

COASTAL HABITAT RESEARCH PROGRAM

STEERING COMMITTEE

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE 12th MEETING HELD IN MONTRÉAL ON JANUARY 24, 2018

PRESENT: Alain Tremblay – Hydro-Québec
Carine Durocher – Hydro-Québec
Jean-Philippe Gilbert – Hydro-Québec
Marc Dunn – Niskamoon Corporation
Norman Cheezo – Cree Nation of Eastmain
Nadia Saganash – Cree Nation Government
Réal Courcelles – Hydro-Québec
Robbie Tapiatic – Cree Nation of Chisasibi
William Blackned – Cree Nation of Wemindji

GUESTS: Emily Sinave – Cree Nation Government
Ernie Rabbitskin – Niskamoon Corporation
Louie Kanatewat – Cree Nation of Chisasibi

ABSENT: James Bobbish – Cree Nation of Chisasibi
Josée Rousseau – Hydro-Québec
Jean Rodrigue – Canadian Wildlife Service
Merlin Whiskeychan – Waskaganish First Nation
Roderick Pachano – Cree Nation of Chisasibi

CHAIR AND SECRETARY

Mr. Dunn chaired the morning session and Ms. Saganash chaired the afternoon session.

Réal Courcelles acted as Secretary. The meeting began at 9:40 a.m.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

The Chair reviewed the agenda. It was agreed that the following items be added to the agenda:

- Association for the Sciences of Limnology and Oceanography (ASLO)
- Additional funding request

APPROVAL OF THE DRAFT MINUTES OF THE 11th MEETING

The Chair reviewed the minutes of the 11th meeting page by page. Some corrections were requested and the minutes were approved as corrected.

UPDATE ON RESEARCH PROGRAM

A. Research program on geese

Mr. Gilbert said that there is not much to say. He said that he had received the proposal from Jean-François Giroux of UQAM, which included a proposed budget.

Mr. Gilbert summarized the proposal and said that it is the same as the one Mr. Giroux presented at the 11th meeting in December 2017 in Québec City, except that the budget has been updated.

Mr. Gilbert said that he has to call Cellular Tracking Technology (CTT) to get more information about the technical aspects of the collars for the geese. He said that the cost of 25 collars should be around US\$100,000. He said that the collars will be purchased by Niskamoon.

Mr. Gilbert said that he will get back to the SC once he gets the technical information from CTT.

Ms. Durocher asked why Mr. Giroux's proposal states that he intends to conduct biomolecular analyses.

Mr. Gilbert answered that a blood sample will be taken from each goose captured, and a biomolecular analysis will be done to determine the bird's sex.

Ms. Durocher asked whether Mr. Giroux's budget includes the cost of the booklet we intend to use during the survey.

Mr. Dunn said that the budget includes 15% for contingencies and that this amount should cover the cost of the booklet. He also said that Niskamoon should bear the cost of the booklet. He added that \$90K should be added to the budget to take helicopter costs into account.

Mr. Courcelles said that two budgets should be prepared: one for Mr. Giroux's contract and one for the expenditures to be paid by Niskamoon.

Mr. Dunn asked how much the CWS's participation in the 2018 goose study would cost, i.e., the time and costs associated with Jean Rodrigue's participation.

Mr. Gilbert answered at it would cost approximately \$88K.

Mr. Dunn asked whether the CWS could contribute an amount of money to share the costs of the goose program.

Mr. Gilbert said that he will ask Jean Rodrigue.

Mr. Dunn said that he would prepare a revised version of the budget. He said that Cree participation is a different matter, explaining that since the cost of Cree participation was planned for all studies together rather than for one at a time, it isn't necessary to consider the cost of Cree participation on a study-by-study basis. However, we do need the number of person-days of Cree labor per study.

Mr. Dunn asked the community representatives whether they were informing and consulting the land users about the aerial goose inventories to be conducted in spring and fall 2018.

Mr. Blackned said that he had already spoken to some land users about the aerial inventories and that some of them were OK with the flyovers.

Mr. Cheezo said that the regional CTA is meeting in February and that the subject of the flyovers will be discussed.

