

**REPORT TO NWT CUMULATIVE IMPACT MONITORING PROGRAM:
2004-2005**
***COMMUNITY-BASED MONITORING OF WILDLIFE POPULATIONS AND
HARVESTING ON HUNTING CORRIDORS IN THE SAHTU, 2005/2006***

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Summary

In July 2005, biologists with the Governments of the Northwest Territories and Nunavut conducted aerial photo-census surveys on the post-calving ranges of the Cape Bathurst, Bluenose-East, and Bluenose-West herds of barren-ground caribou. Results from those surveys showed dramatic declines in all three herds over the previous five years – for the two herds harvested by residents of the Sahtu, there was a 36% decline in Bluenose-East and 72% in Bluenose-West.

Reasons for these declines include a number of human-related and natural factors; however, access to the herds along winter roads was identified by biologists, Renewable Resource Councils (RRCs), and co-management board members as having a major impact. Of particular concern was the unregulated and unquantified harvest of caribou, particularly from the Bluenose-East herd, by subsistence harvesters from outside the Sahtu Settlement Area. This harvest was not included in the Sahtu Settlement Harvest Study conducted by the Sahtu Renewable Resources Board (SRRB) from 1998 to 2005. It is of significant importance to RRCs, the SRRB, and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (ENR) to know what species are being harvested, how many (including sex ratio), by whom, and where they are from.

At their bi-annual meeting (Fort Good Hope, 13-15 September 2005) the SRRB and representatives from the five community RRC's recommended that a harvest monitoring check station be established during the 2005/06 winter road season in the Sahtu, which is typically January to April. The monitoring station would be run concurrent with further scientific studies on the caribou herds and while wildlife co-managers decide how best to reverse the caribou population declines. The project will also provide additional data for an ongoing collaborative and multi-faceted effort for community-based monitoring of the health and condition of barren-ground caribou (see Veitch et al. NWT CIMP 2005/06) and adds to data collected during the Sahtu Harvest Study.

Collaborators on the project are the SRRB, the Department of ENR, RRC's, and harvesters/monitors chosen by RRC's from Colville Lake, Fort Good Hope, Norman Wells, Tulita, and Deline.

Unfortunately for this year the caribou were not cooperating in that they were not any where near the road systems that we were preparing to monitor, and as would be expected much of the project remains unfinished. It was also too late for the department to go through its process for acquiring a mobile road unit and the time frame for other partners made this acquisition outcome negative.

What we did accomplish:

We were able to visit our existing cabins and inspect for deficiencies and damage. We managed to purchase all the supplies and lumber needed to fix both cabins, contracting services from RRC's has been planned but not executed to date.

Justification

The work outlined in the proposal has been requested by the SRRB and all five RRC's and recommended to the Minister of ENR. We are hopeful that we can continue this fall and winter if all parties again cooperate.

Community Involvement/Partnerships

This project is a partnership among the SRRB, ENR, RRCs, and funding organizations such as NWT CIMP. It is the intention of SRRB and ENR to see the co-management process implemented under Section 13 of the Sahtu Dene and Metis Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement (1993) function as it was intended.

1) Expenses

| Main Item | Anticipated Costs (\$) | CIMP Expense |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------|
| Contracts | 72,000 | 0 |
| Travel (around Sahtu) | 43,600 | 1800 |
| Fuel | 2,500 | 250 |
| Accommodation/food | 43,200 | 1200 |

Wildlife Access Corridor Harvest Monitoring in the Sahtu – Report to CIMP 2005/06

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|--|----------------|-------------|
| Mobile equipment Materials and supplies | 22,000 | 4420 |
| Communications | | 0 |
| ENR Salaries | 45,000 | 0 |
| Wildlife Monitor Program | | 0 |
| Total Expenses | 206,300 | 7670 |

Above we have a picture of the winter road and a second of one of our roadside monitoring cabins for use during winter road operations. Renewable Resource Officer Ron Doctor inspects the cabin near Tulita.

The above chart represent s the expenditures made to date on this project.

The department and the partners hope to proceed with this worthwhile project over the hunting season and throughout the winter road season. We will continue to look for a mobile unit and hope that we can get it funded through this program