

COASTAL HABITAT RESEARCH PROGRAM

STEERING COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE 18TH MEETING

HELD IN MONTRÉAL ON FEBRUARY 28, 2019

PRESENT:

William Blackned – Cree Nation of Wemindji
James Bobbish – Cree Nation of Chisasibi
Norman Cheezo – Cree Nation of Eastmain
Réal Courcelles – Hydro-Québec
Marc Dunn – Niskamoon Corporation
Jean-Philippe Gilbert – Hydro-Québec
Louie Kanatewat – Cree Nation of Chisasibi
John Lameboy – Cree Nation of Chisasibi
Ernest Moses – Waskaganish First Nation
Nadia Saganash – Cree Nation Government
Emily Sinave – Cree Nation Government
Robbie Tapiatic – Cree Nation of Chisasibi
Alain Tremblay – Hydro-Québec

ABSENT:

Carine Durocher – Hydro-Québec
Roderick Pachano – Cree Nation of Chisasibi
Ernie Rabbitskin – Niskamoon Corporation
Jean Rodrigue – Canadian Wildlife Service

GUESTS:

Mhaly Bois-Charlebois – Hydro-Québec

PROPOSED AGENDA

Thursday, February 28, 2019 – Maison du développement durable, Saint-Laurent room

9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Steering committee 18th meeting

- 1) Approval of the agenda
- 2) Extension of the Research program and of the universities' mandate (M. Dunn)
- 3) Fred Short and Dante Torio's mandates (M. Dunn)
- 4) Presentation of M. Leblanc, McGill University
- 5) New mandate for the eelgrass study

- 6) Field work logistic
 - a. Update (E. Rabbitskin)
 - b. Barrels of fuel and coordination between Hydro-Québec, the researchers and Niskamoon (A. Tremblay)

- 7) Communication plan, action plan and newsletter
 - a. Upcoming actions and responsible
 - b. Discussion on the way to improve the communication between the researchers, the SC and the communities
 - c. Role of Zou Kuzyk in the communication of the results

- 8) Update on research programs:
 - a. Research program on Geese (J.P. Gilbert)
 - b. Research program on Cree Knowledge and Land Use (M. Dunn)
 1. Coordination between CERRI and the other Cree Knowledge and Land use researchers (C. Durocher)
 - c. Research program on Oceanography – coastal (A. Tremblay)
 - d. Research program on Oceanography – rivers (A. Tremblay)
 - e. Research program on Eelgrass (M. Dunn)

- 9) Discussion on how to report the information gathered during the symposium

- 10) Approval of the minutes of the 15th, 16th and 17th meetings

- 11) Next meeting

- 12) Meetings schedule for 2019

- 13) To do list

- 14) Miscellaneous

CHAIR AND SECRETARY

Réal Courcelles chaired the meeting.

Mhaly Bois-Charlebois acted as Secretary. The meeting began at 9:30 a.m. on Thursday, February 28, 2019.

John Lameboy said that Marc Dunn asked him to join the committee as a member. He said that he is the representative for the Eeyou Marine Region.

The participants welcomed him.

1) APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

The Chair reviewed the agenda.

Norman Cheezo asked who M. Leblanc is.

Mr. Dunn explained that M. Leblanc is Melanie Leblanc, who gave a presentation at the last Steering Committee (SC) meeting. He explained that Ms. Leblanc had asked if she could present her work to the SC and he had invited her to come without obligation or commitment. He added that Ms. Leblanc gave a presentation on the methods she uses to study eelgrass.

Some changes were requested and the agenda was approved as follows:

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- 4) Presentation of M. Leblanc, McGill University
- 5) New mandate for the eelgrass study
- 6) Field work logistic
 - a. Update (E. Rabbitskin)
 - b. Barrels of fuel and coordination between Hydro-Québec, the researchers and Niskamoon (A. Tremblay)
- 7) Communication plan, action plan and newsletter
 - a. Upcoming actions and responsible
 - b. Discussion on the way to improve the communication between the researchers, the SC and the communities
 - c. Role of Zou Kuzyk in the communication of the results
 - d. Proposal of CERRI regarding communication
 - e. Symposium minutes
- 8) Update on research programs:
 - a. Research program on Géese (J.P. Gilbert)
 - b. Research program on Cree Knowledge and Land Use (M. Dunn)
 - c. Coordination between CERRI and the other Cree Knowledge and Land use researchers (C. Durocher)
 - d. Research program on Oceanography – coastal (A. Tremblay)
 - e. Research program on Oceanography – rivers (A. Tremblay)
 - f. Research program on Eelgrass (M. Dunn)
- 9) Discussion on how to report the information gathered during the symposium
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2) EXTENSION OF THE RESEARCH PROGRAM AND OF THE UNIVERSITIES' MANDATE (M. DUNN)

Mr. Dunn put one of the letters sent regarding the extension of the program on screen. The three letters that were sent are appended to the minutes. Mr. Dunn said that the letter requesting the extension of the mandate was finalized with Ms. Bois-Charlebois and that he sent one copy to William MacLeod and another to Abel Bosum.

Ms. Bois-Charlebois said that she would send the letter to David Murray today.

Robbie Tapiatic asked who David Murray is.

Mr. Courcelles answered that Mr. Murray is Director of Operations and President of Hydro-Québec Production.

Mr. Dunn explained that Mr. Murray has the same position that Richard Cacchione had. He said that Mr. MacLeod responded by email maybe 10 minutes after he sent the letter.

Mr. Courcelles said that it would be nice to have the final response by the next Niskamoon board meeting on April 9, 2019.

Mr. Dunn said that he would prefer having an answer before that. He said that if Dr. Bosum and Mr. Murray could provide an answer as soon as possible, he would be able to provide a final answer. He said that the grand chief signed the first agreement, but that they understand that Davy Bobbish will play a role in the extension.

Nadia Saganash asked whether Mr. Dunn had received an acknowledgment of receipt.

Mr. Dunn answered that he had not.

Ms. Saganash said she would follow up. She asked whether they thought it would be good to have a response before the end of March 2019.

Mr. Dunn answered that it would be good to have the response as soon as possible. He said that the researchers will get nervous as time goes by. Mr. Dunn read the letter.

Alain Tremblay said that many members of the SC raised the concern that December 31, 2020 is too soon to end the mandate and that spring 2021 would be better.

Mr. Courcelles said that they did not want to go there in the letter.

Mr. Tremblay said he understood, but he wanted to say that maybe they need more time, not more money.

Mr. Dunn said that he tended to agree with Mr. Tremblay that December 2020 is too optimistic. He said that it is one thing to report back to the communities, but another to publish and receive

the peer review. He said that this process would take longer, but would make it possible to present the results to the communities earlier.

Mr. Cheezo asked what the next step would be after the results are presented.

Mr. Dunn answered that recommendations will arise from whatever comes out of the research. He said that someone will be put in charge of applying those recommendations.

Mr. Courcelles said they should cross that bridge when they get to it.

Ms. Saganash asked Mr. Dunn if he had had any initial discussion with the grand chief about the extension.

Mr. Dunn said that it was discussed in December 2018. He said that John Paul Murdoch had made it clear that the answer was no and that this would only change if the symposium went well.

James Bobbish asked whether the band councils should be cc'ed in this letter.

Mr. Dunn answered that this is up to the Cree representatives of the SC to decide.

Ms. Saganash said that the letter refers to an extension, but there is no reference to the financial part of it. She asked if Mr. Dunn had a ballpark figure.

Mr. Dunn said that it has yet to be confirmed and that the SC has to talk about it.

Mr. Courcelles said that they know they need more money, but they do not have the exact amount.

Mr. Dunn asked whether the SC should ask the researchers for a budget, or tell them the budget they have.

Mr. Courcelles said that the big question will be for the eelgrass study and that it will be a guess, but that Jean-Philippe Gilbert and Jean-François Giroux will be able to provide a more accurate estimate for the goose study, for example.

Mr. Dunn said that a total of \$6 million has been put aside. He said that the researchers will not come back with a lower budget if the SC asks because they always use all the money they have.

Mr. Courcelles said that sometime between July 2018 and June 2019, the SC will have a better idea of what it will cost.

Mr. Dunn said that he disagrees, because there are a lot of capital expenses.

Mr. Courcelles said that yes there are, in terms of the teams and employees involved, and that they will also have to add the costs related to the analyses, presentations, participation, etc.