Mr. Dunn said that a meeting should be scheduled to determine the content of the booklet. After discussion, it was agreed that the meeting will be held on February 1 at 2:00 p.m., at the CNG Offices on Duke Street in Montréal.

Ms. Durocher said that Mr. Giroux or someone from his team should attend that meeting, since his team has been mandated to analyze the data entered in the booklet.

Mr. Gilbert said that he will send Mr. Giroux an e-mail requesting his presence at the meeting.

Ms. Saganash asked whether Mr. Giroux's planned publications would incorporate Cree traditional knowledge.

Mr. Gilbert confirmed that that is the plan.

Mr. Dunn asked whether Mr. Rabbitskin could participate in the flyovers.

Mr. Gilbert answered that there is no space in the helicopter for Mr. Rabbitskin since there will be three experienced technicians and one local Cree representative on each flight.

Mr. Dunn asked whether Mr. Rabbitskin could be in the helicopter all the time in replacement of a local representative.

Mr. Cheezo said that he had already told some people in Eastmain that there would be an Eastmain representative in the helicopter for the flyovers involving Eastmain traplines.

Mr. Gilbert explained that the cost of the flyovers is estimated at about \$90K and is based on four days in the spring and four days in the fall (i.e., two flyovers and two days per flyover).

After discussion, the following three options were on the table:

1. **Option 1:** Mr. Rabbitskin would be the Cree representative for all flyovers. This would make things faster since it wouldn't be necessary to stop to change Cree representatives. A flyover would take about two days, which would lessen the disturbance to hunters.
2. **Option 2:** One Cree representative per community. This would be slower than Option 1 because the Cree representative would have to be changed every time someone else's trapline was being surveyed. This would mean three days per flyover, which would cause more disturbances to the hunters. Helicopter costs would also be higher because of all the stop-and-go involved with changing the Cree representatives.
3. **Option 3:** One Cree representative per trapline. This would be even slower than Option 2. Each flyover would take four to five days, which would be extremely disruptive for the hunters. Costs would also be very high.

Mr. Kanatewat proposed a **4th option:** One Cree representative for the flyovers of the Chisasibi and Wemindji traplines and another for the flyovers of the Eastmain and Waskaganish traplines.

Mr. Gilbert added that we could have two experienced technicians and two Cree representatives aboard the helicopter, i.e., the Cree representative designated for the Chisasibi and Wemindji trapline flyovers and the one designated for the Eastmain and Waskaganish flyovers. Mr. Gilbert estimated that this way, we could complete the flyovers in one day or two at the most, and stay within the \$90K budget.

Mr. Dunn reiterated that conducting flyovers during the hunting season is a very sensitive issue.

Mr. Blackned said that we need to consult the land users.

Mr. Dunn agreed that we need to consult the tallymen and users of traplines along the coast, especially about how we plan to conduct the flyovers.

Mr. Blackned said that the coastal land users know where to find the geese.

Mr. Gilbert explained that the scientific strategy is to conduct the flyovers along aerial transects of the entire coast, rather than target specific areas known for geese presence.

Ms. Durocher asked whether a GoPro camera would be attached to the helicopter so that video footage of goose behavior during the flyovers could be shown to the land users.

Mr. Gilbert said that there will be two GoPro cameras attached to the helicopter.

Mr. Dunn said that he would review the budget proposed by Mr. Giroux.

B. Research program on Cree knowledge and land use: proposal from CERRI

Mr. Dunn said that there is nothing new. He said that he sent his comments to the Chief of the Cree Nation of Chisasibi (CNC) and that there will be internal discussion at the CNC level. He said that this file is very political.

Mr. Tremblay asked how long it will take to get an answer.

Mr. Dunn said that he doesn't know, but was told that the study will be done and that there is a will to do it.

Ms. Durocher said that she worries that the goose study, the consultation in connection with the flyovers and the data collected with the booklet will somehow duplicate the information that was supposed to be collected as part of the land use study.

Mr. Blackned asked whether there is a deadline to get an answer from the CNC.

Mr. Dunn said that the land use study was supposed to be the first one completed. He said that if things don't work out with CERRI, we will find another researcher to do it.

