

COASTAL HABITAT RESEARCH PROGRAM

STEERING COMMITTEE

SIGNED MINUTES OF THE 9TH MEETING HELD IN MONTREAL ON

OCTOBER 11 AND 12, 2017

PRESENT:	Carine Durocher	Hydro-Québec
	Jean-Philippe Gilbert	Hydro-Québec
	Marc Dunn	Niskamoon Corporation
	Merlin Whiskeychan	Waskaganish
	Norman Cheezo	Eastmain
	Réal Courcelles	Hydro-Québec
	Robbie Tapiatic	Chisasibi
	Simon Marcotte	Hydro-Québec
	William Blackned	Wemindji
	GUESTS	Émily Sinave
Ernie Rabbitskin		Chisasibi
James Bobbish		Cree Nation of Chisasibi
Jean Rodrigue		Canadian Wildlife Service
Josée Rousseau		Hydro-Québec
Louie Kanatewat		Chisasibi
Roderick Pachano		Cree Nation of Chisasibi

CHAIR AND SECRETARY

Mr. Marcotte chaired the meeting of October 11 and 12, 2017. Ms. Rousseau acted as Secretary.

The meeting began at 1:20 p.m.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

The Chair reviewed the agenda for the day.

Mr. Bobbish asked that "Information Campaign" be added as item 9c) of the agenda.

APPROVAL OF THE DRAFT MINUTES OF THE 7TH MEETING

Mr. Marcotte distributed copies of the minutes of the 7th meeting.

The Chair reviewed every page of the minutes of the 7th meeting. Some corrections were requested and the minutes were approved as corrected.

UPDATE ON RESEARCH PROGRAMS – RESEARCH PROGRAM ON GEESE – terms of reference and proposal by a researcher

Mr. Gilbert gave a PowerPoint presentation entitled “Research on Eeyou Istchee Coastal Ecology and Wildlife – Waterfowl Project – Terms of Reference.” A copy was appended to the minutes.

Mr. Gilbert explained that he gave this presentation last June and was asked to prepare the terms of reference. He confirmed that he had prepared them and requested that everyone submit their comments by the end of October so that a researcher could be hired. He added that Mr. Rodrigue had already submitted his comments concerning the terms of reference.

Mr. Gilbert said that he left the aerial survey in the document.

Mr. Gilbert said that he wants to receive the Crees’ comments so that he can plan one or two days of flyovers.

Mr. Pachano wondered how relevant this study is, since we know that the geese don’t fly along the coast anymore. Discussion followed concerning the relevance of conducting a coastal flyover.

Mr. Bobbish asked whether the geese that fly inland and those that fly along the coast are part of the same flyway.

Mr. Gilbert confirmed that they are and said that the flyway is very extensive.

Mr. Gilbert showed the participants what he receives when the cellular tracking data is downloaded. He said that he would like to obtain access for the SC and Niskamoon members. He added that the results obtained to date show that the geese are flying inland. He said he had received data for 22 of the 25 collared geese.

Mr. Courcelles asked if we can set up or organize some method of catching the geese that stop along the coast.

Mr. Pachano answered that it depends on the weather, and that catching geese on the coast is an experiment in itself.

Mr. Courcelles asked the Crees to think about organizing a survey.

Mr. Kanatewat said that the Crees were always told to avoid scaring the birds and to shoot them when they are in flight, not when they land. He said that if we install a net, it will scare the geese.

Mr. Marcotte summed up by saying that the terms of reference will be sent to the members by the end of the week and that all comments must be received by the end of the month. The members will also need to submit their comments concerning the proposal to hire Jean-François Giroux as a researcher. Mr. Dunn will compile the comments.

Ms. Durocher asked if the geese feed on eelgrass in the spring or mostly in the fall.

Mr. Kanatewat answered that they also feed on eelgrass in the spring, but since there is no more eelgrass, they don't land in the spring anymore.