Mr. Dunn said that he is hesitant to ask them for a budget because they will ask for a lot. He showed a table on screen. A copy is appended to the minutes. A discussion took place about the numbers shown in the table.

Mr. Courcelles said that Mr. Tremblay should provide the estimate for oceanography study (both river and coastal), Mr. Gilbert should provide the one for geese, and Mr. Dunn should estimate the cost for eelgrass and traditional knowledge.

Mr. Bobbish said they should ask the researchers what kind of activities they need to carry out in 2019 and 2020.

Mr. Courcelles said this was a good suggestion.

Mr. Dunn said that if the SC is committed to this, the researchers should also do their part. He said that they should be willing. He added that the SC will not ask how much they need.

Ms. Saganash suggested asking for a template of the needs, activities and estimates.

Mr. Tremblay said that they need to refocus the objectives to be sure to have the answers the SC needs to address the issues. He said he had spoken with Virginie Galindo and Michel Gosselin and they are not necessarily meeting the SC's needs. He added that the results they have are still interesting in terms of research, but do not answer the questions about eelgrass. Mr. Tremblay said that they have to be sure they understand the focus of the study. He said that he had had the discussion because they were supposed to go into southern areas to sample at least a few stations, but did not. He said that he told them they would have to focus on those areas next year, because the research program is for the whole coast.

Mr. Dunn asked whether it was too soon to ask them for an estimate, then.

Mr. Tremblay answered that it was not, but that the SC would have to refocus the objectives first, and then see the budget.

Mr. Courcelles said that he agreed with Ms. Saganash that they should send the researchers a mandate proposal explaining what the SC expects them to do during the summers of 2019 and 2020.

Mr. Gilbert asked if they should send new terms of reference.

Mr. Tremblay said it may not be necessary, but that they have to refocus. He said that the *Institut des Sciences et de la Mer de Rimouski* (ISMER) studies a number of parameters. He said that this is never a bad thing in terms of science, but it means that more time is required to do the fieldwork. He added that it is of concern to him, because they put a lot of energy into sampling a lot of parameters instead of just concentrating on eelgrass.

Mr. Courcelles asked Mr. Tremblay and Mr. Gilbert whether they could send the researchers the updated terms of reference by the end of March.

Mr. Tremblay asked whether they should ask for the budget at the same time.

Mr. Courcelles answered it would be good to have this information before April, because the Niskamoon board meeting is in April.

A discussion followed about the numbers in the table.

Mr. Dunn explained that the data from year 3 had not been approved in the resolution, so the year-3 data in the table is a forecast.

Mr. Gilbert asked whether the estimate is for the period until June 2020.

Mr. Dunn said it is, but has not been approved.

Mr. Gilbert said that, as Mr. Tremblay said, they all have to see what they will need to do in 2019 and 2020, like waterfowl aerial surveys, for example.

Mr. Dunn said it would not be necessary and that it is expensive.

Ernest Moses said that it is not very efficient, either.

Mr. Dunn said that the problem with aerial surveys is that they are only efficient when carried out repetitively, which they cannot do. He said that Mr. Giroux said that if they did any aerial surveys, it would be in the fall.

Mr. Gilbert said that he would talk to him.

Mr. Dunn said that it would be good to see the differences between long-neck and resident geese.

Mr. Gilbert said it would be, if there is any money left.

Mr. Dunn said the collaring in Waskaganish sure was expensive.

Mr. Courcelles asked Mr. Gilbert what was happening with the refurbished collars.

Mr. Gilbert answered that the person he had been communicating with for 3 years was on paternity leave and that he was supposed to be back this week or next week. He said he would contact him. He added that he knows they have some collars there and that he has to talk to Mr. Giroux about implanting them next summer.

Mr. Courcelles said that, to summarize, Mr. Tremblay and Mr. Gilbert would update the terms of reference and send them to the research teams concerned, and then ask them to come back to the SC before the third week of March.

Ms. Saganash said that it is important that the researchers know that extending the program is still just a possibility and not a commitment.

Mr. Courcelles said that he would see with Mr. Tremblay what is expected from geomatics, and prepare a budget.

Mr. Dunn said that it is important that the document specify that there are external charges for Hydro-Québec.

Mr. Tremblay said that this would not include him and Ms. Bois-Charlebois, as they could not incur such charges. He added that it is different for each department and that Mr. Tremblay, Mr. Gilbert and Ms. Durocher charge their time under a specific code.

Mr. Cheezo said that the scientists tend to budget for more than what they really need and wondered whether they should ask them for their budget.

Mr. Tremblay said that they have to be more meticulous with the terms of reference they give them. He said that they can conduct more sampling than what is requested, as long as it does not cost more. He added that sometimes this works, but they did a lot more than what was expected, including more fieldwork, so maybe the research program is paying more for these extras.

Mr. Moses said that they also have to monitor things very closely.

3) FRED SHORT AND DANTE TORIO'S MANDATES (M. DUNN)

Mr. Dunn said that he had spoken with Dr. Short who found out the SC had contacted Dr. Torio. He said he told Dr. Short that nothing was official at that time, because the SC had not communicated anything official to anybody. He added that he went through all the issues the SC has with him [Dr. Short], one by one. Mr. Dunn said he explained to Dr. Short that the biggest problem is communication. He said that he has SC asked for something and Dr. Short is not providing it. He told Dr. Short that it is a lack of respect for the mandate and a lack of recognition of the SC's role in the process, and that it feels like he never wanted the SC and the other researchers in the project. Mr. Dunn said he told Dr. Short that he had defended him on numerous occasions, but that he could not defend him any longer. He told Dr. Short that he never intended to study the biomass even if the SC put it in the contract and that for him, that was the last straw. Mr. Dunn said that Dr. Torio insinuated that the SC were not clear about this mandate, Mr. Dunn explained that when they were in Wemindji, he went through the terms of reference with Dr. Torio point by point. Mr. Dunn said he told Dr. Short he was upset about the information given at the symposium about replanting eelgrass. He told him that it was unfair to the people who were there and it was also misleading people about the next step, when they are still wondering about the issues with this research. He said that Dr. Short asked what he could do to address those issues and Mr. Dunn answered that he was not sure he could do anything. Mr. Dunn told Dr. Short he could contact other members of the SC and talk to them. He said that the most important people to talk to are Mr. Courcelles and Mr. Tapiatic because they are with Niskamoon, but that at this point, he should talk to everybody. He said he knows Dr. Short spoke to Mr. Bobbish.

Mr. Bobbish said that Dr. Short had not spoken to him. He said he had received a message from Dr. Torio saying that Dr. Short wanted to talk to him. He added that he had texted Mr. Tapiatic and Mr. Dunn to tell them he did not feel comfortable talking to Dr. Short because he was not with Niskamoon. He said that Dr. Short did not call back.

Mr. Dunn said that people should not do anything they are not comfortable with.

Mr. Tapiatic said he told Dr. Short to call him last Friday.

Mr. Courcelles said he did the same because this week is really busy.

Mr. Dunn said Dr. Short tried to reach Louie Kanatewat.

Mr. Kanatewat said he tried to reach Dr. Short but he was not there. He said he waited for Dr. Short's call all afternoon but never got a call.

Mr. Dunn said that Dr. Short also talked to Ernie Rabbitskin saying that what he understood is that the SC wanted him out of the project and wanted Dr. Torio to continue. He said that he would not go back on the SC's vote at the last meeting because it was the right decision. He added that he is worried that the SC will not have time to put another team together for the eelgrass research. Mr. Dunn said that they would talk about this with Ms. Leblanc. He said that another issue is that Dr. Short has engaged with the land users and that if the new researchers do not do the same, the project will be a failure. He said that he does not mean the eelgrass study has to involve Dr. Short, but he is concerned about this aspect. He said that they cannot lose a step in the process and that he had stated this very clearly to Ms. Leblanc. Mr. Dunn said that she understood, but that it is one thing to understand it and another thing to do it.

In reference to Dr. Short, Mr. Tapiatic said that this was the first time he had seen such total disregard for a contract. He said he had told Mr. Dunn they would have to discuss it with him because he does not do what he says. He added that there was also a problem with the way he treated the Crees in the SC because he did not try to communicate with them, especially with the representatives of Niskamoon. He said that this is why the SC asked him to write the letter explaining why he does not do the things that were set out in the contract. He said that Dr. Short is the highest paid researcher on this project and that he should communicate better with the representatives.