Discussion followed on whether it would be appropriate for the SC to send a letter to the Board of CERRI reiterating the urgency of conducting this study as soon as possible and requesting an answer by a given date.

Ms. Durocher agreed to draft arguments that could be used in the letter.

Mr. Tapiatic suggested sending the letter to the CNC Chief and Council.

Mr. Kanatewat agreed with Mr. Tapiatic's suggestion.

Mr. Dunn said that he worries that the SC could lose the support it has gained in the Chisasibi community.

Ms. Saganash proposed to contact the Chief to inform him of the current situation.

The SC agreed with Ms. Saganash's proposal and decided not to send any letter for now.

The meeting paused at 11:15 a.m. and resumed at 11:35 a.m.

When the meeting resumed, Mr. Dunn and Ms. Saganash said that during the break, they contacted people involved with the land use study and as a result of their discussions, it was recommended that the SC send an e-mail to Vincent Gauthier-Doucet from CERRI, with a c.c. to Chief Davey Bobbish of the CNC, John Paul Murdoch and the Cree SC members and participants, to inform them of the current situation regarding this issue.

Mr. Dunn said that he had just sent such an e-mail.

Mr. Dunn introduced Michel Parent, who had just joined the meeting. He said that Mr. Parent is a research scientist from the Geological Survey of Canada who will give a presentation after lunch.

C & D. Research Program on Oceanography: Coastal & Rivers

Mr. Tremblay said that ISMER is ready to go ahead with their winter field campaign. He said that ISMER will use scientific equipment belonging to Hydro-Québec and that he will send it to them around mid-February.

Mr. Tremblay said that the map of the sampling station sites for the Rivers program needs to be finalized.

Mr. Tremblay said that he had yet to receive anything from Fred Short concerning the eelgrass sampling sites.

Mr. Dunn said that when he spoke with Fred Short, Mr. Short told him that he is working with Urs Neumeier from ISMER and that ISMER's sampling station map incorporates Fred Short's sampling stations.

Mr. Tremblay said that he would ask Mr. Neumeier whether the map he provided includes Mr. Short's sampling station sites, and whether Paul del Georgio had sent him an updated map of his sampling station sites for the Rivers Research Program.

Mr. Tremblay said that ISMER should be arriving in Chisasibi on February 28 and that they intend to conduct their fieldwork by helicopter for about a week and by snowmobile for three or four days.

Mr. Tremblay said that Ms. Kuzyk will concentrate her sampling activities in the Grande Rivière plume area and will use a helicopter for a period of three to four days.

Mr. Tremblay raised the issue of refueling the helicopters during the fieldwork. He asked whether there is a way for Niskamoon to do the helicopters reservation. He said that helicopters chartered by Hydro-Québec will not be able to refuel at a Cree community airport, but he believes that helicopters chartered by Niskamoon will be able to do so.

Mr. Dunn answered that the fueling restriction in community airports apply to all air transport company and not only to Hydro-Québec.

Mr. Gilbert asked whether it will be possible to have fuel barrels delivered to community airports.

Mr. Tremblay said that the helicopters could refuel at LG-1 for the upcoming fieldwork, but that this should not be seen as a long-term solution.

Mr. Dunn said he would contact the responsible authorities at the community airports to see if barrels of helicopter fuel could be stored there.

Mr. Tremblay said that he would send Mr. Dunn the necessary information about what is needed in terms of helicopter fuel.

Mr. Tremblay said that the list of parameters to be sampled at each station and the equipment to be used to take the samples (i.e., helicopter, snowmobile, canoe, etc.) has not yet been finalized.

Mr. Dunn said that it will be important to have that information before validation with the tallymen and land users takes place at the end of February.

Mr. Tapiatic said that for sampling in the Grande Rivière, he would like there to be a station near LG-3, since the sampling stations currently planned start at Robert-Bourassa reservoir (formerly La Grande 2) and go downstream, which means that the water sampled at these stations will contain water flowing from the south through the Boyd-Sakami system, as well as flow from the section of the Grande Rivière watershed not yet influenced by the flow from the rivers to the south that were diverted to Robert-Bourassa.

