

Barry Taylor/Arctic Safaris

SUBMISSION TO

Wek'eezhii Renewable Resources Board

“Joint Proposal on Caribou Management Actions in
Wek'eezhii”

March 3, 2010

As a long term resident of the NWT and a Canadian citizen, my goals here are to encourage and support ethical caribou management decisions and the outfitting industry and its practices.

As to my background to comment on these proposals, I have been a permanent adult resident of the Northwest Territories for over 40 years and have spent a large majority of my lifetime in the barren lands amongst the caribou. Since 1966 I have been guiding, and since 1981 have held a guiding license for barren land caribou, and shortly after that date became an outfitter. Since 1986 we have operated camps on Lake Providence with great success, twice being nominated North American Professional Outfitter of the Year.

Caribou are my passion in life, not only from an economic view and my occupation, but from my love for wildlife. Like any successful farmer, my concern is for my livestock and its ability to thrive and multiply, and for these reasons one has to monitor the weather, available vegetation, predation, general animal movements, and all other factors that may impact their survival and sustenance.

It is for these reasons that I feel compelled to speak out on these issues.

The Outfitting Industry

In the early 1980's the Government of the Northwest Territories opened the door to outfitting and the non-resident hunter. The industry since has always been encouraged to expand as it has proven itself to be a viable asset to conservation and herd management. It has continuously proven itself as a leading source of tourism dollars and side benefits.

The benefits are:

- The majority of tourism dollars are attributed to the Hunting industry
- The hunting seasons occur mainly in the fall and early spring, ...the "shoulder" seasons for other tourist oriented activities, therefore filling a void.
- The outfitters, in one year alone, created 313 seasonal jobs (*Ellis Consulting Services*)
- Outfitters are responsible for a multitude of hotel rooms and restaurant services, therefore they are supporting service oriented jobs.
- Outfitters have generated millions of dollars in tax revenue for all levels of government, Federal, GNWT, and local. That revenue more than exceeds the monies spent on Caribou research in the NWT.
- Outfitters use aircraft charter services at a time of year when demand is otherwise slow. This maintains work and jobs in the North. Charter services pass the rewards onto their suppliers.

- Outfitters purchase their supplies, ranging from food to fuel and equipment in the North, creating more jobs and maintaining those industries.
- Outfitters' clients are generally affluent and therefore purchase high end souvenirs, jewellery, and other artworks. (Our average client spends about \$2200 in Yellowknife).
- Outfitters are the sole reason for a taxidermist being located in the North. Without our support he and his staff would be forced to relocate.
- Outfitters donate their meat, often in excess of 40,000 pounds each year, to both communities and the local Food Bank. The expenses incurred in shipping, etc., are borne by the outfitters. Without this meat, both the Food Banks and elders they service would suffer.
- Outfitters and the majority of their clients only retain the antlers and front hide. All meat is then made available to others in the North and all edible portions must be accounted for by law.*see attached harvest report In our own case, we also salvage hearts, livers, and tongues for the elderly and strip muscle sinews for the crafts industry. What better use of animal can be done as the entire animal is used in a traditional way?
- When biologists request various animal parts for study, such as kidneys and jawbones, the outfitters willingly provided these specimens. And, as camps were spread out, a good cross-section of the herds were covered.
- Outfitters have taken a small, ignored industry from its infancy to one of large proportions, with camps exceeding \$1 ½ million in investment. If these proposals go through, those camps now become independent liabilities with no future.
- Outfitters have put the NWT on the map. When I first started doing Sportshows no one even knew where the NWT was, but guessed "Northern Australia"!!! After a few years and a few million spent on promotion, everyone now knows we are "Canada's Arctic" and an exotic destination!!!
- Outfitters promote the North constantly through their expenditures and efforts on marketing. This results in good feelings towards the North, and numerous magazine articles and tv shows, all demonstrating "the allure of the North"!! One recent Sunday had three shows highlighting hunting in the NWT.

If the Outfitting Industry ceases

- There will be little remaining of the Tourism industry. Hunting and Fishing are what brings the big dollar North. The Fishing segment is already dying due to aging clients and a new generation that has no interest in replacing the previous. If Hunting goes down the tube, so does Tourism as we know it today. There is no

viable alternative market in the NWT for non-consumptive tourism. I know, as I have tried alternative markets and there is an insufficient volume of clients willing to pay the costs of participation.