William Blackned asked whether Dr. Short wrote the letter.

Mr. Dunn said he did and that the letter was shown during the last SC meeting. He said that Dr. Short was kind of downplaying what he did wrong. He added that two people—Mr. Cheezo and Mr. Lameboy—were absent from this meeting and said that he would like to hear from them.

Mr. Lameboy said that, as Mr. Dunn said, if there is no traditional knowledge, the project is a failure. He said that the eelgrass and geese are gone. He added that the researchers began the project 3 years ago and there is a lot missing. Mr. Lameboy said that the eelgrass started disappearing in the 80s and was gone by the 90s. He said that this is not only due to climate change. He said that he did not know much about Dr. Short, only that he had worked with Chisasibi many years ago. He added that he could not say much about Dr. Torio, since he had only known him for a couple of years.

Mr. Courcelles said that one good thing about Ms. Leblanc's presentation to the SC was that she was answering people's questions and that her presentation was really good.

Mr. Dunn said that she is finishing her PhD. He said that she worked for the task force. He added that she has been working in New Brunswick since then. Mr. Dunn confirmed she has seen geese eating eelgrass and she knows eelgrass and geese. He said that she approached us and said she can contribute, so he invited her to the SC meeting. He added the content of her presentation was based on Dr. Short's research. Mr. Dunn said he had told her that the problem with Dr. Short was the lack of communication and that he never gave a presentation like hers. He said that Dr. Short is saying that eelgrass is declining, but they already know that. He said the information from the trappers makes clear that the eelgrass is declining, but all Dr. Short is saying is that his research shows a decline in eelgrass.

Mr. Cheezo asked what the difference is in Dr. Short's budget.

Mr. Dunn answered that \$150,000 goes to him in salary and another \$100,000 goes to Dr. Torio and Nick Anderson in salary and tuition. He said that none of the other researchers have this.

Mr. Tapiatic said that Dr. Short has hardly been in the north and that he is sending Dr. Torio and Dr. Anderson.

Mr. Cheezo said that the first time he met Dr. Short, he was the only researcher who was meeting with the people in the communities. He said that no other researchers did that.

Mr. Dunn said he agreed that this is his big strength.

Mr. Moses said that before he joined the SC, he had heard things from Merlin Whiskeychan and said that the SC should have acted on this problem earlier, during the first year. He said that it took too long to act. He added that he agrees with Mr. Dunn, Mr. Tapiatic and everybody else on this aspect and that when there is a breach in the terms of reference, it is unprofessional. Mr. Moses said the SC should communicate more with the researchers. He said that they will not succeed if they do not work together.

Mr. Tremblay said that, as Mr. Cheezo mentioned, the committee recognizes that Dr. Short communicated well with the communities, but did not communicate as well with the SC concerning the research. He said that, although they agree that he works well with the Crees, the SC wants to stop to working with him for this reason; he does not deliver.

Mr. Tapiatic said that the SC cannot forget that Dr. Short is a businessman. He said his company is replanting eelgrass. Mr. Tapiatic said that last year, he told Mr. Dunn that if Dr. Short did not communicate better with the SC, he would not be the one asked to replant the eelgrass.

Mr. Dunn said he had already started establishing his position on this.

Mr. Tapiatic said that although Dr. Short thinks he will be the one to replant, there are other people in Canada and throughout the world who can do it. He said that he would not push for Dr. Short to do it, as he feels he has no respect for the SC.

Mr. Cheezo said that when he talked to Dr. Short, he said *you are the Crees, it is your territory, and you should be included more in this*. He said that none of the other researchers do that; they just come and go.

Mr. Tapiatic said that it is the first time this file is moving forward. He said that if they did not think they would have results after all this time, he would not have been part of the project. He said that the fact that Dr. Short is a businessman is affecting the research.

Mr. Dunn said that he had spoken with the other researchers and it seems to be a generational thing. He said that when a researcher talks to you about the salary first, it shows you something. He said that Dr. Short should still be given credit for putting the eelgrass issue on the map, but that most professors in Canada do not get paid if they are not teaching. He said that he had heard from some researchers that some universities do not pay a salary. Mr. Dunn said that the SC has to make it clear to the other researchers that they have to fill in the gaps, because they are losing a lot of community support. He said that he suggested having them conduct community outreach activities for two days before and after the fieldwork. He said that he understands that some of them are more comfortable with this idea than others. He added that it is clear that they have to focus on the traditional knowledge component this summer. He added that at this point, it would be unrealistic to think that Dr. Torio would be involved if Dr. Short were not, given that he had spoken to Dr. Short about the discussion they had had at the last meeting, although the SC said to wait.

4) **PRESENTATION OF M. LEBLANC, MCGILL UNIVERSITY**

Mr. Courcelles welcomed Ms. Leblanc and explained that her presence was new to Mr. Lameboy, who was a new SC member, and to Mr. Cheezo, who had been absent at the last meeting, but that for the rest of the group, this was the continuation of the first presentation she did.

Ms. Leblanc gave a presentation entitled *Coastal Habitat Comprehensive Research – Eelgrass Project*. A copy of the presentation is appended to the minutes. She said she was able to go over the documents covering the other research components, including Dr. Short's program, and that it was interesting. She explained that researchers usually focus on certain aspects of a subject because it is too complicated to cover all of it. She added that, for example, she is not an expert in remote sensing and that, although she does know something about it, it is a field that is changing really fast. Ms. Leblanc said that the light column affects the quality of a satellite image and has to be calibrated. She said that this calibration can only be done where eelgrass is present and that the satellite images can match what is in the field pretty accurately. Ms. Leblanc said that since clouds make mapping challenging, the images from past years cannot be accurately analyzed if it was cloudy when they were taken. She said that in Dr. Short's research, they combined images with two different resolutions. She said she understands why, but that they should have talked about alternatives.

Mr. Tremblay asked whether images can be taken from different months to recreate an image for the entire year. He said that it would probably be better than nothing.

Ms. Leblanc answered that she totally agreed and that she did not understand why Dr. Short's team would do what they did.

Mr. Dunn said that it is a communication issue. He said that the only justification given was cost. He said that high-resolution images are really expensive, and Dr. Short's team said that by waiting to buy them, you can get the images at a lower cost. He said he has no idea if this is true or not.

Ms. Leblanc said that even if it is true, this approach is hugely disadvantageous, especially if you do not study the light in the field. She said that every research project has a particular approach, but that they should have tried the method where there is a lot of eelgrass to see if the method passed the test. She said that to come back to Mr. Tremblay's comment, the images for each area should be taken on dates as close together as possible.

Ms. Saganash asked which approach Ms. Leblanc was referring to when she talked about other alternatives.

Ms. Leblanc answered that if it is a cost issue, they could have selected certain areas. She said that Dr. Short's team did put the data on the presence and absence of eelgrass online and asked whether they had any further details.

Mr. Dunn answered that for some sites they have video where they established an underwater transect. He said that from his perspective on what Dr. Short presented at the symposium, the method was good but only for three sites. He said that he looked at the other sites and it was awful. Mr. Dunn said he did not see how this can be used as a method. He said that they also had 12 sensors, each one metre long, measuring the light between the top and the bottom.

Ms. Leblanc said she understood that they did have light measurements, then.

Mr. Dunn answered they did, but only at the bottom.

Mr. Courcelles said that the other problem is that when there is debris, it changes the measurement, so you have to go back to the field.

Ms. Leblanc said that measuring light in the water is the approach used to correct the images. She said that the reason it is important to have detailed image is that if the maps are not accurate, it throws off all the research carried out using those particular maps.

Mr. Dunn said that the SC never had the full set of data. He added that the way the research is done, it does not give you any way of correlating the data with traditional knowledge, because you do not know who selected the site. He said that you have data on the presence and absence of eelgrass, but no background information. Mr. Dunn said that he knows Dr. Short's team used the map from the 70s, but he never quite understood how they chose the sites to sample.

Mr. Cheezo said that they chose the site with the elders.

Mr. Dunn asked if they talked with the elders to see where the eelgrass beds were.

Mr. Cheezo said they did.

Ms. Leblanc said that letting them guide the researchers is a good approach.

Mr. Dunn said they worked with Dr. Short for 3 years and that they still do not know how he identified the eelgrass beds.