Mr. Tremblay said that in any case, the sampling stations downstream of Robert-Bourassa (formerly LG-2) will reflect the quality of the water flowing into the Grande Rivière watershed, including the flow from LG-3.

Mr. Tapiatic said that it would be important to ascertain the water quality in the section of the Grande Rivière not yet influenced by the flow from the diverted rivers to the south.

Mr. Tremblay said that they can look at this suggestion, but that gathering additional data upstream from LG-3 won't help answering the question about the disappearance of eelgrass in some areas along the coast and what are the requirements for its re-growth.

Ms. Sinave asked why half the coastal sampling will be done this year and the other half next year.

Mr. Tremblay said that we can't do them all in one year. He said that all the stations will be sampled over a period of two to three years. He added that the parameters to be sampled (e.g., salinity) will not change significantly from year to year.

Mr. Dunn said that, since all the research teams will be in the field this summer, all the coastal communities will be involved.

Ms. Saganash asked Alain Tremblay whether he could remind the researchers about the need for an updated sampling protocol.

Mr. Tremblay said that he would send them a reminder by Friday, January 26, 2018.

Mr. Dunn noted that, for the Rivers program, some of the sampling stations upstream of the river mouths are on inland traplines. He said that the SC needs to inform the tallymen concerned.

Mr. Tremblay said that he would ask Mr. del Giorgio for the final sampling station locations.

Mr. Dunn reminded Mr. Tremblay that both ISMER-UQAR and UQAM must send the SC a new service proposal for 2018–2019.

The meeting paused for lunch at 12:15 p.m. and resumed at 1:05 p.m.

Ms. Saganash chaired the afternoon meeting.

E. Research program on eelgrass

Mr. Dunn said that Mr. Short is working with Mr. Neumeier to establish the eelgrass sampling station sites.

GEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF CANADA

Mr. Parent gave an undated PowerPoint presentation entitled “Glacial isostatic adjustment (rebound) in the James Bay–Hudson Bay Region – A primer, Michel Parent, Research Geoscientist, Geological Survey of Canada, Natural Resources Canada.”

During the presentation, Mr. Parent said that it is difficult to assess the isostatic rebound that is happening along the James Bay coast. The rebound of the land along the coast as an average is approximately 10 mm/year, but since the sea level is increasing by approximately 5 mm/year, that offset to a certain extent the isostatic rebound.

The meeting paused at 2:35 p.m. and resumed at 2:45 p.m.

FIELDWORK LOGISTICS

Mr. Rabbitskin said that the oceanography research team will be arriving in Chisasibi on February 28.

Mr. Dunn said that Ms. Kuzyk will also be in Chisasibi that week.

Mr. Tremblay said that the research team will be staying at Mr. Tapiatic’s house while they are in Chisasibi.

Mr. Tremblay said that the initial cost estimate for a mobile lab is approximately \$36K. He said that the trailer accounts for \$13K and equipment such as a water filtration system, a freezer that must cool to -80°C, an oven, a generator, etc., account for approximately \$23K.

Mr. Dunn said that we need a formal proposal that includes specifications for installation of the equipment in the trailer so that we can submit a formal proposal to the Finance Subcommittee for approval.

Mr. Tremblay said that he would send a formal proposal to Mr. Dunn.

Mr. Dunn said that we still need one more trailer to house all the research teams.

COORDINATION BETWEEN RESEARCHERS: INTEGRATED METHODOLOGY AND SUMMARY REPORT

Mr. Dunn said that he spoke with Ms. Kuzyk about taking on the role of coordinating the various research teams and that she agreed to do so.

Mr. Dunn said that she told him she had contacted the other researchers and that most of them were agreeable to her acting as coordinator.

Mr. Dunn said that Ms. Kuzyk requested that the SC provide her with a well-defined mandate.

Mr. Dunn put an outline of a mandate he is submitting to the SC on screen for comment.

Ms. Durocher said that a well-defined mandate will be important for the success of the research program and the relationship among the researchers. She said that we should take more time to comment and come up with a formal mandate for Ms. Kuzyk.

Mr. Tremblay said that he thinks that her mandate should mainly focus on the summary report. He said that Ms. Kuzyk's mandate should not focus too much on short-term coordination because SC does it.

