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# HUNTING PRACTICES

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By far the majority of hunting activity in VGFN is by VGFN beneficiaries. Whereas elsewhere in the Yukon many issues under this heading refer to Yukon residents and outfitters, the concerns identified by this community all relate to its own practices.

## Concern

### Spring waterfowl hunting.

In 1916, a joint agreement with the United States (Migratory Birds Convention) resulted in the Canadian government prohibiting spring hunting of waterfowl (*Migratory Birds Convention Act*) and this applied to everybody, including VGFN beneficiaries. In 1994, the act was revised to permit spring hunting of waterfowl by First Nations and Inuvialuit. This fact is not fully understood in the community and some people still think it is illegal to hunt ducks, geese, swans and cranes in the spring.

**Solution** Rely on increased community understanding about waterfowl hunting.

It was agreed that although there is still confusion among some hunters about the legality of hunting waterfowl in the spring, this will resolve itself by community members informing and educating each other. Thus, no specific action items were required.

## Concern

### Moose hunting near town.

The principle of having a no-hunting zone around town for the benefit of elders has a long history in the community but has yet to be successfully implemented. This desire was identified in the community questionnaire that formed part of the public consultation in preparation for the plan.

**Solution** Figure out if moose restrictions are necessary.

The principle of providing better access to moose for elders and for special ceremonies is related to the general status of the moose population near Old Crow. Thus, if the population is relatively high, the restriction of a 12-mile no-hunting zone may not be required. If moose are not relatively abundant, then this restriction may be viewed as more important to implement.

## Actions

Responsible parties, Time line

VGFN  
2002/03

Following moose survey, restrict hunting around town if necessary.

If the population is relatively high, the restriction of a 12-mile no-hunting zone except for elders and ceremonies may not be required. If moose are not relatively abundant then this restriction may be viewed as more important to implement. [2001-NY-AI-32]

VGFN  
2001/02

Complete VGFN *Wildlife Act* and regulations.

In order to implement any hunting restrictions on VGFN beneficiaries, VGFN must complete its own legislation. [2001-NY-AI-33]

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**Concern**

**Muskoxen hunting.**

The status of muskoxen in the Yukon is quite complicated. Although it is a Specially Protected Species under the *Wildlife Act*, which prohibits hunting by Yukon residents, this does not apply to VGFN hunters following signing of the VGFN Final Agreement and repeal of Section 19(3) of the *Yukon Act*. Nonetheless, given that only 150 muskoxen inhabit the Yukon and there is no management plan in place for them, the understanding is that muskoxen should not be hunted until the plan (and a quota) is in place.

**Solution** Comply with the muskoxen management plan.

VGFN will take steps to participate in the muskoxen management plan initiated by the WMAC (NS). This plan must be expanded to accommodate the rights and interests of all governments and their citizens on the population's range in Canada and Alaska. VGFN should become a signatory to this plan and comply with its recommendations.

**Actions**

Responsible parties, Time line

**VGFN**  
2001/02

Request voluntary no-hunting of muskoxen by Gwitchin until plan completed. In general VGFN people do not hunt muskoxen and the government will formally request that this ban be observed until hunting is addressed through the muskoxen management plan. [2001-NY-AI-34]

**Concern**

**Poor practices.**

A number of comments came from the community about poor hunting practices by its members. Wounding losses on the Dempster Highway are a concern for everybody. Hunting skills vary greatly among community members depending on how much time they have spent on the land. There is a particular need for hunting education for youth.

**Solution** Improve hunting practices.

This matter requires particular attention and should be the focus for specific programs dedicated to improving marksmanship and traditional hunting ethics. This is viewed as especially important for VGFN youth.

**Actions**

Responsible parties, Time line

**VGFN/YG**  
2001/02  
2004/05

Arrange for hunter education for VGFN. A variety of programs can be employed by VGFN for this purpose. They include:

1. Big Caribou Day.
2. Marksmanship competitions sponsored by the Canadian Rangers.
3. The Yukon government's HEED course. This course can be modified to be more relevant to VGFN hunters. The Yukon government Conservation Officer should attend along with the course instructor. This requires two months notice to set up.
4. Provide a hunting camp for students (use life size targets).
5. Look into a school program.

[2001-NY-AI-35]

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**Concern**

**Cow moose.**

Comments about not hunting cow moose were recorded in the community questionnaire. There are several sides to this issue. Traditionally, there has always been some cow moose hunting for cultural and subsistence reasons plus the feeling that a balance must be maintained between the sexes. On the other hand, removing cows can be viewed as removing productive animals that produce young which keeps the population strong and this could be risky when the moose population is low.

**Solution** Address cow hunting if required.

Since the major concern here about cow hunting is related to the health of the moose population, it was agreed to await the moose survey of the Porcupine River (the major hunting grounds) and then decide whether cow hunting restrictions should be implemented. Not hunting a cow moose that is carrying a calf is an ethics issue best addressed in the section on improved hunting practices.

**Actions**

Responsible parties, Time line

**VGFN**  
2001/02

Review cow moose hunting after survey of Porcupine River survey area. The need to restrict cow moose harvesting as a subsistence practice (at the correct time of year) is viewed as related to the health of the moose population. If the population is low then cow hunting should be minimized but if moose are abundant the need to reduce cow hunting (in the proper season) may not be as necessary. It is essential, however, to record all cow moose harvesting accurately for future management. [2001-NY-AI-36]

*Dennis Frost on  
Second Mountain  
(north of Old Crow)*