Mr. Gilbert said that when Dr. Short gave his presentation, he just said the eelgrass had covered 80% of the study area in the past. He said that this cannot be true and that it is underestimating the area because of the low tide, the years when the pictures were taken and some other factors. He said that Dr. Short did not present those factors and it was wrong to say that the area covered had decreased from 80% to 30%.

Mr. Cheezo said that the Hydro-Québec study states that there was eelgrass in some areas, but there was none when they went back later.

Mr. Gilbert asked if Mr. Cheezo was using the fact that Hydro-Québec found eelgrass when they conducted sampling in 2009 but did not find any when they went back to the same site later as an example.

Mr. Cheezo answered this is what he meant.

Mr. Gilbert said that this happens, because the eelgrass beds can change really quickly, and that Hydro-Québec has always said that.

Mr. Dunn said that Ms. Leblanc had said that the eelgrass had even moved within the span of one summer.

Ms. Leblanc said this was correct.

Mr. Dunn said that here was eelgrass in the images taken 5 years ago, but none in the same location five years later. It is a bad assumption to say that it disappeared.

Mr. Kanatewat said that he has great knowledge of his trapline, CH38, because he is there every year. He said that the last time he saw abundant eelgrass on his trapline was in the 1990s, maybe 1995. He added that every year he has gone there, he has seen the eelgrass decline more and more.

Mr. Lameboy said that the water has changed and that there is more fresh water than in the past. He said that there was more salt water at the mouth of the river (Grande Rivière) back in the 1970s. He added that 4 years ago, at 30 km for the river to the north, the instruments measured the layer of fresh water at 15 feet. He said that he tasted the water, as did his parents, and they said they could boil tea from that water. Mr. Lameboy said that his dad had predicted that and knew that when the fresh water came into the bay, the eelgrass would decrease. He said that the

geese do not touch the eelgrass there and still would not touch it even if it were replanted, as long as the salinity does not change. He added that eelgrass only grows at a specific level of salinity.

Ms. Leblanc said that to overcome the problem of the current mapping, a trial pass could be conducted over a certain area.

Mr. Dunn asked how much it would cost.

Mr. Gilbert said that for an area the same size as the one at La Romaine, it would cost \$50,000.

Mr. Dunn said that that is an expensive photo.

Mr. Gilbert said the area at La Romaine is about 6 square km. He said they selected the lowest tide in July and August to have the clearest picture.

Mr. Dunn said that you need people in the field to see when the water is clear. He added that some land users said that there is sediment in some places, like with erosion on the Grande Rivière.

Mr. Tremblay said that it is not just in the Grande Rivière, it is happening in other rivers too.

Mr. Dunn said that this was true and that there are some areas like this in the Eastmain as well.

Mr. Bobbish asked why Mr. Dunn did not agree with Dr. Short's interview with the CBC.

Mr. Dunn answered that the issue he has is not whether or not it is true and that it could, in fact, be true. He said that Dr. Short talked about things that are under the other research team's responsibility and he should have told the CBC to go talk to them.

Mr. Bobbish said that his point is that the Eastmain and Rupert rivers are not the same as before and that the bay is having a stronger influence on the water.

Mr. Dunn said that this is definitely true in the Eastmain, but it is not so clear in the Rupert.

Mr. Bobbish said that there is an effect when the tide comes in.

Mr. Moses said that there is a lot more water coming in from James Bay and it has an effect on both sides of Rupert Bay. He added that it is very visible. He said that you can see that there is less water and that water is coming in from the bay. He added that there is less vegetation on both sides of the bay. Mr. Moses said that they are very blessed in Waskaganish because there are two rivers flowing into the bay, the Broadback and Nottaway.

Mr. Gilbert said that when François Bilodeau gave a presentation at the last Monitoring Committee meeting, the water was browner in the Rupert than in other rivers. He said that this summer, during the Hydro-Québec eelgrass study, they will take photos from a higher point and will provide these photos to a third party if useful. He added that they use these photos to approximately delineate the eelgrass beds. Mr. Gilbert said that the images are already paid for by Hydro-Québec and the resolution is really high. He said that what they do is wait for the perfect day and the low tide and that they can wait as long as two weeks for the best day to get the best image. He added that taking these photos is already included in the study mandate. He said that Hydro-Québec has images from all the years they conducted the eelgrass study, and that they are available if the researchers want to use them.

Ms. Leblanc said that the best way to study the beds is to combine all the information you have.

Mr. Gilbert said that what is complicated is that some images were taken from helicopters, some were taken from boats and some were a combination of both, and that he had not looked at all the available data.

Ms. Leblanc said that she remembered that a study was conducted in the Bay of Many Islands in 1994, 1995 and 1996. Ms. Leblanc said that he had retired and she did not know where the pictures are now. She said she asked if they had pictures of James Bay, but they do not know where they are. She said that to try to assess the eelgrass in past years, you have to rely on all the information you have.

Mr. Tremblay said that the mandate of the study is not to go back in time. He said that they do not have enough information to do that. He added that if there were a way to go back in time it would be good, but that the mandate is to see what is happening with eelgrass now and find out why it is not growing.

Ms. Leblanc said that it is sometimes useful to look at the past to see the pattern of change so you can deduce what is happening in the present.

Mr. Tremblay asked if studying past patterns can give an answer the question of what is happening now.

Ms. Leblanc answered that it does not, but it gives you an idea of what is happening on a larger scale. She said that, although she understood what Mr. Tremblay was saying, sometimes you have to step back to better assess what is happening in the present.

Mr. Kanatewat said that it is wrong to say that the eelgrass is not growing at all. He said that it is growing, but the geese do not come to eat what little eelgrass there is. He said that the geese just do not bother. He said he wondered if it is because the eelgrass is no good or at least, not as good as in the 1970s. He said that the geese do not stay as long as they used to.

Mr. Lameboy said that, as was said earlier, they have to go back through the years of the decline to understand what is happening.

Mr. Tremblay said that they may have satellite images of the past, but it will not tell them why it has changed. He said that his understanding of the mandate is that we need to find out what is happening now, so he did not think that putting all their efforts into what happened in the past will address the Crees' concerns. He added that this is always an interesting thing to do, but they cannot spend too much energy on it.

Mr. Lameboy said that with all the monitoring Hydro-Québec has done on eelgrass, they already knew the eelgrass was changing. He asked why they did not tell people this.

Mr. Gilbert said that before 1999, there was no sign of decline where Hydro-Québec studied the biomass. He added that from what he read and learned from his predecessors, Hydro-Québec only became aware of the question in 1996, when they found out from the Crees that the eelgrass was declining.

Mr. Lameboy said that there are different layers of water salinity. He said that in his area, the eelgrass is short and the water salinity is higher. He added that two years ago, there was a very low tide for a day or two and long-neck geese were feeding there.

Mr. Cheezo said that Hydro-Québec keeps saying they do not know why the eelgrass is declining, but the elders know. He said that they knew that something was coming and they keep saying it has to do with the dams. He added that when you change the water it changes everything.

Ms. Leblanc said that she understands Mr. Tremblay's perspective on doing a retrospective, and said that if there is any available information, they should still use it. Ms. Leblanc continued her presentation. She said that there are different ways of doing a health assessment. She added that for James Bay, the better way to do it is through field surveys.

Mr. Dunn asked Ms. Leblanc for her opinion concerning Dr. Short's mesocosm studies. He said that some people raised the concern that the mesocosms he studied are in New Hampshire and the results cannot be applied to James Bay.

Ms. Leblanc said that knowledge of what is affecting eelgrass growth has already been established, so she does not think this is a good approach.

Mr. Dunn asked whether it was correct to say that there is more salt water in New Hampshire than in James Bay.

Mr. Tremblay said that salinity in James Bay can be as high as 33 PSU.

Mr. Lameboy said that this is not the case where the eelgrass is.

Mr. Tremblay said he agreed.

Mr. Dunn said that part of the issue the oceanographers raised is that everywhere they looked, the salinity was below what Dr. Short studied in the mesocosms. He said that based on Dr. Short's logic, there would not be any eelgrass anywhere.

Ms. Leblanc said that this concern was raised by a researcher in British Columbia and agreed that studying mesocosms is not the right way to get the results they want.

Mr. Dunn said that frankly, he thought Dr. Short did this part of the study because there were tanks there and it gave his students something to do. He said he wondered whether there was any added value to this study.