The meeting paused at 3:10 p.m. and resumed at 3:30 p.m.

UPDATE ON RESEARCH PROGRAMS – RESEARCH PROGRAM ON CREE KNOWLEDGE AND LAND USE

Mr. Dunn said that he and Mr. Tapiatic had met with the Chisasibi Eeyou Resources and Research Institute (CERRI) and they proposed being responsible for the research on Cree knowledge and land use. He added that they were introduced to archaeologist/anthropologist Vincent Gauthier-Doucet, who could conduct the research on behalf of the Centre. He added that the CERRI are only comfortable doing the research in Chisasibi, but that he had informed them that this would not be a good idea, and that they should come back to the SC with a proposal that would respect the terms of reference.

Ms. Durocher said that this is an interesting outcome since the SC needs to move forward. She added that she was going to recommend another researcher, Thora Martina Herrmann. Ms. Durocher presented Ms. Herrmann's profile to the participants. She said that as a geographer, she would be qualified to produce maps. Ms. Durocher said that Ms. Herrmann had written a research paper entitled "Understanding Subarctic Wildlife in Eastern James Bay under Climatic and Socio-environmental Conditions," and that maybe she could work in collaboration with Vincent Gauthier-Doucet.

Mr. Dunn said that the SC needs to wait for the CERRI to come back with a proposal and then find a way to link the four communities.

Ms. Durocher said that this is a lot of work for one researcher, as it will involve a lot of interviews on 33 traplines.

Mr. Courcelles also suggested that the SC wait for the CERRI's proposal.

Mr. Dunn said that one of the arguments from the Chisasibi Research Centre involves intellectual property. They said that what is carried out in the community should stay in the community.

Mr. Bobbish recommended that other communities ask to be included in the Institute's research. He said that he understands that Chisasibi doesn't want to impose on other communities.

Ms. Durocher said that the results of the research will have to come out quickly so that they can be made available to the other researchers. She added that they will need a team to work on this, as well as infrastructure.

Mr. Marcotte suggested that Ms. Herrmann's article be sent to Mr. Dunn.

Ms. Durocher said that the Institute will need a team that is familiar with the communities concerned.

UPDATE ON RESEARCH PROGRAMS – RESEARCH PROGRAM ON OCEANOGRAPHY – COASTAL: Fall 2017 field campaign by UQAR and ISMER

Mr. Tremblay being absent, Ms. Durocher suggested that Mr. Tapiatic and Mr. Rabbitskin present a follow-up.

Mr. Tapiatic said that the researchers needed a laboratory and that he lent them the basement of his house.

Ms. Durocher said that Mr. Tremblay did not consider this option to be a long-term solution.

Mr. Tapiatic said that the researchers cannot stay at LG-1, as they need to be in the community.

Mr. Dunn said he thinks the only long-term solution would be to get a trailer.

Mr. Marcotte offered to check with Hydro-Québec to see if a trailer is available.

Mr. Dunn inquired about the possibility of acquiring surplus assets from Eastmain-1.

Mr. Courcelles said he did not think it would be necessary to go through the process of acquiring surplus assets if they are for Hydro-Québec's needs.

Mr. Tapiatic suggested that the SC contact the Chisasibi Council first, to verify whether trailers are permitted in the community.

Mr. Dunn asked Mr. Rabbitskin what the researchers' plans are.

Mr. Rabbitskin said that UQAR should be in the community from October 19 to 29. He added that the researchers are planning to conduct eight field trips in two weeks. He said their first priority will be to visit the Baie of Many Islands and that four members of their team are coming. The boat operators are already confirmed.

Mr. Tapiatic said that one of them should arrive at his place on October 16, 2017.

UPDATE ON RESEARCH PROGRAMS – RESEARCH PROGRAM ON OCEANOGRAPHY – RIVERS

Mr. Dunn said that Mr. del Giorgio has been busy doing the integration work and is not planning to go into the field this fall (2017).

