, Norman Wells, NT
 Angela Bernarde, SRRB intern, Tulít'a, NT
 Joe Bernarde, elder, Tulít'a, NT
 Kris Brekke, Executive Director, Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society-NWT, Yellowknife, NT
 Faye d'Eon-Eggertson, Resource Management Officer, Parks Canada Agency, Tulít'a, NT
 David Etchinelle, elder, Tulít'a, NT
 Joe Hanlon, Program Coordinator, SRRB, Tulít'a, NT
 Gabe Horassi, elder, Tulít'a, NT
 Tee Lim, Project Manager, Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society-NWT, Yellowknife, NT
 Royden MacCauley, youth, Tulít'a, NT
 Jaryd McDonald, youth, Tulít'a, NT
 Rhea McDonald, President, Norman Wells RRC
 Ruby McDonald, Norman Wells RRC
 Rocky Norwegian, President, Tulít'a RRC
 Rocky Norwegian Jr., youth, Tulít'a, NT
 Jean Polfus, Doctoral Candidate and Research Associate, SRRB, Tulít'a, NT
 Heather Sayine-Crawford, Wildlife Biologist, NWT ENR, Sahtú Region, Norman Wells, NT
 Deborah Simmons, Executive Director, SRRB, Tulít'a, NT
 Laani Uunila, Park/Site Manager, Parks Canada Agency, Tulít'a, NT
 Janet Winbourne, Technical Writer and Research Associate, SRRB, Victoria, BC

Day 3 only (by Skype):

Josh Barichello, Dechenla Lodge, Ross River Dena Council Traditional Knowledge Program, Ross River, YT
 Norman Sterriah, Ross River Dena Council Traditional Knowledge Coordinator, Ross River, YT

Appendix B: Resolutions from 2014 Meeting

The first Joint Caribou Meeting between the Ross River Dena Council and Sahtú representatives was held in Ross River, Yukon in July 2014. The primary goal was to encourage dialogue on the situation surrounding mountain caribou in the Dechenla/K'á Tə (Macmillan Pass/CANOL) area, and to identify solutions to address the problems of overharvesting, industrial activities, and environmental change. Participants achieved consensus with respect to five recommendations for immediate action to be considered by the Tulít'a and Norman Wells ʔehdzo Got'įneᑦ (Renewable Resources Councils) and Sahtú Secretariat Incorporated. These resolutions represent the consensus of the Sahtú beneficiaries and Ross River Dena present at the meeting:

1. Permission to hunt

That the Tulít'a Renewable Resources Council put in place a requirement for all non-Sahtú beneficiaries and non-Ross River Dena land users to obtain permission to harvest in the Dechenla/K'á Tə shared traditional territory.

2. Resident and non-resident hunting

That the Government of the Northwest Territories put in place an immediate closure on the resident caribou harvest in the Dechenla/K'á Tə area for at least two years.

3. Caribou stewardship planning

That a two year joint caribou stewardship planning process be undertaken including delegates of the Sahtú Renewable Resources Board, Tulít'a Renewable Resources Council, and Ross River Dena Council.

4. Ross River check station

That check stations operated by Ross River Dena and Sahtú Dene (or Government of the NWT enforcement officers) be established in Ross River and at Mile 222 respectively for at least two years to monitor permitting and big game harvest for the area encompassing Ross River and Dechenla/K'á Tə shared traditional territory.

5. Friendship treaty

That Ross River Dena and Tulít'a Dene leaders take the necessary steps to establish a Friendship Treaty.

Appendix C: Research needs identified in the 2014 and 2016 Joint Mountain Caribou Meetings

In 2014 the most pressing information need identified was to determine the causes of the caribou declines. In 2016, it was noted that before any further harvest restrictions can be enacted by government, it would be necessary to provide evidence of the decline. As a result, determining population trends may be the most pressing current research need.