Ms. Leblanc said that when you want to study plant productivity, the key to success is selecting the right sites for the field survey. She said that you want a contrast between where the eelgrass is dense and where it is not and you need a lot of samples. She said that a 10-samples site is not enough. She added that finding the best spots is a challenge, and you want to get feedback from the locals so that you know where eelgrass beds are. Ms. Leblanc said that somebody had raised the issue of conducting the surveys in winter. She said that this is a good idea, but she did not know if the sensors would be efficient in winter.

Mr. Tremblay answered that doing it in winter is possible, but you cannot take measurements as often. He said you could not do it everywhere, but it might be possible at some sites.

Ms. Leblanc said that she read a study showing that in subarctic regions, eelgrass keeps growing all year long, but at a very slow pace in comparison with eelgrass in southern regions. She said it was interesting to read and added that it would be interesting for this mandate too, but very time consuming. Ms. Leblanc said that when cell analyses are conducted, the biomass also needs to be studied. She said you only need to take one biomass sample with roots per year to see how the plant is growing. She added that you get a lot of information from the eelgrass beds. She said that you have to be careful, because there are many things to consider in researching what is affecting eelgrass growth at a particular site. Ms. Leblanc continued the presentation by talking about the potential use of drones to take pictures and about potential collaborators on the study.

Mr. Dunn asked Ms. Leblanc what her vision for the study would be.

Ms. Leblanc answered that it depends on the objectives. She said it would be relevant to redo or revise Dr. Short's maps and to work with Hydro-Québec and the locals. She said this could be done with both of the proposed researchers.

Mr. Courcelles asked Ms. Leblanc if she was interested in getting involved in the project, as he understood she was busy.

Ms. Leblanc answered that she is very interested, and even more so with regard to the cellular study, because she thinks that this is a glaring gap in the current data. She said it really depends on what the SC's direction is.

Mr. Courcelles said that he wanted to be clear that the SC had made the decision not to renew Dr. Short's mandate. He added that the SC had also decided to request that the research mandate be renewed for two years, until December 31, 2020.

Ms. Leblanc said she had spoken with both of the proposed researchers and that they are available.

Mr. Dunn asked Ms. Leblanc how much experience they have with Indigenous people.

Ms. Leblanc answered that they have none and that this aspect of the study would be her role. She said they are both willing to do it, that they understand it is an innovative project and that they are interested in learning.

Mr. Dunn said that he took this to mean that she is willing to participate in the traditional knowledge part of the study. He said that it is not possible to separate traditional knowledge from eelgrass, because there is a significant overlap between them.

Ms. Leblanc said that she would be willing.

Mr. Moses asked what languages the researchers speak.

Ms. Leblanc answered that both speak English, but she does not think they speak French.

Mr. Tapiatic said that he really appreciated the information Ms. Leblanc gave and seeing how Dr. Short's data can be improved.

Mr. Lameboy said he wanted to clarify something about traditional knowledge. He said that there are 30 traplines and they all have different traditional knowledge. He said that they cannot apply the information they gathered on a Waskaganish trapline to another trapline. He said that, for example, Chisasibi people hunt in the fall, but he does not think Mr. Moses does that. He said that they have to be careful with this aspect.

5) NEW MANDATE FOR THE EELGRASS STUDY

Mr. Dunn said that since Mr. Cheezo and Mr. Lameboy were not at the last meeting of the SC, he asked them if they had any comment about Ms. Leblanc.

Mr. Blackned said he was mesmerized by her and asked why she had come back to give another presentation to the SC.

Mr. Dunn answered that the first presentation was more general, and this one was more detailed.

Mr. Cheezo said she gave a good presentation and that, as Mr. Moses had said, the SC should have intervened during the first year of the program. He said that if someone asked him whether the SC would hire her or not, it would a bit early to answer, but she would be a good candidate.

Mr. Lameboy said that it was the first time he had seen such a detailed presentation. He said it looks like she understands eelgrass and that she is a good candidate.

Mr. Dunn said he agreed with Mr. Cheezo that the SC has to take responsibility for the problems they have with the research. He said that Dr. Short is no longer their responsibility and they can now say that they are sticking with what they originally committed to.

Mr. Tremblay asked what the next step was. He said that Ms. Leblanc cannot be responsible for the entire eelgrass study and that the SC has to award the contract quickly.

Mr. Dunn said he proposed to develop real terms of reference, specific enough to cover what the SC needs, but a little open given the short time they have. He said the next step would be to revise the document as a group and send Ms. Leblanc the approved document to allow her to prepare a proposal for the next 2 years.

Mr. Tremblay asked who would prepare the terms of reference.

Mr. Dunn said that the SC had to discuss this and that Ms. Leblanc said she would need the document in the next two weeks.

Mr. Moses said they should revise the terms of reference that were sent to Dr. Short to see which objectives were met and which were not.

Mr. Dunn said that there were no terms of reference with Dr. Short and that it was more like a guideline. He said that terms of reference are more precise.

Mr. Gilbert said that they just have to be sure what they want Ms. Leblanc to do, because she covered a lot of things in her presentation.

Mr. Dunn said that he was thinking about cartography, productivity and traditional knowledge, because all this is clearly linked. He said that it will also need to be linked to what Dr. Short's team did, to make sure that what is usable is used.

Mr. Gilbert asked if the SC wanted to include traditional knowledge in the same mandate, since it was not done for the other aspects of the research.

Mr. Dunn answered that he thought it would have to be this way for the eelgrass study.

Mr. Gilbert asked if they knew whether the researchers would do it.

Mr. Dunn said that Ms. Leblanc would be responsible communication between the other researchers and the communities.

Mr. Gilbert said he wished Carine Durocher were there to comment on this, because they had not incorporated traditional knowledge into any of the other components of the research. He asked whether the researchers would have to gather the traditional knowledge as well as study the eelgrass.

Mr. Dunn said they would not. He said that they will work together and that Ms. Leblanc would be involved with the traditional knowledge team.

Mr. Tremblay asked if she is comfortable doing this, as she has not yet completed her PhD.

Mr. Dunn answered that she would not be handling the biomass component, but the other researchers she proposed would. He said that she would not be leading the whole program, but that it would involve 3 universities, i.e., the two she mentioned, plus the one her supervisor is from. He added that her supervisor would delegate some of the work to her, so he would be the official leader and she the unofficial one. He told the SC members that this was a proposal and to raise any concerns they had.

Mr. Tremblay said that they will have to have a clear discussion with the researchers to make sure they understand the goals of the study.

Mr. Dunn said that this is why they need to prepare terms of reference.

Mr. Tremblay said that the SC will have to speak with the researchers to be sure everything is linked, to avoid having the same problem they had with Dr. Short. He said that they have to enlist everyone's cooperation from the very beginning. He added that this is going to be a challenge and that it is feasible, but they have to be clear at the beginning.

Mr. Dunn said that they should put this in the terms of reference.

Mr. Blackned said that the project is at year 3 and they have not touched the traditional knowledge aspect yet.

Mr. Dunn said that this is why they have to talk about this seriously and take the opportunity to link traditional knowledge with the eelgrass study. He said that they are running out of time and have to study traditional knowledge this year. He said that Ms. Leblanc does not have time to do the eelgrass study, but it looks to him as though this is a good opportunity to combine both aspects.

Mr. Blackned said that he did not know if there is sufficient time to complete the study.

Mr. Dunn said he did not know either.

Mr. Courcelles said they have two years.

Mr. Cheezo said that this knowledge goes back 10,000 years. He asked whether the researchers will share what they gather or not.

Mr. Dunn answered that they have to do the research in 4 communities with people representing each of them, and that they have to make this clear. He said that each time Niskamoon asks CERRI for ideas, they come up with a ridiculous budget or unfeasible demands. He said that if they cannot share with the universities, there is a problem. He explained that they sent a proposal to CERRI and they came back with a budget equalling the budget of the whole study. He said that they say they do not want to collaborate with others and this is a big problem for the SC. Mr. Dunn said that at the last meeting they had with them, they said they would give them (CERRI) some money to do the study in Chisasibi, but that the SC would do the work with the other communities.

