

## COASTAL HABITAT RESEARCH PROGRAM

### STEERING COMMITTEE

#### SIGNED MINUTES OF THE 4th MEETING HELD IN MONTRÉAL ON NOVEMBER 29, 2016

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**PRESENT:**

- Alain Tremblay – Hydro-Québec
- Carine Durocher – Hydro-Québec
- Jean-Philippe Gilbert – Hydro-Québec
- Marc Dunn – Niskamoon
- Merlin Whiskeychan – Waskaganish
- Nadia Saganash – Niskamoon
- Norman Cheezo – Eastmain
- Réal Courcelles – Hydro-Québec
- Robbie Tapiatic – Chisasibi
- Simon Marcotte – Hydro-Québec
- William Blackned – Wemindji

**GUESTS:**

- André Tessier – Hydro-Québec
- Floris Ensink – Niskamoon
- Josée Rousseau – Hydro-Québec
- Louis Kanatewat – Chisasibi
- Noah Chakapash – Chisasibi
- Roderick Pachano – Chisasibi

#### CHAIR AND SECRETARY

Mr. Marcotte chaired the meeting of November 29, 2016. Ms. Rousseau acted as Secretary.

Mr. Courcelles informed the members that Mr. Tessier would retire at the end of 2016 and that Josée Rousseau, Advisor – Aboriginal Relations, would be replacing him. He thanked Mr. Tessier for his excellent work as Secretary of the Committee and welcomed Ms. Rousseau to the position.

#### APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

The meeting began at 10:50 a.m. The Chair reviewed the agenda.



Mr. Pachano asked that “Joel Heath’s program” be added to the agenda as item 6 c).

Mr. Pachano asked that “Coastal maps and rates” be added to the agenda as item 6 d).

### **APPROVAL OF THE DRAFT MINUTES OF THE 1st, 2nd AND 3rd MEETINGS OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE**

The Chair reviewed every page of the minutes of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd meetings. Some corrections were requested and the minutes were approved as corrected.

### **SC – 21 – 2016 LITERATURE REVIEW ON LAND USE AND CREE KNOWLEDGE**

Ms. Durocher gave a PowerPoint presentation, dated October 12-13, entitled “Literature review on Eelgrass, Goose Hunting and Cree Knowledge.” A copy was appended to the minutes and a copy will be sent to the SC members.

Ms. Durocher also reviewed the following two documents:

- “EELGRASS BEDS OF EASTERN JAMES BAY COAST AND CREE TRADITIONAL ECOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE (EASTMAIN AREA), pilot study. Project submitted by THE CREE REGIONAL AUTHORITY TO FISHERIES AND OCEANS under the SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES PROGRAM, March 21, 1994.”
- “Wemindji Cree Knowledge of Eelgrass Distribution and Ecology.” Prepared by K. Ettinger and G. Lajoie, in collaboration with R. Beaulieu, for The Cree Regional Authority. Submitted to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, March 1995.

These documents had already been forwarded to the members in preparation for the meeting in Chisasibi on October 12, 2016.

Ms. Durocher explained that the SC needs to determine whether these documents are relevant and can be used to support this research program.

Mr. Pachano suggested that the SC obtain permission from The Cree Nation of Chisasibi to provide the members with a copy of the report entitled “Migratory Bird Habitat Task Force, Chisasibi, Eelgrass and Waterfowl: A Review of Cree Traditional Ecological Knowledge and Scientific Knowledge – Final Report – March 2016, Chisasibi, Québec,” mentioned by Ms. Durocher during her PowerPoint presentation.

Mr. Marcotte suggested that the SC set up a Web site where all documents and reports could be filed and access given to the members.

Mr. Pachano asked why the literature review includes neither the report produced in the mid-70s by Steve Curtis of the CWS, nor the literature review from Environment Canada.

Ms. Durocher answered that these documents concern eelgrass in general, and that she had focused more specifically on literature relating to Cree knowledge.

Ms. Saganash asked whether any reports on traditional knowledge of waterfowl are included.

Mr. Dunn said that when Collin Scott submitted his proposal for a study on land use related to eelgrass and waterfowl, his survey form included about 300 questions, many of which had already been put to land users. Mr. Dunn expressed reservations about the usefulness of starting all over again, as the land users are tired of being asked the same questions repeatedly.

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

**SC – 22 – 2016            GUIDELINES FOR TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR  
RESEARCH ON LAND USE AND CREE KNOWLEDGE**

Ms. Durocher gave a PowerPoint presentation dated November 2016, entitled “Study on Cree Knowledge and Land Use in James Bay Coastal Area.” A copy was appended to the minutes.

