

**Wolf Conservation and Management Plan Review  
Community Meeting Pelly Crossing**

April 12, 2011

**Community:** Peter Johnny, Betty Joe, Danny Joe, Brenda Bosely, Freddie Harper, Rachel Tom Tom, Thomas Charlie, Carl (Unknown), Eugene Alfred, Alex Joe, Johnson Edwards, Jerry Kruse, Roger Alfred, David Connolly, Brian Isaac, Peter Isaac, David Johnny, Marguerite Rose, (Unknown) Johnson, Gabriel Ellis, Ryan Silverfox, Darlene McGinty, Jason Harper, Steven Silverfox, Robert Van Bibber

**Review Committee:** Wayne Jim, Karen Clyde, Frank Thomas, Doug Larsen, Harvey Jessup, Mark O'Donoghue

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The following summary sets out key points discussed at a four hour meeting of the Yukon Wolf Conservation and Management Plan Review Committee and community members in Pelly Crossing. Major points or themes were also reviewed by the facilitator in an oral summary at the conclusion of the meeting.

The discussion focused on proposed changes to the 1992 Yukon Wolf Conservation and Management Plan and current issues associated with Yukon wolf conservation and management.

**1992 Yukon Wolf Conservation and Management Plan**

- People were divided in 1992 during the wolf control programs.
- The 1992 plan did not consider traditional knowledge.
- The 1992 plan took away many management options and left only extreme measures.
- New plan needs to include details on implementation.

**Management context – roles and responsibilities and current conditions**

- We need to work together and learn from each other. Everyone needs to collaborate.
- We need to manage wolves together.
- The RRCs will have the authority to pass bylaws to manage furbearers. The RRC is seeking clarification on how far their authority would reach for passing bylaws and manage animals like wolves.

**Wolf conservation and management – general approach**

- We need to walk very gently around this issue.
- People who protest against wolf control do not live on the land and have no idea how to live with wolves.

- We take care of the land and we need to be respectful.
- This work is about wolf management not ungulate enhancement.
- There should be more room for local management.
- Support and focus on land based monitoring, including wolves.
- Wolf populations grow too fast.
- Going to extremes with wolf management is what causes controversy. Need to take small measured approach.
- Don't clear all the wolves out as they know how to manage themselves.
- Local responses are important.
- There are expectations and hopes that young people are going to step up as part of these management approaches.
- "Managing Wolves Together" was suggested as a new title for the plan.
- The new plan needs to demonstrate a collaboration between traditional, local and scientific knowledge.
- The foundation of the new plan will be very different than the 1992 plan. Recommend starting a new plan and not working to revise the old document. There is a whole new legal basis and self government basis that needs to be considered.
- The plan should include details about how it should be implemented and the role of each of the parties.
- There is a different type of wolf further north – smaller, larger packs, they kill more moose.

### **Management of hunting and trapping of wolves**

- Reduce wolves by trapping and teaching young people to trap and harvest wolves in respectful way.
- There are very few people trapping wolves in this area.
- Reduce wolf numbers to half.
- The good trappers are in Alaska – bring them over to teach people how to trap wolves.
- Trappers don't target wolves. They are a lot of effort and the worst animals to skin.
- The tool for wolf management is the trapper. If it is not viable for the trapper to get out on the land we won't have wolf management.
- Not sure how to manage wolves in summer because the fur can not be sold at that time.
- Fur can be sold in the winter.
- When wolves are targeted on traplines there are not a lot of wolf signs.
- Other furbearers are sometimes lost to wolves on the trapline.
- In Alaska wolf hunts in spring are very popular. This may be something clubs in the Yukon could organize.
- There are no traplines in Alaska so people can trap where they want.

- Rules and regulations around hunting and trapping wolves need to be made more clear.
- There is a great importance to teach young people to live off the land.
- Selkirk First nation trapping program of getting young trappers out trapping was a big success.
- Look at “calling” wolves as a unique sport. Predator calls could be used after the trapper has left the trapline.

