



**Manitoba Model Forest  
Committee for Cooperative Moose Management  
Meeting Minutes  
June 27, 2011  
Winnipeg River Learning Centre**

**Present:**

Brian Kotak (Model Forest), Eugene Bear (Hollow Water First Nation), Ivan Lavoie (Sagkeeng First Nation trapper), Stu Jansson (MB Trappers Assoc.), Gerry Arbez (Lac du Bonnet Wildlife Assoc.), John Williams (MB Wildlife Federation), Allan Actimichuk (Winnipeg River Bow Hunters Assoc.), Jim Hoard (Pinawa Game and Fish Assoc.), Aart Amerongen (Pinawa Game and Fish Assoc.), Mitch Walker (MB Conservation), Bill Abraham (Black River First Nation TAAC), Ernest McPherson (Black River First Nation TAAC), Rene Barker (Model Forest), Ken Rebizant (MB Conservation), Bob Austman (Model Forest), Kelly Leavesley (MB Conservation), Hilda Bjork (Hollow Water First Nation TAAC), Dwight Bjork (Hollow Water First Nation TAAC)

**1. Introductions**

Introductions of the participants were made.

**2. Additions to the Agenda**

There were no additions to the agenda

**3. Minutes from the June 2, 2011 Meeting**

Brian Kotak circulated a copy of the draft June 2 meeting notes. Brian asked the committee to look over the minutes and provide any revisions/feedback to him in the next 2-3 weeks. Brian will email the minutes from the last several meetings before the next meeting. We would like to finalize the meeting minutes. There was a comment that the meeting minutes should be posted on the MBMF website once the minutes are approved and finalized. Brian will ensure that this happens for each set of approved meeting minutes.

**4. Letter of Management Recommendations to Minister Blaikie**

Brian Kotak indicated that the letter from the Committee for Cooperative Moose Management was sent to the Minister on June 9 by email. The only response that we received from the Minister's office was that the letter was received and would be brought to the attention of the Minister. Because of the fall election this year, the last date for official announcements by the Minister would be around July 5 or 6. The Minister could still make a decision after July 6 regarding moose, but an official announcement on closures would have to be done in a different way.

There was a discussion about a sentence in our letter of recommendations that mentioned consideration of economic stakeholders when making decisions about moose management. There was concern that the moose committee does not represent economic stakeholders. Brian explained that the Manitoba Model Forest strives to ensure that all stakeholders and people with an interest in resource management (forestry, wildlife, etc.) are considered by government when making management decisions. The Model Forest does not speak for individual groups, but does advocate the government consider all interested groups/peoples when making their management decisions. The point was to make sure that the province talks to people that have an economic stake. Tim Swanson (MB Conservation – Forestry) is talking to the economic and other stakeholders in the region about the road decommissioning activities. The committee suggested that Tim bring the access decommissioning plan to the moose committee for our ideas and recommendations. Kelly Leavesley indicated that she would contact Tim. Kelly indicated that there are also other processes in place for consultation, including specific Section 35 consultations with the First Nations.

Ken Rebizant indicated that the letter of management recommendations that was sent from the Model Forest moose committee was a good thing, as the committee includes a wide diversity of organizations and communities. The recommendations were also consistent with those from western MB.

Jim Hoard indicated that he would have liked to see the letter before it went to the Minister. Jim does not have email. Brian indicated that notifications of meetings, meeting minutes, etc. would be faxed to him in the future.

Stuart Jansson expressed concern about reclamation proposed for Central mine in the region. The Province has consulted with cottage associations, but not specifically to other economic stakeholders in the region.

## **5. Terms of Reference (TOR)**

We still need to finalize the TOR, including operating procedures. Kelly Leavesley volunteered to put together a straw dog of the operating procedures so that the committee has a starting point to look at.

Committee memberships – MB Wildlife Federation needs to be added to the TOR

There was a suggestion that we contact Paul Chief and ask him if Brokenhead Ojibway Nation would like to participate on the committee. Brokenhead used to attend moose committee meetings. Brian will extend an invitation to him.

Under the heading of “Non-member Participation at Committee Meetings”, there was a suggestion that the Chair does not need to approve the participation of non-members in advance of the meeting. This would potentially discourage participation by people. Perhaps the whole heading should be deleted from the TOR.

We will finalize the TOR in the fall.

## **6. CCMM Budget and Activities for 2011-12**

The Moose committee has a budget of \$23,900 this year from the Model Forest. Brian indicated that a number of ideas for moose committee activities were developed for this year's work plan. A copy of the moose committee work plan was handed out. The list is more of a wish list of activities that the moose committee could work on over the year. The committee now needs to identify specifically what activities they want to undertake within the budget available.

Kelly indicated that the Minister will be making an announcement about moose soon, and that this will also include an announcement on wolf management. The exact dollar amount per wolf hasn't been finalized. The target is to remove 60% of the wolves in the first year and each year thereafter, for 3-5 years. MB Conservation had meetings with experts in other jurisdictions and all said you need to involve trappers, but no jurisdiction has hit the wolf removal target levels by using just trappers. The most effective means is shooting. We are currently removing about 100 wolves per year in our region. While shooting wolves is not generally supported by the public, it is more palatable when a Species at Risk is involved (e.g., Little Smokey caribou herd in Alberta).

MB Conservation is going to pay for processing samples for the diet analysis (for a certain number of samples). We still need prey samples analyzed. All outfitters are required to turn in samples for bears. The population estimate for bears in GHA 26 is approx 1200. However, this is an educated guess. The estimate is based on how many bears the habitat in GHA 26 can support, not based on aerial surveys. This is also based on experience from other jurisdictions.