Mr. Dunn suggested extending the study area south to Boatswain Bay to include three traplines from Waskaganish, providing eelgrass is found there.

Ms. Durocher inquired as to whether the land users participating in the interviews should be asked to map the eelgrass beds, considering that Fred Short intends to map the eelgrass beds using satellite imagery.

Mr. Courcelles answered that he does not feel that the land users should be asked to map the eelgrass beds, since the conclusions of Mr. Short’s study should be released in 2017 whereas the results of the land use study will only be published in 2018.

Mr. Kanatewat and Mr. Tapiatic said that the red-throated loon population is decreasing. Ms. Durocher suggested adding questions to the survey about the low occurrence of red-throated loon along the coast.

Mr. Dunn said that the proposed guidelines contain the minimum we require. Once we have selected a researcher for the purpose of submitting a proposal, we will inform him or her that the SC members are open to discussing any and all suggestions that may improve the quality of the product.



Mr. Courcelles said that this openness on the part of the Committee could be included in the letter of invitation, but not in the protocol.

A discussion followed concerning the ethical principles that need to govern the holding of interviews. Ms. Durocher suggested that the SC set up an Ethics Working Group. Mr. Dunn said that we must keep in mind that the researchers already have their own ethics guidelines to comply with, but that the two could be combined.

Mr. Pachano suggested that once the land use study is completed, a peer review process should be implemented. Mr. Dunn said that if the SC wants quality research, it will undergo a peer review process.

Mr. Courcelles said that this is feasible and added that once the study is written up, it could be submitted to a scientific journal for publication.

Mr. Tremblay said that the researcher shall not only produce a report, but that the SC should clearly inform the researcher that the results of his or her study are to be published.

Ms. Durocher suggested adding a stipulation at the end of the study schedule indicating that the researcher must publish his/her study results.

Ms. Durocher said that the Ethics Working Group could also participate in the review process.

She added that for every two hunters interviewed, the researcher should send an interview report to the community representative for comment, after which the interview could be validated. She said that this way, the interview report would be reviewed by the community representative and then presented to the SC. She said that this would not be an academic peer review as such, but rather a validation by land users or the community.

Mr. Pachano told the SC that the Crees have had bad experiences with researchers, who collected the Crees' knowledge during their studies but refused to share it. Mr. Pachano brought up the issue of intellectual property, saying that it is not in the Cree tradition to give away their traditional knowledge. He said that the Crees are the guardians of their culture and do not give it away. Cree knowledge is passed on to the next generations. He stated that this is one thing the Crees would want to be maintained in the ethical guidelines.

Ms. Durocher said that the SC can make it clear that the collected knowledge belongs to the Cree communities; as for the intellectual property of the report itself, she suggested that we could be co-authors.

Mr. Dunn said that the key here is to choose a good researcher. Mr. Dunn said that the research program to be approved by the SC will have to clearly stipulate that the researcher will have to include a section in his/her final report thanking the Crees for

their participation in the study and stating that the raw data collected is the property of the Cree communities concerned.

Mr. Pachano emphasized that everything in the report will have been provided by the Crees.

Mr. Dunn added that the researcher's analysis of the data he/she has collected and the conclusions arising from it will have to be agreed upon by all communities concerned, as well as by the SC.

Mr. Dunn suggested that the report be presented to the community first and then to the SC.

"This gave rise to a discussion among some of the members regarding whether the opposite should be done, i.e., present the researcher's report to the SC first, and then to the community."

Ms. Saganash said that she believes the SC should look at it first, as suggested by Ms. Durocher, but added that the community may have to validate or clarify certain points before the final version is produced.

Mr. Dunn said that he believes that if we want the best researchers, the SC will have to leave room for some flexibility, lest the researcher feel that he/she is simply being used as an instrument in the process. He added that the non-negotiable aspects of the research program will also have to be identified.

Mr. Courcelles said that it should be up to the SC to decide whether the report should first be presented to the community or the SC. He added that the decision has to be made here and that if the researcher is interested, he/she will not turn it down.

Mr. Cheezo said that he would prefer it if the report were presented to the community first.

Mr. Pachano said that we will have to review the way we do things and use Health Canada's document on ethical research as a guideline. He said that his question will be "What does the community say?"

Ms. Durocher said that her proposal places the Ethics Working Group at the heart of this approach and that the group's findings would take precedence over those of any given university. She asked which should prevail.