Mr. Moses said that people in Waskaganish also have concerns about eelgrass and that some of them want the study to include their knowledge. He said he would love to have Ms. Leblanc on the project. He added that he cannot speak for Chisasibi, but he thinks they would love to see progress this summer. Mr. Moses said that he does not know what is behind the story, but they have to move forward with the study with the budget they have. He said that they ended up with Dr. Short and that it is a good mandate for Ms. Leblanc to pursue.

Mr. Courcelles asked who will do the study in the other communities.

Mr. Dunn answered that Ms. Durocher had suggested a few people but that he was not sure about her suggestions.

Mr. Lameboy asked Mr. Dunn if he had received a proposal from CERRI for Chisasibi.

Mr. Dunn answered that he had and that they had asked for \$5 million. He said he cannot give them that.

Mr. Lameboy said that there is a big part missing in the study.

Mr. Dunn said he knows, but they are stuck because CERRI does not want the SC to do the study but they want \$5 million to do it, and that is not possible either. He said that they do not have \$5 million to give them. He added that CERRI keeps coming back and asking him to send a proposal, but he cannot because he has to ask his superior. Mr. Dunn said that he will offer them something, see them in a year, and hope they cooperate.

Mr. Tapiatic said Niskamoon asked a third party how much it would cost, hypothetically, and they said it would be around \$500,000, not \$5 million.

Mr. Courcelles said the SC understands that the issue is different for Chisasibi.

Mr. Dunn said that they would set up a committee for the other communities and have Ernie Rabbitskin and Anderson Jolly, who works for the CNG, coordinate it. He added that Mr. Rabbitskin would work on traditional knowledge full time and that Mr. Jolly would be field coordinator. He said that they can build a team with a cartographer from the CNG, and recruit some young people to help with the fieldwork. Mr. Dunn said that they would build a team made up mostly of Cree members and Ms. Leblanc. He said that he was hoping to talk to Ms. Durocher about this.

Mr. Courcelles said they would call her the next day.

Mr. Dunn said he would, but wanted to see what Ms. Leblanc proposed first. He said that he does not think the people Ms. Durocher suggested are bad, but he found they are not right for this research. He added that he does not know whether this was the right way to go, but he tried getting around this impasse. He said that it seemed to him it is too risky to separate the two studies.

Mr. Tremblay said his concern is that the SC tried to study traditional knowledge for 3 years without success. He said that Ms. Durocher would probably agree that the SC needs to establish a modicum of cooperation between CERRI and the other researchers and that it has to be done properly. He added that CERRI have to at least agree to use the same questionnaire; otherwise, they'll be comparing apple and oranges. Mr. Tremblay said that his other concern is that they are not respecting the agreement in saying that neither Hydro-Québec, nor the Crees would lead the studies.

Mr. Cheezo said that the Crees from Chisasibi represent only a part of the Crees.

Mr. Dunn asked Mr. Cheezo if he meant that they should build some teams for the other communities only.

Mr. Courcelles said that there is a connection to what happened with the Romaine project on the Innu side. He said that they did not want any researchers and organized it so that traditional knowledge was gathered by each community.

Mr. Dunn asked whether the SC members agreed that a team made up of researchers and Ms. Leblanc should be established and that the field coordination should be carried out by the Crees for communities other than Chisasibi.

Mr. Tremblay said he agreed that they need the Crees on the ground and to have some credibility, so that makes sense.

Ms. Saganash asked what other researchers Mr. Dunn was referring to.

Mr. Dunn said that he was referring to the researchers from Manitoba. He said that Fikret Berkes has retired, so it would be his successor, Iain Davidson-Hunt.

Ms. Saganash said that she had various profiles of experienced master's students in Indigenous studies to propose.

Mr. Dunn said to just keep in mind that many researchers are uncomfortable working in Eeyou Istchee because of Colin Scott.

Ms. Saganash said that this is why the SC could look at some profiles and communicate with them. She said that an Indigenous woman would not be intimidated by Colin Scott.

Ms. Saganash, Mr. Courcelles, Mr. Tapiatic and Mr. Dunn agreed to meet with Ms. Durocher the following day to talk about the various possibilities.

Mr. Courcelles said that, based on the chosen group proposal, Niskamoon will be able to go to Chisasibi and show CERRI the budget they have.

Mr. Dunn agreed.

6) FIELD WORK LOGISTIC

a. Update (E. Rabbitskin)

Mr. Dunn said that Mr. Rabbitskin was really busy and would not be able to call and update them.

b. Barrels of fuel and coordination between Hydro-Québec, the researchers and Niskamoon (A. Tremblay)

Mr. Dunn said that there have been some difficult exchanges in the past weeks. He said that they cannot afford to have this kind of situation in this project because they have so much work to do. He added that they have to figure out how to address the problems. Mr. Dunn explained there were two issues. He said that first, Petronor does not treat Niskamoon the same as it does Hydro-Québec. Secondly, Niskamoon's director of finance is gone and they have had a lot of problems since he left. He said that this is why he said they need the information about how many fuel barrels are needed as soon as possible. He said that Mr. Rabbitskin is doing the best he can, so it gets really frustrating for him too. He added that there was also a problem with Université du Québec à Rimouski, as they had booked a helicopter at the same time as other users. Mr. Dunn said that communication needs to be better and that his role is to make sure they are being careful

about booking for land users and then cancelling, because they do not want them to feel like they are not important. He said that if researchers are booked at the same time as land users, they have to talk to them and ask whether the land users will let us do the work. He added that he did not appreciate the email he got about this, as there were a whole lot of complaints. He said that the weather has been really bad up north. Mr. Dunn said that Guy Bouchard took longer than expected, but most of the delay was due to problems with the chainsaw and the helicopter, as well as other problems with the fieldwork. He added that Charlie Sealhunter was supposed to go out but changed his mind. He said that Mr. Rabbitskin called him and asked him if they could hire people from Wemindji, but they had no choice but to offer the work to Mr. Sealhunter first. Mr. Dunn said that the first point is that they need to improve communications and the second point is that Mr. Rabbitskin needs help. He said that he wondered if they could get this help from Marie-Claude Pelletier-Leclerc.

Mr. Tremblay said that he does not want to blame anybody and that he just wants to figure out a way to fix the problem. He said they need to improve how they work with the Crees, because ISMER is frustrated and the Crees are too. He agreed with Mr. Dunn that some actions need to be adjusted. Mr. Tremblay said that this is a Niskamoon mandate and not a Hydro-Québec one. He said they have to deal with the problems at Niskamoon.

Mr. Dunn said that in that case, Mr. Tremblay and the researchers have to respect the time it takes and work with the timeframe.

Mr. Tremblay said he understands the problems at Niskamoon, but they do not always know very far in advance if they will need a helicopter. He said that with Ms. Pelletier-Leclerc, they estimate the number of fuel barrels they will need, deliver more, and then return the unused ones after the work is finished. He said that this is what he thinks the researchers should do. He added that they have underestimated the time they will need to do the work and the constraints related to the weather and the Cree workers, so if things do not go as planned on a particular day, they get worried and stressed about finishing the work.

Mr. Courcelles said that for the next contracts starting in July, if they need, say, 10 days to do the work, they should plan for 14 days. He said that this would not only prevent delays, but would also enable them to go talk to people in the communities, as Mr. Cheezo said before.

Mr. Tremblay said that the researchers are willing to spend more time in the communities, but they need the contacts.

Mr. Dunn said that they do contact people, as stated in the email he received from Virginie Galindo. He said he could ask Mr. Rabbitskin to change the way he works with the Université du Québec à Rimouski. He said that when it comes to their planning, he would like to see more foresight in the schedule. He added that when Ms. Galindo and Mr. Rabbitskin do not agree on something, there are some arguments. He added that Niskamoon told the researchers to have a plan B ready for when plan A does not work, and to not wait around for the issues to be resolved.

Mr. Tremblay said it works both ways. He said he agrees that calling for barrels the day before they are needed is not the best way to go, but that they need some flexibility.

A discussion took place on the events that happened in Chisasibi over the past month and about the work to be carried out this month.

Mr. Dunn said that he did not want to say that things are not working, but that things need to be improved between Mr. Rabbitskin and the researchers.

Mr. Tremblay said that he agreed, but that this is not the first time problems like this have happened and it is frustrating when the Crees say they will do something and then do not.

Mr. Dunn said that it is frustrating for Niskamoon too.

Mr. Courcelles said that if the researchers allowed for a few more days in planning their fieldwork, they would not be so stressed.