There was a question about what we know about bear predation on moose calves. This has not been looked at in our region. Stable isotopes can be used to understand what bears are eating (in much the same way that we are doing this for wolves). Most muscle samples can back cast 2 months of diet, while hair samples allow for back-casting of diet since the last molt.

There was a suggestion that we could extend the wolf diet analysis into GHA 17A. We could pay for analysis and also for trappers to collect samples. Trapper line holders include Henry Hardisty, Eugene Bear, Jim Dickison, Hollow Water community line, and the Bissett community line. We could make our contribution incremental to what MB Conservation is going to spend.

Stuart suggested that we get more youth involved in trapping wolves. Perhaps we should try and get younger people to the next Gordy Klassen seminar. It would be good to get some youth out on trap lines with trappers in GHA 17A.

There was another suggestion that we could develop a moose/wildlife curriculum for schools, in much the same way that the Model Forest caribou committee developed a

provincially-accredited caribou curriculum for use in the schools. There was a discussion that we could put a satellite collar on a moose in GHA 26 and allow students to use the data as part of the moose curriculum. This would be an excellent educational tool. A collar would cost about \$2500.

It was decided that a discussion on the budget and activities will be continued at the next meeting. We need to decide on where we want to spend our money. Committee members should look over the annual work plan sheets handed out at the meeting to see what was proposed when the work plan was developed (back in Feb 2011). Brian will also send out a list of ideas before the next meeting. People can then vote on the activities at the next meeting.

With respect to the moose committee providing funding to trappers for wolf removal/diet analysis, the trappers would need to know by September so that they can prepare in advance of the season. What is the timeline for the provincial program? Kelly: the new wolf program would be effective for next trapping season, however, she indicated that the most effective time is August/Sept to take out wolves, as after this, the wolves will be much more mobile.

There was also discussion about holding a field trip for the committee. The committee has not held a field trip in a long time. It would be good for the committee to see some of the road decommissioning that is occurring. The committee suggested that we have an evening meeting to discuss budget and activities on one day, and then a field trip to road decommissioning sites on the following day. The proposed next meeting dates were:

August 10 – evening moose committee meeting at the Winnipeg River Learning Centre  
August 11 field trip to see decommissioning sites

If there are some people who will need to stay overnight in Powerview-Pine Falls, the moose budget could pay for accommodation costs. People would need to book their own room though and then get reimbursed for the costs.

## **7. Additional Management Recommendations**

There was a discussion about providing additional management recommendations to the Minister regarding moose. The following section summarizes the discussion and Brian was asked to prepare some draft recommendations for the committee to review, based on the discussions below.

### Enforcement

MB Wildlife Federation provided recommendations on enforcement to Minister. The committee suggested that we could recommend that the province increase fines to those trafficking in wild meat and those buying it. Mitch indicated that very few leads on

trafficking are provided to the government. Currently, there is no minimum fine, but there is a maximum (e.g., \$50,000)

#### Potential Recommendation

- Given the importance of a moose hunting closure to all peoples for the recovery of the species, we recommend that the province dedicate sufficient (human and financial) resources to enforcement of a hunting closure. In addition, fines to those illegally selling wild meat and those buying it should be raised substantially.

#### Education

A public awareness campaign is needed. Signage is important. The moose committee could recommend that the TIPS signage program be strengthened. Perhaps the TIPS signs in our region could be redone with some local context information about the moose population on the bottom of the sign.

Bob Austman indicated that the Current Topics in Science is a new course coming down the pipe for schools. The moose committee could develop a course curriculum on wildlife management, with a focus on moose. There were several suggestions of who could be involved in writing the curriculum. These included Rick Wowchuk, Trevor Barker, Kelly Leavesely and Bob Austman.

#### Potential Recommendations

- A broad, public awareness campaign regarding the moose crisis in areas of Manitoba be undertaken by the provincial government, and that this include additional TIPS signage that provides area-specific information on the local moose populations.
- That Manitoba Conservation work with the Manitoba Model Forest to develop a provincially-accredited curriculum supplement on wildlife management (with a focus on moose) for high school level curriculum

#### Habitat

With no more forestry in the region, the habitat will age (in the absence of fire). What is the habitat capability in GHA 26? This has not been explored. Tembec did projections for moose habitat into the future, with and without forestry operations. The moose HSI model developed for the model forest in the 1990s is not a valuable management tool. It is too general. We don't want to create moose habitat. Creating habitat is a slippery slope and it is not something that the committee should get involved in. By creating habitat for one species, you may be destroying or altering habitat for another species. However, we could look at what happens when fire is excluded from the landscape. We could recommend that province look into what happens to habitat when fire and harvesting is excluded from a landscape. For example, there are islands in Sassaginigak Lake that have not burned in a long time. They are not good habitat anymore because of lack of fire.

#### Potential Recommendation

- That Manitoba Conservation, through use of the Forest Resource Inventory and computer models, investigate the long-term effects of forest succession in the absence of a significant forest industry and presence of fire suppression, on the long-term habitat supply of high quality moose habitat in Game Hunting Area (GHA) 26.

#### Snowmobile Access and Trails

Snowmobile trails create highways for the wolves, making them more efficient predators. The province should create a network of designated trails. There is a proliferation of trails for snowmobiling in our region. The committee suggested that there should be a moratorium on new trails during moose closure. Also establish a designated trail system. This is being considered in Wildlife Management Areas and in provincial parks. There is a lot of area in GHA 26 that is outside of Nopiming Provincial Park. There needs to be education on this.

#### Potential Recommendation

- That Manitoba Conservation establish a moratorium on the development of new recreational snowmobile trails in GHA 26, and also establish a designated recreational snowmobile trail system in GHA 26

Minutes by Brian Kotak. Minutes approved by the CCMM at their August 10, 2011 meeting.