The following information needs or research ideas were identified in 2014:

- Baseline studies on caribou health
- Define/determine herds, movements and numbers
- Identify calving grounds
- Survey what is happening along whole migration route
- Identify forest fire plans, places that need to be protected, migration corridors
- Determine calf:cow ratios
- Study predators and their impacts
- Determine where people are hunting and how many caribou are being harvested

Additional topics raised in 2016 include:

- Need to get a good estimate on total harvest
- Research/document traditional conservation laws and practices
- Identify several dedicated quad trails and restrict use in other areas
- Include research ideas as part of a conservation plan
- Identify important habitat for caribou (e.g., migration routes, calving grounds, mineral licks, winter range, etc.). Determine how many of these sites are protected.
- Identify important sites for Dene (traditional trails and camping areas, burial sites, etc.). Determine how many of these sites are protected.
- Compile existing information – what do we already have and know?
- Promote use of TK/LK/CK and SK in all research.

Appendix D: SLUPB Special Management Zone 38

38. Mackenzie Mountains		
Designation	Special Management Zone	
CRs & Prohibitions	CRs# 1-14 Prohibition: Bulk Water Removal	
Map #	10	
Area	40,029 km ²	
Land Ownership	Sahtú Subsurface Ownership	Sahtú Surface Ownership
	-	1.8%
Location & Boundaries	Located in the south-west of the SSA predominantly in the Tulít'a District and a small portion in the K'asho Got'ine District	

Reason for Establishment

The people of the Sahtú have been using the Mackenzie Mountains for centuries. Stories, traditional trails, cultural/heritage sites and subsistence use areas are located throughout as the Mountain Dene travelled between the valley and the mountains.

The mountains offer unique habitat that includes calving/lambing, overwintering and general range for a number of wildlife species that inhabit the area such as Dall's sheep, mountain goat and mountain woodland caribou.

A number of mineral deposits have been identified in the Mackenzie Mountains. The SMZ will allow for the exploration and development of these and other mineral deposits.

Values to be Protected: Archaeological, burial, cultural and heritage sites.

Values to be Respected: Mountain goats are the predominant wildlife found in the mountainous areas.²²⁴ Dall's sheep habitat includes lambing sites and sheep winter habitat including an Important Wildlife Area. Important Wildlife Areas²²⁵ for mountain woodland caribou, Bonnet Plume herd migration route, calving grounds and range, Redstone herd migration route, calving grounds, rutting/wintering area are all found in the zone and South Nahanni herd calving grounds.

The valleys provide winter habitat for moose and mountain woodland caribou. Moose surveys in the Sahtú have found that riparian areas along the Mackenzie River and its tributaries have high densities in the winter. Many of the tributaries run down from the mountains and are associated with moose habitat. *Alces alces gigas*, the Alaska-Yukon subspecies of moose living in the Mackenzie Mountains are the largest moose subspecies. Wolves may also be found.²²⁶

Important Wildlife Areas for moose and bears occur. There is furbearer habitat along the forested river valleys, grizzly bear habitat, fish habitat, waterfowl and migratory bird habitat, important breeding duck habitat and wetlands. Ecologically significant features include karst formations, concentrations of mineral licks, hot/warm springs, glacial refugia, eskers and may-be-at-risk plants: *Minuartia macrocarpa*, *Papaver mcconnellii*, *Draba ogilviensis*, *Claytonia megarhiza*, and *Cyprogramma stelleri*.

²²⁴ Larter, C. Nicholas, Mountain Goat Survey, Flat River Area, Western Mackenzie Mountains, September 2004, Manuscript Report No. 157, GNWT, Department of Resources, Wildlife, and Economic Development

²²⁵ Haas, C.A., & Wilson, J.M., Important Wildlife Areas in the Western Northwest Territories, 2012, Manuscript Report No. 221, Environment and Natural Resources, Government of the Northwest Territories, Yellowknife, NT

²²⁶ Larter, C. Nicholas, Mountain Goat Survey, Flat River Area, Western Mackenzie Mountains, September 2004, Manuscript Report No. 157, GNWT, Department of Resources, Wildlife, and Economic Development

International Biological Programme²²⁷ sites include: Coral Peaks - Site 59, Florence Lake Study Area - Site 31, Carcajou Lake Study Area - Site 72, Plains of Abraham - Site 26, Lymnaea Springs Study Site - Site 60 and Sculpin Springs - Site 70.