Mr. Tremblay agreed.

Mr. Dunn said that it is different for each trapline and that they are a bit unlucky that a lot of the work is being done in the Bay of Many Islands area. He said that it is frustrating for all of them when the Cree workers change their minds, but they have to figure a way to resolve this because Mr. Sealhunter will not change it.

Mr. Tremblay said that maybe the solution is planning for more time than necessary.

Mr. Cheezo asked who is in charge of the logistics.

Mr. Dunn answered that it is Mr. Rabbitskin.

Mr. Moses said that he thinks Mr. Rabbitskin does a great job. He said that he calls him in advance and that the research teams do the same. He added that Mr. Courcelles is right when he says that more time should be planned, because the weather is unpredictable sometimes.

Mr. Dunn said that to be honest, Mr. Rabbitskin was discouraged by the email he received because he thought that people think he is not doing a good job. He said that a message or correspondence letting know he is doing a good job would be good, because he is equally frustrated by things, but he feels that people think he is not doing a good job.

Mr. Tremblay said this is not what he said.

Mr. Dunn said that Mr. Tremblay should talk with Mr. Rabbitskin about this.

Mr. Cheezo said that Mr. Rabbitskin is doing a good job, but he needs to put his foot down and tell the researchers what they have to do. He added that he would tell him he is doing well when he sees him.

Mr. Dunn asked what measures would be taken to address all this.

Mr. Courcelles said that Mr. Dunn should tell the researchers to include additional days in the 2019–2020 budget. He said that this way, there will be no reason for them to say that they only have a budget for 10 days and then get stressed because their flight tickets are booked after those 10 days are up. He added that they will have flexibility to do their work. Mr. Courcelles said he would ask Valérie Groison for Ms. Pelletier-Leclerc's help.

Mr. Tremblay said that they just have to figure it out how to make sure she has the time to work with Mr. Rabbitskin, and then establish an agreement between Ms. Pelletier-Leclerc, Mr. Rabbitskin and himself. He added that if Ms. Pelletier-Leclerc is involved in the file, and he would not mind stepping away from the logistics planning.

Mr. Dunn asked Mr. Tremblay if he would contact Mr. Rabbitskin.

Mr. Tremblay answered that he was doing it now.

A discussion took place about fuel barrel needs over the next months.

Mr. Blackned asked what they should do with the empty barrels.

Mr. Dunn answered that they should leave them there and Petronor will pick them up; otherwise, Niskamoon has to pay for them.

A discussion took place about the possibility of labelling the barrels with stickers with Niskamoon's name. Mr. Courcelles asked Mr. Tapiatic if he could see to this with Shirley Chiskamish.

7) COMMUNICATION PLAN, ACTION PLAN AND NEWSLETTER

a. Upcoming actions and responsible

Emily Sinave said that the young people and elders would want more communication about the project.

Ms. Saganash put the communication plan on the screen. She said that up to now, there has only been the newsletter and the workshop in Chisasibi. She added that she did not think any other initiatives have been implemented, since Cynthia Taylor does not work for Niskamoon anymore.

Mr. Moses requested that the plan be sent to him by email.

Ms. Sinave said she would send it.

Mr. Courcelles said that there is nobody at Niskamoon to do this work.

Ms. Saganash said that once someone is hired, they can do another newsletter. She asked what the timeframe is for hiring someone at Niskamoon.

Mr. Courcelles said that it took 4 to 5 months to fill the last job offer.

Ms. Saganash said that the researchers will need to provide a summary for the next issues.

Mr. Courcelles said that Mr. Tremblay was in charge of asking for a summary of water quality and oceanography.

Mr. Tremblay asked whether it was OK if they received the summary in April.

Mr. Courcelles answered that it was.

Ms. Saganash said that she did not think they should wait 4 months for the next issue and that they should do it themselves. She added that CNG has someone at the office to do this.

Mr. Tremblay said that it will be difficult for March because Paul del Giorgio is really busy, but that April should be okay.

Ms. Sinave asked if Dr. del Giorgio has a copy of the other newsletter.

Mr. Tremblay answered that he did not and asked Ms. Sinave to send him one.

Ms. Saganash asked whether the people around the table wanted something special in the next issue. She asked if water quality and oceanography were O.K.

Mr. Tremblay said that maybe they should write something explaining what the committee does.

Ms. Sinave said that there could be a little square for the meetings and the symposium, for example. She said they had issued a press release before the symposium. She added that they should probably have another square announcing that the research is to be extended.

Mr. Tapiatic said that this would be a good idea, but only after they've received the answers of the 3 decision-makers.

Ms. Sinave agreed.

Ms. Saganash said that once they produce the report on the workshop, they could submit a summary or article to The Cree Hunter and Trapper magazine. She asked Mr. Dunn if he has a template for the newsletter.

Mr. Dunn said that the last newsletter did not seem to get to all the communities. He asked the Cree representatives if they had received it.

Mr. Cheezo answered that had not received them because there was a problem with the boxes.

Mr. Moses said he had received them.

Ms. Saganash reminded the attendees that when they receive the boxes of newsletters, they have to distribute them in the communities.

Mr. Dunn said he thought Ms. Taylor had a template, but he did not know where it was.

Ms. Saganash said that they could send something to The Cree Hunter and Trapper.

Mr. Dunn said that Mr. Rabbitskin had given a presentation to the CTA in Waskaganish the day before.

Ms. Saganash said that it would be good to tell it to the SC members when someone gives a presentation.

Ms. Sinave said that educational tools were mentioned during the workshop.

Mr. Dunn said that somebody needs to take the lead on that.

Ms. Sinave asked whether they want to produce a presentation, a pamphlet or something else.

Mr. Dunn said that it should be very basic, i.e., explain what science is and what traditional knowledge is and how they can work together.

Mr. Tremblay said that they can use the mobile lab.

Mr. Moses said that they recently held a science and technology salon in Waskaganish and the young people gave a presentation on peat moss. He said that they could target the Student Affairs technicians and the Cree Nation Youth Council.

Mr. Dunn asked Ms. Sinave if she could lead this project.

Ms. Sinave agreed.

Mr. Dunn said that the research is too abstract for kids, so they have to be more general. He said that he was sure the Student Affairs technicians can help them with something.

Ms. Sinave asked if this would also be designed for high schools.

Those present said it would.

Ms. Sinave asked whether an internship is still something they want to do.

Ms. Saganash asked if Virginie Galindo did anything about that.

Mr. Dunn said to ask her. He asked what additional measures could be taken to better communicate information about the project.

Mr. Tapiatic said they could use Facebook.

Mr. Dunn said they just need someone to lead this.

Ms. Sinave asked if there is a page they could feed.

Mr. Dunn said that they could use Niskamoon's page, but since they have no communication officer at the moment, it is a little complicated.

Ms. Saganash said the CNG has a page, and they could share information. She added that the CTA, Niskamoon and the CNG could be responsible for publishing the information related to the research.

Mr. Cheezo said they could have something that little kids could color in.

Ms. Sinave said that she found a version on eelgrass and that she will share it with the SC members.

Mr. Dunn said that those things can be very effective. He added that in the corner of the page, you could write an explanation and add a contact.

Mr. Cheezo said that it is a good thing to bring the kids and adults together.

Ms. Sinave asked if there are any more presentations they want to do or that the researchers would like to do.

Mr. Dunn answered that this really has to be at their own initiative, but that the representatives could play a role.

Ms. Saganash said she had a suggestion. She said that for the communication with high schools, they could do a presentation in the science classes. She added that the representatives could contact them and then organize something with the researchers to present.

Mr. Courcelles said he wanted to talk about the symposium minutes. He said they have to distinguish between the workshops, the minutes of the presentation and the interventions. He asked how the SC members want to see the minutes. He added that he did not want to blame anyone, but the translation was not so efficient and they were losing a lot of information when Cree people were talking. Mr. Courcelles said that they have some notes, but very incomplete, and that he was afraid of not reporting exactly what people had said.

Ms. Saganash asked if something was recorded.

Mr. Courcelles said they thought it was but it was not.

Mr. Dunn said they thought it was part of the translation package, but it was not. He added that it was broadcast to the community, but they did not record the broadcast.

Ms. Saganash asked if somebody else besides Ms. Bois-Charlebois and Mr. Courcelles took notes.