UPDATE ON RESEARCH PROGRAMS – RESEARCH PROGRAM ON EELGRASS

Mr. Dunn said that he has not heard much from Mr. Short concerning the issues the SC discussed with him at the last meeting. He added that he was going to contact Mr. Short.

COORDINATION BETWEEN RESEARCHERS: Integrated methodology and summary report

Mr. Dunn said that Mr. del Giorgio had produced a document summarizing the meeting the researchers held in Chisasibi and is proposing a methodology. He added that all the researchers have approved it.

Mr. Gilbert said that Mr. Tremblay has already commented on it.

Mr. Dunn said that this document will be sent to all members and participants. Mr. Dunn explained why Mr. del Giorgio cannot act as lead researcher.

Ms. Durocher said that since the SC is playing the lead role at the moment, it needs to be more structured. She said that a member of the committee should be identified as leader and that the SC needs a timeline with a schedule of the researchers' activities.

Mr. Dunn asked Mr. Rabbitskin if he could get back to the researchers and ask them for specific dates.

Mr. Rabbitskin confirmed that he will.

Mr. Marcotte asked what should be done about the summary report since there is no lead researcher.

Discussion followed concerning the relevance of designating Ms. Kuzyk as lead researcher.

Mr. Dunn said that Mr. del Giorgio had told him that Ms. Kuzyk had collaborated the most on the document.

Discussion followed concerning the budget that could be allocated to Ms. Kuzyk as lead researcher.

The meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m. and resumed at 9:35 a.m. on October 12, 2017.

Mr. Marcotte asked if all the members had had time to read the document distributed by Mr. Dunn yesterday. He said he wonders if the researchers are still comfortable with the budget estimate.

Mr. Dunn said that the extra costs mentioned by the researchers in the document would be for helicopters and divers. He said that the researchers did not get the NSERC funding they had applied for. Mr. Dunn summarized the document and the researchers' plans. He added that his first concern is that if the Cree communities are not involved, the project is not going to work. He said that the Cree participants had a brainstorming session yesterday, and concluded that it could work if the following four conditions are met:

- 1- Divers from every community should be hired
- 2- Mr. Rabbitskin should be part of the team
- 3- The land users should be provided with a schedule and should be welcome to participate
- 4- All sites should be chosen in collaboration with the land users

Mr. Dunn said the selected sites should be sites that are not accessible to land users, sites where there used to be eelgrass according to the Crees, and other sites that are of interest for any number of reasons.

Discussion followed concerning the researchers' expectations, including:

- Addition of sites
- Addition of components to Hydro-Québec' follow-up
- Change in methodology

Ms. Durocher said that it is important to keep tabs on the researchers to make sure that the right parameters are being analyzed.

Mr. Dunn said that the researchers have begun this process but haven't finished yet.

Mr. Pachano said that he doesn't think the researchers and Hydro-Québec should be dependent on one another. He added that he disagrees with Hydro-Québec's findings.

Mr. Dunn said that the researchers should conduct three field surveys a year for two years, for a total of six field surveys, and that Hydro-Québec should conduct one. He said that the SC must consider what can be saved in terms of time and money if we take advantage of the Hydro-Québec study. He suggested we start with what can be done with the land users and then maybe we can complement the Hydro-Québec study.

Mr. Gilbert said that the Hydro-Québec study will not complement anything if the Crees don't trust Hydro-Québec. He added that if this is the case, it is not worth planning to conduct the Hydro-Québec study earlier.

Mr. Dunn suggested continuing to plan the Hydro-Québec study for 2019 and then reviewing the issue once the researchers have completed three or four field surveys with the land users.

Mr. Marcotte said he estimates the cost of using the helicopters at approximately \$300,000, depending on how many hours the researchers want to fly per day. He added that the hourly rate is \$2,000.

Mr. Dunn said that there will be three teams for the field surveys: one in Chisasibi, one in Wemindji and one in Eastmain. The teams will essentially be made up of the same members except for one or two divers.