After discussion, it was agreed that Mr. Dunn would forward the document presented on screen for comment. He said that the comments have to be sent to him before the next SC meeting. He said that after he receives the comments, he will file a revised mandate at the next SC meeting.

COMMUNICATION PLAN AND NEWSLETTER

A. Newsletter

Mr. Dunn said that 1,000 copies of the first newsletter have been printed and are ready to be sent. He said that Chisasibi will receive 400 copies, Wemindji 200 copies, Eastmain 150 copies, Waskaganish 50 copies and the members of the SC 200 copies.

Mr. Dunn said that the next issue should be a double issue covering both the research teams and the Cree experts.

Ms. Durocher suggested that the Cree experts on the SC, Mr. Kanatewat and Mr. Pachano among other, should also be interviewed.

B. Communication plan

Ms. Sinave presented an undated proposal entitled “Coastal Habitat Research Program – Communication Plan” on screen. A copy was appended to the minutes.

Ms. Sinave reviewed the document.

Ms. Durocher said that the communication plan was well done and that she had minor comments and would e-mail them to Ms. Sinave.

Mr. Tapiatic mentioned that we should add verbal updates done on the local radio by Cree representatives.

Mr. Dunn said that the final version will be sent to Cynthia Taylor.

VALIDATION TOUR

After discussion, it was decided that the validation tour will take place during the last week of February, starting Tuesday, February 27, 2018, in Chisasibi. The schedule is as follows:

- February 27, p.m.: Chisasibi
 - Robbie Tapiatic
 - Marc Dunn
 - Ernie Rabbitskin
 - Zou Zou Kuzyk
 - Jean-Philippe Gilbert
 - Jean Rodrigue (to be confirmed)

- February 28, a.m.: Wemindji
 - William Blackned
 - Robbie Tapiatic
 - Marc Dunn
 - Ernie Rabbitskin
 - Zou Zou Kuzyk
 - Jean-Philippe Gilbert
 - Jean Rodrigue (to be confirmed)

- February 28, p.m.: Eastmain
 - Norman Cheezo
 - Robbie Tapiatic
 - Marc Dunn
 - Ernie Rabbitskin
 - Zou Zou Kuzyk
 - Jean-Philippe Gilbert
 - Jean Rodrigue (to be confirmed)

- March 1, a.m.: Waskaganish
 - Merlin Whiskeychan
 - Réal Courcelles
 - Jean Rodrigue

ASLO CONFERENCE IN VICTORIA, BC

Mr. Tremblay explained what the association involves and the purpose of the conference to be held from June 10 to 15, 2018, in Victoria, British Columbia.

Mr. Tremblay said that the conference is an excellent opportunity for the SC to promote awareness of its research program on eelgrass, just as it did at the Arctic Change conference in Québec City in December 2017.

Mr. Tremblay said that we could use the same abstract as the one submitted at Arctic Change. He said that the deadline to submit the abstract is February 23, 2018.

Mr. Tremblay said that he and Ms. Durocher will be giving a presentation on behalf of Hydro-Québec at the BC conference on a topic other than eelgrass. He said that the SC could send Cree representatives to give a presentation on the eelgrass program.

Mr. Dunn, Mr. Tapiatic and Ms. Saganash said that they would get back to Mr. Tremblay on this subject.

ADDITIONAL FUNDING REQUEST

Mr. Dunn said that he intends to write and submit a proposal to Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada for funding under their Community-based Climate Monitoring Program. The proposal will focus on specific aspects of the oceanographic research component with a view to developing long-term monitoring tools for coastal communities. The proposal will also outline training and communication, as well as a potential partnership with CERRI for long-term monitoring components. The hope is that, if successful, these funds will support the University of Manitoba's participation in the project, since their

application for funding from the Natural Sciences Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSER) was rejected earlier in the year.


NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled to be held in Eastmain from March 26 to March 28, 2018, with all the researchers.

After discussion and considering the information the researchers have received so far and the ongoing communication between the researchers and the SC members, it was decided that a joint meeting will not be required in March 2018. However, the SC will be meeting on March 27 and 28, 2018.

The meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

Marc Dunn



Nadia Saganash