The Mackenzie River and its tributaries are important moose hunting areas²²⁸. The Mountain People would travel into the mountains in the fall to hunt moose, caribou and sheep and travel back into the valley in moose skin boats in the spring. Moose harvest in the mountains was important for survival.

Values to Take into account: Camps, cabins, tent sites, traditional trails especially up the Keele River and some leading into the Yukon Territory. Two trails are of special significance, Trail to the Mountains and the Mountain Dene Trail to the Mountains. See Additional Information. Within the Fort Good Hope/Colville Lake Group Trapping Area.

Economic Importance: Oil and gas potential: 16% low-moderate; 83% low. Oil and gas rights: exploration licence. Known mineralization: Carbonate hosted Zn Pb, coal, red bed slash kupferschiefer type Cu. Mineral rights: leases. In an outfitting region with companies in operation. Existing infrastructure includes: an airstrip, CANOL Road extending 14 Km from the Yukon boarder, and mining access road.

Additional Information: The Mackenzie Mountains are irregular and primarily made up of limestone, dolomite and shale.²²⁹ Erosion has resulted in unstable rubble slopes, cliffs and steep canyons. The mountain tops average an elevation of 2100 m and subalpine areas are usually found below 1800 m.²³⁰

Trail to the Mountains, Shit'a Got'ine Eht'ene, is a "traditional trail that leads from Fort Good Hope to the headwaters of the Arctic Red River in the Mackenzie Mountains. It was used for centuries and was travelled on foot and by dog team. The Mountain River was used as the return route using moose skin boats in the spring. The trail was used to access winter hunting grounds for the Shit'a Got'ine (Mountain People) where they would spend the winter taking moose, caribou and sheep. The trail was last walked in the 1950s."²³¹

The Mountain Dene Trail to the Mountains, Shuht'a Got'ine Eht'ene, starts on the Mackenzie River at Tulita, crosses the Mackenzie Lowlands to Stewart and Tate Lakes, crossing the Keele drainage and on to Drum Lake in the Mackenzie Mountains. From there it joins a network of trails reaching throughout the mountains and into the Yukon. It was used extensively as a walking trail in the fall and by dog team in the winter. In the fall families would move from the valley into the mountains where they would hunt moose, caribou and sheep, to return to the valleys in the springtime by moose skin boats. Many sites along the trail are important in Mountain Dene culture and history. Archaeological research shows that the trail area has been used for centuries.

The ***Rakekée Gok'é Godi: Places We Take Care Of***²³² report suggested:

- Territorial Historic Park;
- Undertake oral history and archaeological research to document and protect heritage resources;
- Surface of documented sites be protected with commemoration of specific areas;

²²⁷International Biological Program (IBP) Ecological Sites in Subarctic Canada, Areas recommended as Ecological Sites In Region 10, Yukon and Northwest Territories Boreal Forest to the Treeline, 1975, Edited by Dorothy K.B. Beckel, Coordinator Region 10 (Subarctic) Panel, Lethbridge, Alberta, The University of Lethbridge Production Services, CCIBP/CT