Mr. Gilbert said that a Bell Long Ranger helicopter can carry a maximum of four people.

Ms. Durocher said that the SC should wait for the researchers to determine the parameters and that the related logistics will follow.

Mr. Marcotte suggested this document be discussed at the next meeting, as some members have not had time to read it yet.

Mr. Gilbert said that since Mr. Tremblay is absent, he will submit his comments on the document by next week.

Ms. Durocher noted that in their document, the researchers stated that they needed more funding for remote sensing. She asked whether this document justifies the allocation of additional funds.

Mr. Pachano asked whether remote sensing could be skipped.

Mr. Gilbert explained that remote sensing is very useful in documenting large-scale parameters, particularly when the satellite images are highly precise.

Mr. Pachano said that traditional knowledge could answer these questions.

Mr. Dunn said that the scientific part of the research would complement traditional knowledge.

Mr. Dunn said that no additional funds would be allocated to the researchers.

Mr. Marcotte asked whether the SC must reply to this document.

Mr. Dunn confirmed that the SC does need to reply, and that it must be repeated that the Crees must be involved as much as possible.

The members agreed that Mr. Dunn and Mr. Tremblay should prepare a letter to the researchers in response to their document.

The meeting paused at 10:25 a.m. and resumed at 10:35 a.m.

Mr. Dunn said he also recommends that Mr. Rabbitskin take the diving certification course.

Mr. Rabbitskin agreed.

FIELD WORK LOGISTIC – UPDATE FROM ERNIE RABBITSKIN

Mr. Rabbitskin said that the weather is an issue. He added that the weather reported on the Internet is not the same as that on the coast. He said that daylight and tides also represent an issue. He said that land users are very reluctant to go at this time of year. He added that he will need to tell the researchers to expect to be there three or four hours at the most.

Mr. Rabbitskin said that he is thinking of making it mandatory for the researchers to get first aid certification. He also would like to implement Mr. Rodrigue's recommendation to provide the researchers with a GPS tracking device.

Mr. Gilbert said that the GPS device can be bought online for \$170.

Mr. Rabbitskin said that his first priority is safety and that he wishes to establish an emergency response procedure. Mr. Rabbitskin referred to a situation where the researchers had put pressure on the land users despite the bad weather.

Mr. Dunn said that if the researchers pressure the land users, the land users will not want to participate in the program anymore.

Mr. Bobbish explained that it is important to be careful at night because of the wood debris.

MORE INFORMATION FROM HYDRO-QUÉBEC ON THE LA GRANDE COMPLEX

Ms. Durocher said that at the joint meeting held in Chisasibi last August, she felt that the researchers wanted more information about the La Grande complex and the prior studies conducted by Hydro-Québec. She added that she believes it could be useful if Hydro-Québec provided those studies to the researchers. She said she is aware that some Crees don't agree with some of the conclusions set out in those studies. She showed a CD-ROM of the studies to all participants.

Mr. Dunn asked that four copies of the CD-ROM be sent to the Niskamoon office to inform the researchers of what Hydro-Québec has done previously. He added that the CD-ROM will be made available in the DropBox folder set up for the researchers.

ARCTIC CHANGE 2017, QUÉBEC CITY, DECEMBER 11-15: Participation and preparation

Mr. Marcotte asked whether Ms. Saganash will be attending the conference since she is the main author.

Mr. Dunn confirmed that she will and that she would like to have the cooperation of the community representatives. He added that it will be a poster session and that the abstract has already been submitted. Although Mr. Tremblay had e-mailed the abstract to all participants for comment, it appears that a few members did not receive it. Mr. Gilbert will send the e-mail to Ms. Rousseau, who will forward it to Mr. Pachano and Ms. Sinave.

It was agreed that the members who will attend the conference will be selected at the next SC meeting. It was also agreed that Ms. Saganash, Mr. Tremblay and Mr. Dunn will prepare the poster for the event.