- The North would lose all the free promotion attributed to the Outfitters via articles in magazines, Sportshows, and outdoor tv shows.
- The North would then have two tourist seasons, the summer traveler and the winter Aurora viewer.
- A few hundred seasonal jobs dependant upon outfitters would disappear. This would include guides, cooks, etc. in the camps, plus pilots and their maintenance workers, chambermaids, expeditors, taxidermists, taxis, waitresses, mechanics, and their administrators. Their lost dollars would not buy groceries, supplies, furniture, housing, in the North. This would be equivalent to a mine shutting down!!
- The Food Bank would now be in a difficult position with an even higher demand for their services, something they could not meet.
- A lot of elders and low income families could not afford the replacement meat now provided by the Outfitters.
- All levels of government will suffer from the lack of Outfitter induced revenue. Perhaps this is why ENR is cutting back on caribou research expenditures,self-induced pain?
- The biologists would not be able to draw upon the outfitters for samples from wildlife or the outfitters' field observations on wildlife.
- Most outfitters will cease to exist and may be forced declare bankruptcy. They have on going costs of operation with no return on investment. Their camps require maintenance and this involves costly aircraft and manpower. For myself, I also have 50 barrels of fuel sitting on the ground at \$29 per gallon cost. This cannot sit and deteriorate for several years awaiting a caribou season. Big diesel generators, outboard motors, boats, buildings, supplies, all require maintenance and use. These camps and lodges are not comprised of pup tents and something that one can just walk away from.
- Outfitters this year are struggling financially. With the announcement of the Joint Proposal in conjunction with the world wide recession, their market has drastically declined, virtually ceased to exist! This means no money coming in, and the operational costs continue. One cannot survive long in the North without income to meet expenses. Most outfitters have continuously poured their profits back into the business and facilities with the hope of someday getting a return on sound business practices and being able to someday retire. Instead of a retirement fund in our businesses we are now faced with a huge liability that won't go away.

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My personal views on this affair

Over my life in the North I've watched the caribou numbers cycle up and down. Several times they were perceived to be "drastic" and resident tags were reduced, only to be put back in place a couple of years later due to "newly found" numbers!! Each time the calving grounds had shifted or great numbers had moved "where they don't belong!"

In the early 80's the Bathurst herd (and that's when all caribou north of Great Slave were considered Bathurst caribou) moved their calving grounds west of the Inlet. When we clamored for the reason, the biologists of the day said, "Relax, they traditionally do this, and will continue shifting to the west. Then, after a few years they will start returning to the east side of the inlet."

If we'd had the same scientist's that we have today, they'd be claiming that the Ahiak herd was endangered due to sudden low numbers. And that the caribou wouldn't move west.

The 60's and 70's had lower numbers available to hunters, they were definitely in a "down" cycle. But ENR's predecessor flew a few of us into the barrens each fall to harvest some animals for various communities' elders. We did a lot of walking and packing, but were always successful, and it kept the elders content and fed.

And then came the 80's, and vast numbers were everywhere. They came south in the winter and went further around the lake and into the provinces. Everybody was happy and content.

I started guiding for caribou and got to spend the majority of my time with them,happy days for me, I was in heaven, doing what I enjoyed and making a living!

Most of the 90's were good years and the caribou were consistent, wolves and bears were coming back in huge numbers, and the vegetation was great. Water levels were fluctuating with good rainfall.

Then, in the late 90's and early 2000's we started into drought years and there was some shifting of animals to the east. The vegetation was noticeably less, water levels were down, and there was a lot of hoof rot, really impairing the animals.

Gradually we noticed that we were getting animals from some other herd, the antlers had a totally different configuration from what we had seen for years and the bulls were all coming out of the west instead of the north. I reported this in my yearly synopsis to the caribou biologist and offered to bring samples of the animals if that would be of any

help. Instead, I was told that I wasn't a biologist and to quit bothering them with my observations.Okay!!!, ...what about the herd of 35,000 that each year comes out of the west, south of Point Lake, and parks themselves for 3 weeks half way down Lake Providence? And then suddenly pulls out and returns to the west where they came from?"Nobody cares!"

Then, suddenly, there's an announcement in the paper that the Bathurst herd is down and there's a meeting at the museum. A couple of other outfitters show up and the biologist looks us up and down and asks, "What are you doing here, I'm going to meet with you later?" We reply that we're interested in what's going on with the caribou. Well, at that meeting we discover that everyone has been wrong in the past, the Bathurst herd is not one herd, but several, and one group is all that will henceforth be termed "Bathurst". Some other group that were always believed to be the remains of the Bathurst on the east side are not, they are "Ahiak" caribou, and how dare anyone question a "professional".Okay!!!, but how did they go from about 4000 animals to 85,000 overnight? And we have the department's most recent literature saying they're all "Bathurst" caribou!!