²²⁸ ibid

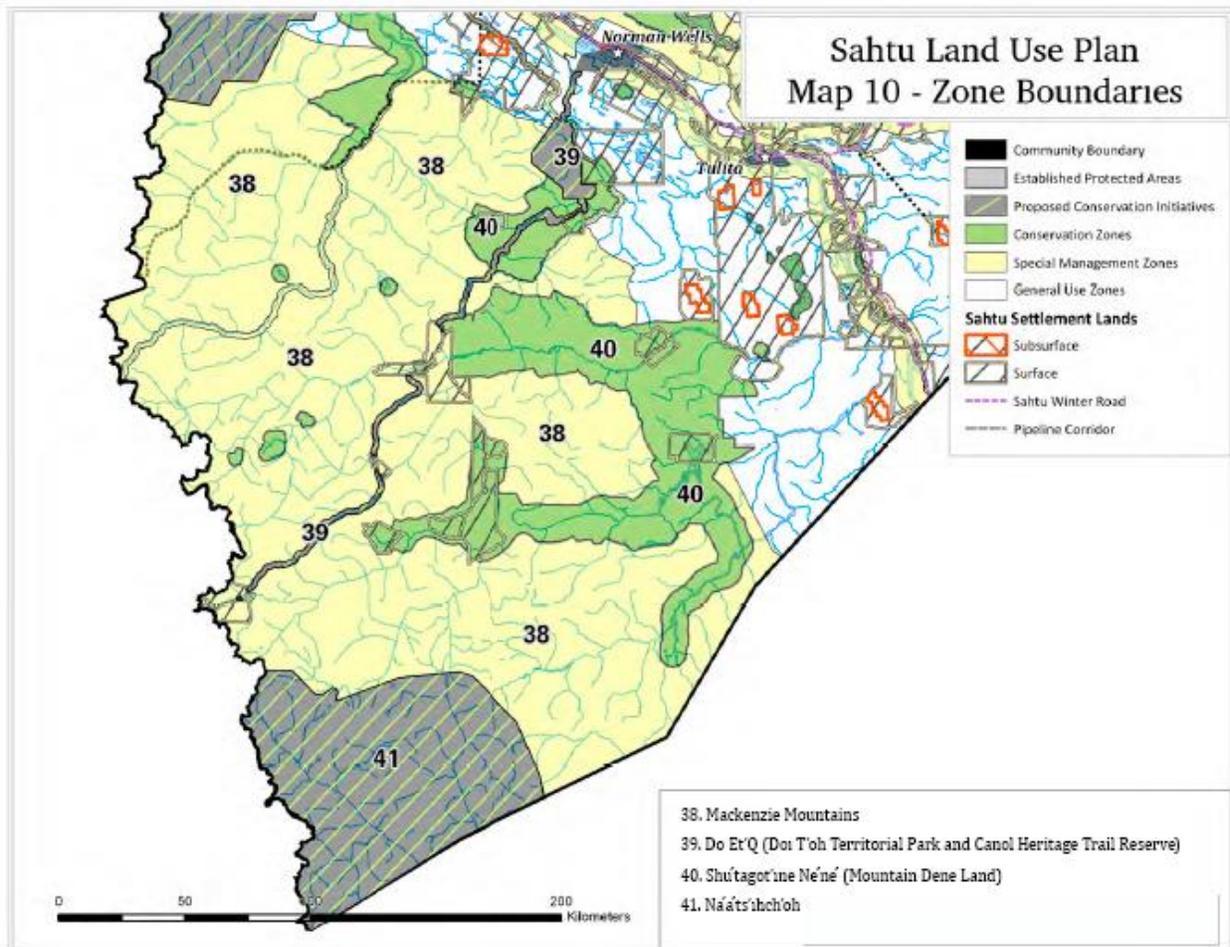
²²⁹ Larter, C. Nicholas, Mountain Goat Survey, Flat River Area, Western Mackenzie Mountains, September 2004, Manuscript Report No. 157, GNWT, Department of Resources, Wildlife, and Economic Development

²³⁰ ibid

²³¹ Prepared by The Sahtú Heritage Places and Sites Joint Working Group. January 2000 (2nd Edition). "Rakekée Gok'é Godi: Places We Take Care Of. Written by Tom Andrews.P. 62

²³² Prepared by The Sahtú Heritage Places and Sites Joint Working Group. January 2000 (2nd Edition). ***Rakekée Gok'é Godi: Places We Take Care Of***. Written by Tom Andrews.