### *Incentive*

- Trappers need incentives to trap wolves.
- Do not believe bounties have worked in the past. At one time there was a \$25 dollar bounty for every wolf harvested.
- There is no money in trapping wolves now.
- Incentives make trapping wolves worth it.
- Put a cap on the number of wolf incentives.
- An incentive of \$500 or more was suggested to control numbers of wolves
- You need to know what’s happening (with wolves) in certain areas. Incentives should be based on the number of animals that need to be thinned out in certain areas.
- Giving money to trappers instead of hunting with helicopters will cost much less.
- A \$200 incentive is not enough.
- The last trapping program was focused on older trappers working with younger trappers. It was highly subsidized and supported. Hopefully the program will be run again.
- Ongoing support of trappers on the land will be the most effective way to manage wolves in the long term.
- There is a mine which draws community members away to work. To get young people out trapping there is a need to make the work financially feasible.

### **Management of ungulates**

- Unless you keep the wolf numbers down there are not going to be any moose or caribou. Losing their traditional foods.
- People don’t see moose along the highway as much anymore.
- Lots of Whitehorse hunters killing moose near Pelly.
- High numbers of moose and wolves along the Macmillan River. Wolves manage themselves.
- More moose the further away you go from the community.
- Selkirk First Nation has been in partnership with YG to split the costs of moose surveys.
- Wolves and coyotes have moved in near the community and there are less deer.
- There are concerns about declines in traditional food around the community. This has impacts on the traditional and cultural lifestyle for First Nations.

### **Wolf Human Conflict**

- There are reports of wolves around town taking dogs.
- People have been snaring around the community because wolves are coming into town.
- Animals are being fed in town. It was emphasized that people should not be feeding wild animals. This is not the traditional way. More bears in town as a result.
- Never saw so many animals coming into town in the past.
- This last winter there were quite a few wolves in town – eight or nine different wolves, and five in a pack work down the farm road.
- There is an increase in the wolf population surrounding the community and concerns about community safety.
- What we are experiencing is wolves getting kicked out of packs and coming into town and eating dogs. Need to contact and work with concession holders that surround the community.
- Not many rabbits to support old wolves so they're coming into town to eat dogs.
- Wolves are attacking horses.
- CO's don't respond to wolves killing dogs
- There was a historical account about a man and his son attacked by a pack of wolves.
- Community safety is a high priority related to this issue.
- Wolves' feeding on dog food during the Yukon Quest was given as an example. This is high protein food that attracts wolves. People are part of the problem and should not be feeding wildlife.

### **Conditions for wolf population reduction**

- Elders in Haines Junction say the wolf control at Aishihik helped at the time and they noticed great benefits with caribou and moose over the time the program was run.
- Interested in learning more details about the money spent at Aishihik in 1992.
- The people who live on the land are for wolf control to a point. The people who live on the land are for wolf control to a point. Not in favor of massive control programs.

### **Other methods**

- Pup cull in the spring should be considered.
- It would be difficult (ethically) for people to go and kill pups.
- Know where all the wolf dens are and go in the spring and eliminate all but two pups.
- Long ago wolves were managed when people went out beaver hunting. The person has to crawl into the den and find out how many wolves there are. When the feeding is good during winter months (for the wolves) there are six to eight pups. When there is less snow there are usually lots of pups. Cull the pups and leave just two. When there are more than two pups in the den is when you cull.

- Not sure what was done with pups during wolf cull.
- If there was a pup cull today would there be a bounty?
- Traditionally, wolves were managed. All the wolves were not harvested, though. Some were left out in the bush. If you take all the wolves out it will be a while before the wolf comes back.

### **Research**

- Wolves should be studied in every community.

### **Other Issues**

- Question about if wolves get sick from diseases. Diseases in wolves are pretty rare.
- Coyotes and bears are important predators in this area too.
- Need to look at the relationship between coyotes, bears and wolves.
- Concern expressed that the government gets the hide when a bear is killed for defense of life and property.
- The climate has changed. Lack of rabbits. Part of the problem.