And then the fun began, and we're all gathered here!

Last year I pointed out that 3 of the outfitters were harvesting Bluenose east caribou based on the government's compilations, so why were we being cut back and threatened?**"Well, no one can tell one from the other!"** was the reply! And that's my point,all but one outfitter, spread across the barren lands last fall reported seeing over 35,000 animals, so it wasn't just in one area, but several. Pilots are all reporting huge numbers being seen north of the lake, but no one wants to investigate for fear their conclusions could be wrong.

Statistics and the science behind all this I'll leave to others, but someone has to admit that with all the focus on the "Bathurst" calving grounds and various census, that the government has no clue about the other herds or historic numbers of those herds because they were all Bathurst caribou until just a few years ago. They have no historic data on any group but the ones calving west of Bathurst Inlet, especially data collected using the "new methods", and you can't compare apples to bananas!! In the old days these hypothesis' were called "a wild man's guess"!

Do I believe the caribou north of the lake (not the "new" Bathurst) are endangered? NO, caribou of the barren lands still number a few hundred thousand!!

Nuff' said.



YK Food Bank
P.O. Box 602
Yellowknife NT X1A 2N5
Tel: 873-4035

December 3, 2009

To whom it may concern:

The YK Food Bank has been distributing caribou meat to needy families for several years. In 2002 we made inquiries to the GNWT Department of Health to determine what health concerns we need to watch out for. They informed us that the only real danger with caribou meat is the possibility of Brucellosis bacteria. They told us to advise hunters to avoid taking any animals with visible signs of disease such as swollen joints, and to keep the meat as clean as possible. They also told us to tell our clients to cook the meat well before it is consumed.

We only accept meat from hunters who are well-known to us. They watch for visible signs of diseased animals and submit samples of any suspect meat to the Resources and Wildlife department. We make sure that the meat is cut up and prepared in sanitary conditions using clean equipment. All meat is kept frozen until we give it out.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dave Ritchie".

Dave Ritchie
President, YKFB



Mr. Taylor,

Thank You for giving us the meat.

We made dry meat with it. We also

made Caribou Stew for everyone

to have at our culture fair. Everyone

enjoyed the stew. Thank You so much!

Daniel Liske

thank you!

Rosalie Paper

Tamara Sangris

Randy Billangean

Wilfred

North Slave Region - Big Game Outfitting CARIBOU PARTS DISTRIBUTION FORM

Hunter's Name: _____ Date: _____

Hunting Licence: _____ Tag #'s: _____

Outfitter: _____

Guide: _____

I am taking the following parts with me:

Caribou #1

- () shoulder
- () shoulder
- () hind quarter
- () hind quarter
- () neck
- () ribs
- () backstraps
- () tenderloins
- () brisket

Caribou #2

- () shoulder
- () shoulder
- () hind quarter
- () hind quarter
- () neck
- () ribs
- () backstraps
- () tenderloins
- () brisket

The following parts have been left in the field:

Reason: _____

* If disease suspected, a sample has been collected.

I am keeping ALL of my meat, or I am gifting the following parts to:

(Name)

(Hunter's Signature)

Caribou #1

- () shoulder
- () shoulder
- () hind quarter
- () hind quarter
- () neck
- () ribs
- () backstraps
- () tenderloins
- () brisket

Caribou #2

- () shoulder
- () shoulder
- () hind quarter
- () hind quarter
- () neck
- () ribs
- () backstraps
- () tenderloins
- () brisket

Used in camp:

- () shoulder
- () shoulder
- () hind quarter
- () hind quarter
- () neck
- () ribs
- () backstraps
- () tenderloins
- () brisket

(Recipient's Signature)

(Date)

For Recipient Use Only

I am sending the following gifted parts to: _____

Caribou #1

- () shoulder
- () shoulder
- () hind quarter
- () hind quarter
- () neck
- () ribs
- () backstraps
- () tenderloins
- () brisket

Caribou #2

- () shoulder
- () shoulder
- () hind quarter
- () hind quarter
- () neck
- () ribs
- () backstraps
- () tenderloins
- () brisket

COPY 1 - Hunter - to be presented to Environment and Natural Resources

COPY 2 - Environment and Natural Resources - to be handed in by the Outfitter, by December 10th

COPY 3 - Outfitter