- Trail experience be recreated through cultural revival projects (eg. walking the trail with youth and elders).
- National Historic Site with surface protection;
- Revive the old National Historic Site proposal;
- Undertake oral history and archaeological research to document and protect heritage resources and burials;
- Surface of documented sites be protected;
- Identify trail for special consideration in the land use planning process.



Appendix E: Proposed K'á Tá, Doi T'oh Territorial Park and CANOL Heritage Trail Interim Measures Resolution

Proposed Interim Measure to Restrict Mechanized ground access in the Doi T'oh Territorial Park Area

Interim Measures Resolution

The following resolution was developed at the August 31-September 2, 2016 workshop in Tulít'a:

Whereas it has been over twenty years since all governments, including ours, decided to include the Doi T'oh Territorial Park and CANOL Heritage Trail in the Sahtú Dene and Métis Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement, and we still have no protection for the wildlife or the land which we wish to preserve.

Whereas the parties are greatly concerned about impacts on the land and wildlife in the larger K'á Tá area that includes private Sahtú lands.

1. Be it resolved that we the following undersigned, do agree to having the GNWT and ENR implement interim measures with special attention to the K'á Tá/Mile 222 area.
2. Be it resolved that the Doi T'oh Territorial Park and CANOL Heritage Trail Management Plan be used as a basis for implementing interim measures.

Proposed Interim Measure on Mechanized Ground Access

The following text pursuant to the above Tulít'a resolution is from Article 6.2.2 of the Doi T'oh Territorial Park and CANOL Heritage Trail Management Plan. Note that the implementing and enforcement parties would need to be identified for the interim measure through the conservation planning process, since the park has not yet been established.

- establish and enforce a prohibition on summer season public use of park areas by any form of motorized ground transportation such as trucks, motorcycles or all terrain vehicles
- regulate the limited use of motorized ground transportation by commercial operations providing recreational facilities and services within the park area under special permit.

On Motorized Vehicles in the Park, Section 13 of the Territorial Parks Act says:

(1) No person shall, in a Territorial Park,

(e) operate a motor vehicle, except in an area designated for that purpose.

(2) In paragraph (1)(e), "motor vehicle" means a vehicle propelled or driven by power other than muscular power. S.N.W.T. 2003, c.8,s.6.

Park access for four wheelers and Argos should be restricted. Summer season motorized access along the park corridor is only feasible for a short distance from the southern terminus of the corridor. This practice is seen as inconsistent with the visitor experience and will be prohibited. Both information signs at the single access point (Mile 222) and extensive information in conjunction with all available material on the park and the area will be used to communicate this limitation on visitor activity. Within that overriding position some limited exceptions will be made for specific activities. Commercial operations could be permitted limited use of motorized access to certain segments of the park to facilitate the movement of visitors to important activity areas. This would expand the areas of potential use and the range of visitors that could be served by these operations. Strict controls would be required to avoid conflict with other trail users. Guide outfitters would also retain special vehicle access permits consistent with their current use of the park corridor. In addition, snowmobile access, for instance, should be encouraged to provide added opportunity for experiencing the park beyond the summer season. While specific areas may be identified as restricted for wildlife reasons, the entire corridor should be available for winter use but this a matter that should be left to the park authority.

Delivered via email April 27, 2017

Distribution List

Fort Norman Métis Land Corporation
 Norman Wells Land Corporation
 Norman Wells Renewable Resources Council
 Ross River Dena Council
 Tulít'a Dene Band
 Tulít'a District Land Corporation
 Tulít'a Land Corporation
 Tulít'a Renewable Resources Council

Copy

Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (Yellowknife)
 Danny McNeely, Member of Legislative Assembly
 Nááts'įch'oh National Park Reserve
 Nę K'ə Dene Ts'įlį Forum (formerly Sahtú Environmental Research and Monitoring Forum)
 NWT Environment and Natural Resources
 Sahtú Dene Council
 Sahtú Secretariat, Inc.
 TNC Canada (Yellowknife)
 Yukon Government Department of Environment.