Mr. Dunn answered that the two should bear equal weight. He recommended having a separate section in the document protocol, stressing that the committee considers the Cree knowledge collected to be the sole property of the Crees.



Mr. Tremblay suggested asking the researcher to elaborate on this issue in his/her proposal.

Mr. Dunn said that yes, we could ask the researcher to do so, but since this issue has legal implications, John Paul Murdoch would also have to be involved.

Mr. Dunn concluded by saying that the Cree representatives on the SC will conduct an internal analysis of Ms. Durocher's proposal and will submit a revised proposal before Christmas. The revised proposal will then be finalized at the SC meeting in January 2017.

Mr. Tremblay asked what the next steps in this study will be, and who will be asked to carry it out.

Ms. Durocher responded that there will have to be a head researcher who is knowledgeable about the James Bay coast and works with a team, since a number of interviews will be carried out in several communities. The fact that there are so many criteria means that there are very few choices.

Mr. Tremblay asked how much time the head researcher will have to submit his/her proposal.

Mr. Dunn asked Mr. Tremblay what would constitute a reasonable amount of time.

Mr. Tremblay answered that about two months would be reasonable.

Mr. Pachano asked whether we are narrowing the field to university researchers.

Mr. Tremblay responded that consultants and researchers are both good options; it depends on how fast you want to work.

Mr. Pachano stated that he doesn't want the SC to hire Genivar (WSP).

Mr. Dunn said that suggestions from consulting firms will have to be considered.

Mr. Courcelles and Mr. Dunn concluded by reiterating the steps to be taken before issuing a call for tenders for the research protocol, i.e.:

- The Cree representatives will examine the document filed by Ms. Durocher and then forward their comments to the SC Secretary by December 23, 2016.
- The protocol for the Specific Research Program on Cree Knowledge and Land Use in the James Bay Coastal Area will be included in the agenda for the SC meeting in January 2017, when the protocol will be finalized and the next steps decided upon.

Ms. Saganash left the meeting at 2:25 p.m.

SC – 23 – 2016 COASTAL MAPPING AND RATES

Mr. Dunn introduced Flores Ensink, saying that he helps coordinate goose hunting development.

Mr. Dunn presented a table entitled “Coastal Research Mapping Budget.” A copy was appended to the minutes. After discussion, Mr. Dunn will bring corrections to the table and submit a revised version of it by December 5, 2016.

Mr. Marcotte asked if this budget covers everything, including expenses associated with Mr. Short’s proposal.

Mr. Dunn answered that Mr. Short’s expenses are not included in this budget.

Ms. Durocher asked whether the table provides for an amount to be used to train the Crees who will be doing the mapping.

Mr. Dunn responded that it does not, but said that Mr. Short’s budget provides for such training.

Mr. Tremblay asked whether this budget only covers the mapping of eelgrass beds, or also includes expenses related to the collection by the Crees of sampling data on physical parameters.

Mr. Dunn said that we need to think about how we can maximize their work while they are in the field. He said that the Crees who will be participating in the land use study should also accompany the Crees hired to map the eelgrass beds.

Mr. Tremblay asked who would coordinate everything.

Mr. Dunn said that Ernie Rabbitskin, a student he spoke to who completed the Natural Environment Technology (NET) program, had said that he was interested. He added that there would only be one coordinator.

Mr. Pachano asked which method would be used to map the eelgrass.

Mr. Gilbert responded that visual observations as well as photographs and GPS coordinates would be used to map the boundaries of the eelgrass beds along the entire coastline, including along the shores of the islands. He estimated that it would take about six weeks to cover the entire study area.

Mr. Pachano asked whether the Cree participants would be trained.

Mr. Courcelles answered that training is one of Mr. Short’s responsibilities.

Mr. Dunn said that the analysis of the field data would have to be discussed with Mr. Short, but believes that he and his team are best qualified to conduct the analysis.

Mr. Tremblay said that the oceanographic data should be analyzed by the researchers in charge of the oceanography study and that the results will be forwarded to Mr. Short.

Mr. Dunn said that this will have to be discussed at the next meeting.

Mr. Tremblay said that data collection could be optimized in the oceanographic protocol proposal.

Ms. Durocher said that the ~~land-users~~ should be aware that there are plant species that can be mistaken for eelgrass and that this risk of error should be addressed as part of the training.

Mr. Dunn said that the total mapping budget should be approximately \$400,000.

Mr. Pachano said that the Cree Trappers' Association (CTA) has local officers and that we should look into how we can get them involved and make arrangements with the CTA.