Mr. Courcelles said that, personally, he would not include names in the minutes. He said that Ms. Bois-Charlebois is going to resume. He added that they have a participants' list. Mr. Courcelles said that he will share his notes with Ms. Bois-Charlebois and they will share them with the SC members. He added that it may not be perfect, but it will be better than nothing.

Ms. Saganash asked the people around the table to share the pictures they have and said she would share hers too.

Ms. Bois-Charlebois said that COMEX had sent some. She added that she would see with Ms. Sinave who would complete the report on the workshop and the minutes.

b. Discussion on the way to improve the communication between the researchers, the SC and the communities

This item was addressed under item 7 a.

c. Role of Zou Zou Kuzyk in the communication of the results

Mr. Dunn said that Dr. Kuzyk had sent an email about the extension and asked what form of communication she should carry out. He said she already has a lot to do. He added that we can ask her to handle communication between the SC and the other researchers. Mr. Dunn said it was useful to have her on the phone during an SC meeting and asked whether they would like to call

her again during the next meetings. He added that Ms. Kuzyk is very careful not to overstep her bounds and that she realized the relationship with Dr. Short was complicated. He said Dr. Kuzyk realizes that she has two roles; one as a research team member and one as leader of all the research teams. Mr. Dunn said Dr. Kuzyk would appreciate it if the SC would define the role they want her to play. He that perhaps they should also include her name in the terms of reference.

d. Proposal of CERRI regarding communication

Mr. Dunn showed CERRI's request to centralize the research and Niskamoon's response on screen. The documents are appended to the minutes. He said that CERRI wants to conduct the research alone and said the message is that Niskamoon is not comfortable having them in charge of communication.

Mr. Courcelles said that they do the same thing as the CNG, they provide the reports and the correspondence they have with them.

Mr. Cheezo asked if CERRI would not think that the SC agrees they are the only communication channel if they shared the information with them. He said that secondly, he does not understand why the other communities' communications should pass through CERRI.

Mr. Dunn said that if CERRI wants to collaborate with the SC, that is great, but if they want to take over the mandate, the answer is no. He said that the SC has a mandate and they have to answer to several communities, not just one. He added that if CERRI wants to do things by themselves, the answer will always be no. Mr. Dunn said that if CERRI wants to see the SC's presentations he will share them with them, because there is no secret.

Mr. Cheezo asked what will happen if they give them the information and they claim credit for it.

Mr. Dunn answered that they can do what they want, but if they want the SC's mandate, the answer is no. He said that he had spoken with George Lameboy and thanked him because the file is moving forward thanks to him, and he said that Mr. Dunn was the first Cree or white person to say this. Mr. Dunn said that Mr. Lameboy said he wants his family to hunt like he did and left. He added that the relation he has with Mr. Lameboy remains conflictual. He said that this is the same conflict they have with CERRI, they want full control, but they will not let them take control.

Mr. Tapiatic said they need to ask CNG to mediate this issue.

Mr. Bobbish said they have a resolution and a letter from the chief and band council asking him to be part of the SC and explaining his responsibilities. He said his first reflex would be to ask the chief and band council to mediate. He added that he does not work for Niskamoon and will not speak on behalf of Niskamoon. Mr. Bobbish said that it would be good to meet with the community and the chief of the Cree Nation of Chisasibi to say that a letter is requesting that the

contract be extended is coming, because the resolution stipulates that he is supposed to give the information to them and the community.

Mr. Kanatewat said he had met with Chief Davey Bobbish on this issue and he told him to continue. He added that the chief did not mention anything about the CERRI issue and he does not know why the chief allows this to go on. Mr. Kanatewat said he will meet with him again and ask what this is all about, because it is up to chief and band council to do something about this issue.

Mr. Bobbish said that Daisy House and Davey Bobbish sit on the CERRI Board of Directors.

Mr. Dunn said that the letter was sent to Niskamoon, and this is why he did not bring it to the SC before the meeting. He added that William Macleod wanted a response as soon as possible.

Mr. Courcelles said that Niskamoon's response is that they are going to provide the reports, the posters and the SC's presentations because it is public information.

Mr. Dunn said that as it is public information, CERRI can do what they want with it, but communication is the SC's responsibility.

Mr. Moses said that he thinks the Chisasibi representatives should speak with CERRI and Mr. Dunn and find out what CERRI wants before proceeding.

Mr. Dunn said they tried.

Mr. Tapiatic said they tried around 5 times.

Mr. Moses said to try it one a last time.

Mr. Dunn said he already knows the answer CERRI will give because they want the SC to go away.

Mr. Moses said that if the traditional knowledge the SC tries to get is misused or distributed, they do not know what will happen. He said he would not want these findings to get outside the territory. He added that it has happened that a researcher has asked an elder for information and the elder will not provide it because he is afraid the researcher will claim the information as his own.

Mr. Courcelles said the only person working at CERRI is Vincent Gauthier-Doucet, so it is not a big organization.

Mr. Tapiatic said that even the chief told him they do not have the capacity to do the study alone.

Mr. Cheezo reminded those present of what had happened with the medicine used for diabetes. He said that it came from Cree knowledge.

Mr. Courcelles said that this is called intellectual property.

e. Symposium minutes

This item was addressed at the beginning of the meeting.

The meeting paused at 3:30 p.m. and resumed at 3:37 p.m. As Mr. Courcelles had to leave, Mr. Tremblay chaired the rest of the meeting.

8) Update on research programs:

a. Research program on Geese (J.P. Gilbert)

Mr. Gilbert said he had nothing new to share.

Mr. Dunn said that Jean-François Giroux had given a presentation in Waskaganish. He said another goose was killed in New York. He added that the confidentiality files are signed for the booklets, so they can go ahead for this year. Mr. Dunn said it is essential that the Cree representatives make it clear that it is important to have the number on the band. He said that they do not need the band, but they have to note the number. He added that one of the most important aspects of this project is to find out where the birds were banded.

b. Research program on Cree Knowledge and Land Use (M. Dunn)

This item was addressed as item 7 d.

c. Coordination between CERRI and the other Cree Knowledge and Land use researchers (C. Durocher)

As Ms. Durocher was absent, this item was not addressed.

d. Research program on Oceanography – coastal (A. Tremblay)

Mr. Tremblay said he had nothing new to share.

e. Research program on Oceanography – rivers (A. Tremblay)

Mr. Tremblay said that a 21-days sampling campaign will begin. He said that Hydro-Québec will also conduct some calibration.

Mr. Dunn asked where.

Mr. Tremblay said they will begin from Waskaganish and move north from village to village.

Mr. Moses said that March 18 is the first day of the campaign.

Mr. Dunn asked how many days they will stay in Waskaganish.

Mr. Tremblay answered it will be a couple of days and that Paul del Giorgio wanted to spend a day on the river.

Mr. Cheezo asked if they will sample all 13 rivers.

Mr. Tremblay answered it depends of the weather, but they should.

f. Research program on Eelgrass (M. Dunn)

This item was addressed at the beginning of the meeting.

9) Discussion on how to report the information gathered during the symposium

This item was addressed as item 7 b.

10) Approval of the minutes of the 15th, 16th and 17th meetings

This item was postponed.

11) Next meeting

A conference call to finalize the terms of reference was scheduled for March 15, at 2:00 p.m.

12) Meetings schedule for 2019

Conference call on March 15, at 2:00 p.m.

April 11 (pre-meeting in the morning and meeting in the afternoon), and 12 to meet with the eelgrass team, in Montréal.

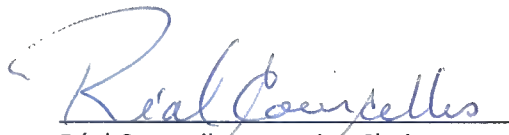
13) To do list

This item was postponed.


14) Miscellaneous

N/A

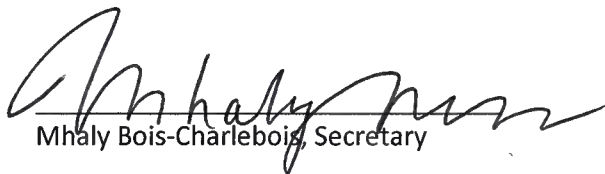
The meeting was adjourned at 3:55 p.m.



Réal Courcelles, meeting Chair



Alain Tremblay, meeting Chair



Mhaly Bois-Charlebois, Secretary