STEERING COMMITTEE MEETINGS: SCHEDULE FOR 2017 AND 2018

It was agreed that the next meeting will be held in Montréal on **November 7 and 8, 2017**, in accordance with the following schedule:

- November 7, a.m.: Pre-meeting for the Cree participants
- November 7, p.m.: SC meeting
- November 8: SC meeting

A meeting will also be held in Québec City on **December 11 and 12, 2017**, in accordance with the following schedule:

- December 11, a.m.: Pre-meeting for the Cree participants
- December 11, p.m.: SC meeting
- December 12, a.m.: SC meeting

A joint meeting with the researchers will be held on the evening of December 11 or 12 to discuss their joint protocol. Mr. Dunn will contact the researchers to confirm their availability.

The meeting paused for lunch at 11:50 a.m. and resumed at 1:50 p.m.

Ms. Durocher suggested that the SC meetings for 2018 be scheduled at the next meeting in November or December.

Mr. Dunn said that he agrees, but that the researchers were told that the SC would meet with them again in June 2018.

Mr. Pachano suggested the SC meet with the researchers whenever they can put something together, even before they start. He suggested the SC meet with them twice a year.

Ms. Durocher said that it could be tough to plan a meeting in April or May because of the goose break.

The members agreed to defer planning for 2018 to a future meeting, but to schedule joint meetings with the researchers in March and late August 2018 so that the researchers can be informed as soon as possible. The joint meetings are scheduled as follows:

March 2018, Eastmain

- March 26: Pre-meeting for the Cree representatives
- March 27 and 28: Joint meeting with the researchers
- March 29: SC meeting

August 2018, Chisasibi

- August 20: Pre-meeting for the Cree representatives
- August 21 and 22: Joint meeting with the researchers
- August 23: SC meeting

BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS – Advisory Committee on the Environment – Canadian Geological Survey

Mr. Dunn said that the office of Mr. Parent of the CGS is in Québec City. He added that he will send him an invitation to attend the SC meeting scheduled for December 2017.

BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS – Joint meeting with the Chisasibi Research Centre

This item was discussed previously. Mr. Dunn said that as previously mentioned, the Chisasibi Research Centre will send the SC a proposal for a researcher.

BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS – Information campaign

Mr. Bobbish said that hunters and trappers want to have a good understanding of what is happening with the research program.

Mr. Marcotte suggested that an information tour like the one carried out by the Monitoring Committee be organized in the communities.

Mr. Bobbish said that Mr. Rabbitskin and Mr. Cheezo could handle part of the preparation but that they would need support. He suggested that a PowerPoint presentation on the research program be given at the CTA general assembly.

Mr. Dunn said that Cynthia Taylor met with him yesterday regarding the newsletter. The newsletter would provide an overview of the SC's mandate, the research components and the researchers. It would be published three times a year. Mr. Dunn confirmed that Ms. Taylor could also take the lead regarding the PowerPoint presentation suggested by Mr. Bobbish.

Mr. Whiskeychan suggested the PowerPoint presentation be given to the local CTA first.

Mr. Bobbish suggested that the research questions also be presented upfront in the newsletter. He said that two questions had been identified in the research program but that the hunters may have others.

BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS – NSERC funding

Mr. Dunn said that Ms. Kuzyk told him that her application for NSERC funding had been rejected, but that another fund is available for "Collaborative Research Development." Mr. Dunn will ask John Paul Murdoch to write a letter supporting the SC's application for this fund.

Discussion followed regarding the relevance of encouraging the researchers to apply for other research funds. Mr. Dunn suggested setting up a working group to establish a strategy for such applications,

TO DO LIST

Mr. Marcotte reviewed the "to do" list and all participants gave their input.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held in Montréal on November 7 and 8, 2017.

The meeting adjourned at 2:00 p.m.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a series of loops and a long upward stroke on the right side.