The Secretary of the SC will forward Mr. Dunn's revised table to all members.

**SC – 24 – 2016      RESPONSES FROM MR. FRED SHORT TO THE  
COMMENTS MADE BY THE SC CONCERNING THE  
PLAN FOR EELGRASS ECOSYSTEM RESEARCH IN JAMES  
BAY**

Mr. Dunn summarized the document sent by Mr. Short entitled "Plan for Eelgrass Ecosystem Research in James Bay, October 2016 to June 2017, Fred Short, UDH, Comments from Comprehensive Coastal Habitat Research Steering Committee, Project Period 9 mos., October 2016–June 2017, Field Season July–November." A copy was appended to the minutes.

Mr. Marcotte asked Mr. Gilbert if he is generally satisfied with the responses provided by Mr. Short.

Mr. Gilbert responded that, once the SC had submitted their comments, he had expected Mr. Short to submit a revised version of his research proposal for 2017. He said that he did not find Mr. Short's responses to be very well detailed. In his opinion, the issue is to determine how we can merge the two programs, i.e., eelgrass and oceanography.

Mr. Tremblay said that he is surprised that Mr. Short did not submit a revised protocol providing information such as the number of stations and what will be measured. He



added that we need to know what will be done and how it will fit in with the other components of the research program.

Mr. Courcelles asked if Mr. Short will send a revised protocol for 2017. He said that Mr. Short is being paid by Niskamoon and that he has an obligation to describe the activities to be carried out in 2017.

Mr. Cheezo suggested that Mr. Short be invited to meet with the SC.

Mr. Courcelles said that he disagrees because the agreement made with Mr. Short was that he would submit a research program for 2017.

Mr. Pachano said that he was expecting a complete outline of what Mr. Short is going to do next year and how he will organize the logistics.

Mr. Dunn said that he will make it clear to Mr. Short that the SC needs a program and that the minutes of this meeting will be forwarded to him to that end. He recommended that, once agreed upon, the oceanographic protocol should be sent to Mr. Short and that he should be asked how he intends to incorporate everything.

Mr. Courcelles reiterated that the agreement calls for a three-year research program and that Mr. Short is obliged to submit a work plan every year.

#### **SC – 25 – 2016      LETTER TO THE CWS**

Mr. Dunn reviewed the e-mail exchanges between him and Marie-Josée Couture, Regional Director of the Canadian Wildlife Service, between November 11 and November 28, 2016, regarding the invitation to CWS to sit on the Coastal Research Program Steering Committee.

Mr. Dunn said that the CWS had responded favorably to the SC's invitation and that Ms. Couture is currently trying to determine who would best represent the CWS on the committee.

Mr. Gilbert proposed to inform Mr. Dunn of the nature of the expertise required of the CWS in terms of the SC's mandate.

**SC – 26 – 2016      UPDATE ON THE HUDSON BAY CONSORTIUM MEETING**

Mr. Cheezo informed the members that he had attended the meeting and had written a brief report. He then reviewed the report. A copy was appended to the minutes.

Mr. Pachano said that, although the Cree and Inuit representatives who attended this meeting made no decisions since they did not have the authority to do so, they will report back to their communities. He said that people were surprised that no one in authority from Niskamoon or Hydro-Québec was present. He said that they are planning another meeting in Montréal in fall 2017.

Ms. Durocher asked whether any federal government representatives were present.

Mr. Cheezo said that representatives from Fisheries and Oceans Canada and other federal departments were present at the meeting.

Mr. Courcelles asked whether the proceedings of the meeting were available.

Mr. Pachano answered that a report would be forwarded to the participants.

Mr. Courcelles said that the report should also be forwarded to Niskamoon.

Mr. Dunn stated that, at the request of Sophie Fillion, Wildlife Director of the Eeyou Marine Board, he would give a presentation on the SC's mandate and activities to the Board on December 14, 2016.

**SC – 27 – 2016      JOEL HEATH'S PROGRAM**

Mr. Pachano asked whether Mr. Heath had been contacted.

Mr. Dunn said that once the research protocol for the oceanography program has been agreed upon, Mr. Heath will be invited to submit a proposal along with other bidders.

Mr. Courcelles said that Hydro-Québec would forward the oceanographic protocol to the members around January 9, 2017.

**SC – 28 – 2016      NEXT MEETING**

Due to scheduling conflicts, the SC meeting originally scheduled for January 25-26, 2017, was postponed to February 1-2, 2017, in Wemindji.